Contemporary Comments on the Adult Sabbath School Lesson

[Title] God is Redeemer
[Text] Romans 1:18; Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20; 1 Peter 1:19; Mark 10:32-45; Matthew 27:46

“Have you seen ‘Titanic?’ That’s exactly what it was.”

“We could hear plates and dishes crashing, people slamming against walls.”

“We had a blackout and everybody was just screaming.”

“I thought that was the end…”

These are just a few of the descriptions given by survivors of a luxury cruise ship after it ran aground and tipped over last Friday night. Approximately 4,200 people, including an estimated 100 Americans, were aboard the Costa Concordia that was cruising off the west coast of Italy.

A series of errors surrounded the accident. First, the evacuation drill was planned for Saturday, though some passengers had already been on the boat for days. Second, the captain made a very poor decision to steer the ship too close to land—just so the head waiter could salute his family watching on shore. Third, for 45 minutes after the accident, crew members insisted that the lights had gone out due to a “technical problem,” so no emergency preparations were begun. And then, for some reason, crew members delayed lowering the lifeboats, even after the ship began listing dangerously. “We had to scream at the controllers to release the boats from the side,” said a passenger from South Africa. “We were standing in the corridors and they weren't allowing us to get onto the boats. It was a scramble, an absolute scramble.”

Stunned survivors were taken to schools, hotels and a church on the small island of Giglio. Those who didn’t make it into lifeboats were rescued by local ferries and helicopters and taken elsewhere. And some of the Concordia’s crew members chose to stay on board to help Coast Guard rescuers.

But where was the captain during all this? Francesco Schettino had abandoned ship. He’s being detained, accused of manslaughter and abandoning ship before all his passengers were evacuated. After he reported the accident to Port Authority, they asked him: “Will you be the last on board?” He reassured them, “I will be the last on board.” But evidence indicates he had already abandoned ship at that time. Three days after the accident, Costa Cruises Chief Executive blamed errors by Schettino for the disaster.

Thankfully, for we who live in this wrecked and sinking world, our Captain has not abandoned ship! In fact, our Captain made the ultimate sacrifice—choosing to die in order to rescue us. Comprehending this makes us want to join the angels in proclaiming our memory text: “’Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!’”
The One who created this world is no coward. Jesus didn’t run from rescuing us when it became evident that we would all die. Our Redeemer had too much love for us to do that. As Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Not when we were perfect. Not when we deserved it. But while we were sinners.

~ nc

Additional resource: YouTube

1. MSNBC
2. Over Head Bin

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