

Sharing God's Word:

On January 13, 1997, missing Steve Fossett began an adventure with high expectations of becoming the first person to circle the globe in a Hot-Air balloon. After three days he had already crossed the Atlantic Ocean and was flying at 24,500 feet eastward over Africa.

However, as he was approaching Libya, he faced a strong headwind that made it very difficult to navigate the balloon. Knowing that hot-air balloons cannot be turned, Fossett made a change in the altitude of the balloon in hopes of finding a crosswind. He vented helium, and the balloon dropped to 6,300 feet and found a southeastern wind that took him just south of Libya.

What adds intrigue to this story is the fact the Libyan government did not approve of the idea of someone entering its air space. Unbeknownst to Fossett, once the balloon was spotted on radar, the Libyan military was prepared to shoot him out of the sky. His life had been saved because of winds that were contrary to his course of direction.

In Mark 6, the disciples were on the Sea of Galilee when a sudden storm arose. Their predicament is recorded in verse 48 stating they were, "... *toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them:*" Simply spoken, they were rowing hard, but were not getting anywhere.

There are seasons in life when we encounter contrary winds, and our lives produce intense motion but very little progress. Frantically, we try rowing harder, readjusting the sails, or even lightening the load of our ship, but like the angel wrestling with Jacob, we "*prevail not.*" Contrary winds can be so discouraging that they are often taken to be Satan's hindrances, when in reality they are God's divinely appointed obstacles.

The Lord performs some of His greatest movements in our lives through contrary winds. Contrary winds brought famine that led Joseph into prominence. Contrary winds; parted the Red Sea for Moses. Perhaps the prophet said it best in Nahum 1:3, "*the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and the storm.*"

Just why does the Lord find it necessary to send contrary winds into our pathway? Contrary winds stretch us for a greater purpose.

In the furniture industry, only strong, superbly-grained wood is selected in the building of expensive furniture. What is the secret of the decorative graining? The trees are chosen from a location that is exposed to constant winds and storms. The constant winds stretch the trees and develop the finest woven fibers which add strength, beauty, and value to the wood.

Contrary winds groomed Peter for the "*rushing mighty wind*" of Pentecost. Contrary winds from the Lord are never meant to break us, but to bend us into a more usable shape.

Contrary winds stir us to a greater profession. When Jonah was bent on taking his own course, we are told in Jonah 1:4, "*the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea...*" Contrary winds that had strength to destroy anything in its path were used to adjust Jonah and spare him from a failed mission.

The traditional philosophy of the world says, "*go with the wind.*" However, winds blowing in the same direction we are heading will often cause us to grow careless, and can push us to destruction. Contrary winds give the initial perception that everything in life is against us, but keep in mind that an airplane takes off

against. the wind, not with it, It is actually the stress and tension of the wind that helps lift the plane to soar. Contrary winds added passion to Jonah's sermons, depth to Job's integrity, and credibility to Moses leadership. Like a vine clinging to a tree during a storm, contrary winds will only press us closer to the trunk if we are growing on the right side of the tree.

Contrary winds are filled with unexpected opportunity, but only if you know how to capture them!

Thoughts of the day:

- 1 The task ahead of us is never as great as the power behind us.
- 2 We don't change the message, the message changes us.
- 3 When a person turns loose and drifts with the current, he soon gets into deep water
- 4 Trust: If we don't **rest** in the Lord, we will become **restless**.
- 5 Wisdom: If you need wisdom, ask God (James 1:5-7).
God always knows what to do when you don't.