

Pt. 16 “God’s Deliverance”

Acts 27: 22-25, 39-44

28:1-6

September 11th, 2001 just past 9:00am, Stanley Praisnath, Vice President for Fuji Bank, was in his office in the South Tower at WTC when his phone rang. “Are you watching the news?” asked a woman the Chicago office. “Are you alright?” “I’m fine” he said wondering why she had called. Just then he turned to gaze out the window at the Statue of Liberty, as had been his routine. The surreal sight of a low-flying commercial jet, heading straight for his tower disrupted his view. He dropped the phone in mid-sentence and dove to the floor. Curling under his desk he began praying to God, “Lord, help me” he prayed desperately as the aircraft smashed into the tower.

The smell of jet fuel in the air, equipment scattered all around, rubble covering the floor, dust in the air, he began clawing across mound of debris. “Lord, I have to go home to my family,” he wheezed. “I have to see my daughters.” Just then he saw a light.

“I am here to help you.” He thought, “This is my guardian angel! The Lord sent somebody to help me!” Praisnath’s guardian angel was Brian Clark, a Christian who was an executive 3 floors below. The 2 miraculously climbed out of the rubble to safety.

Praisnath stated, “My Lord has some unfinished tasks for me.” “I took the tattered clothes I was wearing that day, put them in a box, and wrote DELIVERANCE all over it. I told my wife, ‘if I ever get spiritually cold, I want you to bring this box to me, open it up, and show me what the Lord brought me from.’”

Deliverance...

1. Based on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ
2. Based on the Promises God made to His children
 - See It...Program yourself to see what God will do
 - Believe It...believe what God says
 - Testify It...testify what God will do
 - Step Out...step out in Faith

Romans 4:19-24

10 Things of God’s Deliverance

1. Delivered from the shipwreck...vs.41
2. Delivered from vengeful sailors...vs. 42-43
3. Delivered from centurion...vs. 43
4. God delivers us by all available resources...vs. 43-44
5. Deliverance from barbarian people....Acts 28:2-6
6. Deliverance from viper vs. 5-6
7. Deliverance from a Proud Heart vs. 6-8
8. Deliverance from discouragement 28:13-15
9. Deliverance from bondage vs. 16
10. Deliverance to be able to share his Faith vs. 30

In the closing days of World War II, Allied bombings of the munitions factories around Essen, Germany, became more and more frequent and fierce. When the air raid sirens sounded, armed guards would rush to bomb shelters, leaving the slave laborers (often Jewish and female) to huddle in the rubble and take their own chances.

On March 11, 1945, at the height of an endless bombardment, Elizabeth Roth and five companions decided to make their escape. They crept to the barbed wire surrounding the factory where they worked, crawled through a gap, and made their way across an empty field to a hill overlooking the town where they hoped to find a hiding place.

There, on the verge of freedom, one of the girls lost her nerve. Quietly, she turned back, recrossed the field, crawled back through the wire, and returned to the wreckage of the factory. The next day, along with five hundred other female workers, she was loaded onto a train and sent to Buchenwald and the gas chambers. In recounting this story, William Manchester remarks, "It is a common phenomenon among escapees; the known, however ghastly, seems preferable to the unknown."

Who would do such a thing?" you might ask. "What sane person would make such a tragic decision?" The answer is, "We would."

Like Elizabeth and her friends, we know what it's like to be imprisoned in a broken world. We've been there, living amid the wreckage, cowering under the consequences of our own failure and surrounded by our shattered lives, ruined relationships, and failed hopes.

Then, one day, Jesus comes and offers a means of escape. He takes us by the hand and leads us away from our old lives and habits. Over the wreckage and through the barriers and across the barren fields that separate us from God, Jesus guides us to a place overlooking the possibility of shelter and deliverance. From a high hill, we're given a glimpse of life with God.

We sit on the mountainside with Jesus, gazing at the Beatitudes and thinking what life could be if we walked his way. You can almost hear the wheels turning in the minds of fellow escapees. "Is this possible? Can you teach an old dog like me new tricks? Maybe I should just go back to what I know."

The Old Man and the Gulls

It is gratitude that prompted an old man to visit an old broken pier on the eastern seacoast of Florida. Every Friday night, until his death in 1973, he would return, walking slowly and slightly stooped with a large bucket of shrimp. The sea gulls would flock to this old man, and he would feed them from his bucket. Many years before, in October, 1942, Captain Eddie Rickenbacker was on a mission in a B-17 to deliver an important message to General Douglas MacArthur in New Guinea. But there was an unexpected detour which would hurl Captain Eddie into the most harrowing adventure of his life. Somewhere over the South Pacific the Flying Fortress became lost beyond the reach of radio. Fuel ran dangerously low, so the men ditched their plane in the ocean... For nearly a month Captian Eddie and his companions would fight the water, and the weather, and the scorching sun. They spent many sleepless nights recoiling as giant sharks rammed their rafts. The largest raft was nine by five. The biggest shark...ten feet long. But of all their enemies at sea, one proved most formidable: starvation. Eight days out, their rations were long gone or destroyed by the salt water. It would take a miracle to sustain them. And a miracle occurred. In Captain Eddie's own words, "Cherry," that was the B- 17 pilot, Captain William Cherry, "read the service that afternoon, and we finished with a prayer for deliverance and a hymn of praise. There was some talk, but it tapered off in the oppressive heat. With my hat pulled down over my eyes to keep out some of the glare, I dozed off." Now this is still Captian Rickenbacker talking..."Something landed on my head. I

knew that it was a sea gull. I don't know how I knew, I just knew. Everyone else knew too. No one said a word, but peering out from under my hat brim without moving my head, I could see the expression on their faces. They were staring at that gull. The gull meant food...if I could catch it."

And the rest, as they say, is history. Captain Eddie caught the gull. Its flesh was eaten. Its intestines were used for bait to catch fish. The survivors were sustained and their hopes renewed because a lone sea gull, uncharacteristically hundreds of miles from land, offered itself as a sacrifice. You know that Captain Eddie made it. And now you also know...that he never forgot. Because every Friday evening, about sunset...on a lonely stretch along the eastern Florida seacoast...you could see an old man walking...white-haired, bushy-eyebrowed, slightly bent. His bucket filled with shrimp was to feed the gulls...to remember that one which, on a day long past, gave itself without a struggle...like manna in the wilderness. ("The Old Man and the Gulls" from Paul Harvey's *The Rest of the Story* by Paul Aurandt, 1977, quoted in *Heaven Bound Living*, Knofel Stanton, Standard, 1989, p. 79-80. *God Came Near*, Max Lucado, Multnomah Press, 1987, p. 155).