

Lifelines

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Day of the Dancing Dolphins! **By Ed Jordan**

What a week this was as Space X flew to the International Space Station and brought home three astronauts and one cosmonaut in a flawless mission. Hats off to Elon Musk whose Space X teams flew to and from the Space Station. They rescued two astronauts who unexpectedly were stranded at the station for nine months.

The return of the Dragon capsule was amazing, coming in at 17,000 miles an hour, and then floating down on four parachutes which clocked the splash down at 17 mph. It splashed down right on target, and to the minute that the return was predicted. Simply amazing. The skies were blue, and the waters of the Gulf of America were calm, the rescue boats speeded to the sight and prepared the capsule to be uploaded to the Dragon's Nest.

As the teams from the speed boats began to attach straps to pull the capsule from the water, one of the most stunning events of the return occurred. Suddenly in the water around the capsule a dancing dolphin leapt out of the water again and again, encircling the capsule as though happily dancing and welcoming the astronauts back to Earth. Soon there were several more dolphins dancing and joining in the celebration, as they went around and around the capsule! As the cameras panned out, a whole pod of dolphins would be seen dancing with joy in the water.

For me this was the teachable moment of the event. While some people were inserting political spite and resentment into this astonishing accomplishment, and perhaps some jealousy into the celebration, God's creatures and Creation joined in a dance of joy for the great things God has empowered man to accomplish! Soon they lifted the capsule out of the water, and eventually the astronauts slid out one by one. Smiles and joy were everywhere!

In Psalm 107:23-31(NRSV) we find a beautiful passage about those who go out on the sea and experience the wondrous activities of God. "Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the mighty waters; they saw the deeds of the Lord, His wondrous works in the deep. For He commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven, they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their calamity; they reeled and staggered like drunkards, and were at their wits' end. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out from their distress; He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad because they had quiet, and He brought them to their desired haven. Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for His wonderful works to humankind. Let them extol Him in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the assembly of the elders."

This part of Psalm 107 speaks of the majesty and power of the seas, and how vulnerable man in his tiny ships are to the forces of nature that can toss a ship around like a toothpick. When they were at wits end, and called out to God for help, He interceded and the ocean became calm and tranquil. At that point they sailed home to safe haven. I think there are lots of parallels to being on a ship on the huge ocean, and being on a small ship trying to come safely through gravity and atmosphere, at high speed, and hoping to come to safe haven.

Certainly, one realizes potential dangers, but soon the stress turns into relief, then joy and celebration. Miracles happen at every point of a journey like this, from take-off, to adapting to micro gravity, to space walking, to re-entry and a safe landing.

God, thank you for the amazing minds you have given to us, the adaptability of our human bodies, formulas and engineers who can make ships to navigate space and get there and return home safely. Thank you for those who use their gifts and skills to benefit all humanity. Thank you for what you have accomplished through the human intellect, through inventors, through physicians, through scientists, and artists, to help make our world more livable and beautiful. You are the One who enables success in all these areas.

Teach us to joyfully join the celebration of Your gifts and guidance that you give to people. Lead us to move beyond fear, envy and hatred, to joyful appreciation, love, and dancing joy at Your awesomeness revealed through human beings.

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