

Drop Anchor

In life we all find ourselves in situations we'd rather not be in. We look around and don't like what's happening, yet we have no control or ability to stop it.

In the church we tend to call these "storms". We see multiple accounts of people on boats that end up in a storm. For some of you, you think that would never happen to you because you watch the weather channel and keep an eye on the radar. But there are people like me that mostly just wing it...

And whether you are prepared or not, there are pop-up storms. And these storms you don't get the opportunity to prepare for.

So go the storms of life. Sometimes you can check the radar so to speak, and maybe see what's coming and prepare for it. Sometimes you just live life and wing it, where everyone else seems to know the storm is coming but it's a surprise to YOU. And then we have the pop-up storms that happen way more often than we'd like.

But it's not the storms that we should be concerned about...remember we can't control them...it is our response to the storms that matter.

This morning we're going to look at one particular storm that the apostle Paul found himself in the middle of...

Acts 27:1 (CSB)

When it was decided that we were to sail to Italy, they handed over Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Imperial Regiment.

Paul was not on a yacht, living it up on the Mediterranean Sea. He was a prisoner. He was already in the midst of a situation...a journey not of his choosing...something we would call a storm.

Acts 27:7-8 (CSB)

Sailing slowly for many days, with difficulty we arrived off Cnidus. Since the wind did not allow us to approach it, we sailed along the south side of Crete off Salmone. 8 With still more difficulty we sailed along the coast and came to a place called Fair Havens near the city of Lasea.

This is Paul's "storm"...I'm sure he's just ready to get to Rome to plead his case and be freed...but instead they are sailing slowly for many days, with difficulty. And the wind prevents them from going where they want to go and still they face more difficulty...

Church, sometimes your storm is slow...sometimes it's difficult...you face resistance...it gets more difficult...

And it's frustrating to have no control...you're not steering the ship...you can't stop the wind...you can't speed it up...you're just along for the ride.

Acts 27:9-11 (CSB)

By now much time had passed, and the voyage was already dangerous. Since the Day of Atonement was already over, Paul gave his advice 10 and told them, "Men, I can see that this voyage is headed toward disaster and heavy loss, not only of the cargo and the ship but also of our lives." 11 But the centurion paid attention to the captain and the owner of the ship rather than to what Paul said.

Now MUCH TIME has passed and it's already dangerous. And Paul has some advice based on what he sees...

He said "men I can see..." Paul wasn't a captain or a deckhand or a skilled fisherman or anything where he would know more than those manning the ship.

But Paul sees something they did not...he had discernment...

Paul tries to get them to change course but they did not listen to him.

Like Paul, there will be times in the midst of your storm, that you see something...maybe God shows you...maybe your wisdom leads you to it...or the Holy Spirit gives you insight or revelation...

But your voice is not valued...those involved in these circumstances that you can't control...refuse to yield to your advice...what can you do?

Acts 27:13-19 (CSB)

When a gentle south wind sprang up, they thought they had achieved their purpose. They weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. 14 But before long, a fierce wind called the "northeaster" rushed down from the island. 15 Since the ship was caught and unable to head into the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. 16 After running under the shelter of a little island called Cauda, we were barely able to get control of the skiff. 17 After hoisting it up, they used ropes and tackle and girded the ship. Fearing they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the drift-anchor, and in this way they were driven along. 18 Because we were being severely battered by the storm, they began to jettison the cargo the next day. 19 On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.

It was common in a severe storm to begin throwing cargo overboard to lighten the load in hopes of survival.

I bet you've been there too at some point. The storm has been slow, long, dangerous, you've faced resistance, you see some ways out but can't control the course, and eventually you feel severely battered by the storm.

So you begin to throw things overboard...you're just trying to lighten the load in hopes of survival. I know this can be about the scariest point in the storm...as I'm sure it was for Paul.

Acts 27:20 (CSB)

For many days neither sun nor stars appeared, and the severe storm kept raging. Finally all hope was fading that we would be saved.

When you're in this spot...it's as if there's nothing but darkness...and when there's nothing but darkness, and the storm keeps raging...hope fades.

BUT there IS a way through...no matter how dark, how difficult, how long, or how hopeless.

The way we get through is to Drop Anchor.

Acts 27:27-32 (CSB)

When the fourteenth night came, we were drifting in the Adriatic Sea, and about midnight the sailors thought they were approaching land. 28 They took soundings and found it to be a hundred twenty feet deep; when they had sailed a little farther and sounded again, they found it to be ninety feet deep. 29 Then, fearing we might run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and **prayed for daylight to come**.

I've been in a boat and dropped an anchor to swim or to fish and while that anchor kept the boat from moving away from that spot, it didn't keep it pointed in the same direction the entire time. It turned left or right depending on the waves.

But here they dropped FOUR anchors from the stern. This was to hold the ship in place and keep the bow pointed toward the shore.

They feared they might run aground on the rocks...which would have led to damage and destruction. They knew that if they were going to get through this they needed these anchors to keep them pointed toward the shore.

And for you and me...when we find ourselves trying to get through a storm...if we don't Drop Anchors we get twisted and turned by the waves and the wind and we still get through eventually...but we crash into the rocks and we take on some damage that could have been avoided by staying pointed at the shore.

Paul's ship dropped four anchors and there are four anchors in this text for you and me to drop.

Anchor of Prayer

Acts 27:29 (CSB)

Then, fearing we might run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and **prayed for daylight to come.**

I'm not just talking about saying a "little prayer"...what is that anyway? Don't say a little prayer. Prayer is to be an anchor...something you rely on. Something that's critical to helping you stay pointed toward the shore.

If you're not praying, you're straying!

Anytime you're talking to Jesus...it's not a "little prayer". You're talking to the One who has overcome it all. The One who saves, heals, protects, restores, provides, delivers...Prayer should be your first anchor!

The men on this ship prayed for daylight to come...they wanted to see.

Prayer is like the headlights of a car. Headlights allow you to see where you are going and to see what may be approaching. Living life without praying makes about as much sense as driving a car at night without headlights. You are an accident waiting to happen.

Drop that Anchor of Prayer!

Anchor of God's Word

Acts 27:22-24 (CSB)

Now I urge you to take courage, because there will be no loss of any of your lives, but only of the ship.

23 For last night an angel of the God I belong to and serve stood by me 24 and said, **'Don't be afraid, Paul. It is necessary for you to appear before Caesar. And indeed, God has graciously given you all those who are sailing with you.'**

Paul had told them what God had said. And if God said it, you can take it to the bank.

Numbers 23:19 (CSB)

God is not a man, that he might lie,
or a son of man, that he might change his mind.
Does he speak and not act,
or promise and not fulfill?

Do you know God's Word? Do you know His promises?

Do you remember earlier in the story when Paul said he could see that they were headed toward disaster and would lose the ship and their lives? That's what Paul discerned...what he perceived at that time in the situation.

But now some things have changed...God has spoken. God has revealed that: Yes you will lose this ship, but you won't lose your lives!

Church, you need the Anchor of God's Word to keep you pointed toward the shore.

He is for you and not against you.

If He is for you then WHO can be against you.

Nothing can separate you from the love of God

He is with you

What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?

Take the ship...take all that I have...as long as I still have Jesus. And His Word says I do.

Drop the Anchor of God's Word

Anchor of Fellowship

Acts 27:35-36 (CSB)

After he said these things and had taken some bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all of them, and after he broke it, he began to eat. 36 **They all were encouraged and took food themselves.**

In the midst of the storm, Paul brought the people together. All that it says he did was thank God for some bread and began to eat it. They were encouraged and ate.

When you are in the midst of a storm...what you might want to do is be alone...and that's right where the enemy wants you, alone. Alone with your thoughts and his lies.

But what you need is encouragement. There are others in the storm or that have been through it. The Anchor of Fellowship is so important because God created us to be relational...you need others...and they need you!

Paul had actually told them that eating this food was for their survival. And we do have to eat food for physical survival...but there are times when we need other believers to help encourage us for the survival of our soul!

Drop that Anchor of Fellowship

Anchor of Trust

Acts 27:25-26 (CSB)

So take courage, men, because I believe God that it will be just the way it was told to me. 26 But we have to run aground on some island."

Who likes the "good news/bad news" game? You know what I'm talking about...

The good news is that you're going to live! The bad news is that you are going to lose some things along the way, and eventually you'll lose every material thing you have on this earth.

The Anchor of Trust means that we are willing to accept God's will in the situation.

He told them they would have to run aground on some island. You're gonna crash, your ship will be destroyed...but I'll take care of you!

Psalms 9:10 (CSB)

Those who know your name trust in you
because you have not abandoned
those who seek you, Lord.

Do you know Jesus? Have you called on His name? Have you been born again?

If not, today is the day of salvation! If you have, do you trust Him?

Drop that Anchor of Trust

The enemy wants nothing more than to destroy you. He wants to see you crash, sink and drown in the storm. And he'll tell you any lie he has to tell you to keep you from dropping those anchors.

But at the same time the Holy Spirit is telling you to drop the anchors of Prayer, God's Word, Fellowship, and Trust in Jesus...because these anchors will keep you pointed toward the shore...He will guide you. He will provide everything you need, every spiritual blessing.

It's not just about getting through...it's about getting through alive...living to tell about it.

To live is Christ.