

BGCC Community Group Guide



Acts: Without Hindrance

July 12th, 2026

Shipwrecked

Acts 27

Main Idea: Storms are inevitable, but followers of Jesus can become instruments of hope because we belong to Christ, who is always with us.

Section 1 – Storms Reveal Where Our Hope Really Is

Acts 27:13–20

"...we finally gave up all hope of being saved." (Acts 27:20)

Summary

The voyage begins exactly as everyone hoped. The wind is favorable, the destination is close, and the experienced sailors are confident. Then everything changes.

Without warning, a violent storm overtakes the ship and control disappears. The crew secures the vessel with ropes, throws valuable cargo overboard, discards the equipment they depend upon, and after two hopeless weeks, Luke records one of the saddest statements in Acts: *"We finally gave up all hope of being saved."*

Notice the progression. They first lose their possessions, then their ability to control the situation, and finally their hope. Isn't that often how life works? We naturally place our confidence in things we can manage—our health, finances, career, relationships, or plans. But when those things begin to slip away, we often discover how much our security depended on them. And how little control we ever had becomes scarily apparent.

Scripture consistently reminds us that God never promised a storm-free life. Jesus Himself said, *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). The promise isn't the absence of storms—it is the presence of our Savior within them.

As John Calvin observed, *"The providence of God is the firm and immovable foundation of all comfort."* Our hope was never meant to rest on calm seas but on the God who rules them.

Group Question

Why do difficult circumstances so quickly expose where we've placed our hope?

Personal Relevance

Most of us wouldn't intentionally say our hope is in our job/money, health, retirement, or family. Yet when those things begin to shake, our reactions often reveal what we've been trusting most. Storms don't create idols or crutches as much as they uncover them.

Flow Question

What kinds of circumstances tend to make you feel most anxious or out of control?

Reflection Question

If someone observed your reactions during difficult seasons, what might they conclude your hope rests in?

Section 2 – God's Presence Gives Courage Before It Gives Answers

Acts 27:21–26

"The God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me..." (Acts 27:23)

Summary

Everything changes when Paul stands to speak. He doesn't promise the storm will stop immediately. He doesn't explain why it happened. He doesn't even tell them they'll avoid shipwreck. Instead, he points them to the God who is with them.

The heart of Paul's confidence isn't that he understands God's plan. It's that he knows God's character. His words are deeply personal: *"The God to whom I belong..."* That may be the most comforting phrase in the chapter. Paul's courage wasn't rooted in his experience as a traveler or his confidence as a leader. It wasn't positive thinking or optimism. His courage flowed from belonging to Christ.

Throughout Scripture, God's greatest comfort is almost always His presence rather than an explanation. To Joshua: *"I will be with you."* To Isaiah: *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you"* (Isaiah 43:2). To the disciples: *"I am with you always, to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:20).

Group Question

Why do you think we often want explanations from God when He primarily offers us His presence?

Personal Relevance

Many of us have prayed, "Lord, just tell me why." Sometimes He does. Often He doesn't. Instead, He reminds us who He is. Like Paul, we may never understand every storm this side of heaven. But we can know that the God who gave His Son for us has not abandoned us now.

Flow Question

When you're struggling, what do you tend to seek first: answers, relief, or God's presence?

Reflection Question

How would your current circumstances look different if your greatest confidence came from belonging to Christ instead of understanding His plan?

Section 3 – People of Hope Become Sources of Hope

Acts 27:33–36

"After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all."

Summary

One of the most remarkable parts of the story is that Paul never allows his circumstances to determine his usefulness. He is still a prisoner. The storm hasn't ended. The danger remains. Yet Paul becomes the calmest person on the ship.

He speaks God's truth. He repeatedly encourages others to take courage. He publicly gives thanks before eating. And he serves everyone around him, helping preserve the lives of all 276 people aboard.

Notice that none of these actions changed the storm. They changed the people in it. Luke tells us that after Paul gave thanks, *"they were all encouraged."* Gratitude became contagious because it pointed everyone beyond the storm to the God who remained faithful.

Corrie ten Boom said,

"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength."

Hope-filled believers become powerful witnesses because they remind people that Christ is greater than the crisis.

Group Question

Which of Paul's responses—speaking truth, encouraging others, giving thanks, or serving—do you find most difficult during hard seasons?

Personal Relevance

When we suffer, it's easy to become consumed with our own circumstances. Paul certainly acknowledged the danger, but he refused to let it become the center of his attention. Instead, he continued looking outward. Sometimes the greatest encouragement we receive comes while encouraging someone else. Sometimes serving another hurting person reminds us that God is still at work.

Flow Question

Who has modeled hope well for you during a difficult season of life?

Reflection Question

How might God use your current storm to encourage someone else who is struggling?

Conclusion

Acts 27 isn't primarily a story about surviving storms. It's a story about belonging to Jesus.

- The sailors trusted their experience.
- The soldiers trusted their authority.
- The ship's owner trusted the weather.

Eventually every one of those sources of confidence failed. Only God's promise remained. Paul could face uncertainty because his confidence wasn't tied to the ship. It was tied to Christ.

Near the end of the sermon, Matthew highlighted perhaps the most important phrase in the chapter:

"The God to whom I belong..."

That is the anchor of the Christian life. Before we are workers, parents, spouses, employees, leaders, or friends—we belong to Jesus.

As Charles Spurgeon said,

"The sovereignty of God is the pillow upon which the child of God rests his head."

As you leave today, consider these questions:

- Where have I been placing my hope besides Christ?
- Am I seeking God's explanations more than His presence?
- How can I become an instrument of hope for someone else this week by speaking truth, encouraging courage, giving thanks, or serving?

Our circumstances may not always change immediately. But because we belong to Jesus, we never face them alone. He is still our anchor. He is still our hope. And He is still with us.