

Who, Me?

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[0 : 0 0] Who is worth, and this is a slightly trick question because you know I like putting in trick questions, who is worth or was considered worth in total \$900 billion?

Okay, we're going to watch three short videos to help us get the answer to that. So it's reckoned that if all those scenarios had been real, then the US government would have had to spend in total \$900 billion to rescue Matt Damon.

Three slightly different rescues though. And same with Private Ryan, he didn't know or expect that he was going to be rescued. And for those of you who know the film or don't know the film, it was because the rest of his family, all his brothers, had been killed in combat.

So the army was sent to rescue him and take him home to his family. He didn't know that he needed or was going to be rescued. And the second one, he knew he needed to be rescued.

He wanted to be rescued. But he knew the only hope of being rescued was if the people back on Earth could hear his cry for help.

[1 : 3 1] And the third one, he'd gone out exploring and he knew that if the planet had been empty and there was no worthwhile life or no possibility of growing life on the planet, that he was going to be abandoned and left to die.

So he sent a message saying, yes, there is life here, because he knew that was the only way he was going to be rescued. So three different, slightly different scenarios.

Can I have six volunteers, please? You don't have to do any acting, you just have to be able to sit on a chair and hold a piece of paper. Can everybody see all the names?

Yes. Okay, so for those of you a bit short-sighted or long-sighted and it's not far enough away, Isaiah, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Jacob, and Ananias.

So, can anybody have a guess, or maybe you know, what the connection is, what the common theme is with these six people?

[2 : 4 2] You stick your hand up so I know where the noise is coming from. Heard God speak to them, yes. Title of the service is Who Me? Okay, I need six more volunteers, please.

Can everybody see what those say? And again, for those with not such good eyesight, the font is a little bit smaller. Starting at this end. Whilst at home minding his own business, whilst getting on with life as a father, whilst travelling to visit his son, bit of a poetic license, this one, whilst asleep at boarding school, whilst busy working at the family business, and whilst at worship.

Now, those were randomly distributed, so some of them might be behind the right person already, but some of them may not. So, I'm going to work along the back. Who heard from God, do we think, whilst at home minding his own business?

Someone say it, yes. Ananias, yes, lovely. Ananias. Thank you. Okay, so Lynn.

Who was just heard from God whilst getting on with his life as a father? Not Moses. Abraham, yes.

- [4 : 09] So, you're going to stand behind Abraham. Abraham, lovely. Whilst travelling to visit his son. The odds of getting it wrong are decreasing.
- The odds of getting... Jacob, yes. They're going to stand behind Jacob. Okay. So, you need someone that's first... Whilst at worship. Whilst at church, if you like.
- Or probably the temple, actually. Okay. Sorry? Isaiah, yes, Isaiah. Right, in the right place.
- Whilst asleep at boarding school. Samuel, yes. Lovely. Okay. Whilst busy working at the family business.
- Well, you should know this because it's the last of the six. They must be standing in the right place. What was Moses doing when he heard from God? Being a shepherd for...
- [5 : 18] For his father-in-law. Lovely. Okay. I think you can all now go and sit down. Thank you very much. Yeah, that's fine.
- Just leave him there. Thank you. We'll leave the chairs there for now. James, could you come up and give our reading, please? Which is from 1 Samuel, chapter 3, verses 7 to 11.
- Now, Samuel did not yet know the Lord. The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.
- A third time, the Lord called Samuel. Called Samuel.
- And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, Here I am. You call me. Then Eli realized the Lord was calling the boy.
- [6 : 26] So Eli told Samuel, Go and lie down. And if he calls you, say, Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.
- So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord came and stood there, calling as at other times, Samuel, Samuel.
- Then Samuel said, Speak, for your servant is listening.
- And the Lord said to Samuel, See, I'm about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about to tingle.
- This is the word of the Lord. So we have six characters who heard God speaking to them. Six characters in six very different situations.
- [7 : 48] Some while at work. Some while at worship. Some while at home. Some while on a journey. And they all heard slightly different things.
- Some of them overlap and are similar, but some of them are quite different. Abraham was quite old. We know he was quite old because at this stage, Isaac was already more than just a young boy, probably heading towards teenage years.
- And we know that Abraham didn't have a child until he was very old. And God said to Abraham, Abraham. And Abraham said, Yes, Lord.
- And God said, Go and sacrifice your son. So Abraham set out to sacrifice his son. Jacob was also old.
- And he felt his time was coming to an end. And he was on a journey to Egypt. As we may remember the story, Joseph, his beloved son, had ended up in Egypt, risen to a high place in Egypt.
- [9 : 04] And there was a famine in the land of Cana where Jacob and the rest of the family were living. And in Egypt, because of Joseph's good management, they had abundance.
- And so the brothers went back from Egypt to get Jacob. And they were traveling to take him to Egypt where he would die. And God said to him, Jacob.

And Jacob said, Yes, Lord. And he said, Don't be afraid to settle and die in Egypt. Moses, out tending his father-in-law's sheep, he was given the task of changing jobs from being a sheep herder to being someone who would lead all the Israelites out of slavery and out of Egypt.

Samuel, a young boy, still at school, still learning. Still learning what it meant to be a person even, let alone what it meant to be someone who ministers to the Lord.

Samuel, yes, Lord. You will speak judgment on Eli, your teacher and mentor. And you will speak judgment on his family.

[10 : 31] Yes, Lord. I'll go and tell my teacher how wrong he's been. I'll go and tell my teacher what punishment you are going to put on him and his family.

Isaiah, worshipping in the temple. Who will go? Lord, send me. Right, go to the kingdoms of Judah and Israel and tell them of the judgment that is coming upon them because of their sins.

Another message that is not, yes, I've got to go and do this. Yes, Lord. But also with that, there is a message of hope.

And then finally, Ananias in the New Testament. A new Christian, a new convert. He had to be new because Christianity hadn't been going very long at that stage.

And God came to him. The Lord came to him and said, he said, yes, Lord. Ananias, go to Saul, your arch enemy, the one who's been coming to persecute you and your fellow Christians and has been putting people to death and locking them up.

[11 : 44] Go and lay your hands on him and heal him. Yes, Lord, if you say so.

Different people in different situations with different messages. Not expecting to hear from God, but God comes to them and they respond. They say yes.

Doesn't matter how young you are. Samuel, a young boy. Doesn't matter how old you are. Abraham, probably old enough to be a great-grandfather, let alone just a father. Some of them given relatively straightforward messages.

Yes, don't be afraid in the new country you're going to. Others given harder things to do. Go with these messages of damnation and hellfire, if you like.

Go to your enemy and bless him. Hard things to do. But they did them. They were obedient.

[12 : 56] And God blessed them because of it. Who, me? As we saw earlier. Who, me?

I can be rescued? Yes, you can. You may think you don't need to be rescued, but actually you do. You may know you need to be rescued, but doubt it can happen.

Yes, it can. Jesus' death and more importantly his resurrection proves that it can happen. Is God speaking to you?

But you're not clear if it's his voice or not. And you think it's something else. Like Samuel. But he went to his leader. He went to the spiritual authority in his life.

And Eli said, no, that is actually God speaking to you. What are you hearing from God? What is the challenge he is giving to you that you might be reluctant to do because it's giving bad news or because it's going to seek out someone that you're uncomfortable spending time with?

[14 : 11] I don't know which of those situations is true for you, if any of them. But I do know that God, through his Holy Spirit, will be with you. And as he promised the disciples, he will give you the words to speak when you stand before those he wants you to speak to.

Who, me? Maybe. Who, you? Yes. Just as likely. If not for some of you, more likely.

Jesus values you so much that he left all the glory of heaven, all the glory of heaven to live as a man on the earth born in a stable.

He values you so much that he went through death and separation from God, his Father, so that you might be joined into his family.

Let us value each other to the same degree. Let us value everyone we meet during the week to the same degree.

[15 : 37] and maybe through our actions we will have the opportunity through our words to share with them how valuable they are to God.

May you know his blessing and his moving in your life throughout this week. For his glory in Jesus' name. Amen.