

A red and white fishing boat with the number SB334416 is shown from a low angle, sailing on the ocean. The boat has a black hull with a red stripe and a white cabin. The number SB334416 is prominently displayed on the side. The background is a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Launching out with Jesus

A call and a challenge
to launch out in obedience to God's command,
and to sail safely and successfully
to our heavenly harbour!



With the Lord's help,
this book was compiled and written in 2009
as the product of a small Christian school's effort
to prepare and send forth its young graduates
into God's world - for His glory.

The Lord Jesus said:

Launch out

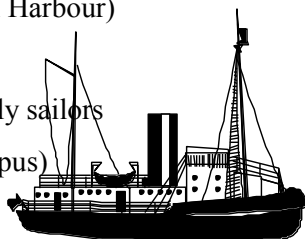
*into the deep
and let down your nets
for a haul.*

Luke 5:4

CONTENTS

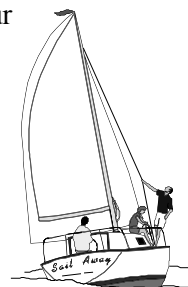
“Launch out...”

Launching out with Jesus	7
Pattern of launching out with Jesus—Noah	9
Preparation for launching out	12
Preconditions for launching out	19
Principles of launching out	29
Perils of launching out and Perils at sea	38
1. NOT launching out...	38
2. Launching out prematurely	41
3. Cross-currents	42
4. Undercurrents	44
5. Hidden rocks and reefs	45
6. A little leak!	50
7. Icebergs! (...and the Titanic)	53
8. Pack ice! (...and Ernest Shackleton)	66
9. Losing direction	80
10. Shortage of fresh water and nutrition	82
11. Pirates!	83
12. Overload	85
13. Collision!	86
14. Mutiny on the ship!	90
15. Storms...!	95
16. Shipwreck (...and Pearl Harbour)	130
17. Enemy submarines	136
18. Peculiar Perils of worldly sailors	138
19. Giant “devil-fish” (octopus)	139
20. More perils...	143



“...into the deep” - Luke 5:4

Principles of sailing successfully	145
1. Respond to God’s call	145
2. Go! Sail! Trusting God!	147
3. Pray as you go!	149
4. Watch out!	156
5. Let the Lord Jesus be my Captain!	158
6. Let the Lord Jesus be my Pilot!	163
7. Use the Compass Correctly!	169
8. Use the Mariner’s Map	175
9. Obey the “rules of the road” at sea	176
10. Read the daily navigational warnings...!	178
11. Set my Sails correctly!	180
12. Use every God-given opportunity!	194
13. Monitor and Maintain the ship Meticulously	198
14. Look at the Lights!	202
15. Ensure “R.A.S.” - Refueling At Sea...	209
16. Constant Radio Communications	214
17. Always Anchor correctly...	220
18. Learn how to Sail through Storms!	228
19. Character, ...endurance, courage, morale...	243
20. Be very careful near the end of your voyage!	246
Promised arrival in our Heavenly Harbour	251
Flavel’s Concluding Speech	263
Personal response required...!	264
Purpose for launching out...?!	268
...Last words	283/4
Select Bibliography	286





Graduation Prayer

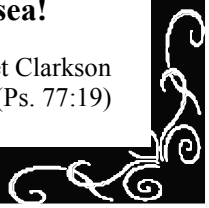
Beside life's ocean, vast, untried,
We stand; the young, the strong, the brave;
And know tomorrow's rolling tide
Must bear us out across its wave:
O Father God, we look to Thee!
Guide Thou our course o'er life's wide sea.

We know not what may lie before,
Or shoal or shallow, reef or bar;
We know not how we'll come to shore-
Or harbor near, or wreck afar:
O Pilot, trusted, true and tried,
Be Thou with us our course to guide!

Come deepest darkness, Thou art light;
Come tide and tempest, Thou art peace;
Come wrong and warring, Thou art right;
Come fear and failure, Thou – release!
Almighty God, be Thine to keep
Our souls from peril on the deep!

O Pilot of our souls, with Thee
We fear no fierce or stormy gale;
We fear no restless, rolling sea,
For Thine is skill that will not fail;
O Father God! we trust in Thee
To guide our course o'er life's wide sea!

E. Margaret Clarkson
(Ps. 77:19)



LAUNCHING OUT

with JESUS!



“Oh, let us launch out on this ocean so broad,
Where the floods of salvation o’erflow;
Oh, let us be lost in the mercy of God,
Till the depths of His fullness we know.

Launch out into the deep! Oh, let the shoreline go;
Launch out, launch out in the ocean divine,
Out where the full tides flow.”

Let us launch out with Jesus! Life is a launching out with Jesus! What an adventure! What a joy! Jesus tells His disciples: ***“Launch out into the deep...!”*** (Luke 5:4). When He is my Captain and my Pilot, and I obey Him, ...no storms, no rocks or reefs, no winds and weather, no currents or cross-currents, no fog or foes, will be able to prevent me from reaching my Heavenly Harbour. How wonderful that will be! O, there is nothing that can compare with the glory and joy and privilege of reaching our heavenly Home – which is the heart of God. How we long for that day! But, before we reach that Haven, there are many days and weeks and even years of preparation ahead, as well as years of hard labour and tests and trials and journeying amidst many perils and possibilities. Without our Heavenly Pilot we cannot make it, but with Him and through Him we can and will – to His glory.

This book is dedicated to all young people who are leaving school. It is written with the prayer that it may be an inspiration to you (and others) as you stand at this crucial point in your life history on earth. You have spent nearly 20 years in the homes of your parents and more than 10 years at School – preparing for this time, and the time ahead. You are hopefully ready to be launched out with Jesus into the world of adulthood, further studies, civil and domestic responsibilities, and work in God’s Kingdom. Let’s remember that the only “launching out” that will not end in disaster, but in glory (and be to His glory) is the “launching out” with Jesus, in Jesus, through Jesus, and for Jesus...!

The Lord Jesus Christ, as well as your parents and friends in God, would like to see you launched out – safely and successfully! With that in mind we present this book for your careful reading. In it, as the Lord gave us the ideas, we'll look at:

a **Pattern** of launching out with Jesus;
the **Preparation** that is needed;
the **Preconditions** for launching out;
the **Principles** of launching out;
the **Perils** of launching out and the **Perils** at sea;
the **Principles** of sailing successfully;
the **Promised arrival** at our Heavenly Harbour;
our **Personal Response** to the challenge...
the **Purpose** of our launching out!

Are you ready? Are you on board?! May you “fare well,” and may God be glorified! “*Bon voyage!*”

**We are launching out
in obedience—to
save lives!**



PATTERN

of launching out with Jesus

The first person who launched out with God, the first seafarer, was Noah! Noah was a man after God's own heart. He walked with God. He waited on God, he worshipped God, he worked for God, and he witnessed for God. He had practical faith in God. He heard God's voice and obeyed God fully. He worked very hard. This is exceptional and exemplary. **He is a PATTERN for us.** Through him we see how to launch out in such a way that we will reach our destination safely and surely.

Noah's PRIORITY

His priority was **to walk with God** (Gen 6:9), to listen to Him and obey Him. He was righteous. He was in a right relationship with God. He had faith in God, he trusted in God (Heb 11:7). He loved God and had a holy fear of God (Heb 11:7). He did not initiate anything that came just from his own mind or will; no, *he was led by God*. This applied to the whole idea of "launching out," the building of a boat, the plan for the boat, the specifications for the "passengers," the time and place of the "launching," the journey, and the arrival.

Noah's PREPARATIONS

We have heard it being said: "If you want to chop down a tree, take half a day to sharpen your axe." This means that your PREPARATIONS are extremely important. Just imagine the kind of boat he was to build, ...and the fact that it had never been done before! It was indeed a **great** undertaking. According to some experts, the ark was more than 550 ft long, about 90 ft broad, and about 50 ft in height! Some say it was the size of one and a half soccer fields and the height of a four-storey building...

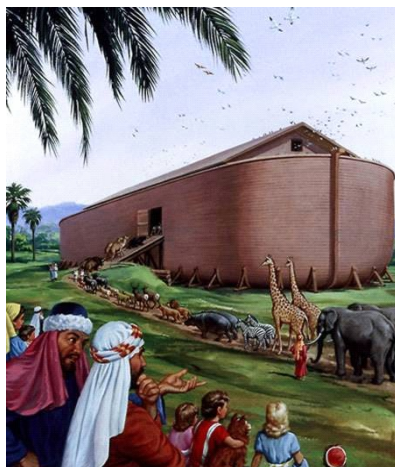
This work of preparing the boat was not only great, but also **costly**. It did not only cost him maybe all he had, but it also cost him constant care and concentration and hard work. It cost him absolute devotion and extraordinary perseverance. He worked at it day after day after day after day... It took him 120 years to prepare the ark for the journey! Oh, but it was worth it all!

Some people think that 12 years at school is a long time of preparation, before they can be “launched out” into the world of adult servant-hood, but compared to 120 years, it isn’t so much! God is the One who determines the time of preparation *and* the time of launching out.

Noah’s PERSEVERANCE

Furthermore, Noah was exposed to the constant reproaches of his neighbours. They laughed at him and mocked him.

They didn’t listen to him, and they didn’t believe him. They looked down on him and despised him. Though he was made the laughing stock of the whole world, **he persevered**. Jonathan Edwards wrote in 1740 that “in such an undertaking as this, Noah, at the divine direction, engaged and went through it, that himself and his family might be saved ... He began, and also made an end: ‘according to all that God commanded him, so did he.’ Length of time did not weary him: he did not grow weary of his vast expense. He stood the shock of the derision of all his neighbours, and of all the world, year after year: he did not grow weary of being their laughing stock, so as to give over his enterprise; but **persevered** in it till the ark was finished.”



Noah’s PATTERN of life

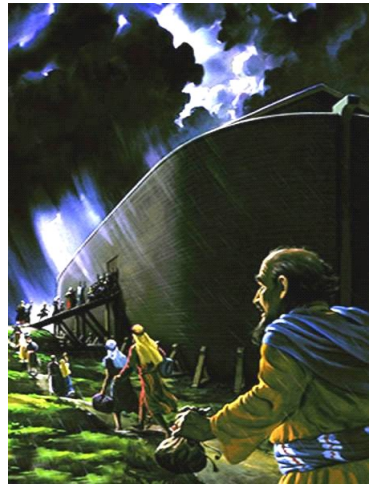
The priority in his life was to walk with God, step by step and day after day, to trust in Him, to listen to Him, and to obey Him – irrespective of all else. It seems to me that his was a **DAILY** walk with God, a **DAILY** working for God, a **DAILY** waiting upon God, a **DAILY** witnessing for God, a **DAILY** withstanding the opposition of the enemy of his soul (through his ungodly neighbours), a **DAILY** working out his own salvation (and that of his family) - in dependence upon God.

“[Prompted] by faith Noah, being forewarned by God concerning events of which as yet there was no visible sign, took heed and diligently and reverently constructed and PREPARED an ark for the deliverance of his own family. By this [his faith which relied on God] he passed judgment and

sentence on the world's unbelief and became an heir and possessor of righteousness (that relation of being right into which God puts the person who has faith)," (Hebrews 11:7; *Amplified Bible*) In *The Message* translation we read: "By faith, Noah built a ship... He... acted on what he was told. The result? His family was saved. His act of FAITH drew a sharp line between the evil of the unbelieving world and the rightness of the believing world. As a result, Noah became **intimate with God.**"

Noah's PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with God

Oh friends, **this was the KEY.** When the Bible says that "by faith Noah ...built an ark," it means by a personal relationship with God. Faith is a personal relationship with God—a relationship of love and trust and confident dependence and obedience. Faith is to HEAR God's voice and to DO what He says... Faith without works (of obedience) is dead (James 2:17,26). The Bible says: "Noah became intimate with God." This means that he came to know God intimately, like Paul later did. The apostle Paul said: "But whatever former things I had that might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as [one combined] loss for Christ's sake. Yes, furthermore, **I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly].** For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed One) ...[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly]..." (Philippians 3:7,8,10). All I want is to know Him and to make Him known! **This is our pattern for life. This is our pattern for "launching out" successfully. May God help us!**

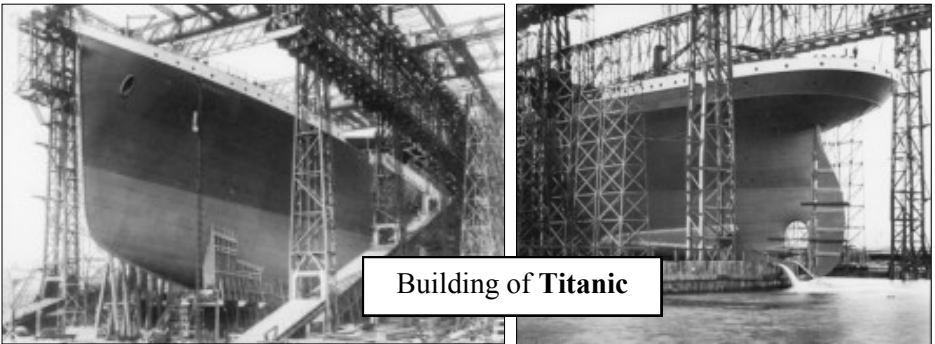


PREPARATION...

Inspiration—Preparation—Realization

Without proper preparation, no ship can sail the seas and reach its desired haven! God has a goal for each one of us. He has a goal for us on earth, and He has a goal for us in heaven. Before He can launch us out towards these goals, much preparation is needed!

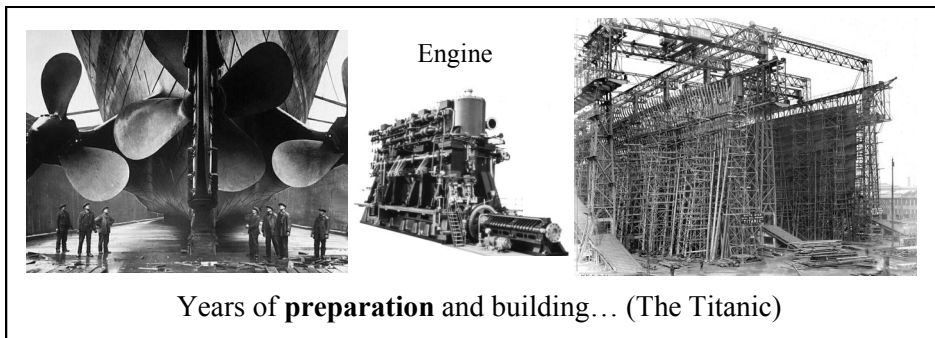
This is clearly seen in the many preparations that are done (sometimes over many years) before the launching of a ship. We know that, after the vision has become clear: (1) a plan must be drawn up for the ship; (2) funds must be secured to build and sail it; (3) builders need to be employed to build it; (4) the actual building of the ship must take place; (5) the ship needs to be fully equipped; (6) the crew needs to be recruited, appointed and trained; (7) the leadership needs to be appointed; (8) the provisions (victuals) need to be bought and brought on board; (9) the ship needs to be tested; (10) the anticipated journey needs to be studied and planned; (11) the emergency measures and safety precautions need to be put in place; (12) a thorough study of navigation and seafaring and emergency procedures needs to be completed and mastered; (13) the weather patterns and sea patterns (tides and currents) must be studied; (14) etc...



Building of **Titanic**

This may all take many YEARS! In the case of **Noah** it took 120 years. With **Moses** it took 80 years before he was “launched out” on God’s purpose for him—which was to lead the Israelites from slavery and bondage in Egypt, to freedom and fruitfulness in the Promised Land. **Joseph** also went through many years of preparation: first in his father’s house, then in the pit, then in

Potiphar's house, and then in Pharaoh's prison, before God could send him forth. We see this needed time of preparation even in the life of **the Lord Jesus Christ**. He spent 30 years of "preparation" in a humble carpenter's home and shop, amidst difficult siblings, patiently learning to be obedient through what he suffered. It is clear that we, too, need to go through the years of God's preparation for us before we can launch out with Him.



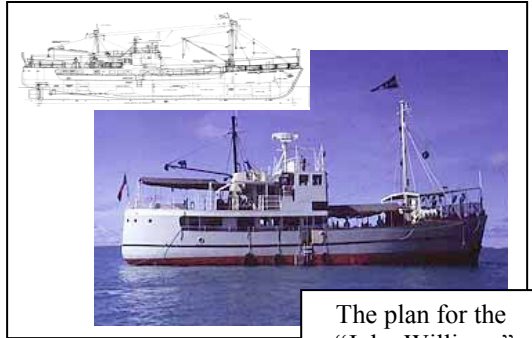
In "*So Send I You*," Oswald Chambers says: **"Preparation is not something suddenly accomplished but a process steadily maintained.** It is easy to imagine that we get to a settled state of experience where we are complete and ready. But in work for God it is always preparation and preparation. **Moral preparation comes before intellectual preparation, because moral integrity is of more practical value than any amount of mental insight."**

Our years of preparation are usually through (1) our parents and brothers and sisters at HOME, (2) our teachers and peers at SCHOOL, (3) our pastor, elders, and Christian brothers and sisters at CHURCH, (4) our interactions with others in LIFE, and (5) our personal relationship and walk and dealings with GOD...

During the crucial time of preparation under our parents **AT HOME**, we learn at least the following. We learn to:

- Love sincerely and practically.
- Submit to authority.
- Obey from the heart.
- Receive love (...and discipline).
- Be patient with others.
- Listen and Communicate well.
- Give love.
- Be disciplined (in daily habits and chores).

- Read the Bible, pray and worship God.
- Practice holy habits.
- Clean our rooms, work in the garden, work on cars, paint, wash dishes, iron our clothes, make our own clothes, work with our hands, be creative, use money wisely, save money and share with others. We also learn to...
- Sing as we go through life.
- Be honest (always).
- Dress modestly.
- Rise early.
- Be orderly.
- Show respect.
- Work hard.
- Be faithful.
- Have good eating habits.
- Honour older people.
- Evangelize and win neighbours for the Lord Jesus.
- Participate in and conduct family worship.
- Greet and thank people properly.
- Sit and walk and talk to God's glory.
- Confess our sins to one another (to walk in the light with one another).
- Be people of integrity.
- Love God with our all, always.



The plan for the
"John Williams"
missionary ship

While it is true that our homes are the smallest forms of churches, in God's wisdom He also prepares us at and through our respective **CHURCHES**. There we learn to...

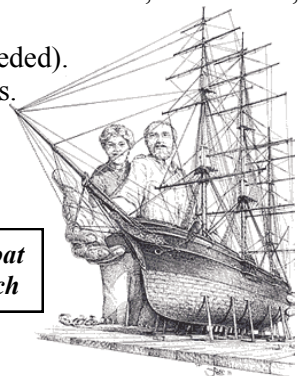
- ◆ Pray to God (together with others) and do spiritual warfare.
- ◆ Listen to His Word and receive His teaching.
- ◆ Worship and praise God with those who are pure.
- ◆ Function as the body of Christ.
- ◆ Reach out to unbelievers and believers.
- ◆ Testify to God's glory.
- ◆ Make disciples.
- ◆ Conduct Bible studies, and prayer meetings and outreaches.
- ◆ Share and proclaim God's Word.
- ◆ Mobilize together for Missions.
- ◆ Discern the spirits.
- ◆ Distinguish between the true and the counterfeit, the holy and the profane (the unholy).

- ◆ Care for those in need in God's body.
- ◆ Use God's money Biblically.
- ◆ Evangelize effectively.
- ◆ Conduct ourselves worthy of the Lord.
- ◆ Practice the sacraments to His glory. We also learn...
- ◆ The practical importance of Church discipline.
- ◆ The importance of submission to delegated authority.
- ◆ To put feet to our faith.
- ◆ To live in loving unity as a body of believers in Jesus.
- ◆ And more...

Another major component of our PREPARATION for “launching out” is what happens at **SCHOOL** and through our school work. Those who were privileged to attend Christian Schools have a great advantage over others. At our Christian School (for instance) the preparation we hope to see in the students are that they learn to:

- ✓ Walk with God for themselves.
- ✓ Work hard, play well, and do all for Jesus.
- ✓ Set daily goals, weekly goals, quarterly goals, yearly goals, and life goals.
- ✓ Be people of integrity.
- ✓ Walk and work as Jesus did.
- ✓ Complete the goals and tasks given to them.
- ✓ Obey God and those in authority over them.
- ✓ Be honest and truthful in their words, thoughts and actions.
- ✓ Be well-grounded in all their major academic subjects.
- ✓ Work well with computers and computer programs.
- ✓ Study conscientiously, diligently, thoroughly, and consistently.
- ✓ Use their God-given talents optimally (their intellect, their voice, their skills, etc.).
- ✓ Follow well and lead like Jesus (where needed).
- ✓ Face, accept and overcome new challenges.
- ✓ Take notes and make summaries.
- ✓ Be disciplined in their work and ways.
- ✓ Be creative and innovative.
- ✓ Read and type well.
- ✓ Be reliable and faithful.
- ✓ Be active and not passive.
- ✓ Be respectful and helpful.

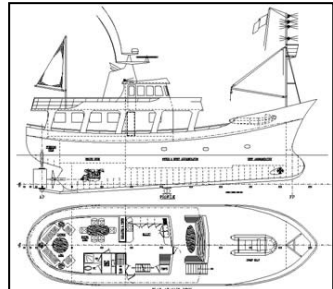
*Preparing boat
for the launch*



- ✓ Do everything in excellence (for Jesus).
- ✓ Relate to their peers, junior and senior, as well as their teachers, in a godly way.
- ✓ Overcome negative peer-pressure and help create positive peer-pressure.
- ✓ Also give attention to physical training and healthy living.
- ✓ Compete in a Christian way (academically and in sport).
- ✓ Not live for themselves but for God.
- ✓ Be whole-hearted, practical missionaries for Him.
- ✓ Draw and lead others to Christ.
- ✓ Make a difference in this world.
- ✓ Trust God in the ordinary activities of every day.
- ✓ Love God with all their heart, and soul, and mind and strength.
- ✓ and their neighbours as themselves.



Plans for preparing a
Fishing Boat!



Jesus says: **“Come, follow Me,
...and I will make you fishers of men”**
Mark 1:17

More can be said, but maybe this is enough to show that there are MANY things that are needed to be done and developed in each one of us during the PREPARATION phase. We can also ask ourselves: “How have I gone through this phase of preparation? Have I learned the lessons I needed to learn? Am I prepared and ready for launching out with Jesus?”

Have I been properly prepared for what lies ahead? Have I prepared myself, as God wanted me to?

We may tend to emphasize the launching out, but **the Lord emphasizes the preparation!** We may promote 3 years (or even 3 months!) of training for 30 years of service, while the Lord went through 30 years of training—for 3 years of glorious service... His ways are not our ways.

It is clear that the main emphasis in the preparation for “launching out” is not the building of a “ship”, but the building of an intimate relationship with God and the building of Christ-like character. This is the best! This is most important!

In “*Calling Youth to Christ*,” Dr Billy Graham says that “during the middle ages there was a court fool who could make the lord of the manor laugh more than any other clown. One day his master called him in and said, ‘Fool, you are the greatest fool I ever met. Take this staff and keep it until you meet a greater fool than thyself. Then pass it on to that greater fool.’”

Years passed, and one day the fool heard that his master was sick. He went to see him. ‘What is the matter, master?’ he asked. ‘I am going on a long journey,’ was the reply. ‘Where are you going?’ inquired the fool. ‘I don’t know,’ was the faint sigh. ‘How long will you be gone?’ questioned the fool.

‘I shall never return.’

‘Have you made any preparations for the journey?’

‘No.’

‘You mean to tell me that you are taking a long journey from which you will never return, and you have made no preparations for the trip?’

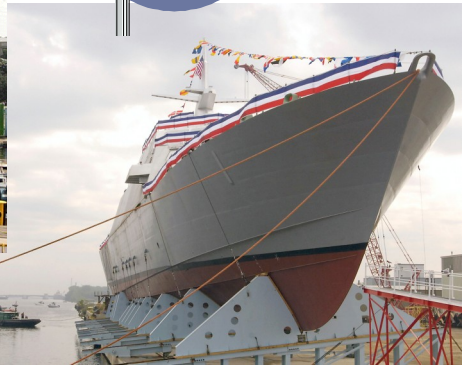
‘I guess that is it.’

‘O master, take this staff, for thou art a greater fool than myself.’... Young man, young woman, father, mother – a heart attack, an atomic bomb, an automobile crash, a hotel fire, and perhaps you will start your

*The main emphasis
in the preparation
for “launching out”
is not the building
of a “ship”, but the
building of an intimate
relationship with God
and the building of
Christ-like character.*

long journey. **Have you made preparation?** Are you certain that you know where you are going? ‘If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved’ (Rom. 10:9).”

The most important “preparation” is to Repent, Return to the Lord, Rely on Him (believe in Him and trust in Him), Receive Him, and develop a right Relationship with Him.



While the preparation phase is of great importance, it may sometimes still fall short of safeguarding the “launching out,” ...if the **PRE-CONDITIONS** for launching out were not met! The preparation should therefore be such that the preconditions for launching out are indeed met. **The good news is that proper preparation will (through God) secure the fulfilling of the preconditions for launching out!**

Our next question is: “What are the *preconditions* for launching out successfully?!”



PRECONDITIONS

for launching out

There are definite **preconditions** that need to be fulfilled *before* there can be any thought of launching out. This is true in the spiritual realm, as well as in the physical realm.

According to “*The Sanlam Skipper’s Guide for Small Vessel Seamanship*,” which is endorsed by the National Sea Rescue Institute, the following points are some of the **important preconditions**:

- ☑ “Persons who take a small vessel to sea **MUST** have passed their examination and hold a “South African Maritime Safety Authority” recognized Certificate of Confidence, with or without additional endorsements for surf launching, commercial night operations, being a dive boat skipper, etc.
- ☑ Skippers should have undergone the necessary, approved training course (s) and have done the prescribed “sea time” (with or without a Tutor Skipper). In other words, apart from having acquired the necessary knowledge, they should have also had the necessary practical experience at sea.
- ☑ “No person may operate a vessel if he/she is not physically able and of sound mental health”
- ☑ “No person may operate a vessel while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or of a drug having a narcotic effect.”
- ☑ The prescribed syllabus for skippers should include training in general legal requirements, seamanship, boat-handling and motors, safety afloat (stability), first aid, “Rule of the Road” at sea, radio procedures, oceanography and weather, navigation, compass-work, and chart-work.
- ☑ “No person may “launch out” who does not have a doctor’s certificate declaring them “fit to go to sea.”
- ☑ The construction and fitting out of the vessel must be in accordance with accepted codes of boat-building practice, incorporating stability and buoyancy requirements.
- ☑ The boat must be sea-worthy! The skipper must be in possession of a “local safety certificate,” which was issued after a complete survey of the vessel’s hull, machinery and safety equipment. This is a necessary “certificate of fitness” for the boat itself.

- ☑ The following safety appliances and equipment are included in the list of preconditions for launching out: life jackets, flares, drinking water, a VHF radio, a compass, suitable charts, fire extinguishers, suitable bailing devices, an anchor, a life raft, a tool kit, spare parts, a first aid kit, a capsizer rope, a grabline, etc.
- ☑ The skipper should prepare a checklist and meticulously use it before launching out. Such a check-list may include: drain-plug in (!); sea anchor ready for use; radio check; chart of area obtained and studied; everything secured and stowed away (this is very important – especially in stormy weather); check controls; steering and boat in general; study launch site, note tide, wave and sea conditions; confirm weather and check tides; check the list for all the safety and other essential equipment; check fresh drinking water is on board; enough (plus 25% extra) fuel on board for the voyage; etc.

It is clear to see that all of the above-mentioned PRECONDITIONS for launching out have SPIRITUAL APPLICATIONS. When we carefully think about it, we can see and appreciate that we cannot just “launch out” in life’s sea and “hope” to reach our Heavenly Harbour safely; no, there needs to be proper preparation as well as specific checking if all the preconditions have been met. For instance, I need to ask myself:

- 1. Am I spiritually fit to launch out?**
- 2. Am I spiritually trained to launch out?**
- 3. Am I spiritually approved of God to launch out?**
- 4. Am I spiritually built up according to God’s pattern?**
- 5. Have I passed the spiritual check-list?**

Let’s look at these questions one by one, and apply it to our own lives...

1. Am I spiritually fit to launch out? If I am not born again, if I am not born from above by the Spirit of God, I’ll surely sink – if I’m not sunk already. If my heart is not clean, or my hands are not clean, or my head is not clean (in thought and imagination), I am spiritually NOT fit to launch out. If I am under the influence of drink or drugs or rock music, or the fashions of the world, or any other form of sin, I am spiritually unfit for launching. If I am proud, or have rebellion or bitterness or impurity in my heart, I’ll sink like a stone to the bottom of the sea... Also, if there is any “leak” in my life, I’ll not be able to make it!

David realized that he cannot launch out in life if he is not searched, examined, tested, helped and approved of God. That is why he cried out: “Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I am about ...” (Ps. 139:23; *The Message*); “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there be any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Ps. 139:23, 24; NIV).

Even if I am not spiritually sick, it does not mean that I am spiritually FIT! Someone may be physically without any disease, but definitely not fit, because they may have not exercised and trained their bodies over a period of time. To be spiritually FIT, I need to have undergone spiritual TRAINING and EXERCISE! With this in mind the Apostle Paul told the young man, Timothy: “**Train** yourself to be godly” (1 Timothy 4:7; NIV); “**Discipline** yourself for the purpose of godliness” (NASB). This brings me to the next question:

2. Am I spiritually trained to launch out? If a person is TAUGHT about seafaring, but he (or she) has not been trained (practically), he’ll most probably sink the ship on the first voyage! O friends, this should not be ignored! If I have head knowledge about living life to God’s glory, but lack the practical application and use of this knowledge in my day to day life – then I am NOT spiritually trained to launch out! This is a desperate need in our day and age!

Before I can “launch out,” I need to be trained spiritually. I need to know: (i) how to use God’s spiritual compass (His Word and Spirit), and have experience in using it. I also need to know (ii) how to deal with spiritual storms in life, (iii) how to use God’s map correctly, (iv) how to go forward despite adverse winds, (v) how to keep my course (even when there’s a spiritual fog), (vi) how to detect and overcome spiritual under-currents, (vii) how to spot and shun spiritual rocks, (viii) how to prevent myself from “going overboard” in any area of my life, (ix) how to detect and fix a spiritual “leak” in my life, (x) how to sail and work in harmony with others, (xi) how to avoid a fatal collision with another boat or person, (xii) how to sail and work and serve with endurance, and (xiii) how to do it all to God’s glory...!

So the question is: “Am I spiritually **TRAINED** to launch out? Do I have the necessary spiritual **EXPERIENCE** to launch out?! Have I done enough spiritual ‘sea-time’?!” In other words: Am I experienced in studying God’s Word? Am I experienced in hearing God’s voice and in being guided by

Him? Am I experienced in staying on course (spiritually) despite negative peer-group pressure, despite the many worldly temptations, despite the trials (in my family or school or church), despite the onslaughts of the devil in my life? Am I experienced in praying to God? Am I experienced in showing others the way to God and in actually leading others to Christ? Am I experienced in keeping my spiritual life and walk with God “ship-shape” and right with Him and others?! It is true that there will always be room for improvement and that one’s experience needs to continually grow, and therefore one cannot wait endlessly for more and more knowledge, and more and more experience, ...but a time comes where one’s experience in the Lord is sufficient to warrant and justify the actual “launching out” into God’s further (or wider or narrower) purposes, in His will. Furthermore, I need to ask myself:

3. Am I spiritually APPROVED of God to launch out? We see that even the Lord Jesus Christ (as perfect man) was first approved of God before He was launched out into public ministry. We read that, at His baptism in water and the Spirit, God the Father said: “This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). A skipper cannot be approved to go to sea without a recognized “certificate of competence”. In the same way, no one dares to launch out without obtaining God’s “certificate of competence” – in the form of His personal approval, as well as in the form of His anointing, through the fullness of the Holy Spirit. This is how it was with the Lord Jesus. This is how it should be with you and me. I need to ask myself: “Do I have His approval? Have I been anointed by Him with ‘power from on high’?”

4. Am I spiritually BUILT UP according to God’s pattern (like a ship that is properly built according to plan and regulations)? According to “*The Sanlam Skipper’s Guide for Small Vessel Seamanship*,” ...“the construction and fitting out of the vessel must be in accordance with accepted codes of boat building practice, incorporating stability and buoyancy requirements. Each stage of the construction must be inspected and approved by SAMSA, who will also oversee the sea trials and stability tests.”

Noah had to first BUILD the boat according to the perfect plan that God had given him, *before* it could be launched out. God’s plans are always the best. God’s pattern is always the best. To build according to His plan (His model) is to be sure that your boat (your life) will be seaworthy, and ready to face some storms...

The first model was given to Adam and Eve in Genesis chapter two. The next model was revealed to Noah (as already mentioned). The following model was given to Moses and personally written down on the tablets of stone (Exodus 20). The latest model of the boat of life was given by the Lord Jesus Himself in the “Sermon on the Mount” (in Matthew chapters 5,6 and 7). He also showed it to us by the Life He lived.

When my life is BUILT on that Model, that Pattern—the pattern of the life of Christ, my life-ship is ready for launching out. Amy Carmichael said:

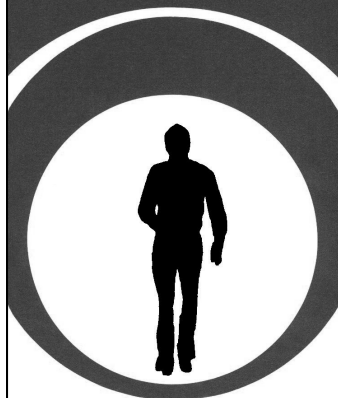
**If Jesus built a ship,
She would travel trim:**
If Jesus roofed a barn,
No leaks would be left by Him:
If Jesus planted a garden,
He would make it like Paradise:
If Jesus did my day’s work,
It would delight His Father’s eyes.

May He not just be our Model, our Pattern, but may He also be our Builder. May He build our ship, then we will “travel trim.”

5. Have I passed the spiritual check-list? Just as the skipper carefully and meticulously goes through his check-list, as a precondition for launching out, I need to go through the spiritual check-list that applies to MY life and launching out. The following check-list is very useful. It needs to be checked, point for point, and with great honesty before the Lord. It is from the pamphlet called “**Heart Searching for Prayer Preparation and Personal Revival**”: It says:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23-24). “One of the problems we face as Christians is that many people do not look on sin as being very bad. Seeing it as high treason has revolutionized my thinking. Ezekiel 39:23 (NAS). In other words, when a Christian is Christ-controlled, Christ is on the throne of his life. Ego-self is dethroned. When the slightest sin is committed: a thought, word, deed or attitude, Christ is dethroned and ego-self is enthroned. That is treason! It is self usurping the throne from Christ. Because He is King of kings and Lord of lords, it is high treason.

Heart Searching For Prayer Preparation And Personal Revival



Perhaps this is one reason James could say. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10). It is not so much the sin that is bad, but the very nature of sin itself. It is high treason.

Prayerfully, consider the following questions. Go through these questions one by one. Answer truthfully each question. Every 'yes' answer means sin in your life. In reading these questions, as you are convicted of sin, confess it at once to God. Be willing to make it right...then you can claim cleansing and forgiveness. **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"** (1 John 1:9). ...**"He**

that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whosoever confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13)...

(1) **Matthew 6:12-14** Is there anyone against whom you hold a grudge? Anyone you have not forgiven? Anyone you hate? Anyone you do not love? ...Is there any person against whom you are harboring bitterness, resentment, or jealousy? Anyone you dislike to hear praised or well spoken of? Do you allow anything to justify a wrong attitude toward another?

(2) **Matthew 6:33** Is there anything in which you have failed to put God first? Have your decisions been made after your own wisdom and desires, rather than by seeking and following God's will? Do any of the following in any way interfere with your surrender and service to God: ambition, pleasures, loved ones, friendships, desire for recognition, money, your own plans?

(3) **Mark 16:15** Have you failed to seek the lost for Christ; Have you failed to witness consistently with your mouth for the Lord Jesus Christ? Has your life not shown to the lost the Lord Jesus?

(4) **John 13:35** Are you secretly pleased over the misfortunes of others? Are you secretly annoyed over the accomplishments or advancements of another? Are you guilty of any contention or strife? Do you quarrel, argue, or engage in heated discussions? Are you a partaker in any division,

or party spirit? Are there people whom you deliberately slight?

(5) **Acts 20:35** Have you robbed God by withholding His due of time, talents and money?...

(6) **1 Corinthians 4:2** Are you undependable so that you cannot be trusted with responsibilities in the Lord's work? Are you allowing your emotions to be stirred for the things of the Lord but doing nothing about it?

(7) **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** Are you in any way careless with your body? Do you fail to care for it as the temple of the Holy Spirit? Are you guilty of intemperance in eating or drinking? Do you have any habits which are defiling to the body?

(8) **1 Corinthians 10:31** Do you take the slightest credit for anything good about you, rather than give all the glory to God? Do you talk of what you have done rather than of what Christ has done? Are your statements mostly about "I?" Are your feelings easily hurt? Have you made a pretense of being something that you are not?

(9) **Ephesians 3:20** Are you self-conscious rather than Christ-conscious? Do you allow feelings of inferiority to keep you from attempting things you should in service for God?

(10) **Ephesians 4:28** ...Do you do very little in your work? Have you been careless in the payment of your debts? ...Do you waste time? Do you waste time for others?

(11) **Ephesians 4:31** Do you complain? Do you find fault? Do you have a critical attitude towards any person or anything? Are you irritable or cranky? Do you ever carry hidden anger? Do you get angry? Do you become impatient with others? Are you ever harsh or unkind?

(12) **Ephesians 5:16** Do you listen to unedifying radio or television programs? Do you read unworthy magazines? Do you partake in worldly amusements? Do you find it necessary to seek satisfaction from any questionable source? Are you doing certain things that show that you are not satisfied in the Lord Jesus Christ?

(13) **Ephesians 5:20** Have you neglected to thank Him for all things, the seemingly bad as well as the good? Have you virtually called God a liar by doubting His Word? Do you worry? Is your spiritual temperature based on your feelings instead of on the facts of God's Word?

(14) **Philippians 1:21** Are you taken up with the cares of this life? Is your conversation or heart joyful over things rather than the Lord and His Word? Does anything mean more to you than living for and pleasing God?

(15) **Philippians 2:14** Do you ever by word or deed seek to hurt someone? Do you gossip? Do you speak unkindly concerning people when they are not present? Do you carry prejudice against true Christians because they are of some different group than yours, or because they do not see everything exactly like you?

(16) **Philippians 4:4** Have you neglected to seek to be pleasing to Him in all things? Do you carry any bitterness toward God? Have you complained against Him in any way? Have you been dissatisfied with His provision for you? Is there in your heart any unwillingness to obey God fully? Do you have any reservations as to what you would or would not do concerning anything that might be His Will? Have you disobeyed some direct leading from Him?

(17) **Col. 3:9** Do you engage in empty and unprofitable conversation? Do you ever lie? Do you ever exaggerate? Cheat? Steal?...

(18) **2 Timothy 2:22** Do you have any personal habits that are not pure? Do you allow impure thoughts...? Do you read that which is impure or suggests unholy things? Do you indulge in any unclean entertainment? Are you guilty of the lustful look?

(19) **Hebrews 10:25** Do you stay away from the meetings of preaching the gospel? Do you whisper or think about other things while God's Word is being read or preached? Are you irregular in attendance at services? Do you neglect to attend or participate in meetings for prayer? Have you neglected or slighted daily or private prayer? Have you neglected God's Word? Do you find the Bible and prayer uninteresting? Have you neglected thanksgiving at meals? Have you neglected daily family devotions

(20) **Hebrews 3:17** Do you hesitate to submit to leaders in the church or elsewhere? Are you lazy? Do you rebel at requests given to you to help the work of the gospel? Do you in any way have a stubborn or unteachable spirit?

(21) **James 1:27** Have you allowed yourself to become "spotted" by the world? Is your manner of dress pleasing to God? Do you spend beyond what is pleasing to God on anything? Do you neglect to pray about things you buy?

(22) **James 4:6** Do you feel that you are doing quite well as a Christian? That you are not so bad? That you are good enough? Are you stubborn? Do you insist on having your own way? Do you insist on your rights?

(23) **James 4:11** Have you dishonored Him and hindered His work by criticizing His servants? Have you failed to pray regularly for your pastor or other spiritual leaders? Do you find it hard to be corrected? Are you

more concerned about what people will think than what will be pleasing to God?

If you have been honest and true in the matter of admitting your sins, then you are ready for God's cleansing. ...Remember these three things:

1. If the sin is against God, confess it to God, and make things right with God.
2. If the sin is against another person, confess it to God, and make the sin right with the other one.
3. If the sin is against a group, confess it to God, and make it right with the group.

If there is full confession, there will be full cleansing. Then the joy of the Lord will follow. There can be testimony and prayer in the power of the Holy Spirit. Revival will follow.” (*This brochure was prepared from materials originally distributed by Rev. Dudley Hall*). David said in Psalm 19:12— "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

We also read in James 5:16, “Make this your common practice: **Confess your sins** to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed” (The Message). “Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].” (*Amplified Bible*). May the Lord help us.

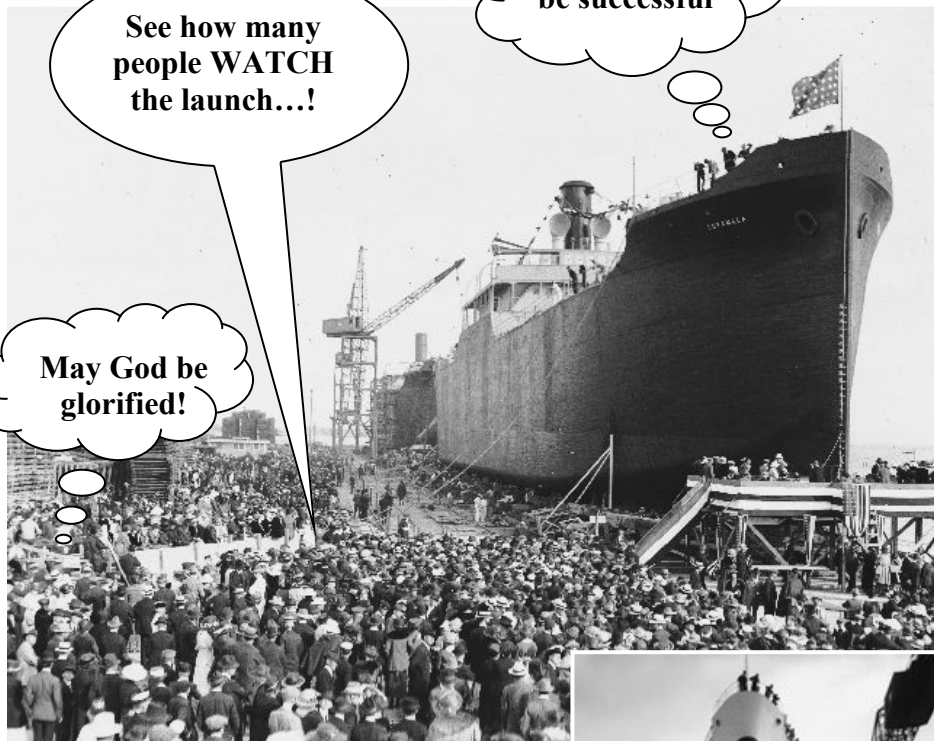
I trust we can now say and pray: ***“Lord Jesus, thank You for showing me myself. Thank You for showing me Thyself. Help me to stay pure. Help me to be spiritually ‘ship-shape’. Help me to remember that even though the boat may be ready, and the crew may be ready and approved, unless You are on board and behind the steering, we cannot dare to launch out”!*** We say with Moses: ***“If Your presence doesn’t take the lead here, call this trip off right now”*** (Exodus 33:15; *The Message*); ***“If Your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here...”*** (NIV).

If Your Presence does not go with us, let us NOT launch out...!

See how many
people **WATCH**
the launch...!

I trust it will
be successful

May God be
glorified!



PRINCIPLES *of* *launching out*

The Lord Jesus said to His disciples:
“Launch out into the deep...”
Luke 5:4

It is a great day when, after years of preparation and building and training, God gives the go-ahead for launching out with Him. Practically, when you reach the end of your schooling career, you are at such a critical time of launching out in your life. Many are happy when that day comes, but they are not properly prepared, and quickly get lost on the ocean of life, or even sink just outside the harbor. But to those who are ready, it is indeed a great day when they launch out from the harbour of school (and home)...



“Bravo Zulu” launching out on a rescue mission!

Amy Carmichael, who served the Lord for many years in Tamil Nadu, India, knew what it was to launch out with Jesus. To those who have not yet done it, she says:

BEFORE THEE LIES THE SEA

Wood violets lent their blue;
The plain, like sea at rest,
Lay calm composed, as slowly grew
A glory manifest—
Of water, earth or air,
Of gold or precious gem?
Who gazed could only think of fair,
Far New Jerusalem.

O thought in me, take wings,
And further, further fly;
Hath entered heart of man the things
That wait beyond the sky?
O Light that shall prevail,
O Powers that yet shall be!
Arise, my soul; cast loose, set sail:
Before thee lies the sea.



A fishing trawler launching out...

(The Lord Jesus said: "I will make you fishers of men" - Mark 1:17)

One of the Puritans heard this call of God and, at the beginning of a new year, prayed this prayer of “launching out”: His prayer is from the book, *“The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions.”*

O Lord,
Length of days does not profit me
 except the days are passed in Thy presence,
 in Thy service, in Thy glory.
Give me a grace that precedes, follows, guides,
 sustains, sanctifies, aids every hour,
that I may not be one moment apart from Thee,
but may rely on Thy Spirit
 to supply every thought,
 speak in every word,
 direct every step,
 prosper every work,
 build up every mote of faith,
 and give me a desire
 to show forth Thy praise;
 testify Thy love,
 advance Thy kingdom.

**I launch my bark on the unknown waters
of this year,
with Thee, O Father, as my harbor,
 Thee, O Son, at the helm,
 Thee, O Holy Spirit, filling my sails.
Guide me to heaven with my loins girt,
my lamp burning,
my ear open to Thy calls,
my heart full of love,
my soul free.**

Give me Thy grace to sanctify me,
Thy comforts to cheer,
Thy wisdom to teach,
Thy right hand to guide,
Thy counsel to instruct,
Thy law to judge,
Thy presence to stabilize.
May Thy fear be my awe,
Thy triumphs my joy.

While some skippers launch out from the harbour, others launch out from the beach, through the surf. This is more tricky and risky. According to one “Skipper’s Guide,” to launch out through the surf, you need to:

- ⇒ “Study the wave pattern for some time before you launch... Look for a place where the wave height is lowest. Bear in mind that a retreating wave can leave the bottom exposed.
- ⇒ Launch the boat into the waves...
- ⇒ Ensure the crew have donned their life jackets before the launch...
- ⇒ The launch should be so timed that the vessel is in the water with engine (s) running and ready to go when the lull occurs...
- ⇒ Make every effort to cross each incoming wave at right angles...
- ⇒ Never try to climb a wave at high speed. This could result in the boat being flipped or damaged when crashing back into the sea after a spectacular leap. Too low speed can allow the wave to swamp the boat or push it aside, so broaching the boat. Each wave must be approached with commitment and speed. As the boat climbs the face of the wave, throttles are cut back. As the boat passes the crest of the wave and drops down the slope of the wave, throttles are pushed open.
- ⇒ Ensure you have a clear path to launch through. No bathers or hazards.
- ⇒ Only when you are well clear of the furthest back line, stop the boat. ...carry out a second radio check with your base or control.
- ⇒ Note: The vessel going out through the surf has the right of way over vessels returning through the surf.”

When we apply this **spiritually**, it means that some of the **PRINCIPLES of “launching out”** successfully are as follows:

- ◆ Launch out **at the right time, God’s time...**
- ◆ **Do not be afraid, but be cautious and careful...**



Facing the waves!



- ◆ **Do things in the right way—every time...**
- ◆ **Do not be too slow, neither too fast...**
- ◆ **Face the “waves” (the challenges coming at you) **squarely, head-on, with Jesus...****
- ◆ **Approach each “wave” with commitment and speed...**
- ◆ **Make sure no one is injured in the process...** (don’t just think of yourself)
- ◆ Stop the boat after you’re well clear of the furthest back line (of breaking waves), to check your position and your boat, and to make radio contact with your base or control... This basically means: **Stop, check if everything is okay, and PRAY!** David calls it “Selah” in the Psalms, which means: PAUSE, PONDER, and PRAISE GOD! One of the Puritans said: “In prayer I launch far out into the eternal world, and on that broad ocean my soul triumphs over all evils on the shores of mortality... Blessed be the strong gales of the Spirit that speed me on my way to the New Jerusalem.... Help me to be all prayer and never to cease praying.”
- ◆ Above all, **launching out needs FAITH!** Faith in God, faith in the ability of the boat, faith in the skill of the skipper, and faith in each other (the crew). By faith in God we can launch out successfully, cross stormy seas, overcome any temptation, and safely reach our heavenly haven. We read in God’s Word that Noah did it BY FAITH! It means that he did it by trusting in God, relying on God, being dependent on God, leaning on God, and having confidence in God. These all imply that he had a real, living, healthy, unclouded **relationship with God. He walked with God!** O friends, this is the only way to launch out successfully... You and I need to walk with God ourselves; we need to have an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus; we need to have a sure and confident and living faith in God... We need to believe that He is able to keep us, that He will be with us always, that He will lead us, protect us, and bring us safely to the place He has prepared for us (on earth and in heaven)! He will guide me through life! He will show me His will! He will show me the way! He will keep me safe! He will protect me! He will be with me all the time and all the way! He will fulfill His purpose in and through me! He will enable me! He is faithful; He is reliable; He can be depended on (1 Corinthians 1:8,9; Ampl) There is no one like Him! He is indeed the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is also the Author and Finisher of MY faith! How I thank God that I can launch out with Him!
- ◆ Furthermore, **launching out requires OBEDIENCE.** In actual fact, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: *“Only he who believes is obedient, and only*

he who is obedient believes...". Jesus told the disciples (as He is also telling me today): "**Launch out into the deep...**" (Luke 5:4). He wants us to launch out. He tells us to launch out. It is His will that we "launch out." He commands us to "launch out!" Do you hear His voice? Do you see His heart? He says, "Launch out into the deep, and **let down your nets** for a draught" (Luke 5:4). He wants you to let down the nets. He wants you to catch fish. He wants you to win others for Him! He said to Peter and Andrew: "Come, follow Me, ...and I will make you fishers of men"! This word is also for each one of us... What a privilege! What a responsibility! What a challenge – to launch out into the deep and let down our nets ...to bring people to God! May we say, like Peter and Andrew and Mark and John (and many others): "Yes, Lord!"; "I'll obey You, Lord!"; "I'll go, Lord!"; "I'll do what You want me to do!"; "I'll launch out, Lord!"; "May You be glorified!"



The Lord Jesus said to His disciples:
"Launch out into the deep..."
Luke 5:4

Mary Warburton Booth also heard God's call to the deep, responded to it, and put what she learned as follows:

THE CALL

It came so clear and distinct
"Will you go?"

What could I do but answer,
“Lord, send me”?
“Nay, not alone,” He whispered,
“I with thee.”
And so we go together
To the foe.
We triumph in His victory
As we go.



She also wrote:

THE DEEP

**Go out with the tide,
Go out with the tide,
It will take you out to the deep
Where the sea billows roll
And God fills your soul,
Far out in the deep, in the deep.
I'm out with the tide
Whatever betide,
For Jesus is waiting for me.
O'er the waves at His call
I gladly leave all
In His ocean of love now to be.**

This is so true. As we go with Him, we triumph. If we “go” without Him, things go wrong. With some people things go wrong even *before* they’ve left the harbour or the shore... Others go wrong and even get shipwrecked, just *as they launch out and leave* the harbour (or the safety of the shore). This is very, very sad. We see, for instance, some young people who start relationships with the opposite gender, or start to attend worldly functions, or start to listen to worldly music, or start to join worldly company, or start to follow worldly fashions..., even *before* they leave school or leave their homes. Other young people leave “well,” but as soon as they are out of the direct inhibiting, restraining and protecting influence of their parents and teachers or godly peers, they lose the way completely, are carried away fast by ungodly undercurrents, and experience devastating spiritual shipwreck! This should NOT be ignored!!!

Launching out...



...to save lives!



...to make war!



**Launching out...
to "fish" for men - for Jesus!**



Deep sea fishing...



Shackleton launching out





Launch out...!

PERILS

of launching out and perils at sea

*“I have been...exposed to...perils in the sea”
2 Corinthians 11:25*

As exciting as it is to “launch out,” there are also PERILS involved in it. The apostle Paul, who was like a missionary mercy ship, a worshipping warship, a Christ-filled cargo ship, a ready rescue boat, a trail-blazing ice-breaker ship, a Spirit-filled fishing boat, a hard-working harbour dredger ship (and more) – all in one – faced many of these perils. He said, “I have been ...many times on journeys, [exposed to] ...**perils in the sea**” (2 Corinthians 11:25,26). “Three times I have been aboard a ship wrecked at sea; a [whole] night and a day I have spent (adrift) on the deep...”! (2 Corinthians 11:25).

It is of great importance that every missionary mariner, every “launcher-out-with-Jesus” acquaint themselves with the perils that may await them on their voyage to heaven. Furthermore, that they also keep in mind that the most dangerous times of the whole journey are not when the storms rage, but... near the shore, near the harbour – at the beginning of the voyage and near its end! This is very important. If we are young or if we are old, we all need to keep this in mind. Let’s look at some of these PERILS.

1. NOT LAUNCHING OUT!

This is indeed (surprisingly) a problem and a great danger in many lives. We may hear the Lord say to us : “Launch out into the deep...” (Luke 5:4); we may feel the challenge in our heart; we may agree it’s the right thing to do; we may tell others that we intend to do it; we may think and dream and plan to do it; we may pray about it and discuss it with others; ...but NEVER DO IT !! O, how sad!

C.T. Studd, who served the Lord as a burning flame of fire in China, India and Africa said: “**Every true Christian is** a soldier – of Christ – (**a sailor of Christ** – *my addition*) – scorning the soft seductions of peace and her oft-repeated warnings against hardships, disease, danger, and death, whom he counts among his bosom friends.”

“The otherwise Christian is a chocolate soldier (**a chocolate sailor**—*my addition*)! Dissolving in water and melting at the smell of fire! ‘Sweeties’ they are! Bonbons, lollipops! Living their lives on a glass dish or in a cardboard box, each clad in his soft clothing, a little frilled white paper to preserve his dear little delicate constitution.”

““They say and do not” – they tell others to go, and yet do not go themselves... ‘I really cannot move,’ he says. ‘I only wish I could, but I can sing, and here are some of my favourite lines’:

**‘I must be carried to the skies
On a flowery bed of ease,
Let others fight to win the prize,
Or sail thro’ bloody seas.**

**Mark time, Christian heroes,
Never go to war;
Stop and mind the babies
Playing on the floor.**

**Wash and dress and feed them
Forty times a week,
‘Til they’re roly poly,
Puddings so to speak.**

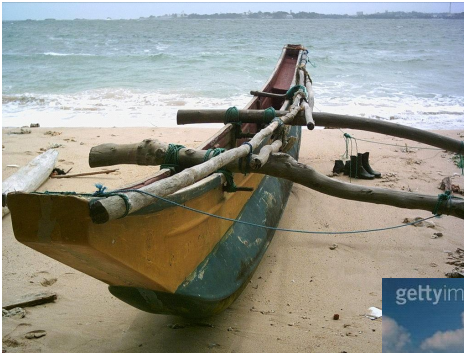
CHORUS:

***Round and round the nursery
Let us ambulate;
Sugar and spice and all that’s nice
Must be on our plate.’ ”***

He said: “God never meant me to be a jelly-fish! God’s men are always heroes.” **May God help us to not be chocolate soldiers, chocolate sailors!** May He help us NOT to fear, not to stay at home, in bed, in our lazy-chair comforts, but to “launch out into the deep” and DO GOD’S WILL in this world, come what may!

In “*My Utmost for His Highest*,” Oswald Chambers said: “**If you do not cut the moorings, God will have to break them by a storm and send you out.**”

HIGH and DRY—not launched out!



**“Can anything be
sadder
than work left
unfinished?
Yes;
work never begun!”**

“Launch out...!”



Fishermen’s boats on the beach... and not on the sea!

“Launch all on God, go out on the great swelling tide of His purpose, and you will get your eyes open. **If you believe in Jesus, you are not to spend all your time in the smooth waters just inside the harbour bar, full of delight, but always moored; you have to get out through the harbour bar into the great deeps of God and begin to know for yourself, begin to have spiritual discernment.”** Christina Rossetti put it in different words. She said: **“Can anything be sadder than work left unfinished? Yes; work never begun!”** Another peril is, contrary to not launching out, is...

2. LAUNCHING OUT PREMATURELY

It is self-evident that if I launch out PREMATURELY, it may end in disaster, tragedy, shipwreck, even death! If the preconditions (discussed earlier) are not met and I venture out in over-confidence or *self*-confidence, no one can tell how and where my voyage will end... I may be shipwrecked on “temptation island,” or drift aimlessly with a broken mast, or sink slowly in a leaking vessel, or get hijacked by spiritual pirates...!

This is especially important for **missionary mariners**. Many a young person who went to the mission field, sailing with a strong wind in full sail, have gone shipwreck on the shores of sin or compromise, or got stuck on the reefs of demonic bondage, or returned to base harbour with ships that are barely afloat – battered, bruised, broken, bleeding, barren, but still His...

I read of a Christian girl who felt that God wanted her to go as a missionary to a Muslim country, which is what she did. But then, one day, soon after she arrived in that country, while she was traveling in a bus, a man approached her and asked if he could sit next to her on the bus. She agreed, made eye contact with him and they started a discussion. There was something more than normal in the prolonged eye contact with each other, and the “end” of the story was sin and disgrace and the end of her missionary service in that country. She returned home, sadly shipwrecked. This is the peril of especially a premature “launching out.”

The shipwreck of those who launched out prematurely may not necessarily take the form of impurity. It may also come through **PRIDE** – pride of performance, pride of possessions, pride of pedigree, pride of profession, or pride of personal appearance or intellect. God reminds us that **“pride goes before a destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall”** (Proverbs 16:18), ...before **a shipwreck!**

May the Lord help us, keep us humble, and keep us in His will – so that we may not hold back when we should “launch out” ...AND that, on the other hand, we may not “launch out” prematurely, while He is still preparing us for His time and purpose. To be in His perfect will is the only safe place – be it in the harbour or out at sea!

To be in His perfect will is the only safe place – be it in the harbour or out at sea!

The next peril is the danger of...

Go against the current!

3. CROSS-CURRENTS

These cross-currents are often encountered just outside the harbour-mouth. Especially when you launch out from the harbour in a river, just as you leave the river-mouth and enter the open sea ...cross-currents can be a real danger! These cross-currents may take you off course right **at the beginning** of your voyage, and even cause you to end up on the rocks or stuck on a sandbank...



To exit a harbour safely, especially at a river-mouth, skillful piloting and careful navigation are of extreme importance. This is so important that some ships will fly in an experienced pilot (who knows that harbour and local conditions like the palm of his hand) to help them start the voyage successfully and safely.

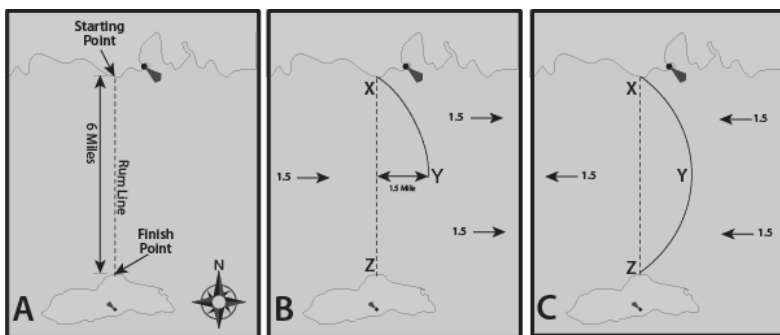
We read in the Bible that **in a Christian's life, this “start up” pilot is no one else than the Lord Jesus Himself. He is the Author (the Beginning Pilot) and the Finisher (the Ending Pilot) of our faith, which is our relationship-journey with God** (Hebrews 12). He can steer us past and through the cross-currents at the harbour-mouth!

The most common cross-current to the missionary mariner – to a saved, sanctified and sent sailor – is the cross-current of a “boy-friend” or “girl-friend” relationship! While the world is waiting to hear God's Good News, while the sea is open before us, while the Wind of God's Spirit is in our sails, this cross-current will suddenly pluck at our hull. If our vision is not clear, if our eyes are not on the Goal, if the engines are not full-throttle, if Jesus is not the Pilot, we may be swept aside or drift along with that cross-current... O, may the Lord save all young mariners (and older ones) from such a demonic diversion!

The young man or young woman who is God's choice for you (if it is His will for you to get married) will not come in the way of a "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" relationship, but in the way of God's clear guidance.

It will not be "guidance" through the **Flesh**, nor the **Feelings**, nor the **Friends**", nor the **Family** (or the cultural way), ...but it will be guidance from the **Father in heaven**, through His Holy Spirit working in your SPIRIT, in accordance with His Word. It will be along the line of God's Goal for your life and God's Current in your spirit. It will NOT be a "cross-current", running across God's direction, and taking you off course... It will NOT be clashing with God's Current, God's Spirit. It will NOT be taking you closer to the rocks of compromise, but closer to the wide ocean of God's wonderful will and purpose for you in this world! May He help us and keep us on course – right from the start, especially at the beginning of our voyage...

There are, of course, many **other** cross-currents, too. For instance, the cross-current of worldly ambition, ...or financial gain, ...or a "welcome" job, ...or an "open door" for education contrary to God's guidance, ...or pleasing people (especially parents and friends), ...or material possessions, ...or perceived "freedom" from parental rule, ...or comfort, ...or worldly "pleasures" (which are not true pleasures, neither pure pleasures). Whatever the cross-current may be in your life and in my life, may the Lord help us see it, steer clear of it, or overcome it – for His glory.



These diagrams illustrate that, if you want to **overcome** a cross-current, you need to adjust your course, so that you can compensate for the potential influence of the cross-current. **You need to go AGAINST the current** if you want to still reach your desired (and appointed) end-point!

4. UNDERCURRENTS

While cross-currents are often visible to the keen eye, especially near the shore and where the water is relatively shallow, undercurrents are usually NOT visible on the surface of things. It makes them very dangerous. They work more secretly and slowly...



When one looks at ice-bergs, for instance, despite a strong wind moving north, it may still float south! This is because of a stronger undercurrent! What makes it worse is that **most**

of an ice-berg is hidden, BELOW the surface of the sea – and thus MORE susceptible to the influence of the undercurrent!

It is the same in a person's life. Most of a person's life is hidden out of sight. Our "INNER WORLD" of thoughts and feelings and motives and imaginations and spiritual perceptiveness and responsiveness ... is "below the surface" and can more easily come under the influence of **undercurrents** which are contrary to God's mind and God's ways. We are speaking of the undercurrents of pride, ...or bitterness, ...or un-forgiveness, ...or a critical spirit, ...or desire for self-gratification, ...or self-centeredness, ...or selfishness, ...or inordinate affection, ...or laziness, ...or discouragement, ...or lust, ...or anger, ...or selfish ambition, ...or jealousy – in short, "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life" (which is not from God)!

***"Now beware
of the
undercurrent!"***

These undercurrents lead to **spiritual drifting**. The Lord Jesus said: "He who walks about in the dark does not know where he goes [*he is drifting*]" (John 12:35b; Ampl).

A person might have sailed through many seas and have gone quite "deep", but the undercurrents may and do still appear and assert their powerful subliminal influence... Oswald Chambers said, in "*My Utmost for His Highest*": "**You have remained true to God under great and intense trials, now beware of the undercurrent**"!

May the Lord help us to stay out of the way of these undercurrents, and if they have pulled us off course, to overcome their pull through His power and grace, come back on course, and continue in His way!



5. HIDDEN ROCKS and REEFS

Successful seamen make sure they know where the hidden rocks and reefs are. They also watch very diligently to identify **in time** *where* the rocks or reefs are just *under* the surface. This is even more important in misty or stormy weather, or when sailing at night.

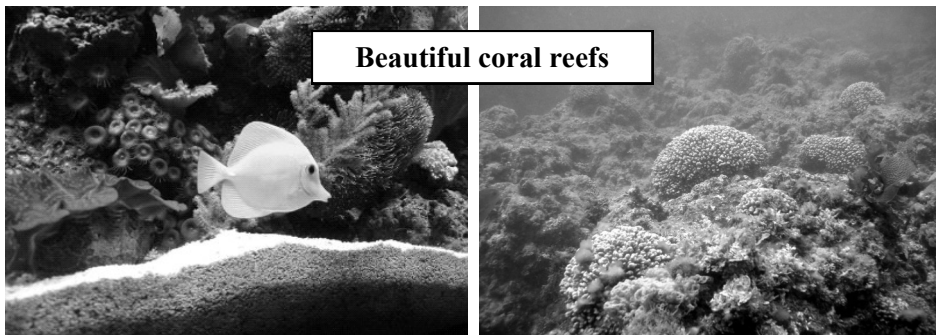
Rocks show no mercy to ships! Rocks have caused many a shipwreck! If you KNOW there are rocks and you do not steer far away from them, you are the only one to blame when the rocks rip open the hull of your boat...

As unmerciful as rocks are, ...SO IS SIN! Rocks may look beautiful, but they still cause shipwreck. Sin may appear beautiful, even majestic, but still slays a soul!

The same applies to reefs. A **coral reefs** can be like a land of dreams, a “magic” world of splendour, colour, surprises, life, beauty and wonder... and yet, wreck a ship! Sin may also appear to be full of fascination and attraction and aesthetic beauty and “perfection”, and life, ...but (for all its beauty) it’s still the most sickening, soul-destroying, satanic and damnable fact in the universe. Sin slays! Sin always slays!

These hidden rocks and reefs are often **close to the harbour**, close to the starting place of the journey, or the resting places, or the half-way harbours, ...and even **close to the destination!** Just as most motor vehicle accidents happen close to home, these rocks are also great dangers – CLOSE TO HOME . It calls for extreme vigilance, watchfulness, carefulness and perseverance, ...as well as swift corrective action whenever these dangers are detected!

To a Christian seaman, a missionary mariner, some of the ***“hidden rocks”*** are: pride, “inferiority” (which is inverted pride), independence, disobedience, unbelief, stubbornness, willfulness, rebellion, lust, lying, and anger.



The ***“coral reefs of sin”*** can maybe be compared to those sins that appear most beautiful, most attractive to a person. For instance: the sins in connection with relationships between boys and girls; or the sin of *emotional* fornication; or the sin of desiring the fashions of the world; or the sin of wanting to marry a lovable person who is *not* a born-again, spirit-filled Christian; or the sin of finding comfort and refuge in music (instead of in God); or the sin of seeking to please people (and not God, first and foremost); or the sin of wanting to look attractive to the opposite gender; or the sin of flattering; or the sin of painting your face or body (which belongs to God) without permission; or the sin of pampering the flesh and seeking comfort; or the sin of the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, the pride of life.

When sin approaches on the horizon in the form of a wonderful, magnificent coral reef – I need to change course and speed away with horror, as fast as I can, with God’s help!

If, for any reason out of my control, I am not in a position to completely avoid the nearness of the rocks and reefs, the allegorical story of the Sirens and their song may show something of the way to overcome:

In Homer's story of the Greek "gods" (or evil spirits), he also writes about the Sirens. They allegedly were beautiful, enchanting, seductive creatures who lived on a dangerous, **rocky island**. They were part woman, part bird. Take note that (in the Bible) the expression, "birds of the air," refers to demons. In later folklore they were presented as "mermaids". When mariners would sail past this island, the Sirens would sing a beautiful song—so irresistible that none can hear it and escape. The charming song would enchant (bewitch) the sailors. "All the sailors who heard the Sirens' songs would hurl themselves overboard and swim to the island of the Sirens'. Lured by these strange maidens the men would die upon the jagged rocks around the isle", and their ship would be shipwrecked... In the story, Circe warns Odysseus (a king) of the danger and tells him how to avoid it. He must plug up his mariners' ears with beeswax, and have himself tied to the mast...

"Square in your ship's path are Sirens, crying
beauty to bewitch men coasting by;
woe to the innocent who hears that sound!
He will not see his lady nor his children
in joy, crowding about him, home from sea;
the Sirens will sing his mind away
on their sweet meadow lolling. **There are bones**
of dead men rotting in a pile beside them
and flayed skins shrivel around the spot.
Steer wide;
keep well to seaward; plug your oarsmen's ears
with beeswax kneaded soft; none of the rest
should hear that song...

...and **keep their stroke up**, till the singers fade. (Book 12, 41-58)

Odysseus had himself tied to the mast by his sailors, so that he would not succumb to the Sirens' song.

Contrary to these efforts of overcoming, in *Argonautica* it is told that the time came when Jason and others had to sail past the dangerous isle of

the Sirens. Jason had been warned about the Sirens and advised ...that Orpheus (allegedly the “greatest of all musicians”) would be necessary in his journey. ...**As they came close to the dangerous, rocky island of the Sirens, Orpheus drew out his lyre and played his music more beautifully than they, drowning out their voices. Jason and this crew did not listen to the Sirens and were able to sail past the island unharmed.**

Some of the lessons we can learn for our own voyage are obvious:

✠ ***Shun the shores of sin!***

✠ ***Steer wide from it!***

✠ ***Stop your ears*** to sin’s seductive suggestions and whispers and songs...

✠ ***Strap (tie) yourself to a fixed place*** (spiritually speaking) - let that hold you tight when temptations come...But most important of all:

✠ ***Sing (and listen to) a song that is more beautiful than the songs of sin!!!***

Oh, please take careful note of this! It is only the Song of the Lord Jesus Christ that can overcome the songs of sin! We do not truly overcome *in the heart* if we just stop our ears and tie ourselves to the mast of our ship, no, we are “more than overcomers” when we love the Lord with all our heart and soul and mind and strength! Then, His love and our love for Him overcomes the love and lure of sin! Then we overcome from and in the heart!

This story illustrates the Biblical truth of “**THE EXPULSIVE POWER OF A NEW AFFECTION...**” This means that ***a new, godly affection will EXPEL an old, ungodly affection. A new affection for Jesus will expel the old affection for sin. A new love for Jesus will overcome and banish the old love for evil. A new and powerful attraction for Jesus will overcome the satanic attraction of sin.***

A story is told of a young man who had to leave his parents’ home in the countryside in the hope of finding a job to help secure the means for the survival of his family. He found a job, but had great difficulty in finding accommodation. In the end he boarded with two old people who stayed in a castle-like place. He was given a dark little room, somewhere down in the belly of this “castle.” He was very thankful, but as he settled down on

his welcome bed, his eyes fell on a life-size wall painting of a very alluring and wicked woman... He struggled to not look at it, but as the days went by, it attracted and captivated and enslaved him more and more... That picture (and that woman) became a disturbing, evil obsession in his mind. It pulled him into darkness... He kept on struggling against it in his mind, until one day... He was invited to have a meal with the old couple and, to his great surprise, there was a beautiful young lady at table with them. It was their daughter, who had come home for holiday. He was fascinated by her lovely, pure, innocent person. She was the embodiment of everything that was OPPOSITE to the painting on his room's wall! Her life and her beautiful personality won his heart. He came to love her—purely and unselfishly. Now, whenever (at work or wherever) the alluring image of the wicked woman came in his mind, he felt he could not allow those thoughts in his mind, because of the pure picture in his heart of the lady he had come to love. They got engaged and were married. The love he had for the virtuous woman (and her love for him) set him free from the evil hold the wicked woman portrait had over him! **He experienced “the expulsive power of a new affection”!!**

When the Lord Jesus is the Love of our life, that love (His love) lifts us higher, it changes the tide in our life, it makes us safely go OVER the reefs and rocks of sin. Priscilla Leonard (1861-1948) describes this love as a triumphant tide that conquers the reefs of sin... She says “*The Tide will Win*”

On the far reef the breakers
Recoil in shattered foam,
Yet still the sea behind them
Urges its forces home;
Its chant of triumph surges
Through all the thunderous din,
The wave may break in failure;
But **the tide is sure to win!**

The reef is strong and cruel;
Upon its jagged wall
One wave, a score, a hundred,
Broken and beaten fall;
Yet in defeat they conquer,
The sea comes flooding in,
Wave upon wave it routed,
But **the tide is sure to win.**

O mighty sea! thy message
In changing spray is cast;
Within God's plan of progress
It matters not at last
How wide the shores of evil,
How strong the reefs of sin -
The wave may be defeated,
But **the tide is sure to win!**

The next peril is the danger of...

6. A LITTLE LEAK!

A little leak can sink a ship! This should not be forgotten by anyone who hopes to reach the Heavenly Harbour. It is a very important topic and we need to give very careful and conscientious attention to it. To help us do this, I'd like you to "hear" the words of a pastor who lovingly laboured for the Lord in a seaport town many years ago. John Flavel (1628-1691) was a heart-preacher who wanted to see *all* come to know Jesus and reach heaven safely. He wrote the following to his seamen friends:

***"A little leak neglected, dangerous proves:
One sin connived at, the soul undoes.***

OBSERVATION: The smallest leak, if not timely discovered and stopped, is enough to sink a ship of the greatest burden: Therefore seamen are wont frequently to try what water is in the hold; and if they find it fresh, and increasing upon them, they ply the pump, and presently set the carpenters to search for it and stop it. And till it be found they cannot be quiet.

APPLICATION: What such a leak is to the ship, that is the smallest sin neglected to the soul; it is enough to ruin it eternally. For as the greatest sin discovered, lamented, and mourned over by a believer, cannot ruin him, so the least sin indulged, covered, and connived at, will certainly prove the destruction of the sinner. **No sin, though never so small, is tolerated by the pure and perfect law of God**, Psalm 119:96. The command is exceeding broad, not as if it gave men a latitude to walk as they please, but broad, i.e. extending itself to all our words, thoughts, actions, and affections. Laying a law upon them all; conniving at no evil in any man, 1 Pet. 2:1.

And as **the Word gives no allowance for the least sin**, so it is the very nature of sincerity and uprightness, to set the heart against every way of wickedness, Psalm. 139:23,24; Job 31:13, and especially against that sin which was its darling in the days of his vanity, Psalm 18:23. True hatred... is of the whole kind. **He that hates sin as sin, and so doth every upright soul, hates all sins as well as some.**

Again, the soul that hath had a saving sight of Jesus Christ, and a true discovery of the evil of sin, in the glass both of the law and gospel, can count no sin small. He knows the demerit of the smallest sin is God's eternal wrath, and that not the least sin can be remitted without the shedding and application of the blood of Christ, Heb. 9:22, which blood is of infinite value and price, 1 Peter 1:19.

To conclude, God's people know, that **little as well as great sins, are dangerous, deadly, and destructive in their own nature; a little poison will destroy a man.** Adrian was choked with a gnat, Caesar stabbed with bodkins. A man would think that Adam's sin had been no great matter, yet what dreadful work did it make! It was not as a single bullet to kill himself only, but as a chain shot, which cut off all his poor, miserable posterity. Indeed, no sin can be little, because its object against whom it is committed is so great, whence it receives a kind of infiniteness in itself; and because the price paid to redeem us from it is so valuable.

*A little leak
can
sink a ship!*

REFLECTION: And is the smallest sin not only damning in its own nature, but will certainly prove the ruin of that soul that hides and covers it. O then let my spirit accomplish a diligent search. Look to it, O my soul, that no sin be indulged by thee; set these considerations as so many flaming swords in the way of thy carnal delights and lusts. **Let me never say of any sin as Lot did of Zoar, 'It is a little one, spare it.'** Shall I spare that which cost the blood of Jesus Christ? The Lord would not spare him, 'When He made His soul an offering for sin,' Rom. 8:32. Neither will He spare me, if I defend and hide it, Deut. 29:20. Ah! If my heart were right, and my conversation sound, that lust, whatever it be, that is so favored by me, would especially be abhorred and hated, Isa. 2:20 and 30: 22. **Whatever my convictions and reformations have been, yet if there be but one sin retained and delighted in, this keeps the devil's interest in my soul.** And though for a time he seem to depart, yet at last he will return with seven worse spirits, and this is the sin that will open the door to him, and deliver up my soul, Matt. 12:43,44. Lord,

*Let me never say
of any sin as Lot
did of Zoar,
‘It is a little one,
spare it.’*

let me make thorough work of it; let me cut it off, and pluck it out, though it be as my right hand, or eye. Ah! Shall I come so near the kingdom of God, and make such a fair offer for Christ, and yet stick at a small matter, and lose all for want of one thing? **Lord, let me shed the blood of the dearest lust for His sake that shed His dearest blood for me!**

THE POEM:

**There’s many a soul’s eternally undone
For sparing sin, because a little one.
But we are much deceiv’d; no sin is small,
That wounds so great a God, so dear a soul.**
Yet say it were, the smallest pen-knife may
As well as sword or lance, dispatch and slay,
And shall so small a matter part and sever
Christ and thy soul? What! Make you part for ever?
Or wilt thou stand on toys with Him, when He
Deny’d Himself in greatest things for thee?
Or will it be an ease in hell to think
How easily thy soul therein did sink?
Are Christ and hell for trifles sold and bought?
Strike souls with trembling, Lord, at such a thought!
**By little sins below’d, the soul is lost,
Unless such sins do great repentance cost.”**

So, we’ve heard from this godly pilot and pastor: **a little leak can sink a ship; a small sin can slay a soul!!** Oh, may the Lord help us not to allow any small sin, any “little leak” in our lives!

Billy Sunday said: **“If you have no joy in your religion, there’s a leak in your Christianity somewhere ...!** This is very true. It is also a good test for each one of us!

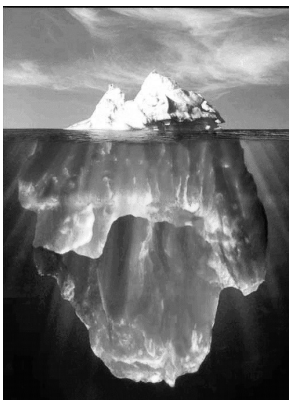
We read in *“My Utmost for His Highest”* (by Oswald Chambers) that **“Spiritual leakage begins when we cease to lift up our eyes unto Him.** The leakage comes not so much through trouble on the outside as in the imagination; when we begin to say – ‘I expect I have been stretching myself a bit too much, standing on tiptoe and trying to look like God instead of being an ordinary person.’ We have to realize that no effort can be too high.’

For instance, you came to a crisis when you made a stand for God and had the witness of the Spirit that all was right, but the weeks have gone by, and the years maybe, and you are slowly coming to the conclusion – ‘Well, after all, was I not a bit too pretentious? Was I not taking a stand a bit too high? Your rational friends come and say – Don’t be a fool, we knew when you talked about this spiritual awakening, that it was a passing impulse, you can’t keep up the strain, God does not expect you to. And you say – Well, I suppose I was expecting too much. It sounds humble to say it, but it means that reliance on God has gone and reliance on worldly opinion has come in. The danger is lest no longer relying on God you ignore the lifting up of your eyes to Him. Only when God brings you to a sudden halt, will you realize how you have been losing out. Whenever there is a leakage, remedy it immediately. Recognize that something has been coming between you and God, and get it readjusted at once.”

***Lord, let me shed the
blood of the dearest lust
for His sake that
shed His dearest blood
for me!***

In “*Approved Unto God*”, he says: “As a worker, watch the ‘sea-worthiness’ of your spiritual life. Never allow a spiritual leakage. Spiritual leakage arises either by refusing to treat God seriously, or by refusing to do anything for Him seriously”!!

From this we see that we may THINK that all is well, that we’re sailing smoothly, that we’re “just fine”, but if we are not SERIOUS in knowing God and doing His will, we are “leaking”, we are in real danger of slowly or suddenly sinking!



7. ICEBERGS!

Icebergs are a tremendous danger. Their danger lies in the fact that (i) they may be seen too late (when you’re sailing at night, in fog, or in a storm), and that (ii) most of an iceberg is hidden under the water. It is said that only one-tenth of an iceberg is normally visible, nine-tenths are NOT visible! When one also considers that a boat cannot stop suddenly, but takes quite some time and distance before it can come to a standstill, it makes the danger of icebergs even greater.

While we all know the sad story of the *RMS Titanic*, it is still not easy for the human heart to learn from that story and personally apply these lessons to secure our own safe sailing!

According to Wikipedia, “The *RMS Titanic* was an Olympic-class passenger liner. For her time, she was the largest passenger steamship in the world, and **believed to be ‘unsinkable’!** On the night of 14 April 1912, during the ship's maiden voyage, ***Titanic* hit an iceberg and sank two hours and forty minutes later...** The sinking resulted in the deaths of 1,517 people, making it one of the most deadly peacetime maritime disasters in history. The high casualty rate was due in part to the fact that, although complying with the regulations of the time, the ship did not carry enough lifeboats for everyone



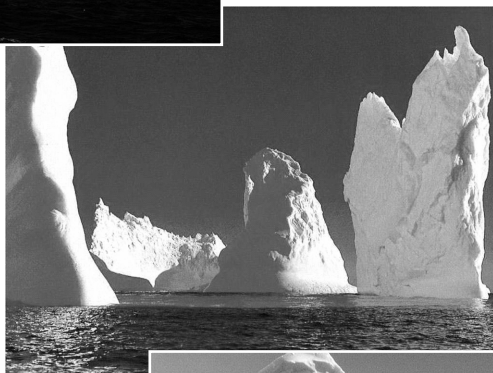
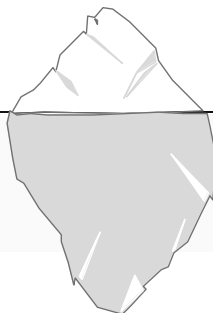
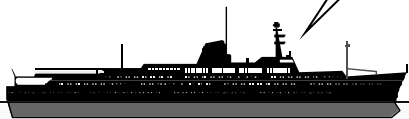
aboard. The ship had a total lifeboat capacity of 1,178 people, although her capacity was 3,547. A disproportionate number of men died due to the women-and-children-first protocol that was followed.

On the night of Sunday, 14 April 1912, the temperature had dropped to near freezing and the ocean was calm. The moon was not visible and the sky was clear. Captain

Smith, in response to **iceberg warnings** received via wireless over the preceding few days, altered the *Titanic's* course slightly to the south. That Sunday at 13:45, a message from the steamer *Amerika* warned that large icebergs lay in the *Titanic's* path, but ...wireless radio operators, ...employed ...and paid to relay messages to and from the passengers, ...were **not focused on relaying such "non-essential" ice messages** to the bridge. Later that evening, another report of numerous large icebergs, this time from the *Mesaba*, also failed to reach the bridge.

At 23:40, ...lookouts Fredrick Fleet and Reginald Lee spotted a large iceberg directly ahead of the ship. Fleet sounded the ship's bell three times and telephoned the bridge exclaiming, **"Iceberg, right ahead!"**. First Officer Murdoch gave the order "hard-a-starboard", using the traditional tiller order for an abrupt turn to port (left), and the engines to be put in full reverse ...A collision was inevitable and the iceberg brushed the ship's starboard side (right side), buckling the hull in several places and popping out rivets below the waterline over a length of 299 feet (90 m)...” **Two hours and forty minutes later the ship had sunk and 1 517 people were drowned!**

**Iceberg!
Watch out!**



**Beautiful...
but
“Bad news”
for sailors!**

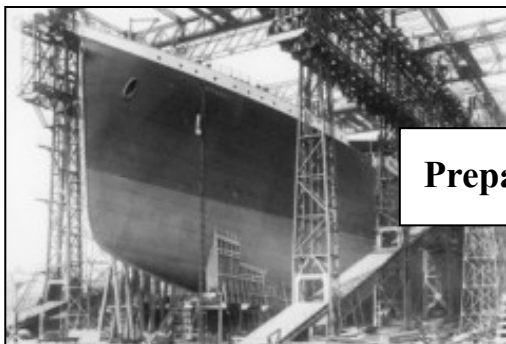


Much more can and needs to be said about this disaster. It seems that there were different **REASONS why the ship sank and why so many people died**. Some of them are the following:

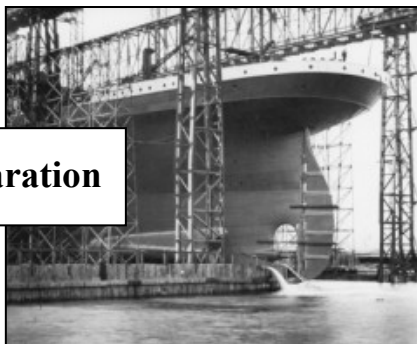
- ✗ The ship was *sailing too fast* for an area with iceberg in.
- ✗ The iceberg *warnings were not taken seriously* enough.
- ✗ **Pride** made some of the passengers and crew to think that it cannot sink and, as a result, made them *less cautious and less vigilant*.
- ✗ Some of the wireless radio *warnings about icebergs were NOT communicated to the bridge* (the control and steering area of the ship).
- ✗ It was *believed (thought) that it cannot be sunk* by an iceberg and that if it was a big iceberg, it would be seen in time—which was NOT the case!
- ✗ A *lack of lifeboats* contributed to the high death toll.
- ✗ The fact that *a nearby ship* (that was allegedly illegally hunting seals) *did NOT come to help them*, but put out its lights and sailed away, after having received the “SOS” call from the Titanic, also contributed to many more people dying.
- ✗ **MOST of the lifeboats were launched half-empty**, because (though the passengers were told to get in the lifeboats, since the ship was sinking) many passengers thought that the “Titanic showed no outward signs of being in imminent danger, and (they) were reluctant to leave the apparent safety of the ship to board small lifeboats.”
- ✗ *Two lifeboats were never launched or used...*
- ✗ **Only two** of the 18 launched *lifeboats returned to rescue people* from the icy waters, after the ship sank!

This was indeed a terrible tragedy. But is not the same tragedy happening over and over as young people “launch out”, leave school, and leave their homes? How many young people do not think and say: “It will never happen to me!”, “I will not sink!”, “I will not backslide!”, “I will never leave the Lord!”, “I will sail strongly!”, “I will reach ‘my goal’ in life!”, “I will be safe!”, “I will not be drawn away by the world!”...?! Oh friends, let’s learn from the Titanic tragedy. Let’s learn from other’s mistakes. Let’s learn from the mistakes we have already made in life...

It seems that some of the **spiritual sailing LESSONS** we can learn from the Titanic tragedy are at least the following:



Preparation



Ready!



Titanic



Launching...



Sailing strongly



Heading for
disaster...



Sinking slowly

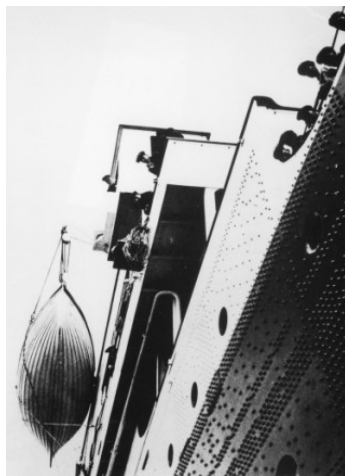
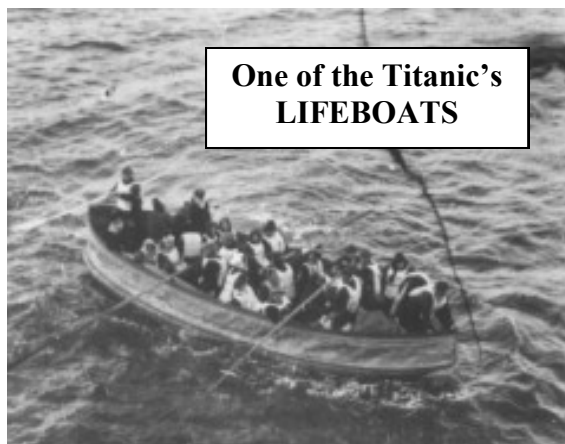
- ✚ **Stay humble!** Pride precedes disaster. We can't dare to launch out with pride as our pilot...
- ✚ **Remain dependent on God,** and do not rely on your own understanding or wisdom.
- ✚ **Beware of haste.** We read in the Bible that "he who believes will not make haste," he (or she) will not be in a hurry...
- ✚ Especially when you are aware of danger—**slow down and watch out!**
- ✚ **Pay careful attention to warnings** from God and from others. Take heed of God's warnings!
- ✚ When the Captain tells you to **get into the Lifeboat**, get in! Don't go according to your own feelings or according to (uninformed) impressions.
- ✚ **Make full use of God's time of grace.**
- ✚ **Get in the Lifeboat while there's still time!**
- ✚ **Make full use of God's Lifeboat** (God's salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ). Make full use of God's provision to save your life! Don't ignore His salvation!
- ✚ **Seek to save others as well...**

While the Titanic was meant (by man) to be a symbol of human ingenuity and advancement, it became a symbol of human fallibility and foolishness, through pride and independence of God.

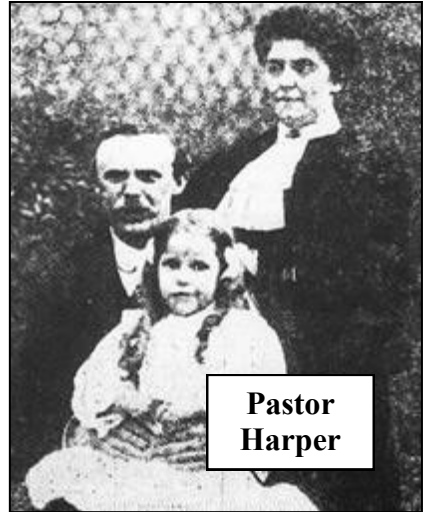
On the other hand, there were also instances of great heroism linked to the sinking of the Titanic. Some of them were godly heroes from whom we can learn much!

John Harper was such a hero. He was thirteen years old when he received Jesus as the Lord of his life. He began to preach when he was 17 years old. In "*The Titanic's Last Hero*" it is written that "as John Harper's life unfolded, one thing was apparent...**he was consumed by the word of God.**" He "started his own church in September of 1896. This church which John Harper had started with just 25 members, had grown to over 500 members when he left 13 years later. During this time he had gotten married, but was shortly thereafter widowed. However brief the marriage, God did bless John Harper with a beautiful little girl named Nana.

It was the night of April 14, 1912. The ***RMS Titanic*** sailed swiftly on the



bitterly cold ocean waters ...On board the ship that night was John Harper and his much-beloved six-year-old daughter Nana. According to documented reports, as soon as it was apparent that the ship was going to sink, John Harper ***immediately took his daughter to a lifeboat***. It is reasonable to assume that this widowed preacher could have easily gotten on board this boat to safety; however, it never seems to have crossed his mind. ***He bent down and kissed his precious little girl; looking into her eyes he told her that she would see him again someday.*** The flares going off in the dark sky above reflected the tears on his face as he turned and headed towards the crowd of desperate humanity on the sinking ocean liner.



As the rear of the huge ship began to lurch upwards, it was reported that Harper was seen making his way up the deck ***yelling, "Women, children and unsaved into the lifeboats!"*** It was only minutes later that the Titanic began to rumble deep within. Most people thought it was an explosion; actually the gargantuan ship was literally breaking in half. At this point, many people jumped off the decks and into the icy, dark waters below. John Harper was one of these people.

That night 1528 people went into the frigid waters. ***John Harper was seen swimming frantically to people in the water leading them to Jesus before the hypothermia became fatal.*** Mr. Harper swam up to one young man who had climbed up on a piece of debris. Rev. Harper asked him between breaths, ***"Are you saved?"*** The young man replied that he was not. Harper then tried to lead him to Christ only to have the young man who was near shock, reply no. ***John Harper then took off his life jacket and threw it to the man and said, 'Here then, you need this more than I do...' and swam away to other people.*** A few minutes later Harper swam back to the young man and succeeded in leading him to salvation. Of the 1528 people that went into the water that night, six were rescued by the lifeboats. One of them was this young man on the debris.

Four years later, at a survivors meeting, this young man stood up and in tears recounted how that after John Harper had led him to Christ, Mr. Harper had tried to swim back to help other people, yet because of the intense cold, had grown too weak to swim. His last words before going under in the frigid waters were, ***‘Believe on the Name of the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.’*** ... This servant of God did what he had to do. While other people were trying to buy their way onto the lifeboats and selfishly trying to save their own lives, ***John Harper gave up his life so that others could be saved.***”

‘Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends...’

John Harper was truly a hero of the Titanic, a hero in God’s eyes!

In “*The Divine Art of Soul-winning*” it is recorded that, after John Harper repeatedly asked this man ***“Is your soul saved?”*** The man testified that “there and then, with two miles of water beneath me, in my desperation I cried unto Christ to save me. I believed upon Him and I was saved. In a few minutes I heard this man of God say: ***‘I’m going down, I’m going down’***; then: ***‘No, no, I’m going UP.’*** That man was John Harper.” He had reached his Heavenly Harbour! He did it, while winning souls! Oh friends, isn’t that a wonderful way to end our voyage?!

Another hero is **Captain Arthur Henry Rostron**, who raced 93 km to the rescue, dodging icebergs in the dark night, and pushing the engines of the Steamer *Carpathia* beyond their limits—in obedience to God’s guidance.

Among the sailors, Captain Rostron was known as “**The Electric Spark**” because of his efficiency and boundless enthusiasm! It is said that it was his “swift actions and forward-thinking that saved many, many more lives that night, and his place in the history books was earned in a truly heroic manner.”

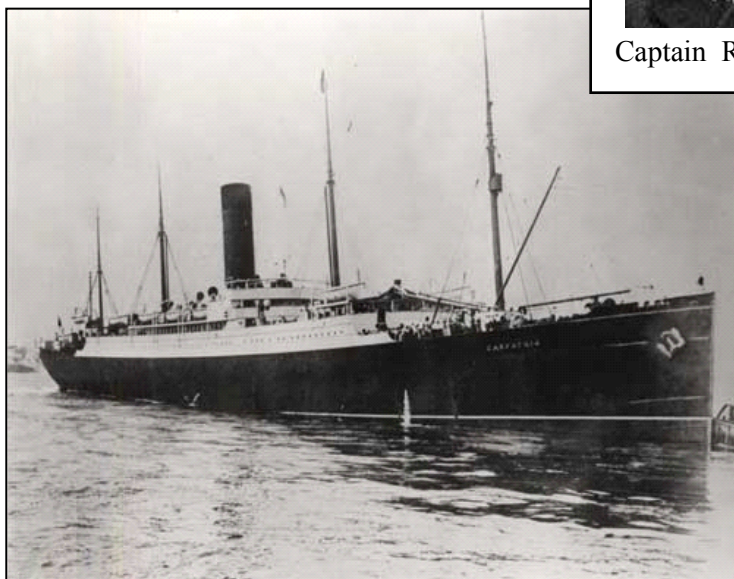
The RMS *Carpathia*, a transatlantic passenger steamship, was sailing from New York City to Rijeka on that fateful night. When wireless operator, Harold Cottam, received the Titanic’s distress call at 01h45, he awakened Captain Rostron who immediately set a course at maximum speed (17 knots) to Titanic’s last known position, approximately 93 km away.

Rostron ordered all the off-duty firemen and trimmers to the boiler rooms to keep the *Carpathia*'s boilers at full pressure, providing much-needed steam to the overworked engines. He also ordered the ship's steam heating (which supplied the passengers' cabins) and hot water to be cut off in order to make as much steam as possible available for the engines, ...to be able to reach the site of the disaster as quickly as possible!

It is reported at www.titanic-titanic.com that Captain Rostron spared no effort or cost in preparing his ship well for their arrival at the scene. "he ordered *Carpathia*'s lifeboats to be swung out..., electrical lights to be rigged along the side of the ship, ...side and pilot ladders to be dropped, hot drinks to be made including tea, coffee and soup, blankets and warm clothing to be collected, plus nets and ropes to be rigged on the side of the ship, ready for the survivors he expected to find to climb up out of the water and from the lifeboats..." He then "ordered first aid stations to be set up in each of *Carpathia*'s Dining Rooms, ...and stationed a doctor in each one. Then, again reflecting his human side, he ordered all of his crew to have coffee, ready for the long, uncertain night ahead."



Captain Rostron



After miraculously working her way through dangerous ice fields, *Carpathia*'s crew sighted green flares ahead at 02h30, and arrived on scene at 03h35, but the great ship was nowhere to be seen. At just past 04h00, the



CARPATHIA passes to remember those who died in the sinking of the TITANIC 15 April, 1912

Reprinted from PHOTOGRAPHED by permission. Copyright 1962 U.S. Navy Institute

Carpathia's crewmen located and brought aboard the first survivors. Dawn's light would reveal a rag-tag collection of lifeboats strewn amid the field of ice. By midmorning all survivors were drawn from the icy waters and given shelter aboard *Carpathia*. By final tally, only 706 of the Titanic's original 2,227 crew and passengers made it aboard the rescue ship alive...

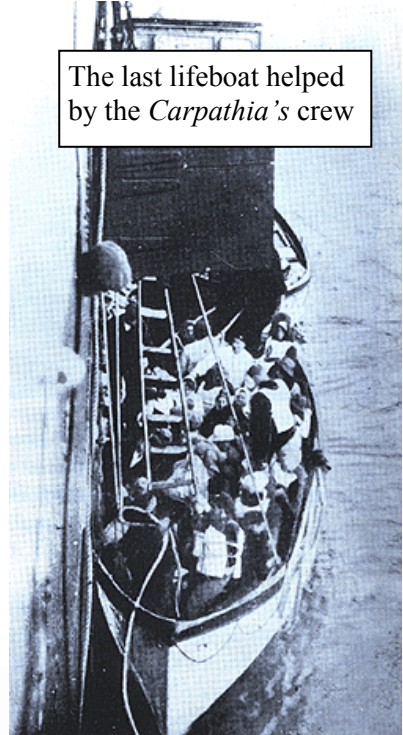
What was the “secret” of this humble hero? **Captain Rostron was a dedicated Christian.** He lived for God and communicated with God. He was clearly guided and miraculously helped by the Lord in this rescue operation. **God protected them.** When they had just ploughed through the dangerous ice fields to the disaster site, as they looked back, they saw their path was completely blocked with icebergs—but they were kept safe from colliding with any of it! **Only the Lord could have done that. He was the true Hero** of all those who called upon Him that night!



*The real Hero
was the Lord Jesus—
who saved and
still saves those who
repent & trust Him.*



Rescued passengers on board the *Carthia*...



The last lifeboat helped by the *Carpathia*'s crew

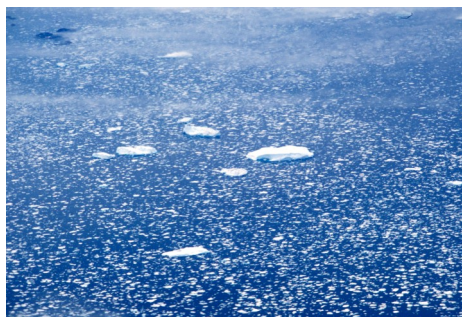


Carpathia docked in New York after the rescue of *Titanic*'s survivors

8. PACK ICE...

While pack ice may seem more innocent than ice-bergs, they may also prove fatal to a ship! We can just think of the now famous voyage of Shackleton and his men with the “*Endurance*”, to appreciate this grave danger... Pack ice may cause a ship to (1) Slow down, and get (2) Stuck, so that it can’t move any more, and even get (3) Squashed to splinters! Spiritual pack ice can have a similar effect! *Oh, may the Lord help us not to get slowed down or trapped in the pack ice of the spirit of this world. May He help us to stay clear of the drift ice of this world’s worldly ways and wickedness.*

It’s helpful to understand how the ice “works”, so that we may be wise mariners, who’ll be able to sail successfully, despite this peril. Wikipedia explains that “**drift ice** is ice that floats on the surface of the water in cold regions, as opposed to fast ice, which is attached (‘fastened’) to a shore. Usually drift ice is carried along by winds and sea currents, hence its name, ‘drift ice’. When the drift ice is driven together into a large single mass, it is called **pack ice**. Wind and currents can pile up ice to form ridges three to four metres high, creating obstacles difficult for powerful icebreakers to penetrate. An **ice floe** is a large piece of drift ice that might range from tens of metres to several kilometres in diameter. Wider chunks of ice are called **ice fields**. The two major ice packs are the Arctic ice pack and the Antarctic ice pack.”



Drift ice



Pack ice

The story of Sir Ernest Shackleton’s incredible boat journey to the Antarctic in the “*Endurance*” can teach us many lessons for our journey in life. It is recorded in heaven and in “*Endurance: Shackleton’s Incredible Voyage*” (by Alfred Lansing) and in “*The Great Antarctic Rescue: Shackleton’s Boat*



A ship entering
pack ice...



**Slowed down
significantly!**



**STUCK
in an ice field!!!**

Journey” (by F.A. Worsley). The following is just a brief summary of that amazing story:

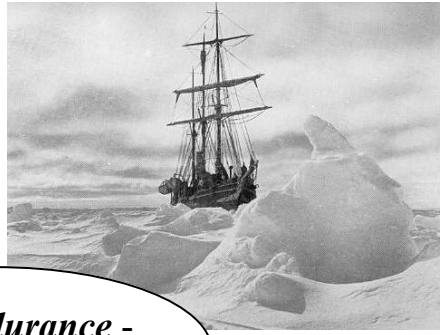
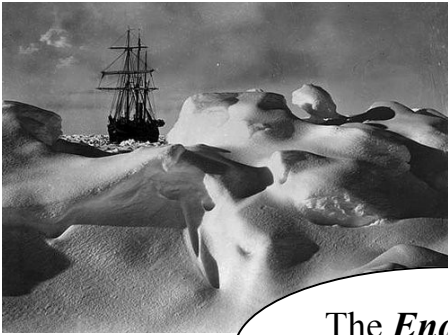
It is said that (as quoted from www.coolatlantic.com) “he planned to cross the Antarctic continent from coast to coast via the South Pole, a distance of about 1800 miles”, setting out from the Weddell sea region... “The ship used for the journey to the Weddell sea was...the **Endurance**.” A newspaper advertisement was supposedly placed by **Shackleton** which stated: “Men wanted: for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success – Sir Ernest Shackleton.”



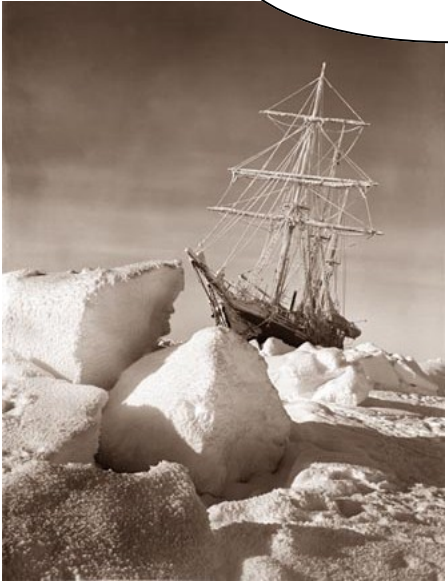
“On August 8th 1914 the Endurance sailed for the Antarctic via ...the sub Antarctic island of South Georgia where there was a Norwegian whaling station. ...The Endurance battled her way through a thousand miles of **pack ice** over a six week period and was one hundred miles ... from her destination, when on the 18th of January 1915 ...the ice closed in around her. The temperature dropped dramatically cementing together the loose ice that surrounded the ship ...Nevertheless, his men looked towards ‘the Boss’ as they called him.”

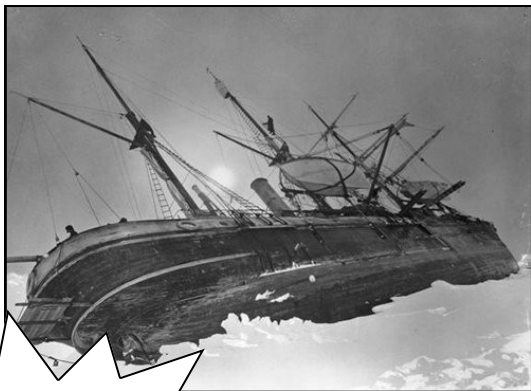
“...The ship was drifting to the southwest with the ice. Attempts were made to free the ship ...but to no avail.The Endurance had drifted at least 1186 miles since first becoming fast in the ice 281 days previously ... It was the beginning of the end for Endurance. Now completely in the power of the ice, the ship began to keel over..., and was ‘crushed to death by the icepacks of the Weddell Sea’ ...”

“They abandoned the ship and ‘Ocean Camp’ was established on a thick, heavy **floe** ...The Endurance finally broke up and sank below the ice and waters of the Weddell sea on November 21st 1915.The 28 men of the expedition were now isolated on the **drifting pack ice** hundreds of miles from land, with no ship, no means of communication with the outside world and with limited supplies. What was worse was that the ice itself was now starting to break up as the Antarctic spring got under way.”

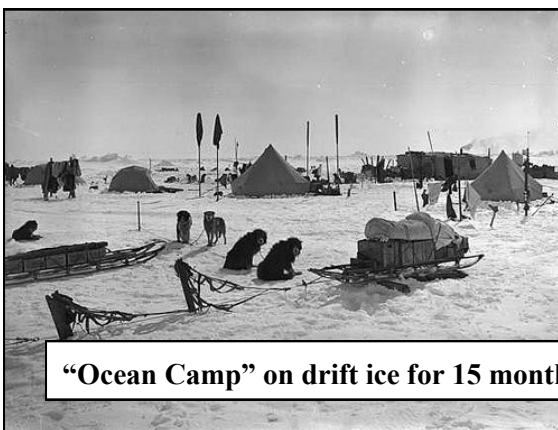


The *Endurance* -
stuck in the pack ice





**Crushed by
the pack ice!**



“Ocean Camp” on drift ice for 15 months!



“On December 20th Shackleton decided that the time had come to abandon their camp and march westward to where they thought the nearest land was, ...pulling their three lifeboats with them over the ice...”

“That the men kept going during this time was a tribute to Shackleton's leadership skills and his abilities and understanding of the importance of keeping up morale....”

“After they’ve been on the ice float for 15 months, they set to sea in the three life boats until they reached Elephant island, where they found relative safety on solid ground. Shackleton realised though that in order to effect a rescue, he was going to have to travel to the nearest inhabited place, which was the whaling station back on South Georgia, some 800 miles distant and across the most stormy stretch of ocean in the world...!” They expected to encounter waves that were 50 feet from tip to trough (called "Cape Horn Rollers") in a 22 foot long life boat! Their navigation was by a sextant and a chronometer of unknown accuracy, they were dependent on sightings of the sun that could sometimes not be seen for weeks in the overcast weather so characteristic of these latitudes....

“The lifeboat chosen for the journey was the James Caird. It was made seaworthy by whatever limited means were available and equipped with a part cover against the weather and the sea. ...The party left behind on Elephant Island used the two remaining life boats (turned upside down) to make a hut...”

“The James Caird set off on the 24th of April, the very last day before the pack closed in again on a day of relative calm. The crew was Shackleton, Worsley, Crean, McNeish, McCarthy and Vincent. The anticipated journey time was a month. It was to become one of the most astonishing small boat journeys of all time....The James Caird made progress at the rate of around 60-70 miles per day though the sea conditions were rough. ...The boat was relatively unladed and so boulders and other ballast had been placed aboard in order to trim her, these had to be constantly moved around. The weather worsened and **they encountered fierce storms.** As the temperature dropped, ice formed on the outside of the boat from frozen sea spray, up to 15 inches deep on the deck. This made the boat much heavier and affected the trim ... They began to throw items overboard in



The whole team **launched out in 3 lifeboats**,
leaving the ice-float behind and searching for safe land...



They landed on ***Elephant Island*** and remained there for another
105 days, before they were rescued.



They stayed in 2 overturned
lifeboats as **“homes”**

Those who **remained** on Elephant
Island, after Shackleton launched out
with 5 others to try and reach South
Georgia Island to get help...

order to save weight ...At other times they had to bale out water for dear life.Frostbite was beginning to affect exposed fingers and hands in the cold and constant wet. Navigation was also a problem due to the continually overcast weather.On May 5th, the eleventh day out at sea, **the sea became much rougher**. Shackleton was at the tiller. He later wrote: ... 'I called to the other men that the sky was clearing, and then a moment later I realized that what I had seen was not a rift in the clouds but the white crest of an enormous wave. ...During twenty-six years' experience of the ocean in all its moods I had not encountered a wave so gigantic. ... It was a mighty upheaval of the ocean, a thing quite apart from the big white-capped seas that had been our tireless enemies for many days ...Then came a moment of suspense that seemed drawn out into hours. White surged the foam of the breaking sea around us. We felt our boat lifted and flung forward like a cork in breaking surf. We were in a seething chaos of tortured water; but somehow the boat lived through it, half full of water, sagging to the dead weight and shuddering under the blow. **We baled with the energy of men fighting for life**, flinging the water over the sides with every receptacle that came to our hands, and after ten minutes of uncertainty we felt the boat renew her life beneath us'

In "*Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*," Alfred Lansing says they have crossed the line separating the "Raving Fifties" from the "Screaming Sixties," so called because of the weather that prevails there and the huge waves. This was the "Drake Passage", the "most dreaded bit of ocean on the globe"...!!!

He says: "Once every ninety seconds or less the *Caird's* sail would go slack as one of these gigantic waves loomed astern, possibly 50 feet above her, and threatening, surely, to bury her under a hundred-million tons of water. But then, by some phenomenon of buoyancy, she was lifted higher and higher up the face of the onrushing swell until she found herself, rather unexpectedly, caught in the turmoil of foam at the summit and hurtling forward. Over and over again, a thousand times each day, this drama was re-enacted"...!!!

Captain Worsley said: "It was the most awe-inspiring and dangerous position any of us had ever been in. It looked as though we were doomed—past the skill of man to save... The strains, shocks, and blows were tremendous, threatening every minute to start her planking, while the bow seams opened and closed on every sea. Good boat! But how she stood it

was a miracle of God's mercy."

"On ...the 8th of May, they ...caught a glimpse of South Georgia, only fourteen days after leaving Elephant Island... Landing was to be a less than straightforward affair, **reefs** ...stretched all along the region of the coast where they were and **great waves** broke over them. The rocky coast in many places descended steeply into the sea. Despite being so close and running out of fresh water to drink, they had no choice but to wait for the next morning to break before attempting to land on the shore....The morning brought a shift in the wind and a **terrible storm arose**, the James Caird was tossed around in the sea and when light broke, they were out of sight of land once again. They made their way back to South Georgia just after noon, but again, it was a coast of **huge breakers and sheer cliffs** that greeted them. The day wore on and there seemed no hope, later though in the evening, the wind shifted direction and began to die down."

Captain Worsley said: "For nine hours we had fought at its height a hurricane so fierce that, as we heard later, a 500-ton steamer from Buenos Ayres to South Georgia had foundered in it with all hands, while we, by the grace of God, had pulled through in a twenty-two-foot boat"...!!! Praise the Lord!

By the morning of the 10th of May, there was very little wind and they were able to look for a landing place. Reefs and breaking waves dogged their every attempt. They found a likely bay to land, but were blown out to sea again by a change in the wind. In approaching darkness they eventually were able to enter a small cove fronted by a reef. They had to take in the oars to pass through, but at long last, carried by the swell, the James Caird was able to land on a South Georgia beach....They had got through thanks to **Shackleton's leadership** and the **incredible navigational skills of New Zealander Frank Worsley**. Worsley had only been able to take sightings of the sun four times, on April 26th and May 3rd, 4th and 7th, all the rest had been dead reckoning. ...Had they failed to land, the boat would have been swept onwards to be lost in the mid Atlantic, and no rescue party would have set out for the men on Elephant Island."

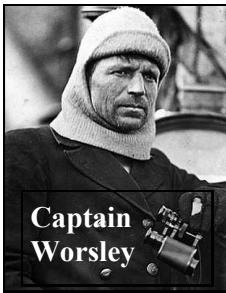
... There was still a major obstacle to overcome. They had landed 22 miles from the Stromness whaling station as the crow flies. In order to get there they had to go across the backbone of mountains that ran the length of South Georgia, a journey that no-one had ever managed... They



The
launching
of the
*James
Caird*...



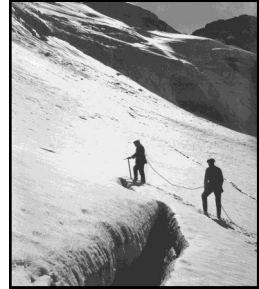
The brave, successful voyage of the *James Caird* over 800 miles
of the stormiest seas in the world, to a small island,
with little navigation possibilities...!



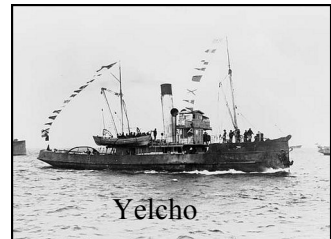
**Captain
Worsley**

crossed glaciers, icy slopes and snow fields. At a height of about 4500 feet, ...they slid down a snowy slope in a matter of minutes losing around 900 feet in the process. ...Worsley and Crean fell asleep, but Shackleton realised that if they all did so, they may never wake again. He woke them five minutes later and ...once again they set off....There was now but one ridge of jagged peaks between

them and Stromness, they found a gap and went through. ...At 1:30 p.m. they climbed the final ridge and saw a small whaling boat entering the bay 2500 feet below. ... The men paused, shook hands and congratulated each other on accomplishing their heroic journey... "..... we had entered a year and a half before with a well-found ship, full equipment, and high hopes. **We had suffered, starved and triumphed, ... We had seen God in His splendours**, heard the text that nature renders. We had reached the naked soul of man..."



"The whaling station, was now just a mile and a half away. They tried to smarten themselves up a little bit before entering the station, but their beards were long, their hair was matted, their clothes, tattered and stained as they hadn't been washed in nearly a year. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon of May 20th, they walked into the outskirts of Stromness whaling station..."



"After repeated attempts to go back to rescue the men on Elephant Island, ...the steamer *Yelcho*, under the command of Captain Pardo (reached) Elephant Island...The boat soon approached close enough for Shackleton, who was standing on the bow, to shout to Wild, '**Are you all well?**' Wild replied, '**All safe, all well!**' and the Boss replied, '**Thank God!**' ...Within an hour they were headed north to the world from which no news had been heard since October, 1914; they had survived on Elephant Island for 105 days." From the day the expedition started to their rescue was 24 months and 22 days, and **through God's grace ALL of them survived!**



Depicting the arrival of Ernest Shackleton on his return to rescue the men on Elephant Island... (This photo was taken with the departure)

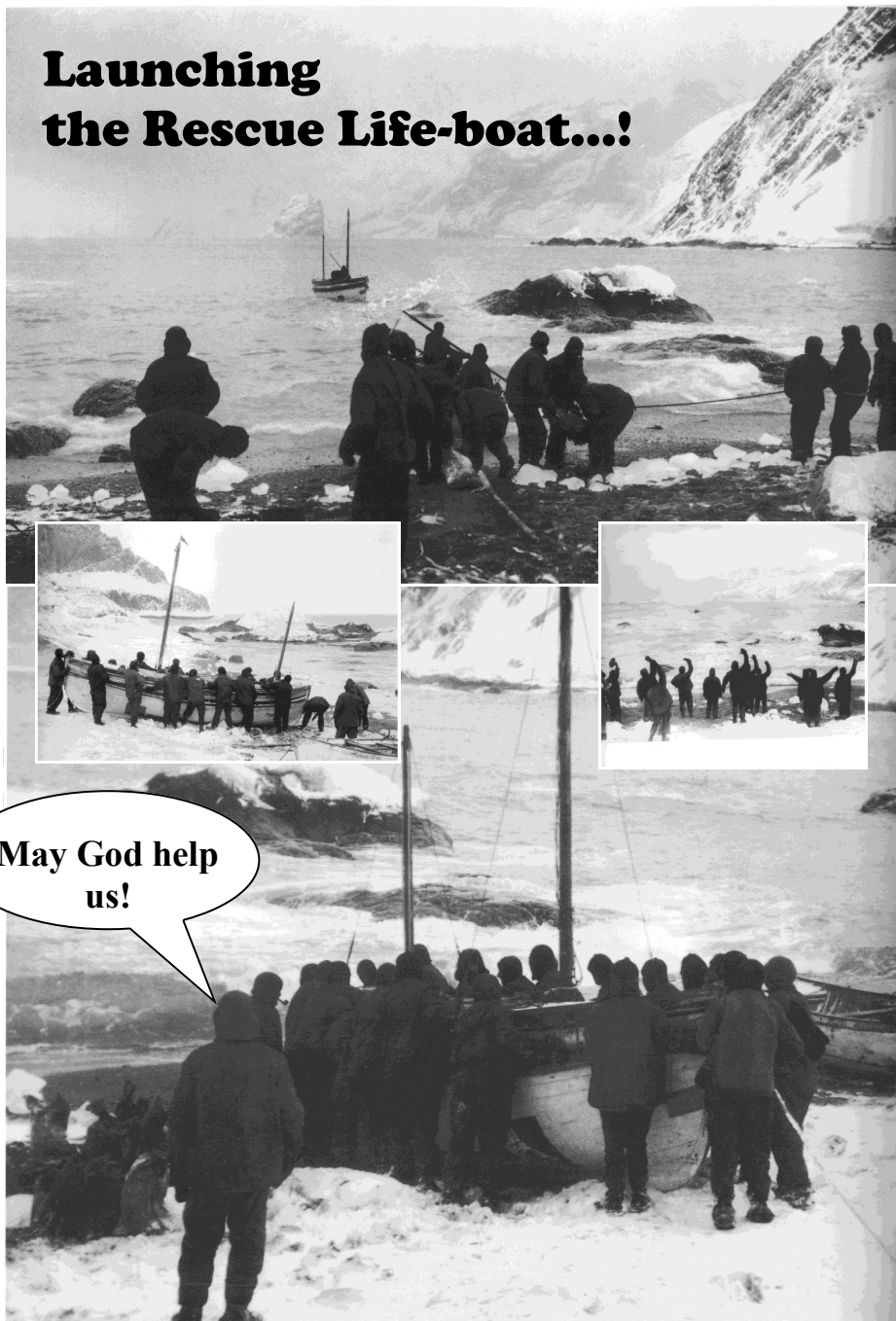




Stuck!



Launching the Rescue Life-boat...!



May God help
us!

9. LOSING DIRECTION

“We all, ...have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). We may lose direction because we *choose* the wrong way, or because we *fail to keep* the right direction... When a sailor is not skilled in navigation, he may easily lose direction, especially once he’s out on the open sea (where there’s no land in sight for days). To keep on course, to keep going in the right direction, needs excellent navigation skills!



You just CAN'T go by what you “feel”, or what you “think”, or by what others “say”. NO, following your fluctuating feelings, or “objective” opinions may cause you to end up floating disorientated, distraught and LOST on the sea of life. It may cause you to reach the WRONG destination or to end up “on the rocks”! You need a SURE way of finding and keeping direction. You (and I) need a SURE way of keeping on course and reaching our heavenly harbour. We need the necessary TOOLS and the skilled TECHNIQUES of using those tools, to not lose direction.

A successful seaman’s navigation tools consist of a compass, a chart, a chronometer, a sextant (which uses mirrors to measure the altitude of celestial objects with regard to the horizon), a radio (for radio navigation), a radar (if available), and nowadays, ...a GPS (Global Positioning System) unit. “A sextant is an instrument generally used to measure the altitude of a celestial object above the horizon. Making this measurement is known as sighting the object, shooting the object, or taking a sight. The angle, and the time when it was measured, can be used to calculate a position line on a nautical or aeronautical chart. A common use of the sextant is to sight the sun at noon to find one's latitude. ...Held horizontally, the sextant can be used to measure the angle between any two objects, such as between two lighthouses, which





will, similarly, allow for calculation of a line of position on a chart.”

To a missionary mariner these tools all represent **THE WORD OF GOD**—the **Written Word and the Living Word!** The Christian’s **compass is the Bible!** The Christian’s GPS is God’s Precious Scriptures! Furthermore: **Christ is the Christian’s Compass!** A spiritual seafarer’s sextant is our Saviour!

A successful seafarer will study to develop the skill of being guided by God and by God’s Word. He will make it his aim to handle the Word of God correctly and skillfully—for his personal benefit and the benefit of others. He will plot his course in life by the Word of God—the Living Word and the Written Word.

If, at any time, I do not use God’s navigational tools, or use it incorrectly, inaccurately, I am in danger of losing direction on life’s sea!



Learn to USE God’s tools



10. SHORTAGE OF FRESH WATER and NUTRITION

No-one can survive without enough fresh water and good nutrition.

Surrounded by a sea of water, **some sailors have died of thirst**. On the other hand, drinking the sea water can also cause death. Craig Larson says that “ocean water contains seven times more salt than the human body can safely ingest. Drinking it, a person dehydrates because the kidneys demand extra water to flush the overload of salt. The more salt water someone drinks, the thirstier he gets. He actually dies of thirst”

The world and sin can be compared to ocean water—it looks as if it can quench your thirst, but it can **never!** When you drink of it, it increases your sin-thirst, instead of quenching it. It is terrible!

Any seaman will tell you that, on our voyage to our desired Haven, we need **fresh water**, we need **living water** (called “Jivannadi” in Sanskrit)! “On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this He meant **the Spirit**, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified” (John 3:37-39).

We also need **fresh fruits and vegetables**. Many sailors suffered in the past (and some died), because of malnutrition and diseases related to vitamin deficiencies. For instance: night blindness (due to Vitamin A deficiency), cerebral and cardiovascular beriberi (from Thiamin deficiency), pellagra (from Niacin deficiency), and scurvy (due to Vitamin C deficiency). **Protein-rich foods** are also needed to



Patient with Pellagra

provide nourishment and growth for the bodies. Where there is a shortage of good nutrition, growth-retardation, malnutrition, starvation, immune-deficiency, and even death follow...

This was the initial reason why the Dutch East India Company built a half-way refreshment post at Cape Town in the 17th century, under the management of a Christian medical doctor, Jan



A doctor caring
for a sailor with scurvy

van Riebeeck. They planted vegetables, cultivated fruit trees, and also provided fresh meat and fresh water to sailors on their way to Asia (from Europe). They furthermore cared for sick sailors.

In the spiritual realm it is the same! Anyone who launches out, but without enough fresh “water”, without enough of the working of the Spirit of God, without the full

supply of the Spirit, without the heavenly store-house at their disposal, without access to the River of Life (Revelation 22) and the Fountain of Living Waters (John 4:13,14), without drinking the pure spiritual milk of the Word (1 Peter 2:2), and without eating the food of daily doing God’s will (John 4:32) ...are in great danger. They will become malnourished, acquire spiritual immune-deficiency syndrome, develop different spiritual diseases and may even die before they reach their destiny. This is a real danger!

The next peril at sea we need to look at is the peril of PIRATES!

11. PIRATES!

Believe it or not, this is a modern-day phenomenon! Martin Otto was used by the Lord to start a Seafarers Ministry, which is a ministry within the Seaman’s Christian Friend Society (SCFS). In his book “*Seafarers! A Strategic Missionary Vision*,” he writes:

“An increasing danger for seafarers is **piracy**. Again and again we hear of attacks and plunder of ships. In spite of tight security measures, heavily armed pirates still seem to be able to board and enter ships. In the *Hamburger Anebdblatt*, the following was reported: ‘The pirate





strikes by surprise and with violence. The number of **pirate attacks** all over the world is on the rise. Last year alone (2000) the International Maritime Bureau registered 469 attempts... A cargo ship is like a supermarket to pirates in the poorer parts of the world...'

Nine seafarers were murdered in pirate attacks during the first nine months of 2001, according to figures from the International Maritime Bureau (IMB). Pirates are now also demanding ransoms for kidnapped crew members. A seaman wrote the following letter:

"I have been a Christian for 15 years. My conversion came about only through the power of God and not by anyone explaining the gospel to me. Before my conversion I had read the Bible, but only for the purpose of debating about it. In June 1985 my wife packed my suitcase because I had to return to sea. I told her to pack some pornographic magazines too. Instead, she offered to pack a Bible. That made me angry and I told her I didn't need a Bible.

While my ship was in Jakarta, I was on duty in the engine room. Pirates entered the ship and asked me where the storeroom was. I answered that I didn't know, since I was new on board. They didn't understand me very well so they continued to ask me all kinds of questions. Every time they asked a question, they hit me in the face or stomach. Finally they tied my hands behind my back, and then my feet to my hands, stuffed a rag into my mouth and pulled me up on a rope so that I was hanging in the air. The leader gave orders to kill me as soon as the engine room was plundered.

My strength was drained and I could only think about dying. Just like a dying man, I began to think about God and scenes from my life began to go through my mind. Then I saw the scene with my wife, as she offered to pack a Bible in my suitcase. God was showing me what kind of man I was—a sinner. I began to cry, not because of the physical pain I was feeling but because I was a sinner, who was going to die soon. I asked for forgiveness for my sins. I began to pray and said, 'I know I have to die but have mercy on my family and me.'

After this short prayer the alarm in the engine room began to sound. It made the pirates panic and they ran around like crazy. Even the man who was supposed to kill me suddenly disappeared. I hung there alone for four and a half hours until my colleagues found me at 5:30 the next morning.

Later, in the hospital, I remembered that I had turned OFF the alarm for my night shift, so it shouldn't even have rung at all. Yet in my hour of need, God himself made the alarm go off. He did it, not only to rescue me from the pirates but also to save my soul and the souls of my family.

He did more wonderful things for me during my hospital stay in Jakarta until I was sent home to the Philippines. After this traumatic experience I surrendered my whole life to Him and received Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. Since then, the Lord has protected me at various times... I have learned many things up until today. Whenever I work on a new ship, I start up a new Bible study group. I even do it when there are only a few willing people."

This is a wonderful story of God's grace and mercy, But let us remember: **Satan is a pirate!** Jesus says he "comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10). The pirates Satan sends may be unclean spirits attacking me, or people attacking me (physically or verbally), or evil (or unbelieving) thoughts attacking me... The Lord Jesus, on the other hand, came that I may have life, and have it to the full! Praise the Lord!

12. OVERLOAD

While the safety certificate of a boat clearly states which number of people are allowed on that particular boat, boats are sometimes overloaded. The same applies to cargo-carriers. We read from time to time of overloaded boats that have sunk, with the result that many people lost their lives.

Overloaded boats may sink much more easily in storms than correctly loaded boats. Overloading any boat puts it in greater danger of sinking. This is a fact. According to "*The Sanlam Skipper's Guide for Small Ves-*

sel Seamanship,’ endorsed by the National Sea Rescue Institute, overloading a boat is dangerous. It may cause it to become immovable and difficult to control. It decreases the freedom and may cause the vessel to be easily swamped (and sink!). It raises the center of gravity, increasing the possibility of a capsizing!

I need to, therefore, take great care that I only “load” on my boat that which is from God and according to His plan for me. If I just allow anyone and everyone to “load” on me what they want, I’ll be in danger of sinking – especially when a storm breaks out. If I give place to humanism in my heart, wanting to “help” anyone and everyone who comes across my way, thinking, “I can help them,” I am in danger of overloading my vessel. This is a great danger.

To think: “I can help,” is to be deceived – it is only God who can really help people! To think: “I can help whoever needs help or whoever asks for help,” is to be proud and also deceived – for the truth is: I cannot help anyone, only God can!

I also need to carefully hear from my Captain what He wants on my boat (which is His boat). I need to hear from Him what He wants in my life. I may become so busy with many, many seemingly good things, that I am overloaded and fail to reach the destiny that HE has for me... May I be like the Lord Jesus, who could say at the end of his life on earth: “Father ...I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work YOU gave me to do” (John 17:1,4). May I always hear His voice and only load what in on His list for me!

The next peril is that of collision at sea...

13. COLLISION!

You may think: “This is not possible! Why, there are no roads at sea; there’s enough space for everyone!” But the truth is, collisions do happen at sea, not because of lack of space and absence of “roads”, but because of human error and disobedience to the “rule of the road” at sea!

Some years ago a tragic collision took place off the South African coast-



The disaster
of an overloaded
container ship



This ship's hull
ripped in two—
due to overload...



Many people have
died due to
the sinking of
overloaded ferries!

line. The *SAS Tafelberg*, which was a strong replenishing ship (and was originally built to be able to break through pack ice), collided into the side of the *SAS President Kruger*, a top class warship, a frigate—which was also equipped to deal with nuclear driven submarines. The warship sank within 20 minutes...! This can happen to any ship, to anyone!

To avoid such unnecessary collision, we need to give careful attention to the “rules of the road” at sea. These rules involve regulations regarding look-out, speed, timely preventive action, the use of lights on the boat (and code flags), overtaking situations, head-on situations (in other words “what to do” in such situations), crossing situations, sound signals, etc. The most basic rules of the road at sea that are to be obeyed—to avoid colliding with other boats are:

- ☛ “Vessels must **keep a proper look-out at all times** by sight, hearing and radar (if fitted).
- ☛ Vessels must **proceed at a safe speed** depending on the circumstance.
- ☛ A vessel must **identify the risk** of collision and **in good time make necessary alteration** in course and/or speed to avoid a close quarters situation.”

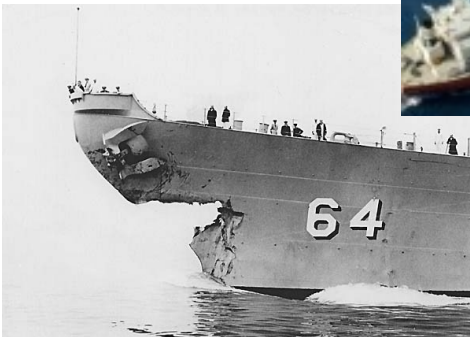
Another incident off Cape Town highlights these above-mentioned rules. “A yacht was proceeding in a shipping lane in dense fog at full engine speed (!). The skipper and one other crew member was bent over the engine-box trying to sort out a minor engine problem. An 18m steel off-shore supply vessel proceeding in the opposite direction, at full speed (!), suddenly saw the yacht dead ahead through the fog. The quick wheel alteration of the supply vessel’s skipper caused the supply vessel to strike the yacht a glancing blow. (The) yachtsmen never knew of the presence of the supply vessel until she struck the yacht. The yacht, being fiber-glass, was never detected on the radar of the supply vessel...”

The life-lessons are obvious. If I want to sail successfully through life’s waters, not colliding with other “boats” (which may represent other people on life’s journey), I need to:

- ◆ **Be watchful**, awake, alert, on the look-out, ... **and pray**.
- ◆ **Not be in a hurry** and rush things, or rush people, or make rushed decisions. The Afrikaans proverb says: “*Van haastigheid kom lastigheid!*” The English proverb is: “*Haste makes waste!*” God says that “He that believes shall NOT be in a



**Collisions
Can
Cripple!**



hurry” (Isaiah 28:16). *Jesus Christ’s life was unhurried, though un-resting.*

- ◆ **Quickly discern** and recognize when potential conflict between others and me may occur, and then take the necessary steps (through God) *in good time* to **help PREVENT any conflict or clash.**

This is very important. Dr. Thomas Hale, who was a medical missionary to Nepal for many years, said that **interpersonal CONFLICT** “is the number-one cause of missionaries leaving the field earlier than planned. It is also the number-one cause of unfruitfulness in missionary teams. That is because **interpersonal CONFLICT** leads to disunity, and disunity is Satan’s most effective means of robbing us of our fruit...”

Dr Hale says further that the sins that are leading to interpersonal conflict are: (i) the refusal to confess wrong, (ii) the refusal to forgive, (iii) self-assertiveness (which is a move “to get my own way”), (iv) irritability, (v) jealousy, (vi) the anger-resentment-bitterness “complex of sins,” and (vii) the criticism-slander-judgment complex of sins (which may masquerade as so-called “discernment” or “Christian concern”). A prominent aggravating factor to the development of interpersonal conflict is “*faulty or distorted perceptions.*”

Since **collisions can cripple a ship and a soul**, we need to take great care to avoid collisions and to not cause it at any stage! Collisions cloud our testimonies and cast a shadow on our Lord. For His Name’s sake we want to sail safely and to His glory.

14. MUTINY!

Mutiny is a modern-day phenomenon. Many of us might have read about mutinies on board sailing ships in years gone by. Most of us know about modern-day mutinies—when union-members rise up against people in authority, “go slow,” “toy-toy,” strike, or try to take over “management” in hospitals or factories, etc. With the emerging of workers-unions across the world, especially where God is rejected, rebellion against delegated authority has sadly become part of the spirit of the age.

Modern mutiny is not restricted to the union movements, it is also prevalent amongst teenagers. It shows in their attitude and behaviour against their parents and people in authority. It shows in the stand that they take against the norms and ways of their parents. It shows in the statement that they make when they choose to dress differently from their parents, or comb or dress their hair differently from those in authority over them. It shows in the gelling and spiking of their hair, in the painting (and tattooing) of their bodies, the piercing of their ears, eyebrows, noses, tongues, etc. It shows in the wearing of pants by the girls and earrings by the boys. It shows in the effeminization of the boys and the rise of seductive feminism among the girls. It shows in the rock music they listen to – including the so-called “Christian rock”.

By the way – if cigarettes are dangerous and bad (...and they ARE), and a brand is marketed as “Christian Cigarettes,” does the name make it good? Of course NOT! Cigarettes are still cigarettes..., if they are “Christian” or not. In the same way – rock music is rock music, if it’s “Christian” or not ..., and rock music was NOT born in heaven!

Modern mutiny is, furthermore, not restricted to most unions and most teenagers, no, it can rise in the heart of anyone and everyone of us—*against God!* This is a worse form of mutiny.

Mutiny, according to the Oxford dictionary, is “the act of refusing to obey the orders of somebody in authority.” When mutiny is directed *against God* – that is *the worst* form of mutiny!! Disobedience to God is **moral mutiny!**

Mutiny in my heart against God (or against God’s will) is **madness!** But it may present itself as caring, loving, sophisticated, humane, compassionate “Christianity.” For instance, if God says: “Cut it off!”; “Cut off that relationship that is not of Me!” and I say: “Lord, it’ll hurt that person too much, they will think You are unloving...” – that is mutiny! If God says: “Stop that music,” and I say: “But, Lord, what’s wrong with it, everybody’s listening to it...” – that’s mutiny! If God says: “Be NOT conformed to the pattern (the fashion) of this world!,” and I say: “But, Lord, I’ll be like an odd-ball...” – that’s mutiny! If God says to me: “Stop watching TV! Stop using Facebook and MXit!” and I say: “But, Lord, I’ll be uninformed, a ‘wall-flower’, a weird ‘foreigner’ in this world...” –

that's mutiny! If God says: "Go and make disciples of all the nations!" and I say: "But, Lord, I was thinking of getting a job, or going to 'varsity, or starting a family..." – that's mutiny! Of course, God may lead you to get a job, go to university, or start a family, ...that's another matter. Then, NOT to do it will be **MUTINY!** Whatever we do, it should be His will and "for Him" only.

Jonah did not agree with this at one stage of his life. As a result, he became mutinous, refused to obey God's command to "go and make disciples," and ended up in a great storm – in which he nearly died.



Mutineers **disobey** authority

Mutineers **reject** authority

Mutineers change their **allegiance**... They take down the one **flag** and hoist the other... They change their **loyalty**...
They change their "**colours**"...



John Weston says: "Is God indifferent to all that is happening? By no means. God is working for the eternal blessing and salvation of all who will turn to Him in repentance and faith. The world is doomed, but He is

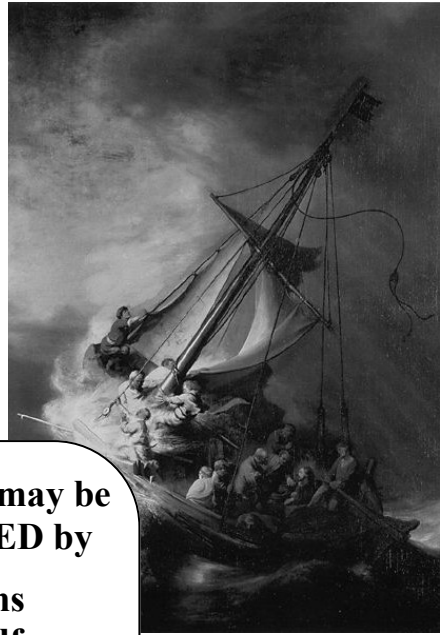
taking out of the world a people for Himself, i.e. all who respond to the call of the Gospel. **The world is like a ship whose crew has mutinied and murdered the Captain (the owner's son) and thrown his body overboard. Now the question arises as to who can guide the ship. Attempts are made by one and another, but all ends in failure and disaster, for the ship strikes a rock and is heading for destruction. The owner hears what has happened and orders a life-boat to be sent immediately to save the crew. "But they have murdered your son," the lifeboat men exclaim. "I will pardon their awful crime," replied the owner, "and save every man who will jump into the lifeboat. The ship is doomed and lost, but I will save out of it all who will accept saving."** This is wonderful! God's amazing grace! That mutineers may become missionary mariners for Jesus again!!

It is true: "A battleship cannot go into action with a mutiny raging on board," ...neither can a fishing boat!!! May we repent and submit ourselves to God, our Captain and Pilot again. May He help us to be His humble, happy, holy missionary mariners in this wicked world. May we be obedient, loyal and faithful. May we always be His stable, submissive seafarers!

The next peril we need to look at is that of storms at sea...



Cal 20 in large waves



**Storms may be
CAUSED by**

**Sins
Self
Spirits
Society
Science
Spirit of God**



15. STORMS...!

Let's start this very important topic with what we read in God's Word, which is the **Mariner's Map**, the **Christian's Compass**.

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. **A furious squall came up**, and the waves broke over the boat (**a furious storm of wind [of hurricane proportions] arose**), and the waves kept beating into the boat, so that it was already becoming filled (Ampl), so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" (**Mark 4:35-41**;NIV)

Here we see the disciples of the Lord Jesus and the Lord Himself, in a great STORM! Storms are part of life! Storms are part of our voyage to heaven! Storms are part of God's school of discipleship, His school of seamanship... Paul encountered many storms, as did Jonah, the disciples, Noah, Daniel, Jeremiah, ...and so do you and I! Some storms are CAUSED by

- ☛ **SIN** (as when Jonah disobeyed God); others are caused by
- ☛ **SPIRITS**, demons (as in the storm where Jesus' rebuke brought calm, as well as in Job's trials); others are caused by
- ☛ **SELF** (as when King Saul gave place to jealousy against David); others are caused by
- ☛ **SOCIETY** (as when the Pharisees and Scribes cooked up a storm against the Lord Jesus); and still others are caused by the
- ☛ **SPIRIT OF GOD** (as in the case of Jonah's disobedience)...
- ☛ **SCIENCE** (as referring to natural causes)...

Apart from the dangers of rocks and reefs, storms are probably the most serious danger that can befall a seaman. **Storms have sunk many ships!** Through STORMS ships have sunk on the open sea, near the shore, near

the harbour, and even **in** the harbour! While it is true that storms can sink a ship, it is also true that storms can save a soul (through God using it)!

If you have never been in a storm at sea, try to imagine yourself being in one. Think of Ernest Shackleton and his five friends in a small boat of only 22 feet long. In a raging storm on the open sea. The wind is roaring at more than 50 knots, ...waves the height of a three-story building roll at you, ...every 90 seconds, hour after hour, day after day and night, for as long as the storm lasts! How do you keep the water out of the little boat? How do you prevent yourself from being swept overboard? How do you stay away from the rocks? How do you stay afloat? How do you stay alive?!

Those who have sailed to Gough Island in the South Atlantic Ocean tell about the “roaring forties” that they have to sail through. This means, encountering waves of forty feet high! Even the “Cape of Good Hope” has its fierce storms, which have caused MANY ships to go shipwreck, giving it its apt second name - the “Cape of Storms”! Also, if you want to sail around Cape Horn (at the tip of South America), or to the Antarctic, you come across the “Raging Fifties” and the “Screaming Sixties” ...!!

Dr Luke recorded the following events about **a major storm** in the book of Acts in the Bible:

8We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. 9Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Fast. So **Paul warned them**, 10"Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also." 11But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, **followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship**. 12Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, **the majority decided** that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.

The Storm

13When a gentle south wind began to blow, **they thought** they had

obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. 14Before very long, **a wind of hurricane force**, called the "northeaster," swept down from the island. 15The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. 16As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure. 17When the men had hoisted it aboard, they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. 18We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day **they began to throw the cargo overboard**. 19On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. 20When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and **the storm continued raging**, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. 21After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. 22But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. 23Last night an angel of the **God whose I am and whom I serve** stood beside me 24and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' 25So keep up your courage, men, for **I have faith in God** that it will happen just as he told me. 26Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

The Shipwreck

27On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. 28They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. 29Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. 30In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. 31Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." 32So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat

and let it fall away. 33Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything. 34Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." 35After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. 36They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. 37Altogether there were 276 of us on board. 38When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea. 39When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. 40Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. 41But **the ship struck a sandbar** and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and **the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf**. 42The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. 43But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. 44The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way **everyone reached land in safety**. (Acts 27:8-44; New International Version)

It seems clear to me that they ended up in this serious storm, because

- they did NOT listen when they were warned NOT to set out to sea,
- they did NOT listen when God spoke to them through a man (Paul),
- they followed what “the majority decided” (Acts 27:12), and
- they “followed the advice of the pilot, and the owner of the ship” (Acts 27:11), and not the advice of God...

In **Psalm 107:23-31** God gives us another vivid account of **seamen in a storm**. We read in *The Message* translation:

23-32 **Some of you set sail in big ships;**
you put to sea to do business in faraway ports.
Out at sea you saw God in action,
saw his breathtaking ways with the ocean:



“God sends nothing but what can be borne”



**With a word he called up the wind—
 an ocean storm, towering waves!
You shot high in the sky, then the bottom dropped out;
 your hearts were stuck in your throats.
You were spun like a top, you reeled like a drunk,
 you didn't know which end was up.
Then you called out to God in your desperate condition;
 he got you out in the nick of time.
He quieted the wind down to a whisper,
 put a muzzle on all the big waves.
And you were so glad when the storm died down,
 and he led you safely back to harbor.
So thank God for his marvelous love,
 for his miracle mercy to the children he loves.
Lift high your praises when the people assemble,
 shout Hallelujah when the elders meet!**

In the *New International version* it reads as follows:

- 23 Others went out on the sea in ships;
 they were merchants on the mighty waters.**
- 24 They saw the works of the LORD,
 his wonderful deeds in the deep.**
- 25 For he spoke and stirred up a tempest
 that lifted high the waves.**
- 26 They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths;
 in their peril their courage melted away.**
- 27 They reeled and staggered like drunken men;
 they were at their wits' end.**
- 28 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
 and he brought them out of their distress.**
- 29 He stilled the storm to a whisper;
 the waves of the sea were hushed.**
- 30 They were glad when it grew calm,
 and he guided them to their desired haven.**
- 31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
 and his wonderful deeds for men.**

In 1675, John Flavel, a heart-pastor who also ministered to many seamen,

published “*The Seamen’s Companion*,” which contained 6 sermons for seamen. The sermon dealing with the above-mentioned verses is called: “*The Seaman in a Storm*”! It is a wonderful sermon to read. It focuses on God’s providence for seamen. We’ll look at some extracts from that sermon. He says:

“This psalm (Ps 107) contains an excellent account of the mysterious and admirable effects of ...divine providence ...In these verses we have a description, both (1) of the persons, (2) of the danger, (3) of the deliverance, by the wonderful work of divine providence for them.”

Flavel says: “... the Psalmist here gives us a very rhetorical and elegant description of their condition in the stormy sea; and shows us how deplorable their state and condition is at such a time. Where we are to **note the CAUSES and EFFECTS of these tempests.**”

According to him, “the principal CAUSE (is) the will and pleasure of God. He commandeth and raiseth the stormy winds. This is God’s prerogative: none can raise winds but himself, and if devils or witches do it at any time, yet it is still by His permission; as you see in Job 1:12,19. The Lord is said to hold wind in his fists, Prov. 30:4, as a man holds a wild, fierce beast on a chain, or by a collar: and when they blow, ‘He brings them out of his treasures,’ Ps. 135:7. There is indeed a natural cause of winds ... But though this be the natural cause of the winds, yet this does not restrain the absolute sovereignty of God over them. It is he ‘that commands and raiseth them,’ as the text speaks ...Now when it pleaseth the Lord to show his power upon the great deeps, he sends forth these winds out of his treasure. This is the principal cause.

Then next, we have the instrumental, subordinate and next cause of the storm; and that is, the ‘winds lifting up the waves of the ocean! There is naturally in the sea a continual agitation and rolling of its waters hither and thither; it ‘cannot rest,’ as the prophet speaks of it; not when a violent wind blows upon it, the ocean is incensed and enraged; and the winds roll moving *MOUNTAINS OF WATER* before them. Then, like wild beasts, the waves seem to break loose and rage; not only to be ...as Virgil calls them, ‘barking waves,’ but ...‘raging waves,’ as Jude speaks, verse 13. Yea, ‘roaring waves,’ as our Saviour stills them, Luke 21:25...”

Based on Psalm 107, Flavel further describes “**the terrible EFFECTS of the tempests**, and that both upon their bodies and their minds...”

“(1) External upon their bodies; it tosses them up and down in a dreadful manner, which the Psalmist elegantly expresses in the text, ‘They mount up to heaven, they go down to the depths,’ a lofty hyperbolical expression ...They seem to mix with the very clouds, and then open deep graves for them in the bottom sands. Yea, it moves them not only perpendicularly, lifting them up, and casting them down, but obliquely and circularly also. ‘They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,’ or, as some translate, ...they run round: they are, indeed, moved according to the unstable motion of the waves, on whose proud backs they are mounted. This is the external effect of the storm upon their bodies.”

“(2) The internal effect of it upon their minds, which is far more terrible. For it is said here, ‘Their soul is melted because of trouble, and they are at their wits’ end!’ Both which expressions do impart a greater commotion and storm in the passions of the mind, than that is in the waves of the sea. The stoutest spirit quails and melts when it comes to this...”

“...Next, we have **their DELIVERANCE** by the wonderful hand of Divine Providence, in verse 27. ‘Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he brings them out of their distress.’ Their usual cry in such extraordinary exigencies, is, *mercy! mercy!* Now they can pray that could not pray before. Extremity drives them to their knees, not only with cries, but vows to the Lord, and he delivers them out of their distresses: some delivered one way, and some another, but all in a stupendous way, which cannot but astonish them that are delivered, and make them acknowledge the finger of God was in it.

From all this we observe,

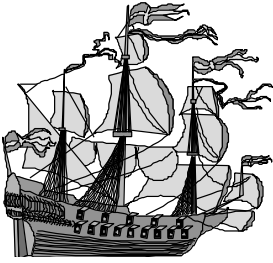
Doctrine: **That the preservations and deliverances of seamen in the dreadful storms and tempests at sea, is the wonderful work of Divine Providence.**

‘The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein,’ Psalm 111:2. and, among his providential works, none greater and more admirable than those which seamen daily behold in their great and marvelous protections upon the sea.

*“The preservation and deliverance of seamen
in the dreadful storms at sea (and in life)”*



...is the wonderful work of Divine Providence!”



Now the glory of Divine Providence towards seamen shines and displays itself in three things especially, *first*, In making the ocean navigable for them at any time. *Secondly*, in preserving them from shipwrecks in the fury and stress of weather. *Thirdly*, In finding out ways, and strangely providing means of safety, when their ships are lost, and broken upon the sea....”

“...But to come home to the case before us, that men should be preserved at sea from immediate ruin in the dreadful tempests that befall them there; this is a mysterious and admirable work of God: that a poor ship should not be swallowed up by the furious ocean, when mountains of water come rolling towards it with an horrid noise, and give it such dreadful stripes: when seas roll over it, and so cover it with the waves, that for a time they know not whether they sink or swim; to see it emerge out of such fatal dangers, keep up its head, and mount upon the backs of those lofty seas that threaten immediately to overwhelm it: O how great is the power and care of providence in such a case! Especially if you consider these following particulars, among many others, which threaten ruin on every side: and should but one of these many contingencies befall them, in the eye of reason they are lost men.

1. Of how many parts, compared together, doth a ship consist. These parts indeed are fastened together with bolts of iron; but being in so many planks, what a wonder it is that none springs, that no bolt gives way, or seams open, whilst every part works with such violence, and so great a stress of weather lies upon it. Should such a thing fall out, (as it is a wonder it should not), how soon would the ship swim within as well as without?

2. How often are they pit from their course by stress of weather, and not know where they are; not being able, for many days, to take any observation? So that they must go wither winds and waves will drive them: for there is no dropping anchors in the main, nor resisting the course of the seas, to which they can make no more resistance than a child to a giant. And how is it that they are not dashed upon the rocks, or founded in the sands, seeing the winds shape their course and not art? **But there is a God who steers your course for you when you cannot.**

3. How often are you even fallen upon rocks and shores before you even see them, and are almost past hope before you begin to fear? Sometimes almost imbayed, and as much as ever you can do to weather a rock or head-land, which you discerned not until it was almost too late.

I remember Dr. Johnson, in that ingenious and wonderful narrative of his voyage to the Sound, when he had survived two shipwrecks, and was embarked in the third ship, he said, ‘We had not been above two or three hours at sea, but there was a sad distraction among us in the ship, and the mariners crying, *mercy! mercy!* For we had almost fallen foul on a rock, which lay so cunningly in the water, that we did not espy it until we were upon it; but by the goodness of God, we sailed close by it, and so escaped it: the least touch of it had been our ruin.’

4. How often do you ride at anchor in furious weather, near rocks and shores? Your lives, under God, every moment depending upon a cable and anchor: if the one break, or the other come home, you are lost men. And how wonderful is it they do not! What is a cable in a storm, but as the new cords with which the Philistines bound Samson, and how easily would they be snapped asunder like a thread of tow, were it not for the care of providence over you? These, and an hundred other accidents which hourly threaten you, might, and would send you down to the bottom, but that the Lord permits it not so to be.

5. And yet more powerful than all this; how often doth God suffer ships to founder and sink under you, and to be dashed to pieces against the rocks, and yet preserve you when ordinary means of preservation are cut off and gone? Who like these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep?

For, first, sometimes a small boat shall save them, when a stout ship could not: thus many of them have been wonderfully preserved; and thus the aforementioned author relates the manner of this wonderful preservation. ‘Our ship had sprung a leak, or rather a plank, and was ready to sink: O how the face of every man was changed at this affrightment! One was at prayers, another wringing his hands, a third shedding tears, when we had no need of more salt water. After this fit they fell to work, and (as it is usual in such extremes) we were busy in doing nothing, and did we knew not what. The master’s mate, whom we sent down to search out the leak,

quickly returned to us with a sad countenance, trembling hands, gnashing of teeth, a quivering tongue, and words half spoken, signifying unto us, that the wound was incurable. Here was no room for counsel, neither had we time to ask one another what was best to be done; but we presently cast out our long boat, and shot off eight or ten guns, which seemed to be so many tolls of a passing-bell before our death. I leaped into the boat, but leaped short, one leg in the boat. Now we were left in the North seas, which seldom wear a smooth brow; but at this time, contending with the wind, swelled into prodigious mountains. It blew half a storm, and we were now in a small vessel: what credit could we give to our safety in a small and open shallop, when so stately a castle of wood, which we but now lost, could not defend itself against the insolency of the waves? We were many leagues from any shore, having no compass to guide us, nor provisions to sustain us, and the night grew black upon us – Nothing but a miracle could preserve us, being out of the reach of human help – we fell to prayer, and our extremity pleaded for us: For this moment of death, when we were without the least expectation of deliverance, he sent a ship to us, which we must needs confess to be the finger of God,’ and so on. And thus has been the wonderful door opened in extremity to multitudes more for their escape: but, oh! How astonishing are these ways of the Lord? Well may we say, “His ways are in the sea, and his paths in the great deep, and his footsteps are not known,” Psalm 77:19.

Secondly, Sometimes they shall be cast upon a rock in the sea, where they shall be preserved until some other way of deliverance come; yea, preserved strangely, God blessing a small matter of provision which they saved to sustain them; though they said of it, as the widow of Zarephath to the prophet, 1 Kings 17:12, “I have but an handful of meal, and a little oil, and am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” Or if they could save nothing, yet a few muscles or birds eggs, with God’s blessing, have sustained them until the time of mercy come. This hath been the case of many ...

Thirdly, Sometimes they have been wafted to the shore safely upon the wreck, or by making a raft of the broken pieces of the ship, and torn sails, and ropes; and upon this, (God knows, a poor security against the boisterous waves) have they ventured themselves: a sinking man (as we say) will catch at a bulrush. Paul, and those that suffered shipwreck with him, were thus saved; “The centurion commanded, that they which could swim,

should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land; and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship; and so came to pass that they escaped all safe to land,” Acts 27:43,44.

Oh, the miraculous works of the Lord! To save by such contemptible and improbable means! Who can but with great joy see and acknowledge the finger of God to be here? “Lo, these are parts of his way: but how little a portion is heard of him?” Job 26:14.

1. **Use of reproof.** If your preservation in storms at sea be the wonderful works of Divine Providence, then divers of you deserve to be sharply reproofed from this truth. And I beseech you suffer the word of reproof meekly and penitently. I shall speak nothing of reproach to you; no, it is not to reproach, but to reform you: and if you hate reproof, and mock at counsel, God may shortly speak in such thundering language to your consciences, as will be terrible for you to bear...

...You that read these lines, seriously ask your own consciences these following questions:

(1) Have you not soon forgotten the wonders and the works of the Lord which your eyes have seen? It may be for the present, you have been sensibly affected with your danger, and the mercy of God in your deliverance, but hath it remained upon your hearts? I doubt these mercies have been written in the dust, which should have been engraven, as in the rock, forever. Thus it was with Israel, a people that saw as many wonders wrought for them by the immediate finger of God, as ever did any people in the world: and yet it is said of them, even after the Red-Sea deliverance, in which “God divided the sea for them, when the waves thereof roared,” Is. 51:15, and with which for the present their hearts were greatly affected; for it is said, Psalm 116:12, “That they believed his word, and sang his praises;” but in the next verse you read, that a little time easily wiped out the sense of this mercy; for it is said, verse 13, “They soon forgot his works, and waited not for his counsels.” I doubt this was not the sin of Israel only, but is the case of many of you at this day. Well, God did not forget you in the time of extremity, though you so quickly forget him ...

(2) Have you not walked very unanswerably to your deliverances, yea,

and to the solemn engagements you made to God in the day of your distress? I fear some of you have walked after God hath rescued you by a wonderful immediate hand from the jaws of death, as if you had been delivered to do all these abominations. As it is Jer. 7:10. It may be the last week or month you were reeling to and fro upon the stormy sea, and staggering like drunken men; and this, reeling and staggering along the streets really drunken.. O horrid abomination! Do you thus requite the Lord, who pitied you in your distress, and being full of compassion, saved you when you cried to him? Is this the fruit of your wonderful salvation?...

(3) But though men see signs and wonders they will not believe; yea, though they themselves become wonders to the world by their miraculous deliverances, yet so brutish and stupid are they, that they will not see the hand that saves them. Take heed what you do: you set yourselves in the direct way of destruction by this, and highly provoke the Lord to abandon and cast you out of the care of his providence: and if he once do so, you are lost men.

(4) And yet more vile (if more vileness can be in sin) than all this: is there not a generation of wretched men among you, that fall a swearing, cursing, and blaspheming God, even when he is uttering his terrible voice in the tempest, and every moment threatening to entomb them in the deep? When you should be on your knees bewailing your sins, and pleading with God for mercy, (as I doubt not but some of you do) to be yet more and more provoking him, daring him to his face; and yet more incensing his indignation, which is already kindled against you; who, that hears this can choose but admire the riches of God's patience and forbearance towards such men?...

2. Use of exhortation. This point is yet farther improvable fore you by way of exhortation, serving to press you to those proper duties which God calls you to by his terrible providential voice in the storms, and by your wonderful deliverances.

1. And the first lesson you are to learn from hence is, To adore the power of God. O what a manifestation of Divine power is here! You are the men who see more than others the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. It is one of God's ends in showing you these wonders, "To make his mighty power known," Psalm 106:8. O what a terrible voice

doth God utter upon the seas when the heavens are black above you, the furious winds and dreadful thunders rattling about you, the seas and waves roaring beneath you! Is not his voice of the Lord full of majesty? Doth it not awe your hearts, and make them tremble? In three things his infinite power is discovered to you.



First – In raising these terrible tempests, and that from so small and weak a beginning as a thin vapour from the earth is; this is the wonderful work of God, Psalm 135:7, “He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain, he bringeth wind out of his treasures.”

Secondly – In limiting and bounding their force and power; what prodigious effects else would follow: The wind is a fierce and boisterous creature, and would (if God did not by his providence restrain it) destroy and overturn all, both by sea and land; or if Satan, who is styled *the prince, the power of the air*, were left at liberty to execute his malice by such an instrument, not a ship should cross the seas, nor a house be safe at land; as is evident enough by the furious haste he made to overturn the house with an horrible tempest upon Job’s children, as soon as he received a permission from heaven to do it.

Thirdly – No less visible is the power of god in calming and appeasing the stormy winds, and remanding them into his treasures. Psalm 107:29, “He maketh the storm a calm.” Yea, he doth so in the very nick of time, when all is concluded lost. Thus you read in Mark 4:39, “When the waves beat into the ship,” so that it was now full, and the disciples cried unto the Lord, “Master, carest thou not that we perish?” He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still; and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” Just as one would hush a child, *Peace, be still*. O the sovereign power of God! How should it be revered and adored by all that behold it, in these marvelous effects of it?

2. The second lesson you are taught by this doctrine is, *To admire the mercy of God*. Mercy is no less discovered than power; yea, the power of God is put forth to give his mercy a fair occasion to shine forth in your deliverance. God sometimes permits your dangers to grow to an extremity, and delays your deliverances to the last moment, till all hopes of safety are gone, upon the like reason that Lazarus’s resurrection was deferred, that the work of God in your preservation may commend itself to you under the greatest advantage.

O that you would view these mercies in all their endearing circumstances! I can only hint your duty generally in this case; you may enlarge upon it, if you have hearts fit for such a blessed work. And mark particularly the multitudes of mercies that are complicated and involved in one deliverance. Observe the season when, the manner how, the means by which your salvation was wrought. It is a thousand pities that so much of God's glory and your comfort, as any one, even the smallest circumstance may contain, should ever be lost.

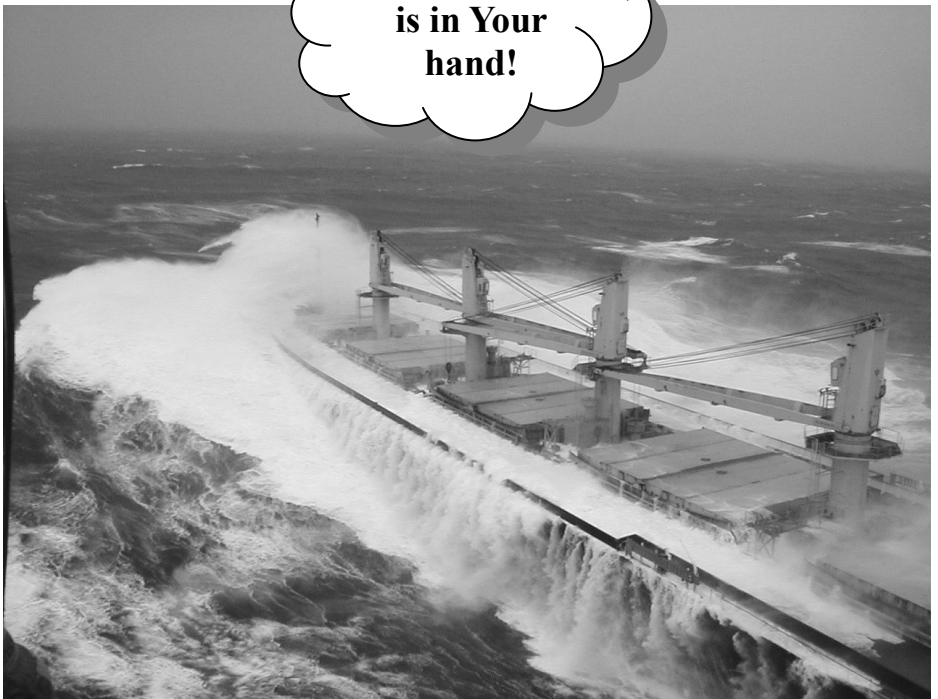
3. Lastly, and above all – *See that ye answer God's ends in your deliverance.* If those be lost, God may say concerning you, as David did of Nabal, 1 Sam. 25:21, "Surely, in vain hath I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness; so that nothing was missed of all that pertained to him; and he hath requited me evil for good." So here, in vain have I preserved his life, liberty, and estate so often by an outstretched arm of power and mercy to him, seeing he requites me evil for good.

O let me interest you to be careful to comply with the designs and ends of God in these your wonderful preservations! If you enquire what God's ends or designs in your deliverance are, I answer,

First, It is to lead you to repentance. "The goodness of God leadeth the to repentance," Rom. 2:4. Dost thou not know the voice of mercy? Why, it bespeaks thy return to God. It may be thou hast spent all thy life, to this day, in the service of sin: Thou never redeemest one of all thy precious hours to consider thine own estate, to bewail thy sin and misery, to seek after an interest in Christ. Why, now here is a providence fallen in that doth, as it were, take thee by the hand, and lead thee to this great and necessary work. *The end of God in raising this storm was to deliver thee from the more dreadful tempest of his wrath, which, without repentance, must shortly overtake thy soul in the blackness of darkness forever.* Now God hath awakened thy conscience by this fright, made it charge home thy sins upon thee, terrified thee with dismal apprehensions of death and hell. O what a fair opportunity and advantage hath he now put into thy hand for repentance, reformation, and gaining an interest in Jesus Christ! If this season be lost, conscience suffered again to fall into any dead sleep, and thy heart be again hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, thou mayest never have such an opportunity for salvation opened to thee any more.



**Lord, my life
is in Your
hand!**



Secondly – If this end be answered, then a farther design God hath in thy deliverance, is **to engage and encourage thy soul to a dependence upon God in future straits and dangers.** This is food for mercy, and goodness of God, to enable you to rest yourselves upon him when new exigencies befall you. If God exercise you with such extremities another time, you may say with the apostle, 2 Cor. 1:10, “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust, he will yet deliver us.”

If your first deliverance were a deliverance without a promise, when you were without Christ, what encouragement have you to depend upon him, when his end is answered in your repentance and conversion; and, being in Christ, are entitled to all the promises.

Thirdly – God’s end in your marvelous preservations and deliverances is **to furnish you for, and to engage you for a life of praise.** O how should the high praises of God be ever in your mouths! You have seen his works and wonders in the deeps; and this is it which the Psalmist presses upon you as a becoming return for your mercies, in the words following my text; “Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”

O with what warm and enlarged affections should you express your thankfulness to the God of your salvation, and say as David, “What am I, O Lord God, and what is my father’s house, that thou shouldst do such great things for me?” Was such a life as mine worth the working of so many wonders to save it? O Lord, thou knowest it has been a life spent in vanity. Thy glory hath not been precious in my eyes, but my life hath been precious in thine eyes. Many more useful, and less sinful than myself have perished, and I am saved. O Lord, show me the designs and gracious ends of these deliverances. Surely there is some great thing to be done by me, or else so great a salvation had not been wrought for me. The Lord saw in what a sad case my poor soul was, to be summoned immediately before his judgment seat: that if I had gone down under all my guilt, I had sunk to the bottom of hell: But thou in love to my soul, hast delivered it from the pit of corruption, that I might yet enjoy a season for salvation, and be once more entrusted with the precious talents of time and means. O that I may not reject or abuse the grace of God in this new instrument, as I have too often done in the former! Let me not live as one

delivered to commit all these abominations!

And now after all that is come upon me for my evils, seeing thou, my God, hast punished me so much less than my iniquities deserve; and hast given me such a deliverance as this, should I again dare to break thy commandments? Ezra 9:13,14 – “O let this new mercy produce a new heart and life!”

The main lessons we can learn from Pastor Flavel’s wonderful sermon on “The Seaman in a Storm” is that:

- ✠ **God is in control of everything, including every storm that may come my way!**
- ✠ **In His great love and power and mercy, when we cry to Him in our distress, He will hear us and deliver us!**
- ✠ **He wants us to repent, depend upon Him in all situations (also in serious storms!), and live a life of praise – to His glory!**

We can indeed say with David, who had gone through MANY storms in life: “Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them” (Psalm 89:9).

S. Franklin Logsdon wrote that an elderly man he knew “was rushed to the hospital for an emergency operation. The son, arriving just as the father was being wheeled to the operating room, inquired, ‘How are you, Dad?’ The father replied with quiet confidence, ‘**Even though the storm is raging without, son, there is always calmness when the Prince of Peace is in the vessel.**’ This is what we, too, must learn. ‘Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,’ Jesus said on one occasion (John 14:27).”

Dorothy Langlord put it in these words:

Could fear remain when His voice spoke?
Could waves His will defy?
Twelve men regained their peace,
When once He said, “‘Tis I.”



The stormy winds blow hard today,

Our boat is tossed about;
But Jesus comes, and still He bids
His trustful child step out.

Another of God's seafarers puts storms in a different perspective in the following poem:

The winds blow hard? What then?
He holds them in the hollow of His hand;
The furious blasts will sink when His command
Bids them be calm again.

The night is dark? What then?
To Him the darkness is as bright as day.
At His command the shades will flee away,
And all be light again.

The water is deep? What then?
For Israel's host the waters upright stood.
And He whose power controlled that raging flood
Still succors helpless men.

David Wilkerson is a man with a passion for Jesus. He has also gone through many storms in life. He wrote about "**Jesus and Storms**" in his book: "Have You Felt Like Giving Up Lately?" Referring to Matthew 14, he explains how, when we are in storms, we often see "ghosts," just like the disciples thought they did. We see the "ghosts" of what we imagine is our hypocrisy or our lying or our compromise or our covetousness or our broken promises, ...and tend to think that *they* must have caused the storm. In the mean time, it may just be that God wanted to teach us the important lesson of trusting Him, always. This is a simple, but wonderful lesson: Jesus wants me to TRUST HIM as my Lord, in every storm of life! O, may He help me! May He help us!

Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still my soul: the waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

Katharina Von Schlegel

While this is wonderfully true, it is also true that I cannot have peace in a storm if I do not have peace with God, if I have un-confessed, un-repented of sins in my heart and mind and life...

The Way to Peace is through the Cross of Christ. The Way to escape the storm in my conscience, the storm of God's coming wrath on sin, is to leave my sins behind and cling to Christ.

There are MORE LESSONS for us to learn about the peril of storms in our journey to heaven. In "*A New Compass for Seamen*," Pastor John Flavel (1628-1691) says that waves may threaten to destroy us in a storm, especially if there's sin in our lives:

*"Like hungry lions, waves for sinners gape;
Leave then your sins behind, if you'll escape."*

"OBSERVATION: The waves of the sea are sometimes raised by God's commission, to be executioners of His threatening purposes upon sinners. When Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord to Tarshish, the text saith, "The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest, so that the ship was like to be broken," Jonah 1:4. These were God's bailiffs to arrests the run-away prophet. And psalms 148:8 says the stormy winds are said to fulfill His Word; not only His word of command, in rising when God bids them, but His word of threatening also. And hence it is called a destroying wind, Jer. 51:1, and a stormy wind in God's fury, Ezek. 13:13

APPLICATION: If these be the executioners of God's threatenings, how sad then is their condition that put forth to sea under the guilt of all their sins? Or, if God should commissionate the winds to go after and arrest thee for all thou owest Him, where art thou then? How dare you put forth under the power of a divine threat, before all be cleared betrixt God and thee? Sins in Scripture are called debts, Matt.6:12. They are debts to God; not that we owe them to Him, or ought to sin, but metonymically, because they render the sinner obnoxious to God's judgments, even as pecuniary debts oblige him that hath not wherewith to pay, to suffer punishment. All sinners must undergo the curse, either in their own person, according to the express letter of the law, Gen. 2:17, Gal. 3:10, or their

surety, according to the tacit intent of the law, manifested to be the mind of the law-giver, Gen. 3:13,14.

Now he that by faith hath interest in this surety, hath his discharge, ...sealed in the blood of Christ; all process at law, or from the law, is stopped, Rom. 8:1. But if thou be an impenitent, thy debt remains upon thy own score, "And be sure thy sin will find thee out, wheresoever thou goest," Num. 32:23, i.e. God's revenging hand for sin will be upon thee. Thou mayest lose the sight and memory of thy sins, but they lose not sight of thee; they follow after, as the hound doth upon the fleeting game upon the scent, until they have fetched thee up. And then consider, "How fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. 10:31. How soon may a storm arrest thee before the bar of God?

REFLECTION: O my soul, what a case art thou in if this be so? Art not all thy sins yet upon thine own score? Hast thou not made light of Christ, and that precious blood of His, and hitherto persisted in thy rebellion against Him? And what can the issue of this be at last, but ruin? **There is abundant mercy indeed for returning sinners; but the Gospel speaks of none for persisting and impenitent sinners. And though many who are going on in their sins are overtaken by grace, yet there is no grace promised to such as go on in their sin. O! If God should arrest me by the next storm, and call me to an account for all that I owe Him, I must then lie in the prison of hell to all eternity; for I can never pay the debt;** nay, all the angels in heaven cannot satisfy for it. Being Christless, I am under all the curses in the Book of God; a child of Hagar. Lord pity and spare me a little longer! **O discover thy Christ unto me, and give me faith in His blood, and then Thou art fully satisfied at once, and I discharged forever.** O require not the debt at my hand, for then Thou wilt never be satisfied, nor I acquitted. What profit, Lord, is there in my blood! **O my soul, make haste to this Christ, thy Refuge City; thou knowest not how soon the avenger of blood may overtake thee.**

THE POEM

Thy sins are debts, God puts them to account;
Canst tell, poor wretch, to what thy debts amount?
Thou fill'st the treasure of thy sins each hour.
Into His vials God doth also pour

Proportionable wrath: Thou seest it not;
 But yet assure thyself, there's drop for drop.
 For every sand of patience running out,
 A drop runs in. Soul, look about!
 God's treasure's almost full, as well as thine:
 When both are full, O then the dreadful time
 Of reck'ning comes; thou shalt not gain a day
 Of patience more, but there haste away
 Heaven's pursevant, who comes upon the wing
 With his commission seal'd, to take and bring.
 Dost still reject Christ's tenders? Well, next storm
 May be the bailiff order'd to perform
 This dreadful office. **O then restless be,
 Till God in Christ be reconciled to thee.
 The sum is great, but if a Christ thou get,
 Fear not, a prince can pay a beggar's debt.
 Now if the storm should rise, thou need'st not fear;
 Thou art, but the delinquent is not there.
 A pardon'd soul to sea may boldly go:
 He fears not bailiffs, that doth nothing owe.**

John Flavel further teaches us the lesson that, in a storm, we learn to **throw overboard what is unnecessary and evil in our lives**. He says:

*To save the ship, rich lading's cast away,
 Thy soul is shipwreck'd if thy lusts do stay.*

OBSERVATION: In storms and distresses at sea, the richest commodities are cast overboard; they stand not upon it, when life and all is in jeopardy and hazard, Jonah 1:5. The mariners cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it. And Acts 28:18,19 they cast out the very tacklings of the ship. How highly soever men prize such commodities, yet reason tells them, it were better these should perish, than life. Satan himself could say, Job 1, "Skin for skin; and all that a man hath will he give for his life."

APPLICATION: And surely it is every way as highly reasonable, that men should mortify, cast out, and cut off their dearest lusts, rather than their immortal souls should sink and perish in the storm of

God's wrath. Life indeed is a precious treasure, and highly valued by men: You know what Solomon saith, Eccles. 9:4, "a living dog is better than a dead lion." And we find men willing to depart from their estates,

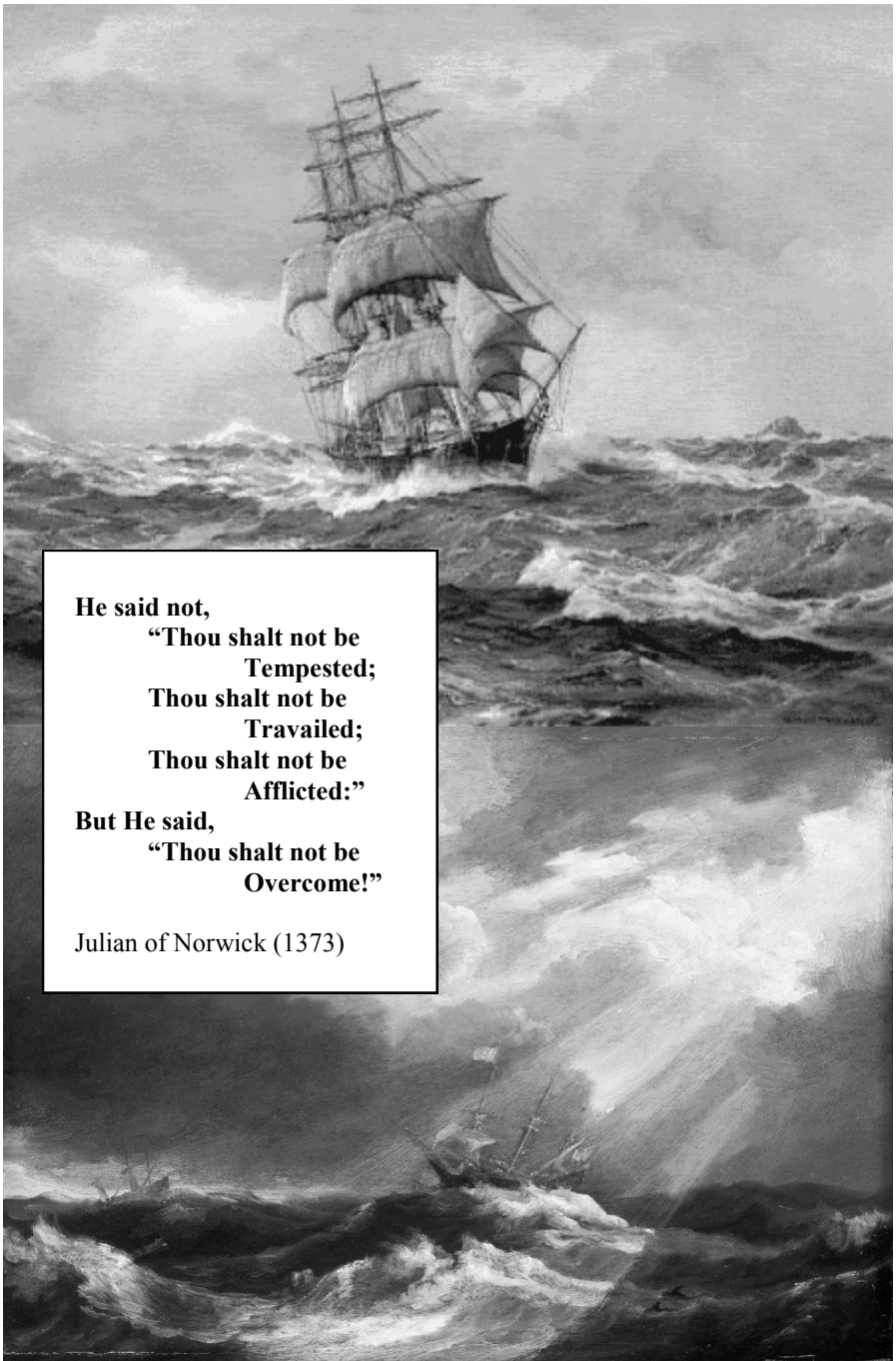
*Either
you must part
with your sins, or
with your souls*

limbs, or any outward comfort for the preservation of it. The woman in the Gospels spent all she had on the physicians for her health, a degree below life. Some men indeed do much over-value their lives, and part with Christ and peace of conscience for it; but he that thus saves it, shall lose it. Now if life be so much worth, what

then is the soul worth? Alas! Life is but "a vapor, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away," James 4:14.

Life indeed is more worth than all the world, but my soul is more worth than ten thousand lives. Nature teacheth you to value the first so high, and grace should teach you to value the second much higher, Matt. 19:20. Now here is the case: **Either you must part with your sins, or with your souls;** if these be not cast out, both must sink together. "If ye live after the flesh, ye must die," Rom. 8:13. God saith to you in this case, as to Ahab, when he pursued Benhadad, 1 Kings 20:42, "Because thou hast let go a man whom God hath appointed to destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life." Guilt will raise a storm of wrath, as Jonah did, if not cast out.

REFLECTION: And must sin or the soul perish? Must my life, yea, my eternal life go for it if I spare it? O then let me not be cruel to my own soul in sparing my sin; O my soul, this foolish pity and cruel indulgence will be thy ruin. If I spare it, God hath said, "He will not spare me," Deut. 26:20. **It is true the pains of mortification are sharp, but yet is easier than the pains of hell. To cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye is hard; but to have my soul cut off eternally from God is harder. Is it as easy (O my soul!) to burn for them in hell, as to mortify them on earth?** Surely, "it is profitable for me, that one member perish, rather than that all be cast into hell," Matt. 5:24. I see the merchant willing to part with rich wares if embarked with them in a storm. And those that have gangrened legs and arms, willing to stretch them out to be cut off to preserve life; and **shall I be willing to endure no difficulties for my soul;** Christ reckoned souls worth His blood: And is it not worth my self-denial? **Lord, let me not warm a snake in my bosom, that will at last sting me to the heart.**



**He said not,
“Thou shalt not be
 Tempested;
Thou shalt not be
 Travailed;
Thou shalt not be
 Afflicted:”**

**But He said,
“Thou shalt not be
 Overcome!”**

Julian of Norwick (1373)

THE POEM

Thy soul's the ship, its lading is its lusts,
God's judgments, stormy winds, and dangerous gusts;
Conscience the master; but the stubborn will
Goes *supra cargo*, and doth keep the bill:
Affections are the men. The winds do rise,
The storm increases: Conscience gives advice
To throw those lusts o'erboard, and so to ease
The vessel, which else cannot keep the seas.
The will opposes, and th' affections say,
The master's counsel they will not obey.
The case is dang'rous, that no man can doubt,
Who sees the storm within, and that without.
Lusts and affections cannot part; no, rather,
They are resolved to swim or sink together.
Conscience still strives, but they cannot abide
That it or reason should the case decide
Lust knows the reason, in like cases, still
Determines well: Then choose ye whom ye will.
Shall make the devil judge? This case has been
Before him, and he judg'd that skin for skin,
And all men have, they'll part with for their life.
Then how unreasonable is this strife?
They that their sins do with their persons ship,
Do for their souls prepare a dreadful whip.

In a further chapter in that magnificent book by John Flavel, "*A New Compass for Seamen*," he describes how the Lord Jesus Christ can still the storm in a person's soul. He says:

*Christ, with a word, can surging waves appease:
His voice a troubled soul can quickly ease.*

OBSERVATION: When the sea works, and is tempestuous, it is not in the power of any creature to appease it...

...But now Jesus Christ hath command of them (the waves) indeed. It is said of Him, Matt. 8:20, that He rebuked them. And Mark 4:38 - He quiets



**“Oh Lord, have mercy on us! Save us!
You are our only Hope!”**

them with a word, ***Peace be still***; as one would hush a child, and it obeyed Him.

APPLICATION: Conscience, when awakened by the terrors of the Lord, is like a raging tempestuous sea; so it works, so it roars; and it is not in the power of all creatures to hush or quiet it. Spiritual terrors, as well as spiritual consolations are not known till felt. O when the arrows of the Almighty are shot into the spirit, and the terrors of God set themselves in array against the soul; when the venom of those arrows drink up the spirits, and those armies of terror charge violently and successively upon it, as Job 6:4. What creature then is able to stand before them! Even God's own dear children have felt such terrors as have distracted them, Psalm 81:15. Conscience is the seat of guilt: it is like a burning glass, so it contracts the beams of the threatenings, twists them together, and reflects the soul, until it smoke, scorch, and flame. If the wrath of the king be like a roaring of a lion, then what is the Almighty's wrath, which is burning wrath, Job 19:11; Tearing wrath, Psalm 1:22; Surprising wrath, Job 20:23; and Abiding wrath, Job 3:36.

In this case no creature can relieve: all are physicians of no value; some under these terrors have thought hell more tolerable, and by a violent hand have thrust themselves out of the world into it to avoid these gnawings. **Yet Jesus Christ can quickly calm these mystical waves also, and hush them with a word; yea, He is the Physician, and no other.** It is the sprinkling of His blood, which, like a cooling fomentation, allays those heats within. That blood of sprinkling speaks peace, when all others have practiced upon the soul to no purpose, and the reason is, because a Person in whom God and man, justice and mercy, meet and kiss each other, Eph. 2:14. And hence fetches in peace to the soul, Rom. 5:1.

REFLECTION: Can none appease a troubled conscience but Christ? Then learn, O my soul, to understand, and daily more and more to savour that glorious name, even Jesus, that delivers not only from wrath to come, but that which is felt here also. O, if the foretaste of hell be so intolerable, if a few drops, let fall on the conscience in this life be so scalding and insufferable, what is it to have all the vials poured out to eternity, when there shall be nothing to divert, mitigate, or allay it?...

THE POEM

Among the dreadful works of God, I find
No metaphors to paint a troubled mind.
I think on this, now that, and yet will neither
Come fully up, though all be put together.
'Tis like the raging sea that casts up mire,
Or like Etna, breathing smoke and fire;
Or like a roused lion, fierce and fell;
Or like those furies that do howl in hell.

**O conscience! Who can stand before thy power,
Endure thy gripes and twinges but an hour?**

Stone, gout, strappado, racks, whatever is
Dreadful to sense, is but a toy to this.
No pleasures, riches, honors, friends can tell
How to give ease: In this 'tis like to hell.
Call for the pleasant timbrel, lute, and harp;
Alas! The music howls, the pain's too sharp
For these to charm, divert, or lull asleep:
These cannot reach it, no, the wound's too deep.

**Let all the promises before it stand,
And set a Barnabas at its right hand;
These in themselves no comfort can afford,
'Tis Christ, and none but Christ can speak the word.
And He no sooner speaks but all is still,
The storm is over, and the mind tranquil.
There goes a pow'r, with His majestic voice,
To hush the dreadful storm, and still its noise.
Who would but fear and love this glorious Lord,
That can rebuke such tempests with a word?**

What a wonderful Saviour! What a glorious God! What a mighty Deliverer! How faithful, and strong, and able, and present, and wise... He knows when to *start* the storm... He knows when to *still* the STORM and when to still the SEAMAN in the STORM! He knows how to rule the waves and how to ride the waves! There's no one like Him!

While storms at sea are a serious danger, John Flavel says that **the Pilot's skill is revealed during storms!** This is wonderfully true! He says:

***“Storms make discovery of the pilot’s skill:
God’s wisdom in affliction triumphs still.”***

OBSERVATION: In fair weather, when there is sea-room enough, then any common person can guide the ship; the pilot may then lie down and take his rest. **But in great storms and stress of weather, or when near the dangerous shore, then the most skilful pilot is put to it; then he shows the utmost of his art and skill,** and yet sometimes all is too little. They are (as the Scripture speaks) at their wit’s end, know not what to do more, but are forced to commit all to the mercy of God and the seas.

APPLICATION: **In the storms and tempests of affliction and trouble, there are the most evident and full discoveries of the wisdom and power of God.** It is indeed continually active for His people in all conditions, Isa. 27:3, ‘Lest any hurt it, I will keep it day and night.’; Psalm 121:4, “He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.” **His people’s dangers are without intermission, therefore His preservations are so too.** But now, when they come into the straight of affliction and deadly dangers, which threatens like rocks on every side, **now the wisdom of their God rides triumphantly and visibly on the waves of that stormy sea.** And this infinite wisdom is then especially discovered in these particulars:

1. In leaving them still somewhat in the lieu and room of those comforts that they are deprived of; so that they see God doth exchange their comforts, and that for the better; and this supports them. So John 14:1-3. Christ’s bodily presence is removed, but the Spirit was sent in the room of it, which was better.

2. In doubling their strength, as He doubles their burdens. It is observed that the saints have many times very strong and sweet consolation, a little before their greatest trials. And this is so ordinary that commonly when they have had their extraordinary consolations from God, they have then looked for some eminent trial. The Lord appeared to Abraham, and sealed the covenant to him, and then put him upon that great trial of faith. So the disciples, Luke 25:49 : it was commanded them that they should “tarry in Jerusalem till they were endowed with power from on high.” The Lord knew what a hard providence they were like to have, and what great oppositions and difficulties they must encounter in publishing the everlasting gospel to the world; and therefore first prepares and



Fishing vessel in heavy seas



**Storms are in our
Father's hands...**



endows them with power from on high, viz. with the eminent measures of the gifts and graces of the Spirit; as faith, patience, self-denial, etc. So Paul had first his revelations, then his buffetings.

3. In coming in so opportunely in the time of their great distress, with relief and comfort, 1 Pet. 4:14, "Then the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them." As the martyr cried out to his friend Austin, at the stake, "He is come, He is come!"

4. In appointing and ordering the several kinds of afflictions to several saints; and allotting to every one that very affliction, and no other, which is most suitable to his condition. Which afflictions, like so many potions of physic, are prepared for that very malignant humor that predominates most in them. Peter's sin was self-confidence, God permits him to fall by denying Christ; which doubtless was sanctified to his good in that particular. Hezekiah's sin was vain-glory, therefore spoilers are sent to take away his treasures.

5. In the duration of their troubles, they shall not lie always upon them, Psalm 125:3. our God is a God of judgment, Isa. 30:18. He knows the due time of removing it, and is therein punctual to a day, Rev. 2:10.

REFLECTION: If the wisdom of God do thus triumph, and glory itself in the distresses of the saints, then why should I fear in the day of evil? (Psalm 49:4). Why doth my heart faint at the foresight and apprehension of approaching trouble? Fear none of those things that thou shalt suffer, O my soul: If thy God will thus be with thee in the fire and water, thou canst not perish. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet let me fear no evil, whilst my God is thus with me. Creatures cannot do what they please, his wisdom limits and over-rules them all to gracious, sweet ends. If my God cast me into the furnace to melt and try me, yet I shall not be consumed there; for He will sit by the furnace Himself all the while I am in it, and curiously pry into it, observing when it hath done its work, and then will presently withdraw the fire. O my soul, bless and adore this God of wisdom, who Himself will see the ordering of thine afflictions, and not trust it in the hands of men or angels.

THE POEM

Though tossed in greatest storms, I'll never fear,
If Christ will sit at th' helm to guide and steer;
Storms are the triumph of his skill and art;



**He cannot close His eyes, nor change his heart.
Wisdom and power ride upon the waves,
And in the greatest danger helps and saves.
From dangers it by dangers doth deliver,
And wounds the devil out of his own quiver;
It countermines his plots, and so doth spoil,
And makes his engines on himself recoil.
It blunts the politician's restless tool,
And makes Ahithophel the veriest fool;
It shows us how our reason us misled,
And if he had not we had perished.
Lord, to Thy wisdom I will give the reins,
And not with cares perplex and vex my brains.**

Thomas Curtis Clarke also knew this quiet confidence in Christ as his all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving Pilot. He wrote these lines which show his trust (in the midst of the storm) in the Prince of Peace as his Pilot:

As moves my fragile bark across the storm-swept sea,
Great waves beat o'er her side, as north wind blows;
Deep in the darkness hid lie threat'ning rocks and shoals;
But all of these, and more, **my Pilot knows.**

Sometimes when dark the night, and every light gone out,
I wonder to what port my frail ship goes;
Still though the night be long, and restless all my hours,
My distant goal, I'm sure, **my Pilot knows.**

While some storms are so serious that ships sink or go shipwreck, others seem to be about to break over us in all their fierceness, but never do...

**Not half the storms that threaten me
E'er broke upon my head.
Not half the pains I've waited for
E'er reached me or my bed.**

**Not half the clouds that drifted by
Have overshadowed me –**

**Not half the dangers ever come
I fancied I could see.**

**Dear Heavenly Father, hold my hand
Each moment lest I fall.**

**Thine is the power to keep – my part
To let Thee, that is all.**

Indeed, “He is able to guard and keep that which has been entrusted to me and which I have committed [to Him] until that day,” (2 Tim. 1:12b, Ampl.). This is wonderfully true.



***Storms
can sink
Ships...***



***...or show
the skill of
the Pilot***



16. SHIPWRECK...!

Despite God's power, and promises, and provision for us to reach the Heavenly Harbour - safe at last - there is still the serious danger and peril of **shipwreck**! We need to look at this danger carefully and prayerfully.

Paul was shipwrecked three times... Through him, God said to Timothy, a young missionary mariner, and to all spiritual sailors: "...fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have **shipwrecked** their faith ...!" (1 Tim. 1:18b,19). In "*The Living Bible*" version we read: "Cling tightly to your faith in Christ and always keep your conscience clear, doing what you know is right. For some people have disobeyed their consciences and have deliberately done what they knew was wrong. It isn't surprising that soon they lost their faith in Christ ..." (verse 19) and shipwrecked!

Spiritual shipwreck is a sad reality in the voyage of life! If I say: "It wouldn't happen to me," it sounds like Simon Peter before he denied the Lord three times. If I say: "It can't happen to me" - remember that God says: "Pride goes before destruction," (Proverbs 16:18), and: "So, if you think you are standing firm (if you think that you are sailing trim), be careful that you don't fall!" (that you don't shipwreck)... This is God's Word, so, let us listen and be careful! We will be wise to consider some of the possible **REASONS why people go shipwreck**:

(i) A disobeyed and defiled conscience. This is quite clear from the Scripture quoted above (from 1 Timothy). As we said earlier, despite God's power and promises of preservation and success, **if I allow SIN in my ship, I'll go shipwreck!** If in any way I disobey my conscience, reject its "voice," and do what is wrong before God, my conscience is defiled. It is then NOT clean and clear any more... **Sin shipwrecks a soul!** Such a "ship," such a soul cannot be saved from going shipwreck, unless they repent!

(ii) Unbelief. Not "holding on to faith," leads to shipwreck. When I do not lean on God in absolute trust and confidence, I sin by unbelief. God says: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5,6;NIV). "Lean on, trust in, and be confident

SIN
shipwrecks
a soul!



www.cargolaw.com

in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding ...” (v 5; Amplified Bible).

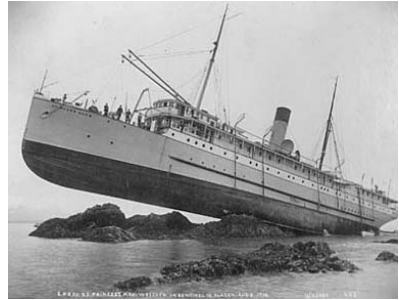
(iii) Disobedience, self-confidence and “majority opinion” are further reasons why a ship can go shipwreck. See Acts 27:1-15.

(iv) Inordinate affections frequently shipwreck souls – young and old! Samson is a “good” bad example. The Bible says “he fell in love with... Delilah” (Judges 16:4). He ended up on the rocks! His life and ministry was shipwrecked! Oswald Chambers said: “Keep the center of your heart for Jesus Christ and watch inordinate affection as you would the devil,” and, “...friendship to a soul undisciplined by loneliness is a precarious sea on which many have been lost, and on whose shores the wrecks of many hearts lie rotting...”!

(v) Pride is another clear reason for going shipwreck! See Ezekiel chapters 27 and 28. “You say, O Tyre, ‘I am perfect in beauty.’ Your domain was on the high seas; your builders brought your beauty to perfection ... they took cedar from Lebanon to make a mast for you. Of oaks from Bashan they made your oars... Fine embroidered linen from Egypt was your sail... Your skilled men, O Tyre, were aboard as your seamen...” (27:3-8). “Tarshish did business with you... Judah and Israel traded with you... Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your customers...” (see 27:12-24). “You were filled with heavy cargo in the heart of the sea. Your oarsmen take you out to the high seas. But the east wind will break you to pieces in the heart of the sea. Your wealth, ...your mariners, seamen ...and all your soldiers and everyone else on board will sink into the heart of the sea on the day of your **shipwreck!**” (See 27:25-26). WHY?! God says: “because of your wealth your heart has grown proud.” (28:5b); “Because you think you are wise...” (28:6b). Pride is the prime reason for going shipwreck. O, may the Lord keep us humble and dependent on Him!

(vi) On the other hand, “having no backbone” (proverbially speaking) can also lead to shipwreck! We read in 1 Kings 22:48, “Now Jehoshaphat built a fleet of trading ships to go to Ophir for gold, but they never set sail – they were wrecked at Ezion Geber”! They never launched out! They were wrecked **IN THE HARBOUR!** What a tragedy!

Is it not so that some young people are wrecked AT HOME, while they



Don't land on the
rocks...!



...or shipwrecked
IN the harbour...!



Ezion Geber harbour...



watch TV or movies, listen to worldly, ungodly music, or surf the internet, or chat on MXit? Others are “wrecked” AT SCHOOL, by what they hear from others, or watch on their cell-phones, or listen to on their i-pods. How sad when people are wrecked IN the harbour (by sins) – even *before* they launch out into the deep with Jesus!

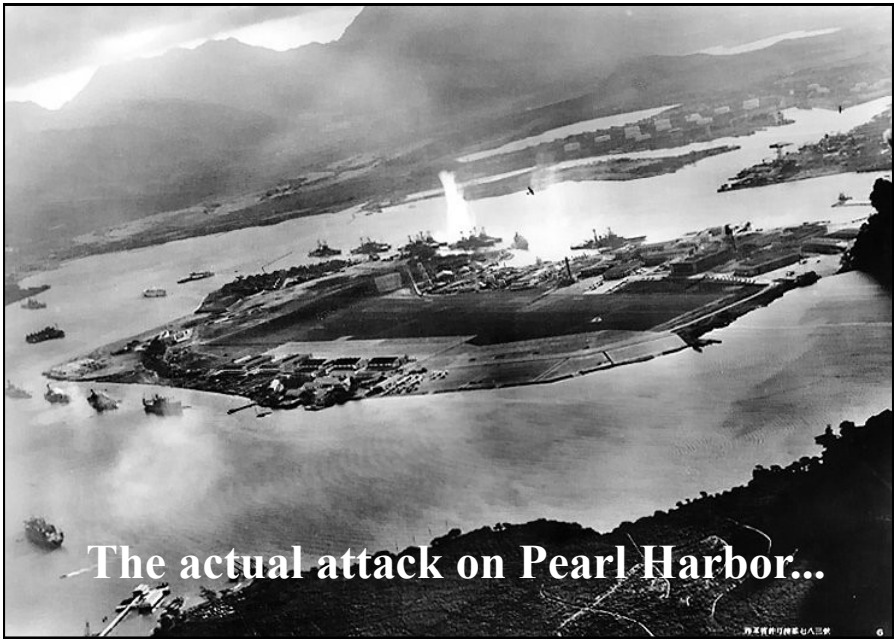
Jehoshaphat’s ships were wrecked at “Ezion Geber”, which means “Place of the **back-bone**”! That’s where many young people’s lives are wrecked today. If they have “NO BACKBONE” to stand up against peer-group pressure, against worldly influences, and ...be different (*for Jesus*), they are wrecked IN the harbour!

(vii) The next reason for going shipwreck is ungodly alliances! Charles Spurgeon says: “The secret cause of Jehoshaphat’s loss is well worthy of notice, for it is the root of very much of the suffering of the Lord’s people; it was his alliance with a sinful family, his fellowship with sinners. In 2 Chronicles 20:37, we are told that the Lord sent a prophet to declare, ‘Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works’...” that is, his ships.

(viii) Direct enemy attacks can sink a ship in the harbour! On Sunday morning, 7 December 1941, enemy air craft and submarines attacked Pearl harbour. The U.S. lost 2,350 soldiers. The enemy sank 4 U.S. Navy battle ships, 3 cruisers, 3 destroyers, 1 minelayer and 188 aircraft...!

(ix) Spiritual cleverness. Oswald Chambers says that “One would think that the person who has passed through great storms and made harbor should be safe. Yet some, like Lot, become shipwrecked IN harbour on the shoal of spiritual cleverness” when between the “times of inspiration we do not work but loaf” spiritually. He says: “**You may often see Jesus Christ WRECK a life before He SAVES it...**” Not because He wants to, but because it has become necessary, due to the stubbornness of the human heart.

There is a Remedy for shipwreck! When we humble ourselves, repent (like Jonah), cry out to God (as the disciples did in the storm), stay in the boat (as Paul advised the seafarers), and put our trust in Jesus – He saves us! Hallelujah! See Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25; Jonah 1 and 2; and Acts 27. Then, through Him, we can say: “**Out of the wreck I rise,**” ... and DO rise, and sail successfully again – to His glory.



17. ENEMY SUBMARINES!

The Spiritual Submarine that is most dangerous is Secret Sin! In his book *“Calling Youth to Christ,”* Dr. Billy Graham writes the following:

“The luxury liner pulled out of New York with full steam. Passengers whose nationality was reckoned from every country in Europe were on their way home. War clouds were hanging low. It was September 1, 1939. The ship was brilliantly lighted. The orchestra played at dinner as usual. The cinema entertained the guests in the evening. Eating, drinking, playing, the passengers idled the hours away. The ship ploughed its way through the waters of the North Atlantic on its way to Southampton.

Three days out the news was flashed to the ship that Britain and France had declared war. Lights were doused; passengers went fearfully to their cabins; quickly and desperately the ship was painted a battleship grey; emergency guns were mounted in the stern and bow, for the wireless had just brought news that the **enemy submarines** were lurking near.

It was midnight. Few passengers were sleeping. Everyone was nervous, excited, anxious. Would the ship make its destination in safety?

Out of the darkness and the silence from nowhere the tension was broken by a mighty explosion, another swish, then a second explosion. Cries of despair, anguish and suffering rent the cold air. The ship began to list. Lifeboats were lowered. Hundreds perished that night in the waters of the North Atlantic.

The voyage that began full of anticipation, joy and happiness for so many had ended in stark tragedy.

I have seen many young lives start out well after young men and woman trusted in Christ as their Saviour. There was a new vigour in their voices, a new sparkle in their eyes, a thrill in their souls all the day long. They loved the prayer meeting. They were fond of Bible study. Spiritual things held a great attraction for them. The battle with Satan was won time after time. Temptations were overcome. There was victory. Then something happened! It was not noticeable at first except to their close friends. Then everyone began to notice it. There

was a lack of interest and a coolness towards spiritual things. **Gradually the fire that had once raged in their breasts became only charred embers.** The joy and thrill of Christian experience was now a thing of the past. Their lives were now powerless and fruitless. They now yielded to temptation; instead of being overcomers, they were now overcome. The spring had left their step. What was wrong? What has made such a radical change as this?..” The answer is: **SECRET SIN!** “Submarine sins”!! This is the sad experience of many young people!

To destroy an enemy submarine can be very difficult. Special equipment and techniques are used to track such a submarine and bomb it. But when an enemy submarine surfaces, you can strike fast and decisively; shoot it, and sink it permanently! That’s the way to also deal with secret sin... bring it to the surface. Bring it into the light. Expose it. Confess it. Take it to the cross. Give it to Christ. Let it be removed permanently. Destroy it! Kill it! God says: “**He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsake them shall have mercy,**” (Prov. 28:13). Praise the Lord!



To sink the submarine of secret sin, you need serious, whole-hearted sorrow for sin, repentance, and a sufficient Saviour—the Lord Jesus Christ!

18. PECULIAR PERILS of WORLDLY SAILORS

In the world, sailors who are not saints, are especially notorious for their swearing, drinking and sexual immorality. That's way people say: "He's as drunk as a sailor," or, "He swears like a sailor." In the book, "A Caution to Seamen: a Dissuasive Against Several Horrid and Detestable Sins," John Flavel (1628-1691), refers to the "horrid and detestable sins of drunkenness, swearing, uncleanness, forgetfulness of mercies, violation of promises, and atheistical contempt of death." He says: "Those sins of theirs ...are the Jonahs in your ships; it is sin that sinks them, and drives them against the rocks"!

He pleads: "Take heed and beware of the detestable sin of drunkenness, which is a beastly sin, a voluntary madness, a sin that un-humans thee, and makes thee like the beasts that perish; yea, sets thee below the beasts..." The Word of God says, "Cursed is he who gives his neighbour drink" (Habakkuk 2:15).

Flavel says : "The second evil I shall deal with is the evil of the tongue, which... is full of deadly poison, oaths, curses, blasphemies; and this poison it scatters up and down the world in all places; an untamed member that none can rule, James 3:7,8," ... except God. The poison can be idle words, lying words, gossiping words, critical words, bitter words, vile words, curse words, seductive words, slanderous words, angry words, etc.

"The next danger I shall give you warning of, is the sin of uncleanness; with which I fear too many of the rude and looser sort of seamen defile themselves ...That this is a dreadful gulf, a quick-sand that hath sucked in, and destroyed thousands, is truly apparent both from Scripture and experience ...Oh! The multitudes of dead that are there! ...The word Delilah, which is the name of a harlot, is conceived to come from a root that signifies to exhaust, drain, or draw dry." This is exactly what happens through the sin of sensual and sexual uncleanness! Remember, it may be "only a look", a look in the other's eyes, a look at their body, a look at their clothes (or lack of it), a look at a photo or picture on a cell-phone or on the internet, a look at a magazine or movie or DVD ...Jesus said that if a man looks with lust, he has already committed adultery (or fornication) IN HIS HEART with that person. This is SIN. No ship can sail into heaven's harbour with such a sin on board! This applies to male and fe-

male seafarers alike!

Just as secular seamen need to take caution to stay away from the peculiar sins of their profession, you and I need to FLEE those sins that easily entangle US, and sail with perseverance in the voyage set out for us by God (Hebrews 12:1). Annie Johnson Flint said:

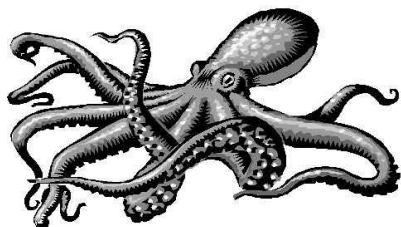
**Seas of sorrow, seas of trial
Bitterest anguish, fiercest pain,
Rolling surges of temptation,
Sweeping over heart and brain,
They shall never overflow us,
For we know His Word is true;
All His waves and all His billows
He will lead us safely through.**

19. GIANT DEVIL-FISH (or octopus)!

A.W. Beaven tells the following true story. He says:

Some years ago I was in a boat with a chum of mine, rowing along the shore in a bay on the western coast. We were rowing along slowly and lazily, noticing how muddy the water was, the shore a hundred feet away, when suddenly the boat began to slow up and stop.

“What are you quitting for?” I asked.



“Why,” he said, “I am not quitting, but the old boat is caught on something. We must have run into the mud.”

I said, “Why, there’s plenty of water here. Put your oar down.”

He took his oar out of the oarlock, and reached down. The water was five or six feet deep. Then slowly over the edge of the boat there came the slimy arm of **a devilfish**. He jumped back from it, and I jumped back, snatched the oar, and began to hack at the arm that had fastened



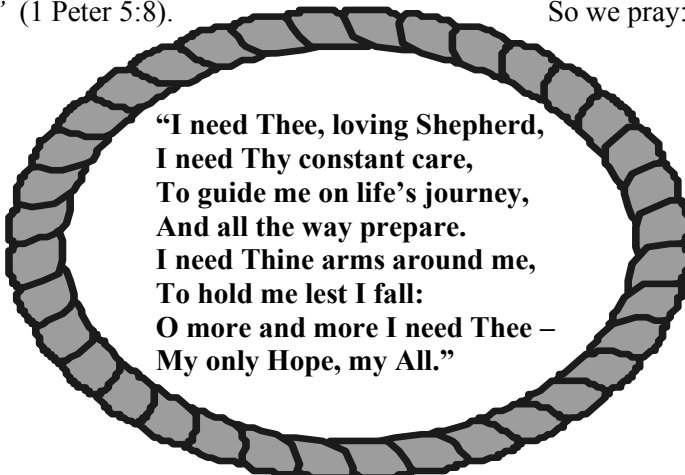
to the boat. Then on the other side another arm began to come up. We realized our danger and took the two oars, and began to pole for the shore until we got near enough so that we could jump off the boat and get out of danger.

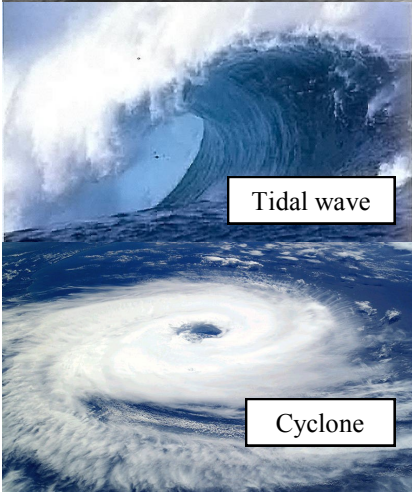
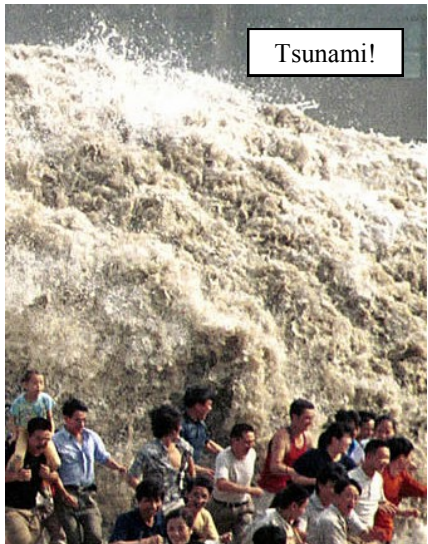
In days since then I have looked back at that moment, and it has seemed to me a picture of a youth passing through life's experiences without any serious sense of danger, when all of a sudden out of the muddy depths of a perilous place some vicious arm reaches up, and before he knows it, the trend toward the right begins to slow up, and he is in the arms of danger.

Young people! do not let anybody ever laugh you into the idea of thinking there is no peril in the sins all around us! These sins can seize you, and they can seize me; people as good as we are going down every day. No! I need the Savior's help and I need it greatly! You need Him, and you need Him now.

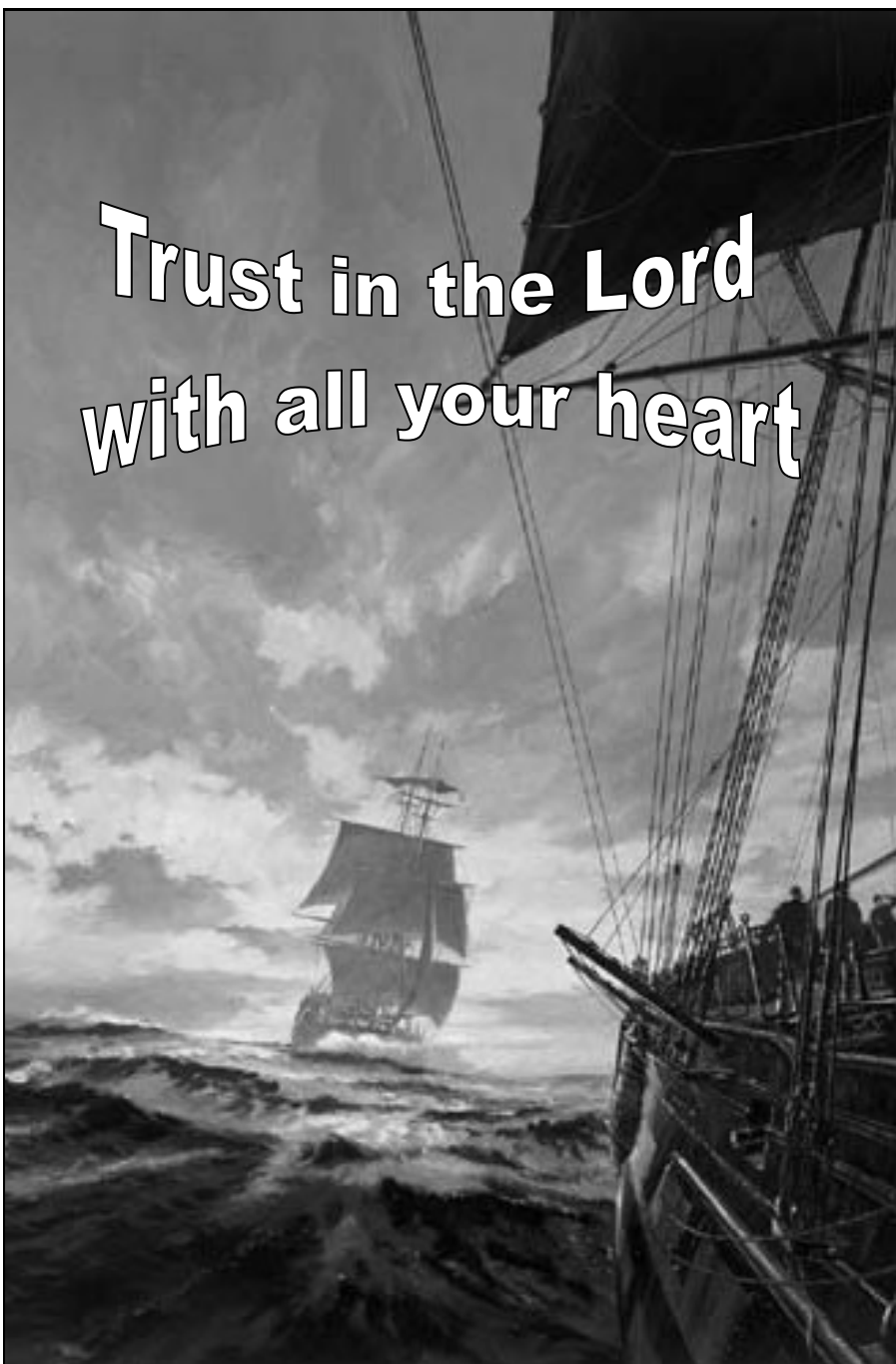
That's why God tells us: *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8).

So we pray:





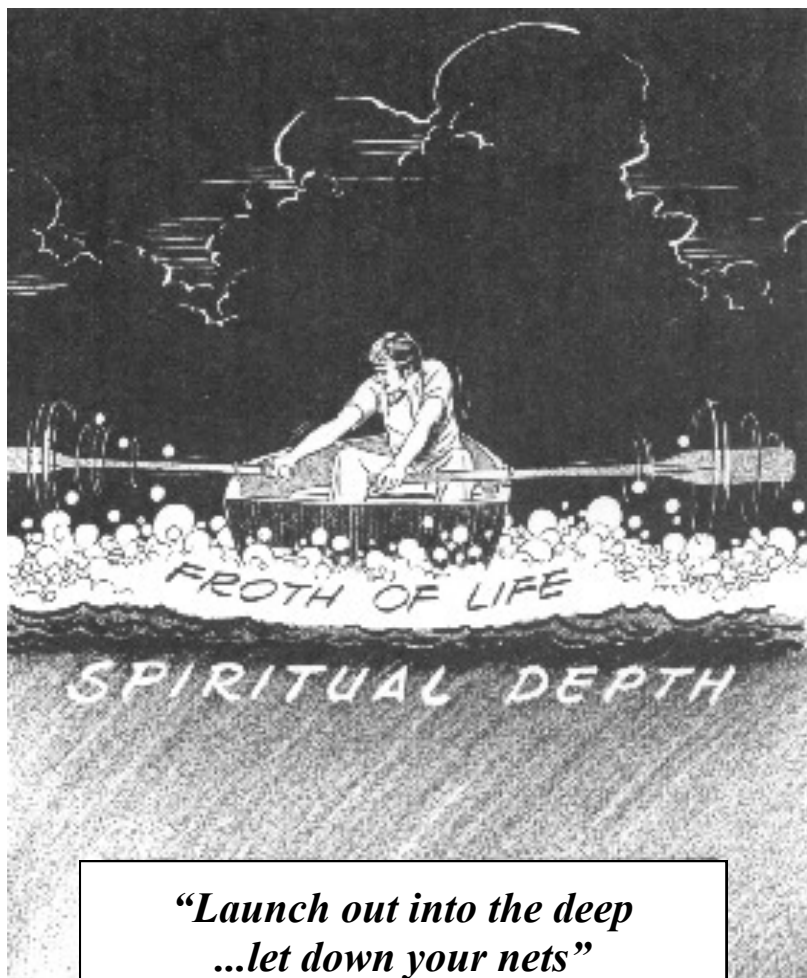
**Trust in the Lord
with all your heart**



20. There are MORE PERILS of launching out and of being at sea, like freak waves, engine problems, fire on board, whales, tidal waves, tsunamis, hurricanes, dilapidated (old) boats, the “beast out of the sea” (Rev 13), the sea monster (Job 41), family estrangement, discouragement, disunity, excessive calm, the effect of superstitions and witchcraft, unfaithfulness of the marriage partner at home, exploitation by employers, injuries on duty, getting “sea-sick”, sleeping on duty, thick fog, workers’ strikes, sickness while being on the ship, loneliness, etc., ...but all of these cannot be dealt with in this book.

Let’s consider again the world of that great seaman, that missionary mariner, the apostle Paul. He said: “...Three times I have been aboard a ship wrecked at sea; a [whole] night and a day I have spent [adrift] on the deep; Many times on journeys, [exposed to] ...**perils in the sea...**” (2 Co 11:25-26). “But He said to me, **My grace** (My favor and loving-kindness and mercy) **is enough for you [sufficient against any danger and enables you to bear the trouble manfully]; for My strength and power are made perfect (fulfilled and completed) and show themselves most effective in [your] weakness.** Therefore, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities, that the strength and power of Christ (the Messiah) may rest ...upon me! So for the sake of Christ, I am well pleased and take pleasure in infirmities, insults, hardships, persecutions, perplexities and distresses; **for when I am weak [in human strength], then am I [truly] strong (able, powerful in divine strength).**” (2 Co 12:9,10)





***“Launch out into the deep
...let down your nets”***

PRINCIPLES *of* SAILING SUCCESSFULLY

We would all like to reach our Heavenly Harbour and spend eternity in God's presence, but to reach that harbour, we need to launch out and sail safely and successfully—all the way. We do not reach there automatically. Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) said: "You will not be carried to Heaven lying at ease upon a feather bed." "You will not get leave to steal quietly to heaven in Christ's company, without a conflict and a cross." He said: "The Cross of Christ is the sweetest burden that ever I did bare; it is such a burden as ...sails are to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbour." In John Flavel's words:

What good might seamen get, if once they were
But heavenly minded? If they could but steer
The Christian course, the soul might then enjoy
Sweet peace, they might like seas o'erflow with joy.
Were God our all, how would our comforts double
Upon us! thus the seas of all our trouble
Would be divinely sweet: men should endeavor
To see God now, and be with Him forever.

But to do that, and to reach that Harbour, there are **PRINCIPLES of sailing safely and successfully**. We'll consider some of those important principles now...

1. RESPOND TO GOD'S CALL

This is obvious, but of crucial importance. When God calls us, respond. When He commands us, go! When He says: "Launch out," we launch out. When He says, "Sail on!" we sail on. When He says: "Slow down!" we slow down... **Whatever He says, we do! This is the life of a missionary mariner, a spiritual seafarer.**

**Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild, restless sea;
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,
Saying, "Christian, follow Me."**

Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world's golden store,
From each idol that would keep us,
Saying, "Christian, love Me more."

In our joys and in our sorrows,
Days of toil and hours of ease,
Still He calls in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love Me more than these."

**Jesus calls us: by Thy mercies,
Savior, may we hear Thy call,
Give our hearts to Thine obedience,
Serve and love Thee best of all.**

I love the song that says:

"Where He leads me, I will follow;
Where He leads me I will follow;
Where He leads me I will follow;
I'll go with Him, with Him –
To the end ...!"

That is indeed what I want to do and choose to do, daily—because I love Him, and trust Him and obey Him... Amy Carmichael launched out and followed the Lord Jesus to India, spreading His fragrance and life wherever she went. She challenged others to set sail to do God's will in the world. She wrote "*Before thee lies the sea...*":

Wood violets lent their blue,
The plain, like sea at rest
Lay calm composed as slowly grew
A glory manifest—
Of water, earth or air,
Of gold or precious gem?
Who gazed could only think of fair,
Far New Jerusalem.

O thought in me, take wings,
And further, further fly,
Hath entered heart of man the things
That wait beyond the sky?
O Light that shall prevail,
O Powers that yet shall be!
Arise, my soul, cast loose, set sail,
Before thee lies the sea.

2. GO! SAIL! TRUSTING GOD

As we respond to God's call, step out, step on board, cut loose the moorings, and **set sail in His will for us, we do not know what lies ahead.** We do not know what we'll do and where we'll be next year. We do not know where we'll go, where He'll lead us, ...**but we know HIM, and that is enough!** So we take to heart that ...

When we cannot see our way,
Let us **trust** and still obey;
He who bids us forward go,
Cannot fail the way to show.
Though the sea be deep and wide,
Though a passage be denied;
Fearless let us still proceed,
Since the Lord vouchsafes to lead.

(Taken from "*Daily Strength For Daily Needs*," by M.W. Tileston). **I trust the Lord**, because, as "Amma" (Amy Carmichael) said in "*God made the shore*":

God made the shore,
Rocks and sand and sea,
Little lovely shells;
He made me.

God feeds the fish
Swimming in the sea,
Feeds them every day;

He feeds me.

God rules the tides
Of the mighty sea;
God will never fail;
He guides me.

God's behind the storm
Lashing up the sea;
God's within the calm;
He loves me.

Though I may forget,
He loves faithfully:
Always God goes on
Loving me.

And when I consider this, "What room is there for troubled fear? I know my Lord, and He is near..."

O LOVE, O LIGHT

What room is there for troubled fear?
I know my Lord, and He is near;
And He will light my candle, so
That I may see the way to go –
O Love, O Light, I sing to Thee,
And in my heart make melody.

There need be no bewilderment
To one who goes where he is sent;
The trackless plain by night and day
Is set with signs, lest he should stray:
O Love, O Light, I sing to Thee,
And in my heart make melody.

My path may cross the lonely sea,
But that need never frighten me;
Or rivers full to very brim,

But they are open ways to Him:
*O Love, O Light, I sing to Thee,
And in my heart make melody.*

Lord, grant to me a quiet mind,
That **trusting Thee**, for Thou art kind,
I may go on without a fear,
For Thou, my Lord, art always near:
*O Love, O Light, I sing to Thee,
And in my heart make melody.*

3. PRAY AS YOU GO !

**To start without prayer
or to sail without prayer
is to seek to sink
or to go shipwreck!**

We read in Acts 21:5-7, “But when the time was up, we left and continued on our way..., and there on the beach we knelt to PRAY. After saying goodbye to each other, we went on board the ship, and they returned home. We continued our voyage...” **Paul started his voyage WITH PRAYER, and he prayed as he continued the voyage at sea** (Acts 28).

In “*The Seamen’s Farewell*,” a sermon based on these verses, John Flavel (1628-1691), said that: “**those that undertake voyages by sea, had need not only to PRAY earnestly themselves, but also to engage the prayers of other Christians for them.**” This is very true. **None of us can “launch out into the deep” without much prayer.** We need to desperately cry out to God before we launch out, as we launch out, and as we sail... We cannot dare to leave school or leave home without much prayer for guidance, protection, blessing and help from God. We also need to solicit the prayers of others for us. Paul asked for others to pray for him. The Lord Jesus asked for others to pray with Him. How much more do we need others’ prayers for us!



VOYAGE

*O Lord of the oceans,
My little bark sails on a restless sea,
Grant that Jesus may sit at the helm and steer me safely;
Suffer no adverse currents to divert my heavenly course;
Let not my faith be wrecked amidst storms and shoals;
Bring me to harbor with flying pennants,
hull unbreached, cargo unspoiled.
I ask great things,
expect great things,
shall receive great things.
I venture on Thee wholly, fully,
my Wind, Sunshine, Anchor, Defense.
The voyage is long, the waves high, the storms pitiless,
but my helm is held steady,
Thy Word secures safe passage,
Thy Grace wafts me onward,
my haven is guaranteed.
This day will bring me nearer home,
Grant me holy consistency in every transaction,
my peace flowing as a running tide,
my righteousness as every chasing wave.
Help me to live circumspectly,
with skill to convert every care into prayer,
Halo my path with gentleness and love,
smooth every asperity of temper;
let me not forget how easy it is to occasion grief;
may I strive to bind up every wound,
and pour oil on all troubled waters.
May the world this day be happier and better because I live.
Let my mast before me be the Saviour's cross,
and every oncoming wave the fountain in His side.
Help me, protect me in the moving sea
until I reach the shore of unceasing praise.*

(Taken from "The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions.")

As far as our **PERSONAL PRAYERS** are concerned, Flavel said in “*The Seaman’s Farewell*” that:

(1) And among those mercies to be earnestly requested of God by him, the first and principal is, **the pardon of sin**; a mercy which must make a part of every prayer, and at this time to be earnestly sued for. Guilt is that Jonah in the ship, for whose sake storms, shipwrecks, and ruin pursue it... Certainly friends, it



is your great concern to get a pardon, and be at peace with God; a thing so indispensable, that you cannot have less, and so comprehensive that you cannot desire more. **If sin be pardoned, you are safe, you need fear no storms within, whatever you find without.** But woe to him that finds at once a raging sea, and a roaring conscience; trouble without, and terror within, ship and hope sinking together. You are privy to all the evils and wickedness of your hearts and lives. You know what treasures of guilt you have been heaping up all your days; and think you when distresses and calamities come upon you, conscience will be as quiet as it is now? No, no, guilt will fly in your faces then, and stop your mouths. **O therefore, humble yourselves at the feet of God for all your iniquities; apply yourselves to the blood of sprinkling; pray and plead with God for the remission of sin;** without which you are in a woeful case to adventure yourselves at sea to those imminent perils of life.

(2) Another mercy you are earnestly to pray for is, **that the presence of God may go with you.** I mean not His general presence that fills the world; that will be with you, whether you pray for it or no, but His gracious special presence, which was that Moses so earnestly sued for in Ex. 33:15, “**If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not hence.**”

(3) A third mercy you are specially concerned to beg of God, is, **that you may be kept from the temptations to sin you will meet with when you are abroad in the world.** The whole world lies in wickedness, 1 John 5:19. Every place, every employment, every company hath its snares and temptations attending it. And you know you have corrupt natures, as much disposed to close with temptations as tinder is to catch fire. So that unless the preventing, restraining, and mortifying grace of God be with you, they will but touch and take. **If there were no devil to tempt you externally; yet such a corrupt heart meeting with a suitable temptation and occasion, is enough to overcome you,** James 1:14, “Every man

is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed.” Alas! You know not what hearts you have till temptations prove them; and what comfort can you take in the success and prosperity of your affairs, be it never so great, if you return with consciences polluted and wounded with sin ...**O therefore beg earnestly of God that you may be kept from sin: pray you not be led into temptation.**

(4) **Pray for divine protection** in all the dangers and hazards to which you shall be exposed. You know not how soon your life and estate shall be in jeopardy. This night you may sleep quietly in your cabin, tomorrow you may be tugging at the pump, and the next night take up your lodging on a cold rock... How poor a defense is the strongest ship against the lofty seas and lurking rocks? How innumerable are the accidents and contingencies in a voyage, which the most skilful navigator cannot foresee or prevent? ...They are, as the Psalmist speaks, at their wits end, Psalm 107:27. But O how secure and safe amidst all dangers, is that man whom the Lord takes into His special protection? And He will not shut out those who sincerely commit themselves to Him. The winds and seas obey His voice. He can with a word turn the storm into a calm, Psalm 107:29, or order means for your preservation, when you seem lost to the eye of sense and reason. I have heard of a young man, that being in a great storm at sea, was observed to be very cheerful, when all the rest were as dead men. And being asked the reason of his cheerfulness in the case of so much danger, he replied, ‘Truly, I have no cause to fear, for the pilot of the ship is my father.’ O it is unspeakable comfort when a man hath committed himself unto the hands of God, as a Father, and trusted Him over all!

(5) **Pray for counsel and direction in all your affairs and undertakings**, and lean not to your own understanding. “I know, O Lord that the way of man is not in himself, neither is it in him that walks to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23). **Undertake nothing without asking God’s leave and counsel...** “In all thy ways acknowledge Him,” Prov. 3:6.

(6) **Pray for success upon your lawful employments and designs**, and own it to be from the Lord.... It was anciently said, “He that would learn to pray, let him go to sea.” But now, how long may a man be at sea, before he hear a praying seaman! Let your families from which you part, witness what conscience you have made to seek God, as you have been here directed, before your outset: it is said, Deut. 33:18, to the tribe of seamen, “Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out.” But in this case we may invert the words, and say, *Mourn, O ye seamen, in your going out.* How deplorable a case is this? **Let your cabins witness what conscience you**

make of the duty of prayer: you can talk and sleep there, but when did you pray there? You there hear the voice of God in the roaring seas; but when did God hear your voice in prayer? You see the wonders of God in the deeps, wonders of *creation*, and wonders of *preservation*; but mean time you yourselves are the greatest wonders that are to be seen in the sea. Men immediately depending on God for their



lives, liberties, and estates, every moment, and not once owning or acknowledging Him in prayer ...the very heathens will rise up in judgment against you, and condemn you ...The Turks will condemn such as you are, for they fail not to pray five times a day, how urgent soever their business be ...**There is a vile generation in our days, that instead of calling upon the name of the Lord by prayer, do call upon it profanely**, rending and tearing that great and terrible name with the language of hell.In the next place, this point is exceedingly useful, by way of exhortation, **to persuade all men, and particularly seamen, to be men of prayer**; to imitate that noble pattern in the text, and no longer to live in the neglect of a duty so sweet, and so beneficial, as prayer is. O that you did but know the excellency of this duty! How would you give yourselves unto prayer! ...“Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O Lord, hear my voice.” Psalm 130:1,2. Many a prayer hath been heard, and miraculously answered upon the sea. There have been men convinced, and fully satisfied, that it is not in vain to cry to the Lord.... You that are seamen, know what the use of the *pump* is, when the waters leak into your ship, and of what use the scupper-holes are to you, when waves break and dash over your necks: why, of **the same use is prayer**, when sorrow leaks into your hearts, and distresses are ready to overwhelm your souls. This gives a vent to that which else would quickly sink you. “Your heart shall live that seek the Lord,” Psalm 69:32. Prayer will buoy up the fainting spirits; it will sensibly ease an oppressed heart. No fear of fainting, while a man continues praying....

Oh! Were but your sails filled by prayer, how prosperous would your designs be?

...O seek the Lord therefore whilst He may be found, call upon Him whilst He is yet near. Now is your praying season, hereafter there will be no use of prayer. “For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found. Surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto him” Psalm 32:6...

Objection : But many pray and receive not: I myself have often done so.

Answer : “You ask and receive not because you ask amiss,” James 4:3. If we were disposed to receive as God is to give, we should not be long without the answer of our prayers.

(1) **If your persons were accepted through Christ,** your prayers should be accepted too, Gen. 4:4. But you are in a state of nature, destitute of the Spirit, John 15:7, and so your voice is to God not the voice of a child, but a stranger.

(2) **If your prayers were regulated by the will of God,** they could not miss of the desired success; 1 John 5:14, “If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.”

(3) **If your prayers had more faith and fervency,** they would not return empty; see James 1:6 and 16. Well then, object no more against your duty, but in the fear of God apply yourselves to it, and dare not to go forth in any design, until thou hast by prayer recommended thyself and thy affairs to God. Go alone, my friends, retire from the world; and say not you cannot spend time for prayer; better anything else were neglected than this. Tell the Lord, thou art now launching forth into the ocean, and knowest not what this voyage may bring forth. Possibly thou mayest never return to the land of thy nativity anymore; but however it shall please Him to dispose the event, beseech Him with all earnestness, that thou mayest have the pardon of sin sealed to thee before thou go. O beg Him to separate guilt from thy person, before thou be separated from thy habitation and relations; lest that stroke that shall separate thy soul from thy body, should eternally separate both soul and body from God.

Desire of the Lord that His presence may go with thee wherever thou shalt go. Tell Him it is the fountain both of thy safety and comfort. Desire Him if His presence may not go with thee, not to carry thee hence. All the relief thou hast against trouble, is wrapped up in that promise of His, “*I will be with him in trouble.*” Tell Him, those will be tasteless comforts, and succourless troubles, in which He is not... **Entreat the Lord with all**

importunity, to keep thee by his fear, from the sins and temptations that are in the world. Tell Him thou art sensibly affected with the danger which thy own corrupt heart will every where expose thee to: sins in buying and selling, into which thou mayest easily be drawn by an earthly covetous heart. Sins in drinking, wherein thou mayest be entangled (except He keep thee) by evil company and an irregular appetite. Sins of uncleanness, by which thou mayest be overcome in the absence of lawful remedies, and presence of alluring objects, except His fear quench the temptation, and break the snare.

Be earnest also with the Lord for his gracious protection of thee in all thy dangers. Tell him, thou canst not be in safety anywhere, but under the shadow of his wings. Tell him, *at what time thou art afraid, thou wilt trust him*; and beseech him, that when thy heart be overwhelmed with fears and troubles, he will lead thee to the rock that is higher than thee. Beseech him, also to give thee counsel in all thy straits and difficulties, that thou mayest not lean to thine own understanding, but that he will make thy way plain before thee.... And if it be his good pleasure, that he would bless thy just and holy enterprises with success and prosperity; which if he shall do, tell him it is thy desire, and beg the assistance of his grace, that thou mayest improve all thy mercies to his praise. **If thus you set forth in the fear of God, you may expect sweet success, and a happy issue."**

[These extracts from the sermon "The Seaman's Farewell," were taken from the book "The Seaman's Companion," which was written by Pastor John Flavel and published in 1675.]

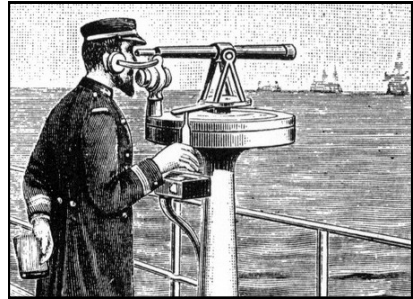
He also tells about many amazing answers to prayer in "A Narrative of some late and wonderful Sea Deliverances." He wrote:

"I have read of a ship that had sprung a leak: Some pious passengers **pray**, whilst others ply the **pump**, and all to little purpose, till at last, on a sudden, they espy the waters within to be at a stand, and then take heart afresh, and ply the pump with good success. They get into their harbor, and ship put into the dock, and **upon search there is found a certain hole, with a fish sticking fast in it, exactly commensurate to the hole**. God shews himself great in the smallest instruments of **preservation!**"

God is wonderful indeed, and He works in wonderful ways!!!

4. WATCH OUT !

If we want to sail successfully and reach our Heavenly Harbour, we need to be **very, very watchful!** The Lord Jesus (our Captain and Pilot) says: “Watch out” (Matt. 7:15a); “Watch out that no one deceives you” (Matt 24:4); “Therefore keep watch” (Matt. 24:13, 42); and “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation” (Matt. 26:41) and shipwreck your soul!



We need to **watch out** for the devil’s schemes; we need to watch and guard our own hearts; we need to watch and be ready for any storm; we need to watch out for spiritual pirates; we need to watch for rocks and reefs, currents and cross-currents, ships and sandbanks, as well as for the smallest little leak in the ship. We need to be watchful to the very end.

In that magnificent and very helpful book “*Navigation Spiritualized: A New Compass for Seamen*,” John Flavel says:

*Seamen foresee a danger, and prepare;
Yet few of greater dangers are aware.*

OBSERVATION: **How watchful and quick-sighted are seamen to prevent dangers!** If the wind die away, and then fresh up suddenly, or if they see the sky hazy, they provide for a storm. If by the prospective glass they know a pirate at a great distance, they clear the gun room, prepare for a fight, and bear up, if able to deal with him. If not, they keep close by the wind, make all the sail they can, and bear away. If they suppose themselves, by reckoning, near land, how often do they sound? And if upon a coast with which they are unacquainted, how careful are they to get a pilot that knows, and is acquainted with it?

APPLICATION: **Thus watchful and suspicious ought we to be in spiritual concerns. We should study, and be acquainted with Satan’s wiles and policy.** The apostle takes it for granted, that Christians are not ignorant of his devices, 2 Cor. 2:11. ...**The devil is a cunning pi-**

rate; he puts out false colors, and ordinarily comes up to the Christian in the disguise of a friend.

I love to watch
and pray!



O the manifold depths and stratagems of Satan to destroy souls! Though he have no wisdom to do himself good, yet he hath policy enough to do us mischief. He lies in ambush behind our lawful comforts and employments; yet, for the generality of men, how supine and careless they are, suspecting no danger? Their souls, like Laish, dwell carelessly, their senses unguarded; O what an easy prize, and conquest, doth the devil make of them!...

REFLECTION: Lord! How doth the care, wisdom and vigilance of men in temporal and external things, condemn my carelessness in the deep and dear concernments of my precious soul! What care and labor is there to secure a perishing life, liberty, or treasure! When was I thus solicitous for my soul, though its value be inestimable, and its danger far greater. Self-preservation is one of the deepest principles in nature. There is not the poorest fly, or worm, but will shun danger if it can: yet I am so far from shunning those dangers to which my soul lies continually exposed, that I often run it upon temptations, and voluntarily expose it to its enemies. **I see Lord, how watchful, jealous, and laborious Thy people are; what prayers, tears and groans, searching of the heart, mortification of lusts, guarding of senses; and all accounted too little by them.** Have I not a soul to save or lose eternally as well as they? Yet I cannot deny one fleshly lust, nor withstand one temptation. O how I am convinced and condemned, not only by other's care and vigilance, but my own too, in lesser and lower matters?

THE POEM

I am the ship whose bills of lading come
To more than man's or angel's art can sum,
Rich fraught with mercies, on the ocean, now
I float, the dang'rous ocean I do plow.
Storms rise, rocks threaten, and in every creek

Pirates and picaroons their prizes seek.
My soul should watch, look out, and use its glass,
Prevent surprisals timely; but alas!
 Temptations give it chase, 'tis grappled sure,
 And boarded, whilst it thinks itself secure.
 It sleeps, like Jonah, in the dreadful storm,
 Altho' its case be dang'rous, and forlorn.
Lord, rouse my drowsy soul, lest it should knock,
And split itself upon some dang'rous rock.
If it of faith and conscience shipwreck make,
I am undone forever; soul, awake!
Till thou arrive in heaven, watch, and fear;
Thou may'st not say, till then, the coast is clear.

This is truly our prayer – that we may be wide awake, on our guard, watchful and alert, ...and that we may never relax our guard and our watchfulness, until we reach heaven !

5. LET THE LORD JESUS BE MY CAPTAIN!

When He is my Captain, all is well! As my Captain, He owns all, He decides all, He guides in all, He helps in all, ...He's my All-in-all. There



**Don't be my
own captain!**

are some people who are so foolish in their worldly wisdom that they think it's a problem to have the Lord Jesus as their Captain. They think He's too strict, He's too exact, He's too holy, He's too perfect, He's too demanding... They are blinded in their minds by Satan (2 Cor. 4:4). They think and speak like William Earnest Henly, who wrote the following poem in 1875 to describe his humanistic, "unconquerable soul": He obviously did not realize that to be ruled by "self" is darkness, to be the "master of my fate" is a hopeless mess, to be my own "captain" is to court sure disaster! He wrote:

Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
 I thank whatever gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.

He was in
darkness

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

He believed
in chance

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

He was
hardened

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
**I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.**

He was his
own captain

This is utter foolishness! When the Lord Jesus appeared to Joshua in Canaan He said: **“I have now come as the Captain...!”** (*free translation*). **O friends, this is the only way to live and sail successfully – with Jesus as our Captain!**

At one stage in his life Simon Peter was the captain of his own boat, the captain of his own soul, but then he met Jesus and everything changed. Frederick Wood said, **“When Peter made Christ the CAPTAIN of his boat he was commanded to ‘launch out into the deep!’ When Christ was in control, Peter must no longer stay in the shallows.”**

He further asked, **“Are you hugging the shore of the world? Do you wonder why there is no success in your Christian life? Have you been a Christian for so long, and yet do you still dabble in the world’s pleasures? Do you still compromise with the world’s standards? Are you still content to come down to the level of the world? Have you never burned your bridges and cut your shorelines and launched out into the DEEP, with Christ in full control?”**

With Him in full control, WE do not decide what and where and when we will do what, no, HE decides. He knows the best. When He says, “Do NOT conform any longer to the pattern (the fashion) of this world” (Rom. 12:2), we obey. When He says, “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19), we obey! Joseph Addison Richards penned what happened to **Simon the seaman** in the following poem:

I owned a little boat a while ago
And sailed a Morning Sea without a fear,
And whither any breeze might fairly blow
I'd steer the little craft afar or near.

**Mine was the boat, and mine the air,
And mine the sea; not mine, a care.**

My boat became my place of nightly toil.
I sailed at sunset to the fishing ground.
At morn the boat was freighted with the spoil
That my all-conquering work and skill had found.

**Mine was the boat, and mine the net,
And mine the skill, and power to get.**

One day there passed along the silent shore,
While I my net was casting in the sea,
A man, who spoke as never man before;
I followed Him – new life begun in me.

**Mine was the boat, but His the voice,
And His the call; yet mine, the choice.**

Ah, 'twas a fearful night out on the lake,
And all my skill availed not at the helm,
Till Him asleep I waken, crying "Take,
Take Thou command, lest waters overwhelm!"

**His was the boat, and His the Sea,
And His the Peace o'er all and me.**

Once from His boat He taught the curious throng,
Then bade me let down nets out in the Sea;
I murmured, but obeyed, nor was it long
Before the catch amazed and humbled me.

**His was the boat, and His the skill,
And His the catch – and His, my will.**

Oh, this is wonderful! When my will is “His”, all is well, my life is on course! Sadly, it does not always STAY like this and we sometimes find ourselves again drifting, groping, swerving, even wrecking. With this in mind and in the hope of pointing out the Remedy, James McConkey wrote the following poem:

Why do I drift on a storm-tossed sea,
With neither compass, nor star, nor chart,
When, as I drift, God’s own plan for me
Waits at the door of my slow-trusting heart?

Down from the heavens it drops like a scroll,
Each day a bit will the Master unroll,
Each day a mite of the veil will He lift.
Why do I falter? Why wander, and drift?

Drifting, while God’s at the helm to steer;
Groping, when God lays the course so clear;
Swerving, though straight into port I might sail;
Wrecking, when heaven lies just within hail.

**Help me, O God, in the plan to believe;
Help me my fragment each day to receive.
Oh, that my will may with Thine have no strife!
God-yielded wills find the God-planned life.**

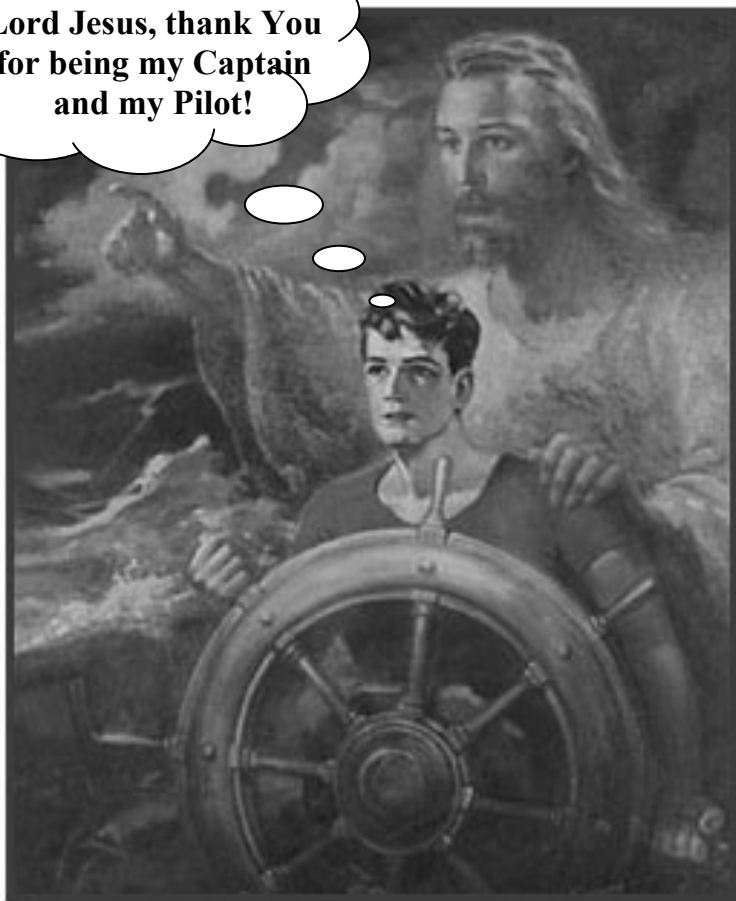
In “*Our Daily Homily*,” F.B. Meyer says: “Yield your will to God’s will;

and even though it bears
you far out of your
course, dare to believe
that it is the quickest and
best way of attaining the
harbour which GOD has
prepared...”



In other words: **let Him
be your Captain!**

**Lord Jesus, thank You
for being my Captain
and my Pilot!**



***“Jesus, Saviour, pilot me
over life’s tempestuous sea...”***

* We do not wish to make or promote an image of God by putting this painted picture in, but to convey the message that HE SHOULD BE MY PILOT...!

6. LET THE LORD JESUS BE MY PILOT!

I need the Lord Jesus not just as my Captain, but also as my Pilot -
that He may guide me, steer me, and direct me through all the trials and temptations of life...

I cannot do it alone;
The waves run fast and high,
And the fogs close all around,
The light goes out in the sky;
But I know that we two
Shall win in the end,
Jesus and I.

Coward and wayward and weak,
I change with the changing sky;
Today so eager and bright,
Tomorrow too weak to try;
But He never gives in,
So we two shall win,
Jesus and I.

**I could not guide it myself,
My boat on life's wild sea;
There's One who sits by my side,
Who pulls and steers with me.
And I know that we two
Shall safe enter port,
Jesus and I.**

In the poem "*Journey Through Life*," Dean Alford also recognizes another Hand on the helm – the Hand of the Lord Jesus, our Pilot:

**My barque is wafted to the strand
By breath divine;
And on the helm there rests a hand
other than mine.**

One Who is known in storms to sail



**Lord, I trust You
as my Pilot**



* We do not wish to make or promote an image of God by putting this painted picture in, but to convey the message that HE SHOULD BE MY PILOT...!

**I have on board,
Above the raging of the gale
I hear my Lord.**

**Safe to the land, safe to the land,
The end is this;
And then with Him go hand in hand
Far into Bliss.**

Another spiritual seafarer, Louis A. Waterman echoes the same principle, the same living truth, in this little poem:

Thy piloting, how sure, how safe,
Until, all breakers passed,
We triumph o'er each hurricane,
And anchor, home at last!

According to another spiritually seasoned “seadog”, Annie Johnson Flint:

Seas of sorrow, seas of trial
Bitterest anguish, fiercest pain,
Rolling surges of temptation,
Sweeping over heart and brain,
They shall never overflow us,
For we know His word is true;
All His waves and all His billows
He will lead us safely through.

Fired with the same passion and vision of the Lord Jesus as our Pilot, one of the puritans prayed as follows:

I launch my bark on the unknown waters of this year,
with Thee, O Father, as my harbor,
Thee, O Son, at the helm,
Thee, O Holy Spirit, filling my sails.
Guide me to heaven with my loins girt,
my lamp burning,
my ear open to Thy calls,
my heart full of love,
my soul free.

Yet another puritan seafarer prayed these words:

Thy goodness has been with me another year,
leading me through a twisting wilderness,
in retreat helping me to advance,
when beaten back making sure headway.
Thy goodness will be with me in the year ahead;



I hoist sail and draw up anchor,

With Thee as the blessed Pilot of my future as of my past.

I bless Thee that Thou hast veiled my eyes to the waters ahead.

If Thou hast appointed storms of tribulation,

Thou wilt be with me in them;

If I have to pass through tempests of persecution and temptation,

I shall not drown;

If I am to die,

I shall see Thy face the sooner;

If a painful end is to be my lot,

grant me grace that my faith fail not;

If I am to be cast aside from the service of love,

I can make no stipulation;

Only glorify Thyself in me whether in comfort or trial,
as a chosen vessel always for Thy use.

Whether it's fair weather or fowl weather, whether it's sunny skies or stormy seas, ...let Jesus always be my Pilot! It is of the greatest importance that He steers when all is still ...and when storms strike my ship. Only He can steer me safely through the storm!

Storms also show the skill of the Pilot. So, in life, God's skill and wisdom and power and faithfulness and love and nearness is especially revealed when the storms of life break out.

***"Storms make discovery of the pilot's skill:
God's wisdom in affliction triumphs still."***

What a wonderful Pilot is God! O, may we learn to let Him steer, ...and not to fear. John Flavel said:

Though tossed in greatest storms, I'll never fear,

If Christ will sit at th'helm to guide and steer;

Storms are the triumph of his skill and art;
He cannot close His eyes nor change his heart.
Wisdom and power ride upon the waves,
And in the greatest danger helps and saves.
From dangers it by dangers doth deliver,
And wounds the devil out of his own quiver;
It countermines his plots, and so doth spoil,
And makes his engines on himself recoil.
It blunts the politician's restless tool,
And makes Ahithophel the veriest fool;
It shows us how our reason us misled,
And if he had not we had perished.
Lord, to Thy wisdom I will give the reins,
And not with cares perplex and vex my brains.

How wonderful it is when the Lord Jesus truly is my Pilot! All we try to convey about this important principle of sailing successfully is summarized by Edward Hopper in his poem "**Jesus, Saviour, Pilot me**" (1871):

Jesus, Savior, pilot me,

Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rocks and treacherous shoal.
Chart and compass come from Thee;
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

While th' Apostles' fragile bark
Struggled with the billows dark,
On the stormy Galilee,
Thou didst walk upon the sea;
And when they beheld Thy form,
Safe they glided through the storm.

Though the sea be smooth and bright,
Sparkling with the stars of night,
And my ship's path be ablaze
With the light of halcyon days,
Still I know my need of Thee;
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

When the darkling heavens frown,
And the wrathful winds come down,
And the fierce waves, tossed on high,
Lash themselves against the sky,
Jesus, Savior, pilot me,
Over life's tempestuous sea.

As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
Boisterous waves obey Thy will,
When Thou sayest to them, "Be still!"
Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

When at last I near the shore,
And the fearful breakers roar
'Twixt me and the peaceful rest,
Then, while leaning on Thy breast,
May I hear Thee say to me,
"Fear not, I will pilot thee."



7. USE THE COMPASS CORRECTLY!

When Christ is our Pilot, it doesn't mean we become passive passengers! To the contrary, we become more active, more diligent, more co-operative, more ready, more "active on-the-spot" ...we eagerly learn from Him and live and sail according to His principles. One of the very important principles of spiritual sailing is to use Christ's compass, which is the Word of God!

A compass is used (i) to **find your present position** (by taking cross-bearings, for instance), (ii) to **plot the course you need to take**, and (iii) to **see and keep the direction** in which you have to go... This is exactly what we also need the Word of God for. Through the Word of God we find our present position. It shows us where we stand with God now. It shows us where we are in our spiritual life and journey, at this point in time. It shows us which course to take, which way to go. It also shows us if we're heading in the right direction at any particular point in time.

Just as an ordinary compass needs a good **navigator** to read it, interpret it, and use it, ...in the same way we need the **Holy Spirit** to help us to read God's Word, interpret it correctly, and use it effectively, successfully.

Things can go horribly wrong if one uses a compass incorrectly or if the compass is incorrect! I came across the following sad story:

"An old pilot, trusted and wise, was one night many years ago taking his vessel up between the coasts of Wales and Ireland. He had been over the course innumerable times without disaster. This particular night, nearing port and home, he was running full steam ahead. With his keen eye he watched compass and chart. Suddenly with a sickening crashing sound, **the vessel was on the hidden rocks**. Loss of life and loss of ship marked the wreck.

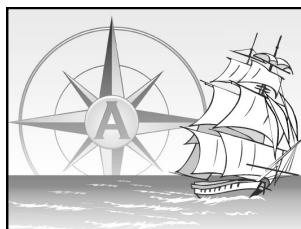
Later, upon entering the pilot-house which still survived, close examination revealed the fact that someone, seeking to clean or tamper with the compass, had slipped a thin knife blade into the compass box near the needle, and the little blade had broken off. That **little piece of foreign steel was sufficient to deflect, though only slightly, the needle** by which the old clear-eyed pilot was steering the boat. **Such a little**

thing - such a mighty wreck!"

This story teaches me to ask myself: "Has anything slipped into my life that is deflecting the needle of conscience and leading me off the true course? I need to make sure that my compass is true - that **Christ is my Compass!**

To any seafarer it is essential to understand the difference between "true north," "magnetic north," and "compass north." "*True north*" is the actual, true north geographic point of the earth. "*Magnetic north*" is the north point of the earth's magnetic field, which is about 700 nautical miles south of the True North Pole. "*Compass north*" is north as indicated by the compass. It does NOT indicate true north; it is supposed to indicate magnetic north, but NOT necessarily. Other magnetic fields and metal in the vicinity of the compass (like that of the boat, its equipment and electric wiring) may influence the compass needle's "reading" of the earth's magnetic field. The degree of influence varies from ship to ship. This difference (between magnetic north and compass north) is called "**DEVIATION**." The difference between true north and magnetic north is called "**VARIATION**." This all means that, to find my true direction, when using a compass and map, **I need to CORRECT for the deviation and the variation. If this is not kept in mind, I may THINK I'm sailing on course when I'm actually FAR OFF COURSE!** For instance, the variation from true north and magnetic north in South Africa is 23 degrees West!!

God tells us in the book of Proverbs that "there is a way that **SEEMS** RIGHT to a man, but in the end it leads to DEATH" (16:23). **We need to make very sure that we are not deviating from God's way by the magnetic pull of the world and the things of this world – the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life** (1 John 2:16). In "*The Message*" translation of the Bible this magnetic pull of the world is described as: "wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important..." (1 John 2:16). The above-mentioned example furthermore showed how a **SMALL INTRUSION** (like the tip of a knife) can cause deviation and disaster!



In the book “*A New Compass for Seamen*,” John Flavel’s words are like a shining lighthouse on this topic. In it he speaks about the necessity of the compass. He says:

*“To sea without a compass none dare go:
Our course without the Word is even so.”*

OBSERVATION: Of great use and necessity is the compass to seamen! Though they can coast a little way by the shore, yet they dare not venture far into the ocean without it. **It is their guide**, and directs and shapes their course for them. And if by the violence of the wind and weather they are driven beside their due course, yet by the help of this they are reduced, and brought to rights again. It is wonderful to consider, how, by the help of this guide, they can run in a direct line many hundred leagues, and at last fall right with the smallest island; which is in the ocean comparatively, but as the head of a small pin upon a table.

APPLICATION: **What the compass and all other mathematical instruments are to the navigator, that and much more is the Word of God to us in our course to heaven.** This is our compass to steer our course by, and it is truly touched; he that orders his conversation by it shall safely arrive in heaven at last, Gal. 6:6 “As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy.”

This Word is as necessary to us in our way to glory, as a lamp or lantern is in a dark night, Psalm 119::105; that is a light shining in a dark place, till the light of dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts, 2 Peter 1:19. **If any that profess to know it and own it as a rule, miss out on heaven at last, let them not blame the word for misguiding them, but their own neglect and deceitful hearts, that shuffle in and out, and shape not their course and their conversation according to its prescriptions.**

What blame can you lay upon the compass, if you steer not exactly by it? How many are there, that neglecting this rule, will coast it to heaven by their own reason? No wonder such fall short, and perish in the way. **This is a faithful guide, and brings all that follow it to a blessed end;** “Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.” Psalm 73:24. The whole hundred and nineteenth Psalm is spent in commendation of its excellency and usefulness. **Luther professed that**

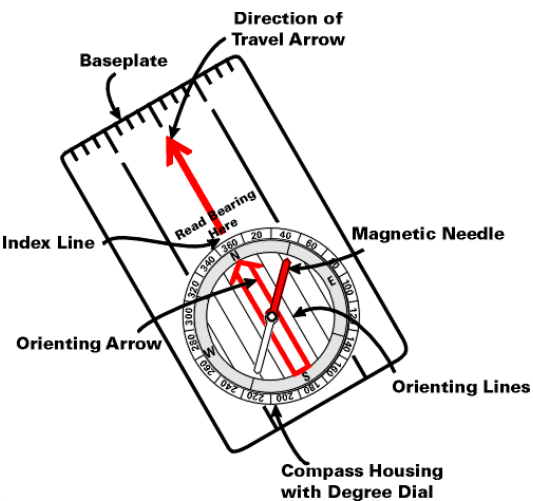
he prized it so highly that he would not take the whole world in exchange for one leaf of it. Lay but this rule before you, and walk accurately in it, and you cannot be out of the way to heaven, Psalm 119:30, "I have chosen the way of truth, Thy judgment have I laid before me." Some indeed have opened their detracting blasphemous mouths against it... And the Papists generally slight it, making it a lame, imperfect rule: yea, making their own traditions the touchstone of doctrines, and foundation of faith. ...But those that have thus slighted it, and followed the by-paths unto which their corrupt hearts have led them, they take not hold of the paths of life, and are now in the depths of hell. **All other lights to which men pretend, in the neglect of this, are but false fires that will lead men into pits and bogs of destruction at last.**

REFLECTION: And is Thy Word a compass, to direct my course to glory? O where am I then like to arrive at last, that in all my course have neglected it, and steered according to the counsel of my own heart! **Lord, I have not made Thy Word the man of my counsel, but consulted with flesh and blood;** I have not enquired at this oracle, nor studied it, and made it the guide of my way, but walked after the sight of my eyes and the lust of my heart. Whither, Lord! Can I come at last, but to hell, after this way of reckoning? **Some have slighted Thy Word professedly, and I have slighted it practically.** I have a poor soul embarked for eternity, it is now floating on a dangerous ocean, rocks and sands on every side, and I go a-drift before every wind of temptation, and know not where I am. Ah, Lord! Convince me of the danger of this condition. O convince me of my ignorance in Thy Word, and the fatal consequence of the issue thereof. **Lord, let me now resolve to study, prize, and obey it; hide it in my heart, that I may not sin against it. Open my understanding, that I may understand the Scriptures; open my heart to entertain it in love. O Thou that hast been so gracious to give a perfect rule, give me also a perfect heart to walk by the rule to glory!**

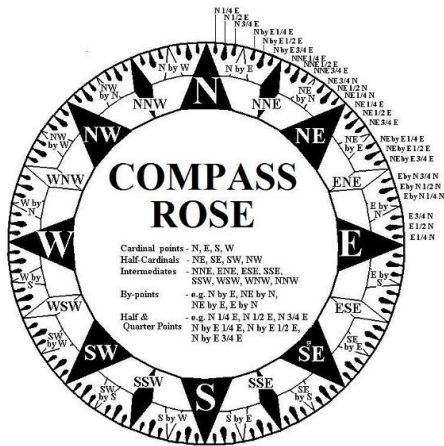
THE POEM:

This world's a sea, wherein a num'rous fleet
Of ships are under sail. Here you shall meet
Of ev'ry rate and size; frigates, galleons,
The nimble ketches, and small pickeroons:
Some bound to this port; some where winds and weather
Will drive them, they are bound they know not whither.

Christ's Compass is the Word...



The Word is Christ's Compass



Some steer away from heaven, some for hell;
To which some steer, themselves can hardly tell.
The winds do shape their course, which tho' it blow
From any point, before it they must go.

**They are directed by the wind and tide,
That have no compass to direct and guide:**

For want of this must run themselves aground,
Brave ships are cast away, poor souls are drown'd,

**Thy Word our compass is, to guide our way
To glory; it reduces such as stray.**

Lord, let Thy Word dwell richly in my heart.

And make me skilful in this heavenly art:

O let me understand and be so wise,

To know upon what point my country lies:

And having set my course directly thither,

Great God preserve me in the foulest weather.

By reason, some will coast it, but I fear,

Such coasters never will drop anchor there.

**Thy word is truly touched and still directs
A proper course, which my base heart neglects.**

Lord, touch my iron heart and make it stand

Pointing to Thee its loadstone. To that land

Of rest above, let ev'ry tempest drive

My soul, where it would rather be than live.

“Lord, please touch my iron heart as well. May the Lord Jesus be its loadstone too. May HE attract me to HIM. May HE be my attraction. May I be pulled to Him. May His compass always point me to Him. May He be my Goal, my End, my All...”

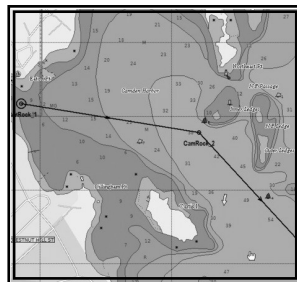


***A Christian's Compass
is Christ
and His Word!***

8. USE THE MARINER'S MAP

I may be in the boat, with the compass in my hand, but how do I know which way to go to reach my destination? How do I know when to change, and in which direction? I can't just go and "hope for the best"...! No, **I need a MAP (a chart)!**

A map shows the seas, the land, the coastlines, contour lines, prevailing currents, islands, coral reefs, rocks, wrecks, harbours, lighthouses, and buoys. It shows where there is deep water, shallow (under 20 feet deep) water, and where a boat would be "out of the water" at low tide! It also shows true north, magnetic north and the variation on the "compass rose" on the map—which is essential to using your compass correctly and navigating accurately. It further shows the longitude and latitude lines (which help to indicate position), and distance in nautical miles (one nautical mile = 1852m).



By itself, a map or a compass is of little use, but **used together, it is a great tool!** Spiritually speaking, **the mariner's map is the Word of God.** As we read and study the Word of God (with the help of our Navigator, the Holy Spirit), we see where we are, our destination (heaven and Him) and the Way to get there. The Lord Jesus said: "I am the

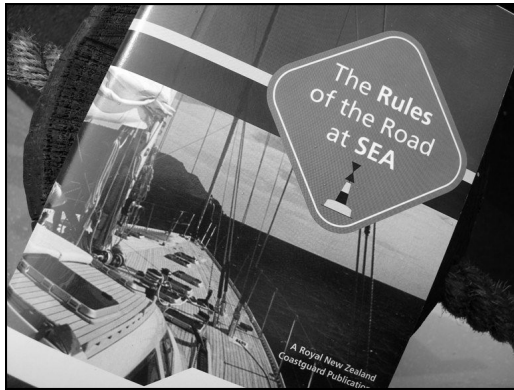
Way" (John 14:6). We also see the dangers (the hidden rocks, the reefs, the currents, the wrecks, the low tide markings, etc.) and the warning signals (the lighthouses and the buoys). *We see the difference between true north and magnetic north, the difference between the true Christian life and the worldly, deviated Christian life.* We learn about the difference between the common and the vile, the holy and the profane (Ezekiel 44:23). We see "the world" and "the world to come..."

The Word of God is Christ's Chart; it is the missionary mariner's map. It is so rich and full and sufficient! It is able to keep me on

course. It is able to bring me safely to my Heavenly Harbour! It is able to show me all the dangers on the way! O friends, let us read it and study it and use it, and adjust our course to it! Let us live by it and sail by it! Let us, through it, be led to Him!

9. OBEY THE “*RULES OF THE ROAD*” AT SEA

Though there are no roads and road signs out at sea, there ARE “roads” and “rules of the road”... This is also how it is in life. **We may not see the “road” and “road signs” with our physical eyes, but there ARE “roads” the Lord wants us to be in, and there are “rules of the road” that He wants us to follow...!** If we don’t, it leads to disaster—either a collision, or getting stuck on a sandbank, or going shipwreck on the rocks. **It is easy to obey when we love God, but often people think that it’s easier to disobey. It costs more to disobey than to obey! It pays more to obey than to disobey!** God says: “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—the blessing if you obey...” (Deut. 11:26,27).



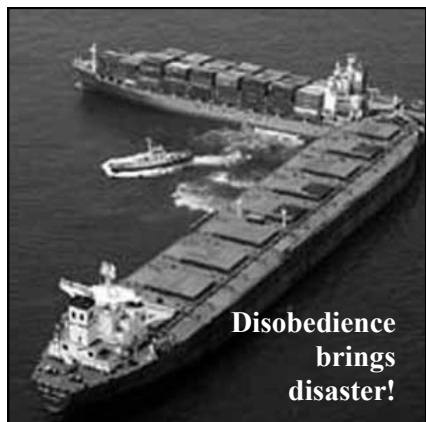
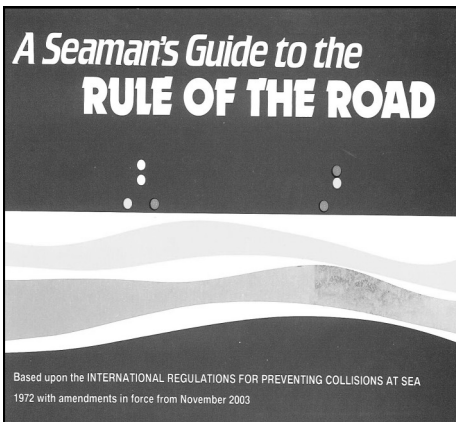
All sailors need to know and obey the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, called “**COLREGs**”. Some of these “rules of the road” at sea are:

- Vessels must keep a proper look-out at all times.
- Vessels must proceed at a safe speed depending on the circumstance.
- A vessel must identify the risk of collision and in good time make

necessary alteration in course and/or speed to avoid a collision.

- “**Give way to port**” – this means that if two ships approach each other from opposite directions, the one or the other (or both) should give way by changing course to the left (port) side. This will prevent collision. If they give way to “starboard” (right), they will collide!
- “**Always keep your lights on** – from before sunset to after sunrise”. Do not let your light go out, it may cause an accident! Furthermore, the light’s configuration should indicate the TYPE of ship it is, just as your life will indicate the type of person you are...!
- “**Blow the fog-horn** or ring the bell regularly in fog.” This will indicate your presence, caution other ships and help prevent collision.
- “**RIGHT-OF-WAY rules**” are very important. It differs slightly with different types of boats and will not be discussed here, except to say that there are clear rules that indicate when and how you must hold back, slow down, and give way to another boat. A Christian recognizes the relevance of this. **In life, we need to know when to hold back, slow down and give others the right-of-way. We need to know when to draw back that they can go forward, ...and when to hold our tongue that they may speak.** Jesus taught us to deny ourselves and to follow Him. Paul said: “***So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you***” (2 Corinthians 4:12). That was his constant choice—for the sake of others and of God. He denied himself, died to himself, and wanted to see others go forward on their voyage to Heaven... May the Lord help me to be like that too.

I can only sail successfully if and when I **OBEY** the “rules of the road” at sea—to God’s glory.



10. READ THE DAILY NAVIGATIONAL WARNINGS...!

On a daily basis, navigational warnings are sent to ships. These “NAV-WARNINGS” need to be received, printed out, carefully read, ...and acted on!! This is very important. For instance, a container can come loose and fall off a cargo ship during a storm. This container (which is as big as a garage!) can be floating **just under the surface—in the shipping lane!!!** This can cause a serious accident! Such a danger will be reported in the **daily navigational warning** so that an accident can be avoided, until the container is sunk and out of the way.

The **daily navigational warnings** may also include information about rough seas, high swells, storms, ships that have gone down, survivors in lifeboats, cyclones, hurricanes, etc.

The warnings are sent out to help prevent accidents and disasters. It’s meant to enable seafarers to take the necessary precautions and to sail safely and successfully. But, to do that, **it needs to be READ DAILY and ACTED ON!**

That’s why God says: “**Seek ye out of the book of the Lord and READ**” (Isaiah 34:16). **It’s in and through His Word that we are warned, prepared, alerted, equipped and made ready... to face whatever may come our way, or to avoid it as FAR as possible.** We read in Psalm 19 that the Word of the Lord is perfect, trustworthy, right, radiant, sure, altogether righteous... “**By them is your servant warned**; in keeping them there is great reward” (v 11).

To spiritual seafarers these **daily navigational warnings** may come through (amongst others) the regular reading of the Bible, the regular fellowship with other believers, the regular listening to godly radio-programs, the regular receiving of godly newsletters and circulars, the regular hearing of God’s Word through sermons, the regular reading of Christian biographies and devotional books, and (especially) through the regular, DAILY times of fellowship alone with God.

Andrew Murray says that “**there is ONE lesson that all young Christians should learn, namely this—the absolute necessity of fellowship with Jesus EACH DAY.**” He says: “Time alone with the Lord Jesus

EACH DAY is the indispensable condition of growth and power.”

Another well-known spiritual seafarer said: **“Next to receiving Christ as savior and claiming the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we know of no act that brings greater good to ourselves or others than the determination to keep the morning watch, and spend the first half hour of the day alone with God.”** Ralph Cushman put it this way:

“I met God in the morning

When the day was at its best,
And His presence came like glory
Of the sunrise in my breast.

All day long the Presence lingered,
All day long He stayed with me,
And we sailed in perfect calmness
O’er a very troubled sea.

Other ships were blown and battered,
Other ships were sore distressed.
But the winds that seemed to drive them,
Brought to us a peace and rest.

Then I thought of other mornings,
With a keen remorse of mind.
When I too, had loosed the moorings
With the Presence left behind.

And I think I know the secret,
Learned from many a troubled way:

You must seek God in the morning
If you want Him through the day.”

In fellowship with Him we receive warnings and wisdom – to face today’s storms or stillness. In fellowship with Him we hear Him say to us: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Is. 41:10); “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you” (Is.43:2a); “...apart from Me there is no Savior” (Is.43:11)...

11. SET MY SAILS CORRECTLY !

This is extremely important! It is one of the key principles of successful sailing. Ella W. Wilson said:

One ship drives east and another drives west
with the selfsame winds that blow;
**'Tis the set of the sails
and not the gales
which tell us the way to go.**

Another spiritual seafarer put it slightly differently. We'll do well if we hide this word in our heart and use it in our hand, day after day. He said:

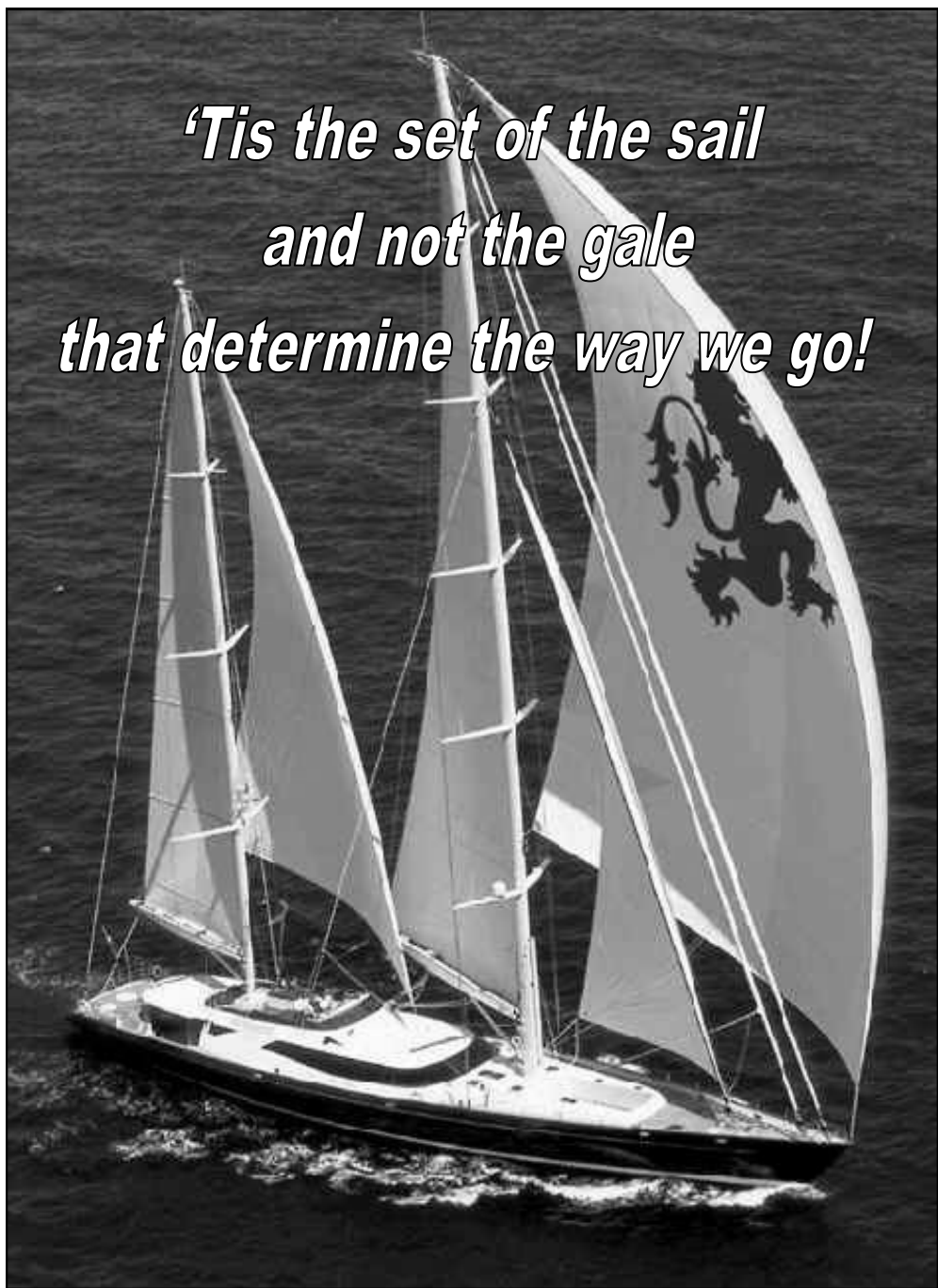
**'Tis the set of the sail
and not the gale
that determines the way we go!**

Based in this physical and spiritual principle, A.W. Tozer (who was one of God's successful seamen) said: **"Let us, then, set out sails in the will of God. If we do this we will certainly find ourselves moving in the right direction, no matter which way the wind blows"!**

But what does it mean to "set our sails"? To understand this, we need to briefly consider a few points relating to sails. These "sail-facts" are from "*Fast Track to Sailing*", the handbook for America's number one sailing school:

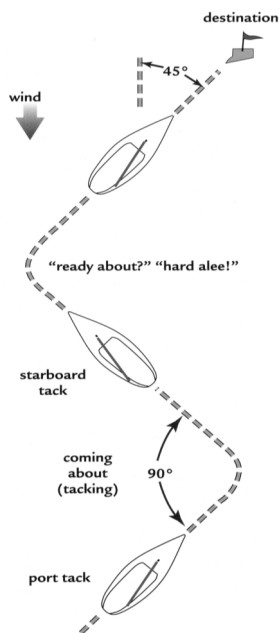
- ☒ **Sails** are a sailboat's **engine**.
- ☒ The **wind** is the engine's **fuel**.
- ☒ To detect the wind's **direction** is crucial.
- ☒ The **relationship** between the wind and the sails is the key to sailing.
- ☒ Facing the wind, to fill the sails, you need to **place the boat at an angle** of at least 45 degrees to the wind.
- ☒ As you sail along, you need to "make little adjustments" to ensure that your sails are **trimmed properly**, otherwise you will sail slower than you should.
- ☒ Trimming your sails means **adjusting your sails** for wind direc-

*'Tis the set of the sail
and not the gale
that determine the way we go!*



tion and strength.

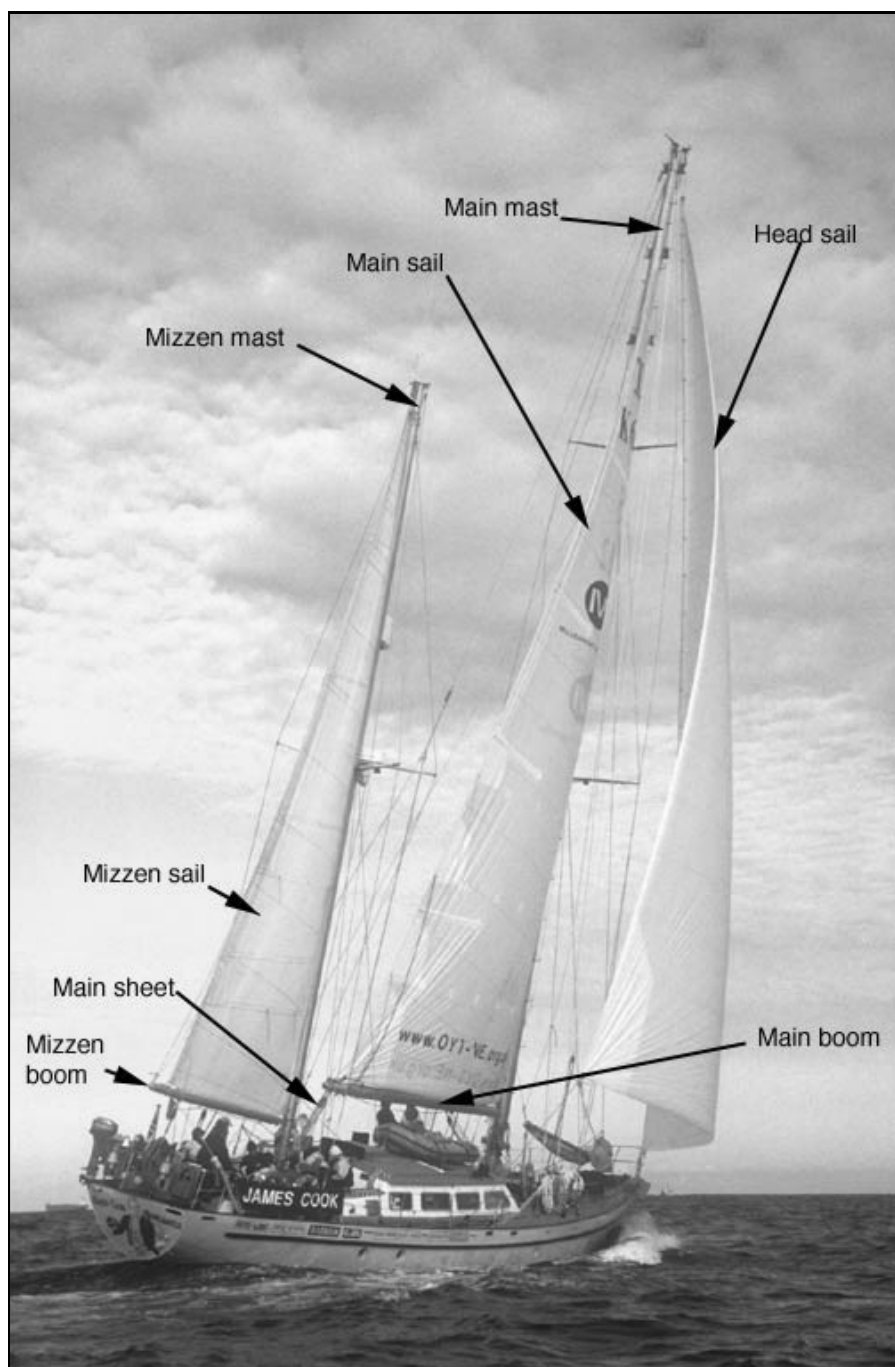
- ☒ Wind does NOT simply push the sails.
- ☒ **Wind creates “lift”**, it does not only exert a sideways force on the sails, but also a “**forward pull**” – because of the “lift”.
- ☒ The “lift” is caused by the flow of air (the wind) over the surface of the sail – just like with the air flowing over the surface of the wings of an airplane! **This is the reason why it is possible for a boat to actually sail against the prevailing wind!** It’s done by following a zig-zag course *against the wind*. Such a “series of tacks” is called a “beat” or beating to windward.” Put in plain words: “We can beat the wind, we can go against the wind – and still reach our destination!”

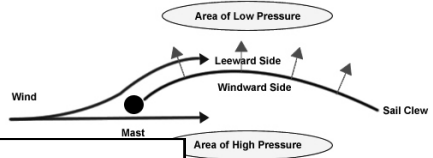
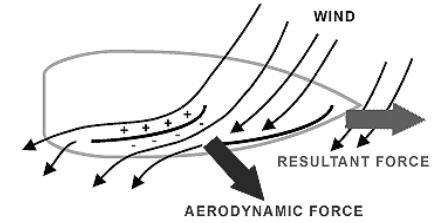
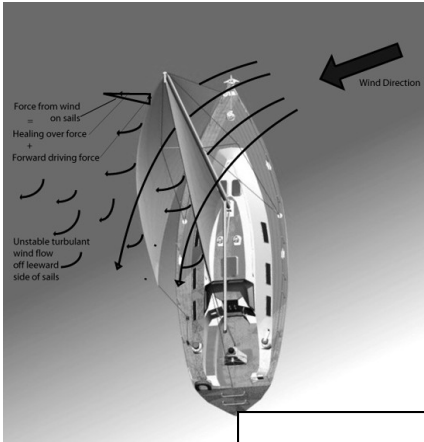


To do this, we need to “set our sails” correctly. It means that the sails are put up and opened up, facing the best direction, at a very specific angle to the wind, and with just the correct tightness – to result in the maximum effect towards achieving the goal of reaching your destination safely...For instance, as the velocity of the wind increases, you need to adjust the draft (the “belly”) of your sails for the best efficiency. A full sail (with deep draft) is like first gear. A flat sail (with a shallow-draft) is used like high gear in a car... Now, we can see and understand more clearly that, indeed, “...’Tis the set of the sail, and not the gale that determines the way we go”! It’s easy to go forward toward my destination when there is a favourable “tail”-wind blowing (a wind from astern, from the “back”), but when there’s an unfavourable “head”-wind blowing (from ahead, from the

“front”), it’s not so easy to keep on course and to keep going forward. This is when the set of the sails are of paramount importance. **Irrespective of the direction from which the wind blows, if my sails are set correctly, I’ll go forward!**

This is true for life. Irrespective of the winds that may blow in my life – be it winds of opposition, or persecution, or trials, or criticism, or gossip,

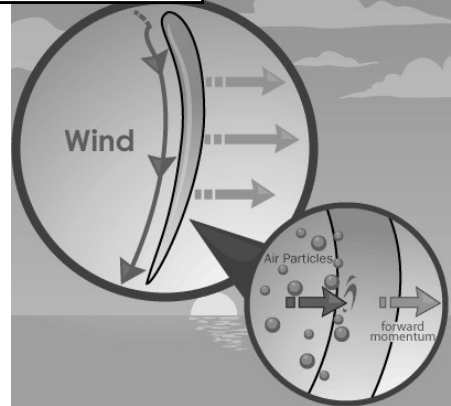
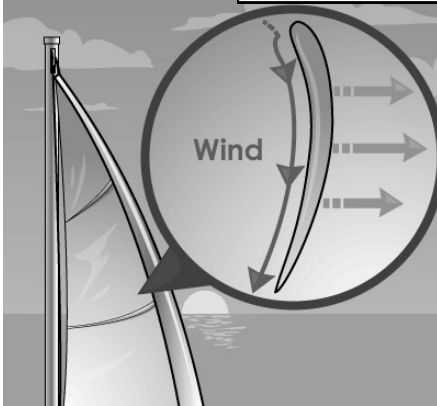




Wind creates "pull"

How Sailboats Work - Th

©2008 HowStuffWorks



Well trimmed sails!



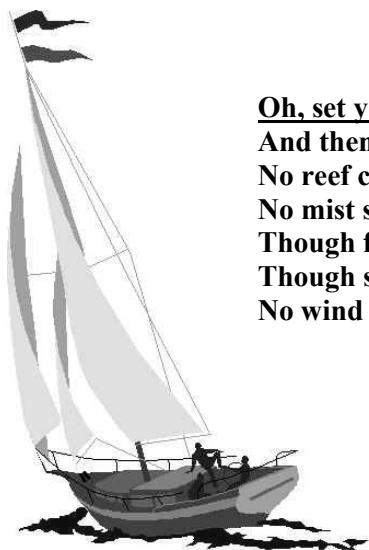
I've set my sails
in the will of God!

**I've set my sails
in the will of God**

or temptations, or winds of demonic attacks, ...or winds of change (worldly change) – **I must keep sailing in the right direction, God’s direction for my life! I must sail AGAINST the contrary winds, AGAINST the worldly winds, AGAINST the winds of wickedness, AGAINST the winds of willfulness and waywardness. If my sails are set to the will of God, it will be possible, it will be done!**

The reason is: there is “another law” than the law of the wind, a “law of God” - that even *uses* the contrary wind to cause a “lift”, enabling me to sail against the wind! This illustrates what we read in Romans 8:2, that the “law of the Spirit of life” is stronger than the “law of sin and death”, through Christ Jesus!

I think, this is what Annie Johnson Flint meant when she wrote the following beautiful poem:



Oh, set your sail to the heavenly gale
And then, no matter what winds prevail,
No reef can wreck you, no calm delay;
No mist shall hinder, no storm shall stay;
Though far you wander and long you roam
Though salt sea sprays and o’er white sea foam,
No wind that can blow but shall speed you Home.

I’m sure you want to say with me: “Thank you, Lord!” Furthermore, in his book “*Navigation Spiritualized*”, (for which I would also like to say: “Thank You, Lord!”) John Flavel (1628-1691) calls such a “heavenly gale” (as mentioned above) a “trade-wind”. He says:

**“Ships make much way when they a trade-wind get:
With such a wind the saints have ever met.”**

“OBSERVATION: Though in most parts of the world the winds are variable, and sometimes blow from every part of the compass, by reason whereof sailing is slow and dangerous; yet about the Equinoctial, seamen meet with a trade-wind blowing, for the most part one way; and there the sail jocund before it, and scarce need to lower a topsail for some hundreds of leagues.

APPLICATION: **Although the people of God meet with many seeming rubs and set-backs in the way to heaven, which are like contrary winds to a ship, yet they are from the day of their conversion to the day of their complete salvation, never out of a trade-wind’s way to heaven.** Rom. 8:21, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose.” This is a most precious Scripture, pregnant with its consolation to all believers in all conditions, a pillar of comfort to all distressed saints: Let us look a little nearer at it.

“*We Know*” - Mark the certainty and evidence of the proposition, which is not built upon a guess or remote probability, but upon the knowledge of the saints; we know it, and that partly by Divine revelation, God has told us so; partly by our own experience we find it so.

“*That all things*” - Not only things that lie in a natural and direct tendency to our good; as ordinances, promises, blessing, etc. but even such things as have no natural fitness and tendency to such an end, as afflictions, temptations, corruptions, desertions, etc. all these things help onward. They

“*Work together*” – Not all of them directly, and of their own nature and inclination; but by being over-ruled and determined to such an issue by the gracious hand of God. Nor yet do they work out such goods to the saints singly and apart, but as adjuvant causes or helps, standing under, and working in subordination to the supreme and principal cause of their happiness.

Now the most seeming opposite things, yea, sin in itself, which in its own

nature is really opposite to their good, yet eventually contributes to it. Afflictions and desertions seem to work against us, but being once put into the rank and order of causes, they work together with such blessed instruments, as word and prayer to an happy issue. And though the faces of these things that so agree and work together, look contrary ways, yet there are, as it were, secret chains and connections of providence betwixt them, to unite them in their issue. There may be many instruments employed about one work, and yet not communicate counsels, or hold intelligence with each other. Joseph's brethren, the Midianites, Potiphar, etc. knew not one another's mind, nor aimed at one end, (much less the end that God brought about by them) one acts out of revenge, another for gain, a third out of policy; yet all meet together at last, in that issue God had designed to bring about by them, even Joseph's advancement. **Even so it is here, Christian, there are more instruments at work for thine eternal good than thou art aware of.**

REFLECTION: Cheer up, then, O my soul, and lean upon this pillar of comfort in all distresses. Here is a promise for me, ...that ...turns all into gold that it touches. This promise is my security, however things go in the world, my God "will do me no hurt," Jer. 25:6. Nay, he will do me good by every dispensation. **O that I had but an heart to make all things work for His glory, that thus causeth everything to work for my good. My God, dost Thou turn everything to my advantage? O let me return all to Thy praise; and if by everything Thou work my eternal good, then let me in every thing give thanks.**

But ah! How foolish and ignorant have I been? Even as a beast before Thee. How hath my heart been disquieted, and apt to repine at Thy dispensations, when they have crossed my will? Not considering that my God faithfully pursues my good, even in those things that cross, as well as in that which pleases me.

Blessed Lord! What a blessed condition are all Thy people in, who are within the line of this promise? All things friendly and beneficial to them; friends helpful; enemies helpful; everything conspiring, and conducing to their happiness. With others it is not so; nothing works for their good; nay, every thing works against it. Their very mercies are snares, and their prosperity destroys them, Prov. 1:32. Even the blessed gospel itself is a savor of death to them. When evil befalls them, "it is an only evil," Ezek.

7:5, that is not turned into good to them; and as their evils are not turned into good, so all their good is turned into evil. As this promise hath an influence into all that concerns the people of God, so the curse hath an influence into all the enjoyments of the wicked. O my soul, bless the Lord, who hath cast thy lot into such pleasant place, and given thee such a glorious heritage, as this promise is.

THE POEM:

When once the dog-star rises, many say,
Corn ripens then apace, both night and day.
Souls once in Christ, that morning-star lets fall
Such influences on them, that all
God's dispensations to them, sweet or sour,
Ripen their souls for glory ev'ry hour.
**All their afflictions, rightly understood,
Are blessings; ev'ry wind will blow some good.**
Sure at their troubles saints would never grudge,
Were sense deposed, and faith made the judge.
Falls make them warier, amend their pace;
When gifts puff up their hearts, and weaken grace.
Could Satan see the issue and th' event
Of his temptations, he would scarcely tempt.
**Could saints but see what fruits their troubles bring,
Amidst those troubles they would shout and sing.**
**O sacred wisdom! Who can but admire
To see how Thou dost save from fire by fire!**
**No doubt but saints in glory wond'ring stand
At those strange methods few now understand.**

Father—God, thank You for Your amazing faithfulness, Your wonderful promises, Your continued love and victorious working, also in me. Thank You that I can know (with a happy heart) that “in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose...” (Romans 8:28;NIV).

While it is so that **God works in all things, we also** need to learn how to work in all things (with Him, and against the enemy of our souls). We also have something to learn to do. We need to learn (as was said earlier) how to set our sails in such a way that, irrespective of the winds that blow,

we'll go forward, we'll still sail towards Heaven!

In this masterpiece on how to sail successfully to heaven John Flavel gives us more information on the importance of **the setting of the sails**, and what **WE** are to do. He says:

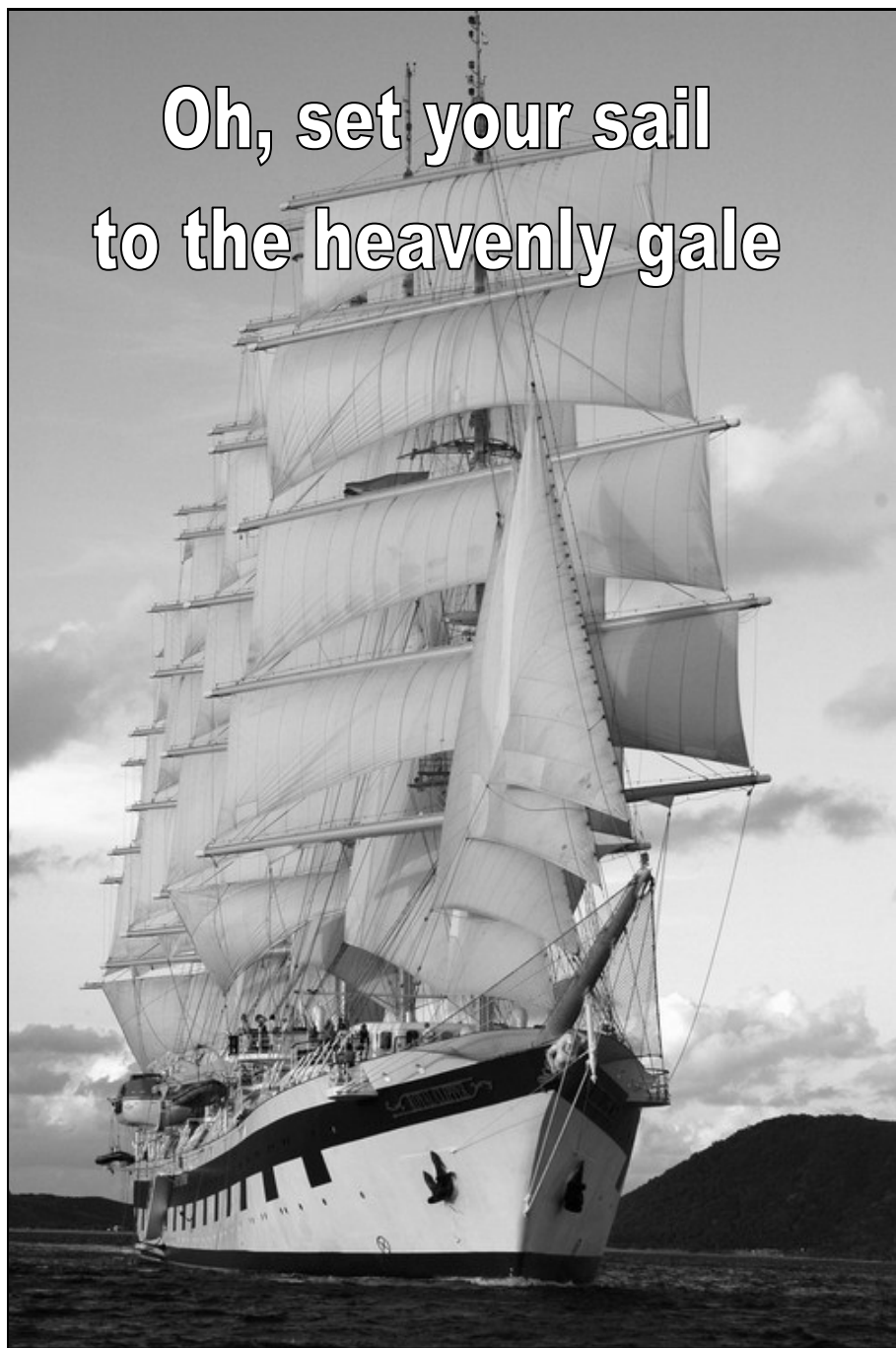
**“The navigator shifts his sails to take
All winds, but that which for his soul doth make.”**

OBSERVATION: The mariner wants (lacks) no skill and wisdom to improve several winds, and make them serviceable to his end; a bare side wind, by his skill in shifting and managing the sails, will serve his turn: **He will not lose the advantage of one breath or gale**, that may be useful to him. **I have many times wondered to see two ships sailing in a direct counter motion, by one and the same wind: Their skill and wisdom herein is admirable.**

APPLICATION: Thus prudent and skilful are men in secular and lower matters, and yet how ignorant and unskillful in the great and everlasting affairs of their souls! All their invention, judgment, wit, and memory, seem to be pressed for the service of the flesh. They can learn an art quickly, and arrive to a great deal of exactness in it; but in soul-matters, no knowledge at all. They can understand the Equator, Meridian, and Horizon; by the first they can tell the latitude of any place, south, or north, measuring it by the degrees in the Meridian; by the second they can tell you the longitude of a place, east and west, from the Meridian, measuring it by the degrees of the Equator; and by the third they can discern the divers risings and settings of the stars. And so in other arts and sciences, we find men endowed with rare abilities, and singular sagacity. Some have piercing apprehensions, solid judgments, stupendous memories, rare invention, and excellent elocution; **but put them upon any spiritual supernatural matter, and the weakest Christian, even a babe in Christ, shall excel them therein**, and give a far better account of regeneration, the work of grace, the life of faith, than these can. 1 Cor. 1:26. “Not many wise men after the flesh ... but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world.”

REFLECTION: How inexcusable, then, art thou, O my soul! And how mute and confounded must thou needs stand before the bar of God in that

Oh, set your sail
to the heavenly gale



great day? **Thou hadst a talent of natural parts committed to thee, but which way have they been improved?** I had an understanding indeed, but it was not sanctified; a memory, but it was like a sieve, that let go the corn, and retained nothing but the husks and chaff; wit and invention, but alas, none to do myself good. Ah! How will these rise in judgment against me, and stop my mouth? What account shall I give for them in that day?

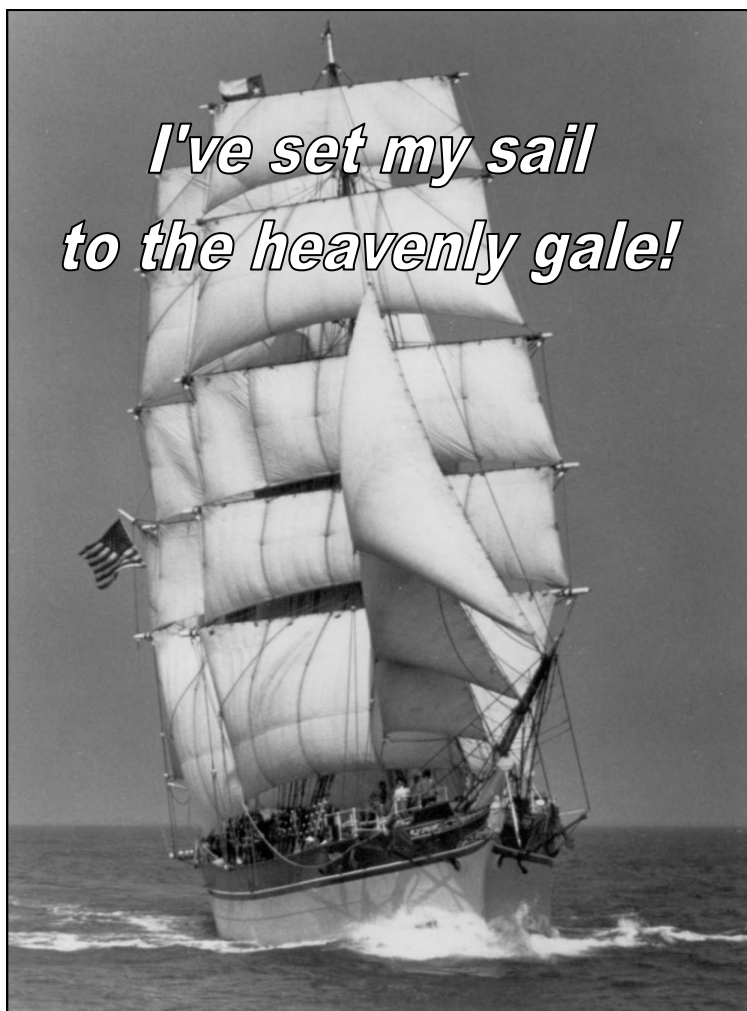
Again, **are men (otherwise prudent and skilful) such sots and fools in spiritual things; then let the poor, weak Christian, whose natural parts are blunt and dull, admire the riches of God's free grace to him. O what an astonishing consideration is this!** That God should pass by men of the profoundest natural parts, and choose me, even poor me, whose natural faculties and endowments, compared with theirs, are but as lead to gold! Thus under the law he passed by the lion and eagle, and chose a lamb and a dove. O how should it make me to advance grace, as Christ doth upon the same account, Matt. 11:25, "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and **revealed them to babes.**" **And let it ever be a humbling consideration to me; for who made me to differ? Is not this one principle thing God aims at, in calling such as I am; that boasting may be excluded, and Himself alone exalted?**

THE POEM:

**One thing doth very much affect my mind,
To see the seaman husband ev'ry wind;
With excellent art he shifts the sails, and knows
How to improve the fairest wind that blows.
If a direct, or fore right gale he want,
A side wind serves his turn, tho' ne'er so scant.
And will not this one day in judgment rise
Against your souls? Ah! Can you be so wise
In smaller matters; what, and yet not know
How to improve fresh gales of grace that blow?
Fast moor'd in sin your wind-bound souls can lie,
And let these precious gales rise, blow, and die.
Sometimes on your affections you may feel
Such gracious breathings: Ah, but hearts of steel,
They move you not, nor cause you to relent;**

Tho' able, like Elijah's wind, to rent
The rocks asunder: If you do not prize
Those breathings, other winds will shortly rise,
And from another quarter; those once gone,
Then next look out for an Euroclydon,
A dreadful storm: how soon, no man can tell;
But when it comes, 'twill blow such souls to hell.

Oh, may we set our sails to the will of God and to the Wind of God, while
it is still the time of grace!



12. USE EVERY GOD-GIVEN OPPORTUNITY!

Take note, every **God-given** opportunity. We read in the Bible: “But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord...” (Jonah 1:3). **He took an opportunity out of the will of God – and ended up in a storm**, then in the sea, then in the stomach of a big fish, then in “the depth of the grave” (Jonah 2:2). **We need to *shun* the opportunities Satan brings across our way.** We need to **recognize** it, **refuse** it, **reject** it, **rebuke** it, and **run** away from it. Our life depends on it! The success of our voyage depends upon it!

Jonah’s “opportunity” was clearly out of the will of God, but some opportunities may **appear** good and godly, when they in actual fact are **not**. Think of the voyage of Paul (as a prisoner) to Rome. When they were at a place called “Fair Haven”, he warned them *not* to sail further (Acts 27:11). But, the Bible says: “When a gentle south wind began to blow, they (the centurion, the pilot, the owner of the ship, and ‘the majority’) **thought** they had obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed” (Acts 27:13). But, ...they ended up in a big storm! They lost their cargo, the ship’s tackle, ...and the ship itself! **What SEEMED right in the beginning, ended up worse than the bad situation that Jonah was in! That’s the outcome of taking “opportunities” that are out of the will of God!**

On the other hand, when **GOD** gives us opportunities, we need to respond to it with all our heart! When He opens a door for us, we need to go through it. When He shows the way He wants us to go, we need to take it. When He gives us a task (which is an opportunity to serve Him and others), we must do it. **When He gives us a favourable wind in a certain direction, corresponding with His will for us, we need to set our sails to it and GO AHEAD!**

Once more, let’s listen to John Flavel. In “*Navigation Spiritualized*” he writes the following about **taking the opportunity of wind and tide**...

**“If seamen lose a gale, there they may lie;
The soul, when once becalm’d in sin, may die.”**

OBSERVATION: Seamen are very watchful to take their opportunity of wind and tide, and it much concerns them so to be; the neglect of a few hours, sometimes loses them their passage, and proves a great detriment to them. They know the wind is an uncertain, variable thing; they must take it when they may: they are unwilling to lose one flow, or breath, that may be serviceable to them. If a prosperous gale offers, and they not ready, it repents them to lose it....



APPLICATION: There are also seasons, and gales of grace, for our souls, golden opportunities of salvation afforded to men, the neglect of which proves the loss and ruin of souls. God hath given unto man a day of visitation, which He hath limited, Heb. 4:7, and keeps an exact account of every year, month, and day that we have enjoyed it, Luke 13:7, Jer. 25:3, Luke 19:42. The longest date of it can be but the time of this life; this is our day to work in, Job 9:4, and upon this small wire the weight of eternity hangs. But sometimes the season of grace is ended, before the night of death comes; the accepted time is gone, men frequently out-live it, Luke 19:44, 2 Cor 6:2. Or, if the outward means of salvation be continued, yet the Spirit many times withdraws from those means, and ceases any more to strive with men: and then the blessing, power, and efficacy is gone from them, and instead thereof a curse seizeth the soul, Heb. 6:7,8 and Jer. 6:29.

Therefore it is a matter of high importance to our souls to apprehend these seasons. How pathetically doth Christ bewail Jerusalem upon this account! (Luke 19:42). “O that thou hadst know at least in this thy day, the things of thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes!” **If a company of seamen are set ashore upon some remote, uninhabited island, with this advice, to be aboard again exactly at such an hour, else they must be left behind; how doth it concern them to be punctual to their time? The lives of those men depend upon a quarter of an hour.**

Many a soul hath perished eternally, the gospel leaving them behind in their sins, because they knew not the time of their visitation.

REFLECTION: **What golden seasons for salvation hast thou enjoyed, O my soul?** What halcyon days of Gospel-light and grace hast thou had? **How have the precious gales of grace blown to no purpose upon thee!** and the Spirit waited and striven with thee in vain? “The kingdom of heaven, (being opened in the Gospel dispensation) hath suffered violence.” Multitudes have been pressing into it in my days, and I myself have sometimes been almost persuaded, and not far from the kingdom of God. I have gone as far as conviction of sin and misery, yea, I have been carried by the power of the Gospel, to resolve and purpose to turn to God, and become a new creature; but sin hath been too subtle and deceitful for me. I see my resolutions were but as an early cloud, or morning dew; and now my heart is cold and dead again, settled upon its lees. Ah! I have cause to fear and tremble, lest God hath left me under that curse, Rev. 20:11. “Let him that is filthy be filthy still.” I fear I am become as that miry place, Ezek. 47:11, that shall not be healed by the streams of the Gospel, but *given to salt*, and cursed into perpetual barrenness. Ah, Lord! Wilt Thou leave me so! and shall Thy Spirit strive no more with me? Then it had been good for me that I had never been born! Ah! If I have trifled out this season, and irrecoverably lost it, then I may take up that lamentation, Jer. 8:20, and say, **“My harvest is past, my summer is ended, and I am not saved.”**

Every creature knows its time, even the turtle, crane, and swallow, know the time of their coming, Jer. 8:7. How brutish am I, that have not known the time of my visitation! **O Thou, that art the Lord of life and time, command one gracious season more for me, and make it effectual to me, before I go hence, and be seen no more!**

THE POEM:

A fresh and whisking gale presents to-day,
But now the ship's not ready; winds must stay,
And wait the seaman's leisure. Well, to-morrow
They will put out; but then, unto their sorrow,
That wind is spent, and by that means they gain
Perchance a month's repentance, if not twain.
At last another offers, now they're gone;

But ere they gain their port, the market's done.
For ev'ry work and purpose under heav'n,
A proper time and season God hath giv'n.
The fowls of heaven, swallow, turtle, crane,
Do apprehend it, and put us to shame.
 Man hath his season too, but that mis-spent,
 There's time enough his folly to repent.
 Eternity's before him, but therein
 No more such golden hours as these have been:
 When these are pass'd away, then you shall find
 That proverb true, – *Occasion's bald behind.*
Delays are dang'rous, see that you discern
Your proper seasons: O that you would learn
This wisdom from those fools that come too late
With fruitless cries, when Christ hath shut the gate."



Oh, that we would heed God's Word: "**Today**, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7,8 and 4:7). "I tell you, **NOW** is the time of God's favor, **NOW** is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). The Heavenly Harbour is still open. God is still calling as He called to Noah: "***Come in!***" before it is too late! "***Come in*** to the Lord Jesus Christ!" "Get on board!" "Abide in Him!" "Launch out with Him!"

13. MONITOR and MAINTAIN the ship METICULOUSLY

Successful seamen regularly **monitor** all aspects of the ship, the crew and themselves. ***They monitor craft, crew and conscience!*** They monitor to see if there's any fresh sea water in the hold (indicating a little leak somewhere). They monitor the sails, the lifeboats, the ropes, the anchor, the engines (if there are engines), the victuals (the food supplies), the tiller or steering, the ship's lights, the compasses, the radar systems (if on board), the fridges, the two-way radios, the computer systems (nowadays), etc...

The monitoring is done **meticulously**. They use checklists and scheduled times and days to do it. They report their findings to the one in authority over them, who reports (eventually) to the Captain of the ship. Each one has a part to play in the monitoring. **Each one of them knows that "little leaks ignored can sink a ship"!**

This monitoring naturally leads into a **rigorous, continuous program of maintenance**. What is broken, must be fixed; what is leaking, must be repaired; what is working, must be serviced; what is redundant, must be replaced; what is lacking, must be supplied; what is weak, must be strengthened; what is old, must be renewed; what is wrong must be made right – *all for the sake of safe sailing, successful sailing...*

It's also not just **the material things** (the equipment, boat, etc.) that need monitoring and maintenance, but also **the MEN** (and women)! Their well-being, their health, their skills, their morale, their attitude and behaviour, their sense of responsibility, their performing of their duties, their precision, their discipline, their faithfulness, their commitment, their interpersonal relationships, their walk with God, their consciences – these all need constant monitoring *and* maintenance.

This applies to ALL spiritual seafarers alike – from the officers to the able seamen. **We monitor ourselves by** reading God's Word, listening to godly sermons, observing godly fellow-believers and having fellowship with them, reading biographies of others who have gone before us, and (above all) looking to the Lord Jesus as our Example. In short, we monitor ourselves by (i) examining the Scriptures (Rom. 3:20b); (ii) examining ourselves (James 1:23–25) as in a mirror, (iii) asking and allowing the Spirit of God to examine us (Ps.134:23,24), and by (iv) submitting our-

selves to the examination, feedback, guidance and correction of godly men and woman who live listening to God...

Our **spiritual maintenance** is closely linked to the same processes—through the working of the Spirit of God. John Newton (1725–1807), who was a sea-captain for some years, called this daily renewing work of the Spirit of God: “*Amazing Grace*.” He said:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed.

**Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come:
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home.**

The apostle Paul, that great “missionary mariner,” said: “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet **inwardly we are being renewed day by day**” (2 Corinthians 4:16). In “*The Inner Life*” Andrew Murray says: “It is only by fresh nourishment from God’s Word and fresh communion with God Himself in prayer, that the vigor of the spiritual life can be **maintained** and grow... A quiet time and place with the Word and prayer are the means for daily renewal.”

Furthermore, one of the most important aspects of the “maintenance” of a missionary mariner is to **maintain a clear conscience**! This is of greatest importance. We’ve seen earlier (according to 1 Timothy 1:18b-19) that if we do not hold on to faith and a good conscience, we’ll go shipwreck... In “*Navigation Spiritualized*” John Flavel urges us to **keep our conscience pure and tender, and to listen to and yield to our conscience, as God would want us to do**. He says:

My soul, art thou besieg'd
 With troubles round about;
 If thou be wise, take this advice,
 To keep these troubles out.
Wise men will keep their conscience as their eyes;
For in their conscience their best treasure lies.
See you be tender of your inward peace,
That shipwreck'd, then your mirth and joy must cease:
 If God from you your outward comforts rend,
 You'll find what need you have of such a friend.
 If this be not by sin destroy'd and lost,
 You need not fear, your peace will quit your cost.
 If you'd know how to sweeten any grief.
 Tho' ne'er so great, or to procure relief
 Against th' afflictions, which, like deadly darts,
 Most fatal are to men of carnal hearts;
Reject not that which conscience bids you chuse;
And chuse not you what conscience saith, refuse.
 If sin you must, or misery under-lie,
 Resolve to bear, and chuse the misery.

He adds the following words about my affections, my conscience and my will. They are worth careful reading, pondering and application:

A ship of greatest burthen will obey
 The rudder; he that sits at helm, may sway
 And guide its motion: If the pilot please,
 The ship bears up, against both wind and seas.
My soul's the ship, affections are its sails,
Conscience is the rudder. Ah! But Lord, what ails
 My naughty heart, to shuffle in and out,
 When its convictions bid it tack about?
 Temptations blow a counter blast, and drive
 The vessel where they please, tho' **conscience strive.**
 And by its strong persuasions it would force
 My stubborn will to steer another course.
 Lord, if I run this course, thy word doth tell
 How quickly I must needs arrive in hell.
 Then **rectify my conscience, change my will;**

**Fan in thy pleasant gales, my God, and fill
All my affections, and let nothing carry
My soul from its due course, or make it vary;
Then if the pilot's work thou wouldst perform,
I should bear bravely up against a storm.**

May the Lord use these words to help us **maintain** a clear conscience. One of the ways in which we can **monitor** if our conscience is clear, is by asking ourselves if God's blessing still rests on our lives and labours in the Lord. Once more, in "*Navigation Spiritualized*" we read:

**"Doth trading fail, and voyages prove bad;
If you cannot discern the cause, 'tis sad."**

Flavel says, "...it is evident that in all disappointments, and want (lack) of success in our callings, we ought not to stick in second causes, but to look higher, even to the hand and disposal of God: For whose it is to give the blessing, his also it is to with-hold it... This God doth as a punishment for sin, and the abuse of mercies..." He says: "My brethren, I am persuaded these are the sins among many others, that provoke the Lord to blast all your employments..."

- ◆ Our undertaking designs without prayer. Alas! How few of us begin with God!... (1 Tim. 4:5)
- ◆ Injustice and fraud in our dealings... (Hosea 12:7)
- ◆ An over-earnest endeavour after the world. Men made this their business, they will be rich...
- ◆ Lastly, our abuse of prosperity, when God gave it, making God's mercies the food and fuel of our lusts...(Deut 33:15...Ezek 16:13"

He further wrote:

There's great complaint abroad that trading's bad,
You shake your head, and cry, 'Tis sad, 'tis sad.
Merchants lay out their stock, seamen their pains,
And in their eye they both may keep their gains.
**Your fishing fails, you wonder why 'tis so,
'Tis this (saith one) or that; but I say – no,
'Twill ne'er be well till you confess and say,
It is our sin that frights the fish away.**
No wonder all goes into bags with holes,

Since so the gospel hath been in your souls.
 We kick'd like Jeshurun, when the flowing tide
 Of wealth came tumbling in, this nourish'd pride.
 'Twixt soul and body, now I wish it may
 Fare, as betwixt the Jews and us this day
**O that our outward want and loss may be
 To us a soul-enriching poverty!
 If disappointments here advance the trade
 For heaven, then complain not; you have made
 The richest voyage, and your empty ships
 Return deep laden with soul-benefits."**

May these and other considerations help us to monitor and maintain our crafts, our crew, and our consciences... When a ship's maintenance is up to date, we say that "the ship is in shape." May the Lord help us, in our voyage to heaven, to remain "**ship-shape**"— every day and every night, all the time!

The next principle for successful sailing is to...

14. LOOK at the LIGHTS!

This is of crucial importance! By looking at the right lights many a disaster can be prevented and many more can arrive happily at the heavenly harbour. We'll look at three examples, referring to (i) boat lights, (ii) harbour lights, and (iii) lighthouses:



(i) **Boat lights**. By looking at another boat's lights we can know what type of boat it is, but also which side is starboard and which side is port (when, for instance, it's coming towards our boat). Knowing this and steering correctly, following the "rules of the road," a collision will be avoided!

(ii) **Harbour lights**. The lights at the harbour mouth indicate the safe way into the harbour, as well as the safe lane in which to go. If these lights are not working correctly or not followed correctly, it leads to disaster – just outside or even inside the harbour! D.L. Moody related in one of his meetings the story of a ship wreck on a dark and tempestuous night, when

not a star was visible. “A ship was approaching Cleveland Harbour with the pilot on board. Noticing only one light – the Captain asked the pilot if he were quite sure it was Cleveland Harbour toward which they were sailing, as other lights should have been seen at the harbour mouth. The pilot replied that he was quite sure. The Captain then asked, ‘Where are the lower lights?’ To this the pilot replied, ‘Gone out, sir!’ ‘Well, then, can you make the harbour?’ was the Captain’s next question, to which the pilot replied, ‘We must, sir, or perish.’ Alas! In the darkness he missed the channel, and the ship struck a rock. Many lives were lost...”

“In his appeal, after telling the story, D.L. Moody said, **‘Brothers, the Master will take care of the great light house. Let us keep the lower lights burning!’** This inspired P.P. Bliss to write the hymn, with the chorus, ‘Let the lower lights be burning’:

*Let the lower lights be burning:
Send a gleam across the wave.
Some poor fainting, struggling seaman
You may rescue, you may save.”*

A further example of the importance of looking at the harbour lights is told by another spiritual seafarer: ...“Walking after dusk with a friend at the harbour at Teignmouth, we had our attention drawn to two prominent red lights. Our friend explained that when a ship was entering the harbour, the skipper guided it towards those danger lights so long as they appeared in line. But he must not proceed too far, so at a certain point two green lights were seen to his left in line with the ship at that point, and he then turned the ship in the direction of the green lights which led into the wharf. On one occasion, ...the skipper entrusted the wheel to his brother who was also a skilful navigator. As he was steering the ship in towards the red lights, he suddenly became aware of the beauty of the smaller lights that sparkled all along the harbour and exclaimed, ‘What a magnificent display of lights!’ ‘Never mind those lights,’ sang out his brother, ‘keep your eye on the main lights.’ ...In our lives the two main lights are the **Word of God** and



the *Spirit of God*: sometimes they are red and warn us of danger: sometimes they are green and bid us go forward.”

In “*Pearls of Great Price*”, Joni Eareckson Tada tells the following touching story of the importance of “the lower lights” at a harbour: “When I was a little girl, I loved beach camping with my family along the dunes of the Delaware shore. We would huddle around the campfire on the sand and sing:

***Brightly beams our Father’s mercies from His lighthouse evermore;
But to us He gives the keeping of the lights along the shore.***

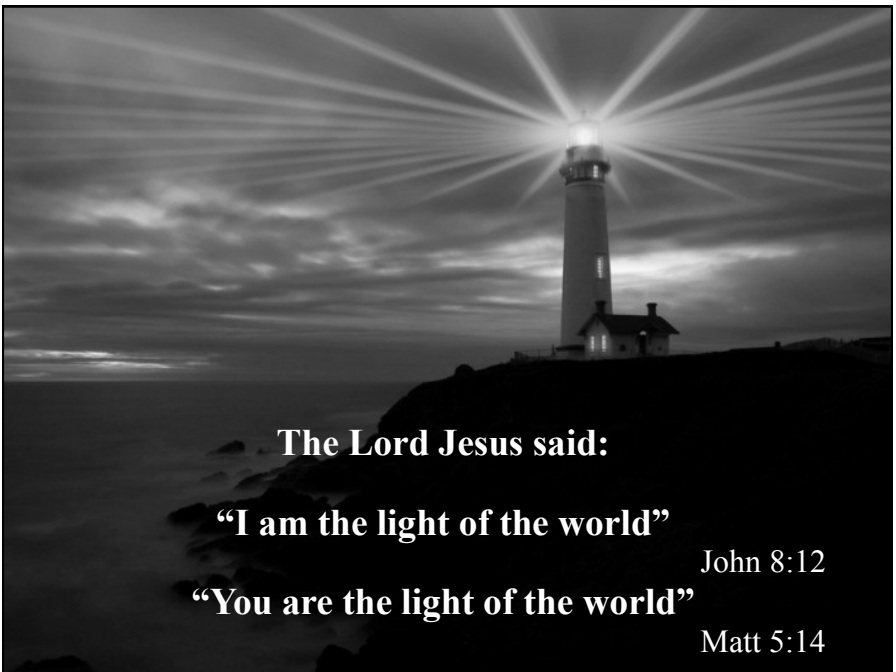
Let the lower lights keep burning, send a beam across the waves.

Some poor fainting, struggling seaman, you may rescue, you may save.

When the mist began to overtake our campfire, we trekked back to our tent on the other side of the barrier dunes. At the crest of the dune, we could see the Fenwick Island lighthouse and, straight ahead, the red and green channel markers on Indian River Bay. When I asked about the lights in the channel, Daddy explained, ‘They mark where the water is deep enough for a boat to safely sail. **If those lights go out, sailors won’t be able to tell where the sandbar is.**’ When I asked why they were called lower lights in the hymn, he told me that, ‘**God is the lighthouse and we are His lower lights. We point the way. We show where it’s safe to go.** That’s what you do, Joni,’ he smiled as we slid down the other side of the big dune.

What way can you ‘**mark a safe channel**’ for others who are younger in the faith? **Don’t be afraid to point the way. Show others where to find the safe harbor. You are the Father’s ‘lower lights’**; after all, Jesus said, ‘You are the light of the world ...**Let your light shine** before men, that they may ...praise your Father in heaven’ (Matthew 5:14,16).”

(iii) Lighthouses are used to warn ships of the danger of rocks, reefs or the shoreline. They are also used to “take a land-fix” in determining your position, course and speed in navigation. In heavy fog lighthouses also blow a foghorn to indicate the closeness of land. We can say: **“As you look and listen to a lighthouse, you can live and not die!”** While it is true in the physical realm, it is even more true in the spiritual realm... God is our Lighthouse – immovable, solid, stable, always shining! The Lord Jesus



says: “I am the Light of the world...” (John 8:12)! **A ship (and a soul) that ignores the Lighthouse will end up on the rocks!** How we thank God that He is a Lighthouse to us wherever there is danger. By looking to Him and adjusting our ways according to His light, we are safe!

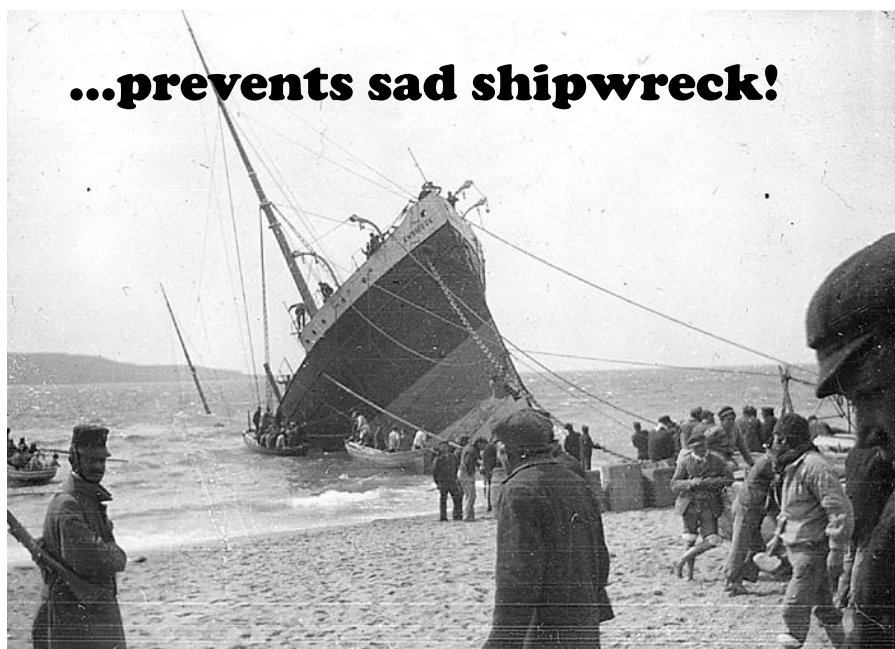
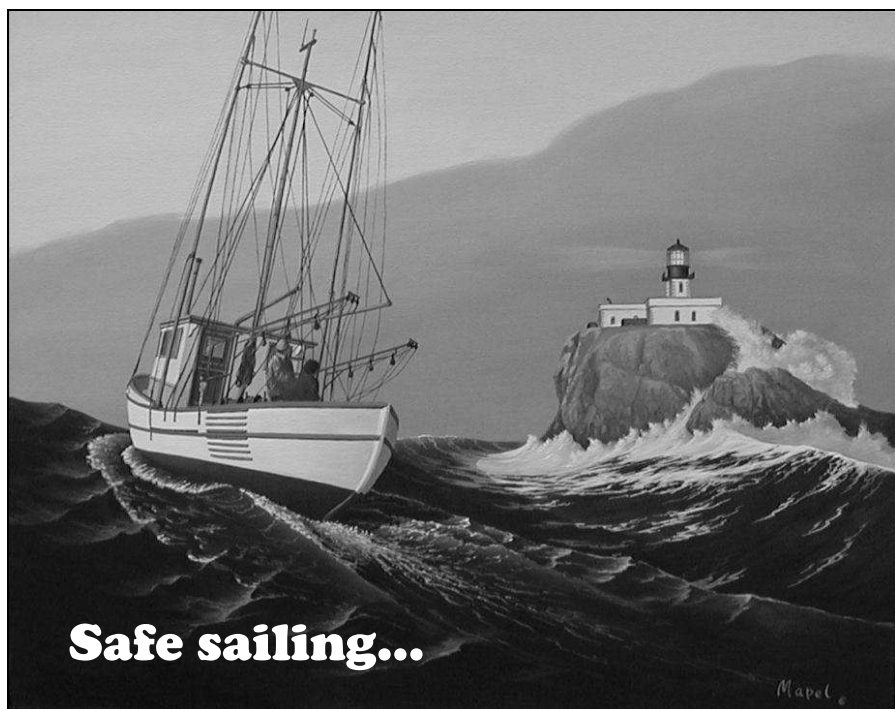
Consider this important story: “The captain of the ship looked into the dark night and saw faint lights in the distance. Immediately he told his signalman to send a message: ‘Alter your course 10 degrees south,’ Promptly a return message was received: ‘Alter *your* course 10 degrees north.’ The captain was angered; his command had been ignored. So he sent a second message: ‘Alter your course 10 degrees south—I am the captain!’ Soon another message was received: ‘Alter *your* course 10 degrees north—I am seaman third class Jones.’ Immediately the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear it would evoke: ‘Alter your course 10 degrees south—I am a battleship.’ Then the reply came: ‘Alter *your* course 10 degrees north—I am a lighthouse”!!! **We should alter our course in life by God’s lighthouse, by God’s standards, by God’s Word. If we expect Him to change His standards to suite us, we’ll end up on the rocks!**

God appoints others to also be lighthouses in this world. That’s why the Lord Jesus said: “You are the light of the world...” (Matt 5:14), ...let your light shine ...that they may see...” (Matt 5:16). This is a great responsibility!

In the 17th century wood and coal were burned to give light in the lighthouses at night. Sometimes the fires were only made with the incoming tide or when there was stormy weather. The story is told of a certain lighthouse-keeper who was constantly asked by the people of the little village to give them some coal for their fires at home. Because he did not want to offend them and wanted to please people, he used to do that. One day, though, when a storm broke out and **he had to light the fire for the lighthouse, there wasn’t enough coal...** That night, a ship ran onto the rocks and was shipwrecked! Many people lost their lives! **Seeking to please people, and not saying “No!” when you need to say “No!” can lead to disaster and spiritual shipwreck!**

May the Lord help us to **keep our light shining** until He comes. May He also help us as spiritual sailors to look at Him as our Light – and sail safely past all the dangerous areas on our voyage to heaven...





15. ENSURE “R.A.S.” – Replenishment At Sea, or Refuelling At Sea

Replenishment and refuelling at sea is another important principle for successful sailing to our heavenly harbour. Not all ships need “R.A.S.”; some sail with all they need on board. Even those that do not ordinarily need “R.A.S.” may find themselves in an emergency situation where, for instance, they run out of **fuel in a storm!** It is critical for them to then do “Refuelling At Sea.” In some instances **victuals** (foodstuffs) and even **personnel** are transferred from one ship to another ...at sea! A seaman who is sick may in this way be “transferred” to a ship with a medical doctor on board. Most of the non-personnel transfers are done via pipes and cables that get connected between the two ships **while they continue to sail on!** It’s not an easy procedure and may be dangerous, ...but it’s very important. **It can be life-saving and ship-saving!**

A ship (without sails) that runs out of fuel is in great danger. Similarly, a spiritual seafarer who runs out of “fuel” in his spiritual life and walk with God and others, is in great danger too. We all find ourselves from time to time in a situation where, for different reasons, **we run out of spiritual fuel.** We lose our fire for God, we lose our zeal for Him and His work, we lose our passion for souls (for leading others to Christ), we become tired and lukewarm... This is very dangerous. The Word of God says: “Never lag in zeal or in earnest endeavour; be aglow, burning with the spirit, serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11). “Don’t burn out; keep yourselves fuelled and aflame” (*The Message*). If it happens that we lose our zeal or “burn out,” then it’s time to do an emergency **re-fuel** before there’s a shipwreck!

We don’t have to necessarily go on a “holiday” to re-fuel. **No, while sailing, while still at sea, we need to re-connect with God, tap in to His resources and let Him re-fill us with His fuel and His food.** Once we correctly re-connect to Him, He’ll do the “R.A.S.” and we can sail on – to His glory.

It is true that the Lord may also want us, apart from “connecting” to Him and receiving from Him, to further do His will – in reading His Word, spending time in prayer alone with Him, meditating on His Word, reaching out to others in need, etc. He often uses those means to replenish and refuel us. Remember the time when Jesus sat at the well and let **the**

spiritually needy and thirsty Samaritan woman to the Fountain of Living Water (John 4)? He was fedby doing God's will (John 4:31-34).

It may happen that seamen need to replenish their food-supply **by fishing**, out at sea! This is another form of "R.A.S."– Replenishing At Sea. Others go primarily on a fishing voyage. The Lord Jesus said to Simon, **"Launch out into the deep** and let down your nets for a catch" (Luke 5:4:NKJV); "Now go out where it is deeper, **and let down your nets to catch some fish**" (NLT).

In "*The Art of Man-Fishing*" Thomas Boston (1676-1732) explains that **the work of a spiritual fisherman** is (i) to catch fish (to win souls), (ii) hard work, being exposed to much cold, (iii) continued despite stormy weather, (iv) through using a net (of the everlasting Gospel), (v) especially at the places where one may expect to catch fish, (vi) to be done with great patience and perseverance, (vii) to do it without getting discouraged, (viii) while trusting God to guide you - for the best catch, as the Lord Jesus guided Simon Peter!

There are many lessons for us to learn in this matter of fishing, which are also of extreme importance to our successful sailing to heaven! We'll look at it very briefly. John Flavel explains that it is not just man that does fishing, ...**Satan also does fishing!!** He said:

**"Whilst thou by art the silly fish doth kill,
Perchance the devil's hook sticks in thy gill."**

OBSERVATION: There is skill in fishing; they that go to sea in a fishing voyage, used to go provided with their craft (as they very fitly call it) without which they can do nothing. They have their **lines, hooks** of several sizes, and their **bait**. They carefully observe their **seasons**; when the fish fall in, then they ply their business **day and night**.

APPLICATION: **But how much more skillful and industrious is Satan to ensnare and destroy souls?** The devil makes a voyage as well as you; he hath his baits for you, as you have for the fish. He hath his devices and wiles to catch souls, 2 Cor. 2:11, Eph. 6:11. He is a serpent, an old serpent, Rev. 12:9. Too crafty for man in his perfection, much more in his collapsed and degenerated state, his understanding being cracked by the



fall, and his faculties poisoned and perverted. Divines observe **four steps of Satan's tempting power**:

- ◆ *First*, He can find out the constitution-evils of men; he knows to what sin their natures are more especially prone, and inclinable.
- ◆ *Secondly*, He can propound suitable objects to those lusts, he can exactly and fully hit every man's humor, as Agrippa mixed that poison in that meat her husband loved best.
- ◆ *Thirdly*, He can inject and casts motions into the mind, to close with those tempting objects; as it is said of Judas, John 13:2, "The devil put it into his heart."
- ◆ *Fourthly*, He can solicit, irritate and provoke the heart, and by those continual restless solicitations weary it; and thereby he often draws men to commit such things as startled them in the first motion.

All this he can do, if he finds the work sticks, and meets with rubs and difficulties; yet doth he not act to the utmost of his skill and power, at all times, and with all persons. Neither, indeed, need he do so; the very propounding of an object is enough to some, without any further solicitation; the devil makes an easy conquest of them.

And besides all this, his policy much appears in **the election of place, time, and instruments** to tempt by. **And thus are poor souls caught, "as fishes in an evil net,"** Eccles. 9:12. The carnal man is led by sense, as the beast; and Satan handles and fits him accordingly. He useth all sorts of motives, not only internal and intellectual; but external and sensitive also; as the sparkling of the wine, when it gives its color in the glass; the harlot's beauty, whose eyelids are snares, **hiding always the hook**, and concealing the issue from them. He promises them gain and profit, pleasure and delight, and all that is tempting, with assurance of secrecy. By these he fastens the fatal hook in their jaws, and thus they are led captive by him at his will.

REFLECTION: And is Satan so subtle and industrious to entice souls to sin? Doth he thus cast out his golden baits, and allure souls with pleasure to their ruin? Then how doth it behove thee, O my soul, to be jealous and wary! **How strict a guard should I set upon every sense! Ah, let me not so much regard how sin comes towards me in the temptation, as how it goes off at last.** The day in which Sodom was destroyed, began

with a pleasant sun-shine, but ended in fire and brimstone. **I may promise myself much content in the satisfaction of my lusts, but O how certainly will it end in my ruin?** Ahab doubtless promised himself much content in the vineyard of Naboth, but his blood paid for it in the portion of Jezreel. The harlot's bed was perfumed, to entice the simple young man, Prov. 7:17, but **those chambers of delight proved the chambers of death, and her house the way to hell. Ah! With what a smiling face doth sin come on towards me in its temptations?** How doth it tickle the carnal fancy, and please the deceived heart? But what a dreadful catastrophe and upshot hath it? **The delight is quickly gone, but the guilt thereof remains to amaze and terrify the soul** with ghastly forms, and dreadful representations of the wrath of God. **As sin hath its delights attending it to enter and fasten it, so it hath its horrors and stings to torment and wound.** And as certainly as I see those go before it to make a way, so certainly shall I find these follow after, and tread upon its heels. No sooner is the conscience awakened, but all those delights vanish as a night-vision, or as a dream when one awakes; **and then I shall cry, here is the hook, but where is the bait?** Here is the guilt and horror, but where the delight I was promised? And I, whither shall I now go? **Ah, my deceitful lusts! You have enticed and left me in the midst of all miseries.**

THE POEM:

There's skill in fishing, that the devil knows;
 For when for souls Satan a fishing goes,
 He angles cunningly; he knows he must
 Exactly fit the bait unto the lust.
 He studies constitution, place and time,
 He guesses what is his delight, what thine:
 And so accordingly prepares the bait,
 Whilst he himself lies closely hid, to wait
 When thou wilt nibble at it. Dost incline
 To drunken meetings? Then he baits with wine:
 Is this the way? If into this he'll smell,
 He'll shortly pledge a cup of wrath in hell.
 To pride or lust is thy vile nature bent?
 An object suitable he will present.
 O think on this! When you cast in the hook,
 Say, Thus for my poor soul doth Satan look.

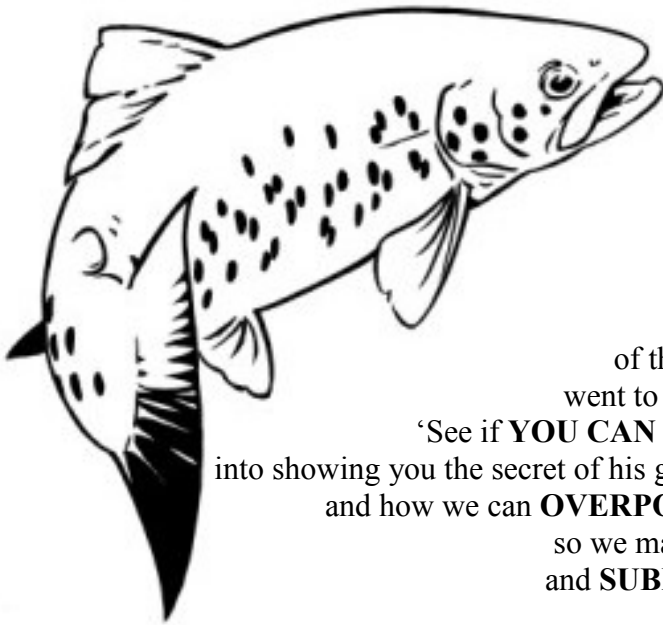
**O play not with temptations, do not swallow
The sugar'd bait, consider what will follow.
If once he hitch thee, then away he draws
Thy captive soul close pris'ner in his paws."**

Oh, may the Lord help us to be true to Him. May He help us to stay FAR away from sin. May He help us NOT to follow the sinful desires of our deceitful hearts. May He help us NOT to look at, nor nibble at the bait of Satan... May He help us to rather **go to GOD for all we need**—that we may be replenished and refuelled by HIM on a daily basis. The aim of "R.A.S." is obviously NOT to replenish Satan and his consorts, but to replenish ourselves in and through the Lord—to His glory.

16. CONSTANT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is crucial to successful seamen. *Lack* of communication or *miscommunication* can lead to disaster, as was the case with the warship "*SAS President Kruger*" off Cape Point, some years ago. Due to miscommunication another ship collided with it and it sank within 20 minutes!

There needs to be **constant radio communication between your ship and "control"**. This fosters accountability and safety. Those on the ship need to be updated on weather conditions, other ships in the shipping lane, hazards (like submerged floating containers that may be in the way), etc. In the spiritual realm we know that there needs to be **constant prayer-communication between me and God** (Who's my "control" in heaven). I need to be on the same frequency with God, so that I can receive any message from Him (via His Scripture, His Servants, His Symbols, His Sympathy, or His Spirit). I also need to *be able* to communicate with Him, and to *in reality* constantly communicate with Him – through prayer: **private prayer, public prayer and private public prayer...!** It is a great and necessary responsibility, but also a great and wonderful privilege! Jesus taught His disciples that they should **always pray** and not give up" (Luke 18:1). God says to us: "Let everything be done in prayer" (Philippians 4:6). **When the radio communication lines go "dead" between a ship and "control", there is danger!** The same applies to all spiritual seafarers. When my prayers to God become less, ...



“The rulers
of the Philistines
went to her and said,
‘See if **YOU CAN LURE HIM**
into showing you the secret of his great strength
and how we can **OVERPOWER HIM**
so we may **TIE HIM**
and **SUBDUE HIM**’”
Judges 16:5



Cell phones



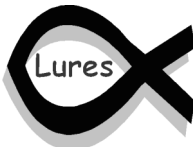
Relationships



Music



Internet



...to catch Christians!!!

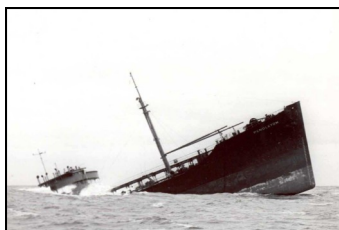


Lucifer
LOVES to LURE
+ HIDE the HOOK!

Look out for
Lucifer's Lures...

and stop – there’s great spiritual danger! I may be spiritually dead already, or desperately sick at soul...

A ship (or a soul) in danger needs to immediately send a **distress message** (a “**MAYDAY**” call) to control (to God). God says: “Call to Me and I will answer you...”(Jer. 33:3). David said: “***In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help. From His temple he heard my voice... He reached down from on high and took hold of me; He drew me out of deep waters (many waters). He rescued me...***” (Ps.18:6,16,17a)!



When you make a “mayday” call, you need to identify your ship (it’s name), state its position, its problem, and other related information. The same applies when I call out to God in my distress: I need to make it personal (attach it to my name), I need to clearly state where I am spiritually at that

particular point in time, I need to specifically mention my problem, and anything (and everything) else that may be needed and important to communicate...

In the manual on small vessel seamanship (endorsed by the National Sea Rescue Institute) it is stated that “the law of the sea ...requires you to go to the assistance of a vessel or person in distress. Failure to comply ...is an offence that carries a severe penalty.” If this is the “law of the sea,” made by sinful man, how much more is it a “law of heaven” that when I cry out in my distress, **He will respond and come to my rescue!!!** – for His Name’s sake. How wonderful it is! What a privilege we have to serve such a God! May He be praised forever!

Another type of call from the ship to “control” is called a “**PAN-PAN.**” It means the message is urgent and that assistance is required, however, the situation is NOT one of distress (as with the “mayday-mayday” call). The “PAN-PAN” call may relate to the vessel being out of fuel, or to have a person on board who needs medical assistance, or to facing very bad weather conditions. For instance, if a vessel is caught in a 50 knot wind, 45 km from base, the pilot (skipper) will contact base (“control”) and institute the “Penguin Procedure” for safe return to base:

❖ You inform “control” of your position, planned course back to base,



and your speed of travelling...

- ❖ Control will calculate your ETA (Expected Time of Arrival) and instruct you to make radio contact at (for instance) 15 minute intervals.
- ❖ The skipper (pilot) may shorten, but not lengthen this interval.
- ❖ Any change in speed or course should immediately be communicated to “control”.
- ❖ Based on your constant radio communications, “control” is able to plot your progress and see if it’s going well or not.
- ❖ If you should fail to make contact with “control” **ONCE** (at the designated time for making that contact), “control” will call you and, if unable to get a response from you, will assume that you are in trouble and that your situation has changed from “Pan-Pan” to “Mayday”.
- ❖ Control will immediately institute the necessary search and rescue operation. They will start at the point from where you indicated your position last.

This procedure teaches us **the importance of constant (regular) communication** between the ship and “control.” It also emphasizes the potentially **serious nature of failing to communicate with “control” ONCE**, especially in a storm. **To fail to communicate ONCE** is a sign of great danger (a sign of “Mayday”) and is treated as such by “control”. **It brings a whole new perspective on the problem of negligence in prayer, the problem of failing to pray to God, the problem of not praying...!**

Another aspect of radio communication is that of **the communication between two ships**. This is of especial importance when the two ships are sailing together, or when two ships are approaching each other from opposite directions. The situation of two ships sailing together is comparable to a husband and wife (and children) - “sailing” together on the voyage of life. Lack of communication can make them drift apart. Miscommunication can cause them to clash (and even sink)! The closer they are to each other, the bigger the hazard with miscommunications. The safest situation is with the one ship following the other – the wife following the husband, the children following the parents (as God intended it to be).



It is a very important life-skill to **communicate clearly** and to **LISTEN carefully**. With radio-communications at sea, it is required of the receiver to REPEAT the message of the sender, to verify the message and minimise miscommunication. This allegedly did not take place during the fateful event of the collision between the *SAS Paul Kruger* and the *SAS Tafelberg*, during which the *SAS Paul Kruger* sank...

Further **radio communication protocol** states that you need to:

- 🔊 Listen *before* transmitting, so that you will not interrupt other callers;
- 🔊 Use *short* and to the point messages;
- 🔊 *Not* get involved in *idle chatter*. It is a saying among sailors that “*loose lips sink ships!*” This is very true. Furthermore, you need to...
- 🔊 *Not* use *offensive language* (remembering that, in God’s ears, gossip and murmuring and seductive language is also offensive);
- 🔊 Keep your radio *tuned* into the *calling channel* (channel A), etc.

God’s communication protocol states clearly that:

- 📖 “Everyone should be *quick to listen*, slow to speak...” (James 1:19)
- 📖 “Brothers, *do not slander* one another...” (James 4:11)
- 📖 “Instead, *speaking the truth in love*...” (Ephesians 4:15)
- 📖 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is *helpful for building others up* according to their needs, that it may *benefit* those who listen ...” (Ephesians 4:29)
- 📖 “Nor should there be obscenity, *foolish talk or course joking* ...” (Ephesians 5:4)
- 📖 “Speak to one another with *psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*...” (Ephesians 5:19)
- 📖 “*Do not lie* to each other...” (Colossians 3:9)
- 📖 “Let your conversation be *always full of grace, seasoned with salt*, so that you may know how to answer everyone...” (Colossians 4:6)
- 📖 “So ...whatever you do, *do it all for the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31)!

So, if we want to sail safely and successfully to our Heavenly Harbour, it is of crucial importance that we **communicate clearly, carefully and constantly** with “control” *and* with the crew of our ship and of neighbouring ships. May the Lord help us.

17. ALWAYS ANCHOR CORRECTLY...

Proper anchoring is an important skill which we need in both fair and foul weather, physically and spiritually speaking. The type of anchor



you use is as important as the technique of anchoring. For instance, the “*Grapnel*” anchor has good holding power on rocky reefs; the “*Danforth*” anchor will hold on most types of bottom *except* rocky reefs, and is very good for general boating; while the “*Admiralty*” (or “*Fisherman’s*”) anchor is the most efficient type obtainable. As teenagers we used to sing a song (which we still sing). It says:



*In times like these, you need a Saviour;
In times like these, you need an anchor.
Be very sure, be very sure,
Your anchor holds and grips the solid Rock.
This Rock is Jesus, (Yes, He’s the One)
This Rock is Jesus, (The only One)
Be very sure, be very sure:
Your anchor holds and grips the solid Rock!*

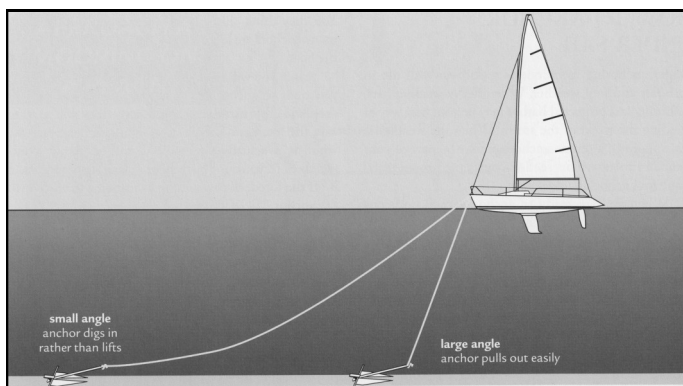
To a spiritual seafarer, a born-again Christian, **the Lord Jesus is both his Anchor and his Rock!**

An **anchor** holds the boat and prevents it from drifting away with the currents or onto the rocks. It stabilizes the ship in a storm. It holds the boat against the winds that may blow. It is an anchor.

The technique of anchoring is very important. Very briefly put, when you want to put out anchor, you need to:

- ✧ Find a **good spot** – not in a channel, at a place with enough water under the keel at low tide and far enough from rocks and other boats.
- ✧ Make sure **the end** of your anchor rope is **tied** securely to a cleat on your boat. Anchors are lost because someone forgot to tie it to the boat!
- ✧ Head **into the wind** and after you’ve stopped, lower the anchor over the bow and let the boat drift backward.

- ✂ **Cleat** the rope after sufficient scope was let out and the anchor made to dig in.
- ✂ **Check** that the boat is secure and NOT dragging!



In a sermon, “**The Anchor of your Soul**”, Charles Spurgeon said: “**This world is like a sea – restless, unstable, dangerous, never at a standstill. Human affairs may be compared to waves driven and tossed by the wind. As for us, we are the ships that go upon the sea and are subject to its changes and motions. We are likely to be carried off course by currents, driven by winds, and tossed by storms. We have not yet come to the true *terra firma*, the dry land, which, in our metaphor, means the eternal rest that will come to the people of God. God does not want us to be “*carried about by every wind of doctrine*” (Eph. 4:14), and therefore He has been pleased to weld an anchor of hope for us that is very sure and steadfast, so that we may outlive the storm.**”

He said: “The purpose of an anchor, of course, is to hold a ship firmly in place when winds and currents would otherwise move it off course or into dangerous conditions. God has given us certain truths that are intended to hold our minds securely to truth, holiness, and perseverance – to put it simply, to hold us to Himself.” The anchor is, he said:

- To keep us from shipwreck
- To keep us in peace
- To keep us from losing ground, and
- To keep us faithful and useful.

To keep us from shipwreck

“Why does a vessel need to be held securely? The most important reason is to keep it from being shipwrecked. The ship may not need an anchor in calm waters when, on a wide ocean, a little drifting may not be a serious matter. But there are weather conditions in which an anchor becomes altogether essential. When a gale force wind is rushing toward the shore, blowing full strength, and the vessel cannot hold its course and is in danger of being driven against the rocky coast, then the anchor is worth its weight in gold. If the ship cannot be anchored, there will be nothing left of it in a very short time except a few pieces of debris. The ship will go to pieces and every seaman will be drowned. This is the time to let down the strongest anchor and let the ship defy the wind.

Our God does not intend His people to be shipwrecked. However, we would be shipwrecked and lost if we could not be held fast in the hour of temptation. Beloved, if every wind of doctrine whirled you about at will, you would soon drift far away from the truth as it is in Jesus and your faith would be shipwrecked. But you cost your Lord too much for Him to lose you. He bought you at too great a price and values you too much to see you broken to pieces on the rocks. Therefore, He has provided a glorious safeguard for you so that when Satan’s temptations, your own sinful nature, and the trials of the world attack you, hope may be the anchor of your soul, both sure and steadfast.

How much we need this anchor! We see others fall into the error of the wicked, overcome by the deceitfulness of unrighteousness and abandoned forever as castaways, *“having no hope, and without God in the world”* (Eph. 2:12).

If you have been sailing on the great waters of life for any length of time, you must be well aware that if it were not for everlasting truths, which continue to hold you securely, your spirit would quickly have been thrown into everlasting darkness long ago, and the proud waters would have gone over your soul long before this. When the mighty waves rose, it must have seemed to you that your poor boat had gone down to the bottom of the sea, and if it had not been for the unchanging love and immovable faithfulness of God, your heart would have utterly failed. Nevertheless, here you are today, convoyed by grace, provisioned by mercy, steered by

heavenly wisdom, and propelled by the Spirit's power. Thanks to the anchor, or rather to the God who gave it to you, no storm has overwhelmed you. Your ship is under way for the port of glory.

To keep us in peace

An anchor is also needed to keep a vessel from distress, for even if it is not wrecked, it is a miserable thing to be driven here and there, to the north and then to the south, in whatever direction the winds may shift. Similarly, a person who is controlled by external influences is unhappy. He flies along like a feather in the breeze or rolls along the ground like something blown by a windstorm. We need an anchor to hold us so that we may remain peaceful and find rest for our souls. I praise God that there are solid and sure truths that have been infallibly certified to us. These truths operate powerfully on the mind in order to prevent it from being harassed and dismayed...

Our Scripture passage speaks of "strong consolation." Is that not a magnificent truth? We do not merely have a consolation that will hold us securely and bear us up against storms in times of trouble, but a strong consolation, so that, when trouble bursts forth with unusual strength, like a furious tornado, the strong consolation, like a powerful anchor, may be more than a match for the forceful temptation and may enable us to triumph over all. The person who has a strong belief is very peaceful.

***Hallelujah! I believe!
Now the giddy world stands fast,
For my soul has found an anchor
'Til the night of storm is past***

To keep us from losing ground

An anchor is also needed to keep us from losing the headway that we have made. Suppose a ship is making good progress toward its intended port but then the wind changes and blows directly at it. The vessel is in danger of being carried back to the port from which it started or to an equally undesirable port, unless it can resist the turbulent wind; therefore, it puts down its anchor. The captain says to himself, "I have made it this far and I am not going to be carried back. I am going to let down my anchor and stop here."

Believers are sometimes tempted to return to the country out of which they came, that is, to their old ways of living. They are half-inclined to renounce the things that they have learned and to conclude that they never have been taught by the Lord at all. Our old sinful nature grabs hold of us and pulls back, and the Devil also endeavors to drive us back. If we did not have something secure to hold onto, we would go back...

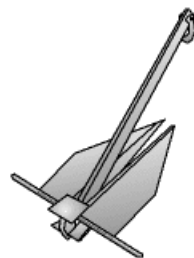
To keep us faithful and useful

Moreover, the anchor is necessary so that we may be faithful and useful. The person who is easily moved and believes one thing today and another tomorrow, is fickle. Who knows where we will find him next? Of what use is he to young people or to those who are weak in faith, or indeed, to anyone else? Like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind, what service can he give in the service of the Lord and how can he influence others for good? He himself does not believe; how can he make others believe? ...In summary, our God has provided us with an anchor to hold us securely so that we will not be shipwrecked, to keep us in peace, to prevent us from losing ground, and to enable us to remain faithful and useful. These purposes are the result of God's kindness and wisdom toward us. Let us bless the Lord who has graciously cared for us...."

We read in Spurgeon's sermon that "because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was **promised**, he confirmed it with an **oath**. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. **We have this hope as an anchor for the soul**, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." (Hebrews 6:17-20).

Spurgeon said, "Anchors are not made of cast ironThey are made of wrought iron, strongly welded, and tough, compact material, which will bear all the strain that is likely to come upon them at the worst of times. If anything in this world should be strong, it should be an anchor, for safety and life depend on it."

The “Admiralty” and the “Danforth” anchors both have **two blades** or arms. Referring to the above-mentioned text, Spurgeon said that “**our heavenly anchor has two great blades**, made of two divine things, each of which acts as a holdfast.” These **two blades of our spiritual anchor** which are two unchangeable things, are (1) God’s promise and (2) God’s oath! “One of the strong blades of the anchor is that God has promised to bless the faithful. He has declared that the seed of Abraham, namely, believers, will be blessed and will be made a blessing. The other blade of the anchor is equally strong and able to hold the soul; it is the oath of the priesthood, by which the Lord Jesus is declared to be a Priest forever on our behalf!” “...This is a blessed anchor for my soul: to know that my Priest is within the veil, my King of Righteousness and King of Peace is before the throne of God for me, representing me, and therefore I am forever secure in Him. What better anchor would the Comforter Himself desire for His people? What stronger comfort can the heirs of promise desire?”



The verses in Hebrews further show that (i) ***we have a HOLD on this anchor***, and (ii) ***the anchor has a HOLD on us***. Spurgeon said: “A ship holds its anchor securely by its chain cable, but at the same time, the most important thing is that the anchor keeps its own hold on the ship. Because it has dug into the ground on the sea bottom, it holds the vessel hard and fast... **When the Devil tempts you to say, ‘I give up,’ an unseen power will reply out of the infinite deeps, ‘But I will not give you up. I have a hold on you, and nothing will separate us’...**” “Best of all, there is the anchor’s unseen grip, ‘which entereth into that within the veil.’ We cannot see our spiritual anchor...our good hope has gone to heaven, and it is pulling and drawing us toward itself...”

“Let the winds blow and billows roll,
 Hope is the anchor of my soul.
 But can I by so slight a tie,
 An unseen hope, on God rely?
 Steadfast and sure, it cannot fail,
 It enters deep within the veil,
 It fastens on a land unknown,
 And moors me to my Father’s throne.”

“...Think about this. What will you do if you have no anchor? A storm is coming on. I see the threatening clouds and I hear the strengthening winds of the distant hurricane. What will you do? May the Lord help you to flee for refuge immediately to the hope that is set before you in Christ Jesus.” Another spiritual seafarer wrote the following poem:

The Anchor

**Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift and the cables strain,
Will your anchor shift or firm remain?**

***We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.***

It is safely moored, 'twill the storm withstand,
For 'tis well secured by the Savior's hand,
And the cables passed from His heart to mine
Can defy the blast, through the strength divine.

It will firmly hold in the straits of fear,
When the breakers have told the reef is near,
Though the tempest rave and the wild winds blow,
Not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow.

It will surely hold in the floods of death,
When the waters cold chill our latest breath,
On the rising tide it can never fail,
While our hopes abide with in the veil.

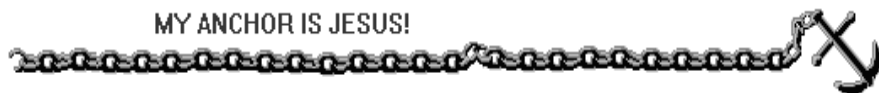
When our eyes behold through the gathering night,
The city of gold our harbor bright,
We shall anchor fast by the heavenly shore,
With the storms all past for evermore.

How wonderful! How true! What an Anchor we have! What a Hope!
What a surety! Praise the Lord!

Some of us may know the song “*The Anchor Holds.*” The first stanza and the chorus are as follows:

I have journeyed through the long, dark night
Out on the open sea,
By faith alone, sight unknown,
And yet His eyes were watching me.

The Anchor holds, though the ship is battered.
The Anchor holds, though the sails are torn.
Well I have fallen on my knees,
as I faced the raging sea,
But the Anchor holds, in spite of the storm.



Missionary mariners, Arthur and Wilda Mathews experienced that this Anchor indeed holds in the toughest storms. They were the last of the CIM missionaries to escape from Communist China in 1953. A few months before their escape, based on Acts 27:27-29 (ASV), which states: “...as we were driven to and fro in the sea of Adria ...they let go four anchors from the stern and prayed for the day,” they found “**four anchors**” in Andrew Murray’s formula for a trial:

- ✚ “Say, He brought me here. It is by His will I am in this strait place and in that fact I will rest.
- ✚ He will keep me here in His love and give me grace to behave as His child.
- ✚ Then He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends for me to learn.
- ✚ In His good time He can bring me out again—how and when He knows. So let me say, I am (1) here by God’s appointment; (2) in His keeping; (3) under His training; (4) for His time.”

18. LEARN HOW TO SAIL THROUGH STORMS!

Storms are part of life, and “a smooth sea never made a skilful sailor!”

Referring to Samuel Rutherford, A.W Tozer said: **“The wind is in Christ’s face, and because we go with Him we too shall have the wind in our face. We should not expect less... The wind still blows toward hell and the man who is walking in the opposite direction will have the wind in his face”** We are not to be “rice Christians” or “chocolate sailors.” We’ve seen that there are different reasons why storms may come. Storms can be caused by Sin, by Self, by Satan, by natural (weather) Situations, by Society, and... by the Spirit of God. If we don’t learn how to avoid a storm, or how to successfully sail through it, we’ll sink or go shipwreck...

God wants us to succeed – to His glory! He wants us to reach our Heavenly Harbour! We need to therefore ask ourselves: **“What are the principles (through God) that will enable us to go through storms safely and successfully?”** Put in other words: **“How can we face and go through a storm safely and successfully?!”** Experienced seamen tell us:

- ☛ **Be prepared!**
- ☛ **Try to avoid** the storm if at all possible.
- ☛ Make sure that you **stow away all loose equipment** and that “large items of equipment, such as the anchor, cannot work loose and cause damage when the boat starts to move violently in the rough seas.”
- ☛ Ensure “all **safety equipment** is readily at hand. If bilge pumps are fitted, test-run them.
- ☛ On receiving a gale warning at sea, **“cease your operations and start heading for port”** (if possible).
- ☛ **“Prepare your vessel** for a bad blow and rough sea conditions.”
- ☛ **“Don your life jacket** and have your crew do the same.”
- ☛ **“Radio** the base and inform them of your intentions, giving them an ETA (expected time of arrival). You might be instructed to adopt the Penguin Procedure.”
- ☛ **Reduce your sail** area or change sails.
- ☛ **Reduce speed.**
- ☛ When the storm strikes and you see that there’s still too much sail out and there is a danger of the mast being broken by the wind,

lower all your sails.

- ☛ **Face the storm and go into the waves.** Do not go with it and never be caught by it side-on! The boat may be capsized easily!
- ☛ **“Hug the coast,”** where possible. As you get a bit closer to the shore, the waves are generally calmer than out at sea. Beware of rocks and reefs!
- ☛ **Get rid of sin,** if there are any! Remember Jonah.
- ☛ Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) said, “I am taught in this ill weather to **go on the lee-side of Christ, and to put Him in between me and the storm**”... This is very true. He also said: **“Slip yourself under Christ’s wing till the storm is over.”**
- ☛ **Be still. Trust the Lord.** Entrust yourself to Him! Missionary mariner, Arthur Mathews, who had to flee for his life from Communist China, wrote this (and more):

In Adria’s tempest-tossed wastes,
My barque through the dark deeps is driv’n;
The canvass all torn from my masts,
My timbers by stormy waves riv’n.
Yet there faith’s assurance rings clear,
E’en there will I trust, EVEN THERE.

All hope for deliverance had gone,
Despair’s chilly gloom shrouded all;
No sun’s ray through threat’ning cloud shone
To brighten the future’s dark pall.
Yet there though my heart quake with fear,
E’en there will I trust, EVEN THERE.

- ☛ **PRAY to God,** who is our Pilot, our Saviour, our Preserver, our Deliverer!
- ☛ **Pray aggressively (in Jesus’ Name) against evil forces** that might have stirred up the storm! Jesus rebuked the waves...
- ☛ **Don’t panic! Don’t be afraid!** A seasoned seafarer wrote:

Storm-tossed, alone, in the starless night
I’m not afraid.
With lost hope drifting from my sight,
I’m not afraid.

Through sorrow and through mystery
My Pilot calls o’er life’s dark sea;

*I'll follow on—
I'm not afraid.*

*Somewhere the dawn shall rise for me,
I'm not afraid.
Sometime, in God's light, I shall see;
I'm not afraid.*

- ☛ **Use your anchor!** It may keep you safe and keep you facing the storm-waves, which is better.
- ☛ In Acts 27 the seamen also threw their precious cargo (and the ship's tackle!) overboard, hoping to **make the ship more buoyant**, so that it would not be swamped by the sea.
- ☛ **Call for help**, if necessary.
- ☛ **Use the distress signals** (like flares, gunshots, flags, foghorn, smoke, radio "Mayday" call, etc.) when needed.
- ☛ **Make sure Christ is in your boat!** We love that little song that says: "*With Christ in my vessel I can smile at the storm, ...as we go sailing Home...*"!
- ☛ **Encourage yourself in the Lord** (1 Samuel 30:6). **Recall God's faithfulness in the past**, as is so beautifully written in this song:

When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God hath done!
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

- ☛ **Praise the Lord** – while you are in the storm, and once He has taken you through it!
- ☛ You may **pray these following "seafarers' prayers"**...

Lord, keep me still,
Though stormy winds may blow,
And waves my little bark may overflow,
Or even if in darkness I must go,
Yet keep me still, yet keep me still.

Lord, keep me still,
The waves are in Thy hand,
The roughest winds subside at Thy command.
Steer Thou my bark in safety to the land,
And keep me still, and keep me still.

Lord, keep me still,
And may I ever hear Thy still small voice
To comfort and to cheer;
So shall I know and feel Thee ever near.
And keep me still, and keep me still.

This is especially true when some or other “social storm” breaks out. The storms of malicious gossip, or false accusations, or misrepresentations, or criticism, or jealousy, or backbiting, or slander, or lying, or bitterness, or hateful talk, etc. We face this storm with: ***“Lord, keep me still. Keep me still inside and keep me still outside – for Your Name’s sake!”*** Amy Carmichael (or “Amma” as she is called in India) often experienced such and other storms. She prayed:

**Before the winds that blow do cease,
Teach me to dwell within Thy calm;
Before the pain has passed in peace,
Give me, my Lord, to sing a psalm.
Let me not lose the chance to prove
The fullness of enabling love.
O Love of God, do this for me:
Maintain a constant victory.**

This is wonderfully and amazingly possible through God. In the midst of any storm (except the storm caused by sin) there is a place of peace and calm in God. We can call it “the eye of the storm.” Another spiritual sailor wrote the following about it:

THE EYE OF THE STORM

Fear not that the whirlwind shall carry thee hence,
Nor wait for its onslaught in breathless suspense,
Nor shrink from the whips of the terrible hail,
But pass through the edge of the heart of the gail,
For there is a shelter, sunlighted and warm,
And **Faith sees her God through the eye of the storm.**

The passionate tempest with rush and wild roar,
And threatenings of evil may beat on the shore,
The waves may be mountains, the fields battle plains,
And the earth be immersed in a deluge of rains,
Yet, the soul, stayed on God, may sing bravely its psalm,
For the heart of the storm is the center of calm.

Let hope be not quenched in the blackness of night,
Though the cyclone awhile may have blotted the light,
For behind the great darkness the stars ever shine,
And the light of God's heaven's, His love shall make thine,
Let no gloom dim thine eyes, but uplift them on high,
To the face of thy God and the blue of His sky.

The storm is thy shelter from danger and sin,
And God Himself takes thee for safety within;
The tempest with Him passeth into deep calm,
And the roar of the winds in the sound of a psalm.
Be glad and serene when the tempest clouds form;
God smiles on His child in the eye of the storm.

Speaking of the Lord Jesus, M. Slattery said:

**He holdeth the waters in the hollow
Of His hand,
This mighty restless seething sea
In His hand.
Oh, hand so sure, so safe, so strong
That it can hold the sea,
Mid the storm-tossed waves of the sea of life
It can, it will, hold me.**

He does not only hold me in the storm, but He also speaks to me and encourages me. I need to listen for His voice in the storm and hear His words to me:

"I heard a voice, a tender voice, soft falling
Through the storm;
The waves were high, the bitter winds were calling,
Yet breathing warm.

"Of skies serene, of sunny uplands lying

In peace beyond;
This tender voice, unto my voice replying,
Made answer fond.

“Sometimes, indeed, like crash of armies meeting
Arose the gale—
But, over all, that sweet voice kept repeating
‘I shall not fail.’”

Mrs Cowman, who went through many storms in life, and wrote “*Streams in the Desert*” and “*Springs in the Valley*”, wrote this in “*Words of Comfort and Cheer*”:

“Robert Louis Stevenson’s story of a storm that caught a vessel off a rocky coast and threatened to drive it and its passengers to destruction is thrilling. In the midst of the terror one daring man, contrary to orders, went to the deck, made a dangerous passage to the pilot house, saw the steersman lashed fast at his post holding the wheel unwaveringly and inch by inch turning the ship out once more to sea. The pilot saw the watcher and smiled. Then the daring passenger went below and gave out a note of cheer. **‘I have seen the face of the pilot and he smiled. It is all well.’ Blessed is he who in the midst of earthly stress and storm can say with equal assurance, ‘I have seen the face of my Pilot and he smiled!’ ...**”

This is a KEY for sailing safely through a storm! May we seek to see God’s face when we face storms and may we see His smile—and continue to trust Him. Charles Wesley, who was used by God to bring spiritual revival in stormy England, wrote:

Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Saviour, Hide
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee:
Leave, ah, leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me!

All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.

Furthermore, we know that God is sovereign and **He rules over everything**. As we've seen earlier, **He reigns over every storm, irrespective of the immediate cause of it**. He sovereignly works in all things for the good of those who love Him (Rom.8:28). Thus, the waves of the storms are His waves and His billows. We read in Psalm 42:7, "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me." Annie Johnson Flint describes it as follows:

They are HIS billows, whether they go o'er us,
Hiding His face in the smothering spray and foam;
Or smooth and sparkling, spread a path before us,
And to our haven bear us safely home.

They are HIS billows, whether for our succor
He walks across them, stilling all our fear;
Or to our cry there comes no aid nor answer,
And in the lonely silence none is near,

They are HIS billows, whether we are toiling
Through tempest-driven waves that never cease,
While deep to deep with clamor loud is calling;
Or at His word they hush themselves in peace.

They are HIS billows, whether He divides them,
Making us walk dry-shod where seas had flowed;
Or lets tumultuous breakers surge about us,
Rushing unchecked across our only road.

**They are HIS billows, and He brings us through them;
So He has promised, so His love will do.
Keeping and leading, guiding and upholding,
To His sure harbor, He will bring us through.**

Praise God that He'll do it! It also means that He wants us to do everything He commands and shows us to do (with His help). For instance, we should NOT spread much sail in a storm; it will lead to disaster. In "*Navigation Spiritualized*," John Flavel speaks about **the misuse of sails in a storm**. He explains it in this way:

**“In storms to spread much sail endangers all:
So carnal mirth, if God for mourning call.”**

OBSERVATION: In storms at sea, the wise navigator will not spread much sail; that is the way to lose masts and all. They use then to furl up the sails, and lie a hull, when not able to bear a knot of sail, or else to lie a try, or scud before the wind and seas. **It is no time then to hoist up the top and top-gallant, and show their bravery.**

APPLICATION: When the judgments of God are abroad in the earth, it is no time then to make mirth, Ezek. 21:10, ‘Should we then make mirth? ...O it is a provoking evil, and commonly God severely punishes it. Of all persons such speed worst in the common calamity. Amos 6:1, “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, that are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph,” as verse 6. ...Whatever our constitution, condition, or personal immunities be, yet **when God calls for mourning, we must hear and obey that call.** David was a king, an expert musician, a man of sanguine disposition and cheerful constitution: yet who more sensible of the evil of those times than he? Rivers of water ran down his eyes at the consideration of them...

REFLECTION: Blush then, O my soul! For thy levity and insensibility under God’s angry dispensations. How many of the precious sons and daughters of Zion, lie in tears abroad, while I have been “nourishing my heart as in a day of slaughter? The voice of God hath cried to the city, and men of understanding have heard its voice,” Micah 6:9. But I have been deaf to that cry. How loath, my God, have I been to urge my sensual heart to acts of sorrow and mourning. Thou hast bid me weep with them that weep, but my vain heart cannot comply with such commands. **Ah, Lord! If I mourn not with Zion, neither shall I rejoice with her.**

O, were mine eyes opened, and my heart sensible and tender, that I might see cause enough to melt into tears! And like that Christian ...to lie weeping at the feet of Christ, Luke 7:38. **Lord, what stupidity is this! Shall I laugh when Thou art angry, and Thy children are weeping and trembling?** Then I may justly fear, lest “when they shall sing for joy of heart, I shall howl for vexation of spirit,” Isa. 65:13,14. Surely, O my soul! such laughter will be turned into mourning; either here or hereafter.

THE POEM:

In troublous times, mirth in the sinner's face
Is like a mourning-cloak with silver lace.
The lion's roaring make the beasts to quake:
God's roaring judgments cannot make us shake.
**What belluine contempt is this of God,
To laugh in's face when He takes up the rod?**
Such laughter God in tears will surely drown,
(Unless He hate thee) e'er He lay it down.
**These rods have voices, if thou hear them well;
If not, another rod's prepar'd in hell;**
And when the arm of God shall lay it on,
Laugh if thou canst; no, then thy mirth is gone.
All Zion's children will lament and cry,
When all her beauteous stones in dust do lie?
And he that for her then laments and mourns,
Shall want no joy, when God to her returns."

Indeed, when God sends storms of sorrow or tribulation or sickness or persecution, it is time to humbly, desperately turn to Him in weeping, supplication, confession and deep repentance! Flavel further explains how **waves may threaten to destroy**. He says:

**"Like hungry lions, waves for sinners gape;
Leave then your sins behind, if you'll escape."**

OBSERVATION: **The waves of the sea are sometimes raised by God's commission, to be executioners of His threatening purposes upon sinners.** When Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord to Tarshish, the text saith, "The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest, so that the ship was like to be broken," Jonah 1:4. These were God's bailiffs to arrests the run-away prophet. And psalms 148:8 says the stormy winds are said to fulfill His Word; not only His word of command, in rising when God bids them, but His word of threatening also. And hence it is called a destroying wind, Jer. 51:1, and a stormy wind in God's fury, Ezek. 13:13

APPLICATION: **If these be the executioners of God's threatenings,**

how sad then is their condition that put forth to sea under the guilt of all their sins? Or, if God should commissionate the winds to go after and arrest thee for all thou owest Him, where art thou then? How dare you put forth under the power of a divine threat, before all be cleared betwixt God and thee? Sins in Scripture are called debts, Matt.6:12. They are debts to God; not that we owe them to Him, or ought to sin, but metonymically, because they render the sinner obnoxious to God's judgments, even as pecuniary debts oblige him that hath not wherewith to pay, to suffer punishment. All sinners must undergo the curse, either in their own person, according to the express letter of the law, Gen. 2:17, Gal. 3:10, or their surety, according to the tacit intent of the law, manifested to be the mind of the law-giver, Gen. 3:13,14.

Now he that by faith hath interest in this surety, hath his discharge, ...sealed in the blood of Christ; all process at law, or from the law, is stopped, Rom.8:1. But if thou be an impenitent, thy debt remains upon thy own score, "***And be sure thy sin will find thee out, wherever thou goest,***" Num. 32:23, i.e. God's revenging hand for sin will be upon thee. **Thou mayest lose the sight and memory of thy sins, but they lose not sight of thee; they follow after, as the hound doth the fleeting game** upon the scent, till they have fetched thee up. And then consider, "How fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. 10:31. How soon may a storm arrest, and bring thee before the bar of God?

REFLECTION: **O my soul, what a case art thou in if this be so? Art not all thy sins yet upon thine own score?** Hast thou not made light of Christ, and that precious blood of His, and hitherto persisted in thy rebellion against Him? And what can the issue of this be at last, but ruin? **There is abundant mercy indeed for returning sinners; but the Gospel speaks of none for persisting and impenitent sinners. And though many who are going on in their sins are overtaken by grace, yet there is no grace promised to such as go on in their sin.** O! If God should arrest me by the next storm, and call me to an account for all that I owe Him, I must then lie in the prison of hell to all eternity; for I can never pay the debt; nay, all the angels in heaven cannot satisfy for it. Being Christ-less, I am under all the curses in the Book of God; a child of Hagar. Lord pity and spare me a little longer! O discover thy Christ unto me, and give me faith in His blood, and then Thou art fully satisfied at once, and I discharged forever. O require not the debt at my hand, for

then Thou wilt never be satisfied, nor I acquitted. What profit, Lord, is there in my blood! **O my soul, make haste to this Christ, thy Refuge City; thou knowest not how soon the avenger of blood may overtake thee.**

THE POEM:

Thy sins are debts, God puts them to account;
Canst tell, poor wretch, to what thy debts amount?
Thou fill'st the treasure of thy sins each hour.
Into His vials God doth also pour
Proportionable wrath: Thou seest it not;
But yet assure thyself, there's drop for drop.
For every sand of patience running out,
A drop runs in. Soul, look about!
God's treasur's almost full, as well as thine:
When both are full, O then the dreadful time
Of reck'ning comes; thou shalt not gain a day
Of patience more, but there hastes away
Heaven's pursevant, who comes upon the wing
With his commission seal'd, to take and bring.
Dost still reject Christ's tenders? Well, next storm
May be the bailiff order'd to perform
This dreadful office. **O then restless be,
Till God in Christ be reconciled to thee.
The sum is great, but if a Christ thou get,
Fear not, a prince can pay a beggar's debt.
Now if the storm should rise, thou need'st not fear;
Thou art, but the delinquent is not there.
A pardon'd soul to sea may boldly go:
He fears not bailiffs, that doth nothing owe."**

The next section in "Navigation Spiritualized" deals with "**The ship's lading cast overboard in the storm**"...

**"To save the ship, rich lading's cast away,
Thy soul is shipwreck'd if thy lusts do stay."**

OBSERVATION: **In storms and distresses at sea, the richest commodities are cast overboard; they stand not upon it, when life and all**

is in jeopardy and hazard, Jonah 1:5. The mariners cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it. And Acts 28:18,19 they cast out the very tacklings of the ship. **How highly soever men prize such commodities, yet reason tells them, it were better these should perish, than life.** Satan himself could say, Job 1, “Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life.”

APPLICATION: And surely it is every way as highly reasonable, that men should mortify, cast out, and cut off their dearest lusts, rather than their immortal souls should sink and perish in the storm of God’s wrath. Life indeed is a precious treasure, and highly valued by men: You know what Solomon saith, Eccles. 9:4, “a living dog is better than a dead lion.” And we find men willing to depart from their estates, limbs, or any outward comfort for the preservation of it. The woman in the Gospels spent all she had on the physicians for her health, a degree below life. Some men indeed do much over-value their lives, and part with Christ and peace of conscience for it; but he that thus saves it, shall lose it. Now if life be so much worth, what then is the soul worth? Alas! Life is but “a vapor, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away,” James 4:14.

Life indeed is more worth than all the world, but my soul is more worth than ten thousand lives. Nature teacheth you to value the first so high, and grace should teach you to value the second much higher, Matt. 19:20. Now here is the case: **Either you must part with your sins, or with your souls; if these be not cast out, both must sink together.** “If ye live after the flesh, ye must die,” Rom. 8:13. God saith to you in this case, as to Ahab, when he pursued Benhadad, 1 Kings 20:42, “Because thou hast let go a man whom God hath appointed to destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life.” Guilt will raise a storm of wrath, as Jonah did, if not cast out.

REFLECTION: And must sin or the soul perish? Must my life, yea, my eternal life go for it if I spare it? O then let me not be cruel to my own soul in sparing my sin; O my soul, this foolish pity and cruel indulgence will be thy ruin. If I spare it, God hath said, “He will not spare me,” Deut. 26:20. It is true the pains of mortification are sharp, but yet is easier than the pains of hell. To cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye is hard; but to have my soul cut off eternally

from God is harder. Is it as easy (O my soul!) to burn for them in hell, as to mortify them on earth? Surely, “it is profitable for me, that one member perish, rather than that all be cast into hell,” Matt. 5:24. I see the merchant willing to part with rich wares if embarked with them in a storm. And those that have gangrened legs and arms, willing to stretch them out to be cut off to preserve life; and shall I be willing to endure no difficulties for my soul? **Christ reckons souls worth His blood. And is it not worth my self-denial? Lord, let me not warm a snake in my bosom, that will at last sting me to the heart.**

THE POEM:

**Thy soul's the ship, its lading is its lusts,
God's judgments, stormy winds, and dangerous gusts;
Conscience the master; but the stubborn will
Goes *supra cargo*, and doth keep the bill:
Affections are the men. The winds do rise,
The storm increases: Conscience gives advice
To throw those lusts o'erboard, and so to ease
The vessel, which else cannot keep the seas.
The will opposes, and th' affections say,
The master's counsel they will not obey.
The case is dang'rous, that no man can doubt,
Who sees the storm within, and that without.
Lusts and affections cannot part; no, rather,
They are resolved to swim or sink together.
Conscience still strives, but they cannot abide
That it or reason should the case decide
Lust knows the reason, in like cases, still
Determines well: Then choose ye whom ye will.
Shall make the devil judge? This case has been
Before him, and he judg'd that skin for skin,
And all men have, they'll part with for their life.
Then how unreasonable is this strife?
They that their sins do with their persons ship,
Do for their souls prepare a dreadful whip.**

These words clearly teach us that if the cause of the storm is SIN, then the only way to deal with the storm is to ***get rid of the sin***—through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This, and only this, is followed

by **Christ's "Peace, be still."** This is what Flavel speaks about next:

**"Christ, with a word, can surging waves appease:
His voice a troubled soul can quickly ease."**

OBSERVATION: When the sea works, and is tempestuous, it is not in the power of any creature to appease it. ...But now Jesus Christ hath command of them indeed. It is said of Him, Matt. 8:20, that *He rebuked them*. And Mark 4:38, He quiets them with a word, **Peace, be still**; as one would hush a child, and it obeyed Him.

APPLICATION: Conscience, when awakened by the terrors of the Lord, is like a raging tempestuous sea; so it works, so it roars; and it is not in the power of all creatures to hush or quiet it. Spiritual terrors, as well as spiritual consolations are not known till felt. O when the arrows of the Almighty are shot into the spirit, and the terrors of God set themselves in array against the soul; when the venom of those arrows drink up the spirits, and those armies of terror charge violently and successively upon it, as Job 6:4. What creature then is able to stand before them! Even God's own dear children have felt such terrors as have distracted them, Psalm 81:15. Conscience is the seat of guilt: it is like a burning glass, so it contracts the beams of the threatenings, twists them together, and reflects the soul, until it smoke, scorch, and flame. If the wrath of the king be like a roaring of a lion, then what is the Almighty's wrath, which is burning wrath, Job 19:11; Tearing wrath, Psalm 1:22; Surprising wrath, Job 20:23; and Abiding wrath, Job 3:36.

In this case no creature can relieve: all are physicians of no value; some under these terrors have thought hell more tolerable, and by a violent hand have thrust themselves out of the world into it to avoid these gnawing. **Yet Jesus Christ can quickly calm these mystical waves also, and hush them with a word; yea, He is the Physician, and no other. It is the sprinkling of His blood,** which, like a cooling fomentation, allays those heats within. That blood of sprinkling speaks peace, when all others have practiced upon the soul to no purpose, and the reason is, **because He is a Person in whom God and man, justice and mercy, meet and kiss each other**, Eph. 2:14. And hence fetches in peace to the soul, Rom. 5:1.

REFLECTION: Can none appease a troubled conscience but Christ?

Then learn, O my soul, to understand, and daily more and more to savor that glorious name, even Jesus, that delivers not only from wrath to come, but that which is felt here also. O, if the foretaste of hell be so intolerable, if a few drops, let fall on the conscience in this life be so scalding and insufferable, what is it to have all the vials poured out to eternity, when there shall be nothing to divert, mitigate, or allay it?

Here men have somewhat to debate those terrors, some hopes of mercy, at least a possibility: but there is none. O my soul! How art thou loaded with guilt! And what a *Magormissabib* wouldst thou be, should God rouse that sleepy lion in thy bosom! My condition is not at all the better because my conscience is quiet. Ah! The day is coming when it must wake, and will lighten and thunder terribly within me, if I get not into Christ the sooner. **O Lord, who knows the power of Thy wrath? O let me not carry this guilt out of the world with me, to maintain those everlasting flames, let me give no sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eye-lids, till I feel the comfort of that blood sprinkling, which alone speaketh peace.**

THE POEM:

Among the dreadful works of God, I find
No *metaphors* to paint a troubled mind.
I think on this, now that, and yet will neither
Come fully up, though all be put together.
'Tis like the raging sea that casts up mire,
Or like to Etna, breathing smoke and fire;
Or like a roused lion, fierce and fell;
Or like those furies that do howl in hell.
O conscience! Who can stand before thy power,
Endure thy gripes and twinges but an hour?
Stone, gout, strappado, racks, whatever is
Dreadful to sense, is but a toy to this.
No pleasures, riches, honors, friends can tell
How to give ease: In this 'tis like to hell.
Call for the pleasant timbrel, lute, and harp;
Alas! The music howls, the pain's too sharp
For these to charm, divert, or lull asleep:
These cannot reach it, no, the wound's too deep.
Let all the promises before it stand,

And set a Barnabas at its right hand;
 These in themselves no comfort can afford,
‘Tis Christ, and none but Christ can speak the word.
And He no sooner speaks but all is still,
The storm is over, and the mind tranquil.
There goes a pow’r, with His majestic voice,
To hush the dreadful storm, and still its noise.
Who would but fear and love this glorious Lord,
That can rebuke such tempests with a word?”

Lord, I do love and fear You. There is no-one like You! **Thank you** for speaking the Word and stilling the storm that raged *in my soul*. Thank You for ruling the winds and the waves that lashed *at my soul*. Thank you for calming the storms that raged *around me*. **Keep me still in Your will.** Keep me worshipping You and obeying You, always. May You be glorified. Amen.

19. CHARACTER, PERSEVERANCE, ENDURANCE, COURAGE and MORALE...

To be a successful sailor you need to have CHARACTER - Christ’s character! It is a great challenge to loosen the moorings, launch out into



the deep, and face all the challenges at sea! It needs real character. It needs Christ’s character! It needs Christ! It needs perseverance, endurance, courage, carefulness, patience, faith, good morale, good inter-relationships and teamwork with others on the ship, self-discipline, and submission to delegated authority. All of these characteristics were well displayed in the life and leadership of Sir Ernest Shackleton during their voyage on the *Endurance* to the Antarctic. He proved himself a true Christian seaman.

The necessary characteristics of a successful spiritual seafarer are the same than the characteristics required in a missionary. Dr Thomas Hale, who was a medical missionary in Nepal for more than 20 years, writes in “*On Being a Missionary*” that the key qualities for any missionary are

insight, adaptability, perseverance, zeal (for sharing the Gospel), ability to get along with others, emotional stability, humility, spiritual maturity, and a Spirit-filled life. Thomas Walker (a spiritual seafarer *par excellence*) served the Lord for many years in Tamil Nadu, South India. He added the “natural” qualities of tenacity (“stick-at-it-ability”), determined persistence, versatility, patient endurance, and practical (common-sense) ability, as well as the need for spiritual knowledge, spiritual life and spiritual power (the power of the Holy Spirit)... Dr Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, said that missionary mariners need to be prepared for labour, self-denial and many discouragements, and always put Jesus ...and souls first and foremost in everything.

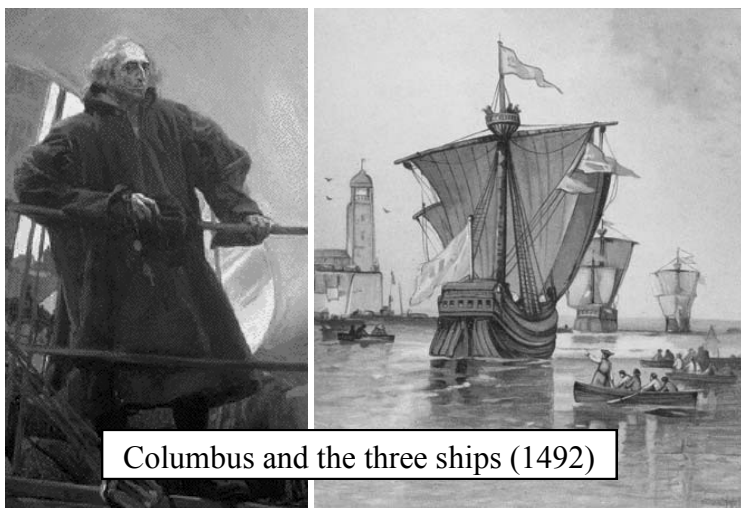
Who is able to be like this and live like this?! It is only possible through the Lord Jesus Christ and through the fullness of His Holy Spirit! To sail successfully, I need to launch out **BY FAITH**. To live this life of a spiritual seafarer, I need to do it **BY FAITH**. I need to take to heart that:

“This hour a grander work awaits your hand
Than any written in the treasured past.
Lay to the oar! The tide runs fast, runs fast,
Life’s possibilities are yet unspanned.”

And since I’ve launched out and am laying to the oar, I need to sail on and on, until I’m home at last, ...as Howard, John, and Richard Morgan wrote:

The journey long, the time soon gone;
Sail on. Sail on.
The sea is deep, your promise keep:
Sail on. Sail on.
Though ocean wide, no surging tide:
Sail on. Sail on.
Home, home at last, the storm is past.
Sail on. Sail on.

This was also the lesson that Christopher Columbus taught his fellow sailors during their dangerous voyage of exploration in 1492 - when he “discovered” America while he was looking for a way to sail to Asia (by sailing West):



Columbus and the three ships (1492)

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
 Behind the gates of Hercules;
 Before him not the ghost of shores,
 Before him only shoreless seas.
 The good Mate said : "Now we must pray,
 For lo! The very stars are gone.
 Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say?"
 "Why, say, '**Sail on! sail on! and on!**' "

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
 My men grow ghastly wan and weak!"
 The stout Mate thought of home; a spray
 Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
 "What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,
 If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
 "Why you shall say at break of day,
 '**Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!**' "

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the Mate:
 "This mad sea shows its teeth tonight.
 He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
 With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
 Brave Admiral, say but one good word;

What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
"Sail on! sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck
And peered through darkness. Ah! That night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck –
A light! A light! A light! A light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: **"On! Sail on!"**

Joaquin Miller

Indeed, what a lesson Columbus gave to the world of **perseverance** in the face of tremendous difficulties! Faith that goes forward triumphs... The last principle that we'll mention of sailing successfully is:

20. BE VERY CAREFUL NEAR THE END OF YOUR VOYAGE...!

Many a seafarer has discovered this great truth, some too late. Even John Bunyan wrote about it in *"The Pilgrim's Progress."* He said: "Then I saw that there was a way to hell even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of destruction..." We need to be very careful when we come near our destination. There are certain **dangers near the coast** (like rocks, reefs, currents and wrecks), but there are also **dangers at the harbor mouth!** For instance, cross-currents and dangerous sandbanks that develop (especially after heavy weather). John Flavel, in *"Navigation Spiritualized: A New Compass for Seamen,"* speaks about the **"Greatest Dangers near the Coast"**...

**"The seaman's greatest danger's near the coast;
When we are nearest heav'n, the danger's most."**

OBSERVATION: **Though seamen meet with violent storms, yet if they have sea-room enough, they are not much dismayed: but if they find themselves near the shore, they look upon their condition as very dangerous:** The sight of the shore is to them (as Solomon speaks of the morning in another case) like the shadow of death, if not able to weather



Sail on!



Sail on!

it. **For one ship swallowed up in the ocean, many may perish upon the coast.**

APPLICATION: **The greatest straits and difficulties that many saints meet with in all their lives, is when they come nearest to heaven, and have almost finished their course.** Heaven indeed is a glorious place, the spacious royal mansion of the Great King; but ...it hath a strait and narrow entrance, Luke 13:24. O the difficulty of arriving there! How many hard tugs in duty, what earnest contention and striving even to an agony! As that word imports, Luke 13:24. **Multitudes put forth, and by profession are bound for this fair haven: but of the multitudes that put out, how few do arrive there?** A man may set out by a glorious profession with much resolution, and continue long therein; he may offer very fair for it, and not be far from the kingdom of God, and yet not be able to enter at the last, Matt. 7:22.

Yea, and many of those who are sincere in their profession, and do arrive at last, yet come to heaven (as I may say) by the gates of hell; and put in, as a poor, weather-beaten vessel comes into the harbor, more like a wreck than a ship, neither mast nor sail left. The righteous themselves are scarcely saved, i.e. they are saved with very much difficulty. They have not all an abundant entrance, as the apostle speaks, 2 Pet. 1:11.

“Some persons are afar off, Eph. 2:23, i.e. touched with no care of religion: **some are near, but never enter** as semi-converts. See Matt. 12:34. **Others enter, but with great difficulty,** they are saved as by fire, 1 Cor. 3:13. Make a hard shift. But then there are **some that go in with full sail before the wind,** and have an abundant entrance; they go triumphing out of the world.” (Manton on Jude). Ah! When we come into the narrow channel, at the very point of entrance into life, the soul is then in the most serious frame: all things look with a new face; conscience scans our evidence most critically; then also Satan falls upon us, and makes his sorest assaults and batteries. It is the last encounter; if they escape him now, they are gone out of his reach for ever. And if he cannot hinder their salvation, yet if he can but cloud their evening, and make them go groaning and howling out of the world, he reaches another end by it, even to confirm and prejudice the wicked, and weaken the hands of others that are looking towards religion.

REFLECTION: If this be so, how inevitable is my perdition, may the careless soul say? **If they that strive so much, and go so far, yet perish at last; and if the righteous themselves are scarcely saved, then where shall such an ungodly creature as I appear? O Lord!** If they that have made religion their business, and have been many years pursuing a work of mortification, have gone mourning after the Lord Jesus, and walked humbly with their God; yet if some of such as these have such a hard tug at last, then what will become of such a vain, sensual, careless, flesh-pleasing wretch as I have been?

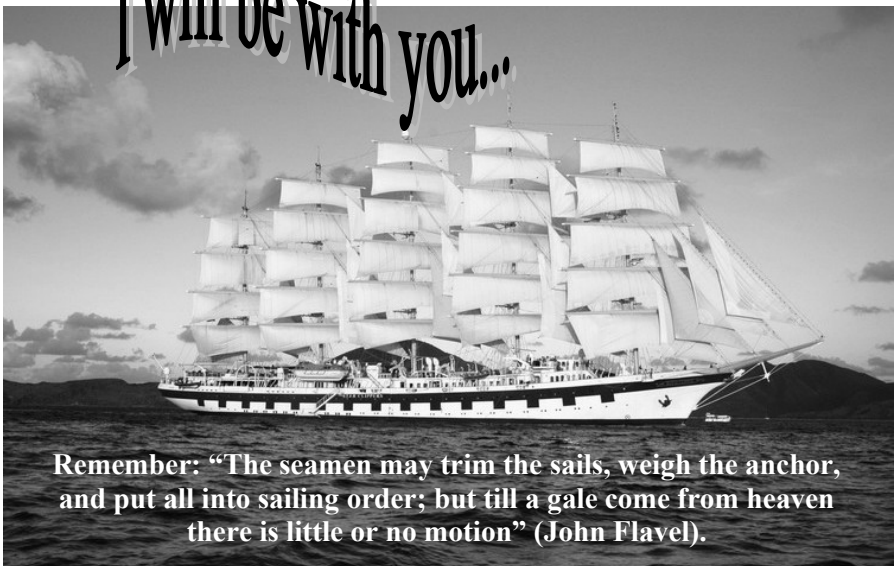
Again, do saints find it so strait an entrance? **Then, though I have well-grounded hopes of safe arrival at last, yet let me look to it, that I do not increase the difficulty.** Ah! They are the things that are now done, or omitted, that put conscience into such an agony then; for then it comes to review the life with the most serious eye. O let me not stick my death-bed full of thorns, against I come to lie down upon it. O that I may turn to the wall in that hour, as Hezekiah did, 2 Kings 20:2,3, and say, **“Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.”**

THE POEM:

**After a tedious passage, saints descry
The glorious shore, salvation being nigh:
Death's long-boat's launched, ready to set ashore
Their panting souls. O how they tug at oar,
Longing to be at rest! But then they find
The hardest tug of all is yet behind.
Just at the harbour's mouth they see the wreck
Of souls there cast away and driven back.
A world of dang'rous rocks before it lie;
The harbour's barr'd, and now the winds blow high:
Thoughts now arise, fears multiply apace;
All things above them have another face.
Life blazes, just like an expiring light,
The soul's upon the lip prepar'd for flight.
Death, till the resurrection, tears and rends,
Out of each other's arms two parting friends,
The soul and body. Ah! But more than so,**

**The devil falls upon them ere they go,
With new temptations, back'd with all his pow'r,
And scruples kept on purpose for that hour.**
This is the last encounter, now, or never;
If he succeedeth now, they're gone forever.
Thus in they put, with hardship at the last,
As ships out of a storm, nor sail, nor mast:
Yet some go in before a wind and have
Their streamer of assurance, flying brave.
**Lord, give me easier entrance, if thou please;
Or if I may not there arrive with ease,
Yet I beseech thee, set me safe ashore,
Tho' stormy winds at harbor's mouth should roar."**

Oh, this is also my prayer! Lord Jesus, may You please keep me safe in Your will and in Your way. May You help me to sail safely and successfully until I reach Your goal for me in this life and in heaven. Teach me how to launch out like You, how to sail like You, how to face every storm like You, how to face every wind like You, how to watch like You, pray like You, obey like You, feed like You, communicate like You, persevere like You, be careful like You, do everything like You, live like You—and arrive like You!



PROMISED ARRIVAL

in our Heavenly Harbour

When God gives us the **command**: “Launch out into the deep,” He also gives us the **promise** of a safe arrival in our Heavenly Harbour, and the **provisions** and enablement and **personal assistance** to reach that Goal—for Him. He says: “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you ...they shall not overwhelm you” (Isaiah 43:2). This is a promise of God. Annie Johnson Flint put it in these words:

“When thou passest through the waters”
Deep the waves may be and cold,
But Jehovah is our refuge,
And His promise is our hold;
For the Lord Himself hath said it,
He, the faithful God, and true:
“When thou comest to the waters
Thou shalt not go down BUT THROUGH.”

Seas of sorrow, seas of trial,
Bitterest anguish, fiercest pain,
Rolling surges of temptation
Sweeping over heart and brain –
They shall never overflow us
For we know His Word is true;
**All His waves and all His billows
He will lead us safely through.**

Threatening breakers of destruction,
Doubt’s insidious undertow,
Shall not sink us, shall not drag us
Out to ocean depths of woe;
For His promise shall sustain us,
Praise the Lord, Whose Word is true!

**We shall not go down or under,
For He saith, “Thou passest THROUGH.”**

We thank God for this precious promise! We agree with Louis Waterman when he said of the Lord:

Thy piloting, how sure, how safe,
Until, all breakers passed,
We triumph o’er each hurricane,
And anchor Home at last!

While we have this strong expectation and this wonderful promise, it still happens that we sometimes get tired and even discouraged and full of doubt. Answering this, a spiritual seafarer wrote:

I am tired, Lord: let me furl my sail,
I hear thro’ the mists how the sad waves wail,
My heart is quailing and sick with fear,
Ask me no more on yon course to steer.

**Child, take this word again for Me;
“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”**

Lord, the storm is o’er – we have ridden it well,
Through all its tossings no harm befell,
’Twas Thine hand upon the helm, I know,
But the track is so lonely whereon we go!

**For the lonely hour, child, trust in Me;
“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”**

The canvas is torn, and the rigging rent,
While I see the white sails gleam content
’Neath the golden light on a sheltered bay;
Let me drop my anchor there, Lord I pray.

**Child, thou must leave the choice to Me;
“As thy days, so thy strength shall be.”**

Lord, the night is coming – I fear, I fear!
The roar of the breakers is drawing near.
And I cannot turn my bark aside;
Now must I perish at eventide?

**They shall never perish who trust in Me;
“As thy days, so shall thy strength be”**

The billows are passed and the harbour won –
We saw in the gleam of the setting sun,
The waters of peace that bark enfold,
And bear it afar into joys untold,

**Now heart, be strong to ride life’s sea,
“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”**

As we are strengthened by the Word of the Lord to trust Him and to GO ON sailing life’s sea, we soon discover that we cannot do it alone—we need the Lord.

I cannot do it alone;
The waves run fast and high,
And the fogs close chill around,
And the light goes out in the sky;
But I know that We Two shall win - in the end,
- Jesus and I.

I cannot row it myself –
The boat on the raging sea –
But besides me sits Another,
Who pulls or steers – with me;
And I know that We Two shall come safe into port,
-His child and He.

Strong and tender and true,
Crucified once for me;
Ne’er will He change, I know,
Whatever I may be.
But all He says I must do,
Ever from sin to keep free;
We shall finish our course, and reach Home at last!
- His child and He.

That indeed is what we want to do: to trust Him, obey Him, shun sin, sail well, ...and reach Home at last—the home of His Heart! We have reason to trust Him. He is faithful and reliable, and has helped us “hitherto”... That’s why Mary Gorges said:

We have come very safely – hitherto;

And sometimes seas were calm, and skies were blue;
Sometimes the wild waves rose – the tempests roared;
But never barque went down with Christ on board.

And so it shall be to the very end –

Through ebb or flow, the one unchanging Friend,
Ruling the waves which sink at His command,
Holding them in the hollow of His hand.

A lonely track perchance, a darkened sky,
A mist of tears, and only God knows why –
Is He not worth our trust the voyage through,
He who has never failed us – hitherto?

Here all things pass, but Heaven keeps them fair;
The partings here – the joyous meetings there –

**God's waves and winds drive onward to that rest;
Tossed home, as children to a Father's breast.**

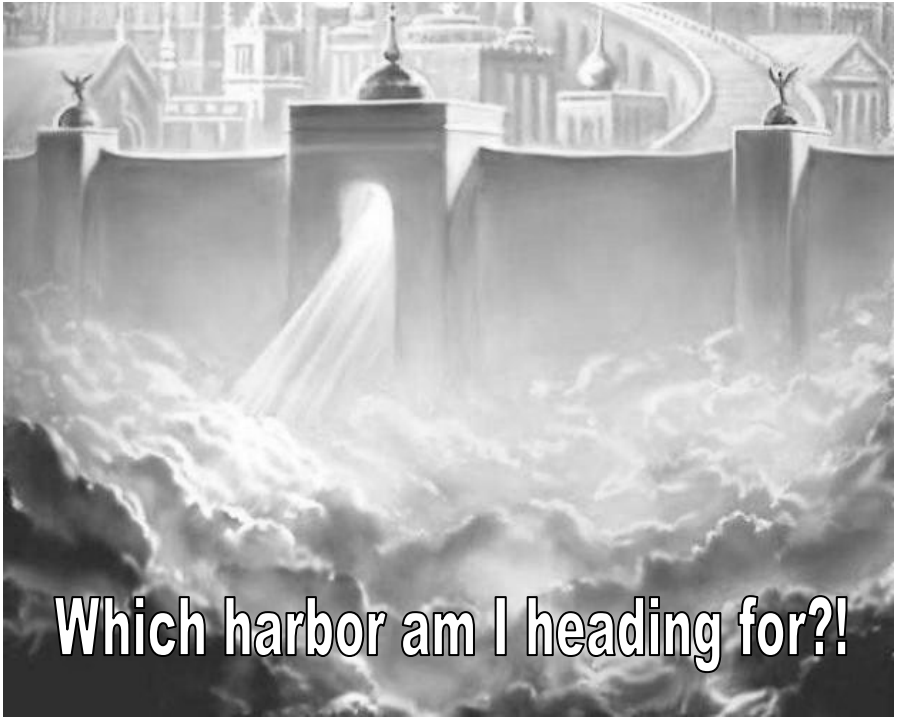
There comes an hour, when, every tempest o'er,
The harbour lights are reached, the golden shore:
Never, oh nevermore to fret or fear –
Christ, gives us faith to praise Thee even here!

As the days go by, we realize that we are getting closer to our Harbour and our anticipation increases. It is as if we can see and hear what lies ahead for us, as if “morning” is about to break... That's how Frank L. Stanton felt (at least). He wrote “**In The Beautiful Morning**”...

**“The storm and the darkness – the desolate night –
But the ship saileth sure, and the harbour's in sight;
And a melody swells
From the chime o' the bells;-
'Home in the beautiful morning.'**

**“O, long was the seaway, with billows to breast;
But we dreamed on those billows of havens of rest;
O'er the oceans sad knells
Still the chime o' the bells –
'Home in the beautiful morning.'**

'Mid the wrecks that were tossed by the storm and the strife



We had drifted so far from the love that is life;
But the bells o'er the foam.
Ever singing of home –
'Home in the beautiful morning.'

**O, storm, and black billows, not hopeless, we roam,
For love guides the ship to the white shores of home;
And the melody swells
From the jubilant bells –
'Home in the beautiful morning.' ”**

Alfred Tennyson (1802-1892) thought of his own home-coming in heaven and his sure hope of seeing the Lord Jesus, his Pilot, “face to face” as he wrote “**Crossing the Bar**”:

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
**And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.**

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full of sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep,
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
**And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;**

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
**I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.**

...And then comes **the promised ARRIVAL!!!** It will compensate for all the hardships, all the trials, all the temptations, all the storms, all the battles, all the struggles, all the prayers, all the agonies, all the watching, all the discipline, all the trusting, all the obeying, all the working, all they studying, all the looking to Him, all the learning, all the leaning on Him...!!!

In "Stepping Ashore" Robert E. Selle put it as follows:

**Oh! Think to step ashore,
And find it Heaven;
To clasp a hand outstretched,
And find it God's hand!
To breathe new air,
And that celestial air;
To feel refreshed,
And find it immortality;
Ah, think to step from storm and stress
To one unbroken calm:
To wake and find it Home.**

Oh, this will be wonderful! Glorious! Unspeakably beautiful! With S.T. Francis we can say:

**Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Love of every love the best:
'Tis an ocean vast of blessing
'Tis a haven of sweet rest.
Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus,
'Tis a heaven of heavens to me;
And it lifts me up to glory
For it lifts me up to Thee.**

According to 1 Corinthians 3:15, there are some who will barely make it to that Home Harbour of Heaven, but still, they'll have reason to rejoice. "St Joseph of the Stadium" puts it like this:

**Safe home! safe home in port!
Rent cordage, shattered deck,
Torn sails, provisions short,
And only not a wreck.
But, O! the joy upon the shore,
To tell the voyage perils o'er.**

Oh, how wonderful that will be—to be safe home in Heaven, with all the perils of the voyage left behind!!! May the Lord help us to sail in such a way that we'll REACH that Haven, but more than that—may He help us to reach it in such a way and in such a manner that he may be glorified!

In her poem, “*Mariner’s Hymn*,” Caroline Anne Southey (1786-1854) captures beautifully the different phases of the mariner’s voyage to heaven. She starts with the launching out, followed by the calm, the dark, and then the storm and the crisis in the storm, ...but followed by the safety of the Harbour! She puts it as follows:

MARINER’S HYMN

Launch thy bark, mariner!

Christian, God speed thee!

Let loose the rudder-bands;

Good angels lead thee.

Set thy sails warily,

Tempests will come;

Steer thy course steadily;

Christian, steer home.

‘What of the night, watchman?

What of the night?’

‘Cloudy, all quiet,

No land yet – all’s right.’

Be wakeful, be vigilant;

Danger may be

At an hour when all seemeth

Securest to thee.

Look to the weather bow,

Breakers are round thee;

Let fall the plummet now

Shallows may ground thee.

Reef in the foresail there,

Hold the helm fast:

So, - let the vessel wear;

There swept the blast.

How? gains the leak so fast?

Clear out the hold;

Hoist up thy merchandise,

Heave out thy gold.

There – let the ingots go;
Now the ship rights:
Hurrah! the harbour's near;
Lo! the red lights.

Slacken not sail yet
At inlet or island;
Straight for the beacon steer,
Straight for the highland.
Crowd all thy canvas on,
Cut through the foam;
Christian, cast anchor now,
Heaven is thy home!

There is no way that we can adequately describe the wonder and privilege of reaching our Heavenly Home. We'll only know it one day! The Lord Jesus said: “**In my Father's house** are many rooms... I am going to prepare a place for you ...**that you also may be where I am**” (John 14:2,3). Oh, may He help us to sail well! May He help us to launch out, ...to cut all ties with the past things that held us back, ...to set our spiritual sails carefully, ...to steer steadily, ...to watch vigilantly, ...to hold the helm firmly through the storms of life, ...to throw overboard all that hinders, ...to not relax or give up, but to bravely, trustingly sail UNTIL we reach the Harbour of Heaven!

HE is our Harbour! **HE** is our Home! **HE** is our Heaven!

Safe in the harbour...



NEVER to leave !

In “*Navigation Spiritualized: A New Compass for Seamen*” John Flavel also wrote about this “**Joy at Reaching the Haven**”. He said:

**“How glad are seamen when they make the shore?
And saints, no less, when all their danger’s o’er.”**

OBSERVATION: What joy is there among seamen, when at last, after a tedious voyage they descry land, and see the desired haven before them? Then they turn out of their loathed cabins, and come upon open deck with much joy. *Psalm 107:30*, “*Then they are glad, because they be quiet: So He bringeth them to their desired haven.*” Now they can reflect with comfort upon the many dangers they have past; it is sweet to recount them.

APPLICATION: But, O, what a transcendent joy, yea, ravishing, will over-run the hearts of the saints, when, after so many conflicts, temptations, and afflictions, they arrive in glory, and are harbored in heaven, where they shall rest forever! 2 Thess. 1:7. The Scripture saith, “They shall sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb,” Rev. 25:3. The song of Moses was a triumphant song composed for the celebration of that glorious deliverance at the Red Sea. The saints are now fluctuating upon a troublesome and tempestuous sea; their hearts sometimes ready to sink, and die within them, at the apprehension of so many and great dangers and difficulties. Many a hard storm they ride out, and many straits and troubles they here encounter with, but at last they arrive at their long-expected haven, and then heaven rings and resounds with the joyful acclamations. And how can it be otherwise, when as soon as ever they set foot upon that glorious shore, Christ Himself meets and receives them with a “Come ye blessed of my Father,” Matt. 25:34. O joyful voice! O much-desired Word! What tribulation would not a man undergo for this word’s sake!

Besides, then they are perfectly freed from all evils, whether of sin or suffering, and perfectly filled with all desired good. Now they shall join with that great assembly, in the high praises of God. **O what a day that will be!** If Diagoras died away with an excess of joy, whilst he embraced his three sons that were crowned as victors in the Olympic games in one day: and good old Simeon, when he saw Christ but in a body subject to the infirmities of our nature, cried out, “Now let thy servant depart in

peace,” **what unspeakable joy will it be to the saints, to behold Christ in His glory**, and see their godly relations also (to whose conversion, perhaps, they have been instrumental) all crowned, in one day, with everlasting diadems of bliss! And if the stars did, as Ignatius saith, make a choir, as it were, about that star that appeared at Christ’s incarnation, and there is such joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner; no wonder then, the morning stars sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy, when the general assembly meet in heaven. **O how will the arches of heaven ring and echo, when the high praises of God shall be in the mouth of such a congregation! Then shall the saints be joyful in glory, and sing aloud upon their beds of everlasting rest.**

REFLECTION: And is there such a day approaching for the sons of God indeed! And have I authority to call myself one of the number! John 1:12. **O then let me not droop at present difficulties, nor hang down my hands when I meet with hardships in the way. O my soul, what a joyful day this will be!** For at present we are tossed upon an ocean of troubles, fears, and temptations; but these will make heaven the sweeter.

Cheer up, then, my soul, thy salvation is now nearer than when thou first believedst, Rom. 13:11. **It will not now be long ere I receive the end of my faith**, 1 Pet. 1:9. And then it will be sweet to reflect even upon these hardships in the way. **Yet a few days more, and then comes the blessed day thou hast so long waited and panted for.** Oppose the glory of that day, O my soul, to thy present abasements and sufferings, as blessed Paul did, Rom. 1:18, and thou shalt see how it will shrink them all to nothing; oppose the inheritance thou shalt receive in that day, to thy losses for Christ now; and see how joyfully it will make thee bear them, Heb. 10:34. Oppose the honor that will be put upon thee in that day, to thy present reproaches, and see how easy it will make them to thee, 1 Cor. 4:5. **What condition can I be in, wherein the believing thoughts of this day cannot relieve me?**

Am I poor, here is that which answers poverty: James 3:5, “hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?”

Am I tempted? Here is relief against that: Rev. 12:16, “Now is come salvation and strength; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down.”

Am I deserted? Here is a remedy for that too: Rev. 22:5, "And there shall be no night there, etc." **Come then, my soul, let us enter upon our inheritance by degrees, and begin the life of heaven upon earth.**

THE POEM:

When Solomon in Israel first was king,
Heaven's arches, earth's foundations, seem'd to ring
With joyful acclamations! **How much more**
Will heav'n resound, when saints are come ashore!
How will the ravished souls transported be
At the first glimpse of Christ! Whom they shall see
In all His glory; and shall live and move,
Like salamanders, in the fire of love.
A flood of tears conveyed them to the gate
Where endless joys receiv'd them. Now the date
Of all their sorrow's out; henceforth they walk
In robes of glory. **Now there's no more talk**
Of fears, temptations, of that snare or this:
No serpent in that paradise doth hiss.
No more desertions, troubled thoughts, or tears;
Christ's full enjoyment supersedes those fears.
Delights of princes courts are all but toys
To these delights, these are transcendent joys,
The joys of Christ Himself; of what they are,
An angel's tongue would stammer to declare.
Were our conceptions clear, did their tongues go
Unto their *Ela*, yet the note's too low.
What! Paint the sun too bright! It cannot be:
Sure heaven suffers no hyperbole.
My thoughts are swallow'd up, my muse doth tire,
And hang her wings, conception soars no higher.
Give me a place among the children there,
Altho' I lie with them in dungeon here.

A CONCLUDING SPEECH

(by John Flavel)

I have now done, and am looking to heaven for the blessing upon these weak labors; what use you will make of them, I know not, but this I know, that the day is coming, when God will reckon with you for this, and all other helps and means afforded to you: and if it be not improved by you, be sure it will be produced as a witness against you. Sirs, I beg you, in the name of Christ, before whom both you and I must shortly appear, that you receive not these things in vain. Did I know what other lawful means to use that might reach your hearts, they should not be in vain to you; but I cannot do God's part of the work nor yours: only I request you all, both masters, common men, and all others into whose hands this shall come, that you will **lay to heart what you read**; pray unto Him that hath the key of the house of David, that openeth and no man shutteth, to open your hearts to give entertainment to these truths. Alas! If you apply it not to yourselves, I have labored to no purpose; the pen of the scribe is in vain: but God may make such an application of them, in one storm or another, as may make your hearts to tremble. **Oh, Sirs! When death and eternity look you in the face, conscience may reflect upon these things to your horror and amazement, and make you cry out, as Prov. 5:12,13, "How have I hated knowledge, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teacher, nor inclined my ears to them that instructed me?"** And O what a dreadful shriek will such souls give, when the Lord opens their eyes to see that misery that they are here warned of! **But if the Lord shall bless these things to your conversion, then we may say to you, as Moses did to Zebulun, the mariner's tribe, Deut. 33:12, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out."** The Lord be with you, which way soever you turn yourselves; and being in the bosom of the covenant, you are safe in the midst of all dangers. **O thou, that art the Father of spirits, that formedst and canst easily reform the heart, open Thou the blind eye, unstop the deaf ear, let the word take hold upon the heart. If thou wilt but say the word, these weak labors shall prosper, to bring home many lost souls to Thee. AMEN."**



PERSONAL RESPONSE

required

All that remains now is for each one of us to **personally respond** to what we have read... What will it be?! When Robert Murray McCheyne, a godly Scottish minister, heard that a friend of the family had said that she was determined to keep by the world, he wrote the following lines on her sad decision:

**She hath chosen the world and its paltry crowd;
She hath chosen the world and an endless shroud;
She hath chosen the world with its misnamed pleasures;
She hath chosen the world before heaven's own treasures.
She hath launched her boat on life's giddy sea,
And her all is afloat for eternity.
But Bethlehem's star is not in her view,
And her aim is far from the harbour true.**

**When the storm descends from the angry sky,
Ah! Where from the winds shall the vessel fly?
When stars are concealed and rudder gone,
And heaven is sealed to the wandering one.
The whirlpool opes for the gallant prize,
And, with all her hopes, to the deep she hies!
But who may tell of the place of woe
Where the wicked dwell, where the worldlings go?**

**For the human heart can ne'er conceive
What joys are the part of them who believe,
Nor can justly think of the cup of death,
Which all must drink who despise the faith.
Away, then - oh, fly from the joys of earth!
Her smile is a lie - there's a sting in her mirth.
Come, leave the dreams of this transient night,
And bask in the beams of an endless light.**

(Jer. 8:20; Heb. 2:3)

It is my prayer that **NONE** of us will choose like this lady did. She chose the world and lost Christ. Let's rather choose Christ and lose the world! Some may doubt or fear to respond with whole-hearted surrender to the Lord Jesus. To such these words come:

Fearing to launch on "full surrender's" tide,
I asked the Lord where would its waters glide
My little bark, "To troubled seas I dread?"
"**Unto Myself**," He said.

Weeping beside an open grave I stood,
In bitterness of soul I cried to God:
"Where leads this path of sorrow that I tread?"
"**Unto Myself**," He said.

Watching my heroes – those I loved the best –
I saw then fail; they could not stand the test,
Even by this, the Lord, by tears not few,
Unto Himself me drew.

Unto Himself! No earthly tongue can tell
The bliss I find, since in His heart I dwell;
The things that charmed me once seem all as naught;
Unto Himself I'm brought.

Friends, when we are **with Him**, nothing else really matters. Then all that matters is His will and to please Him and to glorify Him—in and through a life of loving, trusting, happy obedience. He does not draw us or call us to this or that emphasis in the Christian life; He does not call us to religion; he does not call us to ministry (firstly); no, He calls us to Himself...! Let's respond and say: "**Yes, Lord!**" Let's pray and say: "Send me!"

**Is there some desert, or some boundless sea,
Where Thou, great God of angels, wilt send me?**
Some oak for me to rend,
Some sod for me to break,
Some handful of Thy corn to take
And scatter far afield,

Till it in turn shall yield
Its hundredfold
Of grains of gold
To feed the happy children of my God?

**Show me the desert, Father, or the sea;
Is it Thine enterprise? Great God, send me!**
And though this body lies where ocean rolls,
Father, count me among all faithful souls.

Mary Warburton Booth was a willing, loving follower and sailor of the Lord Jesus. She said about "The Call"...

**It came so clear and distinct
"Will you go?"
What could I do but answer,
"Lord, send me"?
"Nay, not alone," He whispered,
"I with thee."
And so we go together
To the foe.
We triumph in His victory
As we go.**

Laura A. Barter-Snow also heard His call and responded. She wrote:

"Get into the boat!" Thou didst whisper.
At first how I feared to obey;
I looked not at Thee, but the storm-clouds,
The darkness, the waves, and the spray.

But then came the words, **"Will you trust Him?"**
Will you claim and receive at His hand
All His definite fullness of blessing?
Launch out at thy Master's command!"

Thou art willing, my Lord, could I doubt thee?
Hast Thou ever proved untrue?
Nay! **out at Thy word I have ventured,
I have trusted. Thy part is to do.**

This brings us to where we started—with the words of the Lord Jesus. He said to His disciple: “**Launch out** into the deep, and **let down** your nets for a draught” (Luke 5:4)...

What was the PURPOSE for which the Lord told him to “launch out”? It seems: to catch fish, but maybe there’s more to it than that. Before we try to find the answer, let’s ask ourselves: **What are the different purposes why boats (usually) launch out?**

*Lord,
what do You want
me to do?!*



Purpose *for launching out...*

There are many, many different **REASONS** why boats are launched. There are similarly MANY different reasons why God launches us out in this world... Some are called to be housewives, others to be teachers, others to be clerks, others to be farmers, others to be fishermen, others to be nurses, others to be mechanics, etc. Before we look at what we are ALL launched out for, let's see some of the different reasons why boats are launched:

1. **Mission ships**—launch out to visit the port cities of the world and share God's love and care, and Word and words (through godly books)....



Logos 1



The Anastasis



Doulos 2



MV Doulos

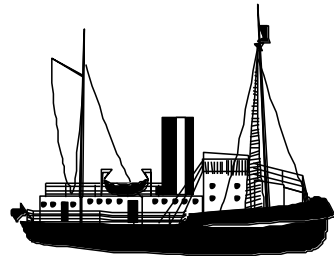
2. **Hospital ships**—launch out to provide quality medical care to less privileged people.



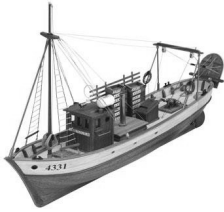
3. **Tugboats**—launch out to help others launch safely ...and to enter the harbour safely.



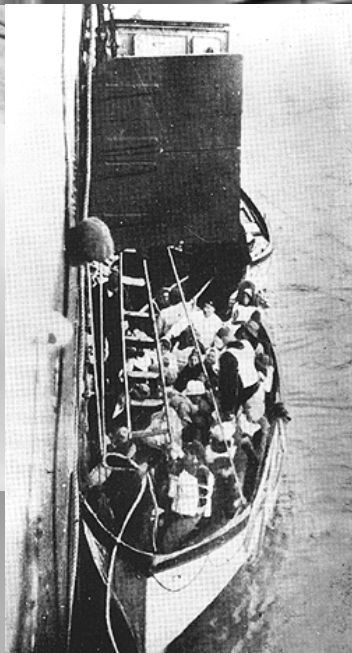
These are very brave,
hardworking little boats—
that are very helpful



4. **Fishing boats**... are “at it” all the time—seeking to “catch fish” and “bring them in.” They are also like brave little warriors. They are always “on the go”... for God; ...always looking for fish!



5. **Life boats**—always ready to go to the aid of those in need, those in danger of drowning, those in danger of shipwreck, those who are sinking, those who are drifting away...





6. **Battleships**—are always ready to rescue, ready to defend, ready to deal with the enemy, ready to engage in warfare with the enemy, ready to “fight the good fight.” They are well disciplined, well trained, precise, faithful, loyal...



7. **Cargo carriers**—are willing “work horses” that are strong to bear, strong to carry, strong to take a load, strong to face the storms... They have an amazing carrying capacity... They focus on money-making and business...



8. **Strike craft**—will protect our fishing waters, help in search and rescue operations, and be part of maritime defense



9. **Frigate**—is part of a naval task force, helps in anti-submarine warfare, and has to protect itself against enemy attacks



10. **Cruise liners**—are launched for luxury, leisure, entertainment, pleasures of the eyes and the flesh, and for transportation...



11. **Minesweepers**—ensure that others ships can sail safely. It searches and destroys mines (bombs) in the water...

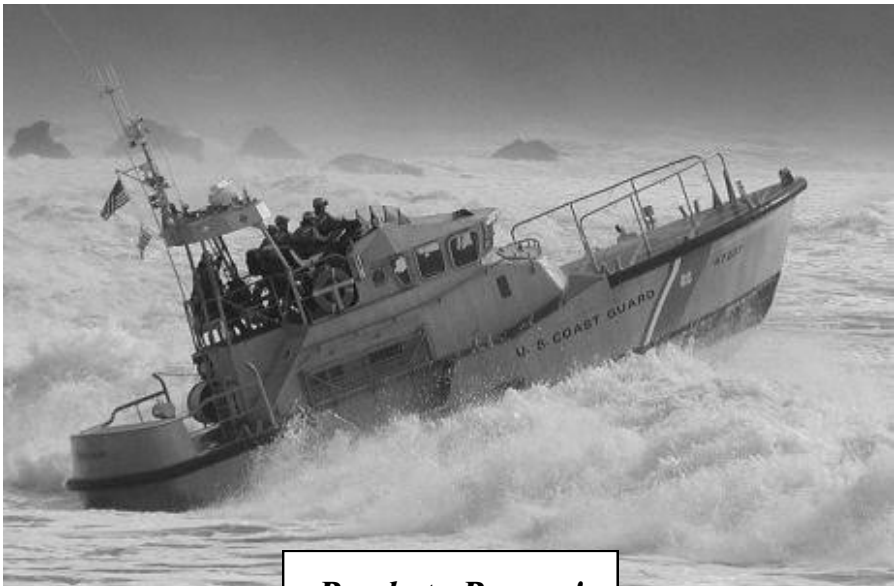


12. **Research boat**—used for research in many different areas: weather, oceans, currents, fish, bird-life, etc...

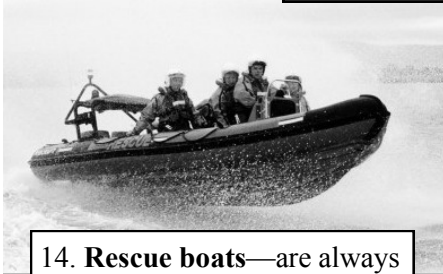


13. **Speedboats**—for sport...

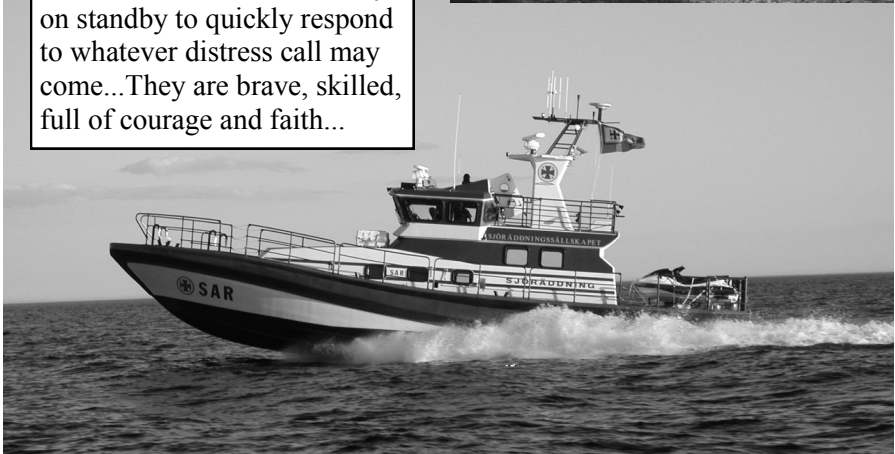




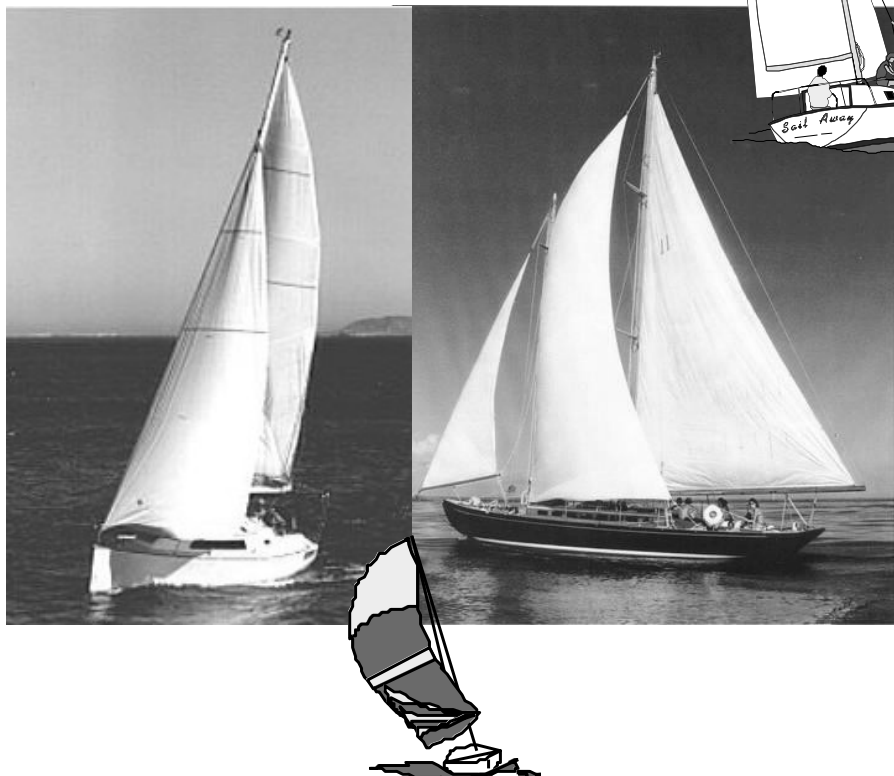
Ready to Rescue!



14. Rescue boats—are always on standby to quickly respond to whatever distress call may come...They are brave, skilled, full of courage and faith...



15. **Sailboats**—are nowadays launched for sport, relaxation, recreation, and entertainment...

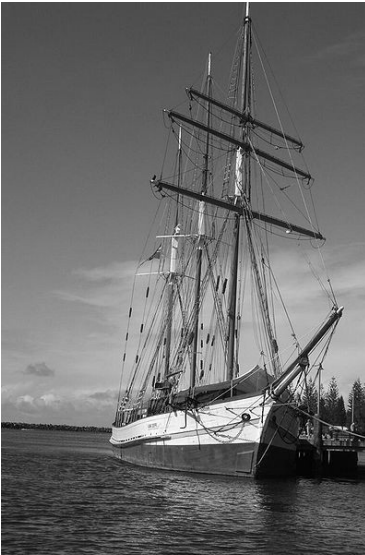


16. **House boats**—launch out (not into the deep!) to provide a home and shelter to a family...





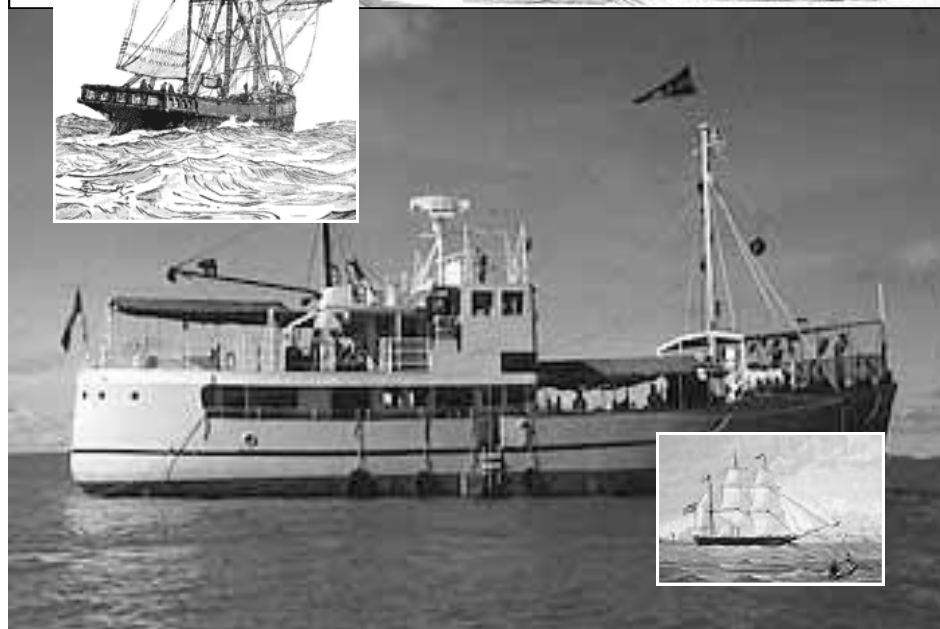
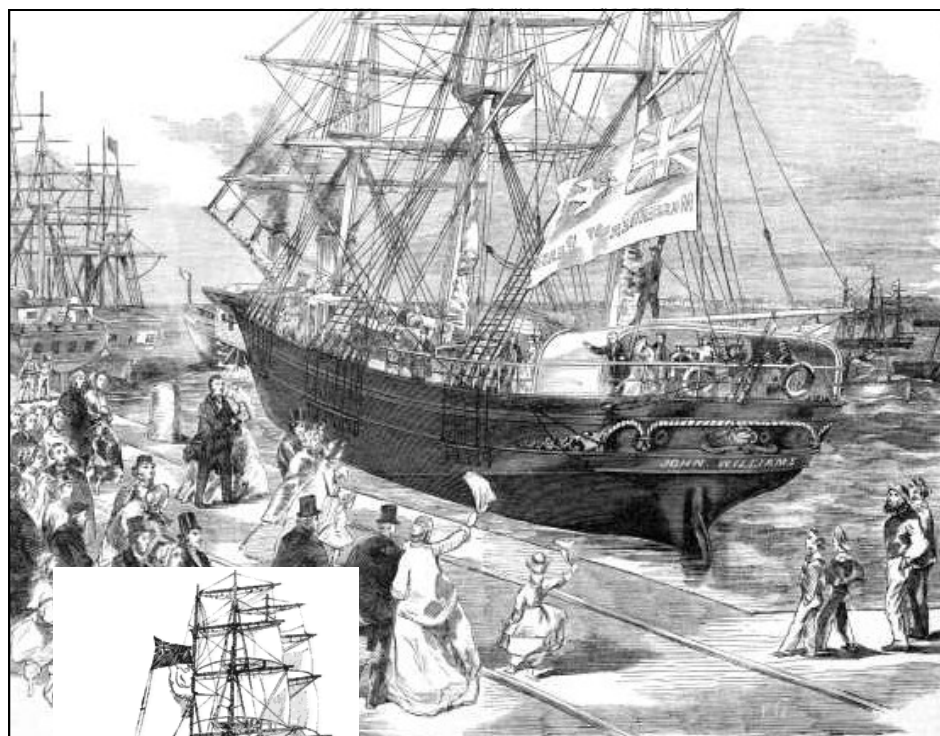
17. Radio boat—launches out to broadcast radio programs from offshore, especially in countries where it's illegal to broadcast Christian programs from within the country...



18. School boats—are used for offering schooling and training to those who need it. This particular one is also a school



19. Ferry boats—launch out to transport mainly people, but also (to a lesser extent) cargo, cars and motorbikes...



20. **Missionary boats**—the ones you see on the opposite page are all “John Williams” missionary boats (past and present). **John Williams** (1796–1839) was an English missionary, called “the Apostle of Polynesia” or “the shipbuilder.” As a small boy he wrote:

With open eyes and gladsome heart
I welcome in the day;
I throw my bed-clothes all apart,
And rise, and kneel and pray.

He was trained as a foundry worker and mechanic. At the age of 21 years he and his wife voyaged to the Society Islands (as missionaries of the London Missionary Society). They established their first missionary post on the island of Raiatea. From there, they visited a number of the Polynesian island chains. Landing on Aitutaki in 1821 they used Tahitian converts to carry their message to the Cook islanders. He discovered Rarotonga in 1823 and founded missions there. He later translated the New testament and other books into Rarotongan. The Williamses became the first missionary family to visit Samoa.

He built ships that were all used to spread the Gospel of Christ among the different people groups on the South Sea islands. “*The Messenger of Peace*” was the first ship that he built on the island of Rarotonga. The ships were also used to transport missionaries and Christian workers to the different islands, as well as food and medicines and things of practical value—to help improve the living conditions of the islanders.

Most of the Williamses' missionary work, and their delivery of a cultural message, was very successful. However, in November 1839, while visiting a part of the New Hebrides where John Williams was unknown, he and fellow missionary James Harris were killed and eaten by cannibals on the island of Erromango during an at-



tempt to bring them the Gospel. .

After his arrival at the Heavenly Harbour (at the age of 43 years), the flame of love for Christ and others that burned in his heart, spread to others' hearts. **They too responded to God's call and command to "go into all the world and preach ...the Gospel to every creature [of the whole human race]"** (Mark 16:15;Ampl). First, the "John Williams I" missionary ship was built and used for the Lord's work. Later, the "John Williams II" was built and used in missions to those islands. This continued until in recent years, when the "John Williams VII" was built and used for God's glory...

The story of the fifth "John Williams" ship (that "sailed and served well for eighteen years") was written by Joyce Reason. as a nine stanza song. Here are some extracts from that song:

In and out among the isles,
up and down the Southern Seas,
Stormy miles and sunny miles,
sullen calm or spanking breeze,
Bearing pastors to their flocks,
boys and girls to school again—
**God keep safe from reef and rock,
gust and gale and hurricane
Our john Williams!
Grant John Williams
Never sails in vain!**

All your many errands done,
southward bound for Suva's port,
Eyes you've brightened, hearts you've won,
with the welcome gifts you brought,
Say, of all you leave of lift,
at your many ports of call,
Was there one most valued gift,
one most precious thing of all?
Well, John Williams,
Tell, John Williams!
Something great or small?

**“One more cherished thing I took
than all gold was ever minted—
Just a little sober book,
plainly bound and closely printed.
Yet upon those leaves is writ
earth and heaven’s most wondrous story:
God our Father speaks through it;
here is seen the Savior’s glory.
I, John Williams,
Your John Williams,
Bear the Word of God.”**

This is wonderful.

Friends, this brings us to the end of this book. May I ask:

What is your purpose in life? What did God make you for? What has He prepared you for? What is He launching you out for? What harbor are you heading for?

**Do we live for Him only?
Do we live to do His will?
Do we live for His glory?
Do we live to tell His story?**

May we know Him and love Him and live for Him and for His glory, every day of our lives. May we sail well and may we see our Pilot face to face when we “have crossed the bar.”

Sail well!

These words come from “*John Williams: The Ship-builder*” and were written in the 8th century:

“...So now the thoughts of my heart urge that I myself should try the high streams, the play of the salt waves. The desire of my mind, every moment, spurs on my soul to GO, that I far hence may seek a stranger land.

For there is no man so high-hearted over earth, nor so good in gifts, nor so keen in youth, nor so brave in deeds, nor so loyal to his lord, that he may not have always sad yearning towards the sea-faring, for what the Lord will give him there.

...The man safe at home knoweth not what some endure who far abroad make tracks of exile. So now my mind stirreth within my breast; my soul amid the sea-flood, over the whale’s home, roameth widely over the ends of the earth, cometh back to me, ...not to be gainsaid, whet-
teh my heart upon the whale-way over the plains of ocean.”

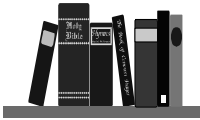
Author unknown

***What good might seamen get, if once they were
But heavenly minded? If they could but steer
The Christian course, the soul might then enjoy
Sweet peace, they might like seas o’erflow with joy.
Were God our all, how would our comforts double
Upon us! thus the seas of all our trouble
Would be divinely sweet : men should endeavor
To see God now, and be with Him forever.***

John Flavel

Thank You, Lord Jesus!





Select Bibliography

- Barnes, Stanley. *An Inspirational Treasury of Samuel Rutherford*. Belfast: Ambassador, 2001.
- Bennett, Arthur. *The Valley of Vision*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997.
- Blanchard, John. *Gathered Gold*. Durham: Evangelical Press, 1989.
- Boston, Thomas. *The Art of Man-Fishing*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977.
- Bryant, Mark. *Literary Hymns, An Anthology*. London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1999.
- Carmichael, Amy. *Mountain Breezes: The Collected Poems of Amy Carmichael*. Fort Washington: CLC, 1999.
- Chambers, Oswald. *Bringing Sons Into Glory; Making All Things New*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1990.
- Chambers, Oswald. *My Utmost for His Highest*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers.
- Chambers, Oswald. *Not Knowing Where*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1990.
- Colgate, S & D. *Fast Track to Sailing: Learn to Sail in Three Days*. McGraw Hill Companies, 2009.
- Cowman, Mrs. Charles E. *Streams in the Desert* and *Springs in the Valley*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House (ZPH), 1996.
- Cowman, Mrs. Charles E. *Words of Comfort and Cheer*. Grand Rapids: ZPH, 1972.
- Dernier W.R. and Van Niekerk N.A. *The Sanlam Skippers' Guide for Small Vessel Seamanship*.
- Edwards, B.H. *Through Many Dangers: The Story of John Newton*. Durham: EP, 1985.
- Flavel, John. *The Works of John Flavel, Volume 4*. London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1968.
- Flavel, John. *The Works of John Flavel, Volume 5*. London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1968.
- Graham, Billy. *Calling Youth to Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1947.
- Kuhn, Isobel. *In the Arena, An Autobiography, Volume 2*. London: OMF Books, 1977.
- Kuhn, Isobel. *Green Leaf in Drought*. London: China Inland Mission (OMF), 1964.
- Hale, Thomas. *On Being a Missionary*. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1995.
- Hurley, Frank. *South with Endurance: Shackleton's Antarctic Expedition 1914-1917. The Photographs of Frank Hurley*. London: Book Creation Ltd., 2001.
- Larson, Craig Brian and Leadership Journal. *750 Engaging Illustrations for Preachers, Teachers and Writers*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993.
- Lansing, Alfred. *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*. NY: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2001.
- Matthews, Basil. *John Williams, the Shipbuilder*. London: The Livingston Press, 1925.
- Meyer, F.B. *Our Daily Homily: Psalms and Canticles*. London: Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1955.
- Murray, Andrew. *God's Best Secrets*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979.
- Northcroft, Cecil. *South Seas Sailor: The Story of John Williams and His Ships*. Guildford and London: Butterworth Press, 1980.
- Otto, Martin. *Seafarers! A Strategic Missionary Vision*. United Kingdom: Piquant, 2002.
- Pearson, B.H. *The Vision Lives: A Profile of Mrs. Charles E. Cowman*. Los Angeles: Cowman Publishing Company, Inc.; Great Britain: Oliphants Ltd., 1964.
- Rutherford, Samuel. *The Loveliness of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2007.
- Sanders, J. Oswald. *Heaven, Better By Far*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1994.
- Spurgeon, C.H. *Morning and Evening Daily Readings*. Christian Focus Publications, 2000.
- Spurgeon, C.H. *The Treasury of David, Volume 2*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers.
- The Holy Bible*, New International Version. Grand Rapids: ZPH, 1973.
- The Holy Bible*, The Message. Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing Group, 2004.
- Tozer, A.W. *That Incredible Christian*. Oasis International Ltd., 1964.
- Walker, M.A., Rev. T. *Missionary Ideals*. London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1959.
- Wilkerson, D. *Have You Felt Like Giving Up Lately?* Vereeniging: Christian Art Publishers, 1991.
- Worsley, F.A. *The Great Antarctic Rescue: Shackleton's Boat Journey*. London: Sphere Books Limited, 1979.
- Psalter Hymnal*. Grand Rapids: 1976.
- Brown, R.K. & Norton, M.R. (Ed). *The One Year Book of Hymns*. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1995.



*The Lord Jesus says:
"Come, follow Me,
and I will make you
fishers of men."
Mark 1:17*





*A smooth sea never made
a skillful sailor*