

SAILING STORMY SEAS

INTRODUCTION

How have you been coping with the crisis the world is in right now? I'm sure many of us if not all, have found this season to be one of the most testing seasons of our lives. It seems we have been bombarded on every side in the voyage of life.

- We have faced ferocious waves of adversity.
- The current of change is powerfully flowing, threatening to pull our life off course, pulling us into loneliness, desperation and even depression.
- The tempest (windy violent storm) of covid has damaged people's finances, and their health and even robbed some of their loved ones.
- Our faith has been severely tested, and It seems as though the rocks are just a short way away, waiting for the rough stormy seas to crash us over and over into them, resulting in shipwreck in our faith.

Tragically, some have already had their faith dashed against the rocks, but for most of us our faith is not yet shipwrecked, many are still sailing in the storm.

What is shipwrecked faith? Who is at risk and how do we avoid it and navigate safely, how do we navigate the storms of life? The good news is that we can all survive the storm because there is a God in heaven who cares for us, and His word will give us direction today.

MESSAGE

Let me begin by showing you what can cause shipwrecked faith:

1 Timothy 1:18-19 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,

Shipwreck is caused by two things:

- Rejecting one's faith
- Rejecting our good conscience.

Essentially it means turning ones back on God and returning to our former sinful lifestyle.

Paul spoke of Hymenaeus and Alexander of whom he said, " whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme".

These men had drifted from good doctrine and were effectively blaspheming God. How does that apply to us today?

If we allow this virus crisis to wear us out in our faith to the point that we give up on God and turn our backs on Him, we will have stopped waging the good warfare. The moment we were born-again we entered a war with the devil. That war is waging wildly in this current crisis and its intention is to shipwreck our faith.

- A sure sign that we are in danger of shipwreck is if, as this crisis continues, we lose our zeal for God, stop praying and spending time in God's presence, and begin doing sinful things that we previously had victory over.
- Alternately, as I said last week, if become so desperate to survive that we align ourselves with the world's efforts to deal with this virus and accept a compromised form of Christianity which differs from the foundation doctrines and teachings of the Bible.

You may feel that you are not at risk, but I have already seen this happening to some of our members and it's tragic. As the crisis has continued, they have not managed to remain strong in their faith and I have watched them slip back into their old lives. This is heartbreaking and should not be so!

Are you still strong in your faith? Are you still having regular, quality quiet times in God's presence? Have you possibly started doubting and questioning God in all of this?

- ***Don't stop fighting the good fight of faith, remember, if it was going to be easy, it wouldn't be a fight!***
- ***Be careful not to backside, keep a good conscience, ask the Holy Spirit for help to remain consecrated and committed to the Lord.***

How do we navigate life's stormy seas? Here are some examples from God's word.

WHEN GOD CREATES THE STORM

Genesis 6:5-8 (NKJV) Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." 8 But **Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.**

We know the story, how God instructed Noah to build an ark, and at the right time the animals went into the ark two by two with Noah and his family. Then came a great storm, it rained 40 days and 40 nights

Genesis 7:17-18 & 23 (NKJV) Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark

moved about on the surface of the waters. 23 So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive.

Genesis 8:1-2(NKJV) Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2 The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained.

Sometimes God does send the storm, and the first key to sailing on stormy seas which can destroy everything, and everyone around us, is to be like Noah and find favour with the Lord.

God remembered Noah! He saved this man who had favour with Him. If this covid storm were from God, and I don't believe it is, but if it were, would you be one of those who God had purposed to survive? How is your relationship with the Lord today? Do you have favour like Noah which will bring you through the storm?

WHEN YOU GO THROUGH A STORM BECAUSE OF OTHERS.

The Apostle Paul had been arrested and was being taken to Rome with other prisoners. Part of the journey would be by sea, but the time was heading into a stormy season where sailing would be dangerous.

Acts 27: 9-11 (NKJV) Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, 10 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." 11 Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul.

It was not long, and that ship was in real trouble.

Acts 27:21-26 (NKJV) 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."

- Paul warned them that the voyage would end in disaster, and they didn't listen.
- But Paul kept his faith even though they were in real trouble.
- Eventually, God sent an angel to speak to Paul and promise deliverance.

- God reminded Paul of His purpose for him.
- He encouraged them all to take heart.

The ship ran aground and was destroyed by the waves and the storm, all possessions were lost, not one life!

- We may not always be in control of our circumstances.
- We didn't ask for the corona virus pandemic.
- Our circumstances may not be of our doing and we may even suffer loss.
- But... we need to trust God in the middle of the storm.
- We must trust and never give up, knowing that God has a purpose for our life.
- Not only our lives depend on it, but those of others around us too!

The second key to sailing stormy seas is to trust that God still has a purpose for your life even if you have no control of your situation.

- ***When everything around is a great big shipwreck, will we boldly cling to our faith?***
- ***When we are suffering because of other people's decisions or actions, will we blame God or trust Him?***
- ***Will we trust God to fulfill His purpose for our life?***
- ***Are we willing to bless those who cause us hardship?***

Today we can trust God to bring us safely through the storm so that we can achieve His purpose for our life even if we have to go through shipwreck before we get the victory!

GOD IS WITH YOU IN THE STORM

The final biblical account I want to share with you this morning is the account of the disciples in the storm.

Mark 4:35-41 (NKJV) On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" 39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

Some of Jesus disciples were seasoned fishermen. They knew how bad that storm was. They were convinced that it would sink the boat. In fact, it was already filling with water, it would be just a matter of time until it sank. They said to Jesus, "do You not care that we are perishing?"

But they had forgotten who was in the boat with them. Jesus, healer, miracle worker and the Messiah, the Anointed one was in the boat with them!

He stood up and said three words, "Peace, be still!" and the storm obeyed, giving way to peace and calm.

We sing the song "Way Maker" – *"Way Maker, Miracle Worker, Promise Keeper, Light in the Darkness, my God, that is Who You are!"*

This is the third key to sailing stormy seas, we need to know that we are not alone, Jesus is with us in the storm! He will restore peace and calm, but we need to have faith! Jesus rebuked them for not having faith!

Maybe your stormy sea is so bad that the boat of your life is filling up with water. You may not know how you will manage financially through another month; you may feel like the depression is going to break you; your marriage may be so full of cracks that you are ready to walk away. Don't give up now, turn to Jesus, He's right there with you in the storm, ask Him to restore peace and calm, He will do it!

CONCLUSION

Hebrews 6:19-20 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

We have a sure and steadfast anchor of hope for our soul our to keep us safe during life's storms. When our hope is in Jesus, we need not worry about the outcome, even if it leads to shipwreck and loss. In Him we have eternal life!

Shipwrecked faith is an unnecessary tragedy. We can navigate the storms of life. We can fight the good fight of faith. We must cling on with every fibre of our being and we must not give up and slip back into a compromised life.

These three keys are our anchor of hope to bring us through the stormy voyage of life.

1. Living in relationship with God, having favour with Him – when storms come He will keep us safe and deliver us.
2. Trusting God even if we have no control over our situation – believing that He still has a purpose for our life.
3. Knowing that Jesus is with us in the storm – Have faith!

By God's grace we will safely navigate this storm and every other storm of life!