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Evangelism Workshop
“Understanding God’s Rescue Mission”

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Understanding God's Spiritual Rescue Mission

Rev. Dr. Otis T. McMillan, Instructor
John 3:14-21

Proposition: Since God's kingdom enterprise is a rescue operation, every person who has been rescued by God through faith in Christ Jesus must become a spiritual rescuer.

"There's only one way every unbeliever can ever have a chance at Jesus and a chance at heaven: that's if believers step up to be spiritual rescuers of lost people in their personal world." Ron Hutchcraft

1. John 3:16, the key verse in our passage is filled with life and death words. (16)

- a. Perish "apollumi" (Gk) means to destroy, die, lose, mar, or perish. (Jn. 3:16, Lu. 19:10)
- b. Save "sozo" (Gk) means preserve, make whole, save, or to heal. (Jn. 3:16, Lu. 19:10)
- c. Seek "zeteo" (Gk) means to go after, look for, go about or enquire for. (Lu 19:10)

2. The spiritual rescue mission for lost humanity is God's idea. (John 3:16)

- a. God initiated His great rescue mission of love by sending Jesus to save the lost. (Jn.3:16)
- b. Jesus embraced God's rescue mission by investing His life in the rescue. (Luke 19:10)
- c. Jesus established God's rescue mission as the mandate for His church. (Matt. 28:19, 20)
- c. Believers must fulfill the mandate and assist in God's rescue operation. (Luke 14:25-27)

3. The spiritual rescue mission is needed by lost humanity. (Romans 3:10-18)

- a. There is none righteous, no, not one. (10)
- b. There is none that seek after God. (11)
- c. There is none profitable or useful. (12)
- d. There is none that doeth good, no, not one. (12)
- e. There is no fear of God before their eyes. (18)

4. The nature of the rescue mission requires the spiritual rescuers to go to lost people in their personal world. (Wherever they are) (Luke 14:23; Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; John 21:15-17)

- a. Go into the entire world and proclaim. (Mk. 16:15)
- b. Go you therefore and make disciples of all nations. (Matt 28:19, 20)
- c. Go be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, etc. (Acts 1:8)
- d. Go feed my lambs...tend my sheep...feed my sheep. (John 21:15-17)

5. The rescue mission of God can best be carried out by God's people who are already with the lost. Tragically, those in the best position to rescue the dying either don't feel responsible or don't feel led.

- a. Reach the lost in your home. (John 1:41)
- b. Reach the lost in your neighbor. (John 4:35)

- c. Reach the lost in your world, (Acts 1:8)
- d. Reach the lost on your journey. (Luke 10:33)

6. The spiritual rescue mission of God may face many hindrances. (Matt. 23:23)

- a. May be hindered by our poor example. (Matt. 23:13)
- b. May be hindered by our misplaced priorities. (Matt. 23:23; Matt 28:19, 20)
- c. May be hindered by church activities. (James 2:14-16)
- d. May be hindered by delay. (John 4: 35)
- e. May be hindered by misplaced fear. (Exodus 4:12; 2 Timothy 1:7)

7. The spiritual rescue mission of God must be clearly understood by every rescue worker.

- a. The duties and responsibilities of the rescue worker. (2Cor. 4:1-7)
 - 1) Rescue workers must not use the gospel deceitfully. (1, 2)
 - 2) Rescue workers must live out the message in their lives. (2)
 - 3) Rescue workers must understand that our message is centered in Christ. (4)
 - 4) Rescue workers must preach Christ and not themselves. (5-7)
- b. The benefits and blessings of sharing faith in Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord.
 - 1) Faith in Christ makes possible a right relationship with God. (Eph. 2:4-8)
 - 2) Faith in Christ makes possible a right relationship with others. (Mt. 5:23, 24)
 - 3) Faith in Christ makes possible a right relationship with self. (Ro. 5:1)
 - 4) Faith in Christ makes possible a right relationship creation. (Col. 1:19, 20)
- c. Christian faith is a response of the total person which involves two dynamics:
 - 1) Trust which is personal and relational.
 - 2) Obedience which is the ethical dimension of faith.

8. The rescue work itself must be clearly understood by every rescue worker. (Ro. 15:18, 19)

- a. Evangelism is not a set program. No one method of evangelism is the method, but each method by God's grace can become a method for sharing faith.
- b. Evangelism is not what we do to people, it is what we do with the gospel. The word evangelism or "eu angel ion" or good news or gospel means good message.
- c. Evangelism is the ongoing process of communication that involves the gospel. To witness is making Christ known by word, deed and signs through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- d. Evangelism is not persuading others to adopt a point of view, but pointing others to Christ, His kingdom and His Church.
- e. Evangelists "best witness" is undergirded by their "deepest relationship" with God.

9. The Spiritual Rescuer's Guidelines: understanding guiding principles and patterns for witnessing.

- a. Be clear regarding your purpose. (*Share His message*)
- b. Be undergirded by prayer. (*Pray for the success of His mission*)

- c. Be willing to listen. (*Listening opens the door for speaking*)
- d. Be conscious of the environment, culture and the situation. (*No Xerox evangelism*)
- e. Be aware of the power of invitational statements. (*Containing a seed of a question*)
- f. Be about your Father's business. (*Every Christian must share their faith*)

10. The Spiritual Rescue Pattern of G R A C E. (Eph. 2:4-8)

G - God's grace in Christ Jesus for all.

G - God's grace in Creation.

G - God's grace in redemption.

G - God's grace in hope and eternity.

R - Recognizing and repenting of sin.

R - Receiving salvation in Christ.

R - Responding in trust.

R - Reconciling grace, being put right with God through the atoning blood of Jesus.

A- Accepting God's forgiveness.

A - Acknowledging Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior.

A - Assurance through the witness of the Holy Spirit.

A - Awareness of the continuing grace of God.

C - Confessing faith in Christ Jesus.

C - Committing in trust to Christ.

C - Commencing the way of Christ.

C - Continuing the walk with Christ.

E - Entering the reign of God.

E - Entering the fellowship of the church.

E - Entering the way of a grace-filled life.

E - Entering into the mission of God.

Let the redeemed of the Lord Say So, 1996; George Morris and H. Eddie Fox, World Methodist Evangelism, Nashville, TN 37212

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