

# Taking the Flood Tide

In the days before modern harbors, a ship had to wait for the flood tide before it could make it to port. The term for this situation in Latin is *ob portu*; that is, a ship standing over off port, waiting for the moment when the tide was exactly right to carry it to harbor.



The English word *opportunity* is derived from this original meaning. The captain and the crew were ready and waiting for that one moment, knowing that if they missed it, they would have to wait for another tide to come in.

William Shakespeare turned this background of the exact meaning of opportunity into one of his most famous passages. It is from *Julius Caesar*, Act 4, Scene 3:

*There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.*

*On such a full sea are we now afloat,  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.*

God gives each of us many *ob portus*, or flood tides. In other words, He gives us many opportunities to serve Him, to dedicate our lives more fully to Him, to grow and become more like Him, and to make something beautiful out of our lives for time and eternity. These opportunities rarely come gift-wrapped, tied with a bow and a ribbon. They come in much more subtle ways.

For those of us in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home, those opportunities abound every day in the mission in which we are engaged, in the lives of the people entrusted to us.

So whatever it is God directs us to do, let's not miss our *ob portu*.

– Beecher Hunter