

In the Midst of the Storm

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the importance of finding purpose in the midst of life's storms, drawing inspiration from the Apostle Paul's experience in Acts 27. It encourages believers to pray, seek God's guidance for their future, and be a source of hope and light to those around them. The message highlights the privilege of sharing Christ with others, even in challenging times, and the transformative power of God's mercy and love in reaching people's hearts.

Scripture: James 5:16, Matthew 5:16, 1 Peter 3:15, 2 Corinthians 1:3, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 10:24, Ephesians 2:10, Galatians 6:2

Topics: "Finding Purpose in Adversity", "Sharing Hope in Difficult Times"

Description

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Transcript

Good afternoon again. It's so great to be with you again and just to be able to share with you from the Word of God. I just love the fact that we can encourage one another in the midst of the difficult days that we're now living in.

It's hard for all of us. I get that. But there's an inner song in the hearts of those of us who have found a living relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Not only a living relationship, but we found out that there's a purpose for our lives that God has, which gives us meaning on the earth beyond just trying to survive or trying to figure out the day that we're living in. For example, in the book of Acts chapter 27, the Apostle Paul, who wrote much of our New Testament, a lot of our New Testament, he was on a journey that God had sent him on. And in the midst of his journey, an incredible storm rose up in the sea.

The storm was so fierce that seasoned sailors were terrified, feeling like they were going to perish. It got to the point where they didn't know what to do. The Bible says that they just threw anchors at the back of the ship, and they hoped for the best.

They hoped for the day. They didn't know. They had no power to stand against the storm.

It was so fierce. And maybe, just maybe, you and I find ourselves in a similar situation today. All of society is trying to halt the slide that seems to be affecting the whole world, but we seem to be so powerless to stop it.

And the best that people can do now is wring their hands and just try to slow it down and hope for a better day. But in the midst of the storm, there was a man who was in the storm, but not really affected by the storm. His name was Paul.

He was in the belly of the ship, and the Bible tells us that he was praying. And as he was praying, God spoke to him about his own future, things that he was going to do. It's so important now that you and I pray and let God speak to us about our future so that the present doesn't become over-terrifying, may I put it that way.

He showed him where he was going to take him and what he was going to do, and he spoke these words. And he said, Paul, I'm also going to give you the 276 people that are sailing on the ship with you. Because I'm going to spare you, I'm going to spare them.

You know, God has spared us because of Jesus Christ, and thank God, that's all I can say, that through us, he spares others on this journey too as well. Now how did God use Paul's life to spare others? Well, when they ran out of hope, suddenly somebody says, where's that man that said he had something to say to us from God? They called for him, and suddenly Paul is standing on the deck of the ship, and he tells the people that if you will listen to me, we're going to go to a place of safety. The ship we're on is going to be broken apart by the waves.

There's going to be some changes in our physical surroundings, but we're going to make it. Everyone grab a piece of wood when the ship breaks apart, and God has promised we're going to make it to the other side. And then Paul does something just phenomenal that I love.

The scripture tells us that he took a loaf of bread and broke it. Now the ship, you have to understand, the ship is going down. The waves are so big, they're destroying the back of the ship.

It's starting to fall apart piece by piece, and in the midst of this storm, Paul takes a loaf of bread, breaks it, and gives thanks to God. Can you imagine that? The way I see it is Paul says, Lord, thank you that you saw fit to let me go through this storm for the sake of these people. I want you to really think about that, because sometimes as believers in Christ, we start thinking, wow, the whole purpose of the gospel is that we don't ever have to go through a storm.

Have you ever thought that maybe, just maybe, sometimes some of us are allowed to go through storms, not for our sakes, it's for the sake of the people around us that have never seen anybody with confidence in God. They've never heard anybody that has a word from God. As a matter of fact, they never even considered listening to God until there was nobody else to listen to.

You'd be amazed who'd listen to you now. People that wouldn't have listened to you a year ago or a month ago even, suddenly, as finances are drying up, as diseases are becoming more rampant, as fear is becoming more prevalent in society, suddenly people are interested in what you have to say. You know, that's the mercy of God.

Some people say, well, it's all judgment. No, no, no, no. Mercy still triumphs over judgment.

Judgment is final. Mercy is what God does in the midst of that journey that would lead to judgment were there not somebody there to speak on God's behalf. What a great, great privilege it is to share Christ with somebody.

As a matter of fact, when I go home, I'm going to knock on my neighbor's door. I had this thought in my heart this morning, and just ask them, how are you doing? Is there something I can get you? Do you need anything? You know, you might be surprised. I might be surprised that maybe hearts are a lot more open than they used to be.

I'm in the storm too, and I thank God I'm in the storm because my value system is about people, other people, and by God's grace they will be saved. Ask God to give you heaven's perspective on your life. Ask the Lord Jesus Christ to show you why He allows trials and difficulties, temptations.

These things come into every life, but it's not always as dark as it seems. There were 276 people who got to hear about Jesus Christ and see the power of God because one man did not give up in the midst of the storm. He prayed.

When he prayed, God spoke to him. I encourage you to pray. Take time right now and just pray.

Say, Lord, just give me peace in the storm and show me the reason for my life and show me the people around me that might be open if I would speak to them. Give me the courage, oh God, to speak for you and help me to have a communion service of my own and go home and break a loaf of bread and say, Lord, thank you. Thank you that you've let me go through this hard time for the sake of somebody around me that just needed to know that you are there.

Oh, this Christian life is a wonderful life. The power of God is a mystery in one sense until it gets to flow through us for the sake of other people. It's what we teach at our Bible school.

The true ministry, true Christianity is living for the benefit of others. May that be your portion. Let your life count now.

We have been given an incredible opportunity to see a great harvest for God's kingdom. Love you so much. I'll be talking to you again soon.

Stay strong. God bless you.

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