

Greeting to all those going onto Glory!

SCRIPTURE:

Luke 23:46 (NIV) – Larger reading: Luke 23:44-49

“Jesus said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’”

STORY:

When Julius Caesar landed on the shores of Britain with his Roman legions, he took a bold and decisive step to ensure the success of his military venture. Ordering his men to march to the edge of the Cliffs of Dover, he commanded them to look down at the water below. To their amazement, they saw every ship in which they had crossed the channel engulfed in flames. Caesar had deliberately cut off any possibility of retreat. Now that his soldiers were unable to return to the continent, there was nothing left for them to do but to advance and conquer! And that is exactly what they did.

OBSERVATION:

Do we trust God enough to burn our means of escape? When we really think about that question, we discover that the answer doesn't come easily ... nor should it. Committing our spirit into our Heavenly Father's care is total commitment ... no turning back ... no escape hatch ... we are in it for the long haul regardless of the outcome ... we burn our “boats”!

As we gather around the Christmas tree and sing our favorite carols may we truly pause to understand, or at least attempt to understand, just what God was doing in that little baby we call Jesus. This was one of the “no turning back” moments for God in saving the world. Jesus had several such moments in his earthly life, out there in the desert, in the garden, when they came to arrest him, before pilot ... but he was in it for the long haul ... no turning back ... he had “burned” his means of escape. Even on the Cross he still could of turned back – he had that option – we all do – but he chose to stay on the cross, suffer the consequences, suffer the painful death ... all for the likes of you and me. No turning back.

This Christmas thing is about us. What God is doing for us through Jesus Christ which comes to a climax on the Cross of Calvary and the empty tomb on Easter. Don't lose sight of that reality. We get all emotional about family and memories and some of our favorite things. Lost in all of the merriment surrounding this beautiful season is the personal cost to God – his “burning the boats” moment.

He invites us into an indescribable journey, if we would only “burn our boats” and commit ourselves to the journey. So, as we sing our favorite carols this season let us sing with our whole heart, let us celebrate with our whole spirit, let us rejoice with our whole self and let us start “burning our boats”!

QUOTE:

“HIGH standards are negated by LOW living!” – Andrew B. Ray

PRAYER:

The torch is in our hands Lord. We hesitate to torch our means of escape. We stand there contemplating the consequences of our action. Support us as we move towards our “boats”. Give us courage of our convictions and a willingness to give of ourselves totally to the journey you are inviting us to take.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
Jmartin450@tampabay.rr.com
386-795-5323

Sermon: “Looking for Signs” – Luke 21:25-28
Join us on today in the sanctuary at 10:30 for worship
OR on FaceBook – Manatee United Methodist Church
OR on YouTube – No Facebook account needed
<https://youtu.be/S7uymcsqjbk>