

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 43

Dearest grandchild,

In today's letter we will combine a bit of trivia with a very serious and important lesson. The trivia involves the familiar expression "wit's end". This is a common expression used by English speaking people all over the world. It actually comes from the Bible.

**"Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the works of the Lord, his wonderful deeds in the deep. For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders."** (Ps 107:23-32)

The expression "they cried out to the Lord" occurs four times in this psalm. There is, of course, a major difference between "whining" about something and "crying out". Every parent intuitively knows the difference. We whine about trivial things, but "cry out" in times of serious danger. Someday, you will probably be at your "wit's end" and "cry out" to God for help.

Traveling by ship was at one time the primary way that people and goods were transported from one place to another. While it is much safer now than in days gone by, the sinking of the Titanic is a stern reminder that even in modern times traveling by ship can still be dangerous.

The Pharos lighthouse in Alexandria, Egypt was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was destroyed by an earthquake on August 8, 1303, but for over 1,500 years it provided guidance to ships in search of a safe harbor. While scholars differ on the details, some believe it was 450 to 600 feet high. Pack animals apparently carried wood up a large spiral ramp to stoke a fire and provide guidance. Some believe that a large mirror was used to magnify this light so that it could be seen on ships that were many miles away. Fortunately, you and I have guidance from God that is available everywhere. When we are at our "wit's end" and "cry out" to the Lord, we can be confident that He will hear.

Take, for example, the familiar story of the disciples crying out to Jesus in the midst of a storm. This story is found three times in the Bible (Matt. 8:23 - 27; Mk. 4:35 - 41; Lk. 8:22 - 25). Since the disciples were professional fishermen we can assume that they would not have cried out unless they were truly in danger. The fact that Jesus was asleep during the story demonstrates at least two things. (1) He was very tired. (2) He trusted in God to protect Him. Jesus, as you know, commanded the winds and the waves to be still and they immediately obeyed Him. This, of course,

is what the Psalmist said that God did when the sailors were at their “wit’s end” and “cried out” for help.

A similar story was experienced by Paul. He too was on a ship in the midst of a storm (See Acts 27:13 - 44). For many days without seeing the sun or stars they had no idea where they were. God, however, was in complete control of the situation and knew exactly where they were. More than that, God was directing the storm so it would blow them to a “certain island” where Paul would preach the Gospel and heal many. On that occasion, the angel of God promised Paul that not one of the 276 people on board the ship would lose their lives. God willing, I will tell more about this story in our next letter.

God also sent a violent storm to give guidance to Jonah (Jonah 1:4). God also provided a great fish to swallow Jonah and vomit him out on dry land (Jonah 1:17; 2:10). It is important to remember that God is always in control of the storms that we face and can use them for His

The Scriptures promise that God is our refuge and strength and a very present help in time of trouble (Ps. 46:1). During the days of King Hezekiah the people of God were so weak and defenseless that they had no way to defend themselves from the King of Assyria. In fact, he sarcastically offered to give them two thousand horses to make the battle more interesting. Even then, he doubted that they King Hezekiah had enough soldiers to put riders on them (2 Ki. 18:18:23). It was at this point that **“King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to heaven about this” (2 Chron. 32;20)**. They “cried out” and God answered their prayer. God promised that the arrogant enemy would not enter the city nor shoot an arrow against it (2 Ki. 19:32). The promise of God, of course, came true. On that occasion God sent an angel who killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in a single night (2 Ki. 19:35). Scholars believe the 46<sup>th</sup> Psalm was composed after God gave His people this amazing victory. They were obviously at their “wit’s end” and “cried out” to the Lord.. This Psalm commands us to “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). This is remarkable because that command comes at a time when the earth was giving way, the mountains were falling into the heart of the sea, and the nations were in an uproar. No matter what trouble you are facing, you can always “cry out” and the Lord will help you out of your trouble.

Paul wrote to Timothy: **“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone” (1 Tim 2:1)**. Too often prayer is a last resort. After the ambulance has taken us to the hospital and the doctor shakes his head, only then do some people turn to God in prayer. Is it not better to “first of all” turn to God in prayer. God is your Heavenly Father and is vitally interested in everything you do. He numbers the hairs of your head and not one sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge.

PLEASE PRAY TO YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER ABOUT EVERYTHING! Then when someday you wind up at your “wit’s end” the lines of communication will be open for you to “cry out”.

I love you,  
Grandpa Boyce