

# Shipwrecks

by John McGregor

---

*The sermon explores the lessons from shipwrecks, urging Christians to be bold witnesses and rely on God's guidance amidst life's storms.*

**Duration:** 39:09

**Scripture:** Exodus 32:26, Matthew 6:33, John 1:38, Acts 27:10-11, Acts 27:21-25

**Topics:** "Falling Away"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses various lessons that can be learned from a biblical text. The first lesson highlighted is the confidence of a spirit-filled servant, as seen in verses 21 through 44. The speaker emphasizes the importance of maintaining courage in the face of challenging circumstances. The second lesson focuses on the rapid changes that can occur in life, using the example of a ship caught in a wind. The speaker encourages listeners to trust in God's control even when they feel out of control. The third lesson explores the console of worldly thinking, highlighting how the non-Christian world bases their decisions on flawed perspectives. The speaker urges believers to rely on God's wisdom rather than worldly wisdom.

---

## Transcript

And lifting our hearts and say good morning to each of you. I want to share from the text that Brad read from Acts chapter 27 this morning, but I want to encourage you just to remember Tuesday night and come together for that 30 minutes. You can come as a family and there won't be any preaching, won't be any singing.

I'll just put on the overhead a number of things to pray for. You can slip in and pray and head out as necessary. If you want to pray all night, that's okay.

Nobody will ask you to leave, but I seldom ask for anything personally. But this morning I'm asking you personally. Come and pray.

Make it a priority. We have needs and the greatest disobedience of the North American church is that we fail to pray together corporately. And so let's not be disobedient to him.

Let's come and pray all who can. Now I'm not trying to put a guilt trip on you if something is there that you just can't do it. But so that's my encouragement.

And we know that more things are wrought by prayer than any other thing. Lessons from shipwrecks. Now there's a title that you could play around with, isn't it? Lessons from shipwrecks.

100 years ago, a little after two in the morning on the 15th of April, the Royal Mail Ship Titanic went under the waves about 300 miles away from Newfoundland and 1,500 plus souls perished in the water that night. And you know, all of our media over the last week or so have had why I even saw the old version, The Night to Remember, advertised on TV and running last night. There's something about that shipwreck that captivates people and that makes us stop and think.

And you know, the ship was built in Belfast. Need I say any more? Although if you go to Belfast, they'll tell you she was okay when she left here. It was the epitome of man's greatest technology and greatest achievement.

The best of the best. And yet, a hundred years on, she's not remembered for the technological achievements, nor for the greatness of the comfort and the plushness of all of those staterooms and so on. But she's remembered because she never made it into New York on that maiden voyage.

Never reached the destination. And you know, the lessons from that shipwreck changed maritime history and work because obviously there weren't enough lifeboats and there were a lot of other lessons that were learned from it. And I want just to walk through a different shipwreck this morning.

Don't worry, I'm not going to preach about the Titanic too much. But just to cause us to think, here's a shipwreck in Scripture and there are some lessons that we can learn from it today. And we're just going to take four thoughts from the text here and allow them to sink into our hearts.

And it's my prayer that God's word will encourage you and equip you. But you know, it's not enough to be encouraged and equipped. It's not enough to have the information from Scripture.

It's meant to change our lives. Just like when that disaster came along a hundred years ago, it caused life change. And so as we study Scripture, it should cause us to make an application personally as well.

So let's just begin and walk through maybe four lessons this morning from this text. In Acts 27 and verse 10 and 11 especially, we see the first thing that we take a lesson from. It's a Christian witness.

A Christian witness. Here is the apostle Paul and he is giving a witness and saying, you know, I think this voyage is going to lead to disaster. And as he shares that, you can tell it's a real woo-hoo kind of moment.

Everybody's excited that the Christian said something, huh? Do you get that as you look at this text? No, of course not. But there's a real lesson here. Often, you know, it's not appreciated in our world when a Christian speaks a word for God.

You notice that? You ever find great discouragement because when you say a word for God, people don't want to listen and they don't want to take any action about what you're speaking about or sharing with them? So here's a Christian's witness. And our media certainly degrades the Christian voice or the Christian message in this kind of poo-pooed as irrelevant and not really necessary. I want to spike that gun this morning.

You think about after a hundred years and all the stuff that we've learned about the Titanic, surely we ought to be able to take some real lessons from the Scripture itself pertaining to a shipwreck in those

days. The lesson is that the world needs the Christian witness. The world needs the Christian voice now more than ever.

And I think that we live in times when people say, well, you know, I've tried to tell them and I've tried to encourage people to go on with the Lord, but they're not listening. And so, you know, what can you do? Isn't that the kind of times really that we walk in? There is a righteousness that God calls people to, and the world doesn't want to listen. And by the world, I mean the non-Christian people in the world around us do not want to listen to that Christian message.

After all, it's kind of going to interrupt and interfere with all the gusto that I can get out of life. Man, I mean, if I listen to those Christians and what they say, I'd be in church. We'd have to have services every day.

You know what we call that? Revival. You see, it's true, isn't it? Those are the kind of things, and it was no different for the Apostle Paul. Now, you would think, surely this great Apostle, man who wrote a third in human terms of the New Testament, he would have had instant success.

Man, he could have, oh, just to be there. No, he faces exactly the same circumstances as you or I, and he is hit by the same lies, and the same sort of negativity, and the same sort of... So one of the lessons we could easy take is that the world wasn't ready to listen then, and it's not ready to listen today, because people want their own way, and they want to go and do their own thing, because that's where joy and happiness is supposed to be, according to the world that we live in. And the end will always justify the means.

As long as I'm happy, it doesn't matter how I got there. But the Bible doesn't teach that, does it? Here, Paul's voice is, in fact, the voice of reason. I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with damage, he says.

And Isaiah 118, God tells us that he is the God of reason. He says, come now and let us reason together. Though your sins are as scarlet, they'll be as white as snow.

Though things can be as bad and as black as ever, they will be cleansed. That's the voice of the Christian witness, isn't it? And he is a voice here speaking of imminent tragedy. And I wonder how many people, if they might open their ears and their heart to the voice of the Scriptures, would avoid so much heartache and so much shipwreck in life.

But the shipwreck is not to be avoided here. Despite his warning, they decide to go on. It's a bit like the old Titanic, isn't it? Full speed ahead, don't worry about the ice field.

We're big enough to go past that. We're fast enough to get by it all. But my dear friends, the truth is that there on the lonely sea, everything came in two hours to a complete loss.

I know that our society doesn't want to hear the voice of the Christian witness, but oh how desperately there needs to be that call to righteousness and to truth. And even the voice of Moses in the Old Testament says, who is on the Lord's side, let him come and stand by me. These are days when Christians need to stand together.

It's an old Scottish preacher, a man who reached thousands and thousands of souls for the Lord Jesus, and it all went back to a young man who wanted to live his own life and live his own way, and he was called to his mother's bedside, and her dying breath to her son was just this. John, would you say a good

word for Jesus? And when he buried his mother, he went on about his life, but he could not get away from those words. John, would you say a good word for Jesus? Until eventually he came to the place of saying, Lord, here I am.

Teach me how to say a good word for you. The second lesson that we see here in this text is there is the counsel of worldly thinking in verses 11 through 13, and there's all kinds of it around today. It shows us how the world, the non-Christian world, bases their decisions.

It's not the right harbor. It's, we can do better than this, and the timing, you know, it's not the right time to be here, and oh, there's the pilot and the captain and all of that human experience pitched in there. All of that worldly counsel to say, oh, I just, I don't feel that we should stay here.

And most of the time, decisions in our world today are based on feelings, feelings. You see, it hasn't changed at all over the centuries, has it? They're probably concerned about finances and the cargo and all of those kind of things, but it comes down to the pilot and the captain, and the voice of the preacher was not heard. And friends, I'd submit to you today, it's the same thing.

It's about feelings, and it's about how we want life to be, all based on what is apparently seen. A good wind, hey! Verse 13, a good wind, that must be a sign. Let's go! And I hear so often, oh, I gotta get a sign.

But remember, Jesus himself said a wicked and perverse generation is looking for a sign. We are called to walk by faith and not by sight. Amen? I'm hoping there's an occasional, okay.

No, I heard that. You see, the problem is there's no greater authority in their mind than themselves. And that's still the problem today, isn't it? There's no greater authority than me.

That's how that decision was based. That's how the decision that drove the Titanic into the ice at full speed was based. Let's get into New York fast! Let's make a show! Oh, it turned out to be one all right, didn't it? And yet, there's still this negativity toward the gospel and the God of heaven, who says, if you come to me and repent of your sin, I'll give you life.

I'll give you truth. I'll give you all that is necessary. Out of this book, my word, you have all that you need.

There is a greater authority in our human thinking. Let me tell you something that the media didn't mention about the Titanic. It's true, she was built in Belfast.

You know, when they launch a ship, what do they do? You must have seen that. Come on, this is the interactive part. Now, stay with the old pastor here.

What do they do? They break the champagne. What a waste of good champagne, huh? And what do they say when they break the champagne? God bless her and all who sail in her. It never happened.

It never happened when the Titanic was launched. There never was any mention of God when the Titanic was launched, except that somebody painted on the bottom, not even God could sink this ship. It's a measure of the total arrogance of where we go when our technology carries us along, and we think that we've gotten so smart, and we think that we've gotten to be so great, and we no longer hear the voice of the Spirit of God.

Sorry, I'm getting cranked up here. Thanks, Al. I love you too, brother.

Psalm 1 verses 1 and 2 say, Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor sits at the place of sin. Blessed, that's the place of blessing. And as you think about worldly counsel in these days, is it not tearing lives apart, ripping lives to pieces? All of our human wisdom and desire and design getting our own way doesn't always lead to happiness.

When I was about 10 years old, my mother sent me to the dentist and a hole in a tooth. And I went to the dentist, probably as close to the dentist's door as I am to the back doors of the sanctuary, and thought, uh-uh, it's gonna hurt if he pulls that tooth out, so I'm not going there. What a wimp, eh, Pastor Brad? You would never do a thing like that, right? No, you'd run too? He's a good man.

So I went home, and what'd I do? I lied to my mother. What did the dentist say? Dentist said, stick something in that hole, a piece of bread or something. It's amazing, the foolishness that mothers believe.

She said, oh really? But you know, she had this curious smile on her face, and I think it's because she knew that not very far down the road, that piece of bread or something was going to start to ache, and it was going to drive me to the place where I would say, okay, okay, I'll go, I'll go. When the tooth was taken out, no more pain. And the simple truth is, the greatest desire of the human heart is a personal, intimate relationship with God and Jesus Christ, a righteous relationship, a relationship full of the knowledge and the presence of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

The simple truth is that nothing else will do, and we'll always be miserable and looking for some kind of out until we come to that place of surrender to the counsel of God's Word and the counsel of God's will. Number three, you look in this text, you see another lesson. Circumstances change quickly in verses 14 through 20.

They took off, they set out, they made a good beginning, but circumstances change so quickly. And, oh dear friends, circumstances do change so quickly, don't they? They're caught in a wind, and there are many kinds of winds that blow these days, aren't there? There are all kinds of lies, there's all kinds of foolish thinking and things that bring pressure just like a wind that blows upon you. Caught in that wind, the next thing that we read in the text is that they are losing control.

Isn't that our greatest fear? When I'm not in control, no longer in charge. Isn't that what happened to Titanic too? Then the text says that they are driven along, and this is what circumstances do to us. They drive us along.

They say, well, you'll never change. It'll never be any different. You'll never get out of this.

You are not going to make it. You're not important. You're a loser.

You're not going to ever amount to anything, and circumstances drive us along, and we believe all the lies of the devil. Those children that you raise for Christ, they'll never come back to him, and circumstances drive us along. Those issues and things that you face, you'll never, and circumstances drive us along.

There's one man in this boat who's not driven by circumstances. And oh, I do love this passage. I really look at what happens here.

The cargo is dumped. The ship equipment is dumped. There's darkness and storm, and the text tells us that all hope is lost.

Talk about discouragement by the time you get down to verse 20. My New American Standard Version says then, storm was assailing us, and from then on, all hope of being saved was gradually abandoned. Isn't it interesting? It doesn't say that it just happened.

We abandoned it. It says it was gradually abandoned. What was happening is every circumstance that came along was another hit, another one.

Oh, it's dark now. We can't even see. Oh, look at this.

We don't know where the rocks are. Look at this. Another hit, and on, and on, and on, and on it goes.

Are not the storms of life exactly the same today? You see, when decisions are made on the basis of human wisdom and not on the Word of God, it only leads one way. It leads to disaster. Titanic is an illustration.

This text, an illustration too. Here's the lesson. Don't base your decisions on the wisdom and advice of this world.

Base your decisions and your life on the Word of the living God. You see, in all of those changing circumstances, Paul had something that the others did not. What is it? He had an attachment to the one who does not change.

Hourly things were changing over those 14 days of that ship in trouble, but there is one who is connected to the one who says in Malachi 3 and verse 6, I, the Lord, change not. You probably heard me once before use this little humor to illustrate this point, but forgive me if I use it over again, of the grandfather and the grandson and the donkey coming down the mountain, and at the first village they say, how stupid are those two. Look at them walking, one on either side of the donkey, when one of them could be riding it.

So they put the little boy on the donkey, and in the next village they say, isn't that terrible? That old man has to walk, and that young fellow who has all the energy in the world is sitting on that donkey just smiling. And so they took him off and put the old man on, and they went on down to the next village, and they said there, isn't that disgusting? Look at that old man sitting up there in luxury, laughing, riding on the back of the donkey, and the poor little fellow has to walk alongside. To make a long story short, when they got to the bottom of the mountain, the grandfather and the boy were carrying the donkey.

The world and its wisdom always has those kind of things, doesn't it? We better take the fourth one so that John can wrap up, and we'll be home before the snow. Amen? There's not going to be any snow. A little faith here.

Number four. Would you notice in this text the confidence of a spirit-filled servant? In verses 21 through 44. We didn't read all that way, and we won't take time to do it now, but let's just read 21 through 25 again.

When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, Man, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss. Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage. Keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

For this very night an angel of God, to whom I belong and whom I serve, stood before me, saying, Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand before Caesar, and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing

with you. Therefore keep up your courage, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told, but we must run aground on a certain island.

Here is one in the midst of all of that who knew the will and the mind of God, one who had spent the night not worrying but praying, and when he stands up he has something to say. And he is able to say it with all the confidence of heaven. He brought a message from the Lord to everybody on that ship, to that hopeless situation.

God speaks life, and things happen exactly as God has said. There is the loss of the ship, but Paul was right. There was no need to fear, because there was no loss of life.

What a miracle in those days that someone would have the confidence to get up and say, this is what's going to happen. How can it be? Maybe Paul knew what Jim Elliot knew. He lost his life to the Akka Indians, but he said this, he is no fool who loses what he cannot keep to keep what he cannot lose.

In other words, he was saying, I might lose this body, but I won't lose this life. Now friends, God uses his servant in this situation, and look at what a difference one disciple makes. Now the world picks on the Christians all the time.

Doesn't matter what you say, doesn't matter what you think, but I'll tell you what. That night when Paul stood up and said, this is what God gave me, all of a sudden it was quite different, wasn't it? It was the one Christian that made the difference. Now I wonder, as we look at the lesson from that, do we believe it? One believer brings truth and hope and salvation to more than 200 people by being obedient and full of the Holy Spirit.

He wasn't standing up in his own strength. He stood up that day, that night, in the power of God. And oh friends, that's what makes the difference.

We need to be spirit-billed believers. Do you know that there were five clergymen on the RMS Titanic? Media didn't say that. Do you know that all of them spent their last breath telling people how to be saved in the water? Do you know that one of them was a man called John Harper? He was journeying to America to go and preach in Moody Memorial Church, a Scottish evangelist with his little daughter.

He put her in the lifeboat and he knew, I have two hours to get the message. Look at the lessons from shipwrecks. And oh, as we come, it's time for John to quit.

And thanks for putting up with me this morning. As I was doing the message the other day, I was thinking about an old man that I used to know called George Bainton. Strange old fella in some ways, lived in Lloydminster.

If you ever asked George a question about anything, he'd always start the answer this way. Well, I'm a Christian. That was his way of just sharing Jesus into the situation, into the conversation.

Well, I'm a Christian. I wonder are we lacking the courage that the Holy Spirit brings to be able to stand wherever we are and wherever we live and say, well, you know, I'm a Christian. And this is what the Bible says, never to be ashamed of it.

All my friends, let's bow our hands and seek the Lord in prayer. There are so many lessons from shipwrecks, but there's one who specializes in saving. There's one who specializes in touching.

There's one who specializes in healing. There's one who specializes in bringing courage and life and hope into the most hopeless situations. And his name is Jesus.

And as we're just in the place of prayer this morning, I'm not going to do a formal invitation, but I want to ask you just where you're sitting. Are you saved? Are you sure? Have you heard the council of the world say it doesn't matter how you live? It does. Do you have as much of the Holy Spirit as you need? And you see the simple truth is we need his spirit to fill us.

That's what heals our wounds. That's what gives us courage in our day and time, his spirit. So just while we're at the place of prayer, might it not be that this morning we could say, both pastors and people, oh Lord Jesus, fill me with your Holy Spirit.

Fill me and equip me. Grant me courage to live in this world, but not be of this world. Help me, Lord, to know your fullness.

And then we would be able to say, Lord, once it was the blessing, but now it is the Lord. So Father, as we are drawing things to a conclusion this morning, we just want to ask you, would you fill us again with the spirit of grace, spirit of forgiveness, spirit of truth, spirit of love, spirit of power? Because the witness of your people and your church is so desperately needed in this world today. We ask these mercies now in Jesus' precious name.

We're victorious people. I'm not convinced. It doesn't matter the shape of your ship.

It doesn't. It matters who you know, who's in control of the wind and the waves, who holds the cargo in his hand, holds all the riches of this earthly life in his hands. So I'm convinced this morning by this message from John that I need to stop looking around at my surroundings, and I need to stop looking at my and letting those be my power, my momentum.

And I need to start looking upward and heavenward because we are victorious people. Right? So as we go into this world that we live in, act like a victorious Christian. You're not shipwrecked.

You can't be. Right? You're victorious people. And Paul got a little taste of that.

And that day on that boat, I'm sure he was sort of like, yes, I was right. So I'm going to pray, and we're just going to be dismissed. And I really want to encourage you for if you need prayer for anything, anything at all, but maybe specifically for healing, something in your body isn't just right, I just encourage you to come, and there will be people to pray for you.

But anything else also, we're welcome to anything, but just, you know, for healing this morning, I think we should go that route. Father God, you are here, and you are victory. Lord, you are our everything.

You are our all in all. You are the great I am. And Lord, help us to be people that don't look at the wreck of our lives, the wrecks around our lives.

Lord, the waves crashing, the rocks, and the wind, and the clouds, and the lightning, and the snow, and the seasons. But Lord, let us be a people that just answer every question with, I'm a Christian. And because of that, and because of who we follow, Lord, we will answer things, and we will do things differently.

We will do things in your name to glorify you, not to glorify any human being or ourself. Help us to make you famous, Lord, in this small city, Regina. Maybe in our workplace, maybe in our school, maybe in a club we're a part of.

Lord, would you be made famous? Jesus, you are good to us. We love you. Amen.

Have a great week. You're dismissed. Please come forward if you need prayer for anything, anything at all.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24346.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-mcgregor/shipwrecks/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**