Nov 15, 26 Small Group Questions

Acts 27: 13-44 "Living in the Mystery"

1. Some people believe that our lives are ultimately directed by fate, destiny, or a sovereign God. Others believe that our future is shaped by our choices and free will. How might each of these views shape the way we navigate our world? What attitudes or postures might they give rise to in us?

Read Acts 27:13–44

2. In verses 13–20, Luke describes the increasingly desperate efforts of the sailors to save the ship. What steps do they take, and what is the eventual outcome? What do you notice about the way their circumstances affect their hope?

3. In verses 21–26, Paul urges everyone to *take heart*. What is the basis for his confidence? What does he understand about God that allows him to speak with such assurance in the midst of the storm?

4. In verses 27–32, the sailors attempt to abandon the ship. How does Paul's warning in verse 31 seem to stand in tension with God's earlier promise that everyone will survive? What does this teach us about the relationship between God's sovereignty and our responsibility?

5. Scripture seems to insist on a *both/and* rather than an *either/or*: God is absolutely sovereign, and our choices really do matter. Why might we find it difficult to hold these two truths together? How might embracing both change the way we approach the decisions and uncertainties of life?

6. The truth of God's sovereignty and our responsibility can be both *bracing and consoling*: bracing because we cannot remain passive or indifferent, and consoling because we cannot ultimately thwart God's loving plans for us. Which of these truths do you most need to hear at this point in your life? Why?

7. Jesus has promised to come again and make all things new. Yet God has chosen to work through ordinary people, empowered by the Spirit, to give the world a foretaste of that future even now. How does the certainty of that promise give significance to our choices today? Where might God be calling you to *have courage* - to act, to speak, to love, or to serve?

8. We are invited to live with two convictions: *Take heart—God is sovereign. Have courage—your choices matter.* Where are you facing a storm in which you need to trust God more deeply? And where is there a decision or action you have been reluctant to take? How can we encourage and prayerfully support one another in these things?

Close in prayer

Invite people to share where they most need to *take heart* and where they need to *have courage*. Pray for a deeper confidence in God's loving sovereignty, wisdom to make faithful choices, and the Spirit's power to live as people who anticipate the coming kingdom of

Jesus. Where appropriate, encourage group members to continue supporting and praying for one another in the week ahead.