

NAVIGATING TOWARD OUR DESTINY - PART X Navigating Through the Icy Waters

Text: Matthew 24:12-14

Key Word: Ice

Key Thought: It Takes Great Skill to Navigate Through Icy Waters

*** We are one of the few countries in the world that have a need for ice breaking ships to open the navigation routes in our Arctic waters. It may be hard to believe but as far back as the 11th century ice breakers were wooden ships that were propelled by the wind with their masts.

Today these are specially designed ships with a thickened hull especially at the bow of the ship. It also is designed in a shape that helps to clear the ice away from the ship. The final improvement is found in the ships propulsion system.

The first modern polar icebreaker was built in England in 1897 for the Russian Navy. This 5,000 ton, 10,000 horsepower ship was decommissioned in 1963. Modern ships have improved from coal or oiled fired steam propulsion to diesel electric and eventually to nuclear powered ships.

The world's largest ice breaker was commissioned recently by Russia on June 16 2016 in St. Petersburg. The **Arktica** is 568 feet long and powered by two nuclear reactors. It is capable of breaking ice that is 13 feet thick. Russia currently has 41 operating and is building 8 more. The USA only has 2 icebreakers. Canada presently has 15 of them. ***

Jesus used the word "**cold**" to describe the condition of people's hearts as we come to the end of the age. A cold-hearted person is described as one who is lacking affection or warmth or one without feelings for others. We all need to be careful in our day and age because everywhere we look we can see and hear of people suffering greatly. We can easily lose our empathy toward them. Hopefully we were all stunned recently by the fires that engulfed more than 10,000 structures in California killing 80 people.

So What Can We Do to Protect Our Hearts from Becoming Hardened in the midst of a Chaotic World?

I. GOODNESS IN - GOODNESS OUT
II. GROW WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED

I. GOODNESS IN - GOODNESS OUT

There are so many voices in our world that spew forth their lies as truth. That is why it is very important WHO and WHAT we listen to. I believe that we need to carefully choose WHAT we read and WHO we allow to into our close relationships. Jesus came like an ice breaker to open the way for a nation that had become frozen in its love. He stood strong against the wrong of His day and was careful not to allow their cold hearts to stall Him or change the direction He was Navigating.

He definitely made a way where there was no way. There are 74 verses in the Gospels that emphasize Jesus confronting the Pharisees because of the indifferent attitudes toward those in need. He confronted them and corrected them in public places. He called Herod a fox and the Pharisees the offspring of serpents. But most of His words were generously filled with kindness, love and peace. Where did He get this attitude from?

*“Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.
20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.”*

John 5:19,20

*** When Hudson Taylor was director of the China Inland Mission, he often interviewed candidates for the mission field. On one occasion, he met with a group of applicants to determine their motivations for service. *“And why do you wish to go as a foreign missionary?”* he asked one.

He replied *“I want to go because Christ has commanded us to go into all the world...”*

Another said, *“I want to go because millions are perishing without Christ.”* Others gave different answers.

Then Hudson Taylor said, *“All of these motives, however good, will fail you in times of testings, trials, tribulations, and possible death. There is but one motive that will sustain you in trial and testing; namely, the love of Christ.”* ***

“Legalism says God will love us if we change. The gospel says God will change us because He loves us.”

Tullian Tchividjian

I. GOODNESS IN - GOODNESS OUT (Contd.)

Jesus continued to spend time in prayer with His Father. He listened to what He was being guided to do and was empowered by the Holy Spirit to propel His way through the ice cold hearts that were joining to become a religious hardened force to hinder the ways of God's people. He truly came as The Way, The Truth and The Life.

He was filled with the goodness of God so that He is why He continued to express that goodness for the crowds to witness. Goodness came out of every pore in His body. He healed the mute, the deaf, the crippled, the paralytic, the blind, the lepers, a bleeding woman. He also cast out devils and raised the dead. He feed the hungry with loaves and fishes.

*"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;
31. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."*

John 20:30-31

So my best advice is to continue to fill you mind and heart with the goodness of God. Goodness In - Goodness Out! The more of God - the less of you. God is sending us forth as a fleet of icebreakers to make a way and turn hearts that have become cold into those that warm and comforting. It reminds me of coming in from a cold day and sitting beside a warm fireplace with my hands around a hot chocolate.

II. BLOOM WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED

*** I will always remember the winter of 1977-78 which was my first experience in a northern cold climate in Fort McMurray. We were living in a trailer where the corner of the walls had ice forming on the inside. The gas furnace seldom shut off. I purchased not only a block heater for our car but also an interior heater.

One morning I got into my car at 6:30 Am and the temperature had fallen to -54 F (-47 C). During the 40 minute drive to Syncrude my tires gave me a bumpy ride. The interior of the car never warmed up. This was NOT like the weather I grew up in.***

I'm sure you've heard of the expression "*Bloom Where You're Planted.*" It was a quote from the Bishop of Geneva, Switzerland named St. Frances de Sales (1567-1622). He became noted for his deep faith and his gentle approach to the religious divisions in his land resulting from the Protestant Reformation.

II. BLOOM WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED (Contd.)

It's much easier to bloom if God chooses to place you in a family and surrounding that is full of warmth, love and care then it is in a place that is full of cold and bitter remarks. He escaped several attempts from assassins. Geneva was a stronghold of John Calvin's teaching which believed that we are predestined by God to go either to heaven or hell. This caused great anxiety for this young priest who eventually became a saint of the Roman Catholic Church.

He became not only a leader of the church but also was recognized by King Henry IV of France to be a man the king called "*a rare bird*" who was both a devoted and learned man but also a gentleman. His motto was, "*He who preaches with love, preaches effectively.*" History notes that he became a spell bounding preacher to listen to.

He truly bloomed where he was planted. He died of a stroke but left a legacy of love and gentleness even though he was surround by cold-hearted bitterness. It's one thing to grow where you're planted it is quite another to bloom.

I love plants. I especially love flowering plants. There are about 391,000 species of vascular plants currently known to science, of which about 369,000 species (or 94 percent) are flowering plants. This proves to me that God loves flowers and gives us plenty of examples to imitate. I only wish I could keep plants looking as good as Loraine does in our church garden and entrance. It takes many skills to keep a plant healthy enough to bloom as it was created to do.

As I close I want to bring your attention to one more person. He was the Messianic Prophet - Isaiah. He also bloomed where he was planted and spread uplifting words that are still encouraging nations.

*"The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus,
2. it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God . . .
8. And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way . . .
9b. But only the redeemed will walk there,
10. and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."*

Isaiah 35:1,2,8,9b,10

II. BLOOM WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED (Contd.)

Isaiah shows us a picture of what He wants for His people. He expects us to stand out of the normal crowd in the last days. We are to burst forth into a bloom. Joy and peace will be evident for all to witness and live in this cold world.

The reason I want to become like an ice breaker is because it will open up navigational routes for those coming behind me. It will make their way easier than it was for me. But I also realize the time is short. These open passageways will once again freeze over if not used. Lets be determined to do what we can with the time we have.

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Date: Nov 25/18

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Prepare the Way - D

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