

Jesus Rescues

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Psalm 34:17-19

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Psalm 34:17-19 (NIV) *“The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all.”*

Psalm 34:17-19 (New Living Translation; which was the text for VBS) *“The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed. The righteous person faces many troubles, but the Lord comes to the rescue each time.”*

The most wonderful thing happened to me last week – Jesus rescued me! I was thinking about what to preach today, so I prayed about it and asked Jesus to help me. Then I was reading my daily devotional book, and that day the lesson was about being shipwrecked! Isn't that cool? The Vacation Bible School theme for the week was **“Shipwrecked – Rescued by Jesus.”** The daily devotional for July 13 talked about Robinson Crusoe being shipwrecked on a deserted island.

Daniel DeFoe's novel tells the story of Robinson Crusoe, a boy who lived in England in the 1600's. All he wanted was to be a sailor who had lots of adventures, but his father said, “No! you stay here with us and get a good job!” Instead of listening to his dad, when he turned 19 Robinson Crusoe ran away. He went to work for a ship captain and sailed to many faraway places. He had many kinds of adventures and was caught in many storms.

After eight years at sea, Robinson Crusoe had the worst adventure of all. The ship he was on hit a sandbar and was smashed to bits by the waves. Everyone else drowned in the stormy seas. Only Robinson Crusoe was able to swim to shore, where he found himself marooned on a deserted island. He was shipwrecked!

Crusoe had more adventures building shelter and finding food. After awhile he decided to wade out to the ship wreck to see if there was anything left that he could use. He brought back some barrels and bags and boxes to his island.

One of the things that Robinson Crusoe discovered in the boxes from the shipwreck was a Bible! I don't remember any of my school teachers talking about that. I bet the Bible wasn't mentioned in the Disney movie either! I am fascinated that Christianity was an important part of the story!

Robinson Crusoe read the entire Bible - cover to cover. He read about God, and about Jesus, and he was converted! God touched his heart and Crusoe grew into a devout Christian believer. His life, though missing human companionship, became peaceful and prayerful.

After maybe 20 years on the island, Crusoe found a footprint in the sand, and he knew it wasn't his own. From then on he was anxious and fearful. He forgot that God had provided for him for so long.

In the devotional book I was reading, David Jeremiah wrote, *“Crusoe had to go back to his Bible, repent of anxiety, and be strengthened again in his faith. He eventually learned the great lesson of faltering Christians: The things we most fear are likely, in the providence of God, to be most used for our good. Those footprints, in the end, led to his deliverance.”*¹

The reason that I retold that whole story of Robinson Crusoe is that it so amazingly illustrates what we talked about this week in Vacation Bible School.

- Robinson Crusoe was **lonely**, shipwrecked on a deserted island for 28 years.
- He was **worried** that savages would come in their boats and find him and kill him.

- He **struggled** to build a shelter, and to find food, and to try to build a raft or a canoe so that he could escape.
- He certainly did many things **wrong** in his life time.
- And Robinson Crusoe was **powerless** against the forces of storms and winds, rain and crashing ocean waves.
- Yet, just as we learned in VBS, Jesus rescued him!

Psalm 34, verse 19, which I read as our scripture lesson this morning, is the source for the theme of Vacation Bible School: “When you have many troubles – the LORD Jesus comes to the rescue each time.” Psalm 34 was written long ago by a young man named David, before he became King of Israel. King Saul hated David and wanted to kill him. The king sent his soldiers out searching to capture David, but he escaped. David fled to the coastal area of the Philistines to seek asylum with Achish, king of Gath. That was a bad idea. Gath was the hometown of Goliath, the giant whom David had killed years earlier. David was in greater danger in Gath than he had been in Israel. When he was brought before King Achish, David pretended to be a madman. The king said, “Get this man out of here!” David was able to escape to a cave where he hid for a long time.

David begins this Psalm by saying, *“I will praise the Lord at all times. His praise will always be on my lips... I sought the Lord and he answered me. He rescued me from all my fears.... This poor man called, and the Lord heard him. God saved me out of all my troubles.”* (vs 1, 4, 6)

- David was **lonely** – he was hiding alone in a cave in a foreign country.
- David was **worried** – he now had two kings and their soldiers trying to kill him.
- David **struggled** to find food.
- And He knew that he had done **wrong** things in his life.
- He was **powerless** to change his circumstances.

In spite of all that, David praised the Lord for His goodness, and he wrote psalms to tell others about God’s mighty works.

One author pointed out that “even when David prayed to be rescued, his circumstances did not immediately change. He was still a fugitive. He was still in danger. For awhile he was still alone. But God did save his life from King Achish and from King Saul.”ⁱⁱ

David mentions four times that those who “fear” the LORD, (those who worship God with awe and reverence and who want to obey him,) will be rescued.

Vs 4 – they will be delivered (rescued) from their fears.

Vs 7 – they will be delivered (rescued) from their enemies.

Vs 17 & 19 – they will be delivered (rescued) from their many troubles.

David does not say that we will not have troubles, but he does promise that God will deliver (rescue) us from them.

Another author reminds us that having faith in God *“is not a guarantee that life will always be easy. [Faith] may mend the broken heart, but it does not prevent the heart from being broken. [Faith] may restore the spiritually crushed, but it does not crush the forces that may create oppression.”*

Psalm 34 declares that God is with us through the trials and troubles of life – whether we feel it or not.

Earlier you heard some of the songs that the children learned this week at VBS. The kids had a great time doing crazy science experiments, making crafts, and acting out Bible stories. Even the games and the snacks reinforced the theme of *“Shipwrecked – Jesus rescues!”*

This year more than other years, the lessons and songs touched the hearts of the grownups too. Several adult volunteers told me that they were impacted by the assurance that Jesus is actively rescuing them too. Adults can feel **lonely** even at a party, or a family reunion, or at work, or in your home. People sometimes even feel lonely at church.

Some grown-ups **struggle** with finances, or with family conflicts, or caring for family members who cannot take care of themselves.

Parents **worry** about bills and finances, and they worry about their children, and then worry about their own health.

No one is perfect; we all do **wrong** things, things that God told people not to do. Then we suffer from guilt. We all need Jesus to help us be better people.

Even adults, no matter how strong or educated they are, are **powerless** against hurricanes and floods, landslides and wild fires.

Still, God promises, *“You may have many troubles, but the Lord will rescue you from them all.”*

Kids, help your parents! Encourage your grandparents! Tell all the grownups that you know. Remind them of these lessons that we learned at VBS last week:

- **When you feel lonely – Jesus rescues!**
He is the best friend you could ever have.
- **When you are worried or afraid – Jesus rescues!**
Jesus said, *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid.”*ⁱⁱⁱ
- **When you struggle with problems and trials and temptations – Jesus rescues**
Jesus offers: *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*^{iv}
- **When you do wrong, Jesus rescues.**
When you sin, when you disobey God or avoid doing what is right, Jesus takes the punishment you deserve.^v He took your place by dying on the cross for the forgiveness of your sin. Jesus rose from the dead, victorious over death, so that all who believe in him would not perish but have eternal life.^{vi}
- **When you feel powerless – Jesus rescues!**
God’s Word teaches you that *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*^{vii}

**Your life may feel like a shipwreck, but through it all –
JESUS RESCUES!**

ⁱ Sanctuary: Finding Moments of Refuge in the Presence of God, by David Jeremiah. P. 205

ⁱⁱ James Montgomery Boice, Psalms, Vol I, p. 295

ⁱⁱⁱ John 14:27

^{iv} Mt 11:28-30

^v 1 John 1:8-9

^{vi} John 3:15-16

^{vii} Philippians 4:13