

Jesus For Me

Introduction:

1. Aron Ralston was an avid mountain climber. He determined to climb all of Colorado's peaks over 14,000 feet. There are 59 of them. He would do it by himself and during the winter.
2. On April 26, 2003 he was canyoneering alone through Bluejohn Canyon in Utah, south of the Horseshoe Canyon unit of Canyonlands National Park. While descending through a slot canyon an 800 pound boulder dislodged smashed his left hand and crushed his right hand against the canyon wall. He was trapped.
3. After 5 days he amputated his arm using a multi-tool. You can read about his experience in his book Between a Rock and a Hard Place.
4. Have you ever felt trapped? When I was a teenager I used steel traps to catch raccoons and ground hogs. They would sometimes bite off a limb in order to free themselves from a trap.
5. When we find ourselves in a desperate situation we will do desperate things to survive.
6. I want to talk with you about a desperate situation that you are in and the desperate thing done in order to give you life.

Discussion:

- I. Our being trapped is described in various ways in Scripture.
 - A. It is described as being in bondage (Gal. 3:13) or enslaved to sin and death (Rom. 6:16).
 - B. As being under a curse (Gal. 3:10ff).
 - C. And as being helpless (Rom. 5:6).
 - D. Paul describes the condition of the Gentiles in Eph. 2:12 as "excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."
 - E. He sees the Jews as "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).
 - F. He sees himself as "sold into bondage to sin." Read his description of his circumstances in Rom. 7:14-24.
 - G. The trouble is most do not recognize that they are trapped. They have never known anything but captivity.
 1. There is some level of contentment that comes with captivity.
 2. Israel had been free from Egypt two months when they grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness saying, "Would that we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Ex. 16:3).
 3. Yes, there were some positive things about their captivity. And there are some positive things about captivity in sin.

- a. Eve observed the tree was “good for food, a delight to the eyes and desirable to make one wise” (Gen. 3:6).
 - b. Heb. 11:25 speaks of the “pleasures of sin.”
 - c. Sin has its advantages. The rich man of Lk. 16 knew this. “He habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day” (v. 19).
 - d. It is foolish to think that sin is all negative. It is a delight. It is desirable. It is pleasurable. It is joyous. That’s why you do it! I often hear people say about another sin, “They know better than that!” Yes that’s right, but it’s not just about knowing what is right and what is wrong. Sin is attractive and it is desirable!
 - e. Any trapper knows you do not set traps with undesirable bait. Fish are not caught with undesirable lures.
4. Sin is both desirable and undesirable. That’s the nature of traps. If we look at the desirable things about sin and ignore the undesirable we will be trapped.
- a. Israel looking at the desirable things of Egypt wanted to go back. Had they forgotten their oppression? Had they forgotten being controlled? Had they forgotten the beatings?
 - b. Aron Ralston found canyoneering by himself thrilling, but he did not find being trapped pleasurable at all. That’s why he cut off his arm to escape.
 - c. Jesus uses the same imagery. “If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell” (Matt. 5:30).

II. The Lord has responded to deliver us from the trap of death (Heb. 2:14-17). Many years ago I set a steel trap in a groundhog hole intending to trap a groundhog. Instead I trapped a skunk. Ironically, I found myself trapped in a situation. If I approached the skunk he would defend himself with that magical spray of his, and so I waited. I determined that I was not going to get sprayed if that skunk died of starvation. But my dad rescued me and the skunk. As the skunk became weaker my dad took his own life in his hands and somehow was able to release the skunk without getting sprayed.

- A. “While we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6). “Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).
- B. God condemned sin in the flesh, sending His own Son (Rom. 8:3-4).
- C. Those crucified with Christ in baptism are no longer slaves to sin (Rom. 6:6).
- D. He Himself bore the sin of many (Isa. 53:12).
- E. “He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due” (Isa. 53:8).
- F. “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf” (2 Cor. 5:21).
- G. One died for all (2 Cor. 5:14).
- H. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (Gal. 3:13).
- I. He gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us (Gal. 1:4).

- J. God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us (1 Thess. 5:9-10).
- K. He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross. For by His wounds you were healed (1 Pet. 2:24; cf. Isa. 53:5).
- L. Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God (1 Pet. 3:18).
- M. He loves us and released us from our sins by His blood (Rev. 1:5).

III. The result of what He has done is we are released (Rev. 1:5), redeemed (Gal. 3:13), and freed from our bondage to sin and death (Heb. 2:15; Rom. 6:3, 6).

- A. “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! . . . There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.”
- B. Therefore we should live (Rom. 8:12ff).

Conclusion:

1. We are trapped by sin and death, but released by the giving of the life of Jesus.
2. A grandfather was reading Bible stories each night to his two-year-old granddaughter. She was just beginning to put together words to make sentences.
3. They had been reading O.T. stories from a multi-volume set of books. But granddad jumped ahead to read a story about Jesus from the N.T. He did not know if she would understand about the story of Jesus. The next night he reached for the O.T. volume where they had left off before.
4. His granddaughter stopped him and selected the N.T. volume that they had read from the night before. She opened the book to the page depicting Jesus on the cross and said, “Jesus for me.”
5. That about summarizes it doesn’t it? Enslaved. Trapped. Helpless. Desperate. And Jesus dies to set us free.