

The Rescue Operation

WEEK THREE LEADER'S GUIDE

Big Idea

God decided to rescue us through the person and work of Jesus.

Format Overview (1 hour)

- I. **INTRO** // Provide some direction
- II. **ARTICLE** // Read Greek Things
- III. **DIALOGUE** // Discuss concepts together
- IV. **WRAP-UP** // Transition to next week

INTRO: *Currently, we are going through a four-week series talking about the similarities between God's story and the Greek story. Last week, we learned that God chose the Israelites to be his bride so that they could radiate his image to the rest of the world. But, they kept messing things up. Still, God remained faithful to them even though they weren't faithful to him – which is exactly the state that we find ourselves in today. Right now, we are going to explore how God decided to rescue his image and rescue us in the process.*

ARTICLE (10 minutes)

Read the article together: Hand out copies to everyone and read it out loud together (taking turns at paragraph breaks). Tell your group to make notes or underline certain sentences that stick out to them that can be brought up during the discussion.

DIALOGUE (45 minutes)

Pursued from Heaven

1. What kinds of feelings or emotions do you experience when a guy or girl pursues you or takes interest in you? What is your favorite "pursuit" story in a movie? How do these answers help us to understand God's pursuit of us?
2. The article says, "Religion is like a pyramid and God is at the top - so everyone is climbing over each other to get there." In what ways do you see this statement being played out in different religious traditions today?

Pretending and Accepting

3. How do you pretend that you are a better fraternity or sorority member than you actually are? How do you pretend that you love God more than you actually do?

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 3

4. Mark Driscoll says, "[Jesus] died the death we should have died and lived the life we should have lived." How does this quote help us to understand why Jesus had to come to earth? (Hint: Look at the next few lines in the article)
5. Pledge-model Christianity is a religion that wants you to do the right things at the right time for the right people. The alternative is... to stop going through the religious motions, to realize that you need rescued, and to accept Jesus' offer of full-acceptance right here right now. Does your heart desire that?

Follow-up question: If you have walked away from a life of trying to rescue yourself daily by doing all the right things, and you have embraced Jesus' rescue of you instead, tell the group how and when that came about in your life.

WRAP-UP: *Well, for the sake of time we are going to wrap things up. The conversation went really well today. Thank you for sharing. To wrap things up, we've learned that God decided to rescue his image and rescue us in the process through the person and work of Jesus.*

Since we talked about the rescue operation this week, next week we will talk about how God plans to restore his image through those who have been rescued.

Greek Things

PART 6 OF 10 PURSUED FROM HEAVEN

Instead of pouting.

Instead of waiting for the Israelites to come back.

Instead of waiting for them to get their act together.

God pursues his bride from heaven.

He comes down from the highest of heaven to the lowest of earth in the form of man. This man was Jesus - a divine person wrapped in flesh.

This may seem like crazy talk, but its true. This distinguishes Christianity from every other world religion. Every other religion is about us trying to get to God. It is about us trying to be good enough for God. Religion is like a pyramid and God is at the top - so everyone is climbing over each other to get there.

Christianity is the opposite.

It is about God coming down the ladder and pursuing us.

It's like Hosea being told to pursue his unfaithful wife even though she didn't deserve it.

Not only does Jesus pursue us, but he publicly shows his love everywhere he goes. He heals us. He teaches us. He eats with us. He serves us. He goes through the same things we do - temptation, suffering, joy, etc. This is because he laid aside some of his divine privileges to experience life the way we experience life. Now, when we pray, we can be sure that he understands every ounce of joy and pain we experience, because he too has gone through it.

He is infinitely greater than us in a divine sense, but infinitely close to us in a human sense.

Jesus pursued the Israelites, his bride, to be with them in the flesh.

But Jesus also came for another reason. And this reason leads us to the climax of the story.

PART 7 OF 10 PRETENDING AND ACCEPTING

The definition of brotherhood in my fraternity was: "I'd get in a fight for you."

Sure, brotherhood, meant a lot more than that, but it is really hard for fraternity men to put these kinds of feelings into words. As shallow as this definition might sound, it is also profoundly deep.

I'd get in a fight for you, at the heart of it, is one guy telling another guy that he'd be willing to lay down his life for the other. It means that the one brother would be willing to leave his comfort zone, put his security at risk, and publicly affirm his commitment to the other brother.

Jesus not only tells his bride "I'd get in fight for you" but he also says "I'm willing to lay down my life for you". This is the highest sacrifice a person can actually make. It is brotherhood and sisterhood at its peak.

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 3

Most people don't understand why Jesus had to come and die for his bride.

Let me use an analogy that might make more sense to the girls than the fellows.

A wedding dress is a beautiful thing to a girl. When walking past a bridal store, what girl doesn't imagine herself in that perfect dress? What girl hasn't already dreamed about every little detail of her wedding day? I know these kinds of things because I have a beautiful bride, Lindsey, who thought about such things during our engagement.

Ever wonder why girls don't dream about wearing a long beautiful black dress for their wedding? I'm sure you don't ponder this often. It's pretty easy to understand that girls want to wear white because it represents purity. They want to be glowing on their wedding day.

Tragically, most girls who get married in white dresses don't deserve to be wearing white.

Most of us stood imperfect on our wedding day and deserved to wear black. But, the white dress got put on and we, the couple, pretended. We pretended that we had not revealed ourselves to any other person before. We pretended that the wedding night was going to be the big night, when in reality, it was just another night.

There is a whole lot of pretending. And this is not how things are supposed to be.

The bible says that when Jesus comes back and we, his bride, are united with him (a.k.a the wedding day) we will be wearing white. But, because he is holy and just, no pretending will be allowed. Only those who are wearing pure white will be allowed to walk up the aisle.

So, what do we do? Well, our default is to try to become perfect. We do everything we can to clean our tarnished white clothes, hoping that we can clean up our image.

But, the only clothes that will be white enough for the wedding day are the clothes that Jesus gives us.

"I will rejoice greatly in the Lord... for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness ..." (Isaiah 61:10)

That is why Jesus laying down his life for us makes sense.

Mark Driscoll reminds us, "He died the death we should have died and lived the life we should have lived."

Jesus, the perfect image of God, died for us, the imperfect image of God.

The bible says that though the tarnished image of God came through one man, Adam, the image was later perfected and restored by one man, Jesus.

The climax of the story is about a husband pursuing his unfaithful bride and laying down his life for her so that she can be united with him for all of eternity.

As the resolution part of the story comes in to the picture, the main character becomes a guy named Paul. He goes around telling everyone to take off their tarnished clothes and to put on the robe of righteousness that Jesus provides for his bride.

But first, if Jesus' rescue of us still doesn't make total sense to you, allow me to Greek up the analogy a little bit.

You could say that Jesus came to rescue us from a pledge-model type of Christianity.

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 3

Across the board, you'll see many chapters eliminating the pledge period, or at least attempting to - so that a student actually becomes a member with full benefits on the first day of committing. Some chapters who still use a pledge period do so without any problems, but there are a few who have found themselves in a dangerous position.

Here's why.

Pledging, in some fraternities and sororities, can turn into the process of inviting someone into a Greek House based on what they do, not because of who they are. Therefore, all of the good things that a pledge may do - clean the house, throw big parties, run errands, raise money, and so on - are only done to ensure that they make it in. There may be some good intentions in the mix, but the main reason for these good works is to be an insider.

The pledging process could possibly turn into a pretending process. Let's pretend that we care about the ideals of the chapter until we secure a position on the inside. Then we can get to the real reason we are here - making more friends, partying it up, shacking up, padding the resume, and so on.

Jesus came to rescue us from pretending. On the day that we commit ourselves to him, we are given full membership status. We don't have to prove ourselves in any type of pledging process because we are fully accepted by him on day one.

He accepts us if we accept what he has done for us.

My bride, Lindsey, didn't have to work to pay off her engagement ring. It was given to her as a free gift. I love her for who she is, not what she has done. A fraternity guy or sorority girl who is accepted on the first day is free to do good things for the chapter out of love for the remaining time in the House. However, if they are accepted conditionally only after a certain period of time, then there will always be the temptation to pretend and do good things for the wrong reason.

So, let's stop pretending and start accepting what Jesus is offering us.

DIALOGUE

What kinds of feelings or emotions do you experience when a guy or girl pursues you or takes interest in you? What is your favorite "pursuit" story in a movie? How do these answers help us to understand God's pursuit of us?

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How do you pretend that you are a better fraternity or sorority member than you actually are? How do you pretend that you love God more than you actually do?

Mark Driscoll says, "[Jesus] died the death we should have died and lived the life we should have lived." How does this quote help us to understand why Jesus had to come to the earth? (Hint: Look at the next few lines in the article)

Pledge-model Christianity is a religion that wants you to do the right things at the right time for the right people. The alternative is... to stop going through the religious motions, to realize that you need rescued, and to accept Jesus' offer of full-acceptance right here right now. Does your heart desire that?

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