

## Dolphins, Seagulls, and Sharks

Not long ago, during a summer vacation, we took the grandkids on a short morning cruise designed specifically to see the dolphins. This mammal has a magical attraction for young and old alike and seeing them lifts the heart. God has some special messages for us in those dolphin-viewing moments.

The dolphin can swim at speeds up to 30 miles per hour and is always in a community of like minded souls. They are, for the most part, playful and happy and are glad they were made by God to find fish for food and entertain humans.

As we saw the first one rise and circle back down, the other hundred people on the boat gave a collective sound of amazement. As more and more dolphins arrived on the scene, the boat was turned so that people could view this wonderful sight.

We, as God's people, could take a few lessons from this. We could plan to be happier, more satisfied, and more regular in our swimming. As we do the things we were created to do, we can find joy in simply being the human being God has created.

Sometimes we swim slow, sometimes fast, but always in the company of others. That is why the church is like a school of porpoises, always traveling together for safety and fellowship. When one finds food, we all find food. When one suffers, we all suffer and help each other along.

When we are swimming and jumping and making sounds God has made us to make, like helping others and singing songs of faith, we are at our best. Negativity and self-centeredness are absolutely going against what God has for us.

The dolphins were drawn, as it was very obvious, by the shrimp trawler far off the shore which was only able to keep about 20 percent of its catch. This means that the dolphins were enjoying a buffet fit for a king as they traveled happily along.

Looking up, and all over the fishing boat, we saw the clouds of seagulls perched on the fishing line, the masts, the nets, and flying all over the ship. They are the top-feeders, as they get the fish and other things that are not shrimp before they go back into the water.

Masters of opportunity, the seagull also travels in groups, known as flocks this time, and are adept at finding the smallest morsel of food and making off with it. They are not known for sharing, however, so we must take the good and leave the bad when we consider their merits under God's banner of faith.

I did not talk to the fishermen, but I imagine the constant presence of the seagull could be a bother at times. They surely would take a chance at stealing some of the catch or trash, and this could be a help or a hindrance to the sailors, depending on the moment.

When we were on shore, we saw the seagull as a master of flight, when one swooped down and snatched a cracker from the sand without even landing in the effort. They can navigate the wind and the waves equally well, for God made them that way.

I have a feeling that ancestors of those same seagulls perched and swooped and called out around the boats where Jesus rode, fished, and taught in ancient Galilee. They could tell us much about how Jesus is in charge of the wind and the waves, as well as the storms, if they could talk.

One piece of information we could have done without on this short voyage. The captain said that for every dolphin on the surface there were three sharks feeding on the fish and refuse the dolphins and seagulls did not eat. Dangerous, scary, and mean is the shark.

That meant that if there were 14 dolphins we saw, there were at least 42 hungry sharks we did not see. Shades of the soundtrack from the movie “Jaws” now play in our heads.

It is worth to ponder, in our journey of faith, whether we are a dolphin, a seagull, or a shark in those travels.

People like to be around the dolphin. They put up with the seagull. But do not like a shark.

God created us to love our brothers and sisters and to find joy simply in the journey. The good thing is that if we are the seagull or shark, God can change us into the dolphin and give us a holy purpose.

Knowing we are creatures of hope and porpoise, we can jump high out of the water to bless others. We can communicate in worship and fellowship in a language others cannot understand until they hear God’s voice as well.

So don’t look for the garbage that one can find if we look high or low. Look for the good food that God provides for us when we are a part of his holy kingdom. Be a dolphin, on porpoise!