

The Rescue

A movie came out a while ago about a police officer who must transport a prisoner to court to testify in a big case. As they start out, the prisoner asks the officer a riddle.

"Suppose you're driving a two-seater car, and you have to make it out of town before a big hurricane hits. You see three people on the side of the road: your best friend; an elderly woman who is injured and has to get to a hospital right away; and the girl of your dreams. Who do you rescue?"

The officer is a bit distracted from solving the riddle because, of course, there are those who are trying to keep the prisoner from testifying. Occasionally, in between the chase scenes and shootouts, the two discuss the riddle. As the movie draws to a close, the officer says he's got it figured out.

"You give the keys to your best friend so he can take the old woman to the hospital, and you stay behind with the girl." The prisoner nods his head as the officer continues. "After all, she's the girl of your dreams, isn't she?"

In this week's passage, we will see that our Heavenly Father sent his son to rescue us from disaster. Jesus, God the Son, came into the storm because he loves us so much. And, Paul tells us, God the Holy Spirit gives those who have been rescued the ability to live a new life.

Monday – No Condemnation

"The law works fear and wrath; grace works hope and mercy." Martin Luther

1. Please read Romans 8:1-4. What powerful statement is contained in verse 1? What comes to mind when you think of the word "condemnation?" Where do you think this condemnation would be coming from?

Text insight: the word condemn is from a Latin root meaning "sentence" or "penalty."

2. Who is saved from condemnation?

Making it Personal: If you are in Christ Jesus, you are free from the penalty that comes from sin. Are you?

Tuesday – Freed through Jesus

"Live in Christ, live in Christ, and the flesh need not fear death." John Knox (reportedly said on his deathbed)

1. Please read Romans 8:1-4. According to verse 2, what happened through Jesus?
2. See 1 Corinthians 15:56. What does it say about the law, sin and death?
3. How does Romans 8:2 compare the power of the Spirit of life with the power of sin?

Digging Deeper: For more on the work of the Holy Spirit, read John 7:37-39. According to verse 38, how much life is promised through the Spirit?

Wednesday – God did it!

"It is easy enough to ... condemn, but redemption is costly." Samuel Chadwick, 19th century British revivalist

1. Please read Romans 8:1-4. According to verse 3, what is it that the law could not accomplish?
2. For a review of the interplay between sin and the law, read Romans 7:7-10 while keeping in mind the first part of 8:3. How did sin pervert the law?

Text insight: Sin has the power to affect God's law negatively, just as it has the rest of God's creation; but it's not permanent. Jesus declared that he came to fulfill the law. Matthew 5:17.

3. Verse 3 tells us that Jesus, God the Son, came to us in the nature of a man. For what purpose? See Philippians 2:5-8 for more on God's humbling himself by coming to us as a human being.

Prayer focus: God took on real humanness when becoming Jesus (without becoming sinful himself), and he did it for us. That is the teaching of Philippians 2, yet even some within the church are confused on the concept. Pray for clear teaching on this in God's church around the world.

Thursday – According to the Spirit

"If you have not the Spirit of God ... you are a fruitless tree standing where a fruitful tree might grow." Charles Spurgeon, 19th century British pastor

1. Please read Romans 8:1-4. How are the righteous requirements of the law to be fulfilled in us?
2. Look back at Romans 3:20-23. How does this passage help you understand your need for someone else to meet the righteous requirements of the law in you and for you?
3. Jesus explained one of the roles of the Holy Spirit to his disciples in John 16:12-16. In what way does this help you understand what it means to live according to the Spirit?

Making it Personal: The Spirit of Truth longs to guide you. Spend some time reading the Bible every day, and ask God to give you understanding of the truth he has for you there.

Friday – God is our Salvation

"A world of nice people, content in their own niceness, looking no further, turned away from God, would be just as desperately in need of salvation as a miserable world - and might be even more difficult to save." C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

1. This week's passage makes clear that our salvation from sin is a gift from God, not some sort of task we can accomplish on our own. This is not just a New Testament idea, either. Read Jeremiah 3:21-23 for an Old Testament prophet's take on the source of salvation.
2. Now look at Lamentations 3:39 (also written by Jeremiah). Is there any real reason to complain against God when some sin we commit leads to a bad result? Wouldn't you rather ask him for the cure, as Jeremiah 3:22 suggests?
3. Lamentations 3:21-26 is a passage of hope, an encouragement to wait for God's saving grace and mercy even when we are caught in the midst of troubles. What words or phrases are most encouraging or comforting to you in this passage?

For the Weekend: Pray through Romans 8:1-4 and Lamentations 3:21-26 in thanks for your new life.