

THE FOUR ANCHORS

Acts 27:27-32, *Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. And they took soundings and found it to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found it to be fifteen fathoms. Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretence of putting out anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.*

Today we are going to examine the **four anchors** that we can use to help us during the storms of life. An anchor is something which provides stability in an otherwise dangerous, uncertain or tenuous situation. It stops us from running aground while we sit out the storm. There will be times in our lives when we encounter adverse weather conditions, and how we handle those storms will determine our quality of life. Too many of God's people have jumped ship or stalled in the midst of a storm. They have allowed the storms of life to effect their onward journey - toward the fulfilment of their destiny. And as a result, a defeatist attitude sets in and they no longer have a plan or pattern by which to live a victorious life.

In this passage of Scripture, Paul was being taken captive to Rome where he would eventually die. And as he journeyed toward the end of his life, he encountered storms along the way. As with Paul, there are **four anchors** that will stabilise us and keep us on course until we land safely at our destination.

ANCHOR ONE - THE PERSON OF GOD (verse 24)

"Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you."

If you want to survive the tempest you must know who God is! You must be familiar with the Person of God - all His divine attributes. For instance, this verse says, ***"Do not be afraid."*** Fear does not come from God. In this context, it is speaking about Paul not having fear in doing God's work. God is assuring Paul of safety, security, and supply. What the Lord is saying is that all safety, security, and supply comes from Him; not only for Paul, but for all who were with him. Even in the midst of a storm, we need not worry about any of these things, for God supplies all. Doesn't this make you want to be associated with people who have God's approval and blessing upon them. There is much safety in that. As long as Paul was bent on doing the will of God, he would be safe (and so would all the people with him). Paul did not fear, he knew that he would be cared for and protected. However, outside of that plan, or being involved in anything except that plan, would have brought about defeat and discouragement.

Verse 24 says that Paul, ***"must be brought before Caesar."*** God had a plan and purpose for him, and He has a plan and purpose for you. Even in the middle of a great storm, God still has a plan for you! Though it may not always be that enjoyable! When we examine Paul's life, we will see persecutions and severe hardships. But God always came through. Yes, serving God is not smooth sailing, and He didn't promise us a storm free journey, but He did promise that we would make it to the other side. God is a great anchor that we should hold on to. And One that we can use when the wind is blowing and the waves are violently beating against our lives. So why not throw out that anchor right now and wait for Him to walk across the sea to your rescue. He is a miracle-working God!

ANCHOR TWO - FAITH IN GOD (verse 25)

“Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.”

The Word of God will be of little benefit to you unless you exercise **faith** in it. The whole key to your success day by day is whether you ‘believe God’ - or not. Paul’s life was such that he had to believe God. Think of the time he and Silas were thrown into the Philippian jail. They had been chained and beaten, but Paul still hung onto that **anchor of faith**. When he was stoned at Lystra and left for dead, he hung on to that anchor of faith. Likewise, we too need to hang on to the same anchor of faith! In the midst of our storm we can choose to believe the adverse conditions, or we can believe God. One word from God will still the wind and calm the waves. One word from God and your tempest will become a playground. Never doubt His awesome power! He is ever-ready to respond to faith.

There are probably people here today that have been struggling with this matter of **faith**. You are holding onto the anchor of God, but that anchor of faith has been slipping and it seems you are about to lose your grip on it. Don’t ever let go of God, because He will never let go of you! In fact God has more faith in you than you have in Him! And remember, God has instructed each of us to live our lives according to His Word. That will require faith. We are instructed by His Word to give our all to Him, and to trust Him implicitly in every situation. That will require faith. Paul said, ***“I believe God...”*** He knew that the same God that had delivered him from the Philippian jail and the death squad in Lystra would deliver him in this situation. This same God of love and compassion will see you through also. So keep hold of that anchor of faith and trust that God will do what He has promised. He is faithful and His timing is perfect!

ANCHOR THREE - THE VESSEL OF GOD (verse 31)

“Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.”

This has to do with **fellowship** and it is a type of the Local Church. What is fellowship? It is “two or more fellows in the same ship.” Don’t you just love our fellowship? So why do so many jump overboard? They have misunderstood the purpose of the ship. The ship isn’t meant to be a vessel of insubordination and mutiny. It is an anointed vessel of love, order and protection. Jesus organised His church during the days of His ministry on the earth to be a messenger. But it seems that people today are happy to shoot the messenger! In Matthew 16:19 Jesus says, ***“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”*** He is not speaking to Peter, but to the N.T. Church. The N.T. Church is the vessel by which we preach the gospel. The N.T. Church is the vehicle by which we take the message to a lost and dying world. That’s the purpose of the ship.

Unfortunately, there are some who place very little importance on Church. They find any reason to stay away! And others come and find any reason to criticise or murmur. It’s as if God has no eyes to see and no ears to hear! Notice, this verse makes it very clear that unless you stay on board there is no safety - there is no protection! Therefore, the ship is a vessel of protection, a place we can be kept safe. Yet, there are some who are on board but are not really ‘on board’ - if you get the gist of what I mean! And this merely exposes them to the elements. Please don’t misunderstand the meaning of fellowship. It has to do with a “like mind” and a “like heart” that’s fully aligned to God’s Word. We are all in the same boat, and therefore, God expects us to be in fellowship (in unity). He expects us to use our time together to build each other up. What effect are we having on others! Are we keeping them safely on board or are we throwing them overboard with our bad attitude and unsavoury conversation?

ANCHOR FOUR - GOD'S NOURISHMENT (verse 33)

“And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored them all to take food.”

Paul told them that they would not be able to withstand the journey unless they ate food/meat for strength. They had fasted for 14 days and needed nourishment. Never forget that during the storm there is a God who has already provided anything you need to be nourished and sustained. No matter what the conditions may be, the Lord is your provider! But the best form of nourishment is received from His Word. In this passage, it reveals four benefits of God's provision - through His Word:

(a) It Will Bring Good Health. Acts 27:34 ***“Wherefore I pray you to take some food: for this is for your health...”*** A steady diet of the Word of God will make you healthy both spiritually and physically.

(b) It Will Bring Safety. Acts 27:34 ***“...Since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you.”*** You need a dose of God's Word everyday. If not, you will fall by the wayside and be defeated.

(c) It Will Bring Encouragement. Acts 27:36 ***“Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.”*** Notice, those who are engaging in the growth program of the Bible will be in good health spiritually. Therefore, they will weather every storm. They will also be encouraged, of good cheer and happy.

(d) It Will Bring You to Your Destination. Acts 27:44 ***“And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.”*** What ever plan God has for your life, be rest assured that He will take you to the correct destination. God never get's lost or changes direction!

Remember this... When you partake of the Bread of God (His Word), and follow its guidance, you will come out victorious - no matter what kind of waters you are going through. It is impossible to fail or be defeated when you allow the Word of God to be your guide. So do what this passage of scripture recommends. Don't get distracted by the wind and the rain, stay focused on Jesus - the author and finisher of your faith! He may just be sleeping in the back of the boat, or He may be walking on the sea to get to you. Either way, you will get to the other side!

In the mean time, make sure you've thrown out your **four anchors**. Are your anchors holding? Are they solid? Will they keep you from drifting out to sea? They will do that and much more because they are part of your spiritual assets.

Let us end by reminding ourselves what they are:

1. The Person of God
2. Faith in God
3. The Vessel of God
4. God's Nourishment