



Larry R Evans, DMin
Assistant to the President
General Conference of SDA
PossibilityMinistries@gc.adventist.org

Scripture Reading, Micah 6:8

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.”

“Rescued!”

Our local news may not have carried the story, but we need to know about it. What happened is symbolic of what is happening to many children. As the war was coming to an end in Afghanistan, frantic efforts were being made to rescue orphan children. For them to remain would mean certain abuse or death.

Ms Rawi, the leader of orphan rescue effort said "Everybody is scared and when you're an orphan, you're scared more than anybody else. You don't have no mother or father to hold your hand and take you to the airport," she said.

When two attempts to rescue the orphans failed, Ms Rawi explained that the only way out was by planning a secret rescue mission. This they did.

The group of 17, comprising 10 orphans, two staff members and their families, made their way across the mountainous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The children, aged between four and 20 years old, were covered up, bundled into a van, and driven across the border unaware of the life-changing journey they were on. They arrived in Australia where they hoped to find families who would be willing to take them in and care for them. While the children are happy for themselves, they feel sad and disappointed about their friends, their orphan brothers, and sisters who were left behind still trying to flee.

Stories like this remind us of a predominant theme in the Bible of God rescuing His people. We find the Apostle Paul speaking of this in Colossians 1:13,14

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13,14, NIV)

The *Message* paraphrase words the passage like this,

“God rescued us from dead-end alleys and dark dungeons. He's set us up in the kingdom of the Son he loves so much, the Son who got us out of the pit we were in, got rid of the sins we were doomed to keep repeating.” (Message, Colossians 1:13,14)

God's love for us is amazing. Our redemption is life-transforming. While the text speaks primarily of our need for forgiveness and transformation through a right relationship with God, it has the potential of changing everything about us. We see our purpose, our meaning, our future, our families, and our community's change. We see the world around us differently. We see all of this differently because of our own rescue. We must always keep in mind, what God has done for us He is anxious to do for others. There are at least three important points found in this passage.

1. We are rescued **from** the dominion of darkness.
2. We are rescued **from** our past.
3. We are rescued **for** the kingdom of Jesus.

Rescued from the Dominion of Darkness

In Colossians Paul reminds us, *“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness” (Col.1:3).*

Once sin entered this world, Satan claimed to be its ruler. According to Isaiah 14, Satan sought to raise his “throne above the stars of God” (v.13) and John reminds us that the world may be under the control of the evil one, we are free because “we are children of God” (1 John 3:1). We need not live under the bondage of Satan! The Israelites had been living under the cruel Egyptian bondage but that all changed when God intervened. Miracle after miracle, some seen and some not seen, God led His people out of slavery. So, it is today. Those who come to Christ will be set free from the dominion of darkness found in our world!

Rescued from Our Past

Paul reminds us, *“we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:14).*

God's rescue plan recognizes that all have sinned (Romans 3:10), but it doesn't stop there! He offers to everyone a new beginning and that comes with a new kind of peace (Romans 5:1). In Christ, we are a new person, and our past is put behind us! (2 Corinthians 5:17). In fact, the Bible says our sins are buried in the deepest sea (Micah 7:19). God always has a future for those who leave Satan's hold (Jeremiah 29:11).

We Are Rescued for the Kingdom of Jesus

With enthusiasm I can hear Paul say, *“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.” (Col. 1:13)*

Paul reminds us that we are the “adopted” sons of God (Romans 9:4). No doubt he had in mind the words Moses spoke to Pharaoh, “Israel is my firstborn son, . . . let my son go” (Exodus

4:22,23). God was ready to take captive Israel as His children to the Promised Land! So it is today!

It is true that in Christ we have been rescued

1. **from** the dominion of darkness.
2. **from** our past.
3. **for** the kingdom of Jesus.

Because we have been adopted by God!

What a story! What a miracle! What a privilege! We were all **orphans**, but God changed that **by adoption**.

While this is good news for us, that hasn't been the experience of everyone. Consider the following,

It is estimated that today there are over 130 million children who have lost one or both parents, and every 18 seconds, another child in the world becomes an orphan. In America, 107,000 children are in the foster care system and are **waiting to be adopted**.

According to a 2007 report (by the Williams Institute UCLA School of Law and The Urban Institute of Washington D.C.), an estimated 65,500 **adopted children** are living with a gay or lesbian parent, and an estimated 14,000 **foster children** are living with gay or lesbian parents. **Christians must not ignore the opportunities available to help these children.**

The General Conference, through **Adventist Possibility Ministries**, is working to coordinate efforts of various Adventist organizations to bring hope and security to these desperate children around the world. Central to its ministry is the belief that every child is precious in God's sight, and none should be left behind.

Zechariah, a prophet of God, speaks to God's people—those who had already been rescued by His grace. Note what the Lord says, in Zechariah 7:9-10,

*This is what the LORD Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or **the fatherless**, the foreigner or the poor.'*

Our attention today, "World Orphans and Vulnerable Children Sabbath, is meant to call us to action in support of the "fatherless, the orphan, the vulnerable child."

Note this supportive statement by Ellen White,

*"I saw that it is in the providence of God that widows and **orphans**, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and persons afflicted in a variety of ways, have been placed in close Christian relationship to His church; it is to prove His people and develop their true character. **Angels of God are watching to see how we treat these persons who need our sympathy, love, and disinterested benevolence. This is God's test of our character.** Testimonies for the Church 3:511.*

A Hope, a Home, and a New Future

Timothy was a beggar boy on a railway station platform in India. On the best days, strangers took pity on Timothy and gave him morsels to eat. On the worst days, Timothy dug in the trash for food, or even ate nothing at all. He had little hope that life would ever change. Little did he know that God cared for him, and that He was preparing a new life for his future!

A kind pastor from Flaiz Adventist School stood on the platform where Timothy lived. As the pastor waited for the train, he glanced around the station. There, he noticed a heartbreaking sight. Timothy stood in tattered and dirty clothes, obviously hungry. Worst of all, the boy had a look of hopelessness in his eyes. The pastor's heart melted with compassion and so he approached.

"I know of a place where children get good food, clothes and a good education," the pastor said. "Children live with a mother and father who love them. It's called the ICC Sweet Home children's village. Would you like to live there?"

It sounded like a dream to Timothy. In fact, it sounded too good to be true. Although the stranger had a kind face, Timothy felt uncertain. He refused, and the pastor hesitantly walked away. Not knowing what else to do, the man said a silent prayer for the homeless child.

A moment later, the train approached. The pastor bent to pick up his briefcase, but it wasn't on the ground anymore. It was in the arms of Timothy. "Sir, that is our train," He said. "Let's go."

The next morning when Timothy arrived at the Sweet Home Children's Village, the staff welcomed him warmly. They quickly found out that he didn't know his last name, the names of his parents, or the name of the village where his parents lived. He could not remember anything about his family. He had lived on the platform of the railway station ever since the death of his parents.

Fortunately, thanks to generous gifts from the child sponsors, it is possible for the Sweet Home to be a safe haven for children like Timothy. They desperately need a home, a family and an opportunity to go to school.

Timothy grew up in Sweet Home Children's Village and attended elementary and high school at the Flaiz Adventist School. After his high school graduation, Timothy went to study Theology at Spicer Memorial College (now called Spicer Adventist University). He received a bachelor's degree in 2014 and successfully completed a master's degree in 2016.

After obtaining his master's degree, Timothy returned to his "home" and joined the Flaiz College as a teacher in the Department of Theology. Because of his own rescue, he is now He is now returning the favor by teaching at the same school where he was a student several years before. Timothy is recognized as being a good teacher and a talented preacher. He is so grateful to those who financially made it possible for him to be "rescued."

The transformation in Timothy was made possible by the support of donors. He is grateful for the prayers and financial support of his sponsors, as well as the love shown to him from that moment on the train station and onward. Timothy stands as an excellent example of how investment in the life of an orphan child pays forward. They in turn become a wonderful blessing as they give back with a life of service. *[This true story was shared by International Children's Care (ICC). It could be replicated by other Adventist organizations who are also working for orphans and vulnerable children.]*

Conclusion: We are the Hands and Feet of Jesus

Without Jesus, we all would be orphans exiled in a world dominated by Satan's darkness. Millions of children today have no hope, but that can change. They can be rescued! God can work through us to bring hope and a new life to these children.

We can do that by:

- Adopting a child.
- Becoming a foster care parent, or
- Financially sponsoring a child at an orphan ministry care center*, but all can
- Pray for the orphans and vulnerable children

We close with these words from Proverbs 31:8,9,

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
For the rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Prayer: Pray for the safety and security of orphans and vulnerable children and that the Holy Spirit will touch the hearts God's family as we search for homes for these children.

*Specific orphan care ministries can be found by going to:
<https://www.possibilityministries.org/orphans>

Additional Information for the speaker and others:

Actions You Can Take Now to Help Orphans and Vulnerable Children

1. **Pray for These Children.** Consider adopting or becoming a foster care parent but even if this is not possible, pray that these children will find a home or care center that loves them.
2. **Send a Special Gift.** Children need to know that they are special. A thoughtful gift means much. So many children struggle to have the bare necessities of life. A personal gift given personally can say much to bring encouragement.
3. **Take Time to Be with These Children and Listen to Their Stories.** Not all vulnerable children are orphans. It is important to be sensitive to the child's feelings and to be a caring "listening ear." Spending thoughtful and relaxed time with the child can make a difference.
4. **Participate in the Do Fast to Defend Orphans Program.** This program brings recognition to the hunger and social challenges faced by millions of children around the world. The North American Division has already begun this program and other divisions may do the same. Check with your division, union, or conference Adventist Possibility Ministries (APM) leader to see about starting the program where you are.
5. **Consider Adopting a Child.** Adopting a child is an important decision and one that can bring hope, stability, and a bright future for a child and your own house.
6. **Consider Foster Care.** There are situations where parents are found negligent in the care of their children. In some areas of the world, the local government will step in and temporarily remove the children from their custody with the hope that changes can be made. During this time the foster family is given legal guardianship over the day-to-day care of those children. This is a tremendous opportunity for foster parents to make a lasting difference in the child's life then and forever.
7. **Consider Saving a Family.** There are times when a crisis hits a family creating stress that is especially difficult for the children. Providing a temporary home away from home can help relieve the immediate stress of both the parents and the children.
8. **Give Your Financial Support.** The Church is blessed with many supportive organizations dedicated to providing an array of services for orphans and vulnerable children including child sponsorships. Some of these organizations are listed on our Adventist Possibility Ministries website, <https://www.possibilityministries.org/orphans>

Larry R Evans, DMin
Assistant to the President
Adventist Possibility Ministries
General Conference of SDA
Email: PossibilityMinistries@gc.adventist.org