



Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 Ramsey Road, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
Pastor Neal Buckaloo
Sunday, October 24, 2010
Make It Simple: Jesus is Lord

The U.S. Coast Guard, established by President Alexander Hamilton in 1790, has saved over a million lives in its 220 years. As an example, on 16 November 2007, veteran fisherman Alan Ryden, 47, from Kodiak, Alaska, was on his way home after two days fishing for black cod near Sand Point and was looking forward to his return home shortly before Thanksgiving. His boat, a 42-foot wooden fishing vessel, the PACIFIC LADY, was riding well in spite of the high winds gusting to 60-knots and the 25-foot seas.

Though the weather on this return trip was not ideal it wasn't anything Ryden hadn't conquered before. He skillfully maneuvered the boat to catch each wave at a slight angle to give him a better ride. Then, a sudden burst of wind caught his boat and heeled it to starboard. The vessel righted itself as the gust passed only to be hit again. This time the vessel heeled so far over water began coming into the pilot house and the vessel stayed on its side. Faced with a life threatening situation 70 nautical miles from shore, Ryden grabbed his survival suit with its white strobe light, called in a mayday across his VHF-FM radio and jumped into the Pacific Ocean with just a hard-sided Type IV Personal Flotation Device. As he watched his boat slowly sink he prayed that the emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) worked correctly. Six hours later the radio beacon signal was picked up by the Coast Guard station at Juneau.

A surveillance aircraft and a helicopter were dispatched to the location of the signal. Once at that location a crew member spotted a white strobe light five nautical miles south. A flare lit the area and a life raft was dropped within 10 feet of Ryden.

After noticing a vessel on radar 11 nautical miles southwest of the strobe, the C-130 crew went to investigate. It was the fishing vessel HERITAGE. The crew of the HERITAGE agreed to steam toward the location of the strobe light and assist. The helicopter crew was able to guide the HERITAGE crew to the strobe and raft. Just after midnight the HERITAGE located Ryden in the deployed life raft, pulled him aboard and proceeded to Kodiak. They radioed the helicopter crew, "We got him". Ryden was cold, but otherwise in good health. ¹

The U.S. Coast Guard Search and Rescue is to give human rescue to those in peril at sea. A well known hymn reminds us who is our pilot and guide through our storms in life. "Jesus, Savior, pilot me over life's tempestuous sea; unknown waves before me roll,

¹ On Scene; The Journal of the U.S. Coast Guard Search and Rescue. Summer, 2008. pp. 29, 30.

hiding rock and treacherous shoal; chart and compass come from thee. Jesus, Savior, pilot me." Jesus is the pilot, the guiding light, the author of hope, the sign of God's promise. For us he is the lens for all of scripture, Son of God, Savior, bread of life, shepherd, door, gate, vine, resurrection and life, way, truth and life.

From Pentecost through the time of Paul, Christians were called Followers of the Way. And Jesus Christ was that Way. John 14: 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Jesus here reminded his disciples that to the extent they know Jesus; they also know Jesus' Father. It is also true for us. The window we have to know God's character, to know who God is comes to us in knowing the earthly Jesus, Son of God, Son of Man, who died and rose again "so that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:17b). Martin Luther admonished those who filled themselves with otherworldly theories about God that they not seek what is unknown of God but rather what is known of God in Jesus Christ.

What does it look like to be a Follower of the Way, to live daily with Jesus as Lord? It is a mindfulness, a mindfulness that you are a child of God, that you are washed clean each new day in your Baptism, that God's Holy Spirit is journeying with you, that the promises of God and God's grace, love and mercy sustain you, and therefore you are blessed to be a blessing.

Once that is clear, you bring your best self, your best judgment; your gifts to the fore for the challenges, opportunities, and ordinary tasks of the day. It is filled with daily routine and interruptions of that routine. It is filled with care for yourself and a looking outward to the needs of others. The hymn "We Give Thee but Thine Own" declares this clearly. "We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee."

A recipient of a trust is to be a caretaker of such a gift. We are caretakers of God's gift to us, all that we have and all that we are. Daily we offer to God that which God has provided - or we offer it to a lesser god - our own egos, the world's demands, or to our more base instincts.

You are writing your own gospel - the good news of Jesus Christ in your life - by how you take up your daily lives. Luke provides an account of the earliest church in The Acts of the Apostles. You together are writing the story of faith lived out through Lutheran Church of the Master in the second decade of the 21st Century of the Common Era. Your faith in Jesus Christ; your gifts, your abilities, and the day to day living in thankfulness to God will write the story. God will lead. The Holy Spirit will guide. Together in this ministry God will be at work drawing the best of each of us to uphold each other in faith and to

look outward, at work in the world because God's mission through us and through the whole Christian church is "that the world might be save through Jesus Christ" and know that Jesus is Lord.