

## A Titanic Story - "A Voice Above the Waters"

The sinking of the Titanic has been one of the most talked about tragedies of the past one hundred plus years, and yet, how many of us have heard the name – John Harper? He was a young widower at the age of thirty-nine set sail on the Titanic along with his six-year-old daughter, Annie nicknamed “Nana”, and his sister, Jessie W. Leitch.

He had been invited to once again cross the Atlantic Ocean to preach at Moody Church in Chicago, Illinois. After answering God’s call to preach at age seventeen, this young Scottish pastor shared God’s love wherever he went - including onboard the Titanic.

On that night of April 14, 1912, as women and children were being herded into the 20 lifeboats after the iceberg had pierced the side of the Titanic, John Harper placed his little girl in Number 11 making sure she and his sister were safe. Then he raised his voice above the threatening waters to anyone who would listen as he shared the Gospel from Acts 16:31 – “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

In those last hours as the ship continued sinking, John shared the hope found in Jesus to as many as would listen and prayed with those who would receive. Eventually, he found himself plunged into the frigid waters, but even then, he grabbed hold of a piece of floating debris and continued raising his voice above the waters to share Jesus with those perishing.

Four years later when survivors of the Titanic gathered in Canada to share their experiences, one young man stood and shared that he had heard the voice above the waters. He too had been in the icy waters as John Harper floated close enough to him to share the Gospel not once, but twice. He became John Harper’s last convert.

Not only did Pastor Harper share the life-giving Gospel, he also gave his life vest away so another could live. John Harper may

have drowned in those icy waters over one hundred years ago, but he did not perish. And because of his voice above the waters, others heard the Gospel and they too were saved.

John's little girl and his sister survived and were among those rescued by The Carpathia. A group from Moody Church travelled to New York and made sure their needs were met and they could return to Scotland. Annie grew up and married a young pastor; she went on to be the longest-living Scottish Titanic survivor and died in 1986.

Over one hundred years have passed, and John Harper's first church he pastored, now known as [Harper Church Glasgow](#), still proclaims the truth John passionately shared that night – "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved!" They have become a multi-national Scottish church sharing God's Word in multiple languages reaching the nations as the nations come to them right there in Glasgow. John Harper's voice and mission continue.

As inspiring as John Harper's last hours are, it was his daily life following Jesus that led to his strength of faith to face that night. We don't have to be thrown into frigid waters or stand on the deck of a sinking ship to share the Gospel and make a difference in people's lives. Each and every day God give us this privilege, this opportunity. People are all around us holding on to scraps of life's debris looking for hope and salvation. Let's raise our voices above the waters and share Jesus now and every day.