



June 14 – Steadfast

Weekly Reading – Acts 24-28

This Week's Passage – Acts 27:13-44

Main Point

Seemingly hopeless situations provide Christians the opportunity to influence others with the hope of the gospel.

Key Verse: Acts 27:25

Try to emphasize this verse throughout the lesson, building up to the Weekly Challenge to memorize the verse this week.

Acts 27:25 – So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.

Main Passage: Acts 27:13-44

See the passages in the [Study and Apply](#) section for the passage text.

Background

Acts 27 occurred during Paul's journey to Rome after he appealed to Caesar as a Roman citizen (Acts 25:11). By this point in Acts, Paul had already endured years of persecution, imprisonment, false accusations, and dangerous travel because of his commitment to proclaiming the gospel. Though he traveled as a prisoner under Roman custody, Luke consistently portrayed Paul as spiritually influential and respected even among soldiers, sailors, and government officials.

Sea travel in the ancient Mediterranean world was often dangerous, especially late in the sailing season after the Day of Atonement (Acts 27:9), which likely placed this voyage in the early fall. Ancient ships depended heavily upon wind patterns, coastal visibility, and

celestial navigation. Without modern compasses or forecasting systems, prolonged storms could leave crews completely disoriented and helpless for days or even weeks.

Luke's detailed nautical descriptions throughout Acts 27 reflected both his eyewitness perspective and the historical reliability of Scripture. Many historians and maritime scholars have noted the remarkable accuracy of Luke's descriptions regarding ancient sailing practices, weather conditions, anchors, soundings, and ship handling. These details reinforced that Acts recorded real historical events involving real people facing genuine danger and uncertainty.

This chapter also highlights a repeated theme throughout Acts: God remains sovereign over His mission and faithful to His servants even during opposition, suffering, and seemingly hopeless circumstances. Though Paul faced chains, storms, and uncertainty, God continued accomplishing His purposes through him.

Christ Connection

The storm in Acts 27 ultimately pointed to the believer's need for a secure and unshakable hope beyond human strength or circumstances. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus demonstrated His authority over creation by calming storms, rescuing fearful disciples, and revealing His sovereign power over the natural world (Mark 4:35–41). The same God who rules over the wind and sea remained sovereign during Paul's storm.

Paul's calm confidence also reflected the kind of steadfast trust believers receive through Christ. While fear and hopelessness dominated the ship, Paul rested in God's promises and faithfully encouraged others. In a greater way, Jesus entered into a broken and fearful world to bring hope, peace, and salvation to sinners who cannot rescue themselves.

Because of Christ's death and resurrection, believers possess a secure eternal hope that remains steady even during suffering, uncertainty, and hardship. **Christians are not promised freedom from storms, but they are promised the presence, faithfulness, and ultimate victory of God through Jesus Christ.**

Life Group – The Flow

- 15 minutes – Conversation and relationship-building
- 10 minutes – Year of Prayer guided prayer time
- 5 minutes – Introduction (icebreaker, activity, or illustration)
- 35 minutes – Study and apply the Bible
- 5 minutes – Application exercise
- 5 minutes – Conclusion

Year of Prayer (10 min)

Always pause and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your time of prayer.

Almighty God, I Chronicles 16:11, instructs us to “Look to the LORD and His strength, seek His face always.” We adore You because You alone are great and greatly to be praised” (Psalm 34:3) and Psalm 72:19 tell us “Praise His glorious name forever! Let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and amen!”

Please share your words of adoration now. (pause)

Our hearts are grieved over those we know and for those around the world who do not call You Lord and Savior. May we give generously to missions—for those who share the good news in places we can not go. Increase our awareness of the spiritually lost around us and those within our family who’ve yet to acknowledge you as their Savior—their Redeemer—their Lord.

Lift your prayers to the Father, now for those without salvation. (pause) Speak the names aloud for those you’ve just prayed over.

Our hearts are full of thanksgiving for Your mercies that were new again this morning. “You have made known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.” (Psalm 16:11)

Please share any words of thanksgiving that you have at this time. (pause)

As we to listen to the Holy Spirit, as we pray, may He guide our petitions and intercessions as we learn to keep company with God the Father. May we grow in our ability to commune with You as naturally and easily as we breathe. Increase our understanding of how best to be Your hands and feet as we serve You.

Please share your petitions and intercessions at this time - have group members share Prayer Requests. (pause)

May we never cease to thank You for our salvation and Your everlasting love. We love You Lord, teach us how to love You more. In Jesus name and for His glory. Amen

Introduction (5 min)

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Ask:

- Have you ever been around someone whose calm trust during a difficult situation encouraged or strengthened you? What stood out about them?

Say:

In 1914, explorer Ernest Shackleton led an expedition to Antarctica aboard a ship called the *Endurance*. Before the team could even reach its destination, the ship became trapped in massive Antarctic ice floes. For 10 months, the crew drifted helplessly while the ice slowly crushed the ship beneath them.

Eventually, the *Endurance* sank, leaving 28 men stranded in one of the harshest environments on earth. For 5 more months, the crew camped on floating ice, endured freezing temperatures, faced starvation, and later traveled hundreds of miles in tiny lifeboats across violent seas searching for rescue.

Through it all, Shackleton became known for his remarkably steady leadership. While fear and hopelessness threatened the crew, he worked constantly to keep morale alive. He stayed calm under pressure, encouraged his men, maintained routines, and refused to give way to despair.

Incredibly, though the ship itself was lost, every member of the crew survived.

In Acts 27, Paul faced a very different kind of storm, yet he displayed a similar steadiness. While everyone around him gave way to fear and hopelessness, Paul remained calm and hopeful because his confidence rested not in circumstances, but in God.

Transition to Passage 1:

“As we study Acts 27, pay attention not only to the severity of the storm, but also to how Paul responded differently from everyone around him. ”

Study and Apply (35 min)

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says and how we can apply it in our lives this week.

Passage 1 - Acts 27:13-26

READ THE PASSAGE - Have a volunteer read Acts 27:13-26.

The Storm at Sea

[13] Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to the shore.

[14] But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster, struck down from the land.

[15] And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along.

[16] Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat.

[17] After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and thus they were driven along.

[18] Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo.

[19] And on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.

[20] When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.

[21] Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss.

[22] Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

[23] For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship,

[24] and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.'

[25] So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.

[26] But we must run aground on some island."

Commentary

Leader Prep: Use the following commentary to prepare ahead of time. As you lead, feel free to summarize key insights rather than reading it word-for-word.

Acts 27:1-12

Paul was sent to Rome under the custody of a Roman centurion named Julius. Luke accompanied them, as is indicated by the “we” that runs throughout Acts 27. They sailed from Caesarea to Myra on the southern coast of modern Turkey. There they transferred to a larger vessel bound for Rome, probably a grain carrier under lease to the Roman emperor. The ship encountered difficult winds and was unable to follow the usual route that ran north of Crete to Sicily. Instead, they were blown to the south side of Crete to a small harbor named Fair Havens. Against Paul’s advice, the crew decided to make for Phoenix, a larger harbor 30 miles west on the Crete coast (27:1-12).

Acts 27:13-17

When a gentle south wind arose, they started out for Phoenix. That was a mistake. Suddenly the ship was shaken by a violent storm, the dreaded “northeaster.” They were blown south to a small island called Cauda in the middle of the Mediterranean. As the ship came under the shelter of the island, the sailors began to take elaborate measures to ride out the storm. They tied down the lifeboat and ran cables underneath the ship to hold the timbers together. Apparently they put out drift anchors from the stern to slow the progress of the ship as the wind propelled it along. In any event, they knew that to the south lay the treacherous shoals of the North African coast known as the Syrtis. They had to avoid those at all costs (27:13-17).

Acts 27:18

On the second day of the storm, as it intensified, the crew took even more desperate measures. They began to throw the cargo overboard. In all likelihood their cargo was grain. Egypt was the bread-basket of the Roman empire. Alexandrian ships such as theirs usually carried cargoes of grain. If water leaked into a full hold, the grain could swell and burst the timbers of the ship. Dumping the grain would both eliminate that hazard and lighten the ship.

Acts 27:19-21

On the third day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard, which probably refers to the main yard, the huge beam that carried the ship’s mainsail. This was a desperate measure. Without a main yard, the ship would not be able to sail. Still, it was better to have no sail than to sink. The storm continued. Everyone went without food. They had no appetite in the tossing seas, especially since they assumed they soon would be drowned. In the midst of the seemingly hopeless situation, Paul offered a word of encouragement.

Acts 27:22

Paul was about to give them even more explicit words from God. They would be well-advised to heed them. He assured his fellow voyagers that they would be delivered. Not a soul would perish. The ship would be lost, he said, but none of them would be harmed.

Acts 27:23

Paul explained that an angel of the God to whom He belonged and whom he served had given him a special message in a night vision. God earlier had directed Paul by means of such visions. At Troas, the Lord had called him to a new field of witness through the vision of a Macedonian (16:10). At Corinth in a night vision the Lord assured Paul that He would protect his ministry there (18:9). The Lord again had spoken to Paul as he lay imprisoned in Jerusalem, assuring him that he would be delivered to testify in Rome (23:11).

Acts 27:24-25

In the middle of the storm's turmoil, the Lord again assured Paul he would live to appear before Caesar. God was preserving him for that special witness. Also, everyone aboard the ship would be saved. Paul had trusted the Lord's promises before. The Lord had never failed him. He had no reason to believe He would fail him now. Paul told his fellow travelers that he had placed his faith in God; he was sure things would turn out just as God had told him. Therefore, they should keep up their courage as well. Paul's faith was a key to his effective ministry.

Acts 27:26

Although God promised survival, hardship and difficulty still lay ahead. The ship would run aground before rescue came. God's faithfulness does not always remove storms immediately, but He remains present and trustworthy through them. This verse reminded believers that obedience and trust do not guarantee an easy path.

Guide Discussion

Leader Note: You do not need to cover every question. Use the questions that best help your group engage with the passage.

1. **Good for Students.** Why did the people on the ship eventually lose hope during the storm?
2. **Discuss.** What stood out to you most about Paul's attitude and response in the middle of this crisis?
3. **Discuss.** What truths about God must Paul have believed in order to respond with such courage and confidence?
4. **Deeper Dive.** How could difficult or uncertain situations create opportunities for believers to display the hope of the gospel?
5. **★ Reflective - write answers on an index card.** When people experience you during stressful or uncertain seasons, are they more likely to encounter panic, discouragement, steadiness, or hope? Why?

Transition to Passage 2:

“While the storm continued to rage, Paul’s confidence in God began influencing the people around him. Instead of giving in to fear or silence, Paul used the situation as an opportunity to encourage others and point them toward hope.”

Passage 2 – Acts 27:27-44

READ THE PASSAGE – Have volunteers read Acts 27:27-44

[27] When the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land.

[28] So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms.

[29] And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come.

[30] And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the ship’s boat into the sea under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow,

[31] Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.”

[32] Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship’s boat and let it go.

[33] As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing.

[34] Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.”

[35] And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat.

[36] Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves.

[37] (We were in all 276 persons in the ship.)

[38] And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea.

The Shipwreck

[39] Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore.

[40] So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach.

[41] But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf.

[42] The soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape.

[43] But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land,

[44] and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.

Commentary

Leader Prep: Use the following commentary to prepare ahead of time. As you lead, feel free to summarize key insights rather than reading it word-for-word.

Acts 27:27–32

Paul's predictions soon came true. After 14 days of storm, the crew could hear waves crashing on rocks and knew that they were near land. As they took soundings and realized they were sailing into ever more shallow waters, they put out four anchors from the stern to hold the ship and direct it toward the shore.

The sailors recognized that the waters were treacherous and decided to abandon ship and make for land in the small lifeboat. They pretended that they were going to put out an anchor from the bow. Paul saw through their ruse and reported it to the centurion, who by then fully trusted Paul. The centurion made sure that the sailors would remain on board to help in the beaching operations; he had his soldiers set the lifeboat adrift.

Acts 27:33–34

After two weeks without a decent meal, Paul urged everyone on board to eat some food. God had already warned him that the ship would be lost (27:22); so he knew that no easy course lay ahead and that all on board would need their strength. Paul reminded them of his earlier vision – none of them would be lost. Now Paul gave an even stronger assurance – none would suffer any harm, not even the loss of a hair from his head.

Acts 27:35–36

Paul was confident that they would be delivered. He set the example himself, being the first to take food. He gave thanks over the food, following the same pattern of blessing so often exemplified by Jesus. He took bread, gave thanks, and broke it before them all. It was the familiar pattern that Jews followed in giving thanks before each meal. Thanking God before the pagans aboard ship was a means for Paul to remind them of the God who was delivering them. When everyone saw Paul's confidence and hope in God, they all joined in and ate to strengthen themselves.

Acts 27:37–38

A large party was on board ship, 276 people in all. Not all were crew. Probably, most were passengers. The Roman world had no passenger vessels. Travelers depended on merchant vessels. Ships such as this cargo vessel often carried large groups of passengers. They obviously had not thrown all the grain overboard on the second day of the storm (27:18). Now they did so, in order to lighten the ship as much as possible for the attempt to beach it.

Acts 27:39–40

When daylight came, the sailors spotted a bay with a beach and decided to attempt running the ship ashore. Ancient sailors often sought sandy shorelines during storms because rocky coastlines could completely destroy vessels and prevent survival. The crew cut away the anchors, loosened the rudders, and raised a small sail in a final attempt to guide the ship toward land. Even after receiving God’s promise of safety, the sailors still acted wisely and responsibly, reminding believers that trusting God does not eliminate the need for practical obedience and effort.

Acts 27:41

Before reaching shore, the ship struck a sandbar where two bodies of water met, causing the bow to run aground while the stern began breaking apart under the force of the waves. Luke’s detailed nautical description once again reflected the eyewitness nature and historical reliability of Acts. Though the ship itself was destroyed exactly as Paul had warned, God’s promise concerning the people aboard remained completely secure. This moment powerfully illustrates that God’s faithfulness does not always prevent loss or hardship, but His purposes and promises still stand firm through the storm.

Acts 27:42–43

Roman soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any escape attempts because guards could face severe punishment or even execution for allowing prisoners to escape custody (Acts 12:19). However, the centurion intervened because he wanted to spare Paul’s life. God used both divine providence and human decisions to preserve His servant exactly as He had promised. Throughout Acts, God repeatedly protected Paul in order to accomplish His mission and purposes through him.

Acts 27:44

Every person aboard the ship reached shore safely exactly as God had promised through Paul. Though the ship itself was destroyed, God faithfully preserved every life. This conclusion reinforced a major theme throughout Acts: God sovereignly accomplishes His purposes despite opposition, danger, suffering, and uncertainty. The passage also reminds believers that God’s faithfulness does not always prevent storms, but He remains present and trustworthy through them.

Guide Discussion

Leader Note: You do not need to cover every question. Use the questions that best help your group engage with the passage. I do encourage you to use the Reflective question to provide more engagement from your Life Group.

1. **Good for Students.** How did Paul’s words and actions encourage the people on the ship?

2. **Discuss.** Why are people often deeply impacted by seeing genuine faith during difficult circumstances?
 3. **Discuss.** How can Christians become sources of encouragement and hope for others during seasons of fear or uncertainty?
 4. **Deeper Dive.** What does this passage teach about the relationship between trusting God privately and influencing others publicly?
 5. ★ **Reflective - write answers on an index card.** Who around you currently needs hope, encouragement, or spiritual stability from you? What practical step can you take this week to encourage them?
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Teaching Toolbox Tip

Ask Follow-Up Questions

Good discussion leaders don't always move quickly to the next question. Often, the best conversations come from asking follow-up questions like:

- “What makes you say that?”
- “Can you explain that more?”
- “How have you experienced that personally?”

Sometimes the richest discussion comes from slowing down and digging deeper into one meaningful response.

Application Exercise (5-7 min)

Option 1: Anchors of Hope

Transition into Exercise: “Throughout the storm, Paul’s confidence rested not in the ship, the sailors, or the circumstances around him, but in the character and promises of God. In the same way, believers today need truths that anchor their hearts during seasons of fear, uncertainty, and hardship. Let’s take a few moments together to identify the truths about God and the gospel that help steady us during life’s storms.”

Time: 5-7 minutes

Supplies: Index card

Instructions

Divide into groups of 3–4.

Ask each group:

- “What truths about God become especially important during seasons of fear, uncertainty, or suffering?”

Have groups create a short list of:

- attributes of God
- promises from Scripture
- truths about the gospel

that help anchor believers during life’s storms.

Examples:

- God is sovereign
- God is present
- God keeps His promises
- Christ intercedes for believers
- suffering is temporary
- eternity is secure in Christ

Then invite groups to share the truths that most encourage them personally during difficult seasons.

Option 2: Song Reflection – “The Anchor Holds” by Ray Boltz, recording by Northside Baptist Church Choir, 2007

Access the song file by going to the Media section under the June 14th lesson on the [Life Group Lessons + Resource Page!](#)



Transition into Exercise: “Throughout Acts 27, Paul remained steady because his confidence rested in God’s faithfulness rather than his circumstances. Let’s reflect together on the hope and stability believers have in Christ even during life’s storms.”

Time: 5-7 minutes

Supplies: Index Card

Instructions

Teacher note – the song is over 6 minutes long, so you may want to only play a portion of it, or you can plan to carve out time to listen to the full song.

Invite the group to listen prayerfully to the song and reflect on these questions, writing down their answers on an index card or answering out loud:

- Which lyric most connected with the themes of Acts 27?
- How does this song reflect Paul's confidence during the storm?
- Why is Christ a steady anchor during fearful or uncertain seasons?
- How can you display hope to others during life's storms?

Transition into Conclusion:

“Storms have a way of revealing where our confidence truly rests. As we close, remember that God not only strengthened His people during hardship, but also used their faithfulness to encourage and influence the people around them. ”

Conclusion (5 min)

Leader Note: Copy and paste the Conclusion in your Life Group's group chat (e.g. text, GroupMe, email thread, etc.) and encourage them to keep these questions in mind and to memorize the Key Verse during the week.

Final Takeaway

After discussion concludes, read the takeaway statement:

Believers who remain steadfast in hardship become powerful witnesses to the hope and faithfulness of God.

This Week's Challenge

Reflect:

This week, ask God to make you a steady source of hope and encouragement in the lives of others. Instead of allowing fear, frustration, or uncertainty to shape your response to hardship, intentionally trust God's promises and look for opportunities to point people toward Christ.

- What situation in your life is currently testing your trust in God?
- How do your responses to pressure and uncertainty affect the people around you?
- What truth about God do you most need to cling to this week?
- Who in your life may need encouragement, stability, or gospel hope from you right now?

- What is one practical way you can intentionally strengthen someone else this week?

Memorize:

Review daily and/or memorize the **Key Verse** from this passage to remind yourself to run to God in hardship and be aware of possible witnessing opportunities in the midst of suffering.

Acts 27:25 - “So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.”

Prayer

Either pray something like the guide below, or invite someone in the group to close in prayer.

Father, thank You for being faithful even in the middle of life’s storms. Help us to trust You when circumstances feel uncertain, overwhelming, or out of our control, and make us steady witnesses of Your hope to the people around us. Strengthen our faith, anchor our hearts in Your promises, and use our lives to point others to the peace and security found in Jesus Christ. Amen.