

The Perfect Storm

Sermon Title: **The Perfect Storm**

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Speaker: **James Bronner**

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PASTOR JAMES: By witness, let us pray. Lord, we thank You for this day, oh, God, that You have made. Lord, I thank You for this message, oh, Lord, for it is not of man, but of God. Lord, You know that this is only my first sermon as an ordained minister; but, Lord, I ask You this morning to take my inexperience, oh, Lord, and combine it with the experience of Your Holy Spirit. Lord, You know that I am a young man, oh, Lord. I ask You to take my lack of knowledge, oh, Lord, and lack of age, oh, Father, and combine them with the revelation, oh, Father, from Your Spirit. Lord, You know that I am a little man in stature, oh, Father, in size; but, Lord, I ask You to place Your Mantle upon me, oh, Lord, for indeed You are a giant God. And, Lord, I pray that Your people will have ears to hear this morning. Oh, Lord, many of us wait on You to come in the loud winds, in the thunderous rain, oh God; but most times, You come in the still small voice. And, Lord, for those who have not the ear to hear Thy small voice, oh, Lord, I pray this morning that You will speak through me, oh, Lord, and amplify Your small voice through my voice this morning. Lord, I pray that You give me the words to speak, oh, Father. I go with the deliverance of it, oh, Lord, that Your people may receive it readily, oh, Lord. I pray that their hearts will be fertile ground, oh, Lord, for this word, oh, Father, that You've given me. I thank You this morning, oh, Lord. In Jesus' name I pray, oh, Lord. And we thank You, Lord, for the gift of Your only begotten Son on this Christmas Eve. Oh, Lord, it was the greatest gift that You could have given us, oh, Lord, for the greatest thing that we can give anybody is ourselves. And You gave us not only Your Son, God; but He was one with You, oh, Lord; that You came down and died for us and gave us a part of You, oh, Lord, and sacrificed Yourself for us, Your Children, oh, Lord. We thank You, oh, Lord for taking us out of the dirt and dust, oh, Lord, and breathing life into us with Your Breath, oh, Lord; and then for a second time sending Your only Son to give us Eternal Life, oh, Lord, through Him. Lord, this is what we pray this morning in the name of Jesus, amen.

This message this morning is not the average Christian sermon. It's not even the typical sermon at all. But you know that God knows what we need to hear, and He doesn't always operate in the traditions of man. Not only does He know what we need to hear, but He knows when we need to hear it, for it's better for us to have a word that's in God season than in man's season. And God instructed Pastor Nathaniel about a month ago, and He told him in prayer that four Sundays from now, the message of "The Perfect Storm" was to be delivered, as we use that movie as a modern-day parable for the people to make it through the coming storm.

And the last instruction that He gave the Pastor that I really didn't want to hear was He said, "Let James deliver it." So here I stand, four Sundays later, to speak to you from the title of the parable of "The Perfect Storm." And I thank God for having a Prophet as the pastor, for people come from long and far to hear prophecies, We even witnessed that here at the Ark when Prophet Connor came. The church was overflowing in the balcony and even the basement, for they'd come to get the Word

from God, and we thank God that we don't have to go anywhere to hear the words of a true Prophet. So, we thank You for having that in our own pastor. The pastor has spoken the prophetic words straight from God, telling His people that a storm is coming. You don't know how or in what manner that storm will come, whether it will be in the weather, whether it will be in finances or politics or even in your own personal lives; but, rest assured that a storm is coming. So take heed today of the impending storm on the horizon, for many times God sends signs in the physical to signal things that are going on or coming in the spiritual.

Since this church has been open, we have never had ice on the ground leading us to the church for two Sundays straight. Well, people, I am here to tell you today that a storm is coming in scenarios of our lives, and even sent in the ice and the snow. And when the storm comes and ice covers the ground, the same ground that you are able to just walk across without even thinking about it and it's just solid and you walk every day, and most people don't look down, they don't even think about it; it's an unconsciousness act. But when the storm comes and ice begins to cover the ground, that same walk that you have always being doing day after day for 20, 30 and 40 years, when the ice hits the ground, all of a sudden you've got to notice every step that you walk. You've got to look and make sure you are not coming up to a patch, and even at the office this past week, we were looking out of the window and trying to keep from laughing as best we could; but people were going up the hill, the same hill they go to work every day; but once the ice hit the ground, they couldn't get their balance, and we say them hit the ground. It was about three different women, so we tried to keep it together; but that same ground when ice hits changes the way that we look at even walking. And it becomes 100 times easier to slip, slide and fall when the ice hits the ground. So that the majority of the people would not fall coming into the Ark on last Sunday, Mr. Connor had to put salt on the ice to melt the ice so that it would be safer for people to walk. He used salt, and Jesus said in His Word, "Ye are the salt of the Earth." Our presence in dangerous and slippery places and situations in the world, we should make this Earth easier to walk upon for the people just by us being in those situations, and we should take the anointing with us and be able to steal the storm in those situations and just bring peace unto dangerous situations; that as we are placed in those situation at works and in our community, the ice would just begin to melt, and people would be able to walk sturdily again upon the ground, and it would remove the danger of it.

He has called us as salt, people. As Jesus taught the people mostly in parables in his teachings in the Word, and the closest parable to this message today was the parable of the wise man who build his house upon a rock, and the foolish man who build his house upon the sand. And when the storm came and the winds blew and the rains fell, the house of the foolish man that was on the sand couldn't stand in the storm. But today we want to be like the wise man, and we want to learn to build our houses on solid foundations so that when the storm comes, it shall not and we shall not fall.

I use the movie today "The Perfect Storm" as a modern-day parable. This was a major blockbuster hit, and even in the video stores, it topped the charts as number one for several weeks. I don't know how many of you got a chance to see the movie -- they had it in the back -- this was a true story of the storm that killed six fishermen on the sea in Gloucester, Massachusetts, in late October of 1991. The ship they were on was called the Andrea Gale, and this storm was called the perfect storm because it involved three separate storms and combined them into one, merging into one storm. It said that you could be a meteorologist all of your life and never see the likes of such. It produced waves out of this storm that were possibly over 100 feet high with winds. Even one man who was out in the storm reported that just the wind pressure changing burst his eardrum in the storm. So that gives you an idea of how strong that storm was. And unlike surfing, where the waves come one after another in the same direction, this storm produced waves that could come from any direction; you would get hit from the back by a wave; and the next minute, you know, even though you are traveling in the same direction, you would get hit from the side by a wave; and the next wave could come 30 feet high straight in front of you. So this storm was not like the regular waves of the sea, in that waves could come from any direction and at any height.

When your health goes on you, you don't necessarily expect that direction; but it will hit you off-guard. And then as you are working with your health, you have to start getting medicine and doctor visits, and your money starts getting tight on you, and you get hit from another direction. Then as you are still trying to get your money together, money is the number-one cause, your relationship gets hit from the front. And then as you start working on your relationship, handling that crisis, your children hear you fussing and fighting and you get a call from their school, and it hits you from the other side as your kids start acting up on you.

This is how storms come in our lives in the manner of a perfect storm: you get hit in all directions. And there are tons of lessons demonstrated in this movie that will help guide us through the upcoming storm in our lives. I will only have time to cover some of them this morning.

The first lesson of this parable of surviving a storm is, you must be sensitive to the Spirit. There were a total of three people who had spiritual warnings dealing with this situation about this storm. The author of the book had a track on the DVD, and on the track, he said that there were two experienced fishermen. He said that one of them had a premonition, and he had never had a premonition before of this kind. He had been fishing all of his life, but something on the inside of him said, "Don't go on this trip." And he called the Captain and said, "I can't make it." And the other had come all the way to the dock to board the ship, and as he stepped onto that ship, he said there's something about it, a cold wind just blew on him that didn't feel

right, and he said that he got off of the ship and told the Captain, "I can't explain it, but I can't go with you this time."

The third spiritual warning that changes to these men came through the girlfriend of one of the men named Bobby. She had a dream, and if you saw the movie, that's what opened the movie was that dream. In that dream, she saw the storm coming, and she warned him about it; but he didn't listen, and he got on the ship anyway.

Those who were sensitive to the spirit, not only did they make it through the storm, but they didn't even have to battle with the storm, because they didn't even get in the storm; they were at home when the storm hit. So they avoided it altogether. And in order to be sensitive to the spirit, you must say, "Praise God," and you must spend quality time with God to build a relationship with Him, for sensitivity to the Spirit just doesn't come overnight. God has to know you, just like you know a person. You have to build a relationship, and you will even begin to feel things that that person is feeling and thinking.

Our communication with God is like the communications antenna on the ship. And during the storm, the antenna blew down, and they could no longer hear what was really going on with the storm and they couldn't be warned and they couldn't call for help and report their position to the Coast Guard or anybody else. It's the same way in our lives. Distractions will come constantly and beat against our spiritual antenna and cause us not to spend the time in prayer that we should; it will be one thing after another, from dealing with the kids' issues to things at work to just things in general like household things and health things, just one thing after another, distraction after another. It will be at the storm, and if we are not careful and test ourselves, it will blow our antennae down, where we won't be able to hear from God.

You have to excuse me while I get a little water this morning. When you first start off preaching, if you have never spoken, you don't know it; but the best way I can describe, it is as though I am sucking on a lollipop made of cottonballs. So if you ever have to speak, you will see what I'm talking about. I know you didn't come here this morning to see me drink water, but just bear with me just a minute.

The second lesson of this parable is, if you're going to be on the water, you must have the right kinds of boats. The Coast Guard ship in this movie was in the same storm that all the other ships were in. The other two ships were completely destroyed, but the Coast Guard ship made it through the entire storm without incident, without any damage to their boat, for their boat was designed from the first bolt put in it for storms, to be able to weather the storms. And even if you are in a perfect storm, if you are sensitive to the Spirit and you must go out to sea, then God will instruct you on what kind of boat to be in, for even He can tell you to even take a submarine out to sea. One thing about a submarine is that it goes under the

water, and in that storm it could have gone deep enough where no matter how bad the storm was on the surface, you would not have even known a storm was up there in a submarine.

So the boat is very vital in a storm; and yet if you are in the wrong kind of boat, even on a calm sea, you will run into trouble and can sink. Pastor Nathaniel had a boat that was named the **Stamus**, and we took this boat out and we didn't even go to the ocean; we just went to a local small lake where there were no waves and it was just still and quiet. It was really my first time going out on a boat like that, and we went out there. A few of us were a little nervous, and he said, "Don't worry about it, we've got two motors on this boat." He said, "I made sure of that so in case one goes out on me, I've got a backup," so that made us feel real good. We got out on that still lake even, with no waves and no wind with the sun shining and, do you know, we barely on a whim of a prayer made it back into that port on that boat. So we got out there, one motor went to smoking and clunking, and we heard it, and that went out on us. Then the boat was a little better, and he said, "That's all right, we're prepared for this. Bring it on, we've got two motors." We went a little longer having fun, and the second motor began to sputter, and it went out on us. And, men, Nathaniel was a mechanic and skilled, and he fixed one motor and got it up, so we said, "We better beat it on back while we've got this one motor halfway working." Even on the way back, the boat kind of drifted off a little bit, and it got stuck in a reef over on the side, and I had to jump off the boat in a lifejacket and get down in the mud and push that boat out of that reef. So it just went to show us that without being sensitive to the Spirit, even on a calm sea, you've got to be in the right kind of boat. You could be on a boat even that has a hole in it, and you will drown, even on a calm, small sea.

Noah in the Bible, he went through a perfect storm, and it rained 40 days and 40 nights without stopping on him. Noah survived, and he saved his family and all of the animals from that destruction; but the thing about Noah was, he built his boat according to the specifications given straight by God, and that's what this Ark is named after. While the rest of the world was partying and drinking and then married and going about work as normal, Noah was working on that ark. They made fun of him, saying, "What a fool Noah is. He is building a boat, and it has never rained one drop of rain. He is wasting his time."

Likewise, I am sure that the people of Egypt laughed at Joseph, the dreamer, for storing food when the famine hit Egypt; but at that time, it was actually bountiful in the land, so they looked at Joseph storing this food and said, "Why is he saving? We need to be eating all of this. We've got food to spare. This land is going to be fertile forever."

But I tell you, Noah was not fully recognized as a true Prophet. Still, it began to sprinkle, and people began to give notice, and the rain began to fall. And Joseph

was not fully recognized as a Prophet of God until the rain stopped and the crops began to wither away from the drought. Then they began to say these men had something, these men knew something, these men were on to something.

The storm exposes and distinguishes those that are really in tune with God from those who are just tuned unto the world. It shows it more. When the flood came, you clearly saw the difference between Noah and his family and the rest of the world. Before the storm, Noah looked like a fruitcake to the other people, they really thought he was off his rocker; but when it began to rain, he looked like the only one on Earth who really knew what was going on.

To move on to the third lesson of this parable, that is, prayer changes things. One odd thing about the movie, with all of this disaster, nobody in the movie even once prayed. You would think that at least the fishermen would have prayed while the ship was sinking in the waves, but they still didn't pray. Before the last man, Bobby, drowned, as he was floating in the ocean, you would have thought that he would have at least prayed then. Well, he did pray; but he prayed to his girlfriend, Christina. But he didn't utter a word unto the only One who could really save him, Christ. He prayed to Christina, but not a word to Christ. And that's a lesson that we have to be prayerful when the storms of life hit us, for often the scenes and distractions of the storm will steal our attention and focus away from God, the One who can really save us from it.

The fourth lesson of this parable is, in dangerous situations, always wear a lifejacket. In all of this storm, in the dangerous work they were doing and had hooks swinging back and forth and all types of things, nobody on this ship, the Andrea Gale, had on even one lifejacket. That lifejacket represents the spiritual salvation and strength, and to swim without a lifejacket in the ocean is like going through life without God. You know, you can make it on your own a little while and be confident in the first couple of minutes and say, "What a good swimmer I am. I have been trained for this. I have been swimming since I was a little child. I can do this all by myself." But as those minutes turn into about 30 minutes and your shoulders begin to tire on you, you start thinking twice about that thing; and as that thing gets to an hour, no matter what kind of swimmer you are, you begin to wonder if you're going to make it at all. But if you have God, you can stay afloat, and that Lifejacket will keep you afloat and keep your head from going underwater no longer how long you're out there. Without that Lifejacket, the waves of life will overtake you without God. The people on the Coast Guard ship in the movie and the people on the sailboats, they all had on red lifejackets, and they all were saved. In looking at them, with them being covered in red, it just reminded me and looked as though they were covered by the Blood of Jesus. And, you know, when you are covered by Jesus' blood, even though harm may come to the physical body sometimes, that Spirit will float all the way up to Heaven, and it will go untouched. It will float in any kind of condition. The fishing profession is the most dangerous profession out of

all professions that there is. Jesus instructed even us to be fishers of men; but even in that, there is great danger, for Jesus and all of the disciples except for John ended in an early death. Even John had to kind of retire early from it and run to the isle of Patmos. So he had to run.

The fifth lesson of this parable is, strong winds and waves reveal weaknesses otherwise not seen. Wind in its essence is air that is rushing from high-pressure areas to low-pressure areas. When everything is going smooth in your life and you've got money in the bank and your children are doing all right, that's a low-pressure area in your life. But then at times you will begin to feel the winds blowing on those smooth situations, and it will begin to bring some of that high-pressure area into your world, and you'll feel the storm coming. When the storm comes, it will break loose everything in your life that is not well attached. It will test every part to see how strong it is and to find the weakest link in your life. And you cannot tell the weak places in calm times; they will only be revealed under pressure. The strength of the windows on the ship were tested and the strength of the communications antenna was tested, and they didn't pass the tests; they both broke. Confusing situations will test your spiritual eyes and your spiritual ears. You can't judge a ship by how it handles in smooth seas. You will only know when the storm and the rough waves hit what that ship is really made of.

Even in this past storm this week, I just went through a few ice patches on purpose, just to see how the antilock brakes worked in the car. And as they began to kick in and as the wheels began to slide and the antilock stopped the car, then I began to see the purpose for the antilock brakes on my car. But I never would have been able to tell how those antilock brakes worked while the ground had plenty of friction for the tires. They were only tested on the slippery ice, and then I could appreciate a little more having the antilock brakes in the car.

The sixth lesson of this parable is, keep shotguns onboard in case you pull in a shark. While they were fishing on this boat, they thought they had a real big swordfish; but as they struggled with it and pulled it onboard, it was a shark that came onboard, and it began to attack the men. The only way they could stop this shark was with a shotgun. They had to blast it in the head several times, that was the only way to stop that shark. This is how our faith must be. We will be faced with powerful demons at some time in our life, and we must have the power like that shotgun to be able to look them in the eye and cast them out in Jesus' name and get them off our ship. And at the end of the movie, if you pay close attention and have the volume up, the storm made a growling sound in that last wave as if it were alive. It was like a demon was operating in those final waves in that storm. The men even said, "She is not going to let us out." And they said "she" instead of "it," as though it were a living being. The perfect storms in your life will not only combine natural elements, but the devil will wish to destroy you and further influence the natural. Some things are just going to happen out of the natural; you know, things

happen and you get headaches sometimes, and sometimes the body will just ache in some places. That's common in the natural; but when the devil gets into it and really wants to try to create a perfect storm, he will turn that headache, and you will go to the doctor to check that migraine, and he will begin to say that you are having an aneurysm when the devil gets into it. And that stomachache that is you is just upset stomach, when you go to the doctor and the devil gets into it and tries to make it a perfect storm, the doctor will come back with a report that it's a cancerous tumor. But thank God that we have shotguns with trace bullets in them, and we can look that devil in the eye and tell him, "By His Stripe, we are healed!" And this cancer is a curse under the law, but Jesus hung on a tree and took that curse for our safety; we will not have to bear it.

The seventh lesson of this parable is, the love of money will cause you to lose your family and your life. They didn't listen to spiritual warning or even practical wisdom in the search for more money. People can work two and three jobs and feel their body going down and down, knowing that they're not getting enough sleep, knowing that their families are being neglected and knowing that their spirits are being starved; but yet they will keep on for the love of money. Only one of the fishermen onboard the Andrea Gale had a good relationship; but even he wasn't married and was living in fornication with her, and the rest of the men were either divorced or separated. So they gave up relationship and family and children for the sake of money, which could never bring them happiness.

During life sometimes, work often seems, to men especially, more urgent at the moment than their families or their children; but on their deathbeds, in their final hour, no one thinks back and wished they would have earned more money or bought more things or put in more hours at their job; they wished they had spent more time with their family, they wish they would have spent more time developing their relationship with God. This is what they wish in their final hour.

On the boat, when they had plenty of time going out to sea, the men rarely mentioned the people back home; but when the boat began to sink and they had no more time left, this is when they began to think and to say, "This is going to be hard on my little boy"; this is going to be hard on their loved ones back home. When they had no time left, they began to say these things; but when they had plenty of time, they didn't even think about it.

The men didn't want to wait out the storm because their fish would spoil, and this was their money that they would lose. Many times we will take risks with our lives and our souls, just to hold on to a few dollars. He who gives us life shall save it according to the Word, and He also will give us money to help others; He will store it up in Heaven. Jesus told the rich man to sell everything in the Bible that he owns and give that money and give it unto the poor and follow him. If he would have done that, he would have received at least a hundredfold of everything that he had given

away, and plus he would have gained eternal life in Heaven, if he had only died to the flesh and obeyed because of Jesus.

And to move on to the eighth lesson of this parable, that is, be grateful in all things. "Thanksgiving" is really two words, "thanks" and "giving." If you are really thankful to God, it won't just be a verbal thing; but you will give. And every person that was saved in the movie, they were saved by somebody else giving them a helping hand. Jesus is the one who cleanses our sins and saves us; but, you know, every person that comes to Jesus, somebody invites them or brings them. There was the man in the movie who got a hook stuck in his hand, and the lines pulled him overboard down into the water, and two men jumped in after him, risking their own lives, and went way under the water holding their breath. But the guy, even when he got back onboard and regained consciousness, out of pride and manly machismo, he still had a hard time telling the men "thank you" that saved his life, because they were fighting before that. God had brought their ship through several times of almost sinking and yielding onto the storm; and each time they got out, and even that last time when they made it through, they had to do a turnaround. They flipped over and came back up and still kept sailing, and even when water filled the boat then, yet they were saved, even after all that, when they got through it, they never once said, "Thank You, God, for saving us." They said, "We did it." That ended in destruction, because they were not grateful for the times that God saved them in the past.

The ninth lesson of this parable is, be careful whom you choose as the Captain of your boat, for you will go wherever the Captain of the ship is going and is steering the ship. And this is important in your job, it's important in your church, and it's important in your family, for a woman needs to be sure what direction a man is headed before she submits herself at that altar, at that wedding, and takes those vows to follow and to submit to that man. She needs to ask that man, "Where is this ship going?" She needs to see the vision and look at the map that he has plotted and navigated and see where he is taking their ship and then decide whether she wants to get onboard that ship. And I thank God -- and we don't have to worry about it in this church -- that we have a pastor that is going where I want to go. We thank God that he has an ear, that he is able to get his directions from God and steer us in the right direction.

The tenth lesson of this parable is, make sure you stay in the Will of God, for Jonah also went through a storm, and his storm was because he was avoiding and running from the Will of God and resisting it. If God has told you to go and is preaching of your Nineveh and you are resisting His Will, you will never have smooth seas and peace in your life, because God has control of the wind, He has control of the waves, He has control of all of the forces of nature in His hands, for He created them all from the beginning. And they must operate in His Will and under His Power. So if you are not aligned with God's Will, then that means that all of those forces of

nature that are moving according to His Will are against you, and whatever you try to do, you will be hit with all of the forces of nature out of the Will of God.

The men on the ship with Jonah, they had to throw him overboard, lest they would be lost with him in the sea. Just for one man's disobedience, the whole ship and all of the men onboard would have been lost if they had not thrown him overboard for his disobedience under God.

The eleventh lesson of this parable is, be careful what you speak. The ship's name ended with "Gale," which means "a very strong wind," and this name was painted on both sides and the front of the ship in big letters. It had the very destiny of this ship's fate painted right on the front of the ship, that it would one day succumb unto the wind that were strong. That's why you have to be careful what you call even your children and even what others call you. My father would wake us in the morning and say, "How are you feeling this morning?" When we were little, sometimes we would say, "We are doing all right" or "Good"; and he would keep on asking us that question until we would say, "We are doing great!" We had to say that every morning; he would accept no word for how we were feeling any less than "great." Even if we woke sneezing and coughing and aching and feverish and didn't feel well, we still had to say we were feeling great. He instilled a principle in us by doing that, and I was so young at the time I didn't even know that word; I thought I was saying "grapefruit," and I could never figure out why he would have me saying a fruit as how I was feeling. But now I understand it, and even among the brothers, he would never let us call each other "stupid" or other names, because he knew the power of words, that the vibration will go out and not return forth. Even though we didn't know, he knew, and he taught it to us.

Even on that ship, each time they said, "We can make it" until they got to the last wave, and then they said, "She is not going to let us out." Those were the words of the captain. That was the only wave that took them down, and you never know what could have happened if he would have said, "By God, yes, we can make it!" He might have told them to turn around the other way or go sideways; but those very words were the only negative words he spoke, and immediately after they drowned.

The twelfth and final lesson of this parable is to keep your balance. On the ships, they cut loose their stabilizing bird when the winds got rough. What the stabilizing bird is, it kind of looks like an anchor, and it swings from both sides of the ship. They call it a "stabilizing bird," because it looks just like a bird; but it's made out of steel, and as the ship is tossed with the waves and if the ship leans left, the stabilizing bird on the right will pull the ship back that way and stabilize it. If the waves took the ship over to the right, the stabilizing bird on the left will pull it back upright and help it be stable on the rough seas.

The Holy Spirit is represented in Scripture even as a bird, for He descended upon Jesus as a Dove. And when sickness comes in your life and pulls you over to the left and snatches you, you need to call down deep within that Holy Spirit's power, and His Stabilizing Power will bring you back to the center and balance your life. Even when your bills pile up in your finances, you don't know how you are going to make it, and they begin to snatch you over to the left with the waves, call upon that Stabilizing Bird of the Holy Spirit, and It will begin to pull you back into the center and stabilize your life. When you are on the sea, the waves throw you off-balance on the boat. You can walk around the boat normally when the sea is still; but when it starts to get a little rough, you begin to wobble a little on the boat. You can't get your balance and your center of gravity is off. It almost looks like you've had something to drink, even if you haven't. In the midst of that storm with the winds blowing and rain in the winds, you can't see straight in the middle of the storm, and you can't walk straight in the middle of the storm, and you can't even think straight in the middle of a storm, because there's just too much going on. This is when you need to walk, talk, hear and see by the Spirit then.

When your physical eyes fail you and grow dim and you can't see through the fog and it's too dense, you need to rely upon your spiritual eyes. When the terrors of the world begin to holler too loud, you need to be still and listen with your spiritual ears and hear what thus saith the Spirit.

PASTOR NATHANIEL: Amen, amen, amen. Wasn't that a powerful message on this day? And indeed for those of you who did not need to watch the TV, we still have copies of "The Perfect Storm"; so if you have not seen the movie, be sure to get a copy so that you can relate to those 12 points we just talked about today in the message with the parable of "The Perfect Storm."

A storm is coming, although we've had one over the last two weeks. And I told you that this message would be preached upon this day, and I told you then that a storm was coming. And we saw the storm that hit Atlanta, but you know that was a storm all across the nation. As a matter of fact, the Weather Bureau said that nationwide, it was the worst December in 104 years. It was the worst storm in December that we have ever had in over 100 years. I told you a storm was coming.

And it is not just the weather. There are some other themes that are coming that if we are not prepared -- and that's why you need to get a copy of that tape and watch it as you listen to this sermon all over again -- so that you will know how to survive that storm. And there will be even some additional themes that you will pick up, because there was a whole lot of points that James and I discussed about the movie that he just didn't have time to even bring out today, even beyond those 12 points.

One of the themes is that the man that owned the boat told them not to go out there, because he said "The Grand Banks are no joke in October." And they had

warning after warning after warning just in the natural. See, a lot of the times, we will have spiritual warnings; but most of the stupid stuff we get caught up in, we got natural warnings on that stuff, too, some natural laws, and the owner of the ship, when he came offshore and said, "I will go farther," the owner of the ship said, "No, you don't, because I want my boat back." He said, "Don't even think about it." And not only did they go to the Grand Banks, they went out to the Flemish Cap, which was way past where the ship owner told them not even to go in the first place. They violated natural law.

So there are some themes that you'll pick up as you watch the movie either all over again and listen to this message all over again. The second part of where he got to the things that are coming in terms of the mark, that's some deep stuff. James asked me, he said, "Should I even bring that?" He said, "Ask God what all need to tell the people." I said, "I told you, God said from the beginning you can deliver the message better than I can. So you follow your own leading on that." And that's some deep stuff, people; but I'll tell you this: one of the reasons even why God had told me to name the third floor Covenant Hall and to only allow people to really sponsor rooms there that were entirely in covenant with God -- and I told you all as I talked about that that the Old Testament required 10; the New Testament takes you the full limit to all of it. Let me tell you this. There isn't any need of you all worrying about the mark. And I am going to say this, and understand this: there is no need for you all worrying about the mark, because the mark may require you to give up everything. There is no need of you worrying about the mark, and you all do 10%. There is no need of you going, "Lord, I'm not going to take the mark," and the mark may require you to give up everything and you won't give up 10%. Don't you even worry about it, because I can guarantee you, if you won't give up 10% to God, I don't even have to question you are going to get that mark. You don't even see me thinking about it, and you are going, "You know, the mark is coming, child. I am not going to take that. I'm going to sacrifice everything." Don't even come here with that. You are not going to do a thing. If you are not going to even give 10%, there is no need for you even talking about you are going to give up everything for God. Don't even say it.

So, you see, we go through stages and we go through parts of foundation. If you won't do the foundation, that's why God will get you into the mode of giving and sacrificing unto Him: because there will come a point when you will have to go beyond what you even thought. There was a point, you know, when you served Jesus, you had to be able to be give up your life! And sometimes we worry about staying in church too long.

Then you say, "If I had been back there, I would have given up mine." No, you wouldn't have, because you won't do the minimum now! So even with Covenant Hall, it is a beginning, and you will never get to the point where you say no to the mark if you haven't gotten to the point where you -- how will all of you give up 100%

when you can't give up 10%? That doesn't even make sense, and you can understand that real clear; and yet many of us will say, "I'm not going to take it, child. Yeah, they have all my money; I'm not going to take it." Yes, you will. You are going to be there. You will be marked head, foot and toe.

So these are the things that we need to understand. There's a storm coming, people. And on many different levels, it is going to hit us from many different angles; it is coming. And if we are not prepared when the storm hits, we are going to drown. I have been in some real storms. You see, he was talking about the boat, that was on a calm. I have actually been knocked overboard. I was in the Amazon, and I was on a boat headed back to the big ship in the wide Amazon River, and another boat ran into us and knocked me into the water. I had to swim all the way back to the big boat, and as I started swimming, I noticed there was something dragging me under, because I had on boots; I had just come out of the jungle. And, people, it's a rough thing to get thrown into water. And James had a dream before I went to the Amazon. He said, "I dreamed that you were in the middle of some muddy water, some bitter water" and, sure enough, it came to pass. As I was swimming towards the ship and my boots were dragging me down, it felt like even something else was dragging me down. I looked behind me, and there was a lady hanging onto my belt. The problem was, it went beyond just the lady hanging onto my belt. As I looked at the lady, and there I was swimming in that cold, muddy river and that ship looked like it was half a mile away. As I was swimming in that cold, muddy river, and there's this lady hanging onto my belt, I looked behind me, and my natural instinct was to shake the lady off, because she was dragging me under. And I looked, and there the lady had in her arms an infant baby. I said, "Oh, my God! I can't shake the lady and the baby off." I mean, I had to swim. You see, people, there are sometimes when you get caught in some situations where you will need some natural undergirding and some natural strength; but God will give you supernatural warning and tell you to get prepared. I am telling you all, there is a storm coming.

So He will give you advance warning and He will have you prepared, because He will know you are going to get in a tough situation and you are going to need to be strengthened. There is no time to learn how to swim when you get thrown in the middle of the river. That's the wrong time to learn how to swim. It's no time for you to get your faith built up for healing when the doctor gives you a cancer report. There is just no time. You need to have that thing. There is no time to go to the hardware store to buy some shotgun shells when you pull a shark on the ship. You need to have your shotgun and your shells already within reach.

So, these are some things that God will give His people warning when stuff is coming. That's what a weather report is all about. So, you'll know when storms of life are heading your way. It's not even so important that you know the storm is

coming as that you get prepared for it and that you make sure that you are one of the one, the wise, who built your house upon the Rock.

Well, amen. Truly we had a truly blessed message upon this day. I am going to ask Brother James to come and give us our benediction.

PASTOR JAMES: Let us pray. Let us bow. Lord, I want to thank You for this message. I thank You, Lord, for opening the people's ears. I pray that this word will even grow in their hearts during the week; that You will give them revelation upon revelation. I thank You, Lord, that even the men out of the helicopter, to survive, they had to bind themselves together, Lord Thank You as I look over the audience, and one is bound unto another. Oh, Lord, You called us together, oh, Lord. I thank You, oh, Lord, also for each person who has given another person a hand. And let us take that Spirit from here, oh, Lord, out into the world, realizing that we must bind together; that we are our brothers' keepers; that it is up to us to give them a hand. I thank You, oh, Lord, for preparing Your people, oh, Lord, for such a time as this, oh, God. Lord, even though the Government and the things that will come when powers upon this Earth will seem like they are such great powers with all of the money that they possess, oh, Lord, we thank You, oh, Lord, that we serve a greater God, oh, Father. Lord, we thank You, oh, Lord, as You move us into this new millennium, oh, Lord, that You'll change and even the representation of the ark, oh, Lord, will just floating on the water, oh, Lord, until the dove flies we can follow. We pray, oh, Lord, that You will take us and float us on angels' wings, oh, Lord, during this millennium time, oh, Father. Lord, we don't want to limit You, oh, Father, with what our eyes can see, oh, Lord, but what You have in-store for us, for in the midst of the power that we shall see, oh, Lord, let us always recognize that the Greater One abides on the inside of us; that there is no need to fear, for man can only harm the body, but only God can save the soul. We thank You this day, oh, Lord. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.