

Sermon Topic: “The Sail, The Storm, The Shipwreck” by Rev Dr Lynette Sathiasingam, 7 April 2019

Sermon Text: Acts 27-28

A. Introduction

This passage raises many important questions for us. Can we really trust God when our life gets stormy, when things go wrong, when the situation is discouraging, when we cannot see beyond the now, and when everything seems so hopeless?

Adversity comes in all shapes and sizes and fashions. These perplexing predicaments show up at the most inconvenient time, disrupting our lives, frustrating us. Where is God in all of this? Doesn't He care? If He says that I am His, and He knows I serve Him, then why is He allowing me to go through such storms, and not just one, but over and over again?

Think about a storm you are facing right now. It could be a rough spot in a relationship, a difficult child, a tough time at the workplace, or a bleak health prognosis. Whatever the situation is, hold it in your mind.

Are there anchors that we can hold onto?

The sailors tried so hard. They lowered 4 anchors into the sea bed. But the anchors didn't hold, and the ship continued to move on and be battered by the waves. But there was someone onboard the ship who seemed so calm, and so steady. Paul was anchored in the midst of the storm. How was he so calm?

Paul had his own anchors.

B. Paul's anchors

- Paul took hold of the presence of God
- Paul clung to the promises of God.
- Paul trusted in the promises of God
- Paul tapped on the power of God

C. Paul took hold of the presence of God (Anchor #1)

- “Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me” (Acts 27:23)
Do you know who you belong to? Do you have that confidence that when trials and tribulations come, you can stand ground and not waver because you know who you belong to? We are princes/princesses of the High King and co-heirs with Christ.
- Even in the midst of the raging storm, Paul could confidently cling to Hebrews 13:5 – Because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you”
- When He seems silent, He is actually at work. Remember the *Footprints* poem – when we face difficult times, God is actually carrying us.

D. Paul clung to the promises of God (Anchor #2)

- Do we take hold of God's promises?
- Acts 27:24 – “for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me” Faith refers to having an assurance, a security in the one we place our faith in.
- Paul believed in God's promise that everyone on board the ship will be saved (ref. v24).
 - This was evident in his advice to the sailors that “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved” (Acts 27:31) which sounded wacky, but was based on what God told him.

- He further reassured the sailors that “not one of you will lose a single hair from his head” (Acts 27:34)
- The promise was fulfilled when “in this way, everyone reached land in safety” (Acts 27:44)
- Paul clung to the promise of God whom he had faith in. While he faced trying times, he never forgot the author and perfecter of his faith.

E. Paul trusted in the protection of God (Anchor #3)

- Paul knew his life had a purpose, even as a prisoner, to share the Good News with Caesar. “Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.” (Acts 27:24)
- While he was caught in a storm, the storm was right smack in the will of God, and hence it was the safest place.
- When Paul trusted in God’s protection, 3 wonderful things happened:
 - He had the favour of the centurion. This man’s job was to stand guard over Paul, and to hand him over to Caesar. However, the centurion liked Paul, and gave Paul the leeway to go to his friends who provided for his needs (Acts 27:3) and prevented Paul and the other prisoners from being killed (Acts 27:42-43)
 - His own personal faith deepened. When you go through a storm, you cannot help but to cling to God and to go to His word. Your faith deepens. That’s when you cling to that anchor, when you trust in the protection of God.
 - It led to the fruition/fulfilment of God’s purpose and plans for him. Paul didn’t regard his ministry as complete when he was taken captive as a prisoner. Everything that happened to him was part of God’s plan- getting to Malta to share the Word, getting to Caesar to share the Word.

F. Paul tapped on the power of God (Anchor #4)

- Paul made use of every opportunity he had to reach out to people. He ministered to the father of the chief official, as well as other people on Malta, the island that they ran aground on (Acts 28:7-10)
 - His actions are a reminder of God’s promise: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10)
 - “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you” (Isaiah 43:2)

G. Do we have these 4 anchors in our life?

- We must take hold of the presence of God
- We must cling to the promises of God
- We must trust in the protection of God
- We must tap on the power of God

H. What do we learn from Paul?

- Paul preached in every circumstance he found himself in. He was an evangelist, and he preached at every opportunity he had – in prison to the guards, out of prison, shared the Gospel with Caesar etc.
- We have an opportunity to get tickets to Celebration of Hope (8 tickets) and to get these tickets into the hands of unbelievers for them to hear the word, and God will do the rest.

