

Anchor for the Soul

The Bible talks about an 'anchor for the soul' in Hebrews 6:19.

What is an anchor? Boats have anchors. What are they used for? Anchors hold the boat in one place, so that even when there are waves and wind, the boat is fastened in one place. The boat might get shaken a bit, but it won't be moved from its place; it won't tip over or sink.

What is the soul? Some say it is our mind, will and emotions. It's not the body and it's not Christ. It's the 'me' part of me.

Our souls have a tendency to be up and down. When things are good, we are happy and friendly. When things are bad, we are grumpy and mean. We are like a roller coaster. Up and down. So if we have an anchor for our soul, we have something that can keep us, keep our emotions and our mind from being sunk in the storms of life. We have something steadfast and sure that keeps our souls from being up and down.

This makes me think of another verse in the Bible- the one about the house built on the sand and the house built on the rock. Wind and waves beat against both houses, and one fell and one stood firm. Was the problem the wind and the waves? Or was the problem the foundation? The problem was the foundation. A house should be built strong enough to weather storms. But I could see the builder of the house built on sand blaming the storm. "My house would have stood if it wasn't for that storm." But the storm just showed what the problem was. The problem was there all along. The foundation was built on something NOT steadfast and sure. When our souls are troubled by the storm of life, we are not resting on the Rock as our foundation. I want to compare the wind and the waves, the storms, to things that might happen in our lives- things that might upset our soul and test our trust in God.

Can you think of anything that might shake someone's trust in God? When bad things happen, people sometimes wonder if God is real and true. They get tossed around, in their soul, like a boat in a storm, with no anchor.

Or, remember Martin Luther? What made him troubled? He tried hard to please God by doing good things. His own sinfulness bothered him. He could never be good enough. So his soul might feel okay for a moment, but then he felt sunk below his feelings of sin and shame.

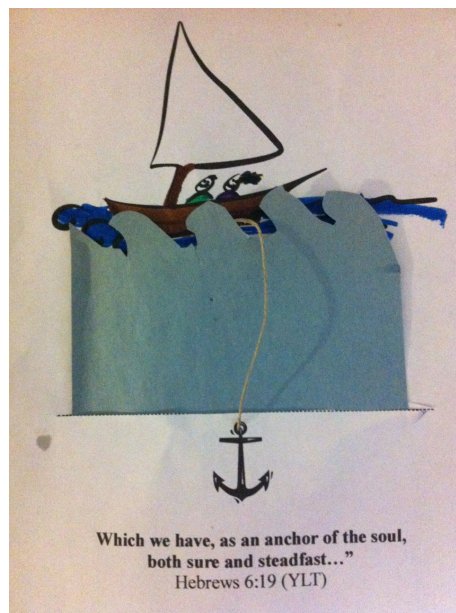
What else might be like a storm in our life that makes our soul feel fretful or upset? Sometimes you might feel stuck, like you can't change a situation, even though you keep trying (having a hard time reading, having trouble getting along with a difficult person, wishing you lived somewhere else, etc.). Some of these things are us being conscious, or aware, of sin- either our own or another person's. All of these things could be like storms to your soul, causing fretfulness, worry, anger, pain...

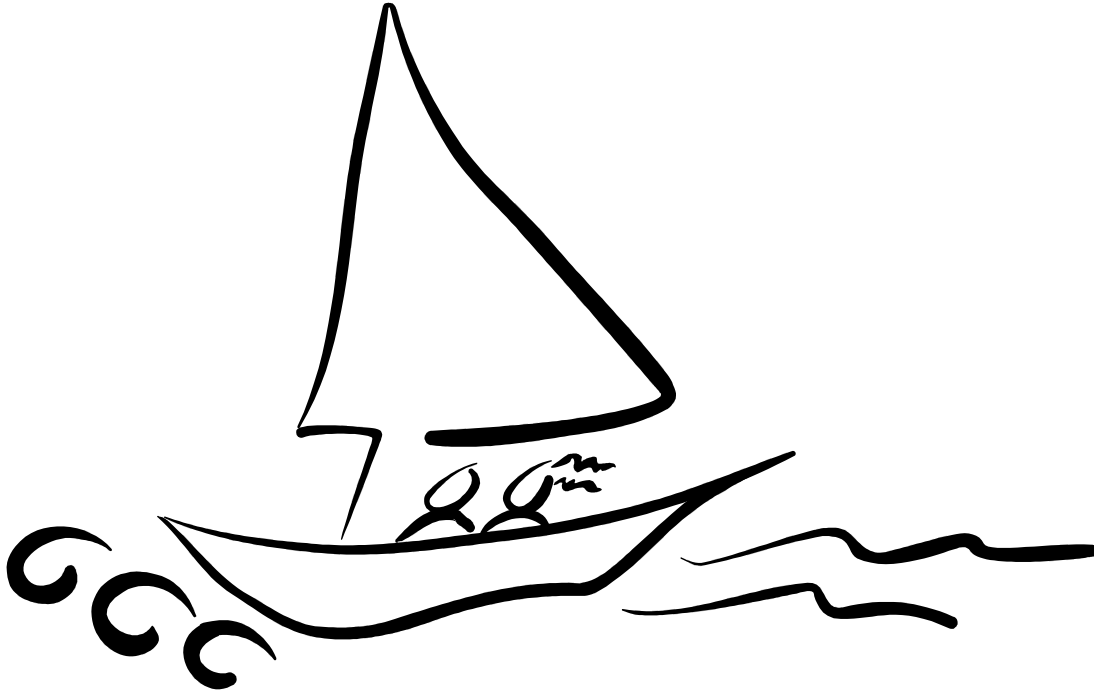
The Bible tells us that we have an anchor for our soul. What is that anchor? The scripture says that it is within the veil. Do you remember how there was a veil that covered the Holy of Holies in the temple? No one was allowed in there, except for the High Priest, who went in once a year to offer a sacrifice for sin. That had to happen every year for Israel's sins to be forgiven. But now, Christ has become for us that Great High Priest, entering into heaven itself as the sacrifice for our sin once and for all. Our soul can find rest because God no longer relates to us based on our sinfulness. He relates to us in Christ. God does not use bad things that happen on earth to speak to us, to punish us. God and Jesus have this amazing, perfect relationship with each other that you and I cannot mess up- and we get to 'sneak in' (I say sneak, because we don't deserve it, but God knows we are brought in because He made it possible) and be hidden and covered and benefit from this relationship.

How does this reality, this Truth, anchor our soul? When Martin Luther understood the truth of God's free gift of forgiveness and that righteousness was not found in the works of the law, but the faith of Christ, his soul found rest. When things on the earth are not like we wish they were, there is something higher and truer than this earthly realm. Those things cannot touch our relationship with God. Christ is our life, and nothing can change that. BUT, our soul can ignore it, or be ignorant of it, and then be restless and weary. There IS an anchor for our soul, but we need to know it; we need to see it. And to see it, we must ask God to show us.

There will still be winds and waves in our lives, but the Bible promises that "He will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is stayed on thee (Isaiah 26:3)." We HAVE an anchor for our souls.

Follow-up Activity: Make a copy of the following page for each child. Cut a piece of blue paper the width of the slit on the activity page. Cut the top of the blue paper to look like waves. Cut on the dotted line of the activity page and insert blue paper waves. Attach a piece of yarn or string from the boat to the anchor. Show the students how the waves can move, but the boat stays put because of its anchor. In the same way, the Lord is an anchor for our soul, even when the waves (troubles) beat against us. He is our peace.





**Which we have, as an anchor of the soul,
both sure and steadfast...”**
Hebrews 6:19 (YLT)