

Rescue The Perishing

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Houston, Texas has been ravaged by widespread flooding as rainfall came down at rates as high as four inches an hour the morning of Monday, April 18. Rainfall totals of 10 to 20 inches were measured to the northwest of Houston. At the time of this writing, 8 deaths have been attributed to the historic flooding. Watching some of the water rescues on live television, it caused me to think about a song written by Fanny J. Crosby with the refrain, “Rescue the perishing, care for the dying, Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.”

1) **Jonah Sent To Rescue The Perishing.** Nineveh, capital city of the great Assyrian Empire, was an exceedingly wicked place. The Lord commissioned Jonah, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me” (Jon. 1:2). When Jonah rose up to flee from the presence of the Lord and boarded a ship to Tarshish, in the opposite direction of Nineveh, “...the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken” (Jon. 1:4). The mariners cried unto the Lord, “...O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man’s life...” (Jon. 1:14). As Jonah was cast forth into the

raging sea and was swallowed up by a great fish, he experienced first-hand the terror of suffering complete ruin or destruction. After this life-changing experience, “...Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord...” (Jon. 3:2). He entered Nineveh with the cry, “...Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (Jon. 3:4). The king of Nineveh decreed, “...turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?” (Jon. 3:10). Matthew 12:41 reports, “The men of Nineveh... repented at the preaching of Jonas...” “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not” (Jon. 3:10).

2) **One Greater Than Jonah.** Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees, “...behold, a greater than Jonas is here” (Mt. 12:41). Jesus, “...the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:16), possessor of all authority in heaven and in earth (Mt. 28:18), came “...to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10). All are in need of being rescued by Christ! “For all have sinned, and

come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). “For the wages of sin is death...” (Rom. 6:23). That is eternal separation from God! It is in Christ that we “...have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:7). “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). John 3:15-16 reads, “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “The Lord... is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). Jesus preached, “...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish...” (Lk. 13:3, 5). There is no reason for any to perish, with a merciful Savior so near!

3) **The Lifeline.** As a lifeline was thrown out to those being swept away by swift flood waters, Heaven’s lifeline to rescue sinful man from eternal, spiritual death includes:

God. “Who will have all men to be saved...” (1 Tim.

(2:3-4).

Christ. "...he shall save his people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21).

Grace. "...by grace are ye saved..." (Eph. 2:5).

Blood. "...being now justified by his blood..." (Rom. 5:9).

The gospel. "...it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Rom. 1:16).

The word of God. "...receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21).

Preaching. "...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

Words. "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14).

Works. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified..." (Jas. 2:24).

Self. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16).

Hearing. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Faith. "But without faith it is

impossible to please him..." (Heb. 11:6).

Repentance. "...God... commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

Confession. "...with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

Baptism. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mk. 16:16).

Faithfulness. "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

A rescue crew may come in a boat and throw a rope to one who is about to perish in floodwaters. As the individual is saved by a boat, by a crew in a boat, by a rope and by himself (in that he had enough strength left to grab hold of the rope and be pulled to safety), we are not saved by any one thing alone, but a number of things work together to bring about our salvation.

4) **We Are Rescuers.** One thing that impressed me about the Houston water rescues was seeing neighbor helping neighbor and stranger rescuing stranger. We are saved to save (1 Tim. 4:16). "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in

the spirit of meekness..." (Gal. 6:1). "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:19-20). Many risked personal injury and death to help save their fellowman. It's amazing what some will do, in a split second, without even giving thought it would seem, to save another human being or even an animal from peril. How far will we go to help rescue our fellowman from the greatest of perils — the loss of his soul?

5) **Time Is Of Essence!** It's shocking how quickly the floodwaters rose! Some were just minutes, if not seconds, from certain death! The Bible says, "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1). "...now is the accepted time..." (2 Cor. 6:2). As the song *Throw Out The Life Line* teaches, "Soon will the season of rescue be o'er, Soon they will drift to eternity's shore, Haste then, my brother, no time for delay, But throw out the Life-line and save them today." Let's rescue the perishing!

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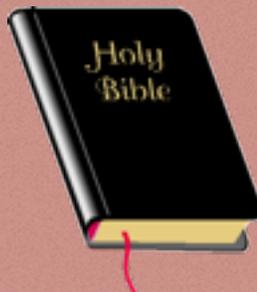
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