

Message Series: Famous Shipwrecks

Today's Message: "The Danger of Making Shipwreck of Our Faith"



A SouthPointe Message

Message Study Guide

Introduction

In 1 Timothy 1:18-20, Paul uses an interesting analogy to describe our Christian journey. He uses the analogy of a shipwreck. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare: Holding faith, and a good conscience; which having put away concerning the faith have made shipwreck" (1 Timothy 1:18-19). Most of us are very familiar with what natural shipwrecks are all about. History is littered with dozens of famous shipwrecks. But most people probably have never made the correlation between a natural shipwreck and making a shipwreck of their own lives. Paul is saying to Timothy that there is a greater tragedy in life than experiencing natural shipwrecks, of which I have suffered three in my lifetime (2 Corinthians 11:25). Paul is saying that if you make a shipwreck of your life, there may be eternal consequences.

In verse 18, Paul uses the analogy of an army when he says to fight a good warfare. But then, he purposely uses a naval term (shipwreck- verse 19) when he describes to Timothy the danger he will face in life and eternity if he gets off course and strays from the gospel and puts his spiritual journey in peril. It is no accident that Paul mentions this to young Timothy at the very beginning of his writing. Timothy was young and somewhat timid, but he was also a man of God who was strong in his faith, yet Paul thought it was important enough to charge Timothy about this danger.

In 1 Timothy 1:20, Paul uses two examples of individuals who apparently had made shipwreck of their faith: "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme". Paul told Timothy not to follow their examples by making shipwreck of his life like they did. After reading this solemn warning at the beginning of the book, Timothy must have read the remaining part of the writing slowly and intently, not to miss a word.

In today's message, Pastor Ron McCurry will examine the causes of spiritual shipwrecks and the possible results of making a shipwreck out of our lives. If Paul described the Christian life to young Timothy as a journey, a race, a fight, and a warfare; then adds the warning of a shipwreck, then all of us must be on guard at all times as we move forward on this journey called life.

Discussion Points

Life is a journey and a destination. After our lives have been radically changed by salvation, we set out on a journey with the purpose of reaching a final destination. During this journey we must never forget that life is never easy. In fact, most of the time, it is hard and dangerous and filled with spiritual land mines and quicksand along the way. Satan works 24 hours a day trying to get us off course. While God never promised us a life of easy sailing, He did promise to cause us to arrive safely at our destination.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Paul thought it was necessary to warn Timothy of all the possible perils he may be facing in life at the very beginning of his writing to Timothy? Why not do that later?
2. Timothy was not an "on the fringe" type of Christian, nor was he a "weak" person in his faith. Yet, the warning given to him by Paul is one of the strongest warnings in all of Scripture. It would seem like there might have been others who needed the warning more than Timothy. What is God saying to you through that warning?
3. Why is the emphasis of the text placed on making shipwreck of "faith" and not on anything else? (See also Hebrews 11:1, 6). How important is faith in the Christian journey?
4. What can you learn about faith from the following verses of Scripture? (Jude 3; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Romans 10:17; John 20:30-31; John 7:17; James 2:20-23, 26; Hebrews 3:12-14)

Think About It

Think about the dangers you would be facing if you experienced a natural shipwreck; possible drowning, serious injury, the loss of everything you have, and the possibility that you would never reach your destination. Yet Paul told Timothy there was an even greater tragedy than a natural shipwreck - Don't let these same things happen to you on a spiritual level.

Do Something About It!

Throughout Paul's writings to Timothy, he reminds Timothy to "DO" several important things to ensure that he doesn't make shipwreck of his faith. (1) War a good warfare. (2) Hold faith. (3) Hold onto a good conscience. James reminds us that a faith that does not include works is a dead faith (James 2:20-23, 26).

Be Willing To Change

"But without faith, it is impossible to please and be satisfactory to Him. For whoever would come near to God must necessarily believe that God exists and that He is a rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him out" (Hebrews 11:6 Amplified).