

# Anchored in the Deep

- Acts 27 -

2 Timothy 4:7-8

February 20, 2016

## Today

I love a good thunderstorm. We don't get really good thunderstorms here in California. Michigan, now they have GOOD thunderstorms. Towering clouds, lightening, thunder, sheets of rain – the power of it is something to behold.

Today we are going to talk about a very different kind of storm which the New Living Translation calls "A wind of Typhoon strength".

Paul has requested an audience with Caesar, so off to Rome he is sent - in chains. While waiting for another ship, Paul along with Luke and Aristarchus, were allowed to stay with believers in town. This permission was greatly appreciated By Paul because he was in poor health. (Acts of the Apostles)

Winter was coming and once they arrived at Fair Havens they waited for some time, hoping for favorable winds. Sailing at that time of year was dangerous. The matter was discussed and because Paul was respected by both sailors and soldiers, he was consulted. Without hesitation, Paul advised them to remain where they were. Paul's counsel was disregarded at it was decided to go forward to Rome. Paul had no choice; he must go on this perilous journey.

Not long into their journey and as Paul predicted, they were in danger of losing not only their cargo but their lives as well. The violence and power of the storm terrified even the most seasoned of sailors. There was nothing to be done except hang on.

**Point 1: Storms happen.** You don't have to look for storms, storms find you. There is no way to avoid storms.

Christians encounter "storms" too. We really do a great disservice if we leave the impression in our preaching or witnessing that becoming a Christian will automatically exempt a person from experiencing troubles or difficulties in life. Job said, "A man is born unto trouble" – and that truth applies to everyone. Not even Christian "super faith" can change that truth. When we are converted, Christ brings many precious gifts into our lives, but a life free from trouble is not one of them.

Paul is the poster-child for experiences in trouble. Very few of us can rattle off the kind of trouble list Paul shares in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

- **2 Corinthians 11:18-28** - Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. <sup>19</sup> For you put up with fools gladly, since you *yourselves* are wise! <sup>20</sup> For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours *you*, if one takes *from you*, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. <sup>21</sup> To *our* shame, I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold -- I speak foolishly -- I am bold also. <sup>22</sup> Are they Hebrews? So *am* I. Are they Israelites? So *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So *am* I. <sup>23</sup> Are they ministers of Christ? -- I speak as a fool -- I *am* more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. <sup>24</sup> From the Jews **five times I received forty stripes minus one.** <sup>25</sup> **Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;** <sup>26</sup> **in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;** <sup>27</sup> **in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness** -- <sup>28</sup> besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

Jesus plainly state, "In this world you WILL have troubles, but take heart, **I have overcome the world.**" John 16:33.

This world and the trouble in it is not the end of the story!!!! Storms do not have the final say!! Too often we fail to remember that this world is not the final destination for those who Love Jesus.

**Point 2: For the Christian Storms have purpose**

- We encounter storms of our own making,
- We encounter storms created by other people (circumstances beyond our control). Storms that aren't really ours but we are caught up in them.
- We encounter storms simply because we live on planet earth

For the Christian storms have a purpose.

- **Ellen White {CC – Ch. 88}**: God had promised to be their God, to take them to Himself as a people, and to lead them to a large and good land; **but they were ready to faint at every obstacle encountered in the way to that land.** In a marvelous manner He had brought them out from their bondage in Egypt, that He might elevate and ennoble them and make them a praise in the earth. But it was necessary for them to encounter difficulties and to endure privations. God was bringing them from a state of degradation and fitting them to occupy an honorable place among the nations and to receive important and sacred trusts. Had they possessed faith in Him, in view of all that He had wrought for them, they would cheerfully have borne inconvenience, privation, and even real suffering; **but they were unwilling to trust the Lord any further than they could witness the continual evidences of His power.** They forgot their bitter service in Egypt. They forgot the goodness and power of God displayed in their behalf in their deliverance from bondage. They forgot how their children had been spared when the destroying angel slew all the first-born of Egypt. They forgot the grand exhibition of divine power at the Red Sea. They forgot that while they had crossed safely in the path that had been opened for them, the armies of their enemies, attempting to follow them, had been overwhelmed by the waters of the sea. **They saw and felt only their present inconveniences and trials;** and instead of saying, "God has done great things for us; whereas we were slaves, He is making of us a great nation," they talked of the hardness of the way, and wondered when their weary pilgrimage would end.

**What was the purpose of the desert experience?** Even though these former slaves longed for freedom, they had become comfortable in their situation and now they didn't know how to be free. God was bringing them from a state of degradation and fitting them to occupy an honorable place among the nations and to receive important and sacred trusts

**What's the purpose of the storms we encounter?** Many look back to the Israelites, and marvel at their unbelief and murmuring, feeling that they themselves would not have been so ungrateful; but when their faith is tested, even by little trials, they manifest no more faith or patience than did ancient Israel. **When brought into strait places, they murmur at the process by which God has chosen to purify them.** Though their present needs are supplied, many are unwilling to trust God for the future, and they are in constant anxiety lest poverty shall come upon them, and their children shall be left to suffer. Some are always anticipating evil or magnifying the difficulties that really exist, so that their eyes are blinded to the many blessings which demand their gratitude. {PP 292-293}

If I am to be a citizen of heaven. My self-centeredness, pride, greed – every single evil tendency of my heart must be transformed. I cannot be a citizen of heaven in my present condition. God has promised to transform me into His image – His love, His kindness, His longsuffering, His patience. How do you think HE accomplishes that? By osmosis? Nope! Circumstances. He uses the storms and trials and troubles of life to change me.

### Point 3: Trust in a God I cannot see

As established in 2 Corinthians, if anyone understands trouble and the storms of life, its Paul! BUT trouble couldn't keep Paul down. He refused to be defeated by trouble. Trouble couldn't detour him from serving God and fulfilling his mission. Paul had a deep and abiding faith in God. Regardless of circumstances Paul KNEW God was there and involved – Paul knew he wasn't alone and he could trust his FUTURE to the One who had been so faithful in the PAST.

Paul understood that we are fragile, but that God uses our fragility to shine through to an equally broken world. Paul knew that it was not about him, it was all about God:

- **2 Corinthians 4:6-9** - For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in **earthen vessels** that the excellence of the power **may be of God and not of us.** <sup>8</sup> *We are* hard pressed on every side, **yet not crushed; we are** perplexed, **but not in despair;** <sup>9</sup> persecuted, **but not forsaken;** struck down, **but not destroyed** –

Paul was content regardless of the circumstances he found himself in:

- **Philippians 4:11-13** - Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: <sup>12</sup> I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things, I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
- **Hebrews 13:5-6** - *Let your conduct be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." <sup>6</sup> So we may boldly say: "The LORD *is* my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

**How do you think Paul came to such a place in his life where he could trust God in every circumstance?** Paul had experience!!! Paul took God at His word.

- **Psalm 34:8** - O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!
- **Isaiah 55:8-9** - "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup> "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.
- **Joshua 1:9** - Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.
- **Matthew 11:28-30** - Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.

- **Jeremiah 29:11-13** – For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> 'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> 'And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart.
- **Romans 8:28-39** - And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; <sup>30</sup> and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. <sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; <sup>34</sup> who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup> But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul had settled the question long ago. God is trustworthy. Period.

- **Acts 27:20-25** - Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us*, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> **"And now I urge you to take heart**, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. <sup>23</sup> "For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, <sup>24</sup> "saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' <sup>25</sup> "Therefore take heart, men, **for I believe** God that it will be just as it was told me.

The truths we hold about God (his intent) will influence our ability and even our desire to have faith and trust in Him

Do you believe that what God says about Himself is true? More importantly, do you believe they are true for you?

Do you put conditions on your trust?

- God is worthy of my trust so long as nothing happens to me that will make me uncomfortable.
- God is worthy of my trust so long as I get what I want when I want it.
- God is worthy of my trust so long as I get the answer I want.
- God is worthy of my trust so long as He places no expectations on me.
- God is worthy of my trust so long as I have all the answers ahead of time.
- God is worthy of my trust so long as He doesn't ask me to go to Africa.
- God is worthy of my trust so long as.....

What happens if you don't get the answer you want or you get no answer at all? What if you have to go through the storm, when you'd prefer to go around it? Is God still worthy of your trust? How you answer that question will determine how far God will be able to get in your life.

Great preacher, you're thinking. Thanks for all the great advice, but how do I get there? I'm not Paul for crying out loud!!! He is a great man of faith and I quake in my shoes when a light breeze blows my way – forget about a typhoon!!

- **Oswald Chambers:** "Faith is *deliberate* confidence in the character of God whose ways you may not understand at the time"
- **Corrie Ten Boom:** "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a *known* God"

How do you come to know God? There is no secret handshake, no 12-step program, no mystery to a life of faith and trust.

Everyday get up and be **deliberate** in your relationship with God - you will not learn trust and faith by osmosis. You can't depend on someone else. You have to choose to trust when the evidence says run. Choose to seek God even when you don't feel like it. Seek Him in prayer (personal and corporate prayer), in Bible study (personal and corporate Bible study),

- **Hebrews 12:1** - Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance (every pre-conceived idea, every expectation, every fear) and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> **fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

Reflect on His words:

- I am the bread of life
- I am the water of life
- I am the light of the world

- I am the door
- I am the way, the truth and the life
- I will give you rest
- I will not cast you out

Reflect on His life. Reflect on His death. Reflect on His resurrection. Reflect on His heavenly ministry. **Reflect. On. Jesus.**

The secret to Paul's unwavering faith in the face of the very real threat to his life was **his eyes were fixed on Jesus**. He knew he was not alone and that no matter the outcome he was secure in the hands of Jesus.

And the conclusion of the story?

- **Acts 27:42-44** - And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. <sup>43</sup> 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, <sup>44</sup> and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. **And so, it was that they all escaped safely to land.**

Today, friends you may be in the midst of a storm or a storm is brewing on the horizon, but you are not alone. The same God Who said to Paul, do not be afraid, is beside you. He wants you to rest in Him. He wants you trust Him.