

Anchors in the Storm - Acts 27:1-44

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[0 : 0 0] Acts chapter 27 verse 1. And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius.

And embarking in a ship of Adrimidium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica.

The next day, we put in at Sidon, and Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for. And putting out to sea from there, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us.

And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Solicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. There, the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board.

We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Sniatus. And as the wind did not allow us to go farther, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmoni.

[1 : 0 0] Coasting along it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fairhaven, near which was the city of Lycia. Verse nine, since much time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, because even the fast was already over, Paul advised them saying, "Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.

But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and the owner of the ship than he did to what Paul said. And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete facing both Southwest and Northwest and spend the winter there.

Now when the South wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete close to the shore. But soon a tempestuous wind called the North Easter struck down from the land.

And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. Running under the lee of a small island called Couda, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat.

After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then fearing that they would run aground on certis, they lowered the gear and thus they were driven along.

[2 : 2 2] Since we were violently stormed tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. And on the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.

When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned. Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me "and not have set sail from Crete "and incurred this injury and loss.

"Yet now I urge you to take heart "for there will be no loss of life among you "but only of the ship. "For this very night, there stood before me an angel of God "to whom I belong and whom I worship.

"And he said, "Do not be afraid, Paul. "You must stand before Caesar. "And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you. "So take heart, men, for I have faith in God, "that it will be exactly as I have been told.

"But we must run aground on some island." Verse 27. When the 14th night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight, the sailors suspected that they were nearing land.

[3 : 32] So they took a sounding and found 20 fathoms. A little further on, they took a sounding again and found 15 fathoms. And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come.

And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship and had lowered the ship's boat into the sea under the pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.' Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go." As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the 14th day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing.

Therefore I urge you to take some food, for it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you." And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat.

Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. We were in all 276 persons in the ship. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea.

Now, when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore. So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea.

[4 : 55] At the same time, loosening the ropes, they tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresole to the wind, they made for the beach. But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground.

The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf. The soldier's plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape.

But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and to make for land. And the rest on planks were on pieces of the ship.

And so it was that all were brought safely to land. Thank you, Dr. Rieland. To visually get an estimation of that journey, if you begin in what is Israel over there on the far right, you will see them departing Caesarea.

They take one ship with the blue line, and then they change ships in Myra to a larger Egyptian freighter, carrying a grain ship, like a barge, to go the rest of the journey, because it was a larger ship.

[6 : 11] And so then they do that. And the orange line is where they took this journey, where they encountered a lot of hardship, much hardship, taking shelter from whatever islands they can get to buffer the wind and the waves.

And they land, ultimately, they run aground at Malta there, and the end of the orange line. And that is a visual of our text today, of where we took.

But I wanted to talk today about how Paul took courage in the midst of a storm. And there were several reasons that Paul accounts as to why he had such courage.

I don't know about you, but if I were on that journey, I don't know if I would have been that calm. The last part of it, from Fairhaven to Malta, you're being buffeted by a storm for 14 days.

And so let's look at, first of all, who the people are on this ship. And so we notice in verse 1, let's introduce the players who are in this account here. There's a Centurion whose name is Julius.

[7 : 24] He's found in verse 1. There is, secondly, and so he is the Roman guard that has this prisoner whose name is Paul, the apostle Paul.

He's under guard by a Roman Centurion named Julius. Second person we understand that is on this boat is his name is Aristarchus. And he is this amazing friend that we found in Acts chapter 19.

You may remember him. He was seized by the angry rioters at Ephesus, and he was put into that large amphitheater, and he was charged with a charge.

And he has been accompanying Paul. We find in Acts chapter 20 that he also is accompanying Paul with this treasury, this offering that has been taken by the church in Asia.

And he's bringing this offering with Paul to the church at Jerusalem. And he accompanies Paul this whole time from Asia Minor down to Jerusalem.

[8 : 22] He is still with Paul. And in Colossians he is found also in chapter 4 verse 10, where he is ministering to Paul at Rome.

And so he completes this journey. We know he will end up completing this journey all the way to Rome. And he is a good ministry friend and a colleague. And what more do you want to go on a journey with than a good colleague and ministry friend?

And Aristarchus is that to the apostle Paul. And then you'll notice in verse 3 and in verse 2, but in verse 3 we read the word we. And the next day we put in at Sidon.

Who is the we, the author of the book of Acts? This is Luke. So we know that Luke and Aristarchus are companions of Paul on this journey, making their way to Rome.

These are three people who it's important to kind of note who are taking this journey with you. And I love that Aristarchus and Luke are good friends of Paul, ministry colleagues who accompany Paul on his journey to Rome, where he's going to stand before Caesar.

[9 : 35] They are willing to go on hazardous, uncertain, uncomfortable voyages. And that demonstrates their love and concern for this man, Paul. They are companions in the gospel and good friends.

Next I want us to note the last part of their journey especially, they were buffeted by a storm the whole way. If you read the account, it's a long, arduous journey.

But the last part from Fairhaven's to Malta is 14 days. And the storm is some fear. Imagine having courage in a moment like this, where the sound of the wind is deafening, the waves are crashing over and onto the hull, hull of the ship, and that becomes unnerving.

The storm blocks the sun by day and obscures the stars by night. Navigation is impossible. Haven't eaten, hunger pains set in, waves are constantly beating the hull, and measures are being taken to strengthen the hull.

They're putting ropes around the hull and tightening it down. In all, there's 276 passengers. They're all wet. Waves are crashing over.

[10 : 51] It's cold. It's late October into November because we read in verse 9 that the fast, the day of atonement, has already passed. And that's a fall celebration, a fall feast of Israel.

And so we know that that has already passed. And so Paul, it's one of the reasons why Paul doesn't want to set out. It's like we're heading into winter here. The storms are going to get worse. Let's not go.

Let's not do this. In verse 20, all hope of survival is gone when it reads, when neither the sun nor stars appeared for many days and no small tempest lay on us.

I love how God's word, no small tempest. It was a big storm. It was a big storm. And all hope of being saved was at last abandoned.

No one on the ship expected to live. And what I find interesting here is in that setting, how the lowest position on the ship, Paul the prisoner, under Roman guard, becomes the most trusted voice over the ship's captain, over the ship's owner that we read in verse 11.

[12 : 08] He becomes this trusted voice. And how is it the huge waves that are assaulting the ship? Paul's soul is like a glassy, windless pond.

How does he become? And how does he remain so calm? May I suggest to you that Paul was anchored in a way the rest of those crewmates knew nothing about.

And every Christian can find courage in the midst of life's storms if he or she uses proper anchors. And so today, if you find yourself in an uncertain time where life circumstances seem to be out of control, this message is for us today.

And Paul possessed courage. So the first thing I want us to note is how did Paul do this? First thing I want us to note is that Paul was certain of God's presence.

Look with me in verse 23. For this very night, Paul is speaking to his shipmates. For this very night there stood before me an angel of whom God, of whom I belong to, and whom I worship.

[13 : 20] An angel had visited him. He was certain of God's presence. Why? Many reasons, but he had a specific reason at this very time because an angel had come to him.

God had not abandoned Paul. He was sent as a messenger. He was told he was going to make it to Rome and proclaim the gospel before Caesar. And he was assured of God's presence.

And let's first talk about the value of God's presence. You may remember with me after the Golden Calf incident in the Old Testament, after the breaking of the two tablets that the 10 commandments were written on, after that event, in Exodus 33, Moses was told to depart.

And they were to go to a land that God had given them. They were going to this promised land. And they were going to drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Parasites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

But God said that he would send an angel to lead them. But he said this to Moses, but I will not go with you.

[14 : 35] Lord was disappointed with Israel. And Moses then puts a tent of meeting out so the encampment of Israel was here, the mountain was there, and in between the two was Moses.

And he created a tent called the tent of meeting. And he would meet with the Lord there in that tent. And one day in that tent of meeting, God is talking to Moses.

And it records this, that God spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks to a friend. So in this tent of meeting, amongst the disappointment of the Lord toward the children of Israel, Moses is meeting with the Lord face to face as a man speaks to a friend.

And on one occasion in the tent of meeting outside the camp, the cloud descended on the tent, and the conversation is recorded. And in that conversation, Moses pleads with the Lord and listened to this plea.

If your presence, O Lord, will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. That Moses, the Lord, Moses pleading with the Lord, listen, I know you said you're gonna send us an angel, and we're gonna go take the land with this angel that you've given us and drive out the enemies of the people that you have of there.

[15 : 52] But I don't wanna go. If you don't go with us, Lord, I don't wanna go. Your presence means more to me than just your power with that angel.

Lord, I don't wanna just your commandments to lead us. I don't want just your provisions to be with us. I don't want just your power demonstrated on our behalf.

Lord, I don't want just one of your emissaries like an angel to go with us. Lord, I want you, you to go with us. I want your presence, not just your provision, not just your protection.

I want you. Don't send us unless you go. And the Oral, ultimately the Lord says, I will go with you.

And Acts chapter one, verse eight. So imagine, there's this greatness of this task to go take the land. Believers in Jesus Christ have a great task.

[16 : 57] What is our task? It sounds like this. You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the world.

Imagine the greatness of the task to go to the ends of the world, to make the gospel known to the most unreached, to sharing the gospel, and we're sharing the gospel wherever he has planted you in your neighborhood, at your work with your family, colleagues, friends.

There's a great task, and it's impossible without his presence. That's why I listened carefully to that verse. I omitted a part that is so critical, but now I'm going to read it.

And you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. I'm with you.

And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the world. But don't go anywhere. Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait until the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

[18 : 01] I'm going with you. My presence is with you. It's even more clear in Matthew 28. All authority, Jesus is saying, all authority under heaven and earth has been given to me.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you.

And then oftentimes, we stop there. We end memorizing the verse there. There's the great commission. But I plead with you to memorize one more verse.

The last verse says, and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Here's this great task.

Here's this great assignment he's given us to make disciples proclaim the gospel. And he doesn't just promise an angel. He doesn't just promise his protection.

[19 : 01] He doesn't just promise his provision for you. He says, don't go anywhere. Wait till the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And lo, I am with you always, even at the end of the age.

My presence goes with you. So how in the world do we have such courage in the midst of life storms? And in the midst of this great task, the presence of the Lord.

The presence of the Lord. Today, this week, Tyler and Karris landed in Mexico to attend RADIUS, the Mission Training Center, and prepared themselves to invest their lives, the rest of their lives, to reach an unreached people group.

Danny has gone and she has returned. And she is in the final stages of support raising before she departs for that same task to reach the most unreached. But wherever you are planted in your school, your neighborhood, your friends, the gym, the workplace, you have the same assignment to make disciples.

The task is great. In fact, the task is impossible. But the Lord promises his presence. Behold, I will be with you always. Paul was anchored in God's presence.

[20 : 22] Listen how God's presence has comforted him in the times past. We read in Acts chapter 18, do not be afraid, but go on and speaking and do not be silent.

And then the Lord says, for I am with you, Paul. And no one will attack you or harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people. In Acts chapter 23, it says, Cessarea, Christ appeared to Paul and he says, take courage for as you have testified to the facts of me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify to me in Rome.

And then lastly, the writer of Hebrews says, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. I love that we have the assurance of God's presence in the midst of life's storms and in midst of an impossible task.

We have the presence of the Lord. And secondly, Paul was certain of God's ownership. Read with me in verse 23, for this very night there stood before me an angel of God whom I belong.

There appeared before me an angel of God to whom I belong. The God of this angel, I belong to that angel. Paul possessed courage because he was certain of God's ownership.

[21 : 44] And you say, well, Scott, how in does Scripture tell us or inform us how and which it is that we belong to the Lord? I would argue like a bride belongs to a bridegroom.

And song of Solomon 2.16, it says this, my beloved is mine and I am his. In fact, the Bible often uses the intimacies between a husband and wife to illustrate our union with the Lord.

In Ephesians 5, Paul's description of marriage, the marriage relationship concludes by saying this, this mystery is profound. And I am saying it refers to Christ in the church.

This mystery is the mystery of marriage, husband and wife. And he says, I am saying that it refers to Christ in the church. So we belong to the Lord like a bride belongs to the bridegroom.

Second, we belong to the Lord like a sheep to the shepherd. This is perhaps the most exalted in personal ways. Jesus says, I am the good shepherd.

[22 : 38] I know my own and my own know me. Just as the father knows me and I know the father, I lay down my life for my sheep in John chapter 10. And like a child belongs to his father.

Alan Redpath is a pastor of Britain. He's the pastoral dean of Caponry Bible School who died in 1989. He was a wonderful man from all the things that I read and I'm remiss that I never had the chance to meet him.

But one morning his mother, the mother of the house, his wife said to the two daughters, hey girls, go get dad for breakfast. And he was up in his office studying.

And so the two girls stammer up the stairs to go get dad, to get Alan. And the eldest daughter was older of course. And so she made it up the flight of stairs without problem.

The younger girl had to climb the stairs with her hands and knees because she wasn't quite tall enough. But she made, she ascended the flight of stairs, made it into the room. And her older sister said to the younger sister upon her lateness getting to the room to get dad.

[23 : 52] She says to her, the older sister to the younger sister, she says, I have already told daddy breakfast is ready. And besides, I have all of daddy. Now that pronouncement was taken pretty hard by the younger sister and tears began to flow down her face.

And Alan took the youngest daughter on his knee and just held her for a while. And then the younger sister smirked. And she said to the oldest daughter, you might have all of daddy, but daddy has all of me.

The apostle Paul was his father's possession and the truth so permeated his inner being that he describes God as the God to whom I belong.

This is a word to the fathers in the room that we have an incredible privilege to communicate to our children the kind of love that God has for his.

And may we live into that as fathers. And lastly, we belong to God because he chose and he bought us.

[25 : 04] And encouraging the Ephesian elders on his way to Jerusalem, the apostle Paul says this to the Ephesian elders, pay careful attention to yourselves and to the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

The church of Jesus Christ has been bought by the blood of Christ and that which is his own. Secondly, in 2 Corinthians we read this, do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within whom you have from God?

You are not your own. You have been bought with the price. And that price is the sinless life sacrificed to death shedding his blood on your behalf.

And his name is Jesus Christ. He bought us. He chose us and he bought us. And Paul traced his great possession, God's possession of Paul, not to the fact that God is creator.

This could easily be my mistake. I could say, well, yeah, I belong to God because God created me. While that is true, Paul doesn't just stop there at yes, God has created me, but God chose me and paid a high price for me, dying for my sin.

[26 : 33] And so Paul can say in verse 23, for this very night there stood before me an angel of God to whom I belong. Paul possessed courage in the midst of a storm because he knew that God had chose him and he bought him with a price.

He was God's ownership. Third reason we come to here is that Paul is certain of the one whom he worships and he serves. Also in verse 23, the bottom line says, the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, the one whom I worship.

This word for worship communicates also a word for service. He's the one who I worship, he's the one whom I serve. Paul is commissioned into the service of God and he knows it.

I serve and I worship the Lord. And I want to contrast two people here. There are two people on the Mediterranean Sea.

One century earlier, let's go to Jonah. Jonah had no such anchor for his soul to find courage in. He was the reluctant prophet of God.

[27 : 48] He was not certain whom he served. Should Jonah serve himself or the God most high? What he thought, he wanted to serve himself, which he thought was right, not to go to the people of Nineveh, to the Assyrians and preach repentance to them.

He was not going to do that. He was not wanting to serve the Lord. In contrast to Paul's witness to the Gentiles on the ship, it's interesting to watch the two different accounts.

Jonah's account of the people on the ship and Paul's account. What's interesting is Jonah's account, his shipmates reproved him and Paul's shipmates received him.

All those who are in Christ who consciously serve him, the best they can experience God's sustaining assurance. This is one of God's glorious gifts to those who seek the Lord and Paul knew it to the fullest.

Paul was certain of the one whom he serves. Paul was certain of the one whom he worships. If you serve or worship anyone else, you will fail.

[29 : 05] If you esteem anything or anyone else over the Lord, they will fail you. You will fail yourself. Others will fail you. But the Lord, his ways cannot be thwarted.

He never fails. Paul knew whom he worshiped. He knew whom he served. And Paul derived his courage in part knowing just whom it was he serves.

An application for us today, we all serve somebody. Who are you serving? Who is it that you wake up each morning and serve?

Who is it that you wake up and worship? How is your courage enlarged or diminished by whom it is that you serve?

It was interesting. I overheard a comment by Pastor Eric and he and I share something in common.

[30 : 05] Sometimes I wonder just who it is that we serve and there was a time in my life where I just could not quite wrap my mind who God is.

And God used a book, a human author, J.I. Packer, knowing God. It's a historical book. And that book, this God used this book, both in Pastor Eric and my life, to cultivate an affection for the Lord, to see for who he is and desire to know him more that drove us to God's word, to then read God's word.

And if today you may feel stuck and you say, I don't know. I want to know the Lord better. May I submit to you this book?

To articulate who God is, to have confidence in him that may drive you to an affection for God's word. Why?

Do you know the one to whom you serve? Do you know the one whom you worship? Paul did. What I ended up doing is looking at Scripture and just looking at all the ways that the Lord describes himself or others ascribe to the Lord.

[31 : 20] So let me just read, and I only made it through a portion of God's word. We could go on and on. This is probably only a spoonful worth of descriptors, but listen to what others in God's word say, who God is.

He is God. He is Jesus. He is Creator. He is the most high God, the Lord Almighty, God of eternity, the ancient of days, the God who will provide, the God who heals, the God who sanctifies you, the Lord of peace, the Lord of hosts, the Lord of all power.

My rock and my redeemer, the most blessed forever, he is the forsaken one. He is my restorer. My rock and my fortress, the rock of my strength, he is the king and priest after the order of Mckizzidec.

He is my shield, a brother born for adversity, he is a friend who loves at all times. My well-beloved, the rose of Sharon, he is altogether lovely, he is beloved and my friend.

The mighty God, the father of eternity, the prince of peace, he is the strength to the poor, he is a shadow from the heat, he is a refuge from the storm, he is a crown of glory and beauty, he is everlasting God.

[32 : 37] Mine, in whom my soul delights, he is glorious, the holy one of Israel, man of sorrows, despised, rejected, stricken, spitten, wounded, bruised and oppressed.

My portion and my maker, my redeemer, he is mighty, he is my physician, the Lord our righteousness, my resting place, he is the prince of princes, he is the Messiah, he is the hope of God's people, he is ruler, he is the king over all the earth, he is a refiner's fire, the son of righteousness, his name, his Jesus, which means salvation, he is a manual, he is God with us, he is a bridegroom, he is meek, he is lowly, he is the one whom my fathers say, this is my beloved son and whom I am well pleased, he is the son of the living God, the rock, the builder, he is betrayed, mocked and crucified, he is the Alpha and the Omega, he is the glory to his people Israel, he is chosen of God, he is risen.

And that's just some of what God's word has to say about who he is. Do you know him?

This is the one whom Paul worshiped, this is the one whom Paul serves, and I pray that he is that for us as well.

Lastly, Paul was certain of God's revelation. Look with me in verses 20 and 24, or 24 and 25, and he said, do not be afraid.

[34 : 11] This is the angel speaking to Paul, Paul, you must stand before Caesar, and behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you. So take heart, and this is now Paul speaking to the men, so take heart men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.

Paul was certain of God's revelation, this angel of the Lord came to him, spoke these things, God had revealed himself, God had expressed, and so that word, he was certain of God's revelation.

This is what God had revealed to him. And revelation does a few things when God reveals himself to you. Revelation casts out fear. Notice Paul is very courageous in the midst of the storm, I would be freaking out.

But Paul, not so. Why? In part, God had revealed himself. God had told him, and do you realize in that promise, he told him two things.

Paul, you're going to still stand before Caesar, I've told you that many times, you're going to survive this, you're going to stand before Caesar, you're going to live, and all those who are on your ship are going to live.

[35 : 29] In every generation, there are things that bring out fear of world-ending events. Every generation has had them. The bubonic plague, the black plague, was a bleak time.

World War I, World War II were bleak times. The Cuban Missile Crisis was a bleak time. If you watch news outlets or have an app for news, you'll discover there are things that may freak you out, and there are world-ending events and civilizations that are going to kill off everybody.

Global warming, sea levels rising, temperature on the earth will become untenable in plant life, famine sets in, followed by disease, and everyone's going to die. There's a superbug, synthetic superbug, that can be manufactured, that will kill everyone.

There's an asteroid traveling at a bazillion miles an hour, will crash into Earth's crust, and everyone's going to die. Russians, China, North Korea, and the US will launch all the nuclear weapons and causing an earth to be untenable, sustained life.

Everyone's going to die. A massive caldera erupts, like Yellowstone National Park, that's below Nash, and along with other massive earthquakes that rip over in the earth's crust, causing cataclysmic events, throwing off gases and dust, and clouding the whole earth, and causing temperatures to fall, making crops untenable, famine sets in, everyone's going to die.

[36 : 44] Worst yet is an extreme solar storm, knocking out the apoplectical power grid, throwing off everything, much radiation, killing everyone, living thing on Earth.

And if you weren't freaked out, you're thinking, now I am. But here's what saddens me. I have believers in Christ say, Scott, do you think these things are true, that all of life is going to end in these ways?

And what's my point? Paul was certain of God's revelation, and that revelation casts out fear. I'll tell you the world-ending event. It's called the return of Christ.

And when he returns, he finds people living on Earth, and he will judge the living and the dead. I'm not worried about some world-ending event that's going to knock out everybody, because Jesus returns and he finds people alive.

And then, he's going to end all things as we know them, and he's going to create a new heaven and a new earth, and those who know him will be with him forever.

- [37 : 53] And those who don't will be in the lake of fire forever. That's the world-ending event. I don't need to have fear about all of these other things. Turn the TV off.
- Quit looking at your phone. That can be edited out. Anyway. But now let me get a little more personal.
- Over the course of years, my wife and I have made decisions that were, we believe they were made in faith, but they were humanly speaking unwise.
- I graduated from college, newly minted bachelor's degree, and I wanted to participate in a church plant, and I was invited to participate in a church plant.
- And so I did. So I worked a minimum wage job to help pay the bills as a single young man, and volunteered my time at the church plant.
- [38 : 58] That's very unwise. There are times where we, I was working then at the church plant.
- They began to pay me some, and I looked to my wife and I said, can I quit my part-time job and just devote myself full-time to this church, even though they're only paying me half-time. I love what I'm doing.
- I feel like the Lord is calling me here. There's a lot of things going on, and I sure would love to do this. Do you think the Lord is in this? And Wendy, working in public education, we're on the career path as a career public educator, and she comes to me one morning and says, I think the Lord is asking me to quit and give up all of this and work at a minimum wage part-time job.
- I'm a minimum wage part-time secretary at a little Bible college. What do you think? This is where our health insurance was.
- This is where everything was. And we've made several decisions. Oh, and then, and then to start a new university, and knowing that that was going to cost us.
- [40 : 17] And do you think we should do that? And here, those were some scary decisions. There was some fear in all of those decisions.
- My point is this, but Paul was certain of God's revelation, and so here's what I knew, and here's what we knew. We had been committed to giving generously to the Lord over the course of our lives.
- So let me just read some things that God has revealed in his word that cast out some fear with us with regard to making some of those decisions. So here's what we knew.
- Remember this, 2 Corinthians 9, 6-8. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver, and God is able to bless you abundantly so that all these things at all times, having all that you have in need, you will abound in every good work.
- Matthew 6, do not store up yourselves treasure on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and where thieves can break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.
- [41 : 38] And where your treasure is there, your heart will be also. And then Psalm, Psalm 112-5. Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, and who conduct their affairs with justice.
- And then Proverbs 24 and 25. One person gives freely, yet gains even more. Another withholds unduly, and he comes to poverty, and a generous man will prosper, and whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.
- So here's my point. We were convinced because of what God's word has said to make those decisions and know with certainty that God would provide.

I don't know how, I don't know where, but I knew what God's word has said, and it helped us move courageously in the midst of untenuous times, uncertain times.

God's word has a way, God's revelation has a way of casting out fear. And knowing what God has said is absolutely important to casting out fear, especially in tumultuous times.

[42 : 47] Last, God's revelation is to be trusted and obeyed. Paul had unusual courage because he was confident in God.

God had revealed himself to Paul, and when God reveals himself, it is our opportunity as children of God to trust and obey. I love what Wayne Grudem said.

I was reading some things, and this is what he says with regard to God's word, and the authority of Scripture. He says this, all the words of Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve and to disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve and disobey God.

For this reason, Jesus rebukes his disciples who didn't believe in the Old Testament. Jesus said in Luke 24-25 to his disciples, O foolish ones, you slow to heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary for Christ should suffer these things and enter into glory? We are to trust and obey when he has revealed himself in his word of God.

[43 : 55] We are to tether ourselves to God's word as the final authority. He has spoken. And we are the people of God's word. Since God's revelation is to be trusted and obeyed, I'm going to just pick on all of us, and so let's just do this.

First, God has revealed in his word that there is to be no deceit that touches our mouth. God hates a lying tongue. This is to be trusted and obeyed.

God has revealed in his word that marriage, that we are not to marry unbelievers. We're not to be unequally yoked in marriage like that. But this has implications in one's dating life.

And this is true whether you're 16 years old or 63 years old. This is what I mean. All relationships go away somewhere.

All relationships go somewhere. So let's assume you date a non-believer and then you get engaged to a non-believer. Do you think when you're getting ready to get married, you say, oh, stop, actually, I can't marry a non-believer?

[45 : 03] Do you think that will happen? And so let me say, I don't. So in case you were curious. So if we're not, this is to be trusted and obeyed.

God has revealed in his word that marriage is to be between one man and a woman. This is to be trusted and obeyed. God has revealed that one cannot serve both God and money. God has revealed that one is to be generous with all that the Lord has entrusted to him, including money.

For what will man give in exchange for his soul? This is to be trusted and obeyed. God has revealed that husbands are to love their wives sacrificially as Christ loved the church. This is to be trusted and obeyed. God has revealed that believers are to abide in Christ, remain in Christ, spend time in his word and prayer, and this relationship is to be delighted in.

And God, for his glory and our good, and this is to be trusted and obeyed, to abide. God has revealed that pastors and elders are to shepherd the flock of God under the care and watch over them, not as one must, but one who is willing, as God desires, not to pursue dishonest gain, not to serve, but to serve eagerly, not lording it over those trusted to them, but to be examples to the flock.

This is to be trusted and obeyed for pastors and elders. We are to forgive others who have caused us harm as Christ has forgiven us. We must do this to others.

[46 : 32] This is to be trusted and obeyed. The first line of defense against poverty is family. God's word says in 1 Timothy 5.8, but if anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially the family, members of his family, household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever's.

Families are to take care of their relatives. This is not the primary job of the state, the public school, or the church even. It is the first line, it's the family. This is to be trusted and obeyed.

Sexual immorality is not to be flirted with. It is not to be diminished. Lust is not to be entertained. Sexual immorality is to be fled. Flee sexual immorality. Whether that be found in a person or online, this is what God's word says, flee like a gazelle from a cheetah.

Accompanying this thought for those of us who are married, Hebrews says, let the marriage be held in high honor among all. And let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexual immorality and adulteress.

Let us hold our spouses in high honor for those who are married. Temptation to sin, this is to be trusted and obeyed. Temptation to sin must be overcome.

[47 : 47] You are not a victim to temptation. You don't have to sin. God's word says no temptation has overcome you, that which is common to man. But God is faithful and he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able.

But with every temptation, he will provide a way of escape. That you may be able to endure it. This is to be trusted and obeyed. Work existed prior to Adam and Eve's sin.

Work is a gift from God, an opportunity to display the image of God in us outwardly. Work is a privilege. Our language of how we speak of work, our heart attitude, must reflect this reality.

That work is a God given privilege. Christians are to be the best employees to their employers and employers, Christians, employers are to be their best bosses to their employees.

This is to be trusted and obeyed. You don't have to go to work this week, you get to. And on and on and on I could go. But God has revealed many things in His word.

[48 : 55] And that revelation is to be trusted and obeyed. And Paul and the angel of the Lord came to him and revealed, listen Paul, you got to still, I have an appointment for you with Caesar and so you're going to survive and all those crew with you are going to survive.

And Paul trusts that and he obeys it and he takes charge.

I don't know where it is in life. What life circumstances are for you.

What storms, what adversity you may be facing. But when we look at this text, we can see that Paul possessed unusual courage. He possessed unusual courage despite the chaotic circumstances and this extreme storm that was life threatening around him.

And Paul had courage in the midst of the storm for the reasons that he was certain of God's presence. He was certain of God's ownership.

[50 : 08] He was certain of the one whom he worshiped. He was certain of the one whom he served. And he was certain of God's revelation. And because of that, he responded very courageously.

And so too can you and so too can I. So let's pray. Father, thank you so much for your word. Thank you for this account of an amazing man who was certain of many things that gave him much courage.

Lord, ultimately he was certain in you. And I pray that certainty in you and your word and your revelation, your presence, your ownership and whom we serve, it would be evident we would take root in you.

Thank you for this body of believers. Thank you this week how we have the opportunity to move courageously. Keep us tethered to your word. We want to know you more.

So now as we sing, that which is true of you, may the words that we sing be anchored in our heart. You're beautiful, Lord.

[51 : 27] You're worth living and dying for. And it's in your name, Jesus, we pray. Amen.