

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: **Acts: To Be Continued**
TITLE: **How Big Is Your Frame?**
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In Acts, Luke shows Jesus' friends continuing the kingdom mission that Jesus started in his earthly life and ministry. The Book of Acts is all about Jesus' followers continuing his mission in the world. We are the ones God has entrusted with carrying the message of Jesus forward.

In this message, we look at Acts 27. Paul is on a journey from Caesarea to Rome. As they encounter a storm, Paul remains calm and confident. This passage shows us how we can navigate the storms of our own lives, by controlling how we “frame” the storm with a bigger view of a big and personal God, who has a plan and purpose for our lives.

A Storm of Persecution

The early church was facing persecution from the Roman government. Luke, the author of Acts, writes so we can see how to maintain calm and confident when things come into lives that try to knock us off course. **How do we navigate the storms we face in life with calm and confidence?**

Frame Control

We all have different perspectives about the situations and people in our lives. These points of view are based on our beliefs and what we value, as well as our background, past experience, and education. Oren Klaff, in his book, *Pitch Anything*, refers to these differing perspectives as “frames”. These frames dictate how we perceive all sorts of situations in life, from conversations we have with people, to the circumstances that we face.

This is similar to a photograph. The composition of a photograph is shaped more by the person behind the camera than by what's in front of the camera.

You and I frame how we see all of life and how we “frame” the storms that come into our lives will determine how we go through those storms.

It is the size of this “frame” that ultimately matters, because **sometimes the frame is more important than the picture.**

Stronger (or bigger) **frames always absorb weaker** (or smaller) **frames.**

The Original Question: **How do we navigate the storms we face in life with calm and confidence?**

Summary of Acts 27:

- The Apostle Paul is being transferred by ship from Caesarea to Rome to stand trial before Caesar himself.
- Luke (the author of Acts) is traveling with him.
- This sea voyage is taking place around the Day of Atonement, roughly around October 5, AD59.
- By this time, Paul has already been shipwrecked at least three times.
- The voyage was slow-going and dangerous from the beginning, with the wind causing them to change course, and Paul warned them that the voyage would include great loss to the ship, cargo, and their own lives.
- Not long after, they had to tie the ship together with ropes just to hold it together.
- They had to throw cargo overboard, and eventually everyone (except Paul) gave up all hope of being saved.
- An angel visited Paul and told him not to be afraid, and that God would save him and everyone sailing with him, and Paul had faith.
- They ran the ship aground onto a beach and everyone reached land safely.

Two Strange Observations from Acts 27:

1. Paul, a prisoner in chains, is running the show in the middle of this storm.
2. Paul is calm and confident as he navigates this storm. He gives the crew courage, saying *“Not one of you will lose a single hair from your head.”*

Paul’s statement is an echo of what Jesus said to his disciples in Luke 21:16: *“You will be betrayed by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends. They will put some of you to death...but not a hair of your head will perish. So by patience and endurance you will possess your souls.”*

The phrase *“not a hair of your head will perish”* is a way to say that God has a *detailed and loving* plan for your life. This plan will bring calm and confidence to you and through you, but it will come through the storms of suffering. ***So by patience and endurance, will you possess your souls.***

This was Paul’s fourth shipwreck. His suffering has made him a person of substance, and because he isn’t blown about on the inside, he can handle being blown about on the outside. **This is how we navigate the storms of life.** You can let the storms ruin your life and fill you with bitterness and self-pity, but by patient endurance, we become people of substance, of depth, of calm and confidence.

So, what's the secret to navigating with calm and confidence? You can't always control the circumstances, but you can always control your frame. To get what you're going through, you need to have a "big frame".

When storms come and bad things happen, if we frame God out of the picture, we will feel rejected and alone. We act like the sailors and soldiers that were with Paul, focusing on all the troubles and difficulties. We forget that "the God to whom we belong" can always be in our frame *if we pull back far enough and have a big frame.*

Our big frame is the same as Paul's: **A big frame includes a big God, a personal God, a purposeful God, and a loving God.** A God who has a plan and purpose for your life, at the center of which is making you into the kind of person who, through patient endurance of suffering, finds a calm and confidence in any storm.

The secret is in remembering that **you can't always control your circumstances but you can always control your frame.** Framing these storms with the Gospel, with the cross in the picture, assures that you're never alone in the storm. When you include the Gospel in your frame, you are reminded that Jesus paid the penalty for all sin, and the cross forever stands as the ultimate statement of God's love for you.

John Newton wrote this hymn, which was never set to music:

*His love in time past
Forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last
In trouble to sink.
By prayer let me wrestle,
And he will perform;
With Christ in the vessel,
I smile at the storm.*

How you frame the bad things that come into your life will determine how you think and act when the storm hits you.

For Discussion:

1. How do you tend to react when you are in a "storm"? Are you calm and confident, or are you uncertain and wavering?
2. If you've been through a storm, how did that *patient endurance* shape you?
3. If you're in a storm right now, what is your "frame"? Do you focus on the suffering and trouble, or do you leave God in the frame, shifting your focus?