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Viewpoints

Observing events in our modern world from the viewpoint of our ascended Savior.

Fuel For Whatever You Face ~ February 18, 2016

A C-135 Stratotanker is a lifeline. Even greater is the God who leads you.

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Last week the Air Force released news of an incident that occurred over territory held by the Islamic State (the location withheld for security reasons).

One of our F-16 fighter jets experienced a mechanical malfunction that would allow the plane to hold only a limited amount of fuel, providing only 15 minutes of flight time. Normally this situation would require the pilot to choose an isolated area for his plane to crash, while he would eject. The pilot would then seek to evade capture while waiting for a rescue operation to retrieve him. You may remember what the Islamic State did to a Jordanian pilot who crashed over Syria in December 2014. While contained within a cage, ISIS burned that pilot alive. And ISIS proudly published the video of his gruesome death!

But this F-16 pilot didn't have to eject over Islamic State territory. One of our nation's mid-air refueling planes, a C-135 Stratotanker, happened to be refueling some A-10 Warthog aircraft on mission nearby. The C-135 Stratotanker broke off its mission with the A-10's and was able to rendezvous with the F-16 Fighting Falcon.

Remember the basics of how mid-air refueling happens? A fuel transfer boom trails behind and below the tanker. The receiving aircraft positions itself behind the tanker so that the boom operator can manipulate the boom to connect with the receiving plane's fuel port.



The Air Force Times explains the Stratotanker's "crew escorted the jet to its base while refueling every 15 minutes to avoid an emergency. 'Knowing the risks to their own safety, they put the life of the F-16 pilot first and made what could've been an international tragedy, a feel-good news story,' Lt. Col. Eric Hallberg, 384th Air Refueling Squadron commander, said. 'In my thoughts, what motivates them is a higher calling to be the best at the mission and take care of their fellow soldiers, sailors and airmen,' he said." [Air Force Times news](#)

Now imagine that you're the pilot of that F-16. (Or see a video [here.](#)) Before your face proceeds a huge Stratotanker with its lifeline, its life-giving fuel boom. And literally, watching over you face-to-face is the boom operator who keeps refueling your craft every 15 minutes.

When Moses was turning over leadership of the Hebrews to young Joshua, Joshua was facing ISIS-like enemies. Through Moses God encourages Joshua with this promise: **“The LORD himself goes before you”** (Deuteronomy 31:8). That's a good English translation, but literally the Hebrew says this: **“The LORD himself goes before your face.”** The almighty creator of heaven and earth, who shoehorned himself into the person of Jesus so that he could be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of world, is he who goes before your face, too.

Whatever it is that you face in life-- no matter what crisis... even the potential of being burned alive by ISIS-- you never face alone. Even as the Savior goes before your face, his face looks upon you, to fuel and refuel you until you ultimately land on the blessed tarmac of heaven. **“The LORD himself goes before your face and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged”** (all of verse 8). ✝

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Blessings to you and your loved ones, Pastor Mike Nitz

