



HomeGroup **LEADER'S** Discussion Questions
Week 10: Nov 14–20

THIS WEEK'S SERMON COVERS THE REST OF ACTS—CHAPTERS 20-28—PLUS PASSAGES FROM OTHER NT BOOKS WRITTEN BY PAUL. THIS WEEK MAY BE A DIFFERENT KIND OF DISCUSSION FOR YOUR GROUP SINCE WE'RE MOVING AROUND THROUGH VARIOUS TEXTS.

PICK 2-3 QUESTIONS FROM BELOW THAT YOU THINK WILL BE BEST FOR YOUR DISCUSSION.

Each week this series has reminded us of God's power at work in the early Church. From Pentecost to prisons, the Spirit has moved to accomplish what no humans could ever do in their own strength. Exhibit A for this has been the life of Paul. What faith! What commitment to God's purposes! As we look back on God's work in Paul's life, we can't help but think about God's work in our own.

MAIN TEXT: Various—see the passages noted below

CONNECT

1. If you had to describe 2020 in one word, what would it be?

Tom uses the word "grief" and then explains why. This could be a great question for you to answer first as a leader to help set the tone and then be ready to listen well to the responses from others.

2. What was most significant to you about the sermon this week?

LEARN

3. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 and Philippians 4:4-7. What can we learn about prayer from these words of Paul?

We see at least a couple of common features in these passages: prayer should be accompanied by thanksgiving, prayer should be our practice in every circumstance and situation.

4. Read Acts 27:13-25 and Philippians 1:12-14. What do you notice about Paul's faith in these two different, yet challenging, set of circumstances?

From Acts 27, Pastor Tom emphasizes verse 25 and the phrase, “for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.” Paul is facing the danger of physical harm in the middle of a storm raging around him, yet he is confident that God will deliver him.

From Philippians, Paul is in prison yet his attention is on how God is using his situation to embolden other believers in their faith.

In both situations, Paul’s faith enables him to not be paralyzed or overcome by his dire circumstances. Instead, his faith in God keeps him focused on God’s work. His faith is a kind of “lens” through which he’s viewing or processing his situation.

5. Read Acts 20:24 (which we looked at last week) and 2 Timothy 4:6-8. What thoughts come into your mind as you hear Paul’s resolve to finish what God had for him?

If you use this question, slow down to really hear and consider what Paul is saying. His life on this earth was, on one hand, of little value to him when it came to a typical “bucket list” of things we might pursue. On the other hand, his life had great value to the extent that it was lived to fulfill God’s purposes.

APPLY

6. How would you describe your prayer life? You can use the terms Tom mentioned of a vehicle (a dump truck or an RV), or think of another way to describe it. Regardless, do you think of your prayer life as a “shared life with Jesus”?

Tom unpacks this in the sermon. In short, a “dump truck” prayer life is one where we pray with the primary purpose of listing off our problems to God that we’d like Him to resolve. An “RV” prayer life, though, is one where we relate more consistently and actively to Jesus in all facets of our life—not just in the things we need.

7. Tom noted how Paul’s faith was contagious—that it rubbed off onto others. Sometimes, though, we need to “hold on to someone else’s faith.” What kind of situation are you presently in? Is your faith rubbing off onto others, or are you needing others’ faith to rub off onto you?

Even mature believers can go through seasons of struggle...Amen!? This may be a good question for helping discover where others in your group are spiritually and how you can come alongside each other. It can be good to point out to your group that we all need others around us in community to “rub off” our faith onto each other. That’s not a sign of a problem! It would be a mistake to conclude from this question that, “Nah, I’m good. I don’t really need anyone right now to help strengthen my faith.”

8. Our circumstances can discourage or inspire us in our faith. As you think about the example of Paul’s life, what can we do to encourage each other’s faith during this challenging set of circumstances?

9. Pastor Tom used the expression, "Our eyes are on Jesus." What does this mean to you and how do you...or could you...practically live this way?

A key word here is "practically." What does this or could this look like for you on a daily basis?