

## Small Groups @ TBC Sermon Discussion Notes

**Date of Sermon:** Nov 12th 2017

**Speaker:** David Lawrence

**Title:** God's Plans Shipwrecked?

**Introduction:** Paul has been on a journey, which God has told him will end in Rome (Acts 23:11). Now he is on his way as a prisoner (not what he had expected perhaps) but in this chapter his journey is anything but smooth! It seems you can be centrally in the will of god and still face difficult circumstances!

**Review:** Invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review.

**Read:** Acts 27 (it's a long chapter but an exciting one!)

**Reflect:**

Paul is in an increasingly difficult situation. But according to his earlier letter to the Corinthians he's been here before! (see 2 Corinthians 11:24-28)

- How do these previous trials strengthen Paul now do you think?
- How can we turn our previous trials into strengths for the future?

Even in adversity Paul manages to be a minister to others (27:9-10, 21-25, 31-38, 42-43).

- What form does his 'ministry' take in these verses? How would you describe how he serves those he is with?
- Remembering that Paul is serving his captors here, what might we learn from Paul's service and attitude in this situation?

Throughout Acts, Paul shows remarkable confidence in God's presence in a crisis, and in his ability to keep his word despite circumstances (see v25, and for another example Acts 16:22-25).

- How did Paul's confidence in God affect those around him?
- What makes it possible to believe in God in trying circumstances? How can we 'prepare' ourselves in the easy times, so that we are able to stand in the tough times?

Maybe we could imagine that given the mess they were in, Paul might have kept quiet about God, in case the sailors blamed God for the storm they were in and turned on Paul (it had happened before - Jonah 1:8-12!). But Paul speaks confidently about God despite the risk (25 again)

- What are the situations in your life with non-Christians in which you are tempted to give up on your proclamation of the gospel?

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**Leaders:** feel free to be selective and creative with your use of these notes.

**Don't feel you have to use all of the material,** but do try to keep the shape of Review – Read – Reflect – Respond and **DO make room for the 'And Finally' questions!**

## Thornbury Baptist Church:

Following the Way of Jesus: Loving God - Loving One Another - Loving Neighbour & World

- What would help you be able to speak out when appropriate?

This chapter shows us that despite the shipwreck, God's plans were NOT shipwrecked.

- In the light of this chapter, spend some time praying for anyone (whether in the group or further afield) who is experiencing something of a 'shipwreck' at the moment (a time when everything seems to have gone wrong for them).

### And finally:

As you conclude, ask each person:

- What is the main thing you are taking away as an action point?
- How can we pray for you?
- Is there anything we can check on next time we meet?

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