

# The Church That Stands

by Brian Long

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*The church must be prepared with faith, hope, and love for the coming storm, trusting in God's sovereignty and standing on his promises.*

**Duration:** 47:39

**Scripture:** Mark 4:35, 1 Corinthians 13:13

**Topics:** "Faith And Hope", "Church Perseverance"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of the church standing strong in the midst of coming storms, drawing parallels between the disciples' experience with Jesus calming the storm and the church's need for faith, hope, and love to remain steadfast. It highlights the necessity for the church to have unwavering faith in Christ, unshakable hope in His promises, and a compelling love that reaches out to others in the midst of trials.

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## Transcript

Praise the Lord. So good to see all of you here again tonight. Praise God.

We're going to turn in our Bibles to Mark chapter four, gospel of Mark chapter four. And when you find Mark chapter four, I also want you to turn to first Corinthians 13 and we're going to read one verse in first Corinthians 13 and you'll understand as the message goes on where these two fit together. I want to talk to you tonight about the church that stands in the coming storm, the church that will stand in the coming storm.

First Corinthians chapter 13 verse 13 says, and now abide or remain faith, hope, love these three, but the greatest of these is love. There's three that will remain faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love. Now let's go to Mark chapter four, gospel of Mark chapter four.

And we begin reading in verse 35 on the same day when evening had come, he that is Jesus said to them, let us cross over to the other side. 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 and a great windstorm arose and the waves beat into the boat so that it was already filling, 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? Then he arose and rebuke the wind and said to the sea, peace, be still. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm and he said to them, why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? And they feared exceedingly and said to one another, who

can this be that even the wind and the sea obey him? Let's pray.

Father, we thank you so much for your presence here tonight. We thank you that not a single one of us is here by accident or coincidence, but you've drawn us together father for this very evening and father, we ask you to speak directly to our hearts and Lord, I just feel that you want to prepare us Lord for what is to come. I pray God that you would open our ears to hear your voice.

You would open our hearts to yield to your spirit and to obey your word and you would take us Lord closer and deeper, closer to you and you would prepare us Lord as your people for the coming storm in Jesus name. Amen. Honestly, brothers and sisters, I struggled with this message a bit until a brother Sam started leading us in these great hymns and it seemed like every hymn the Lord was saying, yes, I gave this to you.

You're on track. Sometimes, I don't know if you're a preacher, you go through that. You're wondering, Lord, do I have the right message? I thought I heard from you on this.

And then you have some doubts arise. But through those great hymns over and over again, the spirit of God confirmed. Yes, this is what I want you to share with the people tonight.

So let's open our hearts and our ears to hear. Um, there is a storm coming. There is a storm coming in these last days and it is a storm that will be so violent and so fierce and so black and so dark and everything that can be shaken will be shaken and only what cannot be shaken will remain.

There is a coming storm when it will come. I don't know. You know, I know all of us go through personal storms in our own lives and this, this message will apply some to that.

But I'm talking about a storm that's coming that is so fierce that anybody that's not in Christ will, will not remain, will shake and fall apart. And it is essential, brothers and sisters, that we as the church of Jesus Christ are in Christ and prepared with faith, hope and love before the coming storm. When the storm comes, it's too late to get ready.

Now is the time for us to get ready. Now is the time for us to hear from the Lord and to be ready for the coming storm. Just a few scriptures.

Second Timothy chapter three verse one says, this know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. The NIV says, but Mark this, there will be terrible times in the last days. The NASB says, but realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.

We're talking about perilous times, terrible times, difficult times will come. Our Lord Jesus said it this way. In Luke chapter 21 we can look at this together.

Luke chapter 21 in verse 10 Jesus said to them, nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom and there will be great earthquakes in various places and famines and pestilences and there will be fearful sites and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake, but it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.

Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed

even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death and you will be hated by all for my name's sake, but not a hair of your head shall be lost.

Let's skip on down to verse 25. He says, and there will be signs in the sun, in the moon and in the stars. And on the earth, distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring men's hearts, failing them for fear from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now, when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads because your redemption draws near. Brothers and sisters, there is a church that will not sink under the darkest of storm clouds.

And in the midst of the most violent storm, there is a church that will stand. There is a people of God who will stand by the grace of God. And this church will be characterized by three God given graces that even the most violent of storms can never drown out nor blow away three things that will remain steadfast and true of the church that stands in the storm.

They are faith, hope, and love, faith in Christ, hope in Christ and love in and for Christ. Those three will remain unshakable. Now in Mark chapter four, the disciples were about to have their faith in Jesus tested.

Someone said that faith not tested can't be trusted. Faith is not faith until it's tested in the fire and tested in the storm. And there's nothing that there's nothing that tests our faith like the storms of life.

After a long day of teaching the multitudes and of performing several miracles, Jesus stepped in the boat on the shores of the sea of Galilee and he said to his disciples, let us pass over to the other side. And as they make their way out to sea, suddenly without any warning, a violent storm arose on the sea. The waves crashed into the boat.

The winds howled. The disciples were being tossed around like little rag dolls. You can imagine this being dark, a violent storm.

They were, they were, they were paralyzed with fear. The boat began to fill up with water and the disciples from the disciples perspective, Jesus doesn't even seem to care. He seems so uncaring and oblivious to it all for he is near the back of the sheep, the ship asleep on a pillow.

Can you imagine what they were thinking? I can imagine some of them saying, you know, not wanting them to wake up, but at the same, I mean, not wanting to wake him up, but at the same time wishing he would wake up, you know, this violent storm and saying, boy, it's sure getting bad out here. I sure wish someone would wake up. And the Lord is asleep on a pillow in the midst of this storm.

Finally, they can't take it anymore. And they go and wake Jesus up and say, Lord, don't you care? We're going to drown. We're going to die.

And Jesus rose and rebuked the wind and said, peace be still. And that whole storm stopped immediately. The sea became calm.

And Jesus says to his disciples, why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? The church that stands in the storm that will that will stand in the coming storm, however violent that storm may be, is not a church that is full of fear, but a church that's full of faith. Why are you so fearful? To be fearful is to be full

of fear. Jesus has called us to be faithful, to be faithful is to be full of faith.

These three remain faith, hope and love. And the disciples lack this first one for sure. Faith in the coming storm.

They doubted the presence of Christ. What would have happened had the disciples shifted their focus from the fear of the waves and the power of the storm to the greatest truth of all? And that is Jesus is in our boat. Jesus is here.

Jesus is with me. Folks, peace is not the absence of the storm. Peace is the presence of God.

You and I as Christians will go through storms. We are going to suffer. We are called to suffer.

We are called to trials. We are called to storms. In this world, you will have tribulation, Jesus said.

But be of good cheer because I've overcome the world. Peace doesn't come from the absence of storms. Peace comes in the presence, having the presence of Jesus Christ.

And he's in the boat. Amy Carmichael said it this way in one of her poems. Thou art the Lord who slept upon the pillow.

Thou art the Lord who soothed the furious sea. What matter beating wind or tossing billow? If only we are in the boat with thee. Hold us quiet through the age long minute while thou art silent and the wind is shrill.

Can the boat sink while thou, dear Lord, are in it? Can the heart faint that waiteth upon thy will? And the answer is never a thousand times. No, if Jesus is in our boat, we are not sinking. If he is with me, he will bring us through the waters, through the flood, through the fire.

We're going to the other side. Peace is the presence of Christ. And this is where faith comes.

You and I will not get great faith by looking to ourselves. We sure won't get great faith by looking at the storms and the circumstances around us. Great faith comes by focusing in upon the great faithfulness of God.

Our God does not lie. Our God is in complete sovereign control of every storm and every storm that he leads us through. And because of that, we can trust in his sovereignty.

We can trust that he's all powerful. They doubted his presence. They doubted his power.

They doubted that he cared. All unbelief, unbelief that grieves the heart of God. Faith, trust in the power of God.

Trust in the goodness of God. Trust in the faithfulness of God. Trust that God does care and that he's with me.

You and I, brothers and sisters, are not orphans. We're not abandoned orphans. When the storm comes, the world needs to see that the church of Jesus Christ can lift her head and praise him in the storm because they know they are not alone.

We're not orphans. He is with us. And whatever he's called us to go through, he will go through with us.

And we can do so with boldness and faith in him. Something comes to mind when our children were very small. I remember Luke was just barely big enough to walk and he went down to the barn with me.

And we had this pen full of bulls, big, you know, terrifying looking bulls. And I had to go from one side of the pen to the other. So I just set him up on a big post.

I said, you sit here on the fence. And I started to walk through the pen to the other side to open the gate or do whatever I needed to do. And as I walked away from him, he just panicked, began to scream and cry.

He was terrified. Daddy, daddy, bulls. And I walked back to him and I picked him up in my arms and said, OK, you go with me.

As we're walking through the midst of the bulls, he sticks out his chest. It's bulls, bulls. You know, all fear was gone.

There was one thing that made the difference. He was with me. He knew I would not abandon him.

He knew I would not drop him. I want to remind you, brothers and sisters, you will go through a storm and I will go through a storm. And we'll go through a storm together.

Jesus Christ will not abandon his own. He has promised you, I will never, ever leave you. I will never forsake you.

He says, go and preach the gospel. In essence, I'm paraphrasing. Go and preach the gospel, baptize, make disciples.

And he says, Lo, I'm with you always, even to the end of the age. He will not abandon his own. They doubted his power.

Lord, Master, don't you care? We're going to drown. We're going to perish. But what a shock they got when Jesus woke up.

He rebuked the wind. This master of the wind, maker of the rain, rebukes the storm and everything becomes calm. The sea becomes like glass.

I guarantee you when Jesus rebuked that storm, not a single gust of wind dare move. Not one drop of water dare move. There's power in the voice of our Lord.

And he is in absolute sovereign control of every storm, of every trial, of every tribulation. God is in control. Don't ever forget that.

You may not need to know that as much right now as you will someday. Don't ever forget it. God is in control.

Regardless of what I see around me, God is in control and I can trust him. He's faithful. They doubted his care and said, Lord, don't you care? And some of us perhaps are guilty of the same unbelief.

Lord, don't you care? Charles Spurgeon said this, he says, to doubt the Lord Jesus is to crown his head with thorns of the sharpest kind. Almighty God gave his only son for you. Does he care? Jesus Christ sweat great drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane as he prayed for if there be any other way, Father, let this cup pass from me.

Does he care? Jesus Christ stretched out his arms and died on a cross in your place in mine. Does he care? He does care. He cares for his own and he has to do nothing else to prove to us that he cares.

They doubted his care. They doubted his promise. Notice in verse 35, Jesus said very clearly on the same day when evening had come, he said to them, let us cross over to the other side.

Now, that's the word of the Lord. If Jesus says we're going to the other side, beloved, we're going to the other side. We're going.

That's his word. That's his promise. They doubted his promise.

Every promise in the book that's in Christ is for me and for you, and I encourage you, brothers and sisters, if you're going through a trial, even now, go to scripture, go to the book of Isaiah, start in about chapter 40 and turn right and you start underlining and highlighting every time God says, I will, every time God says it makes a promise, someone says and has said to me before, brother Brian, that's not for you. That was for Israel. Yes, it was for Israel, but it's also for me because the scripture says in second Corinthians chapter two, chapter one, all the promises of God and God in Christ are for me.

They are. Yes. And they are.

Amen. They offer us and God wants us to lay hold of those promises and stand upon those promises and pray those promises through. And sometimes you're standing upon a promise and you pray and you pray and you pray and you think God has failed to keep it.

He's not failed to keep it. You lay hold of that promise and you can trust him. Our God cannot lie.

He's a covenant keeping God. He's a faithful God. I remember a true story of a man by the name of Roger Sims.

It's a true story. He was released. He'd just come back from the military.

He was discharged. He was so excited to be back on American soil and to be going home. And he thought he would save a little money.

So he just hitchhike on the way home, still had his uniform on, had his bags packed and was walking down the highway hitchhiking when a fancy black Cadillac pulled over to pick him up. He stepped in the car. This businessman reached over and said, my name's Hanover.

Roger Sims is my name. They met each other and they're going down the road. He says, are you headed to Chicago? Because that's where I'm headed.

He says, no, I'm not headed quite that far. But he says, my home will be on the way. So they take off down the road.

They're talking back and forth to one another. And Roger Sims suddenly has this incredible burden to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with this businessman. But he's so nervous and he's fighting it back and forth.

Finally, he just takes a big swallow, asks the Lord to give him courage. And he says, Mr. Hanover, I want to talk to you about something very, very important. Hanover said, go ahead.

And he began to preach to him the gospel of Jesus Christ. He says, all of a sudden, Mr. Hanover pulled the car off the side of the road and he was scared. He thought, well, that's it.

He's going to have me get out. But instead, he bowed his head and he began to weep. He said, I need I need Jesus.

I need the one you're talking about. And Mr. Hanover called out to the Lord and was born again. And they begin to rejoice with one another and pray with one another.

And then he took off again. He took Roger Sims to the town which he was from, let him out, gave him a business card, said, if you're ever in Chicago, please look me up. And Roger went on to his home.

Five years later, Roger Sims is now married. He now has a family of his own. He has a he has a job now and he is scheduled to go on a business trip to Chicago.

He takes out his suitcase and he goes to pack and he finds this little white business card that Mr. Hanover had given him five years earlier. He looked on there. Sure enough, there's his company.

There's a business name and there's the address. He said, when I get to Chicago, I'm going to go see him, see how he's doing. He gets to Chicago a day early, finds this address.

And sure enough, there's this huge building, Hanover Enterprises. He walks in, goes to the receptionist, ask her if he can meet with Mr. Hanover. She looks a little puzzled.

She said, well, sir, you won't be able to meet with Mr. Hanover, but you can meet with Mrs. Hanover. He says, OK. So she points the way, gets on an elevator, goes up to this office, big, beautiful, plush office, walks in.

And here's this lady on the other side of a big desk. She stretches out her hand and she says, you knew my husband. Yes, ma'am, I did.

He said he said he gave me a ride five years ago, I was discharged from the army. And she looked at him sort of puzzled and she said, what day was that? He said, May 7th, the day I was discharged five years ago. And she said, did anything kind of odd happen that day? Yes, ma'am, he said, I shared the gospel of Jesus.

I'm a Christian. I shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with your husband. He pulled off the side of the road, began to weep, cried out to God.

And your husband received Christ that day. She burst into tears, just sobbing her eyes out. He said, ma'am, is everything OK? She said, my husband died five years ago, May 7th, in a head on collision.

He must have had that car crash just after he dropped you off. She said, I had been praying for his salvation for years, standing on the promise of God that he would save my husband. And here all these five years, I thought God had failed to keep his promise when all along he kept it.

Sometimes we don't see the fulfillment of it with these eyes. But I can assure you, brothers and sisters, when God makes a promise and you stand on that promise, he will never, ever fail to keep his word. Trust in his word, it's true.

Trust in his promise. Lay hold of it with all that is within you. Our God is a faithful God.

And you and I will need to know the promises of God when we go through the storms. We do not walk by sight. We walk by faith.

We walk by faith, not by sight. Standing upon his word. Now, these three remain faith.

We must be a people of faith, trust in God. And then there is hope, unshakable, unwavering hope. When the world talks about hope, it's a hope so kind of hope.

But when the Bible talks about hope, it's a no so kind of hope. It is an assurance. My hope is built on nothing less.

We saying then Jesus, blood and righteousness. That is a hope that is a solid rock, brothers and sisters, that cannot sink and that will not fail. Look with me, if you will, in Hebrews chapter six.

This incredible hope that we have. Hebrews chapter six and verse 11, it says, and we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end. That you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.

For when God made a promise to Abraham because he could swear by no one greater, he swore by himself, saying, surely blessing, I will bless you and multiplying, I will multiply you. And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise for men indeed swear by the greater. And an oath for confirmation is for them and an end of all dispute.

Thus, God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath that by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie. We might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the presence behind the veil where the forerunner has entered for us.

Even Jesus, having become high priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek, this hope we have in Christ is an anchor of the soul. It is sure it is steadfast. Jesus said, we're going to the other side.

As long as I'm in Christ, I'm going to the other side. And you're going to the other side. And we can rest confident in that.

And you know how we can exercise this great faith and hope that we have in Christ, brothers and sisters, and how we must exercise it. One of the greatest ways to exercise it is to offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually. In the midst of the fiercest storm.

Look at the testimony of Jesus Christ. When in the midst of the fiercest storm, God's people lift their heads and begin to sing praises. When it doesn't make sense to anybody, and they're singing praises because their hope is sure, it's steadfast.

God forbid that when we go through the storm that the whole world will go through, the world sees nothing different from the church than themselves. God forbid that they see a church that's crumbling and shaking and fearful and acting as if we're orphans and as if we're going to sink. No, we're the people of God.

We can lift our heads and know that our redemption is drawing nigh. We can sing in the storm. We can praise Him because of who He is.

We can praise Him because He has everything under control. And that's what God has called us to do. To praise the Lord, to rejoice in Him, to sing to Him even in the midst of the storm.

We were years ago when I was pastoring a church in Boy City, Oklahoma. My wife and family and I had decided to go on to take a couple of weeks off during the Thanksgiving time of year as a holiday. And so we we left and I got a phone call the following Sunday morning.

We had a group of brothers and sisters that would lead us in praise and worship. And there was a couple that in that group, the Perkins, Jim and Gaylene Perkins. They love the Lord with all their heart.

They had three children. I received a phone call and they said, Brother Brian, we have something terrible to tell you. Jim and Gaylene have been killed in a car accident this morning.

My heart just sunk. I drove back immediately to Boy City and met with the family, that their parents, her parents met with the three children. And of course, everybody is grieving.

Everybody is heartbroken. But I'll never forget this. Those three children, one in their early 20s, the other in their late teens.

They looked at me and we were preparing the funeral service and they said, Brother Brian, we want to sing. I said, you want to sing? We want to sing. What do you want to sing? We want to sing, Blessed be the name of the Lord.

And at their own parents funeral, these kids, they were grieving their hearts out, stood and lifted their heads with such genuine faith and sang, Blessed be the name of the Lord. He gives and he takes away. My heart will choose to say, Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, that's a testimony of solid hope, hope and assurance. I will see my mom and dad again. They were in Christ.

That's the kind of hope that I'm talking about. That's the kind of faith. And you lift your head and you lift your voice and you sing praise to Jesus because he is worthy.

What would have happened on this night if the disciples, though they were afraid, suddenly made a choice to say, look, Jesus is in the boat. Let him sleep. We won't sink as long as he's in here.

Let's praise the Lord in the storm and begin to sing and rejoice. That's the church that will stand in the coming storm. She will have faith.

She will have hope. And finally, she will have the greatest of all. She will have love.

This is something they were lacking. You say, how do you know they were lacking love? Look with me careful at this this passage again. In Mark, chapter four and verse thirty six, it says, 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. Have you ever seen that part? They were not the only boat in the storm. Other little boats were also with him.

Other little boats were also going through the same storm, and they didn't have Jesus in their boat. What about the other little boats? They come to the Lord and say, Lord, don't you care we're going to drown? Jesus could have easily said, don't you care that they perish? I'm in the boat with you. They don't have Christ in the boat, faith, hope and love.

These three remain. And brothers and sisters, the love that we need in the coming storm is a love for those other little boats, those other little ships that are also going to go through the same storm. But they don't have the same hope we have yet.

They don't have the same faith. Do you have any compassion or concern for the other little boats? Can I tell you about the church that is sure to sink? The loveless church, the church that has become so inwardly focused and self-centered, she has lost sight of the fact that there are lost souls perishing on the outside of her walls. What about the other little boats? We need the compelling love of Christ to grip our hearts again, to go after the other little boats.

What would have happened if the disciples would have said, Lord, what about the other little ships? We still have room. That's what the Lord would have said. We still have room.

Bring them in. Let's go get them. Rescue the perishing.

That's our call. The loveless church, characterized by self-centeredness and self-selfishness, always seeking her own, no longer looks like Jesus. No longer looks any different from the world.

I guarantee you the world will not be thinking about anybody other than themselves in the coming storm. What did he say? He told us that men in the last days will become lovers of themselves, seeking their own. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

Where is the church who will look altogether different from the world, that will love the other little boats? Love them enough to go, Jesus said in Matthew 24, because iniquity shall abound, the love of most will grow cold. In the midst of those end times, last days, when the love of most has grown cold, there will be a people of God whose love is burning even brighter than ever before. Who have a concern for the lost, the perishing, the dying.

That's our call. Love never seeks its own. He came for those other little lost ships.

The church that cannot sink, that will stand in the storm, that will shine like a beacon light in the storm, is the church that forgets about herself in the storm and reaches out to the other little ships. We're destined for such a time as this, brothers and sisters. This can be the church's finest hour.

A revived church that shines like a beacon light in the coming of days of tribulation and storms and dark perilous times. A revived church that will rescue the perishing. They say that when the Titanic went down, that big ship that they said even God cannot sink.

That Titanic ship went down. It hit an iceberg and went down in 1912. When it went down, these unspeakably evil, selfish people shut all the lower class in the lower deck.

Shut and locked the doors so they couldn't get out because they knew they didn't have enough lifeboats. But even those that they did rescue with the lifeboats, it says one lifeboat meant to carry 65. They only put 28 on board.

Another meant for 40. They only put 12 on board. Over 300 more passengers could have been saved, but they were not because the selfish lifeboats that had plenty of room wouldn't go back to pick them up.

And I wonder sometimes if much of the church of Jesus Christ hadn't become just as selfish. You know what the Lord says? There's still room. There's still room in here.

There's still room. And we're called to go and we're called to compel them to come in. How do I know that? Listen to Luke chapter 14.

The words again of our Lord Jesus Christ. He gave a parable. He said in verse 16, A certain man gave a great supper, invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, Come, for all things are now ready.

But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, I bought a piece of ground and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.

And another said, I've bought five yoke of oxen and I'm going to test them. I ask you to have me excused. Still another said, I married a wife and therefore I cannot come.

So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind. And the servant said, Master, it is done as you commanded.

And still there is room. Still there is room in the boat. Verse 23, Then the master said to the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled.

God's will is for heaven to be populated. God's will is for our boats to be full, our baskets to be full. God's will, God is stirring some of us right now to go, to preach, to love, to compel them to come in.

I think I was sharing with some of the brothers, somebody just the other day, we just finished some revival meetings in Barnsdall, Oklahoma at the lighthouse church there. And there's one young lady there that was just recently saved, not been saved very long, came out of drugs and prostitution. But she's a clean, new virgin in Christ now, pure and holy and spotless and full of fire for Jesus.

And this young lady, every night of every day of those revival meetings, she would go to these drug homes that she had been before. She had opened the door and walk in and tears streaming down her face, plead with them, please come to Jesus. Please, I'm telling you, He's real.

Come, come, come. And those that wouldn't come right then, she said, well, at least come to the meetings. And I remember one night, one girl came in, more than one came in with her.

They didn't all stay. Some got up and left right after I started preaching, but some stayed. And I remember one particular girl gave her heart to Christ that night.

And she was testifying. And she said, I came because I couldn't stand to see Devin crying anymore. She cried with tears, pleading for them to come.

You know, William Booth of the Salvation Army sent some of his preachers out to preach. They preached their hearts out in a certain location and they saw no fruit. Nobody was coming to Christ.

They sent him back a telegram to William Booth saying, we've done all we can do. Can you just go ahead and call off this mission and we'll come home? He sent back a telegram of two words. Try tears.

Try tears. Let's ask God to break our hearts again. Let's ask God to touch our eyes again.

That we may see others and we may see souls as He sees them. And that we may then compel them to come in. They're not all going to come in the first time you ask, brothers and sisters.

The first time you proclaim the gospel. What is keeping Christians from witnessing and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ? One pastor asked me that not very long ago. Brother Brian, what's keeping the church? What's keeping Christians from witnessing, from sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ? Why aren't people leading people? Why isn't the church leading people to Christ anymore? What's missing? Is it more training that we need? Is it more teaching? I said, brother, I believe it's love that is lacking.

It's love that's missing. It's the compelling love of God. It's love, first of all, for Jesus.

If you meet a man who loves fishing, what does he talk about? Fishing. It doesn't matter who's there. He's not ashamed to talk about it.

You meet a woman who loves her children. What does she talk about? Her children. You meet someone who loves cars, who loves football.

They talk about it. You meet somebody who loves Jesus and they can't help but speak about Him. We cannot help but speak about the one we love and who loves us with everlasting love.

And the other thing is, if you really love Jesus, you will love what He loves. And what He loves above all are people. You will love people.

And if you don't love people, you need to ask God to break your heart. I've had to do that when my heart has grown cold and hard and cynical. Lord, break my heart.

Let me see them again. Let me see them as if they were my own daughters and my own sons. And God will do it.

He'll break your heart again. And He's called us to love those other little boats and bring them in, in the coming storm. May God fill us with His love.

You know, sometimes that's the, you've heard this said, you're the only Bible some people will ever read. I read a story one time of two men that were in a prison concentration camp. One was a believer.

This other one was not. The one that was not was dying. He was full of wounds and putrid sores.

And he was dying. He was sick. They were starving to death.

They got one little bowl of rice a day. And he said, you had to separate what was maggots from what was rice so you knew what to eat. And this Christian man every day would take up that sick man and lift up his head after he cleaned out his bowl of rice and give him all the rice that he had.

And he fed him and he cleaned his wounds. And finally, one day he saw this man's dying. He's not going to last much longer.

I must tell him about Jesus. And he said to his friend, he said, friend, I need to tell you about my Jesus. You know what he said? Is he like you? If he's like you, I want to know him.

May that, may he be seen in us, brothers and sisters. Is he like you? If he's like you, I want to know him. Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Christ in you is that unbeliever's hope that will come across your path this week. And when you pray sincerely and ask God, God, bring someone across my path who needs you. He will do it.

You be ready. He will do it. He will do it.

I'll close with this. You all would know this much better than I being so close to the ocean. But the great lighthouses have the great light and the lower lights.

The great light to lead in the ship, the ship into the harbor, the lower lights when they get closer to make sure they make that barge. D.L. Moody told a story. He said on a dark stormy night when the waves rolled like mountains and not a star was to be seen.

A boat rocking and plunging near the Cleveland Harbor. Are you sure this is the harbor? Are you sure this is Cleveland? Asked the captain, seeing only one light from the lighthouse. I'm quite sure, sir, replied the pilot.

Where are the lower lights? They've gone out, sir. Can you make the harbor? We must or we'll perish, sir. And with the strong hand and a brave heart, the old pilot turned the wheel.

But alas, in the darkness, he missed the channel. And with the crash upon the rocks, the boat was shivered and many a life lost in a watery grave. He said, brethren, the master will take care of the great lighthouse.

Let us keep the lower lights burning in the storm. Remember this morning? We're called to shine. We're called to shine, church.

Let's let the lower lights be burning. One of my favorite hymns. Brightly beams our father's mercy from his lighthouse evermore.

But to us, he gives the keeping of the lights along the shore. Let the lower lights be burning. Send a gleam across the wave.

Some poor, fainting, struggling seaman you may rescue, you may save. Dark the night of sin has settled. Loud the angry billows roar.

Eager eyes are watching, longing for the lights along the shore. Trim your feeble lamp, my brother. Some poor sailor, tempest-tossed, trying now to make the harbor in the darkness may be lost.

Let the lower lights be burning. Send a gleam across the wave. Some poor, struggling, fainting seaman you may rescue, you may save.

Let's pray. Father, my prayer and heart's desire is that you make this message a living reality in us. Make us the incarnation of this word, Lord.

We, your people, full of faith in you. Full of hope, unshakable hope, unwavering faith, and full of love that has a compassion, Lord, and a concern for the other little ships that'll go through the same storm. Make us to be like the Apostle Paul in that great, great storm when he was on that ship and it was going down.

That could stand with boldness and love and confidence and minister to a fearful people and even say to them, come on, you need something to eat. Let me give you something to eat. Take heart.

Not a single one of you will be lost as long as you stay with the ship. Make us like that, Lord. Help us to rescue the perishing, to save those dying, Lord.

Make this church, Lord, a lighthouse, a beacon light, a refuge where many, many more lost sinners will come in. They'll be compelled and they'll come in and come in by the droves and they come into a healthy body. Thank you for this church.

Bless, my brothers and sisters. Let your word go deep in our hearts tonight. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen.

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