

# Remember Your Calling in the Midst of the Storm

by Brian Long

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**Scripture:** Acts 27:23, Colossians 1:27, Luke 11:9, Romans 10:14, Proverbs 11:25

**Topics:** "Rising to Our Calling", "Faith in Adversity"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Brothers and sisters, for having me here, it's such a privilege, an incredible privilege and a joy. And I want to thank you, Sally, for using your gift to organize meetings, and I hear so much about Sally, and I got to enjoy breakfast with her at the conference, and I'm so thankful for you and your ministry, and so thankful for everything I've heard about the ministry and the work of the Lord that He's doing here among you. One thing that I've discovered in every meeting so far since I've arrived in England was that one of the things that has touched my heart so deeply has been the hunger in the hearts of God's people for God and for His Word.

I've been so moved by that. Your hunger for the Lord and your hunger for His Word is so refreshing. It touches my heart deeply.

It stirs something deep within me. And this morning, we're going to turn to Acts chapter 27, Acts chapter 27, and the message the Lord's put on my heart for this morning, I've given a title, Remember Your Calling in the Midst of the Storm. Remember Your Calling in the Midst of a Coming Storm, Acts chapter 27.

Before we read our text, just a little bit of background. The Apostle Paul at this time had been arrested for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, and because he could not obtain any justice among the Jews in the

ports of Judea, he appeals to Caesar. Well, because he appealed to Caesar, he has to go to Rome.

So they put him on a ship as a prisoner with other prisoners, and they send him to Rome. But it was not a good time to be sailing across the open sea during this time of year. So we start in verse nine of Acts chapter 27, and we'll pick up reading there.

Now, when much time was spent and when sailing was dangerous because the fast was now already passed, Paul admonished them and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage. Not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Nevertheless, the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phineas and there to winter, which is a haven of Crete and lie toward the southwest and northwest. Now, let's pray together one more time. Our father, we're opening up your very word, O God, the words of life.

Your words are spirit and they are life. And father, I'm so mindful, as always, as I open up here this morning, how there's a trembling in my heart, a trembling in my soul that we are standing on holy ground when we open up your word and father, we open up our hearts and our ears to hear from you and what you have to say to us. It is always such a mystery to me, Lord God, that you've chosen to use such weak and broken vessels.

But once again, I ask you, Lord God, to empty me of myself, fill me with your spirit and anoint our ears to hear what your spirit is saying to us at this very hour. Let your word go forth with power and great grace and anoint the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart. Make them pleasing and acceptable in your sight.

Oh, Lord, my strength and my redeemer in Jesus name. Amen. Now there's two hundred and seventy six people on this ship all going through the same storm.

It was a storm so violent and severe that it was unlike anything they'd ever been through before. It is a storm that is absolutely totally out of their control. First, they put cables around the ship to try to hold it together, to keep it from falling apart.

Then they adjust the sails, try to adjust the sails just right, just to keep afloat. The next day, they try to lighten the load by throwing cargo overboard. By the third day, they're throwing more equipment overboard.

For two weeks, they never see the light of the sun or the light of the stars. Can you just imagine with me for a minute? I've been here going on two weeks. Think about all the time I've been here.

Never see the light of the sun, never see the light of the stars. That's a long time on a ship. Can you imagine the seasickness? Can you imagine how cold they were, how wet they were, how dark it was, how fearful, how afraid? And at the moment that finally everybody loses hope when the last ray of hope was gone, something happens.

Verse 20, when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was taken away. It was a time of hopelessness. But at that very moment, God raises up a man, the apostle Paul, in the midst of a violent storm that is out of control.

It's not out of God's control, but it's out of the control of man. And everybody is so terrified on this boat. They're in despair.

It is dark. And when they've lost the last ray of hope, here's a man who stands in their midst, God's man. And the apostle Paul becomes God's provision for everybody else in that storm.

There's something that that burns in my heart, brothers and sisters. There are storm clouds building. Now, I've been preaching revival and I believe revival and I believe revival is coming to this country, I believe it with all my heart.

But how that coincides with persecution, with storms, I don't know. I leave that to God. This I know God wants his people to be prepared not only to stand in the coming storm, but to be his provision for others who are going through the same storm that don't know him.

They don't have the peace we have. They don't have the assurance. Christ is not living inside their heart.

He is living in us. I want you to hear today that you could be God's provision in somebody else's storm. The apostle Paul certainly was.

But you know what that means? For you to be God's provision in somebody else's storm means you have to go through the same storm. Sometimes we have to go through storms. They were not necessarily any cause on our part.

You know, there's there's different kinds of storms, isn't there, in this life? I mean, there's there's storms that are just part of living in a fallen world. Doesn't matter if you're a Christian or an unbeliever. Sometimes you still get a flat tire on the car.

Sometimes the car breaks down. A child gets sick. OK, we go through storms.

You suffer the going through the death of a loved one. We still face funerals. Christian, non-Christian causes it to rain on the just and the unjust.

So some of those storms we just go we're going to go through because we live in a fallen world. We don't have to go through them the same way that an unbeliever goes through them. And we should not.

We go through them totally different. But nevertheless, we go through them. There's also storms that we bring on ourselves by our own foolishness, by our own sin.

There are consequences to sin. And for example, Jonah ran away from God, he rebelled and he ended up in a very violent storm because of his disobedience to God. He was the cause and he ended up in that kind of storm.

There are there are storms that God sends to us for our own growth. Remember when Jesus told the disciples, go to the other side and in obedience to the Lord's command, they end up in a storm. But why? God had a purpose and it was to build their faith, strengthen their faith.

This is when the apostle Peter walks on water with his eyes on Christ. So there are those kind of storms. But there are another kind of storm.

There's another kind of storm that I want to especially address this morning. And it's storms that we have to go through. Not because of necessarily anything we caused, but to be God's provision for others who are going through that same storm.

Some and they could be storms caused by somebody else's sin. Sometimes children go through terrible storms because of the ungodly decisions of their parents. They're drug through the storm, not because they were at fault, but because of the decisions of ungodly parents.

Sometimes you can be a recipient of somebody else's, the consequence of somebody else's sin, sometimes because of the sin of a nation, because we live in a nation that has chosen to shed innocent blood, to abort babies, to embrace gay marriage, gay this this lifestyle that is an absolute abomination to God. And we live in a nation or part of a nation that is condoned, that judgment is coming and in large part judgment is here and we have to go through. Storms that are that God is bringing because of that cause, because of that, but God has a purpose for us, and that's what I want you to see this morning, and I want you to see what our calling is in the midst of that storm.

First thing I would have you note to be God's provision. And for somebody else in their storm, we have to first learn to stand. Notice what the apostle Paul does.

Verse twenty one. But after long abstinence, Paul stood. He stood forth in the midst of them and says, sirs, you should have hearkened unto me and not have loose from Crete and to have gained this harm.

The point is, when everybody else is trembling with fear and falling apart, Paul is standing. Reminds me of a script of a verse in Ezekiel where God says, I sought for a man among them and he'll look for a woman, he'll look for a sister to stand in the gap and pray so he you know, so he would not have to just unleash his wrath. He's looking for those who will stand, stand up, stand up.

Not for yourself, not for your own rights, not for worthless causes, but stand for Christ, stand in the strength and the grace of our God, stand for truth, stand for righteousness when everything around us is falling apart. Colossians chapter one, verse twenty seven speaks of this glorious mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory, Christ in you. Is your neighbor's hope Christ in you is whoever else is in your boat, on your ship, in your circle of influence, Christ in you is their hope.

That's our calling. We're to stand and be strong in the power of the Lord, we're to stand in hope when everyone around us has lost hope, we're to stand courageous when everyone else is caving into fear, we are to stand in faith. Now, keep your place there, and I want you to go to the Gospel of Mark, please, to look at another storm here and what we have to learn from our Lord Jesus.

Mark, chapter four, Gospel of Mark, chapter four. Verse thirty five. And the same day when the even was come, he saith unto them, let us pass over unto the other side.

And when they had sent him away, the multitude sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind and the waves beat into the ship so that it was now full.

And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow. And they awake him and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, peace, be still. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

And Jesus said unto them, why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith, fear and faith cannot remain in the same heart at the same time? If I'm full of fear, I cannot be full of faith. If I'm full of faith, fear has no place. Brothers and sisters, when we go through this coming storm in order to rise up to our calling and be God's provision for those others who are going in the same storm.

Listen, I don't know if you've ever noticed this verse, but back to verse thirty six, they're not the only ship going through the storm. He says, and there were also with him other little ships. Those other little ships are going through the same storm, but they don't have Jesus in their boat.

The disciples have Jesus in their boat. So when they rise and say they wake up the Lord, he's sleeping on a pillow. Master, wake up.

Don't you care that we perish? I can see the Lord Jesus saying, don't you care that they perish? They I'm in your boat. If Christ is in your boat, you're not going to sink. We're going to the other side.

If Jesus says we're going to the other side, brothers and sisters, we're going to the other side. We have this hope, this sure foundation, this assurance. Christ lives in me.

I am in him. He is eternal life. And we are going to the other side.

Therefore, we have nothing to fear. But there are other little ships going through the same storm that don't have Christ in their boat. Don't you care that they perish? Your calling is to be light unto them, to point them to the one who is master of the storm.

Hallelujah. So because Christ is in our boat, we have no cause to fear. We need to understand that because it doesn't mean we won't be tempted to fear.

And I tell you, things that are on the horizon, storms that are coming, we can have great cause in the natural to fear. The Apostle Paul said, hey, there were fightings without fears within. But the point is, as Christians, we don't have to yield to that fear.

We don't have to succumb to it. Why? Because as children of the living God, there's only one that we fear. We fear almighty God.

And when you fear God, you need fear nothing else. Come what may, you need fear nothing else. And this is what a lost world needs to see in the midst of the storm, the church of Jesus Christ, unshaken, unmoved, filled with hope, filled with faith, filled with assurance so that they look in the midst of this storm and see the church of Jesus Christ shining and saying, how is it that you're not afraid? How is it that you're not falling apart? Don't you see what's going on around you? Yes, I see it.

But there's someone in my boat and he said we're going to the other side. He will keep us faith. You see, brothers and sisters, faith has a focus.

The focus of faith is not on the storm. We look at the storm, we acknowledge the storm, but we're not focused on the storm. The focus of faith is not upon ourselves, but we will surely be in despair if we're looking to ourselves for strength.

Corrie Ten Boom said this one time, she said, when I look at the world, I'm in distress. When I look at myself, I am depressed. When I look at Jesus, I'm at rest, regardless of what is going on around me.

Faith has a focus and the focus of faith is the person of Jesus Christ himself. He he is the master of the storm and he can tell the storm when to start and when to stop. He can rebuke the wind and the waves and immediately they obey him.

So we need not fear. We need not fear. When you fear God, you need fear.

Nothing else. Now, we'll talk about the focus of faith later in the next message after we we meet again this afternoon, so I'll move on. We are called, number one, to stand, stand in faith, don't fall apart in fear.

Secondly, we are called to serve others in the midst of the storm. Notice what the apostle Paul does. This is so amazing.

He's going through the same storm. He's got to be just as wet, just as cold, just as hungry, going through the same storm. But there's something about the apostle Paul.

His focus is not upon himself and there is nothing self-centered about the Christian life. There's nothing self-centered about the cross. Paul's not looking at himself.

His eyes are on the Lord and now his eyes are on the needs of others. How does he serve? Look at verse thirty three. While the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying this day is the 14th day that you have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

Wherefore, I pray you to take some meat for this is for your health, for there shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you. And when he had spoken, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all. And when he had broken it, he began to eat.

Then were they all of good cheer and they also took some meat. Paul makes himself a servant in the midst of the storm. He's not concerned about his own need.

He's concerned about the need of others. What a beautiful picture to say, look, you all must be so hungry. You must be afraid, you must be cold, take some meat, take some bread.

Let this strengthen you. And he's feeding people in the midst of the storm. He's rising to his calling in the midst of the storm.

Glory be to God. That is our same calling. We're called to serve others in the storm.

Christians were to call not to look in, but to look out. Think of our Lord Jesus Christ himself. He said, follow me.

Think of him before he went to the cross the night before he went to the cross. What is he doing? He gathers with his disciples. They gather in a room and I can imagine him coming in this room and in that custom, you come in and you have your feet washed, but there's no one there to wash the feet.

And you imagine the disciples thinking, well, I'm not doing that job. That's a job of a servant. That's a job of a slave.

One after another. And here comes the king of kings, clothed in humility, and he picks up the towel and he picks up the bowl the night before he was betrayed and I mean, the night before he went to the cross. He goes around and washes the feet of his disciples, a storm is coming.

And what is he doing? Serving others, washing the feet of his disciples. If you knew that your hour had come and you would be put to death tomorrow, would you think about washing the feet of your betrayer? Someone you knew is going to betray you, someone who you knew was going to deny you three times and still get on your knees and wash their feet out of love. What a savior.

What a what a mighty God we have. The king of kings becomes a humble servant. What in the world should we be doing in the midst of a storm when everybody is falling apart who does not know Christ? And we stand in faith and we seek whom can I serve? Whom can I serve? Lord, let your love pour out through me to minister to the needs of others.

That's what the apostle Paul does. And I'll tell you, there's something about the love of God flowing through the people of God that melts even the coldest heart. That breaks even the hardest heart.

One of my favorite illustrations of this is Pastor Carter Conlon of Times Square Church in New York City shared one time this story, how his dad was an unbeliever and his dad wanted him to become a lawyer. He wanted him to, you know, to go to school and become a lawyer. And God had other plans.

And God called called Carter Conlon to preach the gospel. And his dad was very angry about that. He didn't like that at all.

And he would often try to share the gospel with his dad, but his dad would not have it. He was very closed. Well, the day came when Carter Conlon's dad was diagnosed with cancer.

Colon cancer. And eventually he had to have a colostomy bag and they said he was a very proud man. And he's in the hospital one day and he was not letting his wife help him.

He's fighting the nurses off, not wanting them to help him. And so Carter Conlon's mom called him and said, what to do? Your dad, he doesn't want anybody washing him, cleaning him. And this thing is a mess.

And he said, I'll come. And he came to the hospital. And the nurse stops him and says, well, we're so glad you're going to do this.

And here's some gloves and here's a mask. And he said, no, I don't need that. He's my dad.

And he goes in there and he begins to clean his his his father up and wash him and clean out the bag. And he did this day after day after day. And one day he shared the same message, same gospel that he had shared previously.

But something was different. His dad's heart was broken. His dad's heart was melted.

His dad came to Christ, faith in Christ. You know what he said? It wasn't because I changed the message, because it was because his waist was on my hands. He got his hands dirty out of love for his dad in the midst of the storm.

You are called, my brother and my sister, to love. To love others, and you demonstrate your love to others by serving them. That's what the Apostle Paul did.

He served in the midst of the storm. So we are called to stand. We are called to serve.

And suppose just imagine with me if the Apostle Paul didn't wake up to his calling. Suppose the Apostle Paul on the same ship fell into the fear of everybody else and said, oh, this is horrible. You know what's going to happen? Are we going to make it to the other side? You know, are we going to perish? I'm hungry.

I'm cold. Is there anything to eat? What a tragedy. What a tragedy that would be to have no light on that boat.

No messenger of God. There would have been no hope for any of them. Thank the Lord that was not him.

He stands and he serves. But not only are you called to stand and serve in the midst of the storm, you're also called to speak. Yes, there is a time to be quiet and listen, but there's also a time to stand up and speak to others in the midst of their storm.

Romans chapter 10 tells us for whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall they call on the one in whom they have not heard and are believed? And how shall they believe on the one in whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And in some sense, you're a preacher. You may not preach behind a pulpit, but my sister, you're a preacher.

You're a proclaimer of your testimony. You're a proclaimer of you're going to be given your testimony tomorrow. Praise God.

So we are messengers. Amen. And there'll be a time when you are called to speak.

You're called to proclaim. You say, well, I don't know what I'm not sure what I should say. I'm not sure I'm not a speaker.

I'm not eloquent. All this. I don't know enough.

Do you know that Jesus Christ has saved your soul, has forgiven your sins? Do you know that he lives in you? Do you know that he died on the cross to pay for the sins of the whole world? Do you know that he rose from the dead and that he lives? Then you will know enough. You know enough to open your mouth and proclaim the truth to a lost soul, a lost sinner. There's a time to speak.

Now, what did the apostle Paul say? Verse 10 is where it begins. Before the storm even happened, he stood and he said to them, verse 10, sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. So the first thing the apostle Paul does is speak a word of warning.

He warns and there'll be times when God calls you to to warn, to speak a word of warning, a word of correction, a word of warning. Now, they ignore his warning. They don't pay any attention to it at all.

And so then the storm comes. And now we come to verse 21, where he speaks a word of correction and reproof. Verse 21, but after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them and said, sirs, you should have hearken unto me.

You should have listened. And not have loose from Crete and to have gained this harm and loss. And then we go to verse 22, where he gives not just correction and reproof, but now hope and encouragement, he says in verse 22.

And now I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. And look what he is proclaiming now, what God has said to him and shown in verse 23, for there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, saying, fear not, Paul, thou must be brought unto Caesar. And, lo, God has given you all them that sell with thee.

Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me. There's a time to speak. There's a time to warn.

There's a time to reprove. And there's a time to encourage. Say, look, this is what God has shown me and you proclaim it.

You know, sometimes the reason sometimes the problem with us as Christians, as we have a lot that we're taking in, but we're not pouring anything out. I remember meeting a man one time when I was still pastoring and he said, Brother Brian, I don't know what's wrong with me. I don't feel God's really I just feel dead inside.

I read the word and he knew the scriptures chapter and verse. I read the word. I'm coming to the meetings.

What's wrong? And the Lord showed me immediately, I said, Gary. The Dead Sea has everything coming in, all this life giving water coming in, but nothing going out. And in many ways, you're just like the Dead Sea.

Let me say it in love. You're like the Dead Sea. You're drinking, drinking, drinking, receiving, receiving, receiving all the time.

But who are you serving? Who are you ministering to? Is there any life going out of you, folks? God has not called us to be stagnant. And he gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey him. As you step out in faith and obedience, you will experience the life giving river of the spirit of God flowing through you.

But not if you're self-centered, not if you're keeping everything to yourself. Proverbs chapter eleven, twenty five tells us, and I'm just paraphrasing, you can look it up, but he that waters others shall himself also be watered. You want to know how really to memorize scripture and get this word of God into your heart.

Start sharing with somebody else what God has shown you. And when you share with somebody else what God has revealed to you, next thing you know, God's word is alive in your heart and you're being watered. You're being blessed because you're watering others and you have a message for others.

God forbid that in the coming storm, we as Christians have nothing to say. That happened in my country when 9-11 happened and the towers came down, multitudes of churches were full of people immediately looking for hope, looking for answers. What does God have to say about this? And a multitude of pulpits were barren.

We have no message. Many of them had no message for the suffering, for the fearful. Pity the preacher who doesn't have a message in the coming storm.

When God has a message. We need to have been shut in with God. We need to have been have received the word so that we're ready now to speak.

You're called to stand, you're called to serve and you will be called at some point to speak, even if it's to one person, a child, an older person, a friend, a neighbor. You're called to speak when it's time to speak. We need to be ready.

And finally, we're also called to supplicate. We're called to pray. We're called to pray.

To supplicate means to ask or beg for something earnestly or humbly. We have nothing to offer others of any eternal value, but that which we first receive from God. And where do we receive this from? God, but in prayer.

Now, was the apostle Paul praying? There's no doubt he was. I want to see where I where I see this in scripture. I want to show you.

OK, he warned them, don't don't take off. The storm's coming, they ignore his warning, they end up in the midst of the storm. And it says in verse 21, but after a long absence.

Paul now, in other words, he sort of just disappeared, they didn't listen to him. What is he doing in this absence? No doubt he is alone with the father. He's praying.

He's seeking the face of God. Lord, what is my purpose in this storm? Lord, what do you have to say to us? What do you have to say to me? And how do I know he was praying? Because of God's answer to him when he says, don't be afraid after it's when he starts to speak now in verse 24, fear not. Paul said, Thou must be brought before Caesar and, lo, God has given thee all them that sail with thee.

This is what God spoke to him. And therefore he's able to say to them, sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe, God, that it shall be even as it was told me. So no doubt in that time of abstinence, Paul is praying.

He's praying. Now, I want to ask you a question. Who is on your ship right now? Who has God placed on your ship? It can whoever's on you in your workplace.

In your home, your children, your grandchildren. Your neighbor. Those that you see every week, whoever it is, who is in your boat, who's going to pray for them if you don't? Who's going to intercede for them if not you? You are called.

This is your calling. Rise up to your calling in the midst of the storm. You are called to pray for those that God has placed in your path, that he's put in your boat.

Now, turn to Luke chapter 11, Luke chapter 11. Here, Jesus is teaching us how to pray that the disciples ask him, Lord, teach us to pray when they heard him pray. And he gives us this model prayer.

But then he gives us a story to go with it, beginning in verse five. And he said unto them, which of you shall have a friend and shall go unto him at midnight and say unto him, friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine is in his journey, has come to me and I have nothing to set before him. How many of us have felt this before? At a midnight hour, it's a dark night.

It's in the midst of a storm. It's a critical hour. God brings someone to you and you don't know what to say.

You have nothing to set before him. God forbid that someone in need comes across our path to us and we have nothing to set before them. And what many to say, oh, wait, wait, wait, let me go call the pastor.

No, God sent them to you. You feed them. You better have something to set before them.

But how can I be sure that I'll have something to set before them? We need to keep reading verse seven. And he from within shall answer and say, trouble me not, the door is now shut. My children are with me in bed.

I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needed. And I say unto you, ask and it shall be given you seek and you shall find knock and it shall be open unto you for everyone that asketh, receiveth and he that seeketh findeth unto him that knocketh it shall be open.

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? The reason we had nothing to give set before them is because we weren't filled and overflowing with the Holy Spirit. So the answer is ask for what seek for what not and what will be open. The spirit of God, in other words, Lord, I need you.

Oh, I need you. Fill me afresh with your spirit that when someone comes to be in need, I have something I have bread. The Holy Spirit will bring to your remembrance the word of God and you have something to set before them at that midnight hour in a critical need.

So the point is, brothers and sisters, we better be a praying. We've got to get back to setting ourselves to prayer. I'll promise you, if you are in the habit of shutting yourself in the prayer closet and seeking the face of God and your daily in communion with God, you will have something to set before them.

I assure you, you don't have to think, OK, what am I going to say? What is that formula? What did I remember? What did I memorize? No, you've been in the presence of God. Paul, after long abstinence, had something to say. You, after much time alone with God in prayer, will have something to say to those in need.

You'll know what to do. You'll have you'll be ready to serve. You'll be you'll have something to give them.

You'll be amazed at how the spirit of God will speak through you that exact word that they needed, that direction they needed, because it's not you and it's not me. It's the spirit of the living God, the Holy Ghost living in us, pouring out through us like a river. We are called to pray, to shut ourself in with God, and we're called to intercede.

Do you remember the story of a man who was paralyzed and lying on a mat that desperately needed to get to Jesus, but he couldn't get to Jesus on his own? Thank the Lord, he had four friends, four friends that grabbed that mat and said, we'll get you to Jesus. This is a picture of intercessory prayer. They're not going to get to him on their own.

Lord, we're going to bring him to you. We're going to set him before you in prayer. And they were diligent about it.

They were they were they were persistent. They get to the house and the house is crowded. Jesus is in the midst.

How are we going to get him in there? We'll find a way. You see, persistent, prevailing prayer keeps asking, keeps seeking, keeps knocking until there's a way. Lord, do you answer? And they get up on the roof and they dig and they start digging that roof.

Can you imagine the dirt falling in and all of a sudden there's a hole in the ceiling and they lower that man? And the scripture says when Jesus saw their faith. He forgave that man for his sins and said, get up and walk. That's a picture of intercessory prayer.

You're called to pray for those who are in your boat. You're called, you're called saints, you're called to shine in the storm. And this is partly how you do it.

I'll come to a close. I remember one time in Boyce City when I was pastoring Boyce City, Oklahoma, there was a Hispanic fellow that came to me one day and he was in trouble. And anyway, he he he had an encounter with Christ.

He was born again, but he had also had a past of drugs and alcohol and sin. And he began to meet on a weekly basis. He was growing in the Lord, but then all of a sudden he didn't show up.

What's wrong? And then the next week and I should have checked on him and I didn't next week, he still doesn't show up. But I remember before that I said to him, Javier, you have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your savior. You have repented, turned from your sin and put your faith in the Lord Jesus.

You don't have to sin. You don't ever have to go back. But if somehow you did, I want you to always remember this, you come back, come back first to the Lord.

But I want you to know you can always come back here. And we'll pray together. If you start struggling again, come back.

Well, he didn't show up those couple of weeks and then I get a call from his wife. Brother Brian, it's Javier. He's he's fallen.

And he was so ashamed after he fell, he just ran away. She said, I think he went all the way back to old Mexico. I said, we've got to pray this poor little wife now with the children.

She is so broken. She's going through a storm, right? I said, we're going to pray. We're going to call upon the Lord.

And we we gathered some others who know how to pray. And we got on our knees and we cry out to God and we prayed specifically, Lord, convict him of sin, righteousness, coming judgment, and bring so much conviction upon him that he cannot eat and he cannot sleep and bring him back home. One day, but not very long after we pray, maybe three days after we prayed, it was on a Sunday morning and I got to the church early and I was in this room praying and there's a window right out right next to where I would pray there.

And I looked out the window and there's this man walking up the sidewalk. He looked terrible. His head was down.

I didn't know who it was, but I knew he was coming toward the door. So I walked out. I started walking toward him.

He said, Brother Brian, I said, Javier, is that you? He came up and he said, I've been in Mexico for three days. He said, Brother Brian, I could not eat. I could not sleep.

And I'm saying, praise the Lord inside. That's what the saints pray. Don't let him eat.

Don't let him sleep. I see somebody was praying. Somebody was interceding and he repented and God restored him and God restored that family back together.

We've got to pray, saints. We've got to pray like the Apostle Paul prayed. We've got to be God's provision and somebody else's storm rise to your calling.

Stand, serve, speak and supplicate, pray. And here's the end. Verse thirty nine.

Because one man, the Apostle Paul, woke up to his calling in the midst of the storm. Not one single soul on this ship perished, but they all arrived safely upon the land. Verse thirty nine.

When it was day, they knew not the land, but they discovered a certain creek with a shore into the which they were minded if it were possible to thrust in the ship. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea and loosed the rudder bands and hoist up the main sail to the wind and made toward shore and falling into a place where two seas met. They ran the ship aground and the four parts stuck fast and remained unmovable.

But the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves and the soldiers counsel was to kill the prisoners less any of them should swim out and escape. But the centurion willing to save Paul kept them from their purpose and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea and get to land and the rest, some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land.

What did God tell Paul? Not one single one will perish. And what did Paul say? Not a hair of your head. You're we're going to make it.

But listen, listen to the word of the Lord. And because one man rose up to his calling, they all reached the other side. Glory be to God.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for your holy and living word. And Lord Jesus, you you said to us that in this world we will have tribulation.

We will have tribulation, but be of good cheer because you've overcome the world. You said, yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. So we know, Lord, we're not immune to coming storms.

In fact, we know we go through some of them and we don't know all that is to come. But my prayer is that every single precious brother and sister is hearing the sound of my voice and all of us that above all have heard you speak to our hearts this day. Would you in your mercy and by your grace help us, Lord, to rise to our calling, to see that this life is not about us.

It's all about you. Help us to fix our eyes upon you that we may be filled with faith. Steadfast, unwavering faith to stand in the coming storm.

Let us be your hands and feet, Lord Jesus, as we seek to serve others, open our mouth wide and put your words in there and let us speak your words of life to others who are in desperate need in the midst of the storm. And Lord, I pray that you would pour out upon us a spirit of prayer so that we will begin to intercede and pray for others like never before until they come home, until they have an encounter with you. The living God help us to lay hold of you and to pray and not stop praying until you answer.

Lord, we love you. We exalt you and we thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are king of kings. Our Lord of Lords will take us to the other side in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

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