

**Anchors and Storms****971026**

When I look out at the people that make up the congregation where I worship, I realize that there are two types of people who seem to dominate the life of the church. These extremes I like to think of as Anchors and Storms.

The Storm is represented by the gossip that tries to destroy character, the educational director for whom it is "their way or the highway," or perhaps the shepherd who has let his love of power destroy others. In almost every congregation of the Lord's people there is one or more who try to "run the church." They use whatever structure they can seize to beat their doctrine into anyone who will submit. They are "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." (This is a quote from Shakespeare, not the Bible)

But in contrast to these there are anchors. If it were not for the anchors we would be totally blown away by the storms. Anchors are the caring members who are strong enough to withstand the blasts of the others. They are those who understand the real meaning of grace and interpret properly the scripture, extracting what it really is that God wants from us. We must go and make contact with the anchors.

I have read of storms in the midwest where the blizzard is so dense that you cannot see your hand in front of your face. People step outside their dwellings and get lost trying to get back home. They cannot survive for long in the snow. Sometimes human chains are formed to get from one building to another. This is an image of the picture I have of the human anchor.

When I think of storms, I find that there are three things that they try to do. They try to drive us off-course, damage or destroy us, and intimidate us. Such it is with the Storms which exist in our church. Of course, God speaks very strongly against those who would dominate or disrupt the church. We must strive to be an anchor which people can cling to for survival.

Jesus struggled through the storms when he lived on this earth. Remember the control that Jesus took of the storm on the lake?

*Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" (Matthew 8:24-27)*

The Pharisees and Sadducees tried their best to sweep Him aside and destroy Him. They blustered and plotted and eventually crucified Him. But He proved to be the greatest anchor of all. He never wavered from his mission to save those of the human race who would follow Him. He was a source of comfort for his followers and he continues to be for us today.

The church should be a shelter for the weak and oppressed, and we must work to that purpose. We must individually be the kind of person that can offer protection to those who are in need. Isaiah speaks of God's model in this regard:

*You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall; (Isaiah 25:4 NIV)*

And in the perfect world that He has planned each of us must contribute:

*Each man will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. (Isa 32:2 NIV)*

We must ask ourselves the question, as we examine our activities in church today, are we an anchor or a storm?

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