

NAVIGATING TOWARD OUR DESTINY - Part VIII Navigating the Storms of Life

Text: Acts 27:1-44

Key Word: Storms

Key Thought: How to Successfully Navigate Through the Storms of Life

Sharon and I went on a 10-day cruise beginning September 1st on the Royal Caribbean Grandeur of the Seas for a New England and Canada cruise. We just used the time to rest and relax. But something we didn't expect was trailing behind us. What began as tropical storm, quickly increased to become a Category 1 hurricane named Herman as it neared the Florida coast on September 1, 2016. Over the next few days it moved up the Eastern coast of the USA and lessened to an extra tropical cyclone around Southern Carolina.

This storm continued on a northern trek and was about a 1 ½ days behind us. Memories of news reports of less fortunate vacationers being tossed back and forth by huge waves and high winds that are produced by these types of storms became a common discussion among new families we were meeting.

Our trip ended, thankfully, uneventful. The training of the ship's captain and crew kicked into gear and we never witnessed any problems. They kept us informed of the strategic changes they were making to avoid the turbulence that was constantly following us.

What Can We Do When the Storms of Life Try to Overtake Us?

I. NAVIGATE WITH STRATEGIC SUPPORT

II. NAVIGATE WITH SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

I. NAVIGATE WITH STRATEGIC SUPPORT

Not all the storms of life can be avoided. They happen to all of us rich or poor; male and female; young and old; highly educated or those with lower academic standings. Some of these storms come at us and intensify making us feel incapable of doing anything to avoid their destructive paths. One day the skies can be blue and sunny and the next can attack us with vicious, torrential impact. They can bring the strongest of individuals to a point of depression. Destructive thoughts can plague us to the point that we stop moving ahead even though we continually sense the danger trying to overtake us.

These storms can represent health problems, family issues or perhaps a financial crisis to name a few. They can also be work related or huge decisions we need to make that we know will create many challenges. **So what are we to do?** Lets keep this as simple as I can today because anyone facing these types of problems (and many other examples) don't need anything complicated when their patterns of thought are already becoming confusing.

I. NAVIGATE WITH STRATEGIC SUPPORT (Contd.)

I've discovered that not everyone who has a heart to help is the one we should call upon. Some may have ulterior motives. Others may begin well but over time it becomes clear that it is time to lessen their influence over our lives. That is why I would highly recommend that we all **Navigate with Strategic Support.**

The apostle Paul is a wonderful example of how to navigate the storms of life. His life seemed to go from one storm to another. In fact, the Bible gives us a fairly concise account of what this man went through.

*“Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses;
5. in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; . . .
8. through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors;
9. known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed;
10. sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.”*

II Corinthians 6:4,5,8-10

There is one particular storm that I want to address today that happened toward the end of his life. It took place in the Mediterranean Sea somewhere between the Isle of Crete and Malta. The entire story is recorded in the Book of Acts 27. What began as a gentle south wind (27:13) turned into a storm of hurricane force (27:14).

“Never make a permanent decision based on a temporary storm.
No matter how raging the billows are today, remind yourself?
“This too shall pass.”

T. D. Jakes

I. NAVIGATE WITH STRATEGIC SUPPORT (Contd.)

A small portion of this story is almost enough to tell us the danger they were in.

“We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard.

19. On the third day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands.

*20. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, **we finally gave up all hope of being saved.**”*

Acts 27:18-20

We know that this ship carried 276 passengers (Acts 27:37). There was a Roman centurion that seemed to be in control of this Alexandrian ship. Yet all the power and authority of Rome were useless to overcome the danger. That reminds me why it's so important that we **Navigate with Strategic Support**. All the passengers were in a state of malnutrition which weakened their efforts to do anything.

Have you ever faced a time when your resources of run out? Does the Bible offer any answers when we reach these desperate times? Yes it does!

*“But now I urge you to **keep up your courage**, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed.*

23. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me

*24. and said, ‘**Do not be afraid, Paul.** You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.’*

*25. **So keep up your courage**, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.*

26. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.”

Acts 27:22-26

Paul's strategic support came from God through an angel. It was not the authority of the centurion but rather the courage that God created that not only gave them hope but also direction. God did not give Paul the name of the island that they were going to run aground on. We often ask God for details that He's not prepared to share.

II. NAVIGATE WITH SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

You may probably think that this should conclude the story. But that assumption would be very wrong. We do know that as the time was nearing the 14th day that they were becoming very weak because of their lack of nutrition.

This is similar to the way I've often seen people go through life - in a depleted and weakened spiritual condition. We try to face the problems without God. No one can survive without spiritual strength.

“Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. “For the last fourteen days,” he said, “you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven’t eaten anything.

34. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.”

35. After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.

36. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.”

Acts 27:33-36

It was at the darkest time, just before the sun was about to break through the veil that had engulfed them, that they broke bread together. Everyone witnessed the prayer of thanksgiving. Paul passed on the strength he had received from God to 275 others. **It was not only food for their body, but it was encouragement for their soul.** They ate until they were full and then threw the rest of the grain into the sea.

You would think that this would make everyone on board grateful to Paul and his God. But we must realize that even though God's miracles may change you, others in close vicinity may remain with a hardened heart. Even though the centurion had a change of heart, his soldiers remained committed to their duty of transporting the prisoners to Rome. Either they delivered the prisoners or they would lose their life.

“Remember, it is not your weakness that will get in the way of God’s working through you, but your delusions of strength. His strength is made perfect in our weakness! Point to His strength by being willing to admit your weakness.”

Pastor Paul David Tripp

II. NAVIGATE WITH SPIRITUAL STRENGTH(Contd.)

“The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping.

43. But the centurion wanted to spare Paul’s life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land.

*44. The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. **In this way everyone reached land safely.**”*

Acts 27:42-44

Can I ask you in bringing this message to a close, *“Are you facing a storm that you can see is bigger than any resources you have?”* If so, today is your day to begin this part of **Navigating Toward Your Destiny.**

Navigating is a precise act. It requires **strategic support** and **spiritual strength** neither of which we have without God. Call upon Him! He is present and ready and willing to help. Don't put it off another day.

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Date: Aug 5/18

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: What a Friend we Have in Jesus - D

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Acts 27:22-26

II. NAVIGATE WITH SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

Acts 27:33-36; Acts 27:42-44