

This is the Day...Friday

May 13, 2022

The Lifeguard

“Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.” (Matthew 14:25)

When I was a child, the weeks leading up to the end of May and beginning of June were always exciting. I knew summer vacation from school was just around the corner. That meant endless days of being outside in the warm sunshine. It meant neighborhood baseball games, long bike rides, and other adventures with my friends. It also meant that it was time for our annual family beach trip. Every summer, in late June, Dad would pack up the old rambler station wagon and pile in four boys, Mom, and a bunch of stuff as we would head down to Windy Hill Beach for a week of fun. It was a long ride, but we were all filled with excitement and anticipation for what we were about to experience.

Once we arrived at our rental house and unloaded the car it was time to put on our bathing suits, grab a towel and head for the ocean. Mom and Dad typically just sat in chairs on the beach and watched as their four boys splashed in the waves, sat on floats, and played in the sand. I am sure it was not always a very relaxing time, especially on those days when the water was rough, and the current was dragging us up and down the beach. On those days, Dad would constantly be up, waving us back up the beach to keep us in sight.

My oldest brother did not enjoy riding waves or building sandcastles. His idea of fun was simply laying on his back on one of those vinyl rafts and floating wherever the waves took him. Mom and Dad had a real scare one year when my brother was relaxing on the ocean and suddenly the current became very strong. I'm not sure it was a true "rip-tide," but it certainly caused my brother to drift away from the shore very quickly. In a panic, my dad was yelling my brother's name, trying to get his attention. As the lifeguard was running into the water, he was blowing his whistle as loudly as possible. Finally, my brother looked up and realized how far away he had drifted. About that time the lifeguard reached my brother and began pulling him and his raft back to shore. Thank goodness for that lifeguard. As my brother made it back to the shore he was visibly shaken and quite embarrassed. He learned a valuable lesson that day. It is easy to drift away.

Drifting away is almost always unintentional, but it can cause us to miss important moments in life and even be very dangerous. We tend to just put our head down and push through each day, taking care of responsibilities and checking things off the list, and we rarely take time to look up and pay attention to where we are. We don't appreciate those kind words from someone because we are thinking about our next task. We don't relish that hug because our attention is elsewhere. We don't notice that beautiful sunset because we are focused on life's issues. We slowly drift away from the most important things and by the time we look up, we are so far away.

On this day which God has given you, pay attention to where you are in life. Be present in every moment. And if you find that you have drifted, don't worry. Your lifeguard walks on water!