

Guidance for Life

November 27, 2016

Where can we look for guidance for our lives? How can we avoid pitfalls and dangers that threaten to destroy us and lead to a path of destruction? How can we be assured of peace and safety?

Last month's edition of Yankee magazine featured a story of a ship that was lost at sea last year due to hurricane Joaquin during the voyage. The ship set sail on October 1, 2015, and ran directly into the hurricane. It sank taking the lives of all 33 people aboard. There were 8 people from New England aboard; Rachel Slade wrote the story concerning the event that shocked and saddened families, friends and communities.

Captain Michael Davidson had run into problems with owners of the ships in some past voyages that he had been responsible for. He had lost one job because an employer felt he made a bad judgment call that cost the company money and time. Just a month before his final voyage, he'd rerouted the El Faro to avoid a tropical storm and got chastised for it because it cost company time and fuel. The competition among the companies that use the sea for shipping is great and each tries to keep ahead of others. If a captain makes a determination not to move forward on the sea, money is lost and service is delayed, therefore sometimes a fine line is drawn with a judgment call to delay moving forward or rerouting the ship to avoid a storm. El Faro was the ship that Captain Davidson commanded and he had called Captain Bryson, a ship's pilot for Jacksonville Port to let him know that the ship was ready to leave port of its usual run south to Puerto Rico. They met at 7:30 PM, had coffee together and then Bryson stepped out into the air with temperature ranging around 80 degrees and calm under mostly cloudy skies. Looking up St. Johns River, Bryson prepared to guide the huge ship from the busy port east to the sea. At 8:25 on September 29, the El Faro's crew dropped the last of its lines and Captain Bryson guided the boat down the river. Bryson mentioned that there had been a storm forecast and Davidson had said that he just planned on going out and shooting under it. No one reacted to that statement. By 9:30, the tug boat turned and headed back to land. A forecast that Joaquin hurricane was headed right in the path that Davidson's crew was scheduled to sail into had been aired on TV. Charlie Baird, a second mate, was at home in South Portland watching the weather channel and when he saw the developing of the storm, he texted Davidson and warned him about the seriousness of the hurricane and asked him what his plans were. Davidson told him that he was aware of the storm and had plans to be on the back side of the hurricane in a few hours. Charlie spoke to him of alternate routes and asked him to consider them. But GPS tracking later revealed that Davidson never changed course. In fact he continued full steam ahead on a straight southeastern course up to the end. At 7:00 AM on October 1, Davidson made the emergency call to shore. His voice on the recording was calm. He called for help, then had given the call to abandon ship, but they had little chance of survival in open lifeboats

and rafts. Plotting his position, the U.S. Coast Guard was alarmed to discover that the ship was just 20 miles from the Joaquin's eye. The storm would soon escalate. There was no time to get to them before the disaster hit. There were no survivors on that ship.

This story is also a story of life and death. A captain who ignored warnings and once his course was determined, refused to heed wise counsel and wouldn't change the direction that he had chosen to take. He lost the ship, the crew and his own life because he chose to move forward in a direction that his ship was heading thinking he could beat the storm. The ship was no match for that storm. He depended on a report that he had heard early on that convinced him that he could make it to his destination and he was wrong.

There is a story of a storm involving Jesus and his disciples in Luke 8:22 & Matthew 8:25, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go to the other side of the lake." And they launched forth. As they sailed, Jesus fell asleep and there came a storm of wind on the lake and the boat filled with water and they were in jeopardy. They went to Jesus and awoke him and asked, "Master, master, save us, for we perish!" Then he arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water and they ceased and there was a great calm. He said to them "Why are you so fearful? Where is your faith?" They were afraid and wondered and said to each other, "What manner of man is this that even the wind and the waves obey his voice." They arrived at the country of the Gadarenes which is over against Galilee.

In Matthew 8:25, it reads, "Master save us for we perish."

If you continue reading this chapter you will find that once Jesus was on land, he also had power to cast out demons from a lunatic that no one could control. He was a wild man, exceedingly fierce, completely dominated by demonic forces. He wore no clothes and dwelt among the tombs . The devil drove him and had complete control over him. People tried to bind him with chains but he broke loose and there was no help for him among men. When he saw Jesus the demons spoke through him with a loud voice, "What have I to do with you, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee to torment me not." The gospel of Matthew says, "Are you come to torment us before the time?" Jesus had commanded them to come out of the man. When Jesus asked what his name was, the demons spoke that the name was Legion for they were many. Jesus commanded them to come out of the man and they asked permission to go into a herd of pigs and Jesus allowed them to go. The keepers of the pigs ran into the city and told what had happened. When people came to see for themselves, they found the man clothed and in his right mind sitting and listening to the words of Jesus. The people were afraid and demanded that Jesus leave their coast. The man asked if he could go with Jesus, but he was told to return to his family and show how great things God had done for him.

Jesus knew that a storm was coming; he wasn't concerned about the storm. He has power over storms; he has power over any storm that comes into our lives. He will take us to the other side if we trust him to guide us and direct us. Satan tried to keep Jesus from reaching the other side because there was a demon possessed man that Jesus would deliver

and the demons had no power over the Son of God. This man would be a testimony to the power of the living God to deliver from the bondage of sin and loose his mind from insanity. Satan tried to thwart the plan of God, but he has no power over Jesus Christ.

In Matthew chapter 7 Jesus had just spoken the Sermon on the Mount, and continued by admonishing people to be careful what path they choose in life. He said to enter in at the straight gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and many are going through that gate. Matthew 7:13. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leads unto life, few will find it. It won't be popular and it won't be easy, but it will lead to eternal life. "Beware of false prophets", Jesus said, "for they will come to you dressed in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." He tells us that we can recognize them from the fruit of their lives. Keep alert, be aware, take heed to the counsel of Scriptures and when the storm comes, you will have the Holy Ghost, the comforter, right with you to guide you into all truth.

In verse 24, there is a familiar Sunday school story. Jesus said that everyone who hears his sayings and follows them is compared to a wise man which built his house upon a rock. The rains descended, the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house but it didn't fall because it was built on a rock.

Everyone that hears Jesus' words and doesn't heed them, the same is likened to a foolish man who built his house upon sand. The rains descended, the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell; and great was the fall of it.

When Jesus had ended his sayings the people were astonished at his doctrine for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.

In Matthew 28:18 & 19, Jesus gave instructions to his followers. He said "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." He said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Jesus is the one who commanded us to spread his teachings and to speak his words so that people will be delivered from the power of Satan that has deceived them. 1 Peter 5:8 says this: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour." Peter tells us to resist him and he will flee from us. He tells us to stand steadfast and resist him with faith and realize that afflictions will come to believers just as they do in the world. But the God of all grace who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus will, after you have suffered for a time, rescue you and make you perfect, establish you, strengthen and settle you." God will be right with you regardless of what comes your way or what storms come into your life if you are filled with his spirit. All glory, dominion and power is given to Jesus Christ forever and ever!

AMEN!

In 1 Corinthians 10, it warns Christians to avoid lusts of this world. Paul spoke about the Children of Israel and the stories of the Old Testament that God uses to teach us lessons about life. They were given to us for examples that we might learn and heed God's commandments so we don't fall into the same traps that the Jews fell into in Old Testament times. He warns us not to depend on thinking that we stand, lest we fall. "There has been no temptation that comes to you but that which is common to man. But God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able to overcome. But with every temptation He will make a way for you to escape so that you may bear it. Flee idolatry!"

In John 4:24, Jesus spoke to the woman at the well who had been married multiple times and now was living with a man who was not her husband. He spoke to her these words. "The hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The woman replied that when the Messiah comes, she would understand because he would tell her all things.

Jesus replied, "I that speak unto you am He."

We must not shirk our duty of telling the world the truth about the gospel of Jesus. We can expect ridicule, lost friendships, and criticism for those who follow Satan hate truth, they hate light for the Scripture says that men choose darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

I counsel with people often who struggle with being open and honest. Telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth is very difficult for those who have not led honest lives and have lied to themselves and others. They want people to think the best of them; yet they live differently than what they portray to others. When confronted with truth, they get defensive and skirt around the issue, just as the woman at the well did with Jesus. Yet Jesus spoke the truth and told her everything that she ever did. She realized that she couldn't hide from him; he is God.

Yet the truth is what sets a person free. Desire truth for the Bible says to buy the truth and don't ever sell it. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one approaches the Father except through Jesus. The Bible says that whatsoever you do, in word or in deed do all in the name of Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Colossians 3:17. The Bible declares that there is a way that seems right unto man but the end thereof are the ways of death. Proverbs 14:12.

1 Corinthians 13:5 admonishes us to examine ourselves to make sure that we are in the faith. Prove your own selves. Be sure that you have Jesus as the captain of your ship and he is the one guiding you to your final destination. Pray one for another and please pray for me. I desire to be a good and faithful servant and I hope that you do also.