Getting the Nod:

Opening Video: Invincible

NLT | Jn 16:33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

Adversity comes in many shapes and sizes. They show up at the most inconvenient times and disrupt our lives… and the frustrating thing is that these storms come without an invitation. One-minute life is good and the next minute we find ourselves tossed around like a ragdoll in a tornado.

For some of us it seems like one storm after another… we wake up in a storm… we find a storm waiting for us at work… we come home to family tsunamis… and we go to bed in a storm. They can be:

- Physical storms: Illnesses and those brought on by stress. Weakness that holds us back.
- Mental storms: A lack of answers for money problems or how to fix something that seems impossible. Rejection and loneliness.
- And emotional storms: A marriage storm. A collapsing fear about someone we love or hate.

We can even experience storms in our church family. You can feel forgotten in the middle of a large gathering of people! Or sometimes people misunderstand us and what we’re going through.

**Transitional Statement:** But the good news of the Gospel story is that God has provided for us an anchor…as a child of God you can be anchored in the middle of your storms!! The purpose of an anchor is to keep a ship safe and secure at a desired location or to help control the ship during bad weather. However, to accomplish these vital purposes, just having an anchor is not enough. The anchor must be solid, dependable, and used properly at the right time and place. WE NEED ANCHORS TO DO THE SAME IN OUR LIVES!

Connecting Us:

There’s a storm found in Acts 27 that needed anchors to save lives. Before we read it, here is the Back Story:

- **Paul is on his way to Rome to stand trial** before Augustus Caesar. He has taken his Roman citizenship to a whole new level with a chance to witness to the top of Roman culture.
- **In route to that trial, Paul and those escorting him… as well as the ship’s crew were at sea.** The route that they were traveling was normally closed for winter travel… and Paul warned them about it and spoke of certain disaster.
- **Sure enough, a storm hits hard,** and the ship is destined to be shipwrecked. As they sailed, they could no longer see the sun or stars which were their main source of navigation.
- **In other words, they are lost and are being tossed around like a feather in a wind storm.**
- **It looked bad for Paul and the others.** The storm was so treacherous that the crew running the ship gave up all hope of being saved.

**Transitional Statement:** Let’s pick up at verse 14 in Chapter 27.
The terrible storm raged for many days, blotting out the sun and the stars, until at last all hope was gone. Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, “Men, you should have listened to me in the first place and not left Crete. You would have avoided all this damage and loss. But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down. For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, and he said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What’s more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.’ So take courage! For I believe God. It will be just as he said. But we will be shipwrecked on an island.”

About midnight on the fourteenth night of the storm, as we were being driven across the Sea of Adria, the sailors sensed land was near. They dropped a weighted line and found that the water was 120 feet deep. But a little later they measured again and found it was only 90 feet deep. At this rate they were afraid we would soon be driven against the rocks along the shore, so they threw out four anchors from the back of the ship and prayed for daylight.

In this storm, they were so afraid that they threw our four anchors to stabilize the ship and save themselves from the storm. Why anchors? Because an anchor seeks a secure foundation far below the terror of the danger above the water! If that foundation is weak… the anchor doesn’t do any good!!

If you are in a storm today, learn from Paul’s story by dropping four anchors into the most secure foundation you can find… God Himself and His Storm-Proofing Manual… His Word!! Let’s consider some truth about personal storms...

The Truth of Some Storms:

1. Some storms could’ve been avoided.
   - NLT | Ac 27:10 “Men,” he said, “I believe there is trouble ahead if we go on—shipwreck, loss of cargo, and danger to our lives as well.”
   - Paul tried to warn these men about the coming disaster... and they ignored his warning. They knew the potential for shipwreck was possible... but they still went anyway.
   - Application: How many times has a parent or grandparent or a loved one told us that we should stop traveling the path that we are on? It could be a path of sin and temptation; or a path of poor associations; or a path of irresponsibility and bad decisions! Then we find out that those who loved us were full of wisdom and truth.
   - Some storms could’ve been avoided if we would’ve heeded the Word of God and those who warned us.
   - Illustration of Tori and her crushed teeth in Raleigh, North Carolina.

2. Some ships can lose all means of navigation.
   - NLT | Ac 27:20 The terrible storm raged for many days, blotting out the sun and the stars, until at last all hope was gone.
   - As they sailed, they could no longer see the sun and stars, which were the means of their direction. So, the storm created a sense of blindness... with no ability to navigate through it and out of it.
   - Application: Every personal storm has a cloud of darkness connected to it. The longer we ride in the storm, the greater possibility of losing our bearings... and reach the place where we can’t know which way to go.
• What a horrible place to be… lost and drifting without a clear plan out. That’s when a firm foundation is needed most.

• **Illustration of boating 50mph after dark on the Tennessee River.**

3. **Some storms leave us only with hopelessness.**

• **All hope was gone.** The crew had given up and gave no thought to anything but death.

• **Application:** Somebody here today has come to the point of giving up and believes that life will get no better than this. **But I have some good news...**

4. **God can always be found in our storms.**

• **Look at Paul’s response to their hopelessness because of a visit from an Angel that told him...** NLT | Ac 27:24 ... ‘Don’t be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What’s more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.’

• **Application:** When things go wrong as sometimes they do and the road you’re traveling seems all up hill; when funds are low and debts are high; when you have more of a sigh than a smile; rest if you must, but don’t give up...

• NLT | Ps 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.

• NLT | Jn 16:33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

**Transitional Statement:** In an effort to stabilize their ship, the crew threw out four anchors to find a firm foundation that would keep them from shipwreck... and as we conclude this morning... allow me to give you those four anchors to stabilize yourself in your storm ...

**Our Response to God’s Word:**

**The Four Anchors to Drop in Our Storms:**

1. **The anchor of assurance.**

• NLT | Heb 10:19-22 And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. 20 By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. 21 And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, 22 let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

• “Assurance” here actually is rendered “certain confidence”. **To better translate it, “Because of the blood of Jesus and the tearing of the veil, we can be certainly confident that Christ is our firm foundation!!! Throw out the anchor of assurance.**

2. **The anchor of courage.**

• The author of Hebrews uses the word “boldness” to describe our access into God’s Most Holy Presence. Another rendering of that word is “to be fearlessly free” because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

• For those who have found Christ as their Savior, He has done a powerful work in our lives that causes us to fully trust Him...
3. **The anchor of timing.** (Night to Day by Jonathan Cahn)

- NLT / Heb. 10:21 “... we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house...”
- In Jonathan Cahn’s book, “The Book of Mysteries”, he asks the question, “Which came first, the night or the day?” Most believers would stand firm on the fact that the day was first... but they would be wrong. Genesis 1:5 tells us...
- NLT | Ge 1:5 God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.
- Now, what’s that got to do with timing? Light comes after darkness. Before the morning comes with its light... we must be willing to first experience darkness!! **God’s perfect timing is often revealed after a storm’s darkness!!!**  **So, trust Him in the storm!!**
- **Throw out the anchor of trusting God’s timing!!**

4. **The anchor of a firm foundation.**

- NLT / 127:24-25 “God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.’ So, take courage! For I believe God.”
- We will find the firm foundation in trusting God and everything about His plan.
- **A firm foundation in the Word of God:** NKJV | Ps 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.
- **A firm foundation in promised victory:** NLT | Ro 8:37 No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.
- **A firm foundation in God’s plan for our lives:** NLT | Ro 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

**Transition:** Let me close with this...

**Drawing the Net:**

**Illustration Hope Needs a FOUNDATION:** There’s a story From Parade magazine about a self-made millionaire, who greatly changed the lives of a sixth-grade class in East Harlem. This man had been asked to speak to a class of 59 sixth graders. What could he say to inspire these students, most of whom would drop out of school? He wondered how he could get these predominantly black and Puerto Rican children even to look at him. Scrapping his notes, he decided to speak to them from his heart. "Stay in school," he admonished, "and I'll help pay the college tuition for every one of you." At that moment the lives of these students changed. For the first time they had hope. Said one student, "I had something to look forward to, something waiting for me. It was a golden feeling." Nearly 90 percent of that class went on to graduate from high school. 90% trusted him and found him to be real and authentic. Don’t quit! Drop your anchors in God’s FIRM FOUNDATION!

**How important is a foundation?** **Ask the atheist Jean-Paul Sartre:** HOPE NEEDS A FOUNDATION - A little over a month before he died, the famous atheist Jean-Paul Sartre, when
trying to resist strong feelings of despair, would often say to himself, "I know I shall die in hope." Then in profound sadness, he would add, "But hope needs a foundation."

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**The Pastoral Prayer of Challenge**

(OPEN UP THE ALTAR: Make the congregation aware of the altar time)

Truths to pray about:

- For those of us who are in storms of our own making... forgive us and save us.
- For those of us who feel lost and almost blind to how to they will ever get out of this storm... provide light from your Son.
- For those who have a strong sense of hopelessness... may we cling to your peace.
- For those in storms now... help them to see the outstretched arms of God who is right there with them.

Help us to drop our anchors into your foundation with assurance; courage; and trust for your timing.

- For you are worthy; and faithful; and loving; and trustworthy.

   **Join with the Praise Team and Let’s close off with this song...**