

WHITEWATER GOD

(Isaiah 43:1-7)

Intro: When you pass through the waters,
-I will be with you;
And through the rivers,
-They shall not overwhelm you.
#Isaiah 43:2a.

I have a T-shirt.
-From Montana Whitewater.
#Outside of Yellowstone National Park.
-Back reads:
#Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down a raging, bone crushing,
Life threatening Class V stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.

I. Whitewater Rafting.

A. Great Fun.

1. I have been whitewater rafting in a number of places.
 - a. Alaska.
 - b. Montana.
 - c. Wyoming.
 - d. New Mexico.
 - e. Peru.
2. I would love to go again.

B. I Would Never Go By Myself.

1. Not only because I don't have the equipment.
 - a. Raft.
 - b. Wet suit.
 - c. Helmet.
 - d. Truck and trailer.
-To haul it all.

2. But because I want to go with a professional.
 - a. Someone who knows the river.
 - Rapids.
 - Rocks.
 - Currents.
 - b. Someone who knows emergency procedures.
 - Just in case there is a problem.
3. One time I ended up in the water.
 - a. In New Mexico.
 - In the fall of the year.
 - #October.
 - #As I recall.
 - b. With another couple.
 - Occasional rafters.
 - #Not total novices.
 - #But something we did.
 - *Only now and again.
 - Seemed like we two guys.
 - #Doing most of the paddling.
 - Women.
 - #Got their paddles wet.
 - #Screamed a lot.
 - c. Water wasn't all that:
 - High.
 - Fast.
 - #In October.
 - #I've been in much rougher water.
 - d. But there was one place.
 - Decent size wave caught me.
 - #Just as I was pulling back with my paddle.
 - Even though one of my feet was tucked in.
 - #Between the side and the bottom of the raft.
 - My foot came loose.
 - #I couldn't hold myself in.
 - I tumbled backwards into the water.
 - #More surprised.
 - *Than anything.
 - #More embarrassed.
 - *Than afraid.

- e. I remembered what to do.
 - I hung onto my paddle.
 - I got my feet out in front of me.
 - #Floating feet first.
 - *In water that seemed a lot faster.
 - +When I was in it.
 - +Than when I was on it.
 - f. I was grateful that our guide knew what to do.
 - She got the raft down stream from me.
 - #So that I could float into the raft.
 - She grabbed my paddle.
 - She grabbed me.
 - #Helped me back into the raft.
4. Isaiah 43:2b.
- a. When you pass through the waters,
 - I will be with you;
 - b. And through the rivers,
 - They will not overwhelm you.

II. Sometimes We Are In Whitewater.

A. Life Can Be Great Fun.

- 1. Exciting.
- 2. Great adventure.
 - a. Even if:
 - Ride is sometimes unpredictable.
 - We get cold water down our necks.
 - b. That beats cold snow down your neck.
- 3. If you've been to Six Flags.
 - a. Sometimes the Ferris Wheel is alright.
 - But other times you're ready for the Screaming Eagle.
 - b. Sometimes the Log Flume is alright.
 - But other times you're ready for Thunder River.

B. Life Can Sometimes Get Rough.

- 1. People of Israel.
 - a. In exile.
 - In Babylon.
 - b. Enslaved in a foreign country.
 - For 50 years.

- c. It was of their own doing.
 - Punishment from God.
 - #Through:
 - *Nebuchadnezzar.
 - *Babylonian army.
 - #For their:
 - *Disobedience.
 - *Unbelief.
 - They were in Class V whitewater.
 - d. God said to them:
 - When you pass through the waters,
 - #I will be with you;
 - And through the rivers,
 - #They shall not overwhelm you.
2. John the Baptizer.
- a. Did you notice there is a gap in our Gospel reading?
 - Luke 3:15-17.
 - Luke 3:21-22.
 - b. Don't you wonder what happened in Luke 3:18-20?
 - John:
 - #Arrested. #Imprisoned.
 - John was in Class V whitewater.
 - c. John needed to hear:
 - When you pass through the waters,
 - #I will be with you;
 - And through the rivers,
 - #They shall not overwhelm you.
3. Sometimes it happens to us.
- a. Whether of our doing.
 - Or not.
 - b. Maybe it's:
 - School.
 - Work.
 - Relationship.
 - Economics.
 - Health.
 - #Physical.
 - #Mental.
 - #Emotional.
 - *Ours.
 - *Loved one's.
 - Jail or prison.
 - #God forbid.
 - Death of a loved one.

- c. We can find ourselves in whitewater.
 - Class V.
 - #Roughest ride of all.
 - When we thought we'd signed up for Class I and II.
 - #We don't know:
 - *If.
 - *How.
 - +We're going to get away from:
 - =Rocks.
 - =Rapids.
 - When I was in Florida.
 - #In October.
 - #I took a day trip to the Dry Tortugas.
 - *National park 70 miles west of Key West.
 - +Juan Ponce de León.
 - =Named these coral atolls "The Tortugas."
 - Because of the 400# turtles then in abundance.
 - +Subsequent mariners.
 - =Added "Dry" to their maps of The Tortugas.
 - To indicate there was no fresh water there.
 - #On the 2½-hour ferry ride to the Dry Tortugas.
 - *We encountered 6' swells.
 - +Didn't really bother me.
 - =Although:
 - It was too rough to write in my journal.
 - I wondered why I had forgotten my motion pills.
 - #Which I had bought:
 - *Before I went out on Lake Superior.
 - +In June.
 - #But didn't need.
 - +There were a couple of people who got seasick.
 - #Coming back in the afternoon.
 - *It was even windier.
 - *There were 8'-10' swells.
 - +At least a dozen people got sick.
 - =On the main deck.
 - +I don't know how many on the upper deck got sick.
 - =Boat crew became EMS workers.
 - +At one point we stopped dead in the water.
 - =Because our 100' boat.
 - Had come totally out of the water.
 - #Breaking the seal on the pump.
 - *Serviced the toilets.
 - =Pump had to be re-primed.

- *I just:
 - +Closed my eyes.
 - +Thought of you all.
 - +Went along for the ride.
 - d. Maybe that's what you do when things get rough.
 - Close your eyes.
 - Hang on for dear life.
 - Hope you'll soon be back in calmer waters.
- C. You Don't Want To Be In Whitewater By Yourself.
1. But you don't want just any companion, either.
 - a. My first afternoon in Key West.
 - I went out on a 50' sailboat.
 - #With:
 - *Crew of 2.
 - *10-12 other people.
 - b. First time we dropped anchor.
 - We went snorkeling.
 - #Everyone except four women from:
 - *New York.
 - *New Jersey.
 - +Didn't swim.
 - +Didn't snorkel.
 - #They stayed onboard drinking:
 - *Wine.
 - *Beer.
 - Waters were a little murky.
 - #But I saw:
 - *Two lobsters.
 - *Sting ray.
 - *Among other sea life.
 - c. Second time we dropped anchor.
 - We went kayaking.
 - #Everyone except the four women from:
 - *New York.
 - *New Jersey.
 - +Didn't swim.
 - +Didn't snorkel.
 - +Didn't kayak.
 - I was going to be in a kayak by myself.
 - #Until Barbara from New Jersey decided to go along.
 - *She got into my kayak.
 - +With her can of beer.

- *Barbara had an uncanny knack.
 - +Paddling right.
 - #When we needed to paddle left.
 - +Paddling left.
 - #When we needed to paddle right.
 - +She was forever knocking her paddle.
 - #Into my paddle.
- *Paddling was easiest for me.
 - +When Barbara:
 - #Drank her beer.
 - #Didn't paddle at all.
- We circled an island.
 - #Learning about mangroves.
 - #Observing the wildlife.
 - *Osprey.
 - *Cormorants.
 - *Kingfishers.
- Going back to the sailboat.
 - #We had to paddle against the wind.
 - *Waves were splashing into the kayak.
 - *My shirt was getting wet.
 - #Barbara and I brought up the rear.
 - *Barbara helped most:
 - +When she didn't paddle at all.
- d. You don't want just anybody in the rough water with you.
- 2. You want someone:
 - a. Who has been through rough water before.
 - b. Who knows how to handle themselves in rough water.
 - c. Like Jesus.
 - Who was baptized:
 - #Not to wash away any sin of his.
 - *As is one of the benefits of baptism for us.
 - #To place himself in the water.
 - *With us.
 - #To place himself in the whitewater.
 - *With us.
 - #To be able to promise us:
 - *"When you pass through the waters,"
 - + "I will be with you;"
 - *"And through the rivers,"
 - + "They shall not overwhelm you."
 - Who went through his own Class V whitewater.
 - #On the cross.
 - #To redeem us.

- *To redeem in Biblical language can have a legal sense.
 - +To buy back a person.
 - =Who has been sold into slavery.
 - +To buy back a piece of property.
 - =That has been pledged as collateral.
 - To secure a loan.
 - +To pay damages.
 - =In a personal injury suit.
- *We are the ones who are slaves of sin.
 - +Jesus plunges into the whitewater.
 - =To redeem us.
- *We are the ones whose sin has caused personal injury.
 - +To ourselves.
 - +To other people.
 - +To God.
 - =But we can't pay the damages.
 - =We're in the whitewater of sin.
 - Without a paddle.
 - Without a raft.
 - Without a kayak.
 - =Jesus plunges into the whitewater.
 - To redeem us.

-Why?

#Because:

*You are precious in my eyes,

*And honored,

*And I love you.

+Isaiah 43:4a.

#Even without a paddle.

Concl: When you pass through the waters,
 -I will be with you;
 And through the rivers,
 -They shall not overwhelm you.

So: Row, row, row your boat,
 Gently down a raging, bone crushing,
 Life threatening Class V stream,
 Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
 Life is but a dream.

-When God is in the whitewater.

#With you.

-When Jesus has been through the whitewater.

#For you.

