



# MAKING IT TO SHORE:

FAITH FOR A NEW YEAR  
ACTS 27:44

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1.4.26

**MAKING IT TO SHORE:  
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DR. DARRYL T. CANADY  
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**Title: Making It to Shore: Faith for a New Year**

**Sermon Summary:** This powerful message centers on Acts 27, where Paul and his shipmates face a violent storm that threatens their lives. The central revelation is profound: God doesn't just rescue us from storms—He uses storms to reveal what we're holding onto that's weighing us down. This sermon illustrates how believers can navigate through life's storms and arrive safely at God's promised destination in the new year.

The message emphasizes that survival and arrival require three essential spiritual actions: release before rescue, sacrifice before survival, and obedience before arrival. Pastor Canady teaches that storms don't cancel God's plan but reveal His process. God is more concerned with who we are becoming than what we are carrying from our past. True faith is not about rushing but about responding wisely to God's instructions.

The crew had to throw their cargo overboard, then their equipment, and eventually lose the ship itself—yet every single person made it safely to shore. This teaches us that what we refuse to let go of determines whether we'll reach our destination. As we step into 2026, we're challenged to examine what we're still clutching from 2025 that God has told us to release. The storm didn't create their problem; it revealed what was weighing them down.

Some of us are carrying relationships, mindsets, fears, and habits that worked in past seasons but are now too heavy for where God is taking us. The promise is certain: we will make it to shore. But we must release the weight, sacrifice what's familiar, and obey God's instructions even when

the path looks risky. Faith for a new year isn't about how fast we move, but how faithfully we follow. The message concludes with the assurance that even when our ship breaks apart and we're clinging to broken pieces, God promises we will make it to shore if we trust and obey Him.

## **Chapters**

### **Chapter 1: Release Before Rescue**

We must learn to release the weight and burdens we carry before God can rescue us, as demonstrated by the crew throwing cargo overboard during the storm.

### **Chapter 2: Sacrifice Before Survival**

True survival requires sacrificing what is familiar and comfortable, even the ship itself, to prioritize life over possessions and security.

### **Chapter 3: Obedience Before Arrival**

Reaching our destination requires obedience to God's instructions, even when they seem risky or counterintuitive, as not every open door is God's direction.

### **Chapter 4: God's Presence in the Storm**

Despite broken pieces and uncertainty, God promises we will make it to the other shore because He is with us in every storm we face.

## **Key Points:**

- Release Before Rescue: God requires us to let go of dead weight before He brings deliverance; what we refuse to carry determines how we make it to shore
- Storms expose what we trust too much and reveal our real priorities; release creates space for clarity, obedience, and direction
- Sacrifice Before Survival: God is more committed to who we are becoming than what we are carrying; He will choose our life over our luggage
- Survival in God is intentional, not accidental; sacrifice creates room for God to show up and work in our lives
- Obedience Before Arrival: God's promises do not cancel His

instructions; promises don't remove responsibility but invite us to walk carefully

- Not every open door is God's direction; some doors are distractions, not directions
- Faith for a new year is not found in how fast we move but how faithfully we follow God's voice
- God walks with us to the shore; He doesn't rush us there but guides us through the process
- A new calendar does not automatically produce a new life; without release, we risk repeating the same storms with new dates

### **Scripture Reference:**

- Acts 27:44 (Primary text): "The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way, everyone reached land safely."
- Acts 27:18-19 (Release): The crew threw cargo and ship's tackle overboard during the storm
- Acts 27:21-22 (Sacrifice): Paul's instruction about fasting and his promise that none would be lost
- Acts 27:30-32 (Obedience): Paul's command to stay with the ship and the soldiers cutting the lifeboat ropes
- Acts 27:42-44 (Arrival): Instructions for some to swim and others to cling to planks to reach shore
- Exodus 3:14: "I am that I am"
- John 16:33: "In this world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer because I have overcome the world."

### **Stories:**

- The pastor's 99-year-old Uncle Walter who will turn 100 on February 21st, repeatedly saying "I am that I am" and testifying that despite everything, he's still here
- Paul Ketter, one of the Ketter twins, who lost his voice box to throat cancer between July and September but remains encouraged because God is still with him
- The pastor's experience seeking God's will about the property where the school now stands, walking around the old Sears

building over 500 times, and receiving confirmation through the song "When Jesus Says Yes, Nobody Can Say No"

- The biblical account of the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda who waited 38 years but was healed by Jesus without ever getting in the water
- Reference to the church's history being founded just years after slavery, with ancestors who sacrificed and rebuilt after the church was burned down
- Illustration of rocket engines falling off as the rocket ascends higher, symbolizing how some people and things must fall away as we progress in our spiritual journey
- The meteorologist predictions about the snowstorm on December 31st, illustrating that storms don't catch God by surprise even when they catch us off guard

## **Scripture References from the Sermon**

### **Explicitly Mentioned Scripture References:**

- **1. Acts 27:44** - "The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way, everyone reached land safely."
- **2. Acts 27:18-19** - The violent battering from the storm; throwing cargo overboard
- **3. Acts 27:21-22** - Paul's warning about the voyage and encouragement to keep courage
- **4. Acts 27:30-32** - The sailors attempting to escape in the lifeboat
- **5. Acts 27:42-44** - The soldiers' plan and the final rescue
- **6. Exodus 3:14** - "I am that I am"
- **7. John 16:33** - "In this world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer because I have overcome the world."
- **8. 2 Timothy 1:7** - "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and a sound mind."
- **9. John 14:6** - "I am the way, the truth, and the life."
- **10. Psalm 20:7** - "Some trust in horses, some trust in chariots,

but I trust in the name of the Lord Almighty."

- **11. Romans 10:9** - Believing in the heart and confessing with the mouth for salvation

### **Biblical Allusions and Themes:**

- **12. John 5:2-9** - The man at the Pool of Bethesda (38 years, waiting for healing)
- **13. Matthew 14:22-33** - Jesus walking on water
- **14. Psalm 23** - God's guidance and presence through difficult times
- **15. Isaiah 61:3** - Beauty for ashes
- **16. Philippians 3:13-14** - Forgetting what is behind and pressing forward
- **17. Matthew 11:28-30** - Coming to Jesus with burdens
- **18. 2 Corinthians 5:17** - New creation in Christ
- **19. Hebrews 12:1** - Laying aside every weight
- **20. Proverbs 3:5-6** - Trusting in the Lord with all your heart

The sermon's central theme focuses on Acts 27 and the journey through storms, emphasizing release, sacrifice, and obedience as prerequisites for reaching God's promised destination.

### **SERMON QUOTES:**

- Storms don't cancel God's plan, but they do reveal God's process.
- What you refuse to carry determines how you will make it to the shore.
- Release is not punishment. It is your protection.
- God is more committed to who you are becoming than what you are leaving behind.
- Promises do not remove responsibility. God's Word over your life does not excuse you from listening. It invites you to walk carefully.
- What feels risky in obedience is safer than what feels comfortable in disobedience.

- God does not rush us to the shore. He walks with us to get there.

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**5-Day Devotional: Making It to Shore - Faith for a New Year**

**Day 1: Release Before Rescue**

**Reading:** Acts 27:18-19

**Devotional:** The sailors threw cargo overboard not because it was worthless, but because it was too heavy for their season. As we begin this new year, God invites us to release what weighs us down—unforgiveness, fear, outdated methods, even good things that no longer fit our calling. Release isn't punishment; it's protection. What worked last season may sink you in this one. The rescue was already promised, but the release was still required. God doesn't ask us to let go to harm us, but to save us. Before you can receive what God has next, you must open your hands and release what you're clutching from yesterday.

**Reflection:** What is God asking you to release as you enter this new year? What weight are you carrying that belongs in the past?

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**Day 2: Sacrifice Before Survival**

**Reading:** Acts 27:21-22, 38

**Devotional:** After releasing the cargo, the crew faced another decision: sacrifice the ship's equipment and eventually the ship itself. God was more committed to saving the people than preserving their possessions. Sacrifice means choosing life over familiarity, choosing God's future over

our comfort. What once carried you may now be too heavy to keep you alive. God honors what we're willing to surrender. He doesn't just want our leftovers; He wants our trust demonstrated through intentional sacrifice. When we give up what we think we need, we create space for God to show up powerfully. Your survival matters more to God than your stuff.

**Reflection:** What comfort, control, or convenience is God asking you to sacrifice for His greater purpose in your life?

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### **Day 3: Obedience Before Arrival**

**Reading:** Acts 27:30-32, 42-44

**Devotional:** God promised that everyone would survive, yet obedience was still required. When sailors tried escaping in a lifeboat—a seemingly logical choice—Paul warned they must stay with the ship. Not every open door is God's direction; some are distractions. The promise doesn't cancel the process. God's Word over your life invites you to walk carefully, following His instructions even when they seem risky. Some swam to shore, others clung to broken planks, but all arrived safely because they obeyed. Obedience positions us to receive what God has already prepared. Faith isn't about rushing to the destination; it's about faithfully following God's voice along the way.

**Reflection:** Where is God asking you to obey even when His instruction doesn't make complete sense to your natural mind?

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### **Day 4: God's Presence in the Storm**

**Reading:** Acts 27:23-25; Exodus 3:14

**Devotional:** In the darkest moment, an angel appeared to Paul with a message: "Do not be afraid." God's presence doesn't always calm the storm immediately, but His presence in the storm changes everything. The "I AM" who spoke to Moses is the same God with you today. He isn't surprised by your circumstances; He's the meteorologist who knew the



storm was coming. God doesn't change because of our storms—He remains constant, faithful, and present. When everything around you is breaking apart, anchor yourself to the unchanging character of God. He holds you with a grip that never weakens, never tires, never fails. Your storm didn't catch Him off guard.

**Reflection:** How can you recognize and rest in God's presence during your current challenges rather than focusing only on the storm?

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### **Day 5: Faith for the Journey Ahead**

**Reading:** Hebrews 11:1; 2 Timothy 1:7

**Devotional:** Faith for a new year requires lighter hands, surrendered hearts, and obedient steps. God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind. As you move forward, remember: release creates space, sacrifice demonstrates trust, and obedience positions you for arrival. You may be traveling on broken pieces, but with God, you will reach the shore. Don't carry into 2026 what God told you to leave in 2025. Trust that the "I AM" is with you. Your rescue is already guaranteed; walk faithfully through the process. God is more committed to who you're becoming than to what you're leaving behind.

**Reflection:** What specific step of faith is God calling you to take this week to move forward into His promises for your life?

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**Closing Prayer:** Lord, as I journey through this new year, give me wisdom to release what holds me back, courage to sacrifice what no longer serves Your purpose, and obedience to follow Your voice above all others. Help me trust that You are with me in every storm, and that You will bring me safely to shore. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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**Small Group Guide: Making it to Shore - Faith for a New Year**

**Opening Prayer**

Begin with prayer, asking God to open hearts and minds to receive His Word and direction for 2026.

**Icebreaker Question**

Share one thing you're grateful survived from 2025 and one thing you're ready to release as you enter 2026.

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**Key Scripture**

**Acts 27:44** - "The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way, everyone reached land safely."

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**Main Points from the Sermon**

**1. Release Before Rescue (Acts 27:18-19)**

- The crew had to throw cargo overboard before they could be saved
- What we refuse to carry determines how we make it to shore
- Release creates space for God to work

**2. Sacrifice Before Survival (Acts 27:21-22)**

- After cargo, they had to sacrifice the ship's equipment
- God chose their lives over their luggage
- Survival requires letting go of what once felt secure

### **3. Obedience Before Arrival (Acts 27:30-32, 42-44)**

- Following God's instructions was essential to reaching shore
- Not every open door is God's direction
- Some could swim, some clung to broken pieces, but all who obeyed made it

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## **Discussion Questions**

### **Understanding the Message**

1. What stood out to you most from this sermon? Why?
2. The pastor said, "Storms don't cancel God's plan, but they reveal God's process." What does this mean to you personally?
3. How does the story of Paul's shipwreck encourage you as you begin 2026?

### **Personal Reflection**

4. What "cargo" (burdens, fears, resentments, expectations) is God asking you to release this year?
5. The sermon stated: "What worked in your last season may not work in your next season." What habits, relationships, or mindsets might God be asking you to sacrifice?
6. Share about a time when obedience to God felt risky but proved to be right.

### **Application**

7. The pastor emphasized that "release is not punishment—it's protection." How does this perspective change the way you view what God is asking you to let go of?
  8. What does it mean practically to "travel light" into 2026? What specific action will you take this week?
  9. How can we as a group help each other stay obedient to God's direction this year, even when it's uncomfortable?
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## Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Your rescue is guaranteed, but release is still required** - God's promises don't eliminate our responsibility to obey
  - ✓ **Faith for a new year requires lighter hands** - We can't receive what God has for us while clutching what He's told us to release
  - ✓ **Not every open door is God's direction** - Discernment and obedience are essential
  - ✓ **You may be on broken pieces, but you're still going to get there** - God can use even our brokenness to bring us to His promises
  - ✓ **The theme for 2026: Faith and Family** - We're going to make it to the other shore together
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## Practical Applications

### This Week:

- **Identify one thing** you need to release (a grudge, fear, unhealthy relationship, bad habit)
- **Write it down** and pray specifically about releasing it to God
- **Share with one trusted person** for accountability

### This Month:

- Commit to consistent spiritual disciplines (prayer, Bible reading, church attendance)
- Evaluate your relationships - who is helping you move forward in faith?
- Ask God to show you where obedience is required, even if it feels risky

### This Year:

- Make "release, sacrifice, obedience" your personal mantra when facing decisions
- Stay connected to your church family - don't drift away when storms come
- Trust God's process, not just His promises

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## Reflection Exercise

Complete this sentence and share with the group:

*"In 2026, I believe God is calling me to release \_\_\_\_\_,  
sacrifice \_\_\_\_\_, and obey Him by \_\_\_\_\_."*

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## Closing Discussion

1. How can we pray for each other as we navigate this new year?
  2. What specific commitment will you make to stay connected to this group and to God's direction?
  3. Who in your life needs to hear the message that "you're going to make it to the other shore"?
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## Closing Prayer

Pray together:

- Thank God for bringing you through 2025
  - Ask for courage to release what needs to go
  - Request wisdom for obedience in 2026
  - Pray for faith to trust God's process, not just His promises
  - Commit to walking together as a community of faith
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## Memory Verse for the Week

**Acts 27:25** - "So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me."

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## Next Steps

- Share one takeaway from today's discussion on social media or with a friend
- Journal about what God is asking you to release, sacrifice, and obey
- Return next week ready to share how God has been working in your life

## **ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- 1. What weight or burden from 2025 is God asking you to release before He can fully rescue you in 2026, and why is it so difficult to let go?
- 2. How does the story of Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27 challenge the idea that God's promises eliminate the need for our obedience and active participation?
- 3. In what ways might the things that once supported you spiritually or practically now be holding you back from your next season of growth?
- 4. What is the difference between surviving a storm and arriving at the shore with purpose, and where do you find yourself in that journey?
- 5. How can we distinguish between an open door that is God's direction versus one that is merely a distraction or escape from His will?
- 6. What does it mean practically to 'travel light' into 2026, and what relationships, mindsets, or habits might God be calling you to leave behind?
- 7. Why does God sometimes require us to sacrifice what feels necessary or comfortable before He provides survival and breakthrough?
- 8. How does Paul's confidence that 'not one will be lost' speak to your own faith when circumstances around you appear to be falling apart?
- 9. In what areas of your life are you trusting in your own resources, education, or relationships more than in the great 'I Am' who never changes?
- 10. What would it look like for you to choose obedience over familiarity this year, even when God's instructions seem risky or unclear?