

One of my neighbors, who lived to be 92, was a World War II Veteran. He had a lot of stories about a lot of things that he would regale to anyone who stepped foot into his garage. There was one particularly amazing story that I never minded hearing him repeat. Lying to his mother about where he was going and to the government about his age, at barely seventeen Bill walked into a recruiting office and signed up to serve in the military.

One of his first appointments was the USS Missouri at Pearl Harbor. He was standing on the deck of the ship when he heard a large humming noise. Suddenly there was a loud splash next to him and water flew high into the air, raining down and soaking him. The noise grew louder and he glanced around to see if he could find the source. After another moment, he realized it was above him. He looked up and like a shot out of the clouds, a group of planes with round red dots on the side became evident. Japanese fighter planes descended on the docked fleet. Sirens and alarms and bells and whistles all began to go off at once. Water continued to splash high into the air as fire and heavy smoke began to billow off and out of ships.

He and one of his buddies got cornered on their vessel. They had nowhere to go. As they stood there, they watched one of the fighter planes get hit in the air, crippling it. It slowly changed direction and pointed its nose right at the USS Missouri. Bill and his friend watched it head directly toward them. They scrambled for cover right inside a doorway and listened as the noise from the plane grew louder. There was a loud crash, but no explosion. Miraculously.

Bill was a witness to an account that is one of the most terrible days on US soil. To be a witness establishes a matter. It convinces others that it actually happened. There were many witnesses to Christ's death on the cross. The accounts are listed throughout the Gospels. Family, disciples, Romans and hostile accusers all saw him die. They experienced three hours of darkness and a mighty earthquake that split rocks, opened graves and tore the curtain in the temple from top to bottom. Jesus' followers showed deep sorrow, and the crowds were silenced and beat their breasts (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). Had these unusual events not occurred, as the biblical record states, few would have believed the account. And this is important, because without the account of his death, his resurrection would have no real meaning. He had to die to live again.

REFLECTION

- The very best witness we have is that of how our lives are changed when we trust and rely on God. Are you telling your story to others so they can have changed lives as well?

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Lord, take my life and let it be consecrated to you. Give me confidence and boldness to share with others how you have changed me. Make me a witness for you. Amen.