

RESCUE

T H E M

DEVOTIONAL

Five Bible Stories of Redemption



INTRO

From beginning to end, the message of the Bible is one of rescue. Unable to rescue ourselves from separation with God, the Father sent His only Son to pay the price for our sin, securing eternal life with Him for everyone who believes. But the stories of rescue begin long before Jesus ever walked the earth. From the very moment Adam and Eve chose to go their own way instead of obeying the Lord, the ultimate rescue plan was set in motion.

In its most basic definition, rescue simply means "to free from confinement, danger, or evil."* But in tracing the word back to its Semitic origins, the translation goes a step further, meaning "to fortify, to arm someone for war."** It's an extension of the meaning that is crucial in fully understanding not only our own salvation, but also our calling to rescue others in Jesus' name.

INTRO

In the coming days, we'll take a look at some of the most well-known stories of rescue in the Bible. Stories of everyday men and women used by God to rescue families, nations, and those doing His work upon the earth. For some, the stories themselves are ones heard many times before. But it is our hope and prayer that as you read and meditate upon each one, your passion for the mission is renewed.

The calling is not optional. And the opportunity will not last forever. One day, the clock will run out and He will make all things new. But until then and only in His power, let us "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." (Psalms 82:3-4, NIV)

*rescue. 2020. In Merriam-Webster.com.

Retrieved June 29, 2020 from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rescue>

**Bentorah, Chaim. (2016, March 12). Word Study-Rescue Me

<https://www.chaimbentorah.com/2016/03/word-study-rescue-me-ינצלח/>

RESCUE

T H E M

DEVOTIONAL - DAY 1



JOSEPH

JOSEPH

DAILY READING

Genesis 37:12-28; 42:1-8; 45:4-11; 50:20-21 (ESV)

“...God sent me before you to preserve life...to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. It was not you who sent me here, but God.”
(Genesis 45:5b-8a)

The bottom of a pit. It's a phrase typically used in the metaphorical sense, a place where we find ourselves when the world seems to be caving in. But for Joseph, it was a reality he faced at just 17 years old. Tossed into a literal pit and left to die at the hands of his own brothers, then temporarily lifted out only to be sold into slavery, Joseph knew firsthand what it meant to need a rescue.

Years later, he found himself wrongfully imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit, once again facing what seemed like an impossible situation, one in which he was unable to save himself. But God had not

forgotten about Joseph, nor was He unaware of the injustices that had plagued his life for many years. And after He had restored Joseph to a place of prominence and honor, eventually climbing the ranks to become a high-ranking official in the king's service, Joseph found himself on the other side...no longer a man who needed rescue, but one capable of executing it.

When nearly all of Egypt faced a severe famine some time later, by God's grace, Joseph remained unaffected. His family, however, could not say the same. The same brothers who judged him, persecuted him, and ultimately abandoned him were now the very ones in danger of perishing if someone did not intervene. The tables had turned.

We can only imagine the internal struggle Joseph may have felt knowing he was in a position to save those who had hurt him most. But with God as his strength, he chose the righteous path. He chose to not only rescue them, but to generously provide for them for the remainder of the famine. And as he did, old wrongs were laid aside, and new relationships thrived. What man had intended for evil, God worked for good.

Is there someone in your life who needs not only your forgiveness, but also your help? To do so seems counter-cultural, and not something we can do in our own strength. But it is exactly that to which we been called. We must model ourselves after Christ, the Rescuer, who has not only forgiven us, but who graciously and continuously blesses us above and beyond what we deserve. May He empower you today with the strength to release someone's debt against you. And may He give you a desire to bless even those who have mistreated you, remembering that we love as He first loved us.

PRAYER

Father, we thank You for rescuing us out of the pit as You did with Joseph. Thank You for forgiving us when we didn't deserve it, and for giving us good things simply because You love us. Would You give us opportunities today to love others well, to forgive those who hurt us, and to share the hope we ultimately have in You.

RESCUE

T H E M

DEVOTIONAL - DAY 2



M O S E S

MOSES

DAILY READING

Exodus 2:1-10: 6:2-7; 14:5-31 (ESV)

“...‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm...’”

(Exodus 6:6)

Born into slavery, and slowed by a speech impediment, Moses seemed an unlikely candidate to lead an entire nation to freedom. We can only imagine the initial hesitation he may have felt when the Lord commanded him to speak up against the most powerful ruler in the land. For over 400 years, the king of Egypt had utilized every resource available to him to maintain control over the nation of Israel – wealth in excess and an army in the thousands. Who was Moses, a perceived commoner, to approach the king, let alone make any demands?

But in the eyes of the Lord, Moses was anything but common. His upbringing in the house of Pharaoh had provided him with connections and insight he could not have obtained on his own. His encounter with God Himself in the form of a burning bush had empowered him to raise his voice against injustice. His own brother was called by God to stand by his side, speak for him on multiple occasions, and literally hold up his arm on another. Though Moses didn't know it at the time, his entire life up to that point had been one of equipping.

And so when the moment arrived to free the children of Israel from their captivity, he did so, perhaps still somewhat uncertain in his own abilities, but with a stronger conviction not only in the mission to which he had been called, but in the God who had called him to it. In their liberation, the Egyptian army could not overtake them. The Red Sea could not drown them. With the presence of God surrounding them, nothing could stop them from claiming the freedom which had been promised to them.

Perhaps as you are reading this, you are thinking that the mission God called Moses to was extreme. It was. More than likely, none of us are going to spearhead the release of

an entire nation held captive as slaves for several centuries. But there is no small role in God's army. God has called every one of us who follow Jesus into the mission of rescue, into the mission of loving God and loving people. On this mission there are no small deeds, but rather acts of love toward others, done in Jesus name. A cup of coffee, a conversation, an unexpected act of kindness just might be strategy you take as you begin to fight in the battle. Ask Him to show you someone today in need of rescue. And when He does – no matter how challenging the surrounding circumstances may seem – **take a moment to remember how He has equipped and empowered you to answer His call,** just as He did in the days of Moses.

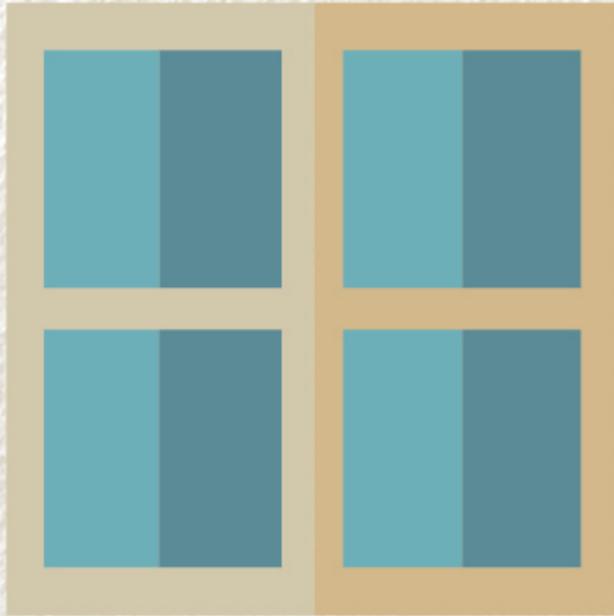
PRAYER

Father, thank You for inviting us to something greater than ourselves. We know that the mission isn't always easy, but we also know that in You, the battle has already been won. Help us to boldly move forward in what You have called us to, resting and finding strength in the knowledge that You are still parting the seas, even today.

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T H E M

DEVOTIONAL - DAY 3



RAHAB

RAHAB

DAILY READING

Joshua 2 (ESV)

“...for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath...swear to me by the LORD that, as I have dealt kindly with you...you will deliver our lives from death.”
(Joshua 2:11 b-13)

Hated because of her ethnicity, and scorned because of her work as a prostitute, Rahab was a woman whose lies saved the lives of two men and in doing so, eventually saved those of her entire family. It's a story only God could have orchestrated.

We know nothing about Rahab's life prior to her helping two men sent by Joshua to spy on the land of Jericho in preparation for their invasion. What we can safely assume, however, is that she was looked down upon, ignored, and certainly abused...a woman on the very bottom rung of society's ladder. But God did not see her that way. Who He saw

was a woman to whom He had given both wisdom and courage - a woman strong, savvy, and brave enough to say yes to His plan despite the danger it entailed.

It was an intricate reconnaissance mission carried out over the course of several days, and one that required a great deal of faith in the Lord from all parties involved. As the spies hid upon her roof, they had to have faith she would not disclose their location to the city officials looking to capture them. But Rahab remained true to her word, and diverted the attention of those pursuing them, in turn allowing the men to escape unharmed. Likewise, she was required to trust the word of the spies when they promised her that her family's house (and all those who gathered within) would not be touched when the Israelite army invaded. By hanging a scarlet cord in her window, she signified which home to pass over, and her entire family was saved.

It's hard for us to imagine facing a scenario like that today. But at some point or another, many of us have felt unwanted. Unseen. Perhaps abused in some way by the people around us or even life itself. Unusable to God. Yet Rahab's story shows that He can

use literally anyone to accomplish His will and play a significant role in the mission. **Your status in life has no bearing on your work for the kingdom.** There's a reason why Rahab is listed in Hebrews 11, commonly known as the "Hall of Faith." There's a reason why she is listed in the genealogy of Christ. Her faith saved lives. Her courage was used by God to bring about His purposes. Her trust spurred her on as she fulfilled her part in God's bigger plan. And history was impacted for eternity.

PRAYER

Father, we are so encouraged and inspired by the life of Rahab, and by how You used her. Thank you that Your work is not limited by who we are, or the skills, connections, or influence we may or may not have upon this earth. As we seek You daily, praying for Your will to be accomplished in our lives, we humbly ask that You fill us with the same boldness and faith so evident in hers.

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T H E M

DEVOTIONAL - DAY 4



ESTHER

ESTHER

DAILY READING

Esther 2:5-8, 15-17; 3:7-11; 7:1-6; 8:3-8 (ESV)

“And who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

(Esther 4:14b)

Though no definitive age is given in the Bible, it is widely assumed that the girl who eventually became Queen Esther was only a teenager when she first entered the courts of King Xerxes. Imagine – an orphaned, Jewish girl, perhaps only 14 or 15, catching the eye and the favor of the most powerful man in the land, eventually securing the royal crown upon her head. Her heritage and life before the palace a secret, her two identities could not have been more opposite.

But as history unfolded, there came a time when her ethnicity could no longer be hidden. Her husband’s right-hand man had issued a decree declaring the mass murder of the entire Jewish nation. It was a nightmare

situation that was, in fact, reality. But it was also an opportunity. An opportunity for a rescue carried out single-handedly by the only woman who could potentially save her people.

Faced with no choice but to reveal her true background to her husband, Esther skillfully planned a series of dinners, the final in which the king offered to her anything she wanted. We can only imagine the deep breath she must have taken before disclosing the deceitful plot that would wipe the Jewish nation from the earth. Revealing the truth could have cost her everything, including her very own life. But the moment – the mission – to which she knew she had been tasked was greater. With complete dependence on and surrender to God, Esther bravely and humbly asked for the king to spare the lives of her people. And in that moment, God came through as only He could – honoring Esther's commitment to His call and saving the Jewish nation from total destruction.

The story reads like a fairy-tale or a screenplay. But it's true. And even though our lives look vastly different today, its lessons are still applicable. God will allow us to be placed into situations for which we feel

unprepared, situations which we feel completely inadequate to handle. God will allow us to face seemingly impossible decisions, some of which may very well cost us everything. **God may call us to lay our own dreams aside for the sake of the mission.** But it's worth it. Surrendering our will, our plans, our lives to Him is worth it every single time. Perhaps the next time the battle rages around us, we will pause for just a moment, considering that we too have been called for such a time as this.

PRAYER

Father, we know there will be times You will give us more than we can handle, times where You ask us to sacrifice everything we have and surrender to Your plan instead. Thank You that in those moments, Your strength is enough. Thank You for already having a way prepared for us, even when we can't see it. May we see those moments not as ones of hardship, but as ones of opportunity to trust You even more.

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J E S U S

JESUS

DAILY READING

*John 19:1-6, 16-18, 30, 40-41;
Matthew 28:1-4 (ESV)*

“...I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said.”
(Matthew 28:5-6)

With the words, “He is risen,” death lost its power, and the mission of Christ upon the earth was accomplished. Just three days before, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had paid the ultimate price – His very own life – to offer salvation to all mankind, for all eternity.

The One who lived a sinless life died for our sins. The One who could have commanded an army of angels to fight on His behalf, stood silent while being mocked and beaten. The One who had healed the sick, who had made the lame to walk and the blind to see, pushed His own body to a near breaking

point as He carried His own cross to a hill called Calvary. The One who loved others – ALL others – with the purest and greatest love imaginable, showed that very same love up until His final breath, and asked the Father in heaven to forgive those responsible for His death. His is a life, a death, and a love we will never fully grasp.

But His love is what compelled Him to fulfill the mission set before Him. Hours before His gruesome and humiliating death, He had stood in a garden and begged the Father for any other way; His anxiety so great that night, He literally sweat drops of blood. But He knew the mission to which He had been called, and even death could not stop Him – not in that moment, nor in the one three days later when He did the impossible and rose from the dead, just as He said He would. His mission was finished.

But ours isn't.

The day is soon coming when He will return and call home those who have surrendered to Him. But until then, we must not stop serving. We must not stop loving. And in His strength, we must put on His armor, step into

the ring, and fight for those who cannot fight for themselves. This is our rescue mission and it cannot wait. **The battle isn't coming, it's already here. You have one lifetime to join the fight and then your opportunity is gone.** Don't put off until tomorrow what you could do today. Eternity hangs in the balance.

PRAYER

Jesus, when we stop to reflect upon what You did for us on the cross, we realize "thank you" will never be enough. Who are we that You would care that much for us? All we can do is give our own lives back to you. Give us eyes to see how we can be a part of Your mission today. Put others in our paths who need to hear the lifechanging truth of the Gospel. Equip us and empower us to step forward in faith, believing that You have already won the battle that lies ahead.



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