

USA flag on a Russian ship!

Some time ago there was an interesting story about whales that were trapped in the ice off the coast of Alaska. These whales swam in the cool waters of Alaska so long that they missed the last plane to Hawaii! They were completely enclosed by the deepening ice. Some people saw their plight and tried to rescue them by sawing through the ice, but they were unsuccessful and called for additional help. The United States Navy sent in a ship to rescue the whales. That, too, failed. Finally, a Soviet icebreaker was asked to plow through the ice allowing the whales to swim out into the open sea. This was in American waters, and thus, before the Russian ship started its work, a United States of America flag was raised on its mast. People, especially the Press Corps, could hardly believe it! Here was a USA flag on a Russian ship! A whale was used to bring two countries, often at odds with each other, together for the sake of rescue. [Eddie Fox & George E. Morris, *Let the Redeemed of the Lord Say So!* (Franklin, TN: Providence House, 1999).] —

It's interesting. God also used a whale to get the attention of the prophet Jonah. As you'll remember, Jonah was prejudiced against the people of Nineveh. He wanted God to destroy the people of that city. And then God sent a whale . . . and then a gourd . . . and then a worm. Finally Jonah got the message. It's a message we still need to hear. All the world's people belong to God. God loves us all the same. God's will is liberty and justice for all the world's people. But here is what we also need to realize: there will not be peace in the world until each of us resolves to live out the message of Christ's love in our own family and neighborhood. If you and I cannot love one another, there is no hope for the world. Fr. Tony (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

"If you call her a pig, Robert, you're calling me a pig, too!"

Robert A. Schuller, young Robert, tells of getting into an argument with his older sister when he was eight. "You're a pig!" he screamed when she refused to give him one of his own toys. Their dad, television preacher Robert H. Schuller, heard what was going on. He came into the room and said to young Bob, 'Robert, don't you ever call your sister a pig again.' 'But, Dad, she is!' he objected. 'If you call her a pig, Robert, you're calling me a pig, too!' said the older Schuller. Young Bob had to think about that for a while. He certainly didn't think his dad was a pig. His father could tell that he didn't fully understand what he was saying. 'Robert, if your sister is a pig, then I'm a pig. She is my child! I can't have a pig for a child unless I'm a pig. When you insult your sister, you're insulting me, too. When you mock or belittle yourself, you're doing the same thing to me. You're my son. The same thing is true for you and God or for your brothers and sisters in the human race and God.

When you belittle yourself, you're belittling God. When you insult your neighbor, you're insulting God." Young Robert said he never forgot that lesson. [Robert A. Schuler, *Getting Through What You're Going Through* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1986), p. 116.] It's a lesson all of us need to learn. Can't we all get along? We can, if each of us will open our hearts to the love of Jesus Christ. Fr. Tony (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

Sodium chloride:

If there are any chemists here this morning, you know that sodium is an extremely active element found naturally only in combined form; it always links itself to another element. Chlorine, on the other hand, is a poisonous gas that can stand by itself. Chlorine is what gives bleach its offensive odor. When sodium and chlorine are combined, the result is Sodium Chloride. What is Sodium Chloride? Salt. Common table salt: the substance we use to preserve meat and bring out its flavor; the substance we use to add spice to meals. — Love and truth can be like sodium and chlorine. Love without truth is flighty, sometimes blind, willing to combine with various doctrines. On the other hand, truth by itself can be offensive, sometimes even poisonous. Spoken without love, it can turn people away from the Gospel. When truth and love are combined in an individual or a Church, then we have what Jesus called "the salt of the earth," and we're able to preserve and bring out the beauty of our faith. Fr. Tony (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

The Fellowship of the Bearers of Cold Water

An old man named Calvin had lived a good life as a farmer for years. One day an evangelist came to the community, and, in the course of his stay, visited Calvin and asked him what denomination he was. Calvin answered the question like this: "When my grain gets ready for selling, after I've harvested it and packaged it, I can take it to town by any one of three roads " the river road, the dirt road, or the highway. But when I get my grain to town and go to the buyer to sell him what I have, he never looks at me and asks, Calvin, which road did you take to get your grain to town?' What he does do is ask me if my grain is any good." Friend, is your grain good - the grain of your discipleship? That's all that really matters. When we get to Heaven we will probably find some (Roman Catholics) and some (Baptists) and some (Presbyterians). And they'll be just as surprised to see us as we will to see them. But we will all belong to just one fellowship. Let's call it the Fellowship of the Bearers of Cold Water. We will all be people who have lived out our discipleship through acts of kindness to others. (by King Duncan from *Collected Sermons* at www.Sermons.com)