

"Retaking The Ship"

-Bryan Hupperts (May 12, 2004).

I dreamed I was aboard a luxury liner, the good ship Christendom, converted curiously enough from a battleship, cruising blissfully through a lazy blue ocean. The cruise ads had promised clear skies, a great time, fun entertainment with some of the greatest speakers and singers of our time, and feast upon feast of a vast array of culinary delicacies from around the globe.

For some odd reason I had the impression this was supposed to be a family cruise but the wealthiest were atop in the luxury suites, quite isolated and protected from the rest of us who were secured in various levels of the ship each according to our rank of importance and wealth. Somehow, it didn't feel right.

Aside from a growing uneasiness that something wasn't quite right on this vast cruise ship, I was enjoying myself listening to great teachers and wonderful singers all the while surrounded by a few close friends.

One night, as I climbed into my bunk, I felt the ship begin to rock. It was a gentle rocking but soon the ship was tossing and heaving like a fish needing air. People were being thrown out of their bunks and began scrambling to get to the decks. Were we sinking?

I staggered like a drunken man up the stairs to see a sight unthinkable. The deck was rocking violently and everything that could be shaken was being shaken. Baggage and luxuries were being thrown overboard by the cresting of the waves and it seemed the ship would split into timbers. And through the swirling fog I saw what looked like another ship: a pirate ship?

We were being boarded and overtaken. It happened so fast there was almost no resistance. Some from the upper decks were shouting, "You cannot do this. We are the lords of this voyage." And a shrouded figure I took for the Captain of the attacking vessel stepped out of the shadows and replied simply; "It is not to be so among you for there is only one Lord."

Within a few minutes many of the passengers and crew were in chains for not having "lawfully boarded," while the rest of us were ordered to different decks. The whole ship was in ordered turmoil as everyone aboard was assigned a new place. A man named Mr. Prophet, who had been in irons for most of the voyage for "Speaking Mutiny" against the now deposed former Captain who ironically wore his same chains, was summarily released and placed into the watchtower to be the eyes of the ship.

A woman named Mrs. Intercessor who was serving in the galley as a lowly cook was sent to the deepest hole in the ship. I wondered about her punishment and asked one of the shining soldiers why this was so. He smiled and said, "She is close to the Captain's heart and needs the silence to be alone with him to hear his heart clearly. She has cried out to be released into this 'punishment' for many years. It is a station of great honor."

Others tried to use their former rank to demand an audience with the Captain but he ignored their swagger and boasts seeming instead drawn to the meek and lowly of heart, giving no regard to a person's rank or status.

The ship's powerful self-propelling engines were unbolted and dropped like useless, dead weights into the forgetfulness of the ocean! A mast went up and in a moment, she was transformed from running under her own power back into a sailing ship. Her ancient armory that had been locked tight was opened anew and her weapons were remounted transforming her into both a sailing ship and a warship. Many of the singers quit entertaining and began to offer up worship on the warship. An order was given to the speakers, "Quit merely speaking and teach by example. To your labor stations!"

Some who had beaten their fellow passengers during the voyage were publicly humiliated as a quick trial took place. Those who had abused their fellow passengers were allowed to remain on the ship and surprisingly were treated as guests of the Captain, but even what they had was taken away from them. There was a fast redistribution of wealth and duty as everyone was released into a place that somehow suddenly felt "right." We were no more divided into passengers and crew, but all simply crewmembers, fellow shipmates united under one Captain.

The Captain assembled the whole ship's company and, while holding a bottle of new wine in his hand, spoke quickly. "I come to liberate, not enslave! I have come to reclaim what is mine by birthright. I have retaken this ship that the pirates stole from me. She is no more christened The Christendom, but her true name, the good ship Salvation!"

He broke the bottle of new wine over her bow. "All who will may board her freely for the price to sail has been paid in full. We set sail for my Father's kingdom. Rebels and mutineers, beware! Your day of retribution draws swiftly near. Behold, I come quickly!"

A cheer went up from the crew as the sails were hoisted and a sudden wind from the deepest Heaven began to blow, propelling her towards an unseen land. My last sight was seeing her proper Captain at the wheel with his joyous face yet set like flint for the voyage to come. I sensed troubled waters of tribulation brewing and knew that only with the true Captain at the helm would we safely reach our destination.

-Bryan Hupperts © 2004.

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