

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



946 The Ultimate “Attitude” Story

Are you tired of hearing stories about having a positive mental attitude? Does that make you negative? I’m Jerry Roberts, and you might want to close your ears because I’ve got a good one coming next, on The Extra Point.

On September 3, two men set off from tiny Mono Island in the Solomon Islands in a 23-foot boat with an outboard motor, planning to head to a town about 140 miles south.

Livae Nanjikana and Junior Qoloni would navigate their way by watching the islands pass off to the side of the boat. They weren’t worried. One of them said, “We have done the trip before and it should have been OK.”

Then, heavy rains came and they couldn’t see the islands any longer. Their GPS stopped working. As they were no longer sure which direction they were heading, they shut the engine down to save fuel. They began to drift.

Though they didn’t know, they were drifting away from their intended destination. Day after day passed, and they prayed to cross paths with someone who could save them.

The men had packed oranges and they ate those, along with coconuts they found floating in the ocean. They would see a coconut in the distance, and would turn on the engine to get to it, then turn it off again. They also rigged a piece of canvas as a rainwater catchment system.

They said God had given them the thought of constructing a device to sail, so they built a mast-like structure with paddles and canvas, and the wind picked them up. They sailed, drank rainwater, and prayed.

They were sailing when the winds allowed, but still had no means of navigation, and had no idea where they were. On their 27th day at sea, they saw an island.

Nanjikana and Qoloni tried for two full days to reach it, but their makeshift sail and the small amount of remaining fuel were not enough. They couldn’t reach the island and were left to once again drift aimlessly. It had to be incredibly disappointing and frustrating. Thoughts must have crossed their minds that they might never be rescued.

Two days later, they spotted a fisherman in a tiny wooden canoe. Were their eyes deceiving them?

He was off in the distance, paddling by himself, beyond the sight of anyone who might be watching from shore. They knew they one last chance.

They turned on their motor, hoping there was enough fuel to allow them to reach the man. The motor sputtered, then shut down. However, the man had seen them and turned his boat in their direction. They would be saved.

The fisherman led them to shore — which was the island of New Britain in Papua New Guinea, nearly 200 miles away from their original target.

I don’t know if the two men have found their way back home yet, but there’s one more small piece to the story. Nanjikana said he has taken some positives away from the experience.

He said: “I had no idea what was going on while I was out there. I didn’t hear about Covid or anything else. I look forward to going back home, but I guess it was a nice break from everything.”

It was a nice break? Floating at sea for 29 days, eating oranges, coconuts, and drinking the rainwater he and his friend, Qoloni, could catch, and not sure they would be rescued.

(Con’t.)

It's a story of faith in God. It's a story of using survival techniques. It's a story of frustration, and worry, and hope, and disappointment, and then salvation. It's all of that, and more.

It's also a story of attitude. To be able to look back on their month-long ordeal, and say it was "a nice break from everything", requires a unique perspective, to say the least.

We all have challenges and uncertainties. We all struggle with one thing or another. There may be a time when life and circumstances strip us down to our core.

May we meet the moment with faith, and an attitude which makes others take notice.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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