**RESCUE THE PERISHING**

Sunday School Lesson 5

*Lessons from the Hymnbook*

2 Peter 3:9

11/6/2022

**Introduction:** Last week, we studied the Biblical teachings found in the hymn “Jesus Paid It All.” During the course of that study, we observed that Jesus’ payment is necessary because we are weak in the flesh. Jesus’ payment provides us with the only way to have real change. Jesus’ payment is necessary because we have nothing good to offer. Jesus’ payment provides us with the opportunity to praise Him forever. Jesus’ payment is sufficient to cover all of our sins. Thus far, each of the hymns that we have studied have focused on a quality or action of the Lord. These are all hymns that we can call declarative in nature. They declare praiseworthy qualities of the Lord. We have seen His grace, His faithfulness , His steadiness as our solid Rock, and His payment for our sins. This week, we are going to turn our attention to a hymn that is more directive than declarative. This means that the song is meant to direct us as the singers to some set action that the Lord would have us to take. In the hymn “Rescue the Perishing,” we have a very clear mission that we are called to carry out. This hymn was written by one of the most famous hymn writers of all time – Fanny Crosby. She wrote this hymn in 1869. The lyrics came to her heart and mind after she had finished working at a rescue mission in New York City. As we sing and study this hymn this morning, may we have the same heart for rescuing the countless number of souls who are perishing in this world.

1. **WHEN WE RESCUE THE PERISHING, WE SHOW OUR COMPASSION ON THE DYING.**
2. **We ought to have care and pity for the perishing, which will then cause us to snatch them from sin and the grave (Luke 10:30-35; Jude 22-23; John 10:13; Mark 4:38).** It should be easy to have care and pity for those who are dying. This is what the Lord communicates to us through the parable of the good Samaritan. The man who had been robbed and beaten was left for dead. All those who passed by there and saw his condition should have been prompted to help him. Sadly, it was only the Samaritan who stopped and showed pity and compassion. The others were either too busy or too important to have compassion for this fallen man. If we would open our eyes and begin to see the lost as being in the same condition as this perishing man, then it ought to cause us to take action to try to snatch them from sin and the grave. If we believe that our eyes are already open to the condition of the lost, then it should cause us to consider why we are not doing more. Are we as willfully uncaring as those others who passed by the fallen man without any regard for his wellbeing? The use of the word *snatch* in the song is fitting for how we are to go about our witnessing. We are seeking to grab ahold of the lost and pull them out of the fire. If a child were standing in the road, would you not snatch them away and place them in a safer spot?
3. **We ought to weep over fallen mankind and point them to the One who can pick them up and restore them back to Him (Philippians 3:18; John 11:33; Acts 9:39; Romans 12:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13).** The primary source of mourning and sorrow throughout the Bible is for those who are either dying or dead. It is a normal response to grieve and cry for the dying. When is the last time that you have shed a tear for the lost? Weeping speaks to heart-felt, emotional pain. Let me remind you that Jesus wept. The God of Heaven was so moved by the suffering of mankind that He literally wept. What is it that brings us to tears? Is it only our own suffering or misfortune that causes us to weep? If so, that reveals to us who we truly care the most about. We ought to look at the suffering of others and weep for them. We rejoice with those who rejoice, and we weep with those who weep. Sadly, many of the lost in this world do not even know that they are dying. Can you imagine knowing that someone else is dying, and they don’t even know it for themselves?
4. **WHEN WE RESCUE THE PERISHING, WE KEEP FORGIVENESS IN THE HANDS OF GOD.**
5. **We ought to remember that the Lord is both forgiving and longsuffering toward the lost (2 Peter 3:9-15; Romans 9:22; Numbers 14:18; Luke 15:11-32) .** We are reminded to in the second stanza of the song that we are to leave forgiveness in the hands of God. Though they are slighting Him, still He is waiting. If this were not true, then the Lord would have already returned and claimed His own. He is waiting the penitent child to receive. We ought not to stand in the place of judgment. Too often, Christians decide for themselves how much forgiveness God is willing to give someone else. They limit the longsuffering nature of the Lord, and they cease from seeking to rescue the perishing in this world. We need to remember that the Lord is forgiving. All of us have wronged the Lord. All of us have slighted Him. All of us are responsible for the Lord needing to go to the cross of Calvary. As given in the example of the prodigal son, the Lord is ready and waiting to receive that penitent child back. He is actively looking for those roaming sheep.
6. **We ought to plead for the lost to go to the Lord and discover His saving forgiveness (2 Corinthians 5:11; Jeremiah 2:9; 50:34; Proverbs 23:11; Acts 26:28).** Knowing the forgiveness of the Lord, we ought to plead with the lost both earnestly and gently. Let them know that God is willing to forgive. Help them to see just how much God loves them and desires for them to be saved. The Bible tells us that our Redeemer pleads for us. If Christ will plead the Father on our behalf, we should be willing to plead with others to go to Christ and find that same mediation and salvation for themselves. The Bible calls us to persuade the lost. We need to help them see that God’s judgment is real, but also that He does not desire to execute that judgment on them. His wrath and judgment are reserved for the Devil and his fallen angels. Unfortunately, mankind has positioned himself to be the recipient of God’s wrath and punishment as well. Let’s go and rescue as many as we can before they are faced with that terrible fate.
7. **WHEN WE RESCUE THE PERISHING, WE HELP TO RESTORE GOD’S CREATION.**
8. **We ought to realize that fallen man has the knowledge of God within their framework (Romans 1:18-20; 2:14-15; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 15:44-46; Jude 10; Matthew 4:3) .** We just looked at the topic of the natural man on Sunday evening. While we know that the natural man has not received the things of the Spirit of God, the book of Romans shows us that the natural man does have a revealed knowledge of God. The creation was born was a knowledge of its Creator. Unfortunately, mankind was blinded in its knowledge of God by the tempter. As we consider our call to rescue the perishing, let’s remember that God created man to fellowship with Him. This is why God came down in the Garden to visit with Adam and Eve. We are seeking to bring about that restoration with man and God. Open the eyes of the creation again to the Creator.
9. **We ought to recognize that sharing the Gospel reminds the creature of the Creator’s love for them (John 3:16; 15:13; Romans 5:8; 8:39; Ephesians 3:19; 1 John 3).** What was the temptation that the Devil used in the Garden of Eden? He, of course, appealed to pride and the ability to know what God know. He also tempted Eve by downplaying the love that God has for mankind. He challenged whether God was intentionally holding back something good from mankind. I believe that the Bible shows us that the Devil frequently tries to undermine God’s love. There are so many lost people in the world today that think that God does not love or care about them. They have been convinced of it through Satanic deceit. The Potter loves the clay. He loves His creation. He wants to redeem us. The message of the Gospel helps to remind mankind of how much God loves us. When we witness to others, we are showing them love and kindness.
10. **WHEN WE RESCUE THE PERISHING, WE FULFILL OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS BELIEVERS.**
11. **We ought to rescue the perishing because it is the duty that the Lord has given to us (Matthew 10:32; 28:19; John 15:16; Luke 14:23; 1 Corinthians 9:16).** As we sing this song and consider the call to rescue the perishing, let us not forget the simple fact that it is our responsibility to share the Gospel. The Lord Jesus Christ chose to use the foolishness of preaching to win the lost. Thus, even if we do not “feel” the compassion or love that we ought to for others, we ought to do it because we have been commanded to do it. The Lord could have chosen to say anything He desired before He ascended up to Heaven, but He chose to specifically call us to take the Gospel to the lost world. This is not just the job of a preacher. This is a job for every disciple of Jesus Christ. Let’s take our responsibility seriously. The Lord will give us strength to do the work. He tells us (all those who labor and are heavy laden) to come unto Him.
12. **We ought to do our job to rescue the perishing, even if most do not want to be rescued (Matthew 7:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:8; Romans 11:28).** Probably the most difficult aspect of rescuing the perishing is that most of them do not want to be rescued. Even worse, many will be defiant and resistant to the Gospel. Can you imagine somebody fighting against you while you are trying to save his life? That’s the equivalent of what happens every time we are faced with an enemy of the Gospel. They are condemning their own souls. They are willingly choosing the path of death and destruction. This is heartbreaking and very frustrating. Many times, it makes us want to quit our work of rescue. We have to be willing to patiently win them. We must stay focused on our message of Christ’s love and sacrifice. Some will choose to take the narrow way.