

## **“Bits and Pieces” for Cadet Sunday sermon**

**Introduction** for those who plan to use these “Bits and Pieces” for a Cadet Sunday sermon, let me start with the (by now) usual *caveat*:

As in last year’s “Roadmap” posting, what follows here is not a sermon. It is, instead, a collection of bits and pieces indicating what I think might be some salient points to use in a sermon. Why not present a full sermon? Because it would be my sermon, not yours, written to be preached with my personality, my inflections, my spontaneous insertions and deletions. All that I gladly leave up to you. You know your cadets and will find your own ways of connecting with them. This collection of bits and pieces obviously needs filling in. It is no problem finding images on the internet for the things that are included in this “sermon” if you are so inclined to use them.

One thing, however, I do have in mind. I hope that whatever you preach will be aimed at the Cadets (probably sitting on the front rows), with the congregation being privileged to “listen in.”

I humbly submit these bits and pieces praying that they will encourage and bless the Cadets, build up the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and bring glory to our Triune God -- Rev. Ted S. Bootsma (ret’d; or, more formally, Emeritus). Member of Bethel CRC, Waterdown, Ontario

So here are the suggested **“Bits and Pieces”** for you to play with:

There can be something fearful about diving. I recall the first time that, as a skinny 12 year old kid, I stood on the edge of the 3 metre (10-foot) diving board at the local swimming pool for the first time. I couldn’t back down; friends were watching. So I launched myself out over the water and dove deep into it. Fear soon was replaced by exhilaration, and I returned to that intimidating edge of the diving board time and time again, each time launching myself into the air, and plunging into the water, gaining some measure of graceful air time after many tries.

The same would be true, I suppose, of first time sky divers. In both cases, one thing is definitely true: once committed to the dive, there is no turning back; it’s an all-or-nothing commitment. And, maybe surprisingly, the thrill never fades.

There is another kind of diving, perhaps less daunting, but equally rewarding. Picture yourself standing on the beach of a tropical island, overlooking the calm water of a lagoon. You’ve been told there is a coral reef within easy swimming distance, but all you see is more water ahead. And so you are content to just wade in the water, swim a little, and sit on the beach enjoying the view. Nice. But you’ll never know what you are missing.

I was on just that kind of beach once. But instead of just wading, I donned snorkel and mask and swam/floated out to the reef. Then everything changed. What a wonderful world lay just beneath the surface of the water. Fish of every imaginable colour swimming right in front of my eyes. Seahorses floated by. The coral reef was alive with more creatures and colour than I could ever imagine. It was an amazing new world that would have stayed invisible to me had I chosen to stay content with looking over the surface of the water. More awe-inspiring than the greatest National Geographic documentary shown in IMAX theatres. Why? Because now I was not just hearing and seeing about it from the experience of others, now I was actually part of that wonderful underwater world. Visual treasure after visual treasure. And that was with just snorkel and mask, not with SCUBA gear to go down farther. Imagine what diving deeper would discover!

The Psalmist says, "I rejoice in your word like one who discovers a great treasure." I might wonder: What kind of treasure is he talking about. Could I find treasure in God's word too? How can I find it? Well, part of the answer is, I suppose, "Dive right in and see for yourself." But remember, diving is an all-or-nothing commitment. And diving goes deep; it doesn't stop at the surface.

A cardinal rule in diving (even swimming/snorkeling) is "Never Dive Alone!" There are serious risks in diving alone. Along that wonderful reef, there are dangers. So when you dive into the word, get yourself a "diving buddy" – someone who will "Dive into the Word" with you, to keep you going when the going gets tough, and to keep you from "wrong" readings of the Word, and to share the joy when good things are discovered in the Word.

Cadet Counsellors, I'm sure, will gladly help with that.

Like diving along a reef, diving into the Word will reveal wonderful things:

- You'll find out that God actually knows and loves you.
- That Jesus will never leave you alone.
- That even in stormy times (literally or figuratively) God's got it. He's in control.
- Etc.

There are warning signs in the underwater world. Some colours indicate dangerous creatures: don't touch, etc. Diving into the Word also brings warnings of danger. God keeps asking you to stay close to Him, listen to Him, and obey His Word. Things go wrong when you don't stay close to Jesus. I guess you could say He is your ultimate diving buddy.

Stories are some of the treasures you find diving into the Word.

- A Jewish girl becomes queen of the biggest empire then known.
- With God's help a boy slays a giant.
- God created a beautiful world, just by speaking.
- Just by speaking, Jesus made a dead man walk out of the grave, alive!
- When a huge crowd was hungry, Jesus had compassion and fed them – with only a bit of bread and a couple of fish. But they were all satisfied.
- When the disciples were scared stiff in a storm, Jesus simply told the storm to quiet down.
- Etc.

So . . . I hope that these little pieces will help you build a message for the Cadets.

God bless!