

Good morning Guys. Always good to be back home in Tulsa. I will say Arkansas is starting to feel more like home. You may know that I brought a group of Arkansans with me today. I've been telling these men about The Anchor for the past few years and how we need to do something like this in NWA. So, we are moving ahead with this plan. The Anchor-NWA launches on September 12- we are really excited! There are thousands of men in NWA who have gone through The Journey, and we believe this will be a great way to connect them, re-engage some of them and help those who are wounded on the battlefield. I told them that when we started The Anchor, the thing that surprised me the most was the fact that so many men were carrying heavy burdens from week to week. As you know if you've come to The Anchor for a while, the best part of The Anchor is when we break into groups of 2 or 3 and pray for each other. I used to always say- you may be here this morning and feel like you've just been kicked in the nuts, life seems gloomy, your marriage is struggling or your kids are struggling or there is a health or financial issue. Whatever the case, life seems tough this morning. If that is you, you need to let some other men carry your burden by

praying with you. Some of you may feel on top of the world today. You feel good, your marriage is in a good place, your job is going well, you have plenty of money in the bank, your kids are well-behaved, you feel a sense of purpose. If this is you, GREAT! But your job is to help make someone else's burden a little lighter by taking some of his burden in prayer today. Galatians 6:2 says, "Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

You are going to have an opportunity to live that out in a few minutes, but first, let's talk a bit about life.

We're going to use an analogy that we use in The Journey. I want you to use your imagination and think of your life, this morning, as a Sailboat. Any sailors here?

God handcrafted your Sailboat. He equipped you with everything you need to live this adventure of life. He's charted out a course for you. He's given you crew members to share the adventure with.

What does your Sailboat look like? Can you picture it in your mind right now?

Is it a large sailing vessel, prepared to go on a long journey and take lots of people with you.

## **SLIDE**

Or is it a sleek racing boat, built to go fast and hard?

## **SLIDE**

Or is it a simple, but strong boat?

## **SLIDE**

Or maybe it is a little Dinghy?

## **SLIDE**

Whatever the case, you need to know that God made you and He doesn't make mistakes. He has given us all the tools we need, but many of us are not going anywhere, and we don't know why.

Maybe we are trying to take too much with us on our Journey.

## **SLIDE**

We have all these Crates that are weighing us down and immobilizing us. We have a Crate called **Unbelief** that is very heavy keeping our ship at bay. We have another Crate called **Fear**- we can't ever risk losing this box. We have another Crate called **Sin** that is very precious to us. We have a Crate called **Unforgiveness** that we keep on deck, always visible to us. We have one Crate called **Significance**, which holds all our money and our possessions and our titles. It's a very large Crate, and we go by and touch it every day to make sure its intact.

We sit in the Bay looking at the vast ocean, longing for adventure.

We know we were made for more than this. We know God is calling us to something greater.

It starts by giving the controls of our Boat over to Him. Are we willing to let God run our Boat?

If so, He's going to ask us to start throwing our Crates overboard. Are we willing to let go of everything we hold sacred and trust Him on our journey? He won't make us do it, but until we are willing, He can't take us where He wants to take us.

Finally, our longing to follow Him is greater than our desire for comfort and we start heaving the heavy crates overboard. Once the deck is clear, our boat is light and ready. And there's good news. We realized we've been equipped with a large puffy sail and there is room to raise the sail.

Now, the wind of His Holy Spirit can fill our sail and start moving us into the sea.

### **John 14:15-21 New International Version (NIV)**

#### **Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit**

**<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—<sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be [with](#) in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who**

**loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”**

Once we begin letting the Holy Spirit fill our sail and guide us, the adventure really begins. The wind is at our back, the salty air smells fresh and the horizon looks endless. We are excited about our journey. We feel victorious and proud of ourselves for letting go. We throw our arms in the air.

Then, we feel a raindrop. We feel the wind shift. We look up and see the storm clouds converging. The waves begin to get larger and larger. We are in the middle of the ocean and feel very vulnerable. We see the Crate called Fear not far from the boat, and we want to bring it back on-board. What have we done? We think we've made a huge mistake!

## **SLIDE OF BOAT IN STORM**

This reminds me of the story of King Hezekiah. This account can be found in Isaiah 36-37. The Assyrians were wreaking havoc in Judah, capturing every fortified city. Next they set their sights on Jerusalem, where Hezekiah was king. The commander of the Assyrian army

approached them and sent word to Hezekiah and the rest of Jerusalem. His voice sounded much like the Accuser's voice:

- On what are you basing this confidence of yours?! Haven't you seen what we have done to all the other cities?
- Why don't you bargain with us and spare your life?
- The Lord is on our side. He sent us to destroy you (remember, the enemy masquerades as an angel of light?)
- Don't listen to Hezekiah. He cannot deliver you! Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord for your deliverance!

When Hezekiah heard all of this, he was distressed. He was intimidated, fearful, doubting in his flesh, but in the Holy Spirit, he knew what to do. HE PRAYED! God heard his prayer and it says the Angel of the Lord went out and put to death 185,000 men! The Jerusalem army did not even have to fight. What an amazing example of Faith in the midst of a Storm!

Hezekiah's boat made it through the violent storm and found smooth sailing. A rainbow might have appeared on the horizon.

Guess what is recorded next in Isaiah 38? The sky got dark, and another storm came rolling in. Hezekiah got very sick, to the point of death. Isaiah comes to Hezekiah and tells him to get his house in order because he was going to die. Isaiah said the Lord told him that Hezekiah would die. What did Hezekiah do?

HE PRAYED!

God heard his prayer.

#### **Isaiah 38:4-6 New International Version (NIV)**

**<sup>4</sup>Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah: <sup>5</sup>“Go and tell Hezekiah, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life.**

Again, Hezekiah's boat was delivered from the storm and the threat of death!

Yes, the storms will come and the waves will rock our boats, but like Hezekiah knew, if we trust the Lord, if we pray, He will deliver us

This is the life of a disciple of Christ. He is a man who has given control of His life over to the Holy Spirit. He is unhindered by the things and concerns of this world. He is a man of prayer, asking the Captain for his orders. He is a man who uses The Word as his Map, helping him maneuver the choppy, uncertain waters. He allows the Holy Spirit to guide his steps and establish the work of his hands. He has been through rough waters which threatened to destroy him, but God used it as an opportunity to strengthen his resolve and prove that His God is mighty to save!

When a man lives like this, let me tell you that life is a great adventure! I've witnessed this these past 11 years with men who have gone on The Journey and discovered Personal Abandonment and Absolute Trust.

- I've seen the wind guide men to stop by a hospital to pray for healing for someone who is sick.
- I've seen the wind guide a man to leave work and go back home to ask his wife for forgiveness for the way he treated her the night before.

- I've seen the wind guide men to do random acts of kindness for those in need.
- I've seen the wind guide a man to text someone who was on his heart, not knowing that the man was considering suicide.
- I've seen the wind cause a Journey guide to stop a session so the men can gather around a man in need and pray for him.
- I've seen the wind cause a man to take a stance against immorality in his company, risking his very livelihood.
- I've seen the wind help men surrender their dreams only to find that God would replace them with better ones.
- I've seen the wind guide men to uncomfortable places and difficult conversations which turn into forgiveness and reconciliation.
- I've seen the wind guide men to find real meaning and purpose in life.

So, how's your boat doing?

Do you need to get rid of some cargo?

Do you need to let go of the wheel?

Do you need to raise your sail and leave the safety of the dock?

Are you in a storm, thinking of turning back rather than trusting?

Are you on the adventure of a lifetime?

I encourage you to think about these things and write a letter to God today! Talk to him about your boat. Ask him where he wants to take you. Ask him what's holding you back.

I did this a few years ago, and it turned into a poem. Let me close with this.

***I'm out to sea, I know I am, for I feel so far from home. I'm navigating new waters, from wave to wave I roam.***

***The sea is rough and so immense, it strikes in me such fear. It makes me grip too tightly to the things that I hold dear.***

***I know not where I'm going, I'm not sure where I've been. I know that I'm not entirely free from the ugly pain of sin.***

*I cannot see the shoreline, and the life I left behind. And I know I'm on a mission for a purpose I must find.*

*I look for where I'm going, yet nothing is in sight. I only see the sun and clouds and moon and stars at night.*

*I stand on deck and ponder life and how I got this far. I know it wasn't simple fate or a wish upon a star.*

*My restless mind works aimlessly, just looking for some task. I think I must do some great work, though I wasn't even asked.*

*I resolve myself to just be still; I fall down to my knees. I ask the Lord to show the way, it's Him I wish to please.*

*In my prayer, the waves calm down, the sun gently warms my skin.*

*And then a breeze comes my way like a welcomed long, lost friend.*

*It beckons me to lift my head and open up my eyes. And look up toward the heavens and see a figure rise.*

*In my view, the wooden mast stretched high into the sky. I never saw its shape before, and it nearly made me cry.*

*It formed a cross, so strong and tall, hovering high above. In that very moment, I'd never felt such love.*

*In a worship moment, my arms fell open wide. I gave my adoration to the One Who died.*

*In my praise, my thoughts were clear; I didn't fear the sea. There was no other place that my soul desired to be.*

*I was content. I didn't care; I needed nothing more. No longer yearning for the things I left back on the shore.*

*In that peace, a gust of wind came blowing in so strong. Its whistling sound struck my ear like a new praise song.*

*Then I saw on my boat, a beautiful new sight. There appeared a mighty sail, so pure and so white.*

*It embraced the wind and billowed out, full of salty air. It thrust the boat and knocked me down, though I didn't care.*

*The wind and sail and the boat moved swiftly through the sea. There seemed to be a smoothness in this newfound unity.*

*I felt as one with the Lord, a smile wouldn't leave my face. The  
Journey now had just begun; there were, now, new dreams to chase.  
I know that there'll be storms ahead and many cares to cast. But I  
will know beneath my sail, there stands that sturdy Mast.*