Sailing with Columbus

On Oct. 12, 1492, some very weary sailors rejoiced in sighting land. The previous month, Christopher Columbus had set sail with three ships looking for a short route to the Indies. During the voyage, there were a number of false sightings, which led to dashed hopes as the days went by.

After three weeks of sailing, which was the longest anyone had ever sailed in one direction out of sight of land, Columbus had to convince the men to carry on.

By Oct. 10, resentment among the sailors had grown almost into a mutiny. Columbus persuaded the crew to sail on for three more days, promising they would turn back if no land was sighted.

Two days later, at 2 o'clock in the morning, a lookout spotted an island in the distance that Columbus named San Salvador. It had taken five weeks of sailing to reach the island that is now part of the Bahamas.

Today is Columbus Day, celebrating the anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas, occurring on Oct. 12, 1492. Since 1971, the holiday has been fixed to the second Monday in October.

As with the sailors on those three ships, we all feel like giving up once in a while. After struggling with a difficult relationship, we are tempted to call it quits. Maybe financial problems overwhelm us, or illness – of ourselves or someone dear to us – diminishes our resolve. Sometimes, we just get weary of trying to do the right thing and not seeing any return for our efforts.

Turning back is not an option in the Christian life. There is nothing behind us worth returning to.

Ahead of us is God's promise that if we don't give up, we will reap a harvest of blessings at just the right time. If we keep doing what's right and trusting God for the outcome, any day now we may sight just what we are looking for – as did those sailors journeying with Columbus.

Let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up (Galatians 6:9 NLT).

– Beecher Hunter