

# Stuck in the Mud on the Ocean Floor

Don Webb, president emeritus of Centenary College of Louisiana, was born in Wales and served in the British Royal Navy before coming to America to begin his ministry.

In the navy, he was named captain of the *HMS Switha*. In that leadership role, he wanted to impress the crew with how wise and brave he was. And the first assignment was to check the anchors that held the buoys in place; the only way to do that was to send a diver down to the ocean bottom in one of those big suits with the iron helmets and weights.

Webb was told that the previous captain always went down first. He felt he had to do the same. The only problem was that Webb had never gone deep-sea diving and knew nothing about it. Rather than admit his weakness to the crew, however, he told them he would go.

Scared to death, he put on the heavy suit with its thick gloves, leaded shoes and huge helmet. As he reached the ocean floor, he began to panic. As he tried to take his first step, he realized his feet were stuck in the mud, and instead of striding forward, he fell face-down in the muck. Worse yet, he let go of the lifeline.

As he lay there in the mud, unable to move, he remembered the last thing the navy ensign told him: "Sir, whatever you do, don't let go of the lifeline. And if you need help, just give it a tug."

"This is it," Webb thought. "I'm going to die down here, stuck in the mud, face down on the ocean floor. This is how it ends."

After several minutes, however, which seemed like an eternity, Webb felt a gentle touch on his shoulder. The crew, sensing that he was in trouble, had sent down an experienced diver to pick him up, unstick him from the mud and get him back on his feet again.

There is a spiritual corollary to this story. In the same way, Jesus comes to us in our need. He enters our world where we are stuck in the muck of sin. That's all of us. The Bible says so: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23 ESV).

But Jesus comes down to help us, to save us. "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live" (John 11:25 ESV).

What a blessed assurance!

We need not fear death. We need not hide behind closed doors. For we have a friend who has come to help. We have a Savior who can rescue us from sin, the grave and the power of death

– Beecher Hunter