

Rescue Missions

Jesus wasn't on a mission of destruction or self-aggrandizement. His mission was a mission of Salvation and Rescue. In His ministry Jesus had encounters with many types of people. He dealt with the religious elite, He dealt with foreign and lost cultures, and He dealt with people of faith. He adapted his strategy with each one, taking into account their needs and reacting appropriately to their responses.

The Paralytic Man

In Mark, you can read the story of the Paralytic Man¹. The story is one of rescue. It tells of a man who was paralyzed from birth. In those times such an illness was thought to be due to sin in a person's life. The man was shunned by most as a result. His friends had enough compassion though to bring him to Jesus. They went so far as to cut through the roof of the house where Jesus was based at the time in order to get through the crowds.

Jesus saw their faith and the faith of the man they brought before Him and his response to that faith was unexpected. He forgave the man's sins publicly.

Son, your sins are forgiven.

The response of the religious leaders was quite curious. They accused him of blasphemy "in their hearts". They didn't do this to His face because they didn't want to cause a scene. Jesus wasn't fooled, though. He knew exactly what they were thinking and called them out.

Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'?

He then went on to prove his authority by healing the man miraculously. Jesus saved this man's eternal soul by forgiving him. He then redeemed the man's reputation in society by removing his illness. Jesus rescued him from a life under the stigma of his illness and redeemed his soul at the same time.

A Man called Legion

Mark recounts another story about a man afflicted with demons.² In the story Jesus travels to Gerasenes. Gerasenes is not a Jewish city. They know nothing of God there and nothing of a promised Messiah. When they land the boat a man possessed by demons meets him. The man was known to be wild and impossible to chain or capture. He was a danger to himself and others. The demons knew who Jesus was though and immediately hailed him as the Son of God and begged for mercy. Jesus asked what the man's name was, and he replied.

My name is Legion, for we are many.

Jesus sent the demons into a nearby herd of pigs. After that, the man was entirely sane. The people of the city were bewildered by the sight of the man sitting, entirely sane and no longer tormented, at the feet of Jesus. They were so afraid of Jesus's power that they begged Him to leave their region. As Jesus was leaving, he did something very different from His usual practice. He did not permit the man to come with Him, instead telling him to tell all of his friends what had happened to him.

¹Mark 2 The Paralytic Man

²Mark 5 Jesus heals a man with a Demon

Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.

Usually Jesus told people to keep quiet about who He was. But in this case He sent the man to proclaim the Good News. Not only did Jesus rescue this man from a life tormented by demons, but He also sent the man to rescue an entire culture opposed to His own.
