

The Sailor's Journey

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[0 : 00] May the words of my mouth, the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you, O my God. Amen.!

And it's to him that I have to thank all the flags, because these are from the Glen Sannicks. So in some way he's on that ship today, so he is participating with us today.

He's the third officer, so he's in charge of the flags. And they have to get rid of him after a certain time. So one of them found our way to us here in Invergordon.

So it's his way of saying thank you. So folks, the title of my sermon today is A Sailor's Journey.

And I want to invite you to embark with me on a wee journey this morning. It's not on land, but across this vast and unpredictable sea that surrounds us.

[1 : 28] It makes most of the planet up, does the seas. And we are an island nation. And we, as a nation, have earned our keep and earned our livings from the sea in the past.

And still are doing so today. But I want you to think about the lives. It's the lives of the people, the sailors that serve on the waves.

Who face storms and calm alike. Who do actually trust in their ship, their crew, and above all in Providence.

And their journeys offer us a really good lesson in our own lives, our faith, and our walk with God.

So there's four small points I want to discuss with you today. And the first one is the unpredictability of the sea.

[2 : 46] Now, anyone who has been a sailor or has indeed been on the waves for any period of time will know that the sea is never really tamed.

How best can I put this to you? Well, I'm going to give you a testimony today. Not mine.

It's my son's. And about eight years ago, he just left Nautical College. And he managed to get himself on board a 4,000 tonne bulk carrier.

Now, we might think that's an awful big ship. But it isn't. It's a wee one. It's a very small one. And he found himself round about the start of December.

He was away for three, four months. But he found himself on this ship at the start of December, sailing between a port in Belgium, carrying salt to Bordeaux.

[4 : 02] And then he was carrying maize, sweet corn or whatever you want to call it, from Bordeaux back to Belgium. Okay. So that was their journey all the time.

So you can imagine, down the English Channel, down the Bay of Biscay to Bordeaux and back again. Anyway, we were following him because you can do this on these remarkable apps that you get now.

And it was round about Christmas. And I don't know if you remember this, but about seven years, a bit of a hoolie got up. And there were some tremendous winds coming from America.

It almost looked like there was a huge Indian fight coming. The arrows were coming all our way. And there was Force Nine. Some of it was quite amazing. And of course, as parents, we were very concerned.

And we tracked his progress from Christmas Eve right through Christmas Day, Boxing Day, etc.

[5 : 07] Down the English Channel. And he was heading west. And I thought, does he actually, is he actually moving? This ship was just doing two knots all the time.

And when the ship was close to water, as it is in the English Channel, you could actually tune in to the ship's webcam. So you could see all this waves crashing over.

Of course, that got his mother really going. So we never tuned in after that. But it was very stormy, you can imagine. And afterwards, I said to him, well, what happened?

How did you feel? He says, Daddy says, it was great. He says, there was no problem going west down the English Channel. We were heading into the waves. There wasn't a problem.

The problem being came when they had to turn left at Brest to go over the Bay of Biscay. He says, Dad, I've never experienced that ever in my life.

[6 : 12] He says, everything above two foot ended up on the floor. He says, all of us were sick.

All of us couldn't function. So I says, well, what did you do? He says, we just had to keep going. We just got together as a crew and we had to keep going.

But he says, I can tell you this, Dad. He says, I was crying in my cabin sometime on my own. And he says, that's when I found Jesus.

That's when he found Jesus. And he told me that when he came home. That he found Jesus in that cabin in the middle of a Force 9 in the Bay of Biscay.

So if you ever see him, just remind him of that. Anyway. The sea can be very unpredictable.

[7 : 13] It can go from glassy smooth to really, really rough. And life can be a bit like that as well, can't it? We all experience it.

We all experience times of calm. When everything's good. Everything's great. But we also face storms. Times of trial.

Times of uncertainty. Times of fear. We've probably been through that as a church quite recently. And as sailors prepare for all conditions.

Storing their provisions and checking their vessels. So too must we. We've got to go out there with faith.

Hope. And love. And love. But before we do that. Before we do that. Scripture tells us.

[8 : 23] To put on the whole armor of God. Encourage you to read Ephesians 6. So that we.

We can withstand the storms. That come our way. The second point is. We've got to.

Trust. In the captain. Now any sailor. Now any sailor. Is not a master. Of the sea.

And it doesn't really matter their experience. They know. That sometimes. Some things. Lie. Well beyond their control.

And they rely on their captain. For guidance. For direction. And I would suggest to you today. That we.

[9 : 21] We've got to remember. Who the true captain. Of our lives is. When we surrender. To God's.

Guidance. When we trust in God. We find. The strength. The courage. To face even.

The fiercest. Fiercest storm. That we can imagine. In our lives. And indeed. The psalmist did right. He stilled the storm. To a whisper.

The waves. Of the sea. Were hushed. Prediction made. About. Jesus. Before he was born. So when.

Life's. Life's waves. Crash. On our life. On our own. Particular. Circumstances. Friends. I encourage you.

[10:19] To call on the Lord. Ask him. To help you out. Trust him. So that he can bring you through. And he will.

And the other thing is. Is the importance. Of fellowship. And that was touched upon. Earlier this morning. No sailor. No sailor. No sailor.

Sails alone. The crew lives. Works together. And each member. Relies on the other.

For it's safe. For his safety. And the success. Of that ship's journey. And it's in the storms.

It's in the unity. Of the crew. That keeps. The ship afloat. And we heard about. The unity. Of the crew. In our passage. It was read to us.

[11:17] This morning. And in the same way. We are called. Really to be a community. Of faith.

We support. We encourage. We lift one another up. That's what we should be doing. And that's why. There's a cup of tea.

After the service. That's why. We're trying to. Encourage you. In your daily lives. By offering you more. The elders are working.

Very hard at that. I can tell you. And I want you to remember. The words. Of Ecclesiastes. Two. Are better.

Are better. Than one. If either of them. Falls down. One can help. The other up. And you can check that out. In Ecclesiastes 4.

[12:15] And indeed. Jesus. When he sent the disciples out. He didn't send them out in ones. He sent them out in twos.

Again. We've got to remember that. Because together. We are stronger. Together. We're more resilient.

And together. We're better equipped. To deal with life's. Challenges. And the fourth and final point.

I want to bring before you today. Is hope. Hope. On the horizon. Listen. You'll hear me talking.

About being a cloud watcher. Because we're told. That's when. That's how Jesus will come back to earth. Through the clouds. So there is hope.

[13:16] On the horizon. How does this apply to us. In a nautical setting. That we're talking about today. Well even the longest journey.

The longest journey. That anybody's ever been on. Comes to an end. Every storm. Gives way to. Blue skies. And for the sailor.

For that man. That woman. The sight of land. After weeks at sea. Is a moment of joy.

And relief. I read a book once. About some. Sailors. That had been. In the second world war.

That had been. Based out in Asia. And as they were sailing home. They were passing. The. The cliffs of Dover. And.

[14:16] They all. Were very emotional. At that time. Because they knew. It was a sign. That they were nearly home. So hope.

Hope. That's the anchor. That's the anchor. Of our souls. Whatever trials. We face. We look forward. We look forward.

With assurance. And we know. We know that God's. Promises are true. And his love.

Is unwavering. Hebrews encourages us. We have this hope. As an anchor for the soul. Firm.

And secure. So when life is uncertain. Let's cling. Cling to that hope. Look to the horizon. Look to the clouds.

[15 : 13] If you want. With faith. And I pray today. I really do. I really pray today. That this. We.

Sailors journey. Has. Reminded you. To be prepared. For the storms of life. To trust the captain.

To cherish. The fellowship. That we've got together. As a body of believers. To hold fast to hope.

And I also pray. That you are trusting the one. Who commands the winds. Who commands the seas. Is confident.

And you are confident. That he will guide us. He will guide us safely home. Amen. Folks.

[16 : 14] Let's just pray together. Just now. Let's have our. Prayers of intercession. As we. As we reflect. On what I've talked about. This morning. Oh Lord.

Our Heavenly Father. A lot has been put. In front of us. This morning. Help us to. Reflect on this. Help us to.

Come to our own conclusions. About where. We fit in. Father. I. Also want to pray.

For those folks. Who. Cannot be heard. At this moment. We think of. The folks in Gaza. We think of the folks. In Ukraine. We think of.

Other areas. Where conflict is. Going on. In this world. And Lord. This is worrying to us. We can't help.

[17 : 15] To be concerned. About all this. This hype. That's whipped up. In the media. But Lord. Deep down. We know. That you're in charge.

You're in full control. And we trust you Lord. We trust you. Help others. Do the right thing. Father.

We think of all the. Things that have happened. In our. In our nation. This week. We give thanks. For our king. Our queen.

Our prime minister. And our first minister. We just thank them. For. Their diplomacy. This week. Father.

We also. Think of folks. That we know. Within this community. Folks. That may be grieving. Just now. And we ask. That you would. Just be with them.

[18 : 16] Comfort them. Reassure them. Think of folks. That are. Ill just now. Maybe. In hospital. Or.

Confined. To their. Homes. So Lord. Again. Please look after them. Be with them. Assure them. That all will be well. As they go.

On this wee journey. Father. We also think of this church. Here in Invergordon. As we are. Sailing the sea together.

We ask that you. Help us to be. More united. To come together. To. Be a lighthouse.

For the folks. In this community. Be a lighthouse. For you Lord. Your light. Should be through us.

[19 : 13] So that folks. Can see. Your love. Being reflected. Through us. Help us. To be part. Of that Lord. Help us. To be leading.

That. In all that we say. All that we do. Within this community. Amen.