

## **JULY 14, 2024 FPCPH PASTOR ROXIE PREACHING SERIES: Change/Transition**

**SERMON: God Is Your Anchor SCRIPTURE: Acts 20: 17-24, 27-28, 36-37;**

**Ephesians 4: 1-5** (the day after the assassination attempt on Former President Donald Trump—I spoke briefly about how violence is never appropriate—love and compassion is our job. We must stand unity with Christ for the goodness and betterment of our time here on earth.)

### **INTRODUCTION—PREACHING SERIES**

As many of you know, we are into the July Preaching Series: Change—the Constant in our lives. We can either handle Change with Humility, relying on the only other Constant in our lives—God OR we can handle Change through our own self-sufficiency which is often called Pride. A lot of times, Pride means we don't consult with what God wants in our Changing Situation—Which often indicates that God is NOT our Anchor in the chaotic seas of Change.

### **BOAT WEEK**

With those thoughts in mind, I don't have to remind you that we are in the midst of the Annual Boat Week here in Port Huron—The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sailboat Race from Port Huron to Mackinaw Island. Boats will be center stage this coming week. Question: How many of you have ridden in a boat: Sail, Motor, Kayak, Canoe, The Huron Lady, Freighter (on my bucket list); Warship or Submarine (Not on my Bucket List). How many of you own a boat? Any kind? Talk to those people to ask if you can have a lift on their boat some time? I am amazed at the generosity and graciousness of boat owners in this beautiful part of God's world. They love being on the water and taking others with them in their boats.

### **BIBLE—WATER--BOATS**

Let us all remember that Jesus and His disciples were in "the boat" often—they lived near the Sea of Galilee. Out of the 12, 4 of them were fishermen and had their own boat. Sometimes, as the Biblical accounts tells, Jesus and the Disciples, were often in rough seas, literally. But they were often in turbulent seas in their ministry of sharing who Jesus is –the Son of God and spreading the Good News of God's love. It wasn't easy—Lots of change in their lives Their discipleship with Jesus—It was often Stormy and Scary—But even in those turbulent waves of Change, they never loss sight of who is their Anchor in Life—God Himself.

### **APOSTLE PAUL**

Today, in Scripture, we hear about the Apostle Paul, as he says his final farewell to the Ephesus Church on the "beach." Apostle Paul is NOT one of the original Disciples, even though he carries the title Apostle (meaning "one who is sent."). The Apostle Paul is called by God to plant churches—one of the amazing leaders in the Early Church.

Apostle Paul spends a lot of time on the sea, getting from one place to another— Because many of the churches he plants are based around the Mediterranean Sea. Read the Book of Acts—The Apostle Paul, like Jesus' Disciples, experiences the literal crashing of the waves, against the boat he is on, particularly in one instance where he almost lost his life. Not only that, but the Apostle Paul and those around him and those to whom He is speaking, are experiencing tremendous CHANGE—Going from the Jewish Faith and the Gentile Worship of Baal gods to a belief in Jesus Christ as the Messiah—the Son of God sent to be the Savior of the World. **To be our Savior and our Lord.** If you want to hear and see the crashing affects of that change; as I said, read the Book of Acts—with its riots and its beatings and its unsettling anger and arguments. Over belief in God—the strain between the Law of God and the Grace of God. Everything is Changing—because of Jesus. **That happens for us also—when we are baptized. When we commit our lives to Jesus. Everything in life changes!!** And Paul, like so many of those early Christians holds on to his Faith in God, in Jesus— He, and others, are firmly Anchored in their Faith in God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Being Anchored in God is only way they get through the Chaos of Change in their lives. **How about us? How are we Anchored? What do WE hold on to in the Sea of Change That we see all around?**

## **BOAT WEEK--EVENTS**

Let me digress again to Boat Week. As the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Boat Week— We get to see those sailboats on Saturday morning go down the Black River; Onto Lake Huron (passing right by the Lighthouse Beach) Then disappearing, blue water/blue sky-into the long arduous journey to Mackinaw Island.

**MANY EVENTS** But there are so many other Events happening around the Boat Race. **Wednesday Night, the Rotary Parade** in Downtown Port Huron; where we will have a float representing FPC (one of the only churches to participate). **Thursday Family Night** with lots of games and fun, provided by different churches and ministries in Port Huron, organized by Operation Transformation. (Can't wait to dunk some of my pastoral buddies in the dunk tank—no, I am not one of the targets) But You probably won't recognize me except by my voice, because I am a clown, Roxie Daisy, walking around the park, Inviting people to FPC, especially children to Bible Church Camp (VBS). Then to end the evening, a Drone of Fireworks follows the Family Night. **Friday Night—Adult Night**—I won't give you details on that night— Just let me say that the "spirits" will flow and some of us will be praying for the Holy Spirit to keep everyone safe and sane.

## THE ROTARY PARADE

Going back to the Rotary Parade on Wednesday night. As I said, we will be out there, walking and riding on a float, (sign up on clipboard) We hope our Float communicates our faith. Basically our participation in the parade was motivated by the idea, persistence, and organization of Sue Brackenbury, member of the Christian Education Committee. Frankly the Christian Education committee, including myself, had to be convinced that it was a good idea and worth the time and effort. But Sue, with the hard work of Bill Briscoe, our faithful handy man custodian, and a Bunch of artists and detail people—All in a cadre of Volunteer team members, with the children, will walk and ride in the parade --handing out these cards with candy attached. Our float is a sailboat with the message on it: **“God Is YOUR Anchor.”**

## WIDE DISCUSSION

Now there was a wide discussion about whether it should be “God is Our Anchor” We, the church, witness to who is Our Anchor—which is Jesus Christ; When we say God is OUR Anchor, we are proclaiming that God is at the center of our lives. We wouldn’t be here, worshipping God, If we didn’t believe that God holds us steady, like an Anchor, in the good times and the turbulent times of life. OR the other choice was: “God is **Your** Anchor” implying that whether people know it or not, God is the **ONLY** Anchor that can steady any of us through life--When we go through difficult times: grief, change of lifestyle, inadequate physical or emotional support. Whatever!! **God is Your Anchor**—whether we know it or not. And that is our Float Message in the Parade **“God can be your Anchor in life—Give God a Chance”**- and see what amazing things can happen in your life. **That has to be our message as followers of Jesus Christ.**

## BACK TO SCRIPTURE

Let us take a look at the Scripture for today, in relationship to all of this. We have this scene of the Apostle Paul before the Ephesian church leaders— He has called them together (on the beach) And he is saying “Good Bye” to them— for the last time. They are in grief. He has helped them to be a **group brave cohesive of Christians standing firm against others who hate them. Saying Good Bye to Paul is Very Unsettling.** And **Very Telling** that Paul is just about to get on the boat that will take him to Jerusalem— a dangerous place for Paul and then eventually to Rome, where he dies in prison. **A lot of grief, especially when he says: “You will not see me again—in the flesh.” Perhaps Paul knows this is his last journey.** But...in their grief—**they are encouraged by Paul to basically hold onto the Anchor of Jesus Christ** which will anchor them when they don’t know what to do as a church—when they don’t know which way to turn—when they have to make decisions—Consulting with Jesus in Scripture and Prayer—is like Anchoring oneself to the greatest Power in the World—God Himself. It is very telling in this Beach Scene Paul and the Ephesian Church

Leaders, kneel together. They pray—realizing that it is not Paul—It is God who anchors them in this life. Apostle Paul just answered the call of God, and humbly finished the work that God gave him. He is going on to new ministries—As we know, he writes most of the letters that we have in the New Testament from his prison cell. The Apostle Paul or any other leader, **including me**, is not Your Anchor. Apostle Paul, humbly, not pridefully, directs the Ephesian Christians to the true Anchor of Life—God Himself. I—and you—must model the same behavior.

## **MYSELF**

As many of you know, soon I will leave as pastor of FPC, Yes, we will grieve together because we have had some beautiful and productive years together. Thanks be to God!! But like Apostle Paul, I know that my job is complete and that there are others who God is calling to build up this Body of Christ. I am fully aware that God may have other things planned for me—bringing me out of retirement—again. All I can do is be available to God's call. Always a surprise to me and a Great adventure on the unknown Seas of Life.

**BAPTISM** And I would go so far as to say that our Baptism, Where our parents or our sponsors, when we were young claimed Jesus as our Lord and Savior—and then we confirmed that later OR as an adult, we were baptized and we claimed for ourselves, Jesus is the One we will follow—Placing him dead-center in our lives as our Anchor when life gets rough—and we all know it does. In my mind, Baptism is visible sign of God our Anchor being in the center of our life. If we are baptized as a young child, someone else (parents or sponsors) takes the vows, for us, raising us in the Christian faith so later on we can claim Jesus as our Lord and Savior—our Anchor, in confirming the vows that were. Taken when we were young. But also if we are baptized as an adult, We claim God in Jesus Christ is our Anchor and today we baptize a young child-- Leland. In a couple of weeks we will baptize 3 of our elementary children in our Church School Program and a young adult Church School teacher.

## **ENDING**

We will end appropriately with scripture written by Apostle Paul to the Ephesian Church, in a letter that he wrote from prison: "I, Apostle Paul, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all"