



WRECKED

Overcoming Adversity In Our Lives



Week 1 (Storms of Life)

Leader Guide



THE WIN



The storms of life are inevitable but there is unfailing hope for the Christian in the midst of these storms. We want all group members to understand this amazing truth and anchor their lives to the one unshakeable God. Each group member will commit to pray for the specific fears of others in the group and will meditate on additional scripture during the week ahead.

Leader: The Scripture and questions in this lesson may bring out some sensitive or hurtful experiences in the lives in your group members. Be sensitive to this, encouraging a safe environment for them to share. However, don't force anyone to share who is not comfortable doing so. Be prepared to spend extra time in prayer with your people if God brings opportunity. If you wind up praying with the group rather than completing the lesson, that is still a "win."

3-5
minutes



SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



READ THIS ALOUD:

A crisis does not make a person; a crisis simply shows what a person is made of and anchored to.

This week, we looked at the life of the apostle Paul through Acts 27. We learned in the message that Paul's confidence through crisis was a direct result of his faith in God. His faith was founded in these anchors:

1. His Promise (v.22)
2. His Presence (v.23)
3. His Purpose (v.24)
4. His Protection (v.25)
5. Prayer (v.29)

ASK THIS:

Which one of these anchors challenged or encouraged you most during the message this week?

5
minutes



WARM UP



READ THIS:

"People are always doing something with God. Human beings inescapably love God—or love something else. We take refuge in God— or in something else. We set our hopes in God—or in something else. We fear God—or something else." (David Powlison)

ASK THIS:

1. What is one thing (other than God) that you feel like you must have in order to be happy?
2. What is the greatest fear you live with every day?
3. Who do you typically turn to in time of need?

DO THIS:

On a 3x5 note card, have each person write down the answer to each question. Tell the group that we'll come back to the cards later in the group meeting.

25
minutes



THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?



DISCUSS AS A GROUP:

In Acts 27, we saw Paul's faith tested through a violent storm and it held firm as he trusted in God's promises, presence, purpose, protection, and prayer. How could this man have such trust as everything around him was falling apart? As we read through the New Testament, we realize that this storm was just one of many examples of hardship that Paul endured during his life. Let's take a look at some other passages to gain further perspective on Paul:

Have a group member read 2 Corinthians 11:23-28.

In this passage, we see a picture of the extraordinary suffering of the apostle Paul. Each individual act alone would have been tough to bear, but the cumulative effects of all of them together must have been overwhelming. As a chosen servant of the Lord, Paul was told that he would suffer greatly to bring glory to Christ's name (Acts 9:15-16). However, knowing about pain and actually enduring it are completely different.

1. Have any of you endured intense or extended periods of pain and suffering in your life? If so, please share with the group if you are comfortable doing so.
2. What were some of the reasons you were able to get through the trials? Were there specific **Promises** in Scripture or otherwise that you held on to?

Let's look at some of the reasons Paul gives for his trials:

Have a group member read 2 Corinthians 1:8-9.

We frequently need a good dose of helplessness when we are reduced to extremities and stripped of all false self-confidence before we learn humility and open ourselves up to God's power. Deep certainty of death for Paul led to a deeper trust in God. When things are at their worst and all human resources are exhausted, then one is most receptive to learning about the power of God. (D.E. Garland)

3. During the storms of your life, do you tend to run from God or run to God? Is there anything in your background that may be influencing your actions?
4. How did God use that time to deepen your awareness of His **Presence**? How did your perspective on life change during this time?

Have a group member read Romans 5:1-5.

Paul takes it even further here by stating that we "rejoice in our afflictions." Admit it- this seems crazy! However, being anchored to Christ radically shifts the outcome of affliction for the believer. Satan intends affliction to discourage you and crush your faith, but God uses it to build perseverance, strengthen character, and ultimately renew your hope. Ultimately, what Paul knew is that Jesus had set him free from the only suffering that could really destroy him: eternal suffering apart from God. This freed him up to live a life of joyful obedience to God, trusting God to work all things for his good and to make him more like Jesus (Rom 8:28-29).

Consider this quote from Tim Keller's book *Walking With God through Pain and Suffering*:

"Jesus lost all his glory so that we could be clothed in it. He was shut out so we could get access [to God]. He was bound, nailed, so that we could be free. He was cast out so we could approach. And Jesus took away the only kind of suffering that can really destroy you: that is being cast away from God. He took that so that now all suffering that comes into your life will only make you great. *A lump of coal under pressure becomes a diamond.* And the suffering of a person in Christ only turns you into somebody gorgeous."

5. According to this passage and quote, why is Paul able to rejoice in affliction rather than despise it?
6. Can you honestly say that you share his attitude about God's **Purpose**?
7. How would your life change if you were able to trust fully in His **Protection**? What if you could rejoice in suffering knowing that hope is the end result to make you more gorgeous like Jesus?

15-20
minutes

////// DIGGING DEEPER //////////////

DO THIS:

Take your 3x5 index card that you filled out at the beginning of the discussion. Divide into huddles of 4 and have each person share their cards, if they are comfortable doing so. **Leader:** If some are not comfortable sharing, that's OK! They can still pray at the end with the huddle.

After spending a moment sharing the answers, have each team member answer these two questions:

1. If the one thing you believe you need to feel happy is taken away, how will you respond?
2. If you knew your greatest fear would come true but that ultimately God would use it to bring you closer to Him and more like Jesus, how would you react?
3. What barriers are keeping you from making God your confidant in time of need?

Have each huddle spend time in **Prayer**, confessing to God if there are areas of life where you have failed to trust him fully. Ask God that He would help us to trust him and bring hope no matter what storm comes our way. Ask each huddle member to commit to pray for the others in their huddle during the week.

3-5
minutes

////// CLOSING THOUGHT //////////////

"Sufferings, rather than threatening or weakening hope, as we might expect to be the case, will, instead, increase our certainty in that hope. *Hope, like a muscle, will not be strong if it goes unused.* It is in suffering that we must exercise with deliberation and fortitude our hope, and the constant reaffirmation of hope in the midst of apparently "hopeless" circumstances will bring ever-deeper conviction of the reality and certainty of that for which we hope." (Douglas Moo on Romans 5:1-5)

Anchoring our life to the one unshakeable God is the only certain way to bring about hope during the inevitable storms of life.

Follow-up: Have the group spend time during the next week reading and meditating on Romans 8. This chapter is one of the most encouraging pieces in all of Paul's writings in revealing the hope we have by anchoring our faith in Christ Jesus. As you read, pray some of these promises for your friends in the group that you committed to pray for this week.