



LifeSpot ... Stories of rescue

Complete release

About 250 years ago in France, a man named Jean Fabre was arrested for his faith. He was 78. He was condemned to be chained as a slave and to labour till he died. He had a son who was young and strong. The son went to the commander, and with tears in his eyes begged him to take him as a ransom for his father. After repeated requests, the commander agreed. For seven years the son served as a slave in place of his father, until public sympathy and outrage led to his release. If this story touches your heart, be touched even more by Christ, who emptied himself, and became a slave, and took your place, and labored to earn complete release for you (Philippians 2:5–8).

To Jesus alone

At his own prior request, John Berridge was buried in a corner of a graveyard that was reserved for people who died in dishonour. He wanted that corner to become consecrated. Look at what's on his gravestone: "I was born in sin, February 1716. Remained ignorant of my fallen state till 1730. Lived proudly on faith and works for salvation till 1755. Was admitted to Everton Vicarage, 1755. Fled to Jesus alone for refuge, 1756. Fell asleep in Christ, January 22, 1793." When all is done for you, what will be written? Will it be "lived proudly on faith and works"? Or the blessed affirmation, "Fled to Jesus alone for refuge"?

A blessed exchange

At Auschwitz in 1941, a prisoner was missing, presumed to have escaped. By rule, 10 other prisoners were lined up to die as punishment. As they were being ordered into the hunger bunker, one man cried out "Have mercy! I have a wife and children." Another prisoner, named Maximilian Kolbe, stepped forward and offered himself instead. Kolbe was a priest. The commandant accepted the exchange. Kolbe went into the cell of death and comforted the others by example and prayer, until his suffering was ended with a deadly injection. You and I are blessed with a High Priest who has taken our place. Let's live with thankfulness in that blessed exchange today.

Taken to shore

In July 1992 I was paddling a canoe in rough conditions on Yellowstone Lake. I thought I heard a cry, "Help!" I stopped, looked, prayed. Saw nothing. Continued. Suddenly it came again: "Help!" I paddled in that direction, and found a man in the frigid water, barely conscious. I got a line around him and towed him to shore—a strenuous task of 20 minutes or more. "I've lost my son," he said. "My son's dead." But his son wasn't dead. My paddling friends had found the younger man helpless on the beach, minutes from dying. These two men shouldn't have been alive, but they were. This is the story of our planet. We are lost in deep waters, but a Rescuer has heard our cry, and taken us to shore.