

Mission: Rescue Souls – Week 1 – Why are we still here – Bible Study Helps

Title: Mission Rescue Souls: The Call to Be Missionaries

Sermon Summary:

This sermon challenges believers to embrace their calling as missionaries in everyday life, emphasizing that evangelism is not optional but a command for every Christian. It addresses the gap between what Christians believe about heaven, hell, and salvation, and their actual practice of sharing the gospel. Using examples from Jesus' ministry—particularly His encounter with Zacchaeus and the woman at the well—the message stresses that Christ intentionally sought lost souls, and His followers must do the same. The sermon identifies common obstacles to evangelism including fear, distraction, and busyness, while emphasizing that the love of Christ should constrain and motivate believers to action. The core message is that the church exists not merely as a gathering place but as a rescue station for perishing souls, and every believer must actively participate in seeking and saving the lost.

Key Points:

- Every believer is called to be a fisher of men, not just those with the so called "gift of evangelism"
- Jesus intentionally went places to reach souls (Zacchaeus, woman at the well, Samaria)
- Christians can become busy with church activities while forgetting the actual mission of rescuing souls
- Fear is normal but courage means obeying God despite fear (Paul experienced fear and trembling)
- Common fears include rejection, awkwardness, offending people, not knowing enough, and looking foolish
- The right motivation for evangelism is the love of Christ, which should constrain and compel us
- We are all missionaries wherever God has placed us—at home, work, school, and in our communities
- Having gospel tracts available at all times removes the excuse of not knowing what to say
- Compassion for souls and tears for the lost should characterize our witness
- Busyness and distractions can replace eternal priorities, but we must remain focused on souls

Scripture Reference:

- Psalm 126:5-6 (sowing in tears, reaping in joy)
- Luke 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus—Jesus came to seek and save the lost)
- Matthew 4:18-19 (Follow me and I will make you fishers of men)

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- John 4:1-35 (Woman at the well—Jesus must needs go through Samaria)
- Mark 16:15 (Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature)
- Acts 1:8 (Ye shall be witnesses unto me)
- Proverbs 11:30 (He that winneth souls is wise)
- 1 Corinthians 2:3 (Paul's fear and trembling)
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-20 (Love of Christ constrains us; ministry of reconciliation; ambassadors for Christ)
- 2 Timothy 1:7 (God has not given us a spirit of fear)
- Romans 1:16 (Not ashamed of the gospel)
- Proverbs 29:25 (Fear of man brings a snare)

Stories:

- Zacchaeus in the sycamore tree—Jesus intentionally sought him out and brought salvation to his house
- The woman at the well—Jesus broke cultural barriers and intentionally went through Samaria to reach her; she immediately went and told others about Christ
- The disciples' obliviousness when they returned from buying food, missing the spiritual opportunity Jesus had
- The lifeguard illustration—a lifeguard sitting comfortably while people drown represents Christians who know the gospel but don't share it
- The firefighter illustration—firefighters don't exist merely to polish trucks but to enter danger and rescue lives
- The doctor with the cure illustration—a doctor who has the cure for cancer but doesn't tell patients because of uncomfortable conversations
- The collapsed bridge illustration—love would compel someone to warn speeding cars of impending destruction
- A ministry to homosexuals—loving people enough to tell them the truth
- A personal story of being challenged about when he last had a clear gospel conversation
- A bold approach at the mall—asking a stranger if they had 5 minutes to talk about spiritual things
- George Whitefield weeping for those who opposed the gospel—"If you will not weep for your sin, I will weep for you"
- The first experience putting a gospel tract in the truck window at work

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Discipleship Questions

Are you following Jesus Christ or just going on a Christian walk? What is the difference between these two, and which one characterizes your spiritual life right now?

In Psalm 126:5-6, the passage speaks of sowing in tears and reaping in joy. When was the last time you wept for a lost soul, and what does this reveal about the depth of your burden for the unsaved?

Jesus said in Luke 19:10 that He came to seek and to save that which was lost. If we are truly following Him, shouldn't seeking and saving the lost be central to our daily lives rather than an occasional activity?

Christians can be like lifeguards who sit comfortably while people drown. How does this image challenge your understanding of the church's mission and your personal responsibility in it?

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:14 that the love of Christ constrains us. If we rarely speak to anyone about the gospel, what does this say about whether Christ's love is truly compelling us?

We can do many good, biblical things in the flesh instead of the Spirit. How can we distinguish between dutiful religious activity and ministry flowing from genuine love for Christ and souls?

In the story of Zacchaeus and the woman at the well, Jesus intentionally went to specific places to reach specific souls. Are you intentionally putting yourself in places and situations where you can share the gospel with lost people?

Fear is normal but courage is obeying God despite fear. What specific fears keep you from sharing the gospel, and how might confessing these fears to God be the first step toward boldness?

If everyone in your church evangelized the lost exactly like you do, would souls be reached effectively? What would need to change in your life for your answer to be a confident yes?

A challenge: have at least one spiritual conversation with a lost person this week. What practical steps can you take today to prepare yourself spiritually and practically for that conversation?

Small Group Guide: Mission Rescue Souls

Based on Psalm 126:5-6 & Luke 19:10

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to open hearts to His mission and to give boldness for witnessing opportunities.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

- Share a time when someone went out of their way to help you in a moment of need. How did that make you feel?
 - When did you first hear the Gospel? Who shared it with you?
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Key Scripture Review (10 minutes)

Primary Texts:

- **Psalm 126:5-6** - "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy..."
- **Luke 19:10** - "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
- **Matthew 4:19** - "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Read these passages aloud together.

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Part 1: Understanding Our Mission

1. **The pastor said, "We are not just a gathering place, but a rescue station."** What does this mean practically for our church? For you personally?
2. In the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19), Jesus was intentional about going to reach a specific soul. **When was the last time you intentionally sought out a conversation about spiritual things with someone?** What made that easy or difficult?

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3. The sermon mentioned that "most Christians believe heaven and hell are real, yet many believers rarely speak to anyone about the gospel." **Why do you think this gap exists?** What causes it in your own life?

Part 2: Confronting Our Fears

4. Paul said he came to Corinth "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (1 Corinthians 2:3). **Does it surprise you that Paul experienced fear?** How does this encourage you?
5. The sermon listed common fears: rejection, awkwardness, offending people, not knowing enough, and looking foolish. **Which of these resonates most with you?** Be honest with the group.
6. **"Do you fear man more than God?"** This is a challenging question. How would you honestly answer this regarding evangelism?

Part 3: The Right Motivation

7. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-20 together. **What does it mean that "the love of Christ constrains us"?** How is this different from guilt or obligation?
8. The pastor shared about George Whitefield weeping for those who rejected the Gospel. **When was the last time you wept or felt deep compassion for a lost person?** What might this reveal about our hearts?
9. The sermon asked: **"If you don't speak and preach the Gospel, your love tank is on empty."** Is this statement too harsh, or is it true? Discuss.

Part 4: Practical Reality Check

10. **Social media example:** Many people boldly post about sports, politics, and entertainment but remain silent about Jesus. Why? Do you see this in your own life?
11. We can get busy with church activities while forgetting the actual mission. **How can we stay focused on what matters most while still serving in the church?**
12. **"Every day you're a missionary."** How does thinking of yourself as a missionary change the way you approach your daily routine—at work, at the store, at home?

Key Takeaways (5 minutes)

Have each person share one key takeaway from the sermon or discussion:

- ✓ **Jesus called every believer to be a fisher of men** (Matthew 4:19)
- ✓ **Fear is normal, but courage means obeying God despite fear**
- ✓ **The love of Christ should constrain and motivate us into action**
- ✓ **We are missionaries wherever we go—home, work, community**
- ✓ **Gospel tracts and prepared hearts open doors for conversations**

Practical Application (10-15 minutes)

This Week's Challenge:

1. Prayer List of "Unsaved People"

- Create a list of people in your life whose salvation you're concerned about
- Date the list and commit to praying daily for them
- Share 2-3 names with the group for accountability

2. Gospel Tracts Everywhere

- Obtain gospel tracts (from the church for free, online, or at the Gospel bookstore)
- Keep them in your car, purse, wallet, and at home
- Commit to having them with you at all times

3. One Spiritual Conversation

- Ask God for boldness to have at least 1 spiritual conversation with a lost person this week
- It doesn't have to result in salvation—just be faithful to speak about Jesus Christ

4. Daily Gospel Tract Challenge

- Give at least one gospel tract or Bible to someone every single day
- Get your family involved
- Track your progress

5. Share Your Stories

- When you have a gospel opportunity, send a brief recap to your pastor/group leader
- Encourage one another by sharing testimonies

Accountability Questions

Discuss with a partner or the group:

1. What specific fear do you need to surrender to God this week?
2. Who is one person God has placed on your heart to witness to?
3. How will you prepare yourself practically (gospel tracts, Scripture memory, prayer)?
4. Will you accept the daily gospel tract challenge?

Scripture Memory

Psalm 126:5-6

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Prayer Focus:

- Confess any fear of man over fear of God
 - Ask God to fill us with compassion for lost souls
 - Pray for specific people on your "unsafe" list
 - Request boldness and divine appointments this week
 - Thank God for saving us and commissioning us
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Before Next Week

- **Read:** The handout "A Parable on Fisherless Fishermen"
 - **Prepare:** Have at least one gospel conversation
 - **Report:** Be ready to share your experience with the group
 - **Pray:** Daily for lost souls on your list
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Leader Notes

- **Be vulnerable:** Share your own fears and failures in evangelism
 - **Celebrate attempts:** Praise those who try, even if conversations don't go perfectly
 - **Avoid guilt trips:** Emphasize love and compassion, not just duty
 - **Follow up:** Check in during the week via text to encourage group members
 - **Share stories:** If anyone has a gospel conversation, share it with the group to build momentum
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"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." - Luke 19:10

Mission Rescue Souls: A 5-Day Devotional Journey

Day 1: Called to Be Fishers of Men

Reading: Matthew 4:18-22

Devotional: When Jesus called Peter and Andrew, He didn't just invite them to follow—He promised transformation: "I will make you fishers of men." This wasn't optional; it was their new identity. As believers, we share this calling. Every day presents divine appointments with souls who need Jesus. The question isn't whether we're qualified, but whether we're willing. Jesus doesn't need our perfection; He needs our availability. Today, consider: Are you following Jesus on your own terms, or truly following Him into the harvest field? The nets we must cast are gospel conversations, tracts, and acts of compassion. When we follow Christ authentically, soul-winning becomes as natural as breathing, because His heart for the lost becomes ours.

Day 2: Intentional Rescue

Reading: Luke 19:1-10

Devotional: Jesus intentionally went to Zacchaeus. He didn't stumble upon him accidentally—He sought him out. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." This wasn't just Zacchaeus's story; it's our mission statement. How often do we pass through our days without intentionally looking for divine appointments? The grocery store clerk, the gas station attendant, the neighbor—these aren't interruptions to our schedule; they're the reason for our schedule. God has strategically positioned you exactly where you are, doing exactly what you're doing, to reach specific people only you can reach. This week, ask God to open your eyes to see people as He sees them—precious souls in desperate need of rescue.

Day 3: Overcoming Fear with Love

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Devotional: "The love of Christ constraineth us"—it compels, motivates, and propels us forward despite our fears. Even the Apostle Paul admitted coming "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." Fear is normal, but love is stronger. When we truly grasp what Christ has rescued us from—eternal separation from God—our gratitude should overwhelm our anxiety. We are ambassadors, representing the King of Kings with the message of reconciliation. Every person we encounter faces eternity somewhere. A parent runs into danger to save their child because love overcomes fear. How much more should Christ's love for the lost, flowing through us, overcome our fear of rejection or awkwardness? Today, confess your specific fears to God and ask Him to fill you with His constraining love.

Day 4: Tears and Harvest

Reading: Psalm 126:5-6

Devotional: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Genuine evangelism flows from a broken heart for the lost. When's the last time you wept over someone's eternal destiny? George Whitefield preached through tears, telling crowds, "If you will not weep for your sins, I will weep for you." This compassion separates casual Christianity from radical discipleship. We live in comfort, distracted by entertainment and busyness, while souls perish around us. The fields are white unto harvest, but where are the tears? Where is the urgency? Pray today for God to break your heart for what breaks His. Ask Him to help you see beyond people's politics, lifestyle, or hostility to their desperate spiritual need. Compassion precedes effective evangelism. Let your heart be moved as Christ's was when He saw the multitudes.

Day 5: Living as Missionaries Every Day

Reading: Acts 1:8; John 4:34-38

Devotional: "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." The disciples were distracted by physical needs while Jesus focused on eternal souls. We're all missionaries—not someday, not somewhere else, but right now, right here. Your workplace is your mission field. Your neighborhood is your parish. The question isn't whether you're called to missions; it's whether you'll accept the call you've already received. Jesus said His "meat"—His sustenance and satisfaction—was doing the Father's will. When evangelism becomes our spiritual nourishment rather than our burden, everything changes. Today, commit to carrying gospel tracts everywhere. Pray for one divine appointment. Ask God to make you intentionally aware that you're His ambassador, a lifeguard on duty, a firefighter ready to rescue. Every day is a mission trip when you live as Christ's witness.

Challenge for the Week:

- Pray daily for specific unsaved people by name
- Carry gospel tracts everywhere you go
- Give away at least one tract or have one gospel conversation each day
- Share your evangelism stories with your church family for mutual encouragement