

The Stowaway

This is a story Dr. Bill Bright of Campus Crusade told many years ago as an illustration of the bountiful gifts that God has given us along with His wonderful gift of salvation. I have adapted it here for my friends that attend our Thursday night bible study. RL

During the daylight hours onboard the luxurious cruise ship, the stowaway hid under the tarp that covered one of the many lifeboats. He would sneak out at night and look in at the people serving themselves at the lavishly prepared buffet tables. Sometimes he'd find some plates with little morsels of the food that were left behind on some of the tables out on the deck. He would stash these in his pockets to enjoy later when he was back hiding in the lifeboat. He would look out at the ocean and see the beautiful moonbeams dancing off the water and almost forget that soon he would be shivering in his hiding place again.

He couldn't risk discovery so he dared not enter the dining room and after several days of this he became exhausted and ill. Shortly after that he was spotted by one of the crewman when he was sneaking back into the lifeboat. In his weakened condition he was escorted to the Captain's quarters by one of the ship's officers. The ship's cook was instructed to send food and drink to help revive the man. The Captain spoke, "Sir, you look terrible. We don't get many stowaways on our ship. Please tell me your story." The haggard man shared that he had scrimped and saved to take this cruise and had been unable to afford the extra cost of a room and food so he had come onboard and after his ticket had been stamped, he found the lifeboat and had been hiding there ever since. His crackers and peanut butter had run out after a few days and he had not eaten anything but the scraps of food he had found. The cold nights had been almost unbearable as the cold sea air swept under the tarp and chilled him to the bone. The Purser arrived to hear the end of the sad and strange tale. He asked the man, "Are you Mr. Wilkins?" The man answered that he was and the Purser told him that they had been looking for him for days. The steward had noticed his bed had not been slept in and he had not come to any of the meals. The entire crew had been alerted to look for him and that he might have fallen overboard or left the ship just before it sailed. The man seemed confused but the Captain explained, "Mr. Wilkins, you are a paid passenger on this ship. As a paying passenger you receive all your meals and a nice heated room at no extra charge. The entire resources of this ship and the services of the crew are available for you to enjoy without paying an extra dime."

How similar are we as Christians. We accept God's free and wonderful gift of salvation and then struggle to sneak a few crackers off the spiritual table He has set for us. We need to realize that God's love, power and the fruit of His Spirit are available to us. They came with the package. We need to begin to live like the riches of Christ are available to us today because they are. Not just when we go to Heaven...

EPH 1:3-9 (NIV) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ.

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