Title: **"Cut the Ropes": Going All in with God**
Text: **Acts 27:1-15, 27-32**
Date: **November 15, 2026**

Find the sermon manuscript to follow along with online at mercyhillchurch.org.

Big Idea

When storms come into our lives, they force us towards a point of decision: are we going attach our hope to man in some way, or are we going to "cut the ropes" and go all in with God?

1. The Tension

I think the best way to come at this is to follow along with the character arc of this Roman centurion in our story. And it seems to me we could sum up his transformation by saying that, through the course of these trials, this storm, he stops placing his confidence in man's brain and brawn and starts placing it in God.

"What is most significant here is the reverence that Paul now commands. All on board would recognize that the boat could be useful in ferrying people to shore should they draw near land too rugged for harboring. By cutting off this limited hope, in obedience to Paul, Julius and, apparently . . ., his soldiers ultimately stake everything on the promise of Paul's God." - Craig Keener (commenting on v. 32)

2. The Lesson

Part #1: God Casts Us Into Crisis

God intentionally brings us into storms to bring us to the end of ourselves. God casts us into crisis . . . in an effort to care for us. We all, by nature, like to imagine ourselves wise and strong, self-sufficient, capable. To be born in sin (as we all are after Adam) is to be born insane. And, as such, we come into this world with little sense of our grave and desperate need for God. And one of the ways God helps us see it is by bringing us into storms to bring us to the end of ourselves. Because where we end, he can finally begin!

"[T]he word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." - 1 Corinthians 1:18

Part #2: God Concedes Us No Compromise

That boat could have been saved in case they had need of it as they were getting closer to shore. It could have been useful to have a second option, a plan B, if you will. But Julius has the ropes cut and they all just watch from the deck as plan B drifts away. "We don't need it. It's God or nothing!"

Do you have any lifeboats still tethered to your ship that need to go? Is there anything you're holding back from God, that you're unwilling to let go of–because, though you trust him, he's not your *trust* (cf. Jer. 17:7), and you feel the need to diversify some of your trust with these other options in case he doesn't steer the ship in the direction you'd like? Even though you know the promises of God for you in Jesus, is there anything else you're looking to for your identity, your security, your joy? If you're not willing to surrender it all to him, if you've got your hope tied off to something else and you're unwilling to cut it loose for him . . . these ropes aren't going to be a lifeline for you, they're going to be a noose around your neck, they're going to strangle your soul. I don't know what it is for you right now. But, if you really want to be free in Jesus, "cut the ropes"!

Part #3: God Carries Us to the Coastline

Jesus doesn't ask you to cut the ropes from your lifeboats so he can kill you out at sea (that's what we fear, right?). No. He does it so he can carry us to shore without any drag (cf. v. 44)!

Reflection Questions

- When the seas get stormy, when the sky turns black, when life gets hard . . . "who you gonna call?" Where are you tempted to turn? Why?
- God brings us into the storm to bring us to the end of ourselves. And he brings us to the end of ourselves so we can finally begin with him. Have you experienced this? How might you be experiencing this right now?
- Do you have any "lifeboats" still tethered to your ship that need to go? What are they? Why is it so hard to "cut the ropes"? What would it look like to do so?

WELCOME

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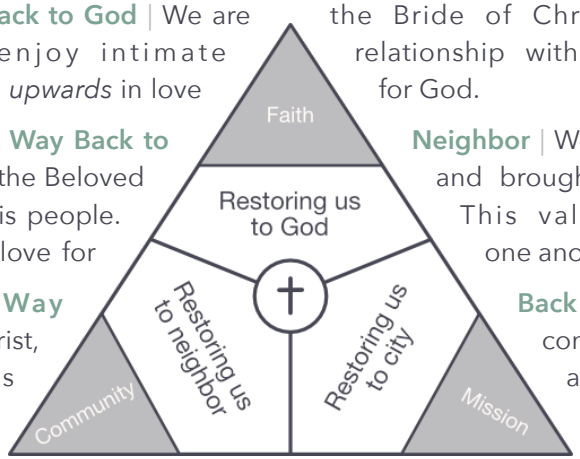
Our Mission & Values

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.

FAITH: The Way Back to God | We are the Bride of Christ, created and redeemed to enjoy intimate relationship with him. This value presses our church *upwards* in love for God.

COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Neighbor | We are the Family of Christ, adopted in the Beloved and brought into covenantal relationship with his people. This value presses our church *inwards* in love for one another.



MISSION: The Way Back to City | We are the Embassy of Christ, commissioned by the Savior to be his ambassadors. This value presses our church *outwards* in love for the unbelieving.

Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service–it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!

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MERCY HILL

Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.
We are so glad you've joined us today!

Announcement Spotlight

Thanksgiving Sunday - November 29th!

At Mercy Hill, we are now officially dubbing the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend (11/29): "Thanksgiving Sunday"! Not all that creative, we know. But, nevertheless, it is so important. Our heart for this Sunday is that we would together, as a church, stop and celebrate all that God has done for each one of us personally over the past year. Thanksgiving is not just a meal we eat with family and friends. It's something we do as God's people in light of who he is and what he's done for us in Jesus. So we want to "do" thanksgiving as a church. Here are a few things you can look forward to during this special service:

- We'll have a shorter sermon focusing on giving thanks to God.
- We'll tap some in our community to share their "thanksgiving" with the rest of us (filling out the form linked below will help us identify who might share).
- We'll open up the mic and let others share as God leads.
- This will be a family service (no kids ministry) and we'll get the kids involved in giving thanks along with us!

To fill out the "Thanksgiving Sunday" form, please scan the QR code below and find the appropriate link.

For any questions, please reach out to Joey at joey@mercyhillchurch.org.

All Church Prayer - Tonight!

Ladies Christmas Tea - December 5th

Short Term Missions Application - Now Available!

Scan the QR code below for more info and clickable content!

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A digital space designed to supplement your Sunday Service experience.