SELF RELIANCE AND THE DANGER OF DROWNING

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*Foamy splashes of salt water breaking over my face is what woke me up to the reality of my situation. It was all I could see in every direction and I wasn't alone. From my perch on a splintered piece of driftwood I searched the waters around me, silently; eyes wide open as my heart began to beat faster with a disturbing anticipation swelling with the threat to my currently air filled lungs. **I was in danger of drowning.***

This cannot be happening!!

I was afraid. The longevity of my treading meant soon I would be too tired to stay afloat on my own, and all I could see in the eyes of the people around me was the same terror I felt in my heart. And then I saw it. A boat, and someone at the bow. He was shouting something, offering his hand to those who were within grasp. Could this be real? He's still so far. What was he saying? Oh, I was getting tired.

I didn't have time to listen. I started to look around for something to hold me up out of the watery cacoon below that promised to wrap me up and change my life. Take my life. There were brief offerings of support giving me rest for mere moments… but their generosity quickly ended and as they collapsed I felt myself sinking once more. Again I

turned my head toward the boat, desperately this time, starting to realize he might be worth whatever effort I had to reach. He shouted again and this time I heard it… "I am here to save your life, it's the only way — trust me!" I watched in surprise as a few gripped his hand and were pulled quickly into the boat, while others seemed ignorant of his reaching hand, heads bobbing, eyes glazed. And suddenly, my desperation was met with conviction — this is the only way. All it took was a choice, and then I saw his eyes were fixed on mine — and hope came rushing. I did nothing. Literally nothing — except to allow his strong arms to pull me into his boat. He wrapped me gently in blankets and held me until I had the strength to gaze into his eyes. And I knew I was safe with him.

It's a story that rolled around in my head for a long time until I finally wrote it down a few months ago. It's intended to parallel a pursuit. Jesus came for us once to die and save our lives -- but he continues to pursue us, over and over offering to pull us into life. But instead of treading water, we're tired parents or overworked employees. We're just living the day in day out of our normal routines, and relatively unconcerned with forever — much less feeling threatened and in need of saving. Or we just don't realize what boat might be available to deliver us when we do, in fact, feel like we're drowning in debt, divorce, disruption or disease. So let's get to the point.

In order to allow ourselves to be rescued from something, we must first recognize that we have something from which to be rescued. We might be drowning, but until we realize that we cannot, in fact, breath underwater, the endless crashing of waves over our heads do not concern us. We will not reach for the hand that is offered to pull us into the life giving safety of a boat. If we believe that our feet can reach the floor of the ocean, we will not give much thought to the life preserver that is tossed in our direction. When we believe that our efforts are enough, that we are strong enough, smart enough and essentially equipped… then we will not appreciate the intimate offering of life forever from the only one who has the means to bestow it. **Therefore, one of the most simultaneously frightening and compassionate declarations, are the ones revealing the truth about a life threatening circumstance.** *You, my darling, are drowning.*

We are all drowning in self reliance before we chose to trust. I cannot think of anything more powerful than an awareness of our own limitations — and the willingness to submit in order to find freedom.

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me."

— John 14:6

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save…" — Luke 19:10