

The Unsinkable Ship

“But God said to him, ‘You Fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’”
(Luke 12:20 – New Living Translation NLT)

Many of us have heard of “The Titanic.” It was the greatest ship that had ever been built. They called it “the unsinkable ship,” yet it sank on its first voyage, killing more than 1,500 passengers who drowned in the icy waters. One hundred years later people are still captivated by the story. Four major movies have been made, with countless documentaries and books making us familiar with the tragedy. The sinking of the Titanic has caught the attention of millions of young people as the film was reissued in 3D a few years ago.

As I began to study the accounts of the sinking of this unsinkable ship, I concluded that it was almost as if man were saying to God, “We now have become the masters of our own destiny, the captains of our own fate. No longer will we be afraid of the elements; no longer will we be frightened of the oceans and the dark and deep sea; but through our intelligence and wisdom and understanding we are now able to conquer our own universe”...The owners, the builders, the designers, the captain, the crew, the news media, had all announced to the entire world that this ship was unsinkable. It was as if man were saying, “God, we don’t need you anymore. We’ve built an unsinkable ship! We don’t need your protection. We don’t need your help.” However, a strange thing happened. That ship sank on its maiden voyage, and it was held up as a spectacle to the entire world that maybe we still need God after all.

“Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man”

(Psalm 60:11 King James Version KJV)

It was as if God was saying,

“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee”

(Luke 12:20 King James Version KJV)

Canada is a great country but is sinking like the Titanic. When I see what’s happening to our country it feels like we are arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

This sermon, as you can see, is based on the sinking of the Titanic, and the events surrounding it.

On the night of April 14, 1912, at 11:40 PM, the greatest maritime disaster in history took place. The great Titanic [the largest ocean liner ever built to that time] ran into an iceberg approximately 800 miles from the coast of Newfoundland. There were 2,340 people on the ship. 705 people were saved and 1,635 perished with the ship.

It was her maiden voyage and had world-wide publicity, not only as the world’s largest and most luxurious, but also as the safest of all ocean-going craft. Never had a crew and passengers been so secure on a seagoing vessel.

Yet, for many people on the Titanic, it was as though God had again said, just as in *Luke 12:20*, ***“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” (KJV)***

Let's look at the 4 ways our Current World is Similar to the Titanic..

I. First They Had False Security

They thought the Titanic was an “unsinkable ship.” After all, it was 882 1/2 feet long, about three and a half city blocks in length. The anchors weighed 15 1/2 tons. It had a double bottom 5 to 6 feet thick to ensure safety. The very word “titanic” means “gigantic,” “huge,” “enormous,” and “mighty.” The Titanic was huge and mighty. It was called “the ship that cannot be sunk.” There were 15 water-tight compartments. They were so confident that the ship could not sink that there were only 20 lifeboats available. Each lifeboat could hold 58 people. That meant that only 1,160 people could be saved, out of the 2,340 on board if every lifeboat was filled full. There were not enough lifeboats to save 1,180 of the people on board. Why were there so few lifeboats? Because they thought they would never need them! They thought that the 50,000-ton Titanic could never possibly sink!

What a picture of the false security most people have today! What about you? Are you prepared for God's judgment? Are you prepared for death if it should come suddenly? Or are you similar to the man in Luke 12 who thought he had many years to live, saying to himself, “***Take life easy, eat, drink, and be merry.***” (Luke 12:19 NIV)

On board the Titanic was John Jacob Astor the 4th, one of the richest men in the world, who was worth \$150 million which would be ten times that much in today's money. He didn't have a care in the world as he returned from a trip to Egypt with his 19-year-old bride – on the Titanic! There was Benjamin Guggenheim, head of the American Smelting and Refining Company. He was worth \$95 million There was Isadore Straus, the owner of the company that made Levis. He was worth \$50 million. There was Jay Bruce Ismay, head of the International Mercantile Marine Company. He was worth \$40 million. One string of

his wife's pearls cost \$250,000. That string of pearls was among the finest in the world.

These men walked calmly on the deck of the Titanic, thinking about making more millions, with no idea that they were about to be plunged into the icy waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The multi-millionaire John Jacob Astor the 4th was the wealthiest person on board. When the Titanic hit the iceberg that caused her to sink, Astor told his wife that the damage was not serious. As the ship sank, he stood on the deck calmly smoking a cigarette. A half hour later the ship disappeared beneath the water, taking him to a watery grave. Two weeks later his bloated body was identified by the initials seen on the label of his jacket. One cannot help but remember that the Bible says, *“Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.” (Proverbs 11:4 NIV)*

II. Second, They were Unprepared

No ship up to that time was as luxurious as the Titanic. It had tennis courts, ball rooms and even elevators, which was unheard of in any ship at that time. The best suites cost \$4,300, which was big money in 1912. These were the most expensive accommodations ever offered. John Jacob Astor the 4th (IV) and his wife played with mechanical horses in the lavish gymnasium after the ship hit that iceberg. But while they played the ship was sinking. No ship that ever sailed the seas gave its passengers more confidence or security that night as the Titanic. It sailed calmly through the icy waters of the North Atlantic. But there were not enough lifeboats! And the lifeboats held no provisions. Some of them had no water stored on them. Some had no sails or compasses. Some of them had the plugs in the bottom pulled out. After all, these lifeboats were not necessary at all – or so they thought! That's why there were only 20 of them. Even so, most of these lifeboats pulled away from the ship with only 10, 12 or 15 people aboard, although they could have held

almost 60. Why were so few people in those lifeboats? It was because the people did not believe that the ship was going to sink! They refused to get into the lifeboats. Then there were a series of explosions. People became frightened at last and ran to the few remaining lifeboats. By now it was a stampede. But it was too late for most of them. Several of the men who perished could have purchased the Titanic, but they didn't have enough money to buy a seat in the lifeboats! They were unprepared! There on the decks were men and women dressed in the finest furs that money could buy. Some of them had gold rings on their fingers, pearls around their necks, diamond earrings in their ears. But now they were no better than the poorest passengers, fighting like animals to get on a lifeboat. But those boats were full. It was too late. They were unprepared! What a picture of this generation!

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:26-27)

They laughed at Noah when he told them to prepare. They thought judgment would never come. Then the rain came down in torrents. As the water rose, they pounded on the sides of the ark and screamed for their lives. But it was too late. They waited too long. The door to the ark was sealed by God. They howled and screamed for fear as they were engulfed by the Flood and went down to a watery grave. ***“This is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.” (Matthew 24:39)***

Someone asked John Jacob Astor, “Man, where is your life jacket?” Astor said, “I don't think I will need it.” Some day you will stand before the Judgment throne of God. You will be asked, “What did you with Jesus Christ?” Will you say, “I didn't think I would need Him”?

You will need Jesus then. You may not think you will need Him, but you will. You must receive Christ now or it will be too late forever.

“Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:15 – NIV)

“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” (Matthew 25:46 – NIV)

II. Third, They Procrastinated

The people aboard the ship were too busy playing and enjoying themselves, putting off getting into what few lifeboats that were available. The ship was sinking, but many went on drinking and dancing. The ship was sinking, but John Jacob Astor and his young bride were playing with a mechanical horse in the gymnasium. The ship was sinking, but stewards had to literally break into people’s staterooms to arouse them from sleep. They couldn’t believe that this unsinkable ship was sinking. Do you know what some of them did? While the ship was sinking, they were chipping off pieces of the iceberg and having snowball fights on the deck! Some of them were taking chunks of ice back to their staterooms. When they were asked why, they said, “We want to take it back to New York City to show our friends.” They procrastinated. They put away their fears. They played and fooled around like the people of Sodom.

“As it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:28-29).

I see Canadians playing, wasting their time in the bars, and partying it up. They are consuming all kinds of drugs and having sex with all kinds of people. They worship music and sports. But could you get these same people to come to church on Sunday morning? Oh, no! Not a chance! Why? Because they “don’t have time” or the famous excuse that “church takes too long.” Yet soon they will hear the voice of God clearly saying, *“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee”* (Luke 12:20).

Salvation is no joking matter we must get serious in these End times....

“They too will drink the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.” (Revelation 14:10-11).

IV. Fourth, They Cried Out As the Ship Went Down

Most of the passengers were drinking, dancing, gambling, and partying. A group of gamblers went on deck when they heard the ship crash into the iceberg. But they soon returned to their gambling tables. They went down with the ship when it sank. Even after they were warned, many went to bed with confidence that the Titanic could never sink. They, too, went down with the ship.

Others joked about the life preservers. Some put the life vests on and danced around the ship, while others stood back and laughed. Some refused to put the life preservers on because they didn’t want to mess up their gowns and dresses with those “dirty life vests.” Many were urged to get into the lifeboats. They said, “Why should we get into the lifeboats and go out into the dirty, cold night? We’ll just be coming back

in a few minutes anyway.” They laughed as the porters and stewards told them the ship was going down.

Oh, I know what the world says. I know they laugh at a young, new preacher like me. I know there are those that say, “Don’t let that fool scare you! Go ahead and live a life of wickedness and sin. Don’t be a fool! Don’t become a narrow-minded Christian. Eat, drink and be merry!” I know what THEY say! But I care more about what GOD says,

“Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed – without remedy.” (Proverbs 6:15)

“Whoever remains stiff necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed – without remedy.” (Proverbs 29:1)

But in the end, they cried out as the Titanic sank beneath the waves. As the lifeboats pulled away, those who huddled, shivering together, told how the band changed its music. A few minutes before it was sinking, they were playing the wild ragtime music of that day. But now the band began to play a mournful hymn

Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee!
E’en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to Thee.
Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee!

As the ship began to sink Rev. John Harper ran from one person to the other on the deck, pleading with them to trust Christ. One man pushed the preacher away and told him to shut up. Rev. Harper gave that man

his own life preserver and said, "You will need this more than I do." Rev. John Harper drowned, but the man to whom he gave his life preserver to lived. Pastor Harper pictured Jesus, the Savior of sinners. Jesus died so you could live.

This morning, Jesus offers you the gift of life. He died on the Cross to pay the penalty for your sin. He rose from the dead to give you eternal life. Will you trust Jesus this morning?

"This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 John 4:10)

Will you trust Jesus and be saved this morning?

There was a congressional hearing after the sinking of the Titanic. Witness after witness came before the senators to speak. Finally, the third officer of the Titanic testified. One of the senators asked him a strange question. I don't know why he asked it, but he did. He said, "Mr. Pittman, can you describe the screams as the ship went down?" Pittman buried his head in his hands and began to sob uncontrollably. Finally, Mr. Pittman was able to speak. He said, "Sir, you ask about the screams. The best answer I can give to your question, is this, Sir, it was just one long continuous moan." That's the way it will be in Hell. ***"There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth"*** (Matthew 13:42) I plead with you, as Rev. John Harper did with that man on the deck of the Titanic. I plead with you, "Trust Christ before it is too late."

If you're living in Sin today, confess your Sin to God and be clear as you never know if disaster could strike like the unsinkable Ship.....