EMBRACING

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CRESTING

THE WAVE

For I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea and its waves roar (the Lord of hosts is His name). Isaiah 51:15

By Bill Hutzel, May 2013

“For I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea and its waves roar (the Lord of hosts is His name).” – Isaiah 51:15 NAS. This is the God Almighty, all powerful, the great “I Am” expressed in Isaiah 51:15. I used to love walking the beach in Bay Head, New Jersey in the early morning when the sun was just coming up in the east. Listening to the waves roll in and looking for sea glass was a pastime of mine since I was a little boy. Even when I go to the ocean now in my later years, this is one of my favorite things to do. I would fill my pockets with different colored sea glass that had been furbished by the sea –frosted blues, aquamarines, pinks, reds, browns, whites, and greens. Oh, what joy that was! And then I would spread out all the sea glass on a table when I got home and would sort them by color and fill a jar with them to marvel at. Does God marvel at you? Are you recognized by the deeds of your flesh, as pieces of jagged glass, or are you evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in you to crucify your flesh? Is the evidence of God’s waves – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control?

Life is like the sea and the waves. Sea glass comes from broken shards of bottles and jars. The sea then tumbles and polishes them and removes the rough and jagged edges until each piece is smooth. God also does that with our lives in order to change us, often times at the expense of our suffering, not for His sake but for ours. In Jonah 2:3, it
says that Jonah was hurled into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about him; all God’s waves and breakers swept over him.

In Isaiah 48:10 God says “See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this”. And in the end, we are a thing of beauty, for His sake, and ultimately for ours if we accept Jesus Christ as our savior. In 1 Peter 3:4 it says that your beauty “should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.”

**In regard to brokenness and of being lost**

A man on a deserted island placed a message for help in a bottle and threw it into the sea. The bottle drifted on the waves for a while, until someone snatched it up and read the man’s note. It was an SOS for help. A search and rescue party was then dispatched and the man was rescued. That island may represent our own state of being, a place of banishment or of exile for those who do not personally know Jesus Christ as their savior, or maybe it is just a temporary place of separation due to the brokenness and sinfulness in our lives. For those, however, who have sent out their distress signal, it is those whom shall be saved. Like the man on the island, God hears our cry for help and comes to the rescue. If it were not for the love of Christ
and for His suffering on the cross, we would all come into judgment and be banished from His presence forever because we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Many times I would ask myself why, it seemed, God has deserted me, or why I must suffer. But, in retrospect, I have also come to realize that it was during my loneliness, pain and suffering that I grew closest to God. Take courage; take hope! God hears everyone that calls on Him for help. In Psalm 145:18-19 it says that, “The LORD is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth … he hears their cries for help and rescues them”. When we ask God into our lives, He saves us “freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24 NAS). That is the first step in being saved from exile on our deserted island. But God also hears all who are His children and works to make their rescue glorious unto Him.

As with the character played by Tom Hanks (Chuck) in the movie Castaway, Chuck is rescued and returns home. Everything is different now for Chuck. His girlfriend is married to another man, and his company is being run differently now from when he ran it. Again, life is full of obstacles, sorrows and brokenness. This is part and parcel with life. We can either accept it or treat what has happened as a gift. “Everything is either an opportunity to grow or an obstacle to keep you from growing. You get to
choose” (Dr. Wayne W. Dyer). Maybe your brokenness is your SOS in a bottle. Or maybe your circumstances are God stirring up the sea and His waves that roar. In either case, take hope, for God wishes to make you someone of beauty for His glory. Just so you know; the movie Castaway did end on a hopeful note. Chuck delivers a package to someone, a woman flirts with him, and this foreshadows a future past the ending of the film.

In regard to cresting the wave

The tide comes in and the tide goes out. No person can continually ride the crest of the wave. At some point, that wave comes in and must go out again. And so is the normal cycle of ups and downs in life. So knowing this, don't give up hope. Go with the flow; get back up and ride the wave again.

I love going to the Jersey shore. For me, listening to the waves gently lapping at the sand or on days when a wave’s fury is unleashed and it comes crashing ashore is both peaceful and exhilarating. It is both God’s gentleness and majesty on display. It is also on display in our daily lives.

Anatomy of a wave and instructions on how to ride the wave

Where do waves come from? Waves in the ocean come from a disturbing source such as wind, landslides, and or
earthquakes. Metaphorically speaking, God also causes ebbs and tides in our lives. These disturbances are gentle at times and tumultuous at other times; a gentle breeze, a strong wind, back and forth, never ending.

Have you ever ridden a wave? I’ve never surfed, but I’ve watched surfers mount their surf boards and ride the wave. Sometimes if they are experienced, they ride the wave all the way into shore, and if they are just learning to ride the wave, they will often fall, get back up and try again. Such is the way of the Christian life. As we mature in Christ, and as our faith in Christ grows stronger, we learn to expertly ride our emotions, challenges, hardships, and perils.

What is the anatomy of a wave? A wave has a crest, a trough, height and length. The crest is the highest part of the wave; the trough is the lowest part of the wave, the height is the vertical distance between the trough and the crest of the wave, and the length is the distance between successive crests or troughs of a wave. Of course, all of us would wish for greater distance between each wave, but that is not how God always works. Again, metaphorically speaking, think of the wave as life’s conflicts and suffering; life’s obstacles. The wave might represent feelings and emotions, temptations, fear, a failing marriage, financial woes, physical illness, etc. But how we manage to ride those waves is a learned experience and ultimately up to us. “We can’t stop them from coming but we can choose which ones to surf.”(1) We can also either accept them and
give thanks and praise to God for them, or be ravaged by the force and energy that the wave can bring, pulling us under and rocking us topsy-turvy.

When I have fallen from my place of sure footing and balance into God’s surf, only to be tossed and turned by one tumultuous wave after another, I scrape against the sea bottom, and it hurts. I struggle to catch my breath as the wave keeps pulling me under. During waves such as these, stay centered in your thoughts of Jesus at all times and you will be delivered. “Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Look neither to the left or the right” (Proverbs 4:26-27).

God’s promises are like the crest of the wave. When I believe God for his promises, I am riding that wave into shore and God delivers His peace, even though I know that under that wave is a powerhouse of energy that is able to pull me down into the depths of despair and defeat. Too many times Christians are defeated over and over again because they have given into the waves of temptation or emotion, by not giving control to God in each of their circumstances, life’s “ups and downs”. Yet, no matter how many times they ride a wave, they seemingly always find sure footing on shore again, because God is faithful. In Isaiah 43:2-3 it says “When you go through the sea, I’ll be there with you … for I am the Lord your God.” It is not to say that God always delivers us from our problems, only
that He will ride the wave with us. In 1 Corinthians 10:13 it says that God is faithful for he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. In other words, for those in Christ, no wave is too big, for when you are tempted, God will always provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

So what is the lesson that God wants us to learn? How do we stay on top of the wave? When we do fall, and we will fall as it is inevitable, we must take precaution to stay tethered to Christ, just as a surfer stays tethered to their surf board at the ankle by a cord so that they do not lose sight of their surf board or get pulled under by the wave. A Christian’s tether is the reading of God’s Word and fellowship with other believers. We are also to “give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” (I Thessalonians 5:18).

**In regard to God’s power and saving grace**

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all you that hope in the Lord” (Psalm 31:24 AKJV). Take hope in God and put on your breast plate of God so that He might deliver you from danger and bring us safely into shore. In Psalm 89:9, it says that God rules over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, He stills them. In Matthew 8:24-27, it speaks of a furious storm that came up suddenly on the lake so that the waves swept over the boat that Jesus’ disciples were in. While Jesus was sleeping through this storm, the disciples woke Him saying “Lord,
save us! We’re going to drown.” He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

Waves also demonstrate God’s power to save us from peril. In the parting of the Red Sea, we see God’s salvation for Moses and Israel when the Red Sea was parted, allowing God’s people to escape from Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.
CRESTING THE WAVE

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Job 9:8 NIV
“He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.”