

3-19-2011, COTR Texarkana

Title: The Storm

Purpose: Provoke people to have unshakable faith in the storms of life.

Spiritual Truth: Jesus is with us in the storm.

Text: Acts 27:14-20

Topic: Storm, Trouble, Faith, Trust

The Storm

I. Introduction

A. Bible guide: encourage daily Bible reading (we recently read the Book of Acts)

B. Acts 23:11 (ESV) [Paul has been arrested in Jerusalem for preaching Christ]

¹¹ The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “**Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.**”

1. Acts 27:14-20 (The Message) [Paul is on a ship headed for Rome]

¹⁴ But they were no sooner out to sea than **a gale-force wind**, the infamous nor’easter, struck. ¹⁵ **They lost all control of the ship.** It was a cork in the storm...²⁰ It had been many days since we had seen either sun or stars. **Wind and waves were battering us unmercifully, and we lost all hope of rescue.**

a. YouTube video: Rough Seas Iceland

2. Paul is on a mission for God and encounters a storm of such violent opposition that he and Luke thought they were going to die. God had told him He was sending him to Rome but now it seemed impossible. What went wrong?
3. The storm is a picture of trouble that has the potential to destroy our life and take away everything we love and hold dear. During the storm we often ask where is God and why is He allowing this. Rather than asking questions, a better response is to choose to trust God and His Word in spite of the circumstances.
4. Picture: Jesus is my pilot. He guided her family across war torn Europe in WW2.
5. What do Christians do when trouble strikes and threatens to stop God’s promises from being fulfilled? What do we do when the storm is bigger than our faith? We’ll answer these questions as we see what happened to Paul in the storm.

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D. Purpose: Provoke people to have unshakable faith in the storms of life.

E. Spiritual Truth: Jesus is with us in the storm.

II. Storms

A. Summary: the storm in Acts chapter 27

1. Paul was persecuted by the Jews in Jerusalem because of his Christian faith. To save his life he used his Roman citizenship and appealed his case to Caesar in Rome. The Roman soldier Julius found a ship to take him across the Mediterranean Sea. Paul warned the people in charge that the voyage would be disastrous but they ignored him. Soon after they set sail a horrific storm arose. It was so bad that they gave up all hope of escaping alive. In the midst of the storm an angel appeared to Paul with a word from God promising their safety.

The storm that almost killed them became a platform for Paul to share Christ with everyone on board.

B. Jesus said storms/ trouble would happen to all of us

1. John 16:33 (NIV) [Jesus is discussing his suffering and crucifixion]
³³ “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. **In this world you will have trouble.** (AMP tribulation, trials, distress and frustration) **But take heart!** (NKJV be of good cheer) **I have overcome the world.**”
2. Storms take many forms. Some storms attack our finances; others attack our health or our family. Some storms take the form of persecution or lawsuits.
3. Storms make us afraid and worried. They try to rob our faith and stop God’s plan.
4. We can’t control the storm. It is bigger than us. We feel alone and helpless but we’re not. God is with us and He’ll see us through the most violent storm.

III. Spiritual people know more than professionals

A. Acts 27:9-12 (NIV) [Paul’s journey to Rome]

⁹ ...sailing had already become dangerous because... it was after the Fast. So Paul warned them, ¹⁰ “Men, **I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous** and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.” ¹¹ But **the centurion**, instead of listening to what Paul said, **followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship.** ¹² Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on...

1. The “fast” referred to was The Day of Atonement so it was mid Sept/ Oct.
2. Secular people often ignore spiritual people and rely on professionals, business owners and the majority. Now the passengers and its crew were confident. Soon their confidence would turn into abject fear and hopelessness.
3. Paul had a spiritual sense about what would happen in the future. Spiritual people can have divine insight into the affairs of this life. This insight isn’t automatic but is the result of a deliberate, daily walk with God over time.
4. Our daily walk with God is the best preparation we can make for a crisis. It starts with our morning devotion and continues as we walk with God during the day.

IV. We can depend on God in the storm

A. Acts 27:14-20 (The Message)

¹⁴ But they were no sooner out to sea than a gale-force wind, the infamous nor’easter, struck. ¹⁵ They lost all control of the ship. It was a cork in the storm. ¹⁶ We...managed to get a lifeboat ready... ¹⁷ But rocky shoals prevented us from getting close. We only managed to avoid them by throwing out drift anchors. ¹⁸ Next day, out on the high seas again and badly damaged now by the storm, we dumped the cargo overboard. ...²⁰ It had been many days since we had seen either sun or stars. **Wind and waves were battering us unmercifully, and we lost all hope of rescue.**

1. Man’s best effort to maneuver or protect our self is no match for major storms, e.g. professional sailors, lifeboats and anchors weren’t enough...Tsunami Japan.
2. Pagans felt that those who died at sea never entered the realm of the dead; instead their souls wandered aimlessly forever above the waters in which they perished. *IVP Bible background commentary.* When Christians face death we have the hope of heaven. Paul and his friends thought they’d die at sea but were confident they’d live in heaven.
3. Sooner or later we’ll face a storm we can’t stop, e.g. death. What will you do on that day? Where will you turn for help when your heart is failing for fear? There

is only one way to survive:

- a. Deuteronomy 7:9 (The Message)

⁹ Know this: **God, your God, is... a God you can depend upon.** He keeps his covenant of loyal love with those who love him and observe his commandments for a thousand generations.

- b. You can trust the faithfulness of your Heavenly Father. Buckle yourself in with the seatbelt of trust. God has promised to be faithful. He will never let you face anything you can't handle while you're holding His hand.

V. The presence of God will enable you to endure any storm

A. Acts 27:21-26 (NLT)

²¹ ...Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, "Men, you should have listened to me ...You would have avoided all this damage and loss. 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."

1. Scene: Everybody has given up...except Paul. Paul is in touch with his Heavenly Father. The all powerful God said everything is going to be all right.
2. God's presence will calm the raging storm on the outside and the one inside us.
3. Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples...²⁰ ...**be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**"

- a. Christians never face a crisis alone. There's an unseen pilot guiding our ship through the storm.
- b. Psalm 23:4 (ESV)

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, **I will fear no evil, for you are with me...**

B. A word from God will revive hope during the storm.

1. One word from God revived hope among hundreds of people.
2. When God speaks to us we have a life jacket to keep us afloat. His Word becomes an anchor in the storm.
3. This is why it's so important to walk with God 24/7.

VI. Conclusion: My faith during the storm can turn unbelievers into believers

A. Acts 27:33-36 (NLT)

³³ ...Paul urged everyone to eat. "You have been so worried that you haven't touched food for two weeks," he said. ³⁴ "Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair of your heads will perish." ³⁵ Then he took some bread, **gave thanks to God before them all**, and broke off a piece and ate it. ³⁶ Then everyone was encouraged and began to eat—

1. Before the storm Paul was a prisoner now he's the chaplain. His ability to hear from God in the storm provided a platform to witness for Christ.
2. Storms provide an opportunity for unbelievers to come to Christ because of our reaction to the storm. Maybe this is why God lets us go through the storm.

B. Summarize the rest of the chapter: just like Paul predicted the ship ran aground and everyone escaped to safety. The natives on Malta were unusually kind to them. God used Paul to heal the sick islanders. Later they found another ship and sailed to Rome.

VII. Response: Prayer and Souls...What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?