

Message Date: 2/8/2026 Lighthouse Meeting Date: 4/8/2026 Minister: Pastor Chuka Nwafor	Message Title: (Overcoming Discouragement Series: Facing the Storms of Life - Who Is With You
Key Texts: 1 Samuel 30:6, Psalm 42:5, 11, Psalm 118:5-17, Isaiah 43:2, Isaiah 54:17, Acts 13:2-3, Acts 15:41, Acts 16:40, Acts 20:1-2, Acts 27:14-25, Romans 8:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 10:35-36	Sub Text:
<i>Please read the entire document and Bible texts before you begin to discuss and answer the related questions. This will help you grasp the overall context of the message, however, remember the Bible is not a discussion book but a decision book. God honours and empowers your decisions not your discussions.</i> <u>INTRODUCTION</u> The "storms of life" is a metaphor for major crises, hardships, and sudden trials. They include financial ruin, severe illness, grief, and broken relationships. Common Types of Hardships • Health Crises: Sudden physical sickness or long-term mental pain. • Loss and Grief: The death of a loved one, job loss, or a broken home. • External Pressures: Stress from money problems, conflict with others, or unfair treatment. What Hard Times Can Teach Us • Builds Strength: Hard moments test our patience and help us grow wiser. • Shows our true Priorities: They strip away small worries and show us what matters most. • Reveal True Friends and people around you: They remind us to lean on God, true friends, family for help and comfort Every storm comes to reveal things to us that we may never have known prior to it. It reveals deep things about God, Satan, ourselves, and the people around us. It often	

evokes critical life defining decisions. What or who will you throw overboard to survive it? On a ship bound for Rome, sailors who had lost sight of the sun and stars began jettisoning their cargo because fear and discouragement which does more than just drain your strength, it often persuades you to abandon the very promises, visions, dreams, and assignments God gave you.

In the midst of that same storm the true test of every man's profession and foundation is tested and revealed. Paul hungry, battered, and still surrounded by danger declared, "Keep up your courage" (Acts 27:22, AMPC). The weather conditions had gone from bad to worse, neither was the storm showing any sign of abating yet, the voice he trusted in remained steadfast and secure. This message is not about denying life's storms; it is about learning, as Paul did, that victory is determined not by the storm around you, but by the God who remains with you.

Psalm 125:1-2 AMPC

Those who trust in, lean on, and confidently hope in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides and stands fast forever. [2] As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from this time forth and forever.

Isaiah 43:1-5 AMPC

But now [in spite of past judgments for Israel's sins], thus says the Lord, He Who created you, O Jacob, and He Who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you [ransomed you by paying a price instead of leaving you captives]; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. [2] When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they will not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned or scorched, nor will the flame kindle upon you. [3] For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt [to the Babylonians] for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba [a province of Ethiopia] in exchange [for your release]. [4] Because you are precious in My sight and honored, and because I love you, I will give men in return for you and peoples in exchange for your life. [5] Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east [where they are dispersed] and gather you from the west.

TEACHING POINT ONE: Discouragement Is One of Satan's Named Weapons

Isaiah 54:17 (AMPC) declares that no weapon formed against the believer shall prosper, a promise that assumes weapons will, in fact, be formed. Among Satan's multi-faceted weapons, one of the most effective weapons in his arsenal is discouragement. Often a calculated assault designed to wear down faith until a person is tempted to quit. Yet Scripture makes an important distinction: discouragement is a weapon, not a verdict.

Romans 8:1 (AMPC) reminds us that "there is therefore now no condemnation" for those who are in Christ Jesus. Whatever discouragement may whisper, it does not have the authority to define your identity or determine your future.

Application: When discouragement urges you to give up, refuse to accept it as the truth about your life. Recognize it for what it is, a weapon of the enemy and stand on God's verdict instead of Satan's accusations (Isaiah 54:17; Romans 8:1).

Digging Deeper: Have I mistaken the enemy's weapon for God's verdict over my life?

Scripture Focus: "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall show to be in the wrong."

Isaiah 54:17 (AMPC)

TEACHING POINT TWO: You Were Called to Be an Instrument of Encouragement

The Holy Spirit specifically set Paul and Barnabas apart for their divine assignment (Acts 13:2–3, AMPC). Wherever they ministered, they left believers stronger in faith and richer in courage, strengthening the churches (Acts 15:41, AMPC) and even stepping out of prison to encourage fellow believers before continuing their journey (Acts 16:40, AMPC).

Encouragement is not reserved for those with an optimistic personality; it is the evidence of a life yielded to the Holy Spirit. Those who truly walk with God will often become channels through which His strength flows to others (Acts 20:1–2).

Application: Prayerfully identify one person you can intentionally strengthen this week, and allow the Holy Spirit to minister through your words, your presence, and your actions (Acts 15:41; 1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Digging Deeper: Do people leave my presence strengthened in faith, or weighed down in spirit?

Scripture Focus: "[Paul] went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches." Acts 15:41 (AMPC)

TEACHING POINT THREE: Refuse to Jettison the Promise

As the storm intensified, the crew first threw the cargo overboard and then the ship's tackle essential provisions sacrificed in desperation (Acts 27:18–19, AMPC).

Discouragement operates the same way. It persuades believers to abandon God's promises, dreams, and calling under the guise of being "realistic." Scripture, however, gives the opposite command: "Do not, therefore, fling away your fearless confidence," because it carries a great reward. Instead, endure with steadfast faith so that, after doing the will of God, you receive what He has promised (Hebrews 10:35–36, AMPC).

Application: Ask the Lord to reveal one promise, dream, or assignment you have quietly laid aside under pressure. This week, reclaim it in prayer and commit it afresh to Him (Hebrews 10:35–36).

Digging Deeper: What have I thrown overboard under pressure that God never asked me to surrender?

Scripture Focus: "Do not, therefore, fling away your fearless confidence, for it carries a great and glorious compensation of reward." Hebrews 10:35 (AMPC)

TEACHING POINT FOUR: Learn the Grace of Self-Encouragement

When David returned to Ziklag and discovered that his own men were speaking of stoning him, Scripture records the turning point with remarkable simplicity: "David encouraged and strengthened himself in the Lord his God" (1 Samuel 30:6, AMPC).

There was no prophet to counsel him, no army to defend him, and no friend to comfort him, only God. The psalmist demonstrates the same spiritual discipline by speaking

directly to his own soul: "Why are you cast down, O my inner self?... Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him" (Psalm 42:5, AMPC). This is not positive thinking or self-help; it is the intentional act of directing a discouraged heart back to the unchanging character of God.

Application: Develop the habit of strengthening your own soul by speaking God's Word and His promises over your life instead of waiting for someone else to encourage you (Psalm 42:5, 11).

Digging Deeper: Have I learned to strengthen myself in the Lord, or have I depended on others to provide a strength that only God can give?

Scripture Focus: "David encouraged and strengthened himself in the Lord his God." **1 Samuel 30:6 (AMPC)**

TEACHING POINT FIVE: The Presence of God Removes Fear, Not the Absence of the Storm

While the ship was still being battered by the storm, Paul declared, "Keep up your courage... I believe God that it shall be exactly as it was told me" (Acts 27:22–25, AMPC). His confidence did not rest in calmer seas but in the assurance that God's angel had stood beside him that very night. The storm had not ceased, yet fear had lost its authority because God's presence had become greater than the crisis. Psalm 118 proclaims the same confidence: "Out of my distress I called upon the Lord... The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 118:5–6, AMPC). Even while surrounded on every side, the psalmist chose confidence over fear because God's presence outweighed every threat.

Application: Refuse to measure God's faithfulness by the intensity of your circumstances. Instead, anchor your confidence in His promise to be with you through every storm (Isaiah 43:2; Psalm 118:6).

Digging Deeper: Am I waiting for my circumstances to change before I trust God, or have I learned that His presence is the true source of my security?

Scripture Focus: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" **Psalm 118:6 (AMPC)**

Psalm 118:5-14 TPT

Out of my deep anguish and pain I prayed, and God, you helped me as a father. You came to my rescue and broke open the way into a beautiful and broad place. [6] Now I know, Lord, that you are for me, and I will never fear what man can do to me. [7] For you stand beside me as my hero who rescues me. I've seen with my own eyes the defeat of my enemies. I've triumphed over them all! [8] Lord, it is so much better to trust in you to save me than to put my confidence in someone else. [9] Yes, it is so much better to trust in the Lord to save me than to put my confidence in celebrities. [10] Once I was hemmed in and surrounded by those who don't love you. But by YAHWEH's supernatural power I overcame them all! [11-12] Yes, they surrounded me, like a swarm of killer bees swirling around me. I was trapped like one trapped by a raging fire; I was surrounded with no way out and at the point of collapse. But by YAHWEH's supernatural power, I overcame them all! [13] They pushed me right up to the edge, and I was ready to fall, but you helped me to triumph, and together we overcame them all. [14] Lord, you are my true strength and my glory-song, my champion, my Savior!

CONCLUSION:

The ship in Acts 27 did not stop breaking apart until it finally ran aground, yet not a single life was lost, just as God had promised Paul. That is the enduring lesson of this account: the storm does not have to end for God's promise to stand. Discouragement will continue to whisper that you should jettison the promise, abandon hope, and surrender the fight. But like Paul, and like David at Ziklag, you have the grace to strengthen yourself in the Lord, hold firmly to what He has spoken, and declare with confidence: it is not what you are going through, but who is with you, that determines how your story ends.

8 Bible Verses About the Storms of Life

Save these verses for a rainy day or hide them in your heart as you walk through today's storm. The One who calms the seas has not left your side.

1. John 16:33

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

For years, I felt surprised every time life became difficult. Finally, I realized that trouble is to be expected. Jesus promised trouble. But he also promised his peace.

Are you facing a storm? Don't be surprised. Also, remind yourself that Jesus has not left your side.

No matter what your storm looks like, Jesus is with you in the boat. He won't leave you (Deut. 31:6). Lean into him and ask him to strengthen you. Keep your heart open to him. Keep seeking him. He won't waste this storm.

2. Isaiah 42:6

"I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you"

God hasn't left us to navigate life's storms on our own.

When you don't know which way to turn, cling to the promise in Isaiah 42:6.

God is with you in this storm, and he will protect you as he takes hold of your hand. Cry out to him and trust that he will never take his eye off you.

3. Psalm 16:8

"I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken."

Stormy seas in life threaten to shake us to the core. By learning to set the Lord always before us—and keeping our eyes on him—we need not be shaken.

When tragedy strikes, I try to remember to run to God *first*, before calling my best friends or swooping in to save the day.

Learn to turn to God first, and he will help you navigate every storm with his grace.

4. James 1:12

"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."

God has promised "the crown of life" to those who love him. Keep pressing through the storm you are facing. God has rewards stored up for you.

At times, God rewards us with temporal rewards in this life. For example, times of sickness increase our gratitude for good health. Times of financial stress help us become more thankful for seasons of stability.

God also promises eternal rewards for those who remain steadfast. We will receive these rewards one day in heaven.

5. Romans 8:18

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

We find this truth in Paul's letter to the Roman church. We all face storms in this life; yet a day will come when the storms will pass, and we will be with God in glory.

If you feel like you cannot take another moment of the storm you're facing, remember that this world is not your final resting place. One day, this storm will pass, and God will wipe away every tear.

6. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

Never forget that God can use your storm for good.

God uses difficulties to shape us into the image of Jesus. As we grow in maturity, we are better able to share God’s love and compassion with others. We also develop resilience and perseverance.

7. Romans 5:3

“Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance.”

I’ve been a runner since I was four years old. Early in life, I learned that the pain of training vigorously leads to growth and increased endurance.

This principle is true in life, too.

Like athletes pushing through pain in preparation for the big game or event, pain builds endurance. Your storms are helping you grow stronger. God will use this storm to give you endurance for the calling awaiting you.

It has often been said that the storms of today prepare us for the calling of tomorrow.

8. 1 Peter 1:7

“These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.”

God also uses our struggles to purify our hearts.

Struggles burn off the parts of our characters that hinder us from abundant, God-honoring lives. God will use this storm for your good and his glory. Keep your eyes on him.

PRAYER POINTS

1. Father, expose every weapon of discouragement the enemy has formed against my life, and render it powerless in the name of Jesus.
2. I refuse to jettison the promises, dreams, and assignments You have entrusted to me. By Your grace, help me recover everything I have abandoned under pressure.
3. Holy Spirit, teach me to encourage and strengthen myself in the Lord, especially in seasons when no one else is there to lift me.
4. Father, let the assurance of Your presence drive out every fear, even while the storm around me still rages.

5. Lord, keep me steadfast until I can testify, like Paul, of Your faithfulness through this trial, in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.