

1 A Titanic Lie

- The Tragedy of believing our own Hype . . .

2 Centennial Memorials

- April 15, 1912 -- 100 years ago tomorrow -- the "unsinkable" Titanic sank.
- The ship went down in the frigid waters of the North Atlantic after hitting an iceberg, taking 1,517 people to their deaths and shocking the world.
- This weekend people all over the world will be engaging in centennial memorials to this event that continues to capture our imagination.
- Why the morbid fascination?

3 Why the Fascination?

- Well, the scale of the disaster certainly has something to do with it.
 - In 1912, the Titanic was the largest moving man made object ever built.
- But perhaps the most compelling reason why we're so fascinated with this story, has to do with the fact that the sinking ship continues to be a morality play about what happens when humans buy into their own hype.
- If the Titanic teaches us anything, it's that we are all, indeed, seriously sinkable.

4 The Unsinkable Legend

- The people boarding the Titanic on April 8, 1912, in Southampton surely believed in its unsinkable reputation, but it's important to note, however, that the White Star Line had never itself claimed that its new flagship was unsinkable.
- That was the product of media hype from such sources as the Belfast Morning News and Shipbuilder, which noted that,
 - "The Captain may, by simply moving an electric switch, instantly close the doors throughout and make the vessel practically unsinkable."

5 The Unsinkable Legend

- While the White Star Line may not have been the source of the "unsinkable" legend, the company surely didn't discourage its use.
- As the world turned from the 19th to the 20th century, emerging inventions like commercial electricity, and the internal combustion engine and the prospect of powered manned flight led many to believe that humanity could conquer any challenge of nature with technology.

6 The Unsinkable Legend

- The Titanic's Captain, Edward Smith, had commented a few years earlier that the nature of "modern shipbuilding" in the early 20th century rendered sinking a near impossibility.
 - "I cannot imagine any condition which would cause a ship to founder," he said.
 - "I cannot conceive of any vital disaster happening to this vessel."
 - "Modern shipbuilding has gone beyond that."

- Captain Smith was last seen on the bridge of the Titanic, having just given the order to abandon ship.

7 Titans

- The name "Titanic" comes from the Titans, a race of gods who preceded the more-familiar Olympian gods who battled with them for dominance.
- In Greek mythology, the Titans are characterized by hubris, or pride.
- Ironically, the same charge can and was leveled against the builders of the Titanic, who boldly imagined they could construct an ocean liner so large that not even the ordinary limitations of the maritime environment would apply to it.

8 The Titanic Story

- Indeed, the whole Titanic story is one full of hubris based on the idea that such a large, imposing, modern ship could not possibly suffer a disaster at sea.
- While they may have never said it out loud, the Titanic's designers, agents, leadership and even its passengers had clearly bought the hype.

9 Ice Berg Dead Ahead!

- Google "Titanic blunders" and you'll see a full list of both factual and legendary mistakes that sent the ship to its watery grave.
- The upshot of all these things put together is that the Titanic was really sunk by the human tendency to ignore bad news and buy into our own hype.
- Human hubris, in other words, was the real tip of the iceberg.

10 Why the Titanic Still Matters

- In a recent article in Popular Mechanics, author Jim Meigs offers several reasons for the sinking of the Titanic, which also applies to other such disasters such as the space shuttle Challenger, BP oil spill, and the recent sinking of the cruise ship Costa Concordia.
 - No disaster is a single event but an accumulation of bad decisions made over hours, days, and sometimes years.
 - Success can breed complacency where we stop being concerned for an accident and let our guard down.
 - Technology can outpace judgment where we put too much faith in the latest inventions.
 - Leaders may fail to plan for the worst. When the consequences are catastrophic, risk ought to be kept low.

11 Good Advice

- U.S. Coast Guard master mariner and author, John Konrad has said,
 - “A tool is only as good as the person that’s using it.”
 - “All the technology in the world can’t replace a good captain.”

12 Light & Liars

- This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5 NIV)
 - If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. (1 John 1:6 NIV)
- But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1:7 NIV)
 - If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8 NIV)

13 Deceiving . . .

- According to the Bible, deceiving is the number one role of the devil.
- It is also the method of all false prophets/teachers who through flattery, smooth talk, fine-sounding arguments deceive others to follow them and become their disciple.
- However, the worst of all deceivers is ourselves.
 - “This is what the LORD says: Do not deceive yourselves, . . .” (Jeremiah 37:9 NIV)
 - Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a “fool” so that he may become wise. (1 Corinthians 3:18 NIV)
 - Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (James 1:22 NIV)
 - If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. (Galatians 6:3 NIV)

14 Self Deception in 1 John

- In 1 John, the writer defines darkness more specifically in terms of self-deception.
- If we believe we're in "fellowship" with God, and yet we continue to sin anyway, then the reality is that we're still walking in "darkness."
- Indeed, doing so makes us liars (v. 6). If we believe that we "have no sin" -- if we have the hubris to claim that we're unsinkable and perfect -- then we're engaged in the ultimate self-deception (v. 8).
- Not only are we liars when we buy into our own sinless hype, we make Jesus a liar, too (v. 10), because he has died for our sins.

15 False Security by Deception

- Confident in the flawless perfection of their ship, the crew of the Titanic pushed her full speed ahead into the cold darkness of the North Atlantic night, believing that there was no obstacle she could not overcome on her own.
- That was a fatal mistake. Below decks there were major design flaws, an inadequate rudder, and no way to compensate for a wreck.
- If we're not paying attention to the major design flaws in our own lives -- the biggest one being our sinful nature -- then we, too, will have a tendency to charge ahead deeper into the darkness of life apart from God, all the while believing that we're doing quite well on our own.
- Eventually, however, we're headed for a crash of epic proportions.

16 Avoiding Self-Deception

- Be Honest . . .
 - How do you avoid the wreckage? John encourages his readers to take a good look below deck on a regular basis and get real about the problems and sins that lie within.
 - Had the Titanic's company and crew been even just a little more honest about her flaws, they might've taken the next step to salvation.

17 Avoiding Self-Deception

- Slow Down:
 - They should've slowed down before the ship slammed into that iceberg.
 - The Titanic had received several transmissions from other ships that there were ice flows in the vicinity, yet she continued to speed ahead at full throttle.
 - If we're going to avoid the sinking effects of sin, it's important for us to slow down, too, and get real about what's wrong.

18 Avoiding Self-Deception

- Confess:
 - Confession is the first step toward avoiding disaster because it causes us to identify all the leaks and holes in our lives.
 - When we confess our sins, we're being honest with God about who we are and we throw ourselves on the mercy of God's righteous judgment.
 - John implies that it's better for us to confess our sins up front, rather than waiting until they have caused all kinds of collateral damage in others as well.
 - Better to name all the problems before you leave port, in other words, than wait until you hit an iceberg-like crisis.

- Rather than continuing to steam ahead in the dark, John urges us to wait for the light so that we can navigate life safely. "If we walk in light, as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus [God's] Son cleanses us from all sin" (v. 7). Confession, in other words, leads us to second chances.

19 Second Chance

- The 1,517 people who went down with the Titanic didn't get a second chance to overcome the ship's fatal mistake.
- Now 100 years later, there are those who are proving that those waters can be navigated safely if you have the right things in place.

20 M.S. Balmoral

- On April 8, 2012, the M.S. Balmoral, operated by the same parent company as the Titanic, launched from Southampton on a 100th anniversary cruise that will follow the Titanic's route, stopping at the very spot she went down at 2:20 a.m. April 15 and holding a memorial service for those who were lost.
- Along the way, passengers will be treated to the identical menus, music and entertainment enjoyed by the original passengers, as well as lectures and presentations by Titanic historians.
- This time they'll have plenty of lifeboats on hand. But how about you?

21 Conclusion

- Confession gives us an opportunity to revisit our own epic crashes, to memorialize what we've lost as a result of our sin, . . .
- . . . but then to continue steaming toward a new future made possible by Jesus Christ, whose own death and resurrection ensures that we will land safely on the other side.
- Therefore, let us not shipwreck our faith by allowing foolish pride to harden our hearts and keep us in darkness where we miss the spiritual dangers around us.
- Let us live by the truth and so allow the light of life to shine on our souls. Amen!