Paul Models for Us How to Face a Pandemic

- I have prayed, researched, studied, I have taken a different approach.
- Pray, love well, worship with all our lives in all we do, and share the same boat with our neighbors to share bigger hope, reclaim your life.
- The Story of Acts 27 is the Apostle Paul “in the Same Boat” facing a disaster with 270 pagans.

Though We Are Different, We’re in the Same Boat

- They had different reasons for traveling.
  - Paul is in chains.
  - Merchant ship.
- They had different destinations.
  - Paul is going to Rome.
  - Merchant ship is going other places.
- They had different worldviews.
  - Paul—one true God.
  - They were pagans with multiple gods.

We’re the Same Boat—Though We Share the Same Circumstance, Pain and Uncertainty, We Show Compassion, Leadership to Our Neighbors, To Not Just Survive but to Thrive.

- In the story, Paul’s in the same boat.
  - Regardless of how the painful circumstance happened.
  - The Captain and Centurian did not head Paul’s advice.
  - No question our government, the WHO and CDC have botched this pandemic from time to time).
- Paul learned what to do from Jesus—incarnation. Lean in, run into the problem, not away from it.
- We have the same temporal goal as our neighbors—survival. We want to stay healthy and live well. But we have a higher eternal goal—Jesus forever.
- Church history speaks to us how to live in this tension.
  - Learn from the early church. N.T. Wright in his recent book, God and the Pandemic, refers to Rodney Stark’s The Rise of Christianity (1996, ch 4). The way early Christians faced plagues was to save the lives of others. In 170’s AD and in 250’s AD (the one that killed Marcus Aurelius), and in 380s AD when emperor Julian tried to reverse Constantine’s order to Christianize the Roman Empire, he complains, that Christians were much better at caring for the sick, the poor than the ordinary non-Christian population. The Christians were risking their lives loving their neighbors like Jesus.
and inflamed with the result that I become the cause of their death through my negligence.”

- Learn from Richard Baxter, the Puritan leader, during a plague instructed the believers to not gather but to, “obey secular law…”
- It was Christians who built hospitals, started hospices, started public schools, revamped prisons, stopped slave trade.
- Learn from the persecuted church.

- So it is not an either/or. We are to worship God by loving our neighbor.

❖ **Use the present circumstance to point to a bigger Hope.**


- Recognize our commonality: Talk about common, temporal things we all want to be saved from bad weather, to poor economy, to injustice, to Covid.

- Reclaim your life. Reorder your life. Reprioritize your life. Then live this abundant, secret life day by day.
  - Adversity—character.
  - Don’t waste these months.
  - Pray/worship, gather, word—soul care.

- Live a life of loving your neighbor. Your life is your biggest message.
  - Parable of the talents—invest in eternal things.
  - Mat 25—when we love other we love Jesus.
  - Call your friends and see how they’re doing, bring them cookies, text them, groceries, give.

- Talk about a bigger hope, a bigger salvation, a bigger purpose to live.

❖ **Taking It Home**

- Pray daily for those under your watch: your family, your neighborhood, your work associates and your small group.

- Love daily: how can I bravely love others incarnationally? Love and give for the sake of others.

- Worship and gather safely with others. As restrictions lesson we will be able to gather more safely.

- Share in the hope of present salvation from Covid and speak and live for a bigger hope and purpose

- Reclaim your life. Reorder, reprioritize.