



Welcome

Message: Still In It
Dr. Lance Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: God of the Storm, thank You for being our unshakeable anchor even when the storms of life threaten to overwhelm us. Forgive us for the times we panic, doubt Your promises, or try to jump ship when our plans fall apart. Grant us the courage of Paul to stand firm in who we are and whose we are, trusting that Your presence and purposes remain constant through every trial. Give each person in this group the strength to endurance-run this coming week, to be a steadying presence for those around us, and to trust that You will bring us safely to the other side. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

ICEBREAKER: If you knew a major storm was going to trap you inside your home for three straight days, what is the one comfort food or treat you would make sure to stockpile?

INTRODUCTION: Imagine standing on the deck of a wooden ship in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. You haven't seen the sun or stars for days. The wind is howling, the waves are crashing over the sides, and the crew is so terrified they've thrown the cargo overboard and stopped eating. The situation isn't just uncomfortable—it looks completely hopeless.

Then, in the darkest hour of the storm, Paul steps forward with a message that sounds almost absurd to everyone around him: *"Take courage."*

He doesn't offer false optimism or pretend the storm isn't real. In fact, he admits the ship is going to be completely destroyed. But he delivers a profound truth—God promised that every single person on board would survive, and Paul believed God would do exactly what He said.

Often in life, "staying in it" doesn't mean the storm instantly vanishes or that our plans stay intact. Sometimes the "ship"—our original expectations, a job, a comfort zone, or a personal timeline—gets shattered along the way. Staying in it means holding fast to God's character and promises when every circumstance around us urges us to panic, give up, or jump ship.

BIBLE STUDY: Read Acts 27:22-26 (NLT): ²² But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down. ²³ For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, ²⁴ and he said, 'Don't be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What's more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.' ²⁵ So take courage! For I believe God. It will be just as he said. ²⁶ But we will be shipwrecked on an island."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **What was your biggest takeaway from the message?** What's one thing you learned? What questions came to mind as you listened to the message? What points did you find most insightful?
2. **Anchoring in Identity (v. 23):** Paul grounds his courage during the storm in knowing who he belongs to and whom he serves. When you are in the middle of a prolonged trial or stressful season, what practical habits or truths help you stay grounded in your identity in God rather than letting the circumstances dictate your state of mind?

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3. **Enduring the Loss of the "Ship" (v. 22):** God promised Paul that everyone would survive, but the ship itself would still be completely destroyed. Has there been a time in your life when God preserved your faith or character, even though a plan, job, relationship, or expectation fell apart? How did you manage to "stay in it" when the structure around you was breaking down?
4. **Staying for the Sake of Others (v. 24):** God granted Paul the lives of everyone sailing with him, making Paul's presence and faith a source of protection for others on board. Who in your life right now might need you to stay strong, present, and faithful in your current environment (family, workplace, community) even when the conditions are difficult?
5. **Trusting the Outcome vs. The Timeline (v. 25-26):** Paul trusted God's promise completely, yet he also acknowledged that they still had to face running aground on an island before reaching safety. How do you handle the gap between believing God's promises and actually waiting through the uncomfortable steps to get there? What helps you resist the urge to jump ship early?

LIVE IT OUT: This week, when your circumstances feel out of control, choose to stay anchored in God's promise rather than abandoning ship out of panic.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also "find, follow and like" our Facebook page at facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications. Remember to subscribe to our YouTube channel!

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g. answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

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We Care!

NOTICE: As a small group leader, we depend on you to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472

EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000

EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR: CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial by Name Directory

EMAIL:

- Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams: Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org
- SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org
- Dreamchasers (20-29): Juan Shackelford: juan.shackelford@myspbc.org
- Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr.: lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org
- Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend: michelle.townsend@myspbc.org
- Encore (50-59): Lisa Johnson: lisa.johnson@myspbc.org.
- Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman: maceo.freeman@myspbc.org
- Refiners (70+): Roscoe Jones: roscoe.jones@myspbc.org

*GPS is a study guide based on the weekend message. The purpose of this guide is to assist small groups in study.
Previous GPS Guides are available online at www.myspbc.org.*



Small Group Leader Guide

Would you like to START or JOIN a Small Group at Saint Paul's?

Most existing groups are open to new group members, and new groups begin on a regular basis. If you have friends in a small group, ask about joining their group. If you are new to Saint Paul's and are looking for a place to connect, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to help you find the right group.

Leader Tips:

The GPS document is a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you must use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through while others will be over in a few seconds!

1. Don't teach the lesson. The lesson was taught on the weekend. Just ask questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our small groups. So, have fun with the people in your group.

Agenda for a Small Group Gathering

Gathering Time

Take 5-10 minutes to welcome everyone, catch up and if planned, share some food!

Discussion Time

Here's a suggested format:

1. **Ice Breaker** – Lighthearted icebreaker question (5-10 min.)
2. **Discussion** - Discussion time, Bible study, application challenge (30-40 min.)
3. **Prayer** – Prayer requests and praying for one another (10-20 min.)
4. **Planning** – Remind the group of how we serve together (e.g. usher, sing, greet, pray, etc.)