

**The Original First Responder**

Text: **Psalm 91:15** "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him."

**Jeremiah 33:3** "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not."

Introduction: I want to welcome all of our police officers, fire fighters, and paramedics to our First Responders Day at Victory Church!  We’re so glad you are here.  We have set this day aside to honor all of you for simply being there everyday when this community needs you. God bless you for faithfully doing what all of you would probably just say was your job!  We appreciate it!  I would like for all of our police officers, firefighters, and paramedics to stand right now.

Appreciation Applause: To Honred Guests: Let's  give all of these men and women great applause for serving our community with outstanding honor and bravery!

This community really does need you.  We never know when we may need you, and any of us are likely to meet up with you somehow at any point in time, possibly in even unlikely ways…

**I. First responders can lead exciting, yet dangerous lives.**

* On any given day a first responder may be called upon to go down into a hole after a child who has fallen in and can’t get out.
* A first responder may have to brave a burning building to save the lives of any one inside.
* A first responder may face an armed intruder whose desperation may cause them to lash out in self preservation.
* A first responder may have to risk life and limb battling the wreckage of a burning vehicle to pull someone from harm’s way.
* The fact is that life is very uncertain, and as a result, the day to day business of a first responder can be very uncertain, as well.
* I suppose the 9/11 event, with all of its stories of heroism, has really brought into focus the importance of those who lay it on the line every day for the communities they serve.  Not everyone can live that way.  Not everyone can risk so much.
* On any given day, any first responder who is probably just an ordinary person, could be thrown into a situation of life or death.
  + - And not only do first responders deserve the honor we can give them, but so do their families!  God bless those wives, those mothers, and those fathers who share their loved ones with us, as they dutifully risk their lives to serve us!

**II. Through the years, first responders have been there for my family.**

**Two Personal Stories**

* It was almost 20 years ago that first responders scooped up my then 10 year old son after an accident in Conroe, Texas, and cared for  him when his mother and I were 5 hours away and could not help him.
* It’s been about 5 years ago that my daughter was in a wreck.  My wife and I were only 5 minutes away, and we were able to be on the scene while first responders ministered to her, assessing her well being.  I still remember some of the faces of those paramedics and that of the police officer who showed such kindness and care that day.  I thank God for them!

**III. But today I want to show you how first responders and God share some common characteristics!**

**Let’s look at our text again briefly and learn a couple of things.**

* He shall call unto me. When we have an emergency and we need help, for years now we’ve known what to do.  Call 911!  It’s a number that has been set aside as an emergency number.  When people are in trouble or need help, all they have to do is dial 911.  And someone will answer the phone and generally ask "what the nature of the emergency?"
* When God said He shall call upon me, God meant that when we are in trouble, He’s within reach!  That word “call”  actually means “to call out and address by name.”  So when we’re in trouble, we can call out to Jesus!
* And while we have first responders that can help us in a natural sense, when you’re dealing with life problems, emotions, worries, concerns, and even sicknesses, we have someone we can call!

**The next step is that God said, “I will answer him.”**

* So if you call 911 in a natural sense, someone answers and someone responds.  And the same is true with God!
* In fact, one of the translations of that word “answer” actually means to respond!  It means God is going to show up at your point of need and minister to you!
* So many times in the Scripture, especially in David’s writings, we read where if we will call upon the Lord, He will answer, He will respond.
* And that’s why He is the original first responder!  In fact, God spoke through the prophet Isaiah and said, “And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they areyet speaking, I will hear.”
* And David concurs with Isaiah when he proclaims, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

Let me wrap it all up for you by saying that when God shows up,  He brings what is needed in your life.

* Police officers show up on the scene with a badge and authority to enforce what needs to be done and help someone in their time of trouble.
* Fire fighters show up with jaws-of-life, axes, water, and water hoses to do what needs to be done and help someone when they are in trouble.
* Paramedics show up with oxygen, bandages, IV capability, and many other medically related things to do what needs to be done and help someone if they are in trouble.

I can assure you that if you call out to God, He will show up and He’ll bring whatever it is you have need of.  Maybe you need hope, healing, peace, joy, comfort, strength, etc.  He’s the ever-present help in the time of trouble.  It’s easy for Him to respond because He is already there.

**Conclusion:**

* God is a first responder like a police officer:  He will enforce His law in your life and protect you.
* God is like a fire fighter: He can quench the fires that threaten to overtake you.
* God is like a paramedic:  He can bring healing to your body.

The Bible says that He is so much more.  He’s our counselor, He’s our peace, He is  everything we need.  In short, He’s God!

First responders, you spend a lot of time helping other people. But you’re human.  I just wanted to remind you that when you need help, the Original First Responder stands  ready to respond to your call!