

## **Three Ships to Avoid a Shipwreck**

Would you believe me if I told you that you could be responsible for a shipwreck? That we could even now be in the process of causing a ship to sink?

Well, in fact, I'm speaking about a very different ship – the ship of your Christian life. In I Timothy 1:19 Paul said that some Christians had made a shipwreck of their faith. It was in ruins, in tatters. They had crashed the ship of their Christian testimony before others. As far as others could see – their lives as Christians looked ruined, crashed and washed up.

What could possibly cause you and I to make a shipwreck of the Christian life? Well, today we will see three ships that we need to have to keep on sailing. If we lack any of these ships – a shipwreck is dangerously possible.

The first ship we need to have is

### **I. Fellowship**

Fellowship – we hear that word thrown around a lot. You may have heard the youth leader or pastor say the word. But what is fellowship? The word literally means communion – to share one another. Fellowship is sharing one another – not just our possessions, money or material goods – but sharing our very selves with someone else. The first person we need to have fellowship with is God Himself. Our Creator has made a way to enjoy fellowship with Him – to enjoy Him intimately – even as He knows us. He sent His Son Jesus to reconcile us to Himself. When we depend totally on Christ's sacrifice for sin on our behalf – we are reconciled – brought into a relationship with Him. But it doesn't end there – we need to fellowship with Him. Learn about who He is in the Bible. Talk with Him in prayer. He delights in our fellowship. He paid the highest price to obtain it. Paul said in Philippians 3:10 “that I may know Him” – personally. Knowing God will also bring power, purity and perfection according to the same verse.

But, our fellowship extends from God to other believers. John asked how one can claim to love God whom He hasn't seen and yet not love his brother whom he has seen. We need to share our lives with other believers: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Hebrews 10:25.

We must find ourselves in a good Bible-believing church where we can fellowship. Christianity is not a correspondence course. It's not a study at home course. Take one coal from the fire – and it gets cold quickly. But put it with the others – it remains aglow. That's fellowship – with God, and with others. It's the first ship necessary to avoid a shipwreck.

The second ship we need is

### **II. Worship**

Worship – that's another Christian word you hear a lot. You may have heard people use the phrase ‘praise and worship’. What is worship? It's from an old English word – ‘worthship’ i.e. ascribing worth to something. If the crown jewels were paraded before you, you would say things about how beautiful they are, and how much they are worth. Worshipping God is describing your estimate of how much God is worth. That's a pretty

sobering thought, isn't it? It's not just about emotion. God is the audience – listening and watching.

Philippians 2:11 tells us that eventually every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Eventually everyone will be forced to worship. So does it make any difference if we worship now or not? Yes, it does! Revelation 4:11 tells us that all things created were created for His pleasure. It is part of our design instructions – to worship Him. We lose out if we do not glorify Him. Worship is the pump in our spiritual engine. A Christian who is not worshipping is a cold Christian. There's no vitality, no vigour, no joy. There's no passion or excitement – we have truly then become the Frozen Chosen.

Jesus said we are to worship Him in Spirit and in truth. In Spirit means we worship Him authentically – by His power. Our flesh cannot worship. Only our new nature can – by His power. Not for show, for self-pleasure, not hypocritically, not as a man-pleaser – God is the audience.

In truth means we worship Him accurately – we worship the true God. Not the God we want, the God who is – the One revealed in the Bible. We don't create God in our image – we are in His image – so we worship the true God.

You see, we are to demonstrate how much we think of God with our lives. We think of worship as just being with the tongue. But it is also with our testimonies, with our finances, with our very lives. We are always worshipping. We are always commenting with our lives about how much we think God is worth. Worship – the second ship we need to stay afloat. How much do you think God is worth?

The third ship we need to stay afloat is

### **III. Discipleship**

That's a word we're not too comfortable with. It sounds a bit too involved, doesn't it? In fact, it tends to sound a lot more complicated than it is. Put simply, discipleship is following in Christ's footsteps – becoming more like Jesus. That's in fact God's goal for us – to be conformed to the image of His Son. The Life of Jesus expressed through you. In Matthew 10:37-42 Jesus spoke about what it takes to become a true disciple.

- 1) A disciple loves God supremely- more than even family and friends. A disciple loves God more than personal comfort, than self.
- 2) A disciple dies to self and the world. A disciple is constantly refusing to follow his own desires and ambitions if they conflict with God's. He is surrendered to God completely. Paul said in Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
- 3) A disciple is willing to forsake all. Lands, comforts, wealth, prestige, reputation – he can give them up. Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is the best illustration of this.
- 4) A Disciple loves other more than self. He is outwardly focused – seeking souls, spiritual growth, he seeks to meet the needs of others.

It sounds impossible – and it is. In our strength. But God said to Paul, "My strength is made perfect in weakness". It's when we empty ourselves – yield ourselves to God and then obey in His power, by His Spirit – He can make us like Christ – one step at a time.

Discipleship – the third ship we need to stay afloat.

Fellowship, worship and discipleship – the 3 ships we need to avoid making a shipwreck of our lives. How about you? How is your fellowship – with God and His people? How's your worship – how much do you value God? And how is your discipleship – are you becoming more like Christ – loving God supremely, dying to self, being willing to forsake all, and loving others? May we obey, and let the Lord have His way in these areas of our lives.