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“THE MATE WAS A MIGHTY SAILING MAN”

What started out to be a “three hour tour”, turned out to be something more, even though the “skipper was brave and true”. The sea ditty from “Gilligan’s Island” resonates with the telling of the ill-fated voyage of the Minnow. For three seasons on prime-time television (and scores more on reruns) the castaways tried desperately to escape from the island, while millions turned in weekly to watch their exploits. It was all in good fun. But imagine actually be stranded or in a turbulent storm that you feared for your life. In the fall of 1982, Deborah Kiley and three companions didn’t have to imagine, it became a reality.

The four young people were to deliver a 58 foot yacht, christened the “Trashman” from Maine to Florida. The trip proceeded as expected until they arrived off the coast of North Carolina. They were greeted with gale force winds and mountainous swells that eventually sank the yacht. The crew was able to crawl into a rubber life boat, and for the next four days, in shark infested waters, tried to hang on to life, sans fresh water or food.

In the book “Albatross”, Kiley shares the ordeal in vivid detail. She chronicles how one crew member railed at God for their plight. She on her part, silently recited the Lord’s prayer and asked God to teach her something through the crisis. The young man who cursed God, drank seawater, became delirious, jumped overboard to his peril. The remaining three crew members were eventually rescued by a freighter.

Each one of us has a different reaction when a crisis arises. The word crisis in the Chinese language is made up of two symbols, one be-

ing danger and the other opportunity. It takes fortitude to view times of crisis as an opportunity. But that is exactly what we are called upon to do. *“In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider...”* is what Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 7:14. Job, centuries prior to Solomon, after being beset with the loss of everything said, *“Shall we accept good from God and not accept adversity?”* (Job 2:10)

In the 8th chapter of Deuteronomy, God reminds the children of Israel about their “wanderings” in the wilderness and it should have provided an optimum opportunity for learning.

One such lesson should have focused on God’s grace in dealing with the people in spite of their attitude toward Him. But when one considers their history after entering the land of promise, it is reasonable to wonder just how much they learned. But the same could be said with respect to us and if we have come to recognize the sovereignty of God and looked to Him for strength and direction. Life is fraught with difficult times that will challenge even the most stalwart. The choice is whether we wither and retreat or grow by learning.

An individual with the last name of DeHaan penned a brief poem that clearly reflects the attitude that should be embraced by all of mankind. “O Lord, I would not ask You why these trials come my way. But what there is for me to learn of Your great love, I pray.” James in his writing put it succinctly. *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete lacking in nothing.”* (1:2-4) (wbe)

THE BULWARK