

I. Introduction and Prayer Concerns

I want you to turn in your Bible to Acts chapter 27. While you are doing that, I want to bring you up on our prayer list. We want to continue to pray for Sam, our own Sam here, who has cancer. Darren's mom, most of you know Bob and Mary Ann. Mary Ann is in the hospital in a very bad situation there. Pam's dad, Bill, is in a critical situation in the hospital. Don't forget Christian out in Las Vegas, and our own Trent. He had knee surgery, and then he fell last week. We need to keep praying for him, a great family. Then, of course, little Lauren Case, whom we mentioned so many times. Keep praying for them and put them on your prayer list and keep them before you.

As I said, I want you to turn to Acts chapter 27. What I want to do today is, I used Acts chapter 27 last week at camp, and I took a section of it every night and related it to something in their life. Remember, the theme was to overcome and to be a victor instead of a victim, and that's really what we focused on. I want to take that message today and I want to preach it to you guys. I know it took me four nights; don't get nervous. I'm going to condense it down into one basic, normal sermon today so that you can better understand what I did, and then you can better understand where your child was at and what we were trying to accomplish.

I say this all the time, and I know it always bears repeating, but this church is here for you. We're not here to be any extravagant mega-church with all the bells and whistles. We meet downstairs here, which years ago, when the Cold War was on, was a bomb shelter. We still have all the signs and the food stashed away somewhere in case we need them again. Anyway, it's about you, and certainly last week was about your children because the future of our church is your kids.

What I did is I took Acts chapter 27, which deals with Paul's shipwreck, if you remember. It's a great story, and in that chapter, as I told the kids, there are probably six or seven sermons, but I just pulled one of them out and just wanted to focus on that. It's a great story and a great illustration of what we are all facing in life. Now, us adults who are older, we've had some storms in our life, some more severe than others. What I tried to get across to your kids is that some storms are coming into their life. This is one of my favorite stories, and it's something that, Lord, I know I've used it in my life many, many times. There are probably, as I said, a number of things that we could look at, but I want to stay focused on just what I talked about with those kids. This chapter is about Paul going to Rome. As we look into this, let's go to the Word of God and ask the Lord to bless us this morning.

II. The Perfect Storm

In this chapter, as I said, it's about Paul going down to Rome. As he heads to Rome, they get into a terrible storm, and that storm threatens all of their lives. It actually looks like nobody is going to survive this. This story will be a picture of the storms that we will have to face in life. As I said, there's coming a time; many of us have already been through them. If you have a child that's in his teens and went to camp last week, their storms are coming their way. These storms

will ravage your life. Some of us today, you know, your lives have been, they've been all kinds of problems in your world, all kinds of issues, and it's because a storm came into your life that became a stronghold in your life. That storm absolutely devastated you and ravaged your life and completely swallowed you up. Sometimes it will take everything from you and leave you absolutely destitute.

I told the kids, back in 1991, there was a terrible sea disaster up in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Gloucester, Massachusetts, is one of the oldest seafaring towns in America today, up in the New England states. I had actually been there a couple of times when I was in the army, and it's a, you go back, you think you're walking back into the 17th century. It's quite incredible. What happened was, in the story, this tuna ship went out, as they do, and they go out hundreds of miles to catch tuna, and they got caught in a storm that absolutely destroyed them. No one ever knows what happened to them. They never came back. They lost contact with them. The storm was unbelievable. They made a movie about it later on called "The Perfect Storm." If you have a chance to look at that movie, I would suggest that you do it. It's a true story based on what actually happened. The name of the ship was the Andrea Gail, and it was a tuna boat out of Gloucester. Nobody knows to this day what happened, but the storm that they hit, or hit them, was a storm that was unprecedented. Nobody had ever seen a storm like this, that it actually came from all four sides, and there was absolutely no way for them to get out of it. Any way they turned, they were doomed. Nobody knows for sure how they all died or what exactly happened. The movie makes a pretty good assumption of it, and it's pretty, pretty, pretty sad at the end. But suffice it to say, no trace was ever found of them.

In Acts chapter 27, you have the perfect storm that comes into Paul's life, and many times it will come into our lives, and there's no way out of this storm, as it seems. There's no way you're going to go. Every which way you turn, that storm is raging around you, and it comes at a point in your life where you simply cannot get out unless you turn to the Word of God and let God lead you out of that storm. This is what I was talking about with your children this last week.

III. Key Components of a Perfect Storm

Now let's look at what we have here: the key components that will bring a perfect storm into your life.

- 1.) Out of God's Will
- 2.) Wrong Direction

IV. Surviving the Storm: The Four Anchors

What follows, and this is what I focused on a different one of these every night for our children, what follows will be one of the greatest layouts in all of the Bible that you have to do to survive this storm because none of us are going to be exempt from the storm, so you better learn how to survive through that storm.

But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

They've been in this storm for 14 days. I'm telling you right now, it may have been 14 days, which is a long time, it probably felt like a year. You know, you can go through something for a short period of time, but in you going through it, I mean, it seems like it has been going on forever in your life. What they are doing, if you are sounding for fathoms, I don't know if you know what that means, it means that they throw out a line with a rope on it that's got measurements on it, and they see how deep it is. 20 fathoms, and then they pull it back up. They will go for maybe 15 more, 20 minutes, an hour, and they will throw out again, and now they are at 15 or 10 fathoms. It means that the bottom is coming up. They are getting shallower. That means they are close to land because that's what happens as you get closer to an island.

If it isn't the wind in the storm that's going to destroy you, it will be the wind in the storm pushing you on the rocks of life that will crush you and destroy you. They are in a fix. They are completely in a vessel that is out of their control. They are at the whim of this storm. They know they are getting close to the land, but they have no power of their own to land safely, and now they are added to fear that they are going to be dashed upon the rocks and be destroyed. I love the last part of verse 29: "and wished for the day." You know what that means to me and you? That means how many times we've been in the storm of our life when we get up, half in the face, at another day, we say, "Oh, Lord, please come back today and get me out of this mess." That's wishing for the day. That's coming to the place in your life where your life is so upside down, your life is so problematic, you've got so many issues, you've lost everything in life, everything in life has abandoned you. You've tried everything humanly possible to fix it, but you won't do the only thing that can fix it, and that is come back to God. You are sitting there as a Christian, or not even a non-Christian, and you are praying to God, "Oh, God, take this away. Oh, God." God is not going to come down and take it just away. You are going to have to go through a biblical process to get through this storm.

You see, that's what we all want. We get, and this is so true of all of us, including me, when we get in a jam, we want God to fix it short-term, but we don't want to do whatever we've got to do that's going to keep it long-term. We just go through God and our relationship storm to storm. You see, what God wants to do is not only fix the storm you are in, but He wants to show you how to fix the next storm and the storm after that. He wants to give you a foolproof program that will get you through any storm. So I understand they are wishing for the day. Whatever times in my life I wish for today, I'm here to know there are times in your life you wish for today. "God, I can't take another day of this. I just wish you'd come back today." You know what? He didn't come, and I'll tell you what, if God just answered all those prayers, we'd have been in heaven a long time ago. You know what? He doesn't do that because there are some things God wants you to learn. There are some things God wants your kids to learn last week, and we did our best. I did my best. The counselors did their best. The preachers did their best.

I want you to see this verse 29: "Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern." I want to preach to you for just a few moments, and this is what I took one of these every night, but I can't do that obviously, so I'm just going to run through them for you. I just want you to see what I gave your kids last week, and then most important, see where we went from there. I want to talk about the four anchors of Christianity in Christian life that you have to put out to hold you through any storm. This whole story is a picture of our life and what happens when we get out of fellowship with God and forsake the clear principles of the Word of God in our life and we go our own way. This storm is a picture of the only thing that's going to get you through that storm was four anchors, and I want to talk about the four anchors of the Christian life that will anchor you and get you through any storm you are going to face in life.

- 1.) The Anchor of Salvation
- 2.) The Anchor of the Word of God
- 3.) The Anchor of Your Spirit
- 4.) The Anchor of Your Ministry (The New Testament Local Church)

V. Conclusion and Call to Action

Building these four anchors in their lives last week will get them through any storm. It will get you through any storm: the anchor of your soul, the day you got saved; the anchor of your life, the Word of God; the anchor of your spirit, Aaron and Hurs in your life and the people that you associate with; and what you do with the New Testament local church that God has given you, getting involved, letting the leadership here. What I did with them, and I've got to tell you, this was, I've done camps for almost 50 years. I mean, hundreds of them. I've preached them all across this country, all around the world, really. I've got to be honest, this last week was probably the best camp I can ever remember, if not the best camp that I ever did, because we put something in place that we have never done before. I took our kids, and at the end, I asked them to get into an accountability group, two or three, three or four kids that will this next year keep each other accountable, that will help each other, that we get done with the drama, the bickering, and all the little things that kids get into, and all the drama in life, that for the next year they stay in those little groups and have Zach and the leadership help them and really focus on just keeping each other accountable and being responsible to each other and making each other better. If they will do that, and in the process of that, do it in their youth group, do it through the Word of God, and do it now that they are saved, many of them or some of them already were, it will work for them. This is what will make a difference in their life. It will make a difference in your life as it made a difference in my life.

Come into the place where I realized that the storms of life are going to ravage you. You better get those four anchors out. You can try everything the world tells you to do. At the end of the day, you are going to crash on the rocks and die unless you put out four anchors: the anchor of your soul, make sure you are saved; the anchor of the Word of God, anchoring your life; the

anchor of your associations, iron sharpening iron; and the anchor of taking the institution that God has given you, the New Testament local church, and making it the vehicle by which you get to where God wants you to go. Those are the things that will make a difference in our kids' lives and make a difference in your life.

I want you to know that your child always has a way to get to church. If for some reason you can't bring them, and they want to come, just let us know, and we will have people pick them up and bring them. I realize there will be times in your life when you can't do that. I get it. I would love to have you come too and be part of it, watch them grow, and let us help you too. But I understand, bottom line is this: your kids have made some really good decisions last week. We have everything going the way we want it to go. I'm asking this church and my leadership not to let down on that, and I'm asking you as parents not to let down on that. Make a difference in their life, and together let's help them be everything that God wants them to be. In the process, I'm always here for you. I don't care what storm you are in. I don't care what you are dealing with. I don't care where you've been, what you've done. All I care about is where are you at right now and where you want to go from here. That's all the difference that it makes to me because that will make the difference in your life. Let's pray. I'm going to pray in a moment, and then we are going to see baptism. Just keep your heads bowed a minute. Our kids are making their way up there to be baptized.