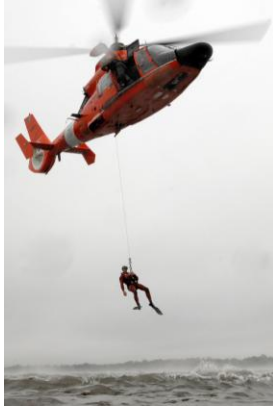


E-Series

The Rescuer



Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” –Philippians 2:5-11

This past Sunday, I mentioned *Gilligan's Island*. It was one of my favorite shows as a child. I'm sure you remember the story-line. Gilligan and the crew are shipwrecked, stranded on this deserted island somewhere off the coast of Hawaii. Their ship is completely demolished. No hope of repair. So they spend the next fifteen years trying to come up with a way off the island. While one person they have working on a solution is poor, klutzy, dopey Gilligan, they *also* have the incredibly smart Professor. This guy is brilliant. He can make a radio out of a coconut. But he can't figure out how to get them off the island.

And it's certainly not for lack of trying. Three seasons. 101 episodes. At *least* that many plans to try and get off the island, and still they're stuck. They strain and try. The Professor hatches many a plan, but they are utterly helpless to get themselves off the island. They are stuck and there's not a single thing they can do about it.

The way they were finally rescued was by someone from the outside. Nobody on the island with them could do it. The way they were rescued, finally, was that Gilligan accidentally set a fire that was seen by a naval helicopter, and the navy helicopter came to them, where they were, just as they were. That was the *only* way they could be rescued.

The same is true for us. We're stranded. We are surrounded by darkness, depression, despair, death. We are powerless to do anything about our sin, helpless to effect change in our own destructive nature. We hurt others. We hurt ourselves. We are stuck.

Depressed yet? Don't be. That's the good news of Christmas. Yes, we are stuck. But, that's not the end of the story. Our God would not leave us abandoned. Jesus, God the Son, refused to watch us drown in the darkness. Jesus would not remain aloof, somewhere out there, sovereign but unwilling to enter the fray. It's a good thing, because any god would not roll up his sleeves and dive head-first into the messiness and darkness of our lives won't do us much good.

Christmas is God's high dive. Christmas is when Jesus plunges deep into the mire and mess we've made of the world. Christmas is when Jesus empties himself, comes down to our level, becomes one of us, Emmanuel...God *with* us.

It's December 17th. Do you hear what I hear? It sounds like the whirring of helicopter blades in the distance. Our Rescuer is on the way!

Waiting for the Rescuer,
Pastor Michael