

### **If You Know the Captain**

On Wednesday morning, I approached my gate in Fort Lauderdale, Florida preparing to fly home for our Prayer and Bible Study at Christchurch. Soon after arriving I saw a tall distinguished United Airlines pilot standing in front of my gate checking his watch. Upon second look, I recognized Captain Brad Andrews, a fine church member from years gone by and one of the best deacons we ever served with. We had a grand time of fellowship before flying. Because Brad has flown primarily intercontinental trips on the big birds, I rarely saw him outside of church and deacon's meetings. How refreshing it was to hear his calm, Christian voice over the intercom of the plane.

As I settled in for my flight across the Gulf of Mexico and home to Houston, I met the young lady sitting near me named Tabitha. I asked if she was familiar with Tabitha or Dorcas in the Bible and she was not, but seemed interested in knowing who the person was who originally bore her name in the book of Acts. She told me her mom got the idea for her name from the old television program, entitled Bewitched. I gave her insight from the biblical perspective on her name and it served as a perfect introduction to witness for Christ, which I did. About forty minutes into the flight we hit some pretty tough turbulence. Looking frightened she said, "Oh, this is rough." In fact, it did feel a little scary. I calmly told the young lady, "You have nothing to worry about; I know the captain!"

Soon after landing safely, I told Captain Andrews good-bye, my wife picked me up and before church on Wednesday evening I went by to see Linda Pool who was nearing her Heavenly home. Most of you know by now that in the early morning of this past Friday, Linda went home to be with Jesus. That was a great visit! It was candid, serious and at times humorous. We reminisced and talked of Heaven. I told Linda about my encounter with Captain Andrews and the young lady. When I told Linda, that I comforted the frightened young lady by saying, "I knew the captain," Linda smiled and immediately I made the application and she agreed that at times like these, it's good to know the Captain.

#### **1. If you know the Captain, you can be sure He knows where He is going.**

The captain has his journey all mapped out. He is not flying by the seat of his pants just hoping he is going in the right direction. He has his compasses and GPS set; he has a predetermined flight plan and he is most definitely not lost. I heard Brad say, "Ladies and gentlemen, we have reached our cruising altitude of thirty-seven thousand feet. Relax and if there is anything we can do for you, just let us know."

Would it not be a little discomfoting, if the pilot came over the air and asked, "Does anybody know where we are?" And then a little while later he inquires, "For those of you near the windows, can you look out and tell me if any

of this looks familiar to you?” You would by now probably be thinking, “I should never have gotten on this plane. No one wants to take a trip with a pilot who doesn’t know where he is going. Here’s what our Captain tells us, *“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths”* (Proverbs 3:6). God knows we don’t know how to navigate through this life, for the Bible says, *“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”* (Jeremiah 10:23). Even though our path is trying He says, *“...I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert”* (Isaiah 43:19). God can make a way when there is no way, even through the roughest wilderness. Not only does our Lord make a way, in a very real sense, He is the Way! *“Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14: 5,6).

## **2. If you know the Captain, you can feel safe because He is in control and He is not afraid.**

I said to the young lady, “I have talked to Captain Andrews many times about flight. He has explained to me that the air above us is very similar to the water below us. There are many similarities to navigating the ocean and flying through the air. In the same way you have still waters and waves, you have calm air and the turbulence is simply like the ocean waves. I remember he motioned through the air when he told me this. As he smiled making the waving motion through the air, he said, “You just ride over the waves, it’s really no problem.” I said, “Tabitha, this captain is in control and he is not afraid. “ How comforting to know that the Captain knows what is happening, even when we do not. He knows how to respond to every wave of turbulence.

I love Joshua 5: 13,14: *“...Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as Captain of the Host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant?”* In conquering the land of Israel, Joshua encountered the Angel of the Lord not knowing he was being visited by the Pre-Incarnate Christ. So, as Joshua sees the Lord dressed in royal regalia, with a mighty sword drawn as if in war, Joshua inquires if He is for them or his enemy. I love the answer the Lord gives, in essence, God said, “I am not for you or them, I did not come to take sides, I came to take over!” Joshua’s response was correct as he fell to the earth in worship and said in substance, “Then take my life over, Lord.”

## **3. If you know the Captain, the voice over the intercom is a comforting one.**

There are so many good reasons to be a Christian and so many excellent reasons to live so close to God that you hear His voice. There are many voices in this world vying for our attention. Although I have never seen it, there is a program that comes on prime time viewing entitled, “The Voice.” We don’t need the voice of this world, but we do need the voice of our Lord. Captain Andrews came over the air, “Please keep your seatbelts fastened, don’t get up and move around, stay where you are....” Then he calmly estimated what time we would be arriving in Houston.” We can say with the Shulamite maiden in prophecy of

Christ, *“O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice...”* (Song of Solomon 2:14). Indeed, sweet is our Lord’s voice and most comforting.

**4. If you know the Captain, you can be certain you shall have a perfect landing.**

We landed, not according to the anticipated time, but a little early. Why, the turbulence not only did not slow us down, but evidently sped us on our journey allowing an earlier arrival time. We arrived on the pilot’s time! He who navigated the winds made all things beautiful in his time. Can we not say the same of our Lord? *“He hath made every thing beautiful in His time...”* (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

We who know the Lord can be certain of a perfect landing. *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end”* (Jeremiah 29:11).

In the wee morning hours of Friday, October 19, Linda Pool made a perfect landing. *“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints”* (Psalm 116:15). We’re just behind her and it’s so good to know she’s okay and so are we because we know the Captain!

-Pastor Pope-