

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

**IN THE STORM.**

**Scripture: Acts 27:13-26**

**Music of storm – play 30 secs**

When was the last time you were caught in a storm? I love to hear the rain on my tin roof most of the time, except when it starts to beat down so hard and strong, that I worry if it will ever stop.



**Slide 1 – boat in a storm.**

Life is full of moments when everything seems to go horribly wrong and we wonder not only what to do next, but if it will even matter.

**Slide 2 – Get out of jail free card.**

How many of you have played monopoly and love to get the “get out of jail free card”?

Sometimes we think life should be like that – when the hard times hit, surely, we can pull out of card and get out of whatever is happening! But of course, this doesn’t happen.

We do everything we’re supposed to do and then the storm comes, and we are tempted to think it’s unfair. Life can be difficult. Your storm may be depression, financial challenges, relational, whatever and you find yourself in the middle and, instead of coming to God for help, we sometimes blame God for the storm, or question where He is, why is He allowed this.

### **Slide 3 – storms of life – what do I do?**

We have spoken about being in the valley and in the wilderness, and today we are exploring what it is like being in the storm. We are either coming out of a storm; are in the middle of a storm or there is a storm looming just around the corner.

### **Slide 4 - Our key thought for today is: Never allow the presence of a storm to cause you to doubt the presence of God.**

Paul was given a life of purpose, mission, and impact from God, but he had to change, and this came about from the various literal and personal storms he experienced.

We have just heard the story in Acts. Think of the captain and the crew who were caught in a dangerous storm swamping their boat and they have lost all hope. Then Paul says: “you should have listened to me.” It’s all your fault. And sometimes it is our fault – we have used poor judgement or ignored God’s leading. But God is always beside us. Paul said he saw an angel which assured him of God’s presence, encouraging the crew to have courage and hope.

**Stop for a moment.** You are in the middle of a boat and an angel stands beside you. An angel of the Lord. Do you believe it?

You may not be aware, but there are angels in this room right now. I believe with all my heart that what we see with physical eyes, it not all there is, that there is a spiritual world that goes

beyond what we can see. In fact, even right now there could be some angels in our chapel, with us.

We see in this story the account of how a Godly man, a man who was experienced in the storm, reacts in all the stages of the storm. The captain and crew didn't listen to Paul though - they ignored the warning signs and rushed straight ahead. There was a gentle wind blowing, then suddenly, it grew in strength, the sky grew darker, and the wind began to howl, the sea began to rise, the gentle swells turn into crushing waves, and the journey they thought they were on totally changed.

It seems unfair right? We've got a sense of justice built in that says when you do the right things you should get rewarded and when you are doing the wrong things you should get punished, but life doesn't always seem to work that way.

**Have you been there?** You thought you knew what you were doing, you felt the need to do something, you were sure things couldn't get any worse, you saw a direction and you acted. Only it wasn't too long before you found out that it could get worse, and the winds of life come up and now when you think it can't get any worse, nothing seems to go right.

When the storms of life come, we may find that our lives are driven by them. We thought we were in control, we thought we could make all the decisions, only we come to a place where there aren't any good decisions left to make. We know what we want to do, but we can't do it. The options that we want simply aren't

there and we have to simply run with the course of things until that time comes to change.

### **Slide 5 – anchors that hold.**

In verse 29 the crew drops four anchors to ensure they don't crash into the rocks. What are your anchors? What allows you to stand fast like Paul did? There are four anchors we are assured of, if we have Christ in our life.

When you are in the middle of a storm, remember God is always with you in many ways. He could be with you in the form of a supernatural being, an angel. He is with you in the form of His Spirit. If you are a follower of Jesus, His spirit dwells within you. He goes before you; our God is already in tomorrow. He is not bound by time, He is hearing your prayers and comforting you in your hurts.

### **Slide 6 – God's presence.**

**The anchor of God's presence** nothing happens that is a surprise to God. Simply put God knew what was coming. During the storm God is there.

### **Slide 7 – God's plan.**

**The anchor of God's plan.** He knows your destination. God has a plan for your life too. He has missions for you to accomplish, people that He wants you to reach.

### **Slide 8 – God's provision**

**The anchor of God's provision** because He knows your needs. He will see you through. It may be at the last minute as it was with Paul, it may be when hope fades, but God will provide for you needs.

### **Slide 9 – God's power**

**The anchor of God's Power**, during the storm God is in control. When we feel our hope has gone, God will see us through the storms of our life. He is ready and willing to see you through if you will trust Him.

### **Slide 10 – all is calm.**

God is our shelter. In the middle of the storm, He is our hiding place, our safety, our strength, our comforter, our source, our redeemer, and our rock.

**I would like you to now to take some time to recall God's faithfulness in your life. You can close your eyes or not.**

**There are 5 things I want to recall.**

- 1. The deliverances the Lord has given you.**
- 2. The way He has led you and continues to lead you.**
- 3. The blessings He has bestowed on you.**
- 4. The victories He has won for you.**
- 5. The encouragement He has given you.**

**Pause for a moment and ask yourself – when has God come through for me when I thought I was alone?**

**Take this space as you identify these times, to thank God and allow your heart to be filled with gratitude for the God who has walked beside you and will continue to do so until you meet Him face to face.**

**God, we cast our cares upon You because You care for us. We thank You that Your grace, mercy and presence guard our hearts, our minds and our souls in Christ Jesus and You give us a supernatural peace that this world knows nothing of, because You dwell within those who know You. Give us peace God, amid the storm. In Jesus' name Amen**