

THE BIG IDEA: What marks those on the Way is a willingness to enter the fray.

The Take-Off

There's an interesting phenomenon called "The Bystander Effect"

It's real - Google it

What you'll find is that only 20% of people will help someone if there's a crowd around.

Why? Because they're sure someone else will help.

Why has the church failed at disciple making, at the ONE THING Jesus sent us to do?

Because we're all sure the other person will do it. The church is guilty of "The Bystander Effect."

A few weeks ago we started this series with a simple statement: it's easier to stand on the shore, but none of us were made for that. We were made to jump...into the water.

We talked about how God takes us deep so that we can go wide, and how following Jesus is a lot like being in a pool filled with different people and that it's God's grace that allows us to love one another and our job to make sure everyone can swim.

Today, I need you to understand that we don't always go into the water to play. Sometimes we go into the water because people are drowning.

When I spent some time lifeguarding at the Y, I learned that most of the time, lifeguards didn't like to get wet.

It messed up their "cool" look. They just enjoyed twirling whistle and getting a tan.

The last thing we need is another church doing the same thing. Saying all the right stuff about loving people where they are and making disciplers, but never actually getting into the water.

We aren't looking to be the cool church. We're just looking to be a faithful church.

To be faithful, we need to be prepared to go into the water to rescue the drowning.

The early church was marked by people who were willing to jump into the water to save the dying.

It was their care of the Gentiles whose families had abandoned them after the plague that opened the door for the gospel to spread.

Today, with more messiness in our culture than every before, we must be marked by that same daring to save.

Listen to the words of Jude 1:22-23. There is an urgency in those words. The people who lived those words were known as members of "The Way" because they were following Jesus - he is the way, the truth, the light.

What marked them then must mark us now. The Big Idea is this: **What marks those on the Way is a willingness to enter the fray.**

Let me give you 3 ideas about these verses in Jude, and some videos to help drive it home.

1. People need to be rescued

- a. [Man of Steel clip]
- b. All kinds of people need to be rescued, even the ones who don't think they need it
- c. The need isn't based on their perception, but on what God says about people needing to be rescued
- d. Here are 3 types from Scripture:
 - i. Sinners - Romans 7:24
 - ii. The poor and needy - Psalm 35:10
 - iii. Even the children of God - Psalm 43:1
- e. That last verse alone kills the idea that following Jesus makes everything butterflies and rainbows
- f. All of us - at one time or another - will need to be rescued
- g. Knowing that should change how we see the world, right?
- h. We should be asking questions like "How can I help?" a lot more often.

2. God is a rescuer

- a. How awesome is that? We need to be rescued, and God loves to rescue! It's a match made in heaven.
- b. Here are a number of verses that you can jot down proving our God is a rescuer:
 - i. Exodus 3:8 - he rescues us from something in order to bring us to something
 - ii. Psalm 17:13; 34:22; 91:14
 - iii. Colossians 1:13
 - iv. 2 Timothy 4:18
 - v. Lamentations 3:58
 - vi. 2 Peter 2:9 - God KNOWS HOW to rescue godly men
- c. When you and I cry out for help, we aren't asking God to do something he isn't good at!

3. **We are on God's rescue mission**

- a. If people need to be rescued, and God loves to rescue, then it's fair to ask why people don't always seem to get rescued?
- b. The answer is surprisingly - maybe painfully - simple, and it's found in Romans 10:13-15
- c. God is able to save all who call (we see that in verse 13), but not all know who to call unless WE ARE SENT TO THEM!
- d. Our verse in Jude says, "snatch others from the fire and save them"
- e. We must enter the fray, because we have been called to be a part of a rescue mission
- f. [Ironman clip]
- g. Ironman needed help - he had a limitation
- h. God doesn't have those limitations, but has chosen to use us in the process of rescuing others
- i. Jeremiah 22:3 is clear: WE are called to rescue the oppressed
- j. Proverbs 24:11-12 in The Message puts it in black and white: "Rescue the perishing; don't hesitate to step in and help. If you say, "Hey, that's none of my business," will that get you off the hook? Someone is watching you closely, you know—Someone not impressed with weak excuses."

The Landing

As we land the message, let me try to answer the question you're all thinking: "How far do we go?"

Paul would say, as far as it takes to save them. (1 Corinthians 9:22)

- why would we swim near them, but not to them?
- go into the water, and go all the way

Far enough that we risk the thanks of the ones we're rescuing

- everyone wants to be the hero, but there's only one hero - Jesus - and they killed him
- stop letting the opinions of some keep you from giving your all
- Jude says to hate even the clothing - more than just hating the sin, we aren't worried about preserving appearances in the middle of the rescue

Farther than we think we can, but never too far for God's protection (1 Samuel 17:37)

As far as God's mercy went for us

- be merciful to those who doubt
- there is a compassion we have with those who are perishing

Our role is to come alongside the hurting and treat them the way this medical personnel treats the rescued captain in the movie "Captain Phillips"

[Captain Phillips clip]

Be merciful to those who doubt: snatch others from the fire and save them.

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