

Message Date: 9/8/2026 Lighthouse Meeting Date: 10/8/2026	Message Title: FRIENDS (THE REVELATION OF STORMS) Minister: Pastor Chuka Nwafor
Key Texts: Acts 27:18-36, Proverbs 27:9, Luke 22:31-32, Proverbs 18:24, Proverbs 17:17, 2 Timothy 4:16-18, Psalm 27:4-5, Psalm 94:13, Jeremiah 16:19, Ecclesiastes 4:9-10	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> Acts 27:29-44 TPT <i>Some sailors pretended to go down to drop anchors from the bow when in fact they wanted to lower the lifeboat into the sea and escape, abandoning ship. [31] Paul said to the Roman officer and his soldiers, “Unless you all stay together onboard the ship, you have no chance of surviving.” [32] At the moment they heard this, the soldiers cut the ropes of the dinghy and let it fall away. [33] Just before daybreak, Paul urged everyone to eat. He said, “Today makes two full weeks that you’ve been in fearful peril and hunger, unable to eat a thing. [34] Now eat and be nourished. For you’ll all come through this ordeal without a scratch.” [35] Then Paul took bread and gave thanks to God in front of them, broke it and began to eat.</i> <i>But they drifted into the rocky shoals between two depths of the sea, causing the ship to flounder still a distance from shore. The bow was stuck fast, jammed on the rocks, while the stern was being smashed by the pounding of the surf. [42] The soldiers wanted to kill all the prisoners to prevent them from escaping. [43] But the Roman officer was determined to bring Paul safely through, so he foiled their attempts. He commanded the prisoners and crew who could swim to jump overboard and swim ashore. [44] The rest all managed to survive by clinging to planks and broken pieces of the ship, so that everyone scrambled to the shore uninjured.</i> How many friends do you have? Who are they? Most people’s friends range from casual acquaintances to those for whom they might die. Sometimes friends are closer than siblings or other blood relatives. True Friends share affection, companionship, confidences, consideration, devotion, esteem, faithfulness, fellowship, harmony, helpfulness, loyalty, partnership, support, sympathy, trust, and understanding. Friends are those with whom we want to spend time both now and in eternity. God created us for relationships—with each other and with him. Jesus has given us the great honor of being his friends (John 15:13-15). The bible teaches strongly on the importance of relationships and true and enduring relationships. Relationships that are covenantal and supportive not just in good times but	

more significantly in times of adversity

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 TLB

Two can accomplish more than twice as much as one, for the results can be much better. [10] If one falls, the other pulls him up; but if a man falls when he is alone, he's in trouble. [11] Also, on a cold night, two under the same blanket gain warmth from each other, but how can one be warm alone? [12] And one standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer; three is even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

Through our ongoing study of Act 27, we will take a brief moment to explore a very critical theme that focuses on the importance of building relationships that are enduring and able to weather the storms of life. Unfortunately in the body of Christ time and experience has shown that we often have very fickle and superficial relationships that are purely self serving and self-centred. Our relationships are often purely contractual and convenience based, unable to withstand the crises (storms) of life. This is reflected in the magnitude of broken friendships, broken marriages, church splits and business fallouts.

Everyone has friends when the sky is blue and clear. It costs nothing to smile with someone in the sunshine but the genuineness of every relationship is revealed when the wind changes and the storms of life rise against you. Scripture presents such moments as tests, and few passages expose this reality as vividly as Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27 - when the storm battered the ship they were travelling in began to break apart, the sun and stars disappeared for days, and all hope of making it alive was gone, was when the true nature of the men on board with Paul revealed.

On that battered vessel were 276 people cargo was initially jettisoned in order to survive, soon some quietly plotted to abandon the ship and save themselves by escaping on the life boats, while others later planned to kill Paul and the other prisoners in order to save their own lives. Yet one man, a prisoner in chains, stood in the middle of the storm and declared, "We must stay together, or none of us will make it." He spoke words of encouragement and comfort to the men and urged them to eat and trust in God who is faithful and true to his Word.

That single word, *we*, marks the difference between an acquaintance and a true friend. This study asks a piercing question: When your storm comes, and it is an inevitability of life (***Job 5:6-7 AMP***

For affliction does not come forth from the dust, Nor does trouble spring forth from the ground. [7] For man is born for trouble, [As naturally] as sparks fly upward./ John 16:32-33 AMP

Take careful notice: an hour is coming, and has arrived, when you will all be scattered, each to his

own home, leaving Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. [33] I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace. In the world you have tribulation and distress and suffering, but be courageous [be confident, be undaunted, be filled with joy]; I have overcome the world.”)

These storms come in one form or another for different people and at different stages of life during the course of this life. The question is who will still be standing in the boat with you after each storm? or perhaps more importantly who will you will be standing with and whose boat are you willing to remain in when the waves of adversity rise? **Proverbs 10:25 NLT**

When the storms of life come, the wicked are whirled away, but the godly have a lasting foundation.

HISTORICAL AND BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Acts 27 records that Paul, the man in chains becomes the source of stability and encouragement for everyone on board. The theme of tested friendship and loyalty runs throughout Scripture. Jesus told Peter plainly that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed once, yet He also said, "I have prayed for you" (Luke 22:31–32), a picture of friendship that survives the failure of others.

Later, Paul wrote to Timothy from a Roman prison, recalling how everyone had abandoned him at his first defense, yet declaring that the Lord stood by him and strengthened him (2 Timothy 4:16–17). He asked the Lord not to hold it against them as he Paul clearly understood the nature of Man especially under pressure of self preservation.

2 Timothy 4:9-12,16-18 AMPC

Make every effort to come to me soon. [10] For Demas has deserted me for love of this present world and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens [has gone] to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. [11] Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very helpful to me for the ministry. [12] Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. [16] At my first trial no one acted in my defense [as my advocate] or took my part or [even] stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them! [17] But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the [Gospel] message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was delivered out of the jaws of the lion. [18] [And indeed] the Lord will certainly deliver and draw me to Himself from every assault of evil. He will preserve and bring me safe unto His heavenly kingdom.

The book of proverbs has a lot to say about true friendship

TEACHING POINT ONE: Storms Reveal What Sunshine Conceals

Proverbs 17:17 NLT

A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need. Proverbs 17:17 TPT

A dear friend will love you no matter what, and a family sticks together through all kinds of trouble.

Proverbs 18:24 AMP

The man of too many friends [chosen indiscriminately] will be broken in pieces and come to ruin, But there is a [true, loving] friend who [is reliable and] sticks closer than a brother.

Psalm 35:12-16 TLB

I do them good, but they return me harm. I am sinking down to death. [13] When they were ill, I mourned before the Lord in sackcloth, asking him to make them well; I refused to eat; I prayed for them with utmost earnestness, but God did not listen. [14] I went about sadly as though it were my mother, friend, or brother who was sick and nearing death. [15] But now that I am in trouble they are glad; they come together in meetings filled with slander against me-I didn't even know some of those who were there. [16] For they gather with the worthless fellows of the town and spend their time cursing me.

Proverbs 17:17 and 18:24 reinforce the same principle from different angles: some friendships prove temporary, while a true friend remains faithful through adversity and "sticks closer than a brother."

Practical Application: Don't wait for a crisis to discover who your real friends are. Examine your closest relationships now. Who has demonstrated consistency, loyalty, and presence when life became difficult? Hold those relationships up to the standard of Proverbs 17:17.

Digging Deeper: Look honestly at your inner circle: who has stood with you through a real storm, and who has only been present while the skies were clear?

Scripture Focus: "Some friendships don't last, but there is a loving friend who sticks closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24)

TEACHING POINT TWO: A True Friend is honest and tells you the truth but Stands firmly With You despite the odds.

When the storm proved the sailors wrong for ignoring Paul's earlier warning, he spoke plainly to

them, he did not soften the truth. He told them, "You should have listened to me" (Acts 27:21). Yet he did not develop a bitter blaming spirit against them neither did he hold it against them in offence. In the same breath, he reassured them that not one life would be lost and urged them to "keep up their courage" (Acts 27:22–25). This echoes Jesus' dealings with Peter. Jesus warned the disciples and especially Peter that he would deny his Lord three times, yet in the same conversation He said, "I have prayed for you" (Luke 22:31–32). Correction and commitment stood side by side. Wow isn't that incredible!!!

Proverbs 27:5-6 NLT

An open rebuke is better than hidden love! [6] Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.

Psalms 141:5 ASV

Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; And let him reprove me, it shall be as oil upon the head; Let not my head refuse it: For even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue.

A true friend is willing to name where you have missed it without turning your failure into a weapon. They tell you the truth, but they do not abandon you because of it. They remain in the boat with you.

Practical Application: When those we love are heading toward a harmful decision, or made a poor choice we must be caring and honest enough to speak the truth in love as Paul did, but pair our correction with the love and commitment Jesus demonstrated toward Peter: "I have prayed for you." Let truth be firm without making love conditional. The bible teaches that we must speak the truth in love and that does not mean rubbing it in the person's face with arrogance and superiority complex.

Ephesians 4:15 NLT

Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

Galatians 6:1-3 AMP

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any sin, you who are spiritual [that is, you who are responsive to the guidance of the Spirit] are to restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness [not with a sense of superiority or self-righteousness], keeping a watchful eye on yourself, so that you are not tempted as well. [2] Carry one another's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the requirements of the law

of Christ [that is, the law of Christian love]. [3] For if anyone thinks he is something [special] when [in fact] he is nothing [special except in his own eyes], he deceives himself.

Digging Deeper: Can you receive correction without pushing away the person who loves you enough to speak truth, and can you offer correction without using someone's failure to shame them?

Scripture Focus: "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned, strengthen your brothers." *Luke 22:32*

TEACHING POINT THREE: True Loyalty Says "We," Not "Me"

As the ship approached destruction, Paul never separated his own safety from the safety of those around him. He declared, "We must run aground on some island" (Acts 27:26), placing himself within the same outcome as everyone else on board. When the sailors attempted to lower the lifeboat and escape on their own, Paul warned the centurion, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved" (Acts 27:30–31). He understood that private escape could endanger the collective survival.

This same principle appears in Ecclesiastes 4:9–10: "Two are better than one," because when one falls, the other can lift him up. True loyalty does not begin calculating personal exit strategies the moment adversity arrives. It asks, "How do we get through this together?"

Practical Application: In your closest relationships, marriage, family, and friendship, resist the instinct to look for an exit the moment things become difficult. Choose the kind of commitment described in Ecclesiastes 4:9–10: remain present, carry one another, and face adversity together.

Digging Deeper: Are you fully committed to your closest relationships, or do you keep one foot near the door, ready to leave when staying becomes costly?

Scripture Focus: "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor; for if they fall, one will lift up his companion." *Ecclesiastes 4:9–10*

TEACHING POINT FOUR: When Everyone Else Forsakes You, remember the Lord Stands by You

Writing from prison near the end of his life, Paul recalled his first defense with startling honesty: "No one stood with me, but all forsook me" (2 Timothy 4:16). Yet instead of responding with bitterness,

he asked that it not be held against them. Then he declared the greater truth: "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me," delivering him from the mouth of the lion (2 Timothy 4:17). This is the ultimate assurance beneath every earthly relationship. Human loyalty may fail, even the disciples fled when Jesus was arrested, but the presence of the Lord does not depend on the courage or consistency of people. Psalm 94:13 reinforces this truth, revealing God as the One who gives His people the strength to remain steady and find peace in the midst of adversity.

Psalm 46:1-3,5 AMP

God is our refuge and strength [mighty and impenetrable], A very present and well-proved help in trouble. [2] Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change And though the mountains be shaken and slip into the heart of the seas, [3] Though its waters roar and foam, Though the mountains tremble at its roaring. Selah. [5] God is in the midst of her [His city], she will not be moved; God will help her when the morning dawns.

Practical Application: When human support fails you in a crisis, do not allow their absence to become a measure of God's faithfulness. Anchor yourself in the assurance of 2 Timothy 4:17: the Lord Himself stands with you and strengthens you when others cannot.

Digging Deeper: Has someone's failure or abandonment ever tempted you to withdraw from God as well? Can you distinguish the failure of people from the faithfulness of God?

Scripture Focus: "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed." 2 Timothy 4:17

Psalm 27:10 NLT

Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close.

TEACHING POINT FIVE: Become Someone's Paul in Their Storm

Paul had every reason to focus on his own survival, yet he became a source of courage and stability for all 276 people aboard the ship (Acts 27:34–36). He did not merely survive the storm; he helped others survive it. Psalm 27:4–5 reveals the foundation of that kind of steadiness: a life anchored in God's presence. When trouble comes, the person who has learned to dwell with God knows where to find shelter, and from that shelter can become a source of strength to others. Jeremiah 16:19 completes the picture, declaring the Lord to be "my strength and my stronghold and my refuge in the

day of distress." The refuge we receive from God is not meant to end with us; it positions us to become a refuge of encouragement for someone else.

Practical Application: Ask God to make you someone's "Paul" in this season. Be the steady voice, faithful presence, and source of courage that another person needs, not because you have no storms of your own, but because you have learned where to find shelter in the middle of yours (Psalm 27:5).

The story of the Good Samaritan is a clear depiction of how to be my brother's keeper and friend in time of need.

Luke 10:30-36 MSG

Jesus answered by telling a story. "There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead. Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he angled across to the other side. Then a Levite religious man showed up; he also avoided the injured man. [33-35] "A Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man's condition, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. Then he lifted him onto his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable. In the morning he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill—I'll pay you on my way back.' [36] "What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers?"

Digging Deeper: Is someone in your life facing a storm right now who needs your steady presence more than another voice adding to the panic?

Scripture Focus: "For in the day of trouble He will hide me in His shelter; in the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will set me high upon a rock." *Psalm 27:5*

CONCLUSION:

Storms will come to your health, your family, your business, and your relationships. When they do, the sunshine friends may scatter, while the true ones stay in the boat and say, "We." But even when every human hand lets go, the Lord Himself does not. He stood with Paul when everyone else had abandoned him, and He will stand with you.

May God surround you with people who remain when staying becomes difficult, and may He make you that same kind of anchor for someone else in their hour of need.

PRAYER POINTS

1. Father, surround me with friends who prove faithful in the storm, not merely present in the sunshine. Give me relationships that reflect the loyalty described in Proverbs 18:24.
2. Lord, teach me to speak the truth in love as Paul did not to shame those I love, but to correct them with grace, commitment, and prayer.
3. Father, teach me to say "we" instead of "me" in my closest relationships. Help me remain in the boat when things become difficult rather than looking for an exit.
4. Lord, when people fail me or forsake me, remind me that You stand with me and strengthen me, just as You stood with Paul.
5. Father, position me to be someone's Paul in the middle of their storm. Make me a source of courage and shelter for others because I have first learned to find my shelter in You.
6. Lord, I declare that You are my strength, my stronghold, and my refuge in the day of distress. Thank You for being the God who remains when others disappear. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

Please note that the Bible is not a discussion book but a decision book.

God honours and empowers your decisions not your discussions.

This is the most important part of tonight's meeting The Holy Spirit awaits your decisions.

From this day forthIn Jesus Mighty Name, Amen.

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