

Discussion Questions
“How To Handle the Storm of Discouragement”
October 2, 2005

OPTIONAL OPENER: Superheroes specialize in rescuing people who are in the worst “storms” of their lives. Who was your favorite superhero when you were young?

THOUGHT FROM MESSAGE: Pastor Mike gave us four things we need to know to be SAFE in the storm of discouragement:

- Seek competent counsel from godly guys (be with uplifting people)
- Address the mess that can be controlled (take action)
- Focus on my Backer, not my attacker (trust God)
- Eradicate big terror with big prayer (pray)

We saw how Hezekiah lived these principles out in 2 Chronicles 32. Let’s look at another account to reinforce this lesson.

READ: Acts 27

(Leaders: This is a longer passage than usual, but it is an exciting story. If you prefer to summarize, the essential verses for our study are 13-36.)

1. Discouragement can come from a number of sources. What potential sources of discouragement do you see in this passage? (*imprisonment, an overwhelming storm, hunger, fear...*)

2. Can you think of other sources of discouragement you have encountered?
 - *attack, like Hezekiah in 2 Chron.32*
 - *criticism, like Nehemiah in Neh.2:17-20*
 - *weariness, like Elijah in 1 Kings 19:4 and in Isaiah 35:3*
 - *sin, failure, loss...*

3. What “godly guy” did Paul receive “competent counsel” from in this terrifying situation?(*vv. 23-25 - an angel*)

4. What counsel did he offer his shipmates? (*v.10 - don’t sail; v.25 - keep your courage up; v. 31 - don’t let the sailors leave; v. 33-36 - eat*)

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5. Just as Paul both received and offered encouragement, we often find ourselves in the position of either giving or receiving encouragement. Tell about a fitting encouragement you received or offered recently.

THOUGHT FROM MESSAGE: Mike reminded us to take what action we can, even though some things are out of our control.

6. The sailors did what they could to survive the storm (lightening the ship, dragging anchors, etc.). Do you find yourself inclined to take action in tough “storms” or to stay discouraged and idle?
7. Focusing on God can be a powerful weapon against discouragement. Paul affirmed in verse 23 that he belonged to God. What are some Scriptural ideas and verses that help you move from discouragement to faith in tough situations?
8. Of the four remedies for discouragement, which are you likely to try first - receiving counsel, taking action, focusing on God, or prayer?
9. Next time you are discouraged, which will you try to do better?

More verses on encouragement:

1 Thess. 5: 11 “Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”

Hebrews 3:13 “But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “today,” lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

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Romans 15:4-5 “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus;”