

The Trip of a Lifetime

A 3-Day Devotional from Pastor Bill's Message January 18, 2026

Day 1: The Patience of the Promise

- **Reference:** Acts 23:11; Acts 9:15-16
 - In Acts 9, God declared that Paul was a "chosen vessel" destined to carry His name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. However, this "trip of a lifetime" did not begin with immediate success; it took roughly 26 years from that initial calling for Paul to finally board a ship for Rome. Along the way, he faced years of missionary journeys and eventually a two-year imprisonment in Jerusalem, where it might have looked like he was a failure. Even in the darkness of a prison cell, the Lord Jesus stood by him and promised he would still bear witness in Rome. God's Word always comes true, but it rarely follows our preferred timeline. Whether you are in a season of waiting or a season of "preliminaries," you can trust that if God put a desire in your heart, He will be the one to ensure you get there in His perfect timing.
 - **Application Question:** What promise from God's Word are you waiting on today, and how does Paul's 26-year journey encourage you to trust God's calendar over your own?
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Day 2: The Deception of "Soft Winds"

- **Reference:** Acts 27:10-15
- After leaving Fair Havens, the voyage quickly turned from "smooth sailing" to "contrary" and "difficult" winds that slowed the ship for many days. Paul, speaking from both spiritual perception and his experience surviving three previous shipwrecks, warned the leaders that continuing would result in disaster and loss of life. However, the centurion was more persuaded by the "experts"—the captain and owner—and the majority vote of the crew who found Fair Havens unsuitable for a "fun" winter stay. When a "south wind blew softly," they assumed they had obtained their desire and pushed out to sea, perhaps even smirking at Paul's warning. They mistook a temporary moment of ease for a sign of safety, but not long after, they were caught in a violent "Northeaster" tempest called Euroclydon. We must learn to listen to the Spirit of God even when the "experts" disagree, and the circumstances look deceptively pleasant.
- **Application Question:** Is there an area in your life where you are tempted to follow a "soft wind" of ease or the "majority vote" of your peers instead of a clear warning from God's Word?

Day 3: The Anchor That Holds You Up

- **Reference:** Hebrews 6:19-20
- When the storm became so violent that the ship was "caught" and could no longer head into the wind, the sailors simply gave up and let the vessel be driven by the gale. For 14 days and nights, they lived in total darkness without sun or stars, unable to eat, and literally scared to death. In those moments of total loss of control, human wisdom and majority votes become useless. Pastor Bill reminds us that while a physical anchor is designed to hold a ship *down* to the earth, the spiritual anchor we have in Jesus is designed to hold the believer *up*. This hope is "sure and steadfast" because it is anchored in the presence of God behind the veil, where Jesus—our Great High Priest—has already entered on our behalf. He acts like a winch, pulling us through the trials of life and closer to our true home in heaven. Even when your life feels "upside down," or you are "treading water," your anchor in Christ will never let go.
- **Application Question:** When you feel "driven" by circumstances you cannot control, how can you practically tether your thoughts and emotions to the "steadfast" presence of Jesus today?