

## Rescue Me

Last week, in the message entitled, “Blessed Are”, we explored the type of blessings that are bestowed upon the poor in spirit, those who hunger for righteousness, those who weep, and those who are persecuted for Jesus’ sake. We looked at what is meant by each of these conditions.

This week’s message is about how God rescues us and provides for us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We will use the stories of the Israelites 40 years in the wilderness and the temptations of Jesus as examples.

Our physical needs include food, water, warmth, rest, safety, security, clothes, and shelter. The Israelites suffered physical persecution in Egypt- hard labor, lack of rest, they did not own possessions. Yet, God rescued them in a physical way by providing items that they could take- quail and manna for food, water, tents, and other physical items that sustained them for 40 years in the wilderness. God had given them freedom, leading them to a land filled with milk and honey. They left their past for an unknown future, but they knew that God had a better future in store for them.

When Jesus was asked to turn stone into bread, He took the opportunity to remind us that “man shall not live on bread alone, but every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

God is always faithful in providing for us. When we trust in God and his promises, he will always provide for our physical needs, no matter how impossible the situation may seem, no matter how high the snow banks may pile up.

God provides for our emotional needs. Examples are relationships, belonging, love, connection, acceptance. For the Israelites journeying in the wilderness, God provided guidance through the leadership of Moses. They became God’s light to the nation.

They regained their chosenness. True fulfillment and belonging can only be found in Him. We experience purpose and power through relationships with God.

Jesus provided authority regarding worship. He was offered power if he worshiped Satan, but it stated, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve." True identity and authority come from Him.

We are faced with following the world to try to satisfy our need for acceptance and belonging; this often means just blending in. Instead, be renewed by the transformation of your mind through the Word of God. He loves and accepts you as you are. You find your true identity and belonging in Him. Only a relationship with Him truly satisfies.

Our spiritual needs include purpose, achieving potential, inner peace, meaning, love, belonging. The Israelites became used to the Egyptian gods. As they encountered different cultures and gods, they were tempted to stray from their own faith. An example from the Bible is their worship of the golden calf. But God was present with them continuously, a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. They were saved from their enemies and God showed them power through miracles. God kept in communication with them and loved them even when they strayed.

Jesus was tempted to test God and affirm His spiritual identity as God's son, validation of His identity. His response was, "Thou shall not test the Lord your God." We can have complete trust in God's provision and protection. We are already affirmed by God at our baptism and He asks us to maintain steadfast faith throughout our lives.

Our temptations to worship gods are in forms like relying on money, finding fulfillment elsewhere apart from God- achievement, work, drugs, alcohol. God continues to pursue us, sometimes by putting people in our life path. He gives us purpose and meaning through relationships.

God rescues us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The stories of the Israelites' travels through the wilderness and Jesus' temptations during his time in the wilderness show God's unfailing love and provision. He guides us through the challenges we face.

What if the church community were to show God's love through acts of feeding physical needs, meeting emotional needs for belonging, and guiding people spiritually in their walk with Jesus?