

My uncle has a lake-side cabin that he used to let our family use from time to time. I have some very fond memories of my experiences there. I learned to ski on that lake; come to think of it, I don't guess I have ever skied on any other. There was a rowboat that we would paddle around in and a great beach where we could build elaborate sandcastles. There was a boat dock to fish from and pine trees all around. It was a really beautiful place.

I remember especially one time that my sister and I were out in the boat for some reason and decided that we wanted to stay at that spot for a while. So, naturally, we threw out the anchor. Unfortunately, no one had undertaken the very simple but extremely important job of tying it to the boat. I'll never forget watching with horror as the last bit of rope sank slowly beneath the water. We were sunk ourselves, because the anchor belonged to my uncle. Now we had the responsibility to buy another one to replace it.

Without an anchor we just drifted along, being pushed by the current. Our lives can be like that if we haven't made sure that we are connected to something larger than ourselves. In Hebrews 6:19, Paul talks of our hope in God's promise: "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." The anchor is connected to the inner sanctuary of God's Holy Temple, and we can feel confident in that.

But we have to make sure that the rope is tied to our boat, that we are indeed connected to God. Many people don't realize that they have cut themselves loose, or never actually tied the knot to secure themselves. I get a similar picture of an astronaut on an extravehicular activity; if the tether is cut loose they have lost their connection and they will drift slowly away, totally alone. That is a very scary thought.

The comedian Gallagher once was trying to describe how his life had changed since they had become new parents. Part of the description was tossing two huge boxes of toys on the stage floor. But he also illustrated it by throwing a huge anchor with a diaper tied to it out on the floor. His new view of life was the total limitation of his freedom.

God provides our anchor, not to limit our freedom ("It is for freedom that Christ has set us free", Galatians 5:1), but to give us stability. It keeps us from falling, something that God has promised throughout the Bible. He is our Rock. We can depend totally on Him for the spiritual strength that we need to get through whatever problems hit us in life. When there are storms we must have something to keep us from being blown to Oz.

Paul was shipwrecked many times but he never let the storm master him. When Paul was being taken to Rome to stand before Caesar, they encountered a terrific storm. The situation is described so well in Acts 27:29: "Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight." But Paul had faith in God and through his leadership all the people aboard made it safely to shore after the ship began to sink.

What do we tie our lives to? The Hebrew writer says that as Christians we are anchored in heaven. We can thus have a complex root structure that makes it impossible for Satan to pluck us away. We can dig down deep so that we can rise up tall and spread our branches out broadly. God's anchor is always available for us to tie to; there is nothing else that can provide the right foundation. Just as God turned Peter in name from a pebble to a rock, so can he transform our unstable spiritual lives into something solid. Let us hold to that anchor as a child clings to their parents, knowing that we will be taken good care of.