

Acts 27 - A Strong Anchor

It has been said that you are either in a storm right now, or you just got out of a storm -

A) Or you are going to be in one soon.

B) Storms are a part of life - right? - How you weather the storm is what is important.

C) In June 1998, Charlie Blanchet and his crew-mate Des McGrath left NZ to sail to Tonga on a 43 foot sailboat affectionately named April

D) On their voyage they encountered severe weather conditions, since known as the 'ultimate storm'.

They were hit by winds of 154 knots and waves They were estimated at over 80 feet

A) At one stage, a set of seven waves hit their boat and it was completely submerged.

B) Then They shot through the air 'like a dolphin' before diving into the next set of waves.

C) They Survived the storm because of their ANCHOR -

1) the Coppins Sea Anchor- said to be the best Sea Anchor MONEY can buy.

D) In our text today we are going to see Paul the Apostle in the midst of a horrible storm.

Three anchors that hold him -

A) These three anchors are what will hold us in the midst of the storms that we face in life

B) Paul is in this situation because some of the same Jesus leaders who had Jesus killed over 20 yrs prior -

1) Now what Paul dead too.

C) They don't like the fact that Paul had broken ranks with the Pharisees

1) to become a follower and spokesman for Jesus

D) Paul Preached the Jesus was the Messiah who had Risen from the dead

1) and HOW believing in Jesus was the only way to a right relationship with God

After a failed assignation plot on his life - Paul used his rights as a Roman citizen and appealed to Caesar

A) So that is where he is headed as we pick up the story here in Acts 27

V.1 And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment.

B) Centurions were cream of the crop in the Roman army - men known for their bravery and their Proven character. - led 100 men.

1) There are probably a good portion of his men traveling with him

C) Julius is in charge and responsible for getting the prisoners to Rome.

D) Note: Paul was not the only prisoner that Julius and his men were taking to Rome,

1) for there were "other prisoners" with them.

The Greek word means "others of a different kind".

A) This may suggest that, unlike Paul, these men were going to Rome NOT to stand trial,

B) But has men who were already condemned - so were bound for execution.

1) Fight the GLADIATORS

Isn't the Lord awesome -

A) Here are a bunch of men who are on this boat - sailing to their death -

B) These men hardened Criminals who are going to spend an eternity in Hell. -

1) God totally hooks them up !

C) Places Paul on their boat - So that before they die they will have the chance to hear the gospel.

Precious Church- know this God does the same thing in our lives.

A) The World around us is floating toward an eternity of torment -

B) Separated from a God who loves them - GAVE HIS SON.

C) God places you and I who know Him – who have been touched by His grace – on the same boat.

1) In the same seas of storm – financial storms – relationship storms –

D) So that we can shine the light of Jesus to people who are lost and going to Hell

1) WE MUST NEVER LOSE THAT PERSPECTIVE – especially in the midst of the storm.

2 So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. And the next day we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him liberty to go to his friends and receive care.

E) All through the voyage Julius, the Roman centurion, treated Paul w/ kindness & consideration.

1) A great sign of the respect Paul had even from the Romans- his citizenship but also his testimony

When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under the shelter of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.

Scholarship reveals this was a grain freighter, taking grain grown in Egypt to Italy.

A) The typical grain freighter of that period was 140 feet long and 36 feet wide. Big boat

B) It had one mast with a big square sail, and instead of what we think of as a rudder,

1) it steered with two paddles on the back part of the ship.

C) They were sturdy, but because of its design, it couldn't sail into the wind.

When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under the shelter of Crete off Salmone. Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

Fair Havens was not a great place.

A) Fair Havens was a small port town which made a boring place.

B) It must have been named by the Chamber of Commerce to try to get people to visit there.

C) Fair havens was not the kind of place - hard core seamen would want to spend the winter

D) It was now late in the sailing season.

The sailors knew they would not be able to reach Rome before winter.

A) They would have to winter somewhere. "But not Fair Havens," they must have said.

B) There is nothing to do here at all.

1) If they got stuck in Fair Havens, they knew it was going to be a long, hard, boring winter.

V.9 Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, October - the Day of atonement Paul advised them, saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives."

C) Paul was a seasoned seaman - who had traveled about 3500 miles in all his journeys by way of the sea.

V.11 Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul. And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, and winter there.

D) I don't think we should read too much into this: Who would you listen to seasoned Sailors -

1) or a Preacher/ Prisoner.

E) These men were about to find out they should have listened to Paul.

Everything we read here in the rest of Acts 27 could have been avoided - just listened to Paul

A) Sometimes we end up in a storm because of our own stupidity - other times it is the rebellion of others

Listen to wise counsel - GUT / When I was in college – I worked at the Sheraton Hotel in Newport Beach.

A) A buddy of mine – Todd L – also worked there - he had 2 day pass - Sheraton mission Bay.

B) One day – we **decided rent Catamaran** – The day we chose was really windy. 50 mph

1) You really want to go out? -

C) That should have been the first clue that this was not a good idea.

1) The 2nd clue was there were no other boats in the bay that day

D) But being two gung-ho college guys we responded **“Sure Why not it will be fun”**

So the guy at the counter calls out to the back - Hey Dave

A) I got a couple of guys here that want to take a Hobie Cat out

B) Dave emerges from the back and he looks like a cross between Johnny Depp as Jack Sparrow in Pirates....

1) And Brandon Fraser as George of the Jungle -

C) He says - you guys want to take a Cat out? - We nod and he says - Far out let's do this!

D) That should have been our 3rd clue this was not a good idea -

1) They are sending us out with Stoner dude.

E) We sent out - the Wind really fast - - easy to get the one side up
Crashed – boat – rescue.

F) We had no business being out on that day.

1) We will see from our story - this boat had no business being in the water either

V.14 But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon. Northeasterly Typhoon winds So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let her drive. And running under the shelter of an island called Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty. When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis Sands, they struck sail and so were driven. And

because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next day they lightened the ship. On the third day we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands. - lighten the ship **Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, - completely dark and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.**

This is looking like a Hopeless situation.

A) The worst kind of storms are the ones that leave you feeling hopeless

B) But it is often in our Hopeless moments that God shows up the strongest.

C) That is when we discover we have an ANCHOR in the midst of the storm

21 But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. 22 And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. 23 For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, 24 saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' 25 Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. 26 However, we must run aground on a certain island."

D) Here in V23-26 We are introduced to the 3 Strong Anchors we are to cling to in the midst of the storms of life

#1 The Strong Anchor of the presence of God.

A) God sends an angel to encourage Paul to not be afraid - I got you.

B) When we are in the midst of the storm - KNOW this you are never alone.

C) Many yrs ago when it was safer for kids to Roam - there was a little boy named Tony - he lived in a big City

Tony was in the 2nd grade and his mom was a little nervous about him walking to school by himself - 8 blocks away.

A) So she wanted to hire the teenage girl from across the street to walk Tony to school each day.

B)She was going to pay the girl 5 dollars a week to walk Tony to school in the mornings.

C)Tony Protested - Mom save your money - I am big enough to walk myself to school -

1)I promise to be careful - I won't stop and I will not talk to strangers -

D)After much pleading and begging -His mom agreed to let him do it by himself

A few years later at a family party - Tony now a 5th grader was bragging to his cousins about his independence

A)I have been walking to and from school by myself since the 2nd grade.

B)That is when his mom burst his bubble - "Did you really think you were alone?"

1)"Every morning when you left for school, I left with you. - I walked behind you all the way.

C)When you got out of school at 3:30 in the afternoon, I was there.

1) I always kept myself hidden, but I was there and I followed you all the way home.

2)I just wanted to be there in case you needed me.

So too - we are never alone! Jesus our good shepherd is always with us

A)We can say like the Psalmist -PSA 23 **Even when I am walking through the Valley of the Shadow of death - I will not fear - You are with me**

B)Remember when Jesus sent his Disciples out to cross the Sea of Galilee -

1)he went up on the Hilltop to pray?

C)From the Hilltop he had the perfect vantage point to watch over them

Sure enough the disciples end up in a storm

A)They were straining at rowing - fighting a wind in their face.

B)Jesus is Looking down - no doubt praying for them

C)The Bible tells us that Jesus is our High Priest who lives to make intercession for us.

1)Jesus is constantly praying for you

D)In that story with the Disciples - when the storm got so bad - Jesus shows up - walking on the water.

E)A Reminder that Storms are opportunities for God to reveal his Power and his Presence.

Remember the Promise of Isaiah 41:10

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

So the first Strong Anchor we have in the midst of the storm is The Anchor of God's presence

A)The 2nd Strong Anchor we have in the storm is the Strong Anchor of God's promise- , 24 saying, **'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar;**

B)Remember we saw back in Ch.23 when Paul was in prison - Jesus came to him -

C)23:11**"Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."**

D)Paul is perfectly in the will of God in the midst of the storm -

God had a plan to get Paul to Rome – but it was different from what the apostle imagined.

A)An illegal arrest in Jerusalem -- Roman and Jewish Trials – confinement in Caesarea for 2 years

B)A storm at sea that will eventually lead to a shipwreck

C)I guarantee you - this is not the way that Paul would have written the story -

But Paul's story was being scripted by God

A)And even in the midst of the storm - Paul was in the perfect will of God

B)The same thing is true of your life and my life, - many storms

C)Times where I was scratching my head - Lord this doesn't make sense - but I will trust you.

1)I will praise you in the storm

God had promised to get him to Rome -

A) And in the midst of the storm Paul is calmly and confidently anchored in the promise of God

B) Listen precious church - we need to be anchored in the promises of God

C) Promises like: *Isaiah 43:1-3*

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. 3 For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

The promise of Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

#3 The Strong Anchor of the Faithful performance of God. Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. 26 However, we must run aground on a certain island.”

A) Paul not only had the presence and promise of God to hold him -

B) But he also had the past performance of God to stand on.

C) God had been faithful to him - God had already seen him through many other storms in life.

D) Same is true in our lives - many things that in the moment don't make sense -

1) But as they say hindsight is 20/20

E) After the storm - it is easy to look back and see what God was doing - how he was preserving -

1) Some plan he was orchestrating

And even If you don't have a long history with God look back on -

A) You can look at the men and women of scripture - Men like Job –

B) What Job went through was a horrendous storm -

1) He lost so much - he was physically afflicted like no other

C) To the point where his wife - even suggested -

Just curse God and die

1) Let him put you out of your misery Job.

D) But at the end of the story - we see God abundantly supplied and restored Job!

1) Because God is faithful

We have story after story in the scriptures -

A) Where we see God coming through big time on behalf of his people.

B) We can stand in the midst of the storm holding on to **The Strong Anchor of the faithful performance of God.**

But there is one more thing we need to SEE today from this story

A) In order to stay Anchored in the Lord we have to cut away the escape routes.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ And they took soundings (long weighted line put out to see where the ocean floor was)

and found *it* to be twenty fathoms; 120 feet and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms. 90 feet

²⁹ Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come.

³⁰ And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, The front of the boat

These seasoned sailors knew things were not looking good- heading for disaster –

A) But their actions are a demonstration of selfishness and unbelief.

B) Instead of being concerned with the wellbeing of everyone else on board,

1) they thought only of themselves.

C) Whether these guys knew it or not God was in the place of **saving every life on that ship**

D)And Rather than being a part of what God was doing in saving

1)there was a small group who were only concerned about saving themselves.

“People that are running off to do their own thing WEAKEN the efforts of others involved in something that God is doing.”

A key insight whether these men knew it, or not, the ship was the SAFEST place to be.

A)Every natural instinct said that it wasn't - These guys were Sailors – they understood the sea

B)They knew that with each sounding – losing depth

1)They would soon run into Rocks –

C)Everything in them said – We are headed for trouble.

D)But God had given an assurance that He was going to take CARE of them!

When we are in the storm – our natural instincts will say – run – man the life boats – bail { ignore scripture

A)But the safest place to be is to stay in the boat

B)For these sailors that soon to be shipwrecked boat was the place where God's mercy would be found.

“Shipwrecked people have all that they need in order to be saved if they but believe and obey.”- Brian Bell.

³¹ Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, **“Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.”**

³² Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

³³ And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. **So sea sick - not eating**

³⁴ Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you.” ³⁵ And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. ³⁶ Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.

³⁷ And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship. ³⁸ So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.

Paul said, “If you jump ship, you'll lose your life.”

A)And the centurion, knowing how tempting it would be for the sailors to bail out, to jump ship, to give up,

B)Ordered the soldiers to cut the lines to the life boats so there would be no possibility of escape.

C)Maybe you are here today and you are thinking - “I haven't jumped ship.

1)I've only lowered a lifeboat over the side.

D)I'll give it three more months, or two more weeks, or one more year.”

1)But if you keep an escape option open in your mind, I guarantee you will end up using it.

Listen if you Think about divorce-

A)There is a good chance you will end up divorced

B)If you Think about other men or other women you wish you could be with -

1) because you feel trapped in the relationship you are in

C)You start thinking in that way - you will bail in the midst of the storm

1)and lose out on miracle God wants to do.

I know many couples in this church - who could have bailed - tempted to bail

A)But hung in there in their marriage - Anchored into JESUS

B)Experienced the faithful performance of God in bringing them out of the storm

C)Maybe the storm is at Work - you want to just bail - quit move on

1)But God hasn't given you the green light - hang in there. - Stayed Anchored

D)Believe that God is working!

Maybe it is ministry - feel like the wind is always in your face - running into a brick wall.

A)Lifeway research - 1700 pastors quit the ministry every month.

B)Serving and it is hard - Don't quit

No matter the storm - Over the years I have watched far too many people bail out in the midst of the storm

A)They suffer loss and heartache - that was far greater than what they were experiencing in the storm

B)You might be thinking - that is easy for you to say PR - you don't know the storm I am in right now.

1)You don't know how vehemently the wind is blowing, how violently the waves are pounding.

C)You just don't understand."

D)You might be right. I don't. But there is One who does.

E)Jesus - He went through the ultimate Storm - literally became sin for us

1)My God....

The Writer of Hebrews admonishes us to run our race with endurance - looking up to Jesus

A)Endured the cross - the shame for us

B)We can hang in there - because Jesus - Hung on the cross for us.

In 1902 a fire broke out suburban St Louis, in the home of an elderly woman. Asleep in the upstairs bedroom was her grandson, whom she tried to rescue before she died in the process.

A man outside heard the screams of the five-year-old boy, and found a way to climb hand-over-hand up a drainpipe, until he made it to the roof, broke through a window, and pulled the boy out to safety.

This story, which appeared in the St. Louis *Globe Herald*, generated quite a bit of interest in the orphaned boy. During the hearings that followed, a schoolteacher came forward and gave reasons why he felt he should be appointed the boy's guardian. So did a wealthy businessman, a minister, and several other upstanding people in the community.

The little boy, however, looked down and never raised his eyes—**until a man came through the back doors of the courtroom, walked up to him, and opened his hands.** The boy looked at the

charred and badly blistered hands of the stranger and jumped into his arms, saying, "This is my dad."

And the judge pounded the gavel and said, "So be it."

So, too, I'm asking you to look at the hands of One who loves you so much He absorbed the heat of hell to pull you out of eternal destruction.

A)I'm asking you to listen to this One who says, "Trust Me. Don't jump ship, or all will be lost."

B)Precious people, Jesus will come in a way that will blow your mind if you don't jump ship.

C)So Cut the ropes. Let the escape routes go

D)Cling to Jesus - trust in Jesus!

Be encouraged by the promise of His presence

A)Be encouraged today by the trustworthiness of his Character Trust him!

C)Let's see how this ends up -

39 When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. 40 And they let go the anchors and left them in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. 41 But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves. 42 And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. 43 But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, 44 and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

D)Next week we are going to pick up with Paul on the Island of Malta -

1)God has a plan to use him there as well.