



Volume XXXVI

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**A STRANGE RETURN**—A strange thing happened recently that showed a fulfillment of Ecclesiastes 11:1, *“Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.”* Years ago when I pastored Fishermen Baptist Church, I conducted many funerals. On one occasion I used an illustration that showed a trust in my earthly father. My father was an old salt who was involved in commercial fishing from the age of thirteen (upon the death of his father). When I became thirteen I was put on his shrimp trawler as 4<sup>th</sup> mate and began to labor as an adult. One late summer a hurricane came out of the Caribbean into the Gulf of Mexico where we were fishing. We continued to work (dangerous) until the storm came close, then ran for the harbor of Bon Secour via Petit Bois Island. We were running a northerly direction with the storm to our stern (south). The seas were 15-20 feet in height, which was dangerous, but just seeing my father at the helm removed all fear for me. I remember laying in my bunk, reading Bugs Bunny comic books, occasionally looking at my father and feeling secure. From this incident I made some parallels to my Heavenly Father during the funeral, and recommended confidence in Him, no matter the situation.

It just so happened that the funeral director was listening (we will call him TC) and enjoyed the parallel. A month or so ago I was talking to Mr. TC and he said he had a gift for me. You would not believe what it was (no, not a free casket); it was a Bugs Bunny original comic book. He had seen it in a marketplace and remembered the message. Upon opening it, it just happened to be a 1957 edition (the year I was 13).

The moral of the story is when we “cast the bread upon the waters” (Word of God), we do not know where it goes or who is hearing. Then after many days we will see it return and maybe benefit more than a comic book! Isaiah 55:11, *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”*

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**SLEEP WHEN THE WIND BLOWS**—How do you handle adversity? What are you thinking when the sun goes down on those cold, windy nights, when you are trying to get to sleep, and the wind keeps swirling and howling around your bedroom windows?

Years ago a farmer owned land along the Atlantic seacoast. He constantly advertised for hired hands. Most people were reluctant to work on farms along the Atlantic. They dreaded the awful storms that raged across the Atlantic, wreaking havoc on the buildings and crops. As the farmer interviewed applicants for the job, he received a steady stream of refusals. Finally a short, thin man, well past middle age, approached the farmer. “Are you a good farm hand?”

“...a net...cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.” Matthew 13:47

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the farmer asked. “Well, I can sleep when the wind blows,” answered the man. Although puzzled by this answer, the farmer, desperate for help, hired him.

The little man worked well around the farm, busy from dawn to dusk, and the farmer felt satisfied with the man’s work. Then one night the wind howled loudly in from offshore. Jumping out of bed, the farmer grabbed a lantern and rushed next door to the hired hand’s sleeping quarters. He shook the little man and yelled, “Get up! A storm is coming! Tie things down before they blow away!” The little man rolled over in bed, and said firmly, “No sir. I told you, I can sleep when the wind blows.” Enraged by the response, the farmer was tempted to fire him on the spot. Instead he hurried outside to prepare for the storm. To his amazement, he discovered that all of the haystacks had been covered with tarpaulins. The cows were in the barn, the chickens were in the coops, and the doors were barred. The shutters were tightly secured. Everything was tied down. Nothing could blow away. The farmer understood what his hired hand meant, so he returned to his bed to also sleep while the wind blew.

Can you sleep when the wind blows? When you are prepared—spiritually, mentally, and physically—you have nothing to fear. Proverbs 3:24, *“When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.”* Ecclesiastes 5:12a, *“The sleep of a laboring man is sweet...”*

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**REEL FUN**—While in Alaska, I spotted a name on the side of a boat that was unique to say the least. Front and back on a fishing tour boat were the words REEL FUN, which fishing is for many in the coastal areas of Alaska. Can you imagine a three hundred seventeen pound flounder? A halibut is a flat fish (like a flounder) that takes hours to get to the surface (fishing three hundred to five hundred feet deep). When brought to the surface it could knock a hole in a small boat or seriously injure the reeler.

This is my story. Imagine a fifteen-foot sea with whitecaps. The temperature is forty degrees, no toilet, with the crew and captain turning green around the gills. There are four hundred feet of anchor line that has to be pulled regularly out of thirty-eight degree water with no gloves, while the four hundred fifty pound captain yells, “Faster!”, as he goes ahead on the boat with the bow in seas that would bust the kidneys of a healthy man. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I catch a glimpse of a baseball bat and shotgun. I wonder who will use them first! Not until later did I learn it was for the fish (and so were the snacks). No three hundred seventeen pounder hit the deck of our vessel that day, but my wife did reel in one with diapers (fifteen pounds). They throw all that size back, not wanting to be guilty of robbing the cradle.

“Fish tales,” you say. Well, my story was close to the truth! I did enjoy some “reel” fun when for about forty-five minutes, as fast as I could reel, ling cod, snapper, and rock fish went into the box and were later safe in my LA (lower Alabama) freezer. The “reel” (light to heavy weight) can make your day and relieve a lot of stress. Try it sometimes; better yet, try some REAL FUN. Let God speak to your heart about your spiritual condition. Upon seeing your condition as God sees it (lost—Luke 19:10), open the door of your heart to Jesus Christ, God’s Son. Taking Christ aboard brings fun (the Bible word is “joy”) beyond words, and it gets better. Having the peace of God in your heart and now a home in heaven gives a desire to fish more than ever before, except this kind of fish swims on land. Jesus told four fishermen of old to follow Him and He would make them fishers of men (Mark 1:17). Yes, to catch a big fish from God’s ocean is exciting, but to see a man or woman in the depths of sin get reeled up by the Saviour with their lives transformed, the smile of God on their faces, and joy in their souls—now that is a catch! Telling others about Jesus—fishing for men—that is REAL FUN! *“And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him”* (Luke 5:11).  
—From *Nautical Notes*, page 58

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**DRIVER HITS FISH**—William Myers was driving on the shortcut off of Highway 281 in Barber County, Kansas, when he saw a hawk trying to fly and carry something in its claws. As the bird took off, it dropped what was in his claws, almost hitting his windshield. “The wind was blowing and I thought the bird was going to break my windshield, but he finally went over the top of the truck.” Myers believed the crisis was averted. When he got home, Myers said he went inside, not noticing anything out of the ordinary. “I went out to move the pickup about two hours later and thought, ‘What is that sticking out of the grill of the pickup?’” It was a 12-inch bass! Did he hit the fish or did the fish hit him? Psalm 136:4, *“To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever.”*

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**LABORERS TOGETHER**—There was trouble in the carpenter’s workshop and the tools were having a row. One of them said, “It’s the hammer’s fault. He is much too noisy.”

“Nonsense,” the hammer protested, “I think the blame lies with the saw. He keeps going backwards and forwards all the time.” The saw shouted, “I’m not to blame, I think it’s the plane’s fault. His work is so shallow, he does nothing but skim the surface.”

The plane objected loudly, “I think the real problem lies with the screwdriver, always going around in circles.”

“That’s ridiculous,” the screwdriver said, “the whole trouble is with the ruler, because he is always measuring other people by his own standards.”

The ruler was furious. “Then what about the sandpaper? Surely he is always rubbing people up the wrong way!” “Why pick on me?” said the sandpaper. “I think we ought to blame the drill, he is so boring!”

Just as the drill was about to protest, the carpenter came in and began to work. Using every one of these tools, he eventually built a beautiful pulpit, from which the gospel of grace was eventually preached to thousands of people.

Editor’s Note—Thank you for being that special tool in the hands of the heavenly carpenter. “He” is building a ministry that gladly gives “Him” the GLORY!

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**ROUGH SEAS, ROUNDED STONES**—Have you ever visited an inlet of the sea that reaches deep into the land, leaving a sheltered bay? The pebbles on that protected beach are rough and jagged, not smooth and polished. But out on the open shore where fierce breakers roar over the rocks, the pebbles are sleek and round. So it is with Christian character. Just as the harsh treatment of the ocean waves makes the rough stones smooth, so our trials, difficulties, and testings can produce in us the luster of Christian maturity.

This reminds me of when I was visiting in the Philippines and I was taken to a beach that sang. Really, it was a beach area open to the waves of the South China Sea. Literally millions of rocks lined the beach and the waves would roll them back and forth, causing a musical sound. So maybe when circumstances become difficult, we can rest assured that God has only one design in view—the perfection of our character, and for music to come forth from our souls. That’s why the psalmist could testify, *“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes”* (Psalm 119:71). The popular idea about trials is that when bad things happen we are being punished, but the word of God indicates that troubles can be a badge of honor for the Christian. Through them we can see that God is at work in us to produce the patience that James said would help us become mature, lacking nothing (James 1:4). Through the rough seas of troubles, God is in the process of “rounding” the stone of our character and producing beautiful music. He is conforming us to the likeness of His Son. **God sends us trials, not to impair us, but to improve us.**

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**HUMOR**

There’s an old sea story about a ship’s Captain who inspected his sailors, and afterward told the First Mate that his men smelled bad. The Captain suggested it would help if the sailors would change undergarments occasionally. The First Mate responded, “Aye, aye, Sir. I’ll see to it immediately!”

The First Mate went straight to the sailor’s berth deck and announced, “The Captain thinks you guys smell bad and wants you to change your undergarments.” He continued, “Pittman, you change with Jones; McCarthy, you change with Witkowski; Brown, you change with Schultz...”

THE MORAL OF THE STORY: Someone may come along and promise “Change”, but don’t count on things smelling any better!

Proverbs 24:21, *“My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change”.*