

Victory of the Lamb- Good Friday 2020
John 19:16-30 – Rescued – Pastor Bill Limmer

True story: It was a Sunday evening in July just over a decade ago when Angela lost control of her SUV and hit a tree. The SUV flipped on its side and burst into flames. Neighbors rushed to the stunning scene.

In the car with Angela were her two-year-old daughter and four-year-old son. With the SUV on its side and the fire raging from the back of the car, people began to break the windshield out to try and rescue the family. The two-year-old was rescued relatively quickly.

Two off duty fire firefighters were called to the scene by their wives who were driving by and had stopped to help. When the firemen arrived, they immediately jumped into action and Angela, too, was able to make it through the windshield to safety.

But that left the four-year-old boy in the burning, now melting car, all alone. The firefighters tried to free him, but they could find the seat belt release as the boy was screaming and reaching out for help. The firefighters said when they saw the little boy, they couldn't help but think of their own children. They called for a knife and a water hose. People scattered looking for a home that would give them a knife or a water hose.

In the meantime, a police officer arrived on the scene and used his fire extinguisher to try and keep the fire off the trapped boy. A knife was found and the firefighters, who are getting burned as well, were able to cut the boy seat belt and take him from the SUV. As a neighbor doused him with water from the garden hose.

The trapped little boy was rescued by the self-sacrifice of others.

I know that most of you are in your living rooms or basements or bedrooms but is there anything that has you trapped? Do you need to be rescued? Maybe you want to share what you are trapped by in the chat room or with someone worshipping with you. Or maybe just with God.

For all of us there are things that trap us and enslave us. Here are a few things that trap us. There is addiction, anger, anxiety, debt, depression, impatience, lack identity, meaning, purpose, worth, some of us are thinking we are non-essential. Some are trapped by lust and pornography, materialism, money, racism, self-righteousness.

Or maybe you are trapped by busyness, confusion, habits can't you break, lies, loneliness, people pleasing, perfectionism, regret, or selfishness. Or maybe we are trapped by the chain of doubt, the chain of fear. The chain of hidden faults. The chain of regret, the chain of guilt, the chain of shame, the chain of skepticism, The chain of someone else's approval. The chain of stress. The of temptation. Chain of an unforgiving heart.

We are all trapped by sin and its consequences and we need to be rescued. Here is the good news.

A recurring theme in the Old and New Testaments is that God is our rescuer and that he would send a rescuer for you. In fact, in the Old Testament there are over 300 prophecies of the Messiah. Here is the first one: Genesis 3:15 **And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring**

and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." These prophecies not only told of things like where the Savior would be born and what he would do but that he would also die for us.

Jesus says in John 4:34, (I am . . .) **to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.** As we read in Isaiah, part of that work was the work of crucifixion. Historians say that three people were used to stretch Jesus out onto the cross while another picked up an iron spike. The nails were 5-7 inches long and about 3/8 of inch wide. The fourth soldier swings his mallet high and pounds through Jesus' flesh and deep into the wood. That was the right side. The same on the left. Then they lifted the cross beam on the standing pole and tied his arms and cross beam around the pole. They then crossed his feet and drove a single nail through them both. With every blow of the mallet, the judgment of the world fell on just one man. **"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written "cursed is everyone who is hung on a tress.** Galatians 3:13.

.And John 19:28-30 says, **Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."** ²⁹ **A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.** ³⁰ **When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished."** **With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**

It is finished was a common term at this time for an employee to employer, for a judge to say to the convicted, and for a bank to say to the one who had taken a loan out. After completing an assignment the employee would go back to the employer and say "It is finished." When the convicted had completed their time in prison, the judge would bang the gavel and say, your debt to society is paid in full – it is finished. When the last payment was to the lending agency, the bank would your account is "paid in full." It is finished.

When he said, "it is finished," the Roman guards thought the revolutionist is dead. The Roman government thought the enemy is dead. The church leaders of the day thought the competition is dead. The disciples hung their heads and went behind locked doors thinking their dream was dead. And Satan thought he had won.

But hanging between heaven and earth, Jesus became rescuer between God and all people who would ever live. With his own blood Jesus paid the penalty for our sins and brought us under his all covering grace. But what Jesus was really saying was, sin is dead, death is dead, Satan is dead. If you think your sin is no big deal, see Jesus on the cross. It's a big deal. If you think your sin is too big to be forgiven, then see Jesus on the cross. God paid your price in full. Romans 8:1 **Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,** If you think you don't matter, that you are non-essential to God, then look at Jesus on the cross and see his love for you. You are essential!

I love this story because it is my rescue story. And you know what? It is yours too. People love stories, that's why we watch movies and television shows and read books. We love stories. Who are you going to tell your rescue story too? A mother, father, son, daughter, a friend that stood up in your wedding, a neighbor.

I want you to know you will have to be humble when you tell your story because you are going to have to admit your sin. But it's okay. They will relate and they already know you are not perfect. You will have to be humble, but it's okay. Jesus will give you strength. Jesus understands, after all he was humble enough to die for you. God bless you and your rescue story. You are a dearly loved child of God.