

## *Journey around the World*

Many years ago, the great explorer, Sir Francis Drake, was attempting to recruit a number of young men for an upcoming exploration.

Drake (1540 – 1596), an English sea captain, naval officer and privateer, carried out the second circumnavigation of the world in a single expedition from 1577 to 1580, and was first to complete the voyage as captain while leading the expedition throughout the circumnavigation. With his incursion into the Pacific Ocean, he claimed what is now California for the English and inaugurated an era of conflict with the Spanish on the western coast of the Americas, an area that had previously been unexplored by western shipping.



Drake gathered young men and told the group that if they came with him they would see some of the most marvelous things their eyes could ever behold – sandy white beaches, juicy fruits, foreign peoples, priceless treasures and gorgeous landscapes. And he told them that this wild adventure could be theirs if they came with him. Not one of them enlisted for the journey.

The next day, a different group came out. Drake told them that if they came with him, they would encounter storms that would terrify them into tears. Tiger winds would hammer them and blow them off course for months. Water would frequently be scarce. At times, they would be so thirsty that their very souls would cry out for simply one drop of water. In short, danger would always be their constant companion.

Drake concluded by declaring that if they could handle these things, the joys of exploration would exceed their wildest dreams. Every single one of them in the group joined Sir Francis Drake that day. Some did not even go home to say goodbye to their families; they just boarded the boat, eager for the journey.

What made the difference in these two groups? Why did the first group turn down the mission and the second jump at the chance?

Was the second group different and more adventurous than the first? The answer is no.

It is not the men who had changed; it was the message. The first spoke of rewards, and the second told of challenges. The first offered comfort; the second promised suffering. The first tempted them with things; the second seduced them with an experience unlike any other.

(more)

Drake felt similarly to Theodore Roosevelt, the 26<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, who put it this way:



*It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.*

Sir Francis Drake discovered what Jesus knew all too well, and that is this: The paths that are offered to us must promise to shape us, build our character and change our world view, if they are to have any appeal to us at all.

If we are presented with a challenge that will change us, we will be eager for the journey.

The Bible has this to say: *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything* (James 1:2-4 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter