

“HE IS OUR LIFE!”  
2 Samuel 23:1-7, Revelation 1:4-8, John 18:33-37  
November 20 & 21, 2021

“One evening a lady was driving down the street. She noticed in her rearview mirror that a huge truck seemed to be following her a little too closely. She sped up to kind of create some more distance, only to discover that the truck sped up too. The faster she went, the faster he went. She made a right turn; he made a right turn. She made a left turn; he made a left turn. She got on the expressway; he got on the expressway. She took an exit; so did he.

“Terror began to sweep over her as it became clear she was being followed. It was at night and she needed to do something, so she pulled into an all-night gas station where there was light and where there were people. She rushed out of the car and ran inside; the man in the truck pulled right behind her into the gas station, rushed out of the truck, but then, instead of rushing into the store where she was, he rushed to her car and pulled open the back door, reached inside, and jerked out a man who had hidden himself in the backseat.

“What the lady didn’t know was that the one she was running from was her savior. The would-be rapist in the back seat was going to hurt her, but because the man driving the truck was sitting high and looking low, he was able to see this unsuspecting character sneak into her car. The lady, however, had a distorted view. **She thought she knew what was going on when in reality, she was totally unaware of what was really happening.**

“Many of us are living life with a distorted view; we are running in fear from the wrong thing. We spend a lot of time and energy trying to fix our souls and our personalities. We spend time making New Year’s resolutions, going to self-help seminars, and promising ourselves we will do better. [But we’re missing the point.] Our souls are not the enemy; they are not what we should try to fix.”<sup>1</sup> It is our spirits that are in danger, and unless we begin to depend upon a Savior who can step into our lives and bring real life to us, we’re headed for a lot of hurt.

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<sup>1</sup> (Tony Evans, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations*, [Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009] #873, pg. 202)

You see, many of us are in a similar situation as this woman was. We've gotten on the highway of life, going on about our own business, pretty sure that we know where we're going, thinking we are headed in the right direction, and we don't have a clue the danger that we're in. We've had an unsuspecting character get into the back seat of our lives and we are unaware of his intentions. **Thank God that we have a Savior looking out for us.**

But we become afraid of someone being so close to us. We speed up in our lives thinking we can find some space for ourselves, but we only find greater concern. We take left hand turns to follow our dreams and look at all that the world can provide to us, only to become haunted by what could happen. We take right turns seeking to find fulfillment and spiritual rest, only to find someone watching us. We do many things in our lives, working hard at finding peace and comfort, yet completely unaware of the dangers so close to us. We miss the true intent of the One who is right there, following us, seemingly stalking us, and staying close to us, and we find ourselves running as fast as we can away from Him.

However, **The One we have chasing after us only wants our best interest.** He is the One who sees all the dangers that surround us, and He is eagerly desiring to save us from all of our troubles. We have a Savior, Jesus Christ, who is working hard to keep us safe and provide us security, but many times He's got a big job on His hands just to try to keep up with us. We misunderstand what His intentions are, so we fear Him, and do our best to run away from Him, only to find ourselves in grave danger. We think we know what is going on, but we have a distorted view of what is really happening.

Our Old Testament lesson of 2 Samuel 23:1-7 lays out our situation. At the end of his life, King David reflected upon how God had directed His life and called Him to follow His ways and serve Him. When David obeyed the call of God, to follow His ways and serve Him, he found that "*the king who rules with justice, who rules in obedience to God, is like the sun shining on a cloudless dawn, the sun that makes the grass sparkle after rain*" (2 Sam. 23:3). David recognized the value of having God's presence with him, and gave his whole life to following after the Lord. Oh, there were failures in his life

along the way, but David sought to follow God's ways, and as a result, God blessed him and provided for him, and allowed him to be a blessing to the people of Israel, protecting him from all his enemies.

However, David also recognized that **when we do not follow God, when the world is our desire and we are its servants, we find ourselves in a dangerous place.** He says, "*But godless men are like thorns that are thrown away; no one can touch them barehanded. You must use an iron tool or a spear; they will be burned completely*" (2 Sam. 23:6-7). When we run away from God, we lose His protection and guidance, only to find all the dangers of the world coming after us to plague us and bring great harm to our lives. And then, we are in danger of becoming completely destroyed.

God's intent, though, is for us to find life in Him. He doesn't follow us to afflict us or make our lives miserable. On the contrary, God delights to bless us and give us an abundance of life. God desires to step in and remove that sneaky character out of our lives so that we have no more to fear, no more to endanger our future. **But God can't free us from the snares and schemes of Satan if we're running away from Him.** It is vital that we take the time to stop what we're doing, pull over onto the side of the road of life, and let God apprehend the one that seeks our destruction in order to grant us safety and wellbeing. Only God can remove the enemy from us, the one who desires our harm, but we have to give God the chance to rescue us. As long as we're running away from Him, He can do nothing at all to help us. We must surrender our lives and our journey over to God, so that through Him, He can provide the best for us. He knows our needs and is ready and willing to supply us with those needs. But we have to turn to Him for His help.

Think about it this way. "If your car fails, you go to a mechanic. If your house breaks down, you call a handyman. If your body breaks down, you go to a doctor. If your clothes are torn, you go to a tailor. If your grades aren't working, you go to a tutor. [When things in this world just don't go right, we turn to the experts who can bring about the changes that we need. But] **what do you do if your life breaks down? When it's a spiritual issue, only God can fix it.** Anything you use to fix a problem in your life cannot compete with the presence [and power] of God. When you need to fix your life, there's

no better solution than divine intervention.”<sup>2</sup> So it’s always best go to the One who knows all about you, the One who created you, the One who knows more about you than anyone else. Turn to the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth, and give Him all your struggles and trials and troubles, for He is the One who can fix them.

And we hear that same invitation from Revelation 1:4-8. We see that “grace and peace” comes from our eternal God, and from Jesus Christ, “*the faithful witness, the first to be raised from death and who is also the ruler of the kings of the world. He loves us, and by His sacrificial death He has freed us from our sins and made us a kingdom of priests to serve His God and Father*” (Rev. 1:5-6). **Grace brings to us what we don’t deserve, the love of God.** And the peace that God gives to us is way beyond anything that we can achieve here on the earth. God is the One who provides us with His loving grace and everlasting peace.

And then, Jesus, the Son of God, came to experience humanness here on the earth, and He paid the price for the wages of our sin. Jesus, in great love for all of us, was willing to take all of our sins upon Himself so that as we claim Him as our Savior, we find all of our sins forgiven. But that can only happen as we turn to Him for His help. If we avoid Jesus, if we choose not to turn to Him, though He has already made the sacrifice for our sins, it does not apply to us. Unless we claim Him as our Savior, the work He did on the cross at Calvary does us no good, because we are left to fend for ourselves. And where can we find help when we fend for ourselves?

When our lives are so messed up because of sin, we could turn to others here on the earth to try to fix us, but **nothing we do can remedy the problem we have with sin.** We could go to psychologists, or counselors, or even spiritual advisors, but unless they refer us to the Lord, there is no permanent remedy. We can’t fix ourselves – nor can we fix anyone else.

We could even go so far as to deny that we have a problem with sin, and then just grin and bear it for the rest of our lives, and for the rest of eternity; but that won’t fix our problems. In order to get our

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<sup>2</sup> (Tony Evans, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations*, pg. 191, #566)

problem with sin fixed, we must humble ourselves to go to the One who can, and who has already fixed it, Jesus Christ.

Now, that doesn't mean we don't face the consequences of our sin, even though we do find forgiveness from Jesus. **There are always consequences to our actions.** If we have reckless lifestyles, we will face the consequences of that lifestyle. If we smoke, we face various cancers. If we drink and drive, we face the possibility of car accidents and the death of those around us. If we stay up late at night, we face missing early morning appointments. If we refuse to pay our taxes, we face penalties from the IRS. If we break the law, we face possible arrest from the police and local authorities. If we don't take care of our bodies, we face the expensive visits to the doctor's office and possible extended stays in the hospital. If we don't pay our electric bill, we face being shut off from the electric company. Everything we do faces consequences.

And it's not just negative actions. When we take care of our finances and make sure to save a part of our incomes, we have savings that can allow us to do the things we want to do or have the resources needed in times of an emergency. When we work hard at our places of employment, we get increases in our salaries. When we use our medications timely and correctly, we find renewed health and wellness. When we put gas into the tank of our cars, we can get from here to there without having to worry about getting stranded. When we devote ourselves to another person in a friendship, we find a lasting relationship. When we are generous with our thanks and praise, we are usually thanked and praised in return. When we show respect and dignity to others, they are usually respectful in return. And if we are law abiding citizens, we never have to worry about being arrested by the police. We reap the consequences of our actions, both good and bad.

So it is only right for us to expect that when we turn to the Lord for His help and guidance, He grants us abundance and direction and protection. **But not everyone makes the choice to let Jesus be their Savior.** Not everyone recognizes His position of power or authority. We see that in the Gospel lesson for today. Listen to John 18:33-37. (READ John 18:33-37).

The Scribes and Pharisees decided that Jesus was not the One they wanted to follow. So they had Him arrested, and brought Him before Pilate, seeking to destroy Him. It was the point in God's plan of Salvation that Jesus stepped up to become the Savior of the World, defeating Satan's plan of the world's destruction through separation from God. And brought freedom from sin to us as we claim Him as our King - the Way, the Truth and the Life given by God the Father.

Jesus answers Pilate's question about Him being a king by telling him, "*You say that I am a king. I was born and came into the world for this one purpose, to speak about the truth. **Whoever belongs to the truth listens to Me***" (John 18:37). Truth always defeats a lie. Truth always reveals the schemes of Satan and brings light upon every dark and dangerous situation. Truth exposes God to us so that we might not only see Him as He is, but that we might believe in Him, receive Him into our lives, and obey Him in all of His ways. Jesus came to bring us the truth of God so that we would not fall for the deception of Satan through the ways of this world.

However, **we still struggle with believing and receiving God's truth.** We might accept Jesus as the Savior and come to appreciate the work He did on our behalf, but we may still keep Him at arm's length so that He does not become our Savior. We want to come to God on our own terms, and in our own way.

I like the way that Tony Evans puts this situation. He says, "I don't like it when my wife asks me to go to Home Depot. I'm not a Home Depot kind of guy. Now, there are two reasons I don't like Home Depot. Number 1, it's big and the aisles are packed with stuff. I also don't like fighting to get through those lines if I happen to go during the wrong part of the day. The main reason, number 2, that I don't like Home depot is because when my wife asks me to go there to purchase something, it usually means I have to fix something around the house myself.

"See, Home Depot is set up for folk who want to take care of things themselves. So instead of calling a plumber, you go to get the plumbing. Instead of calling an electrician, you go get the plugs and the socket so you can screw it in yourself. I don't like Home Depot because that means there is work for

me to do. Home Depot has made a business of teaching people how to fix it themselves.

“We’ve got a lot of **Home Depot** kind of saints today. They are used to being their own boss, captain of their own faith, and master of their own ship. They are so used to doing it themselves that, even though they will breathe a prayer every now and then, they remain fairly self-sufficient people.

“These self-sufficient people are Burger King kind of people. They want to have it their way. They are sufficient within themselves and so they live their own lives [away from the ways of God and away from any guidance and direction from God.] This is what Satan wants. He wants us to operate independently of God”<sup>3</sup> so that we no longer have any use for God, but rely upon our own strength, our own wisdom and our own resources to make it through life. And that’s when we into trouble, because we just can’t fix ourselves, and we can’t live life to the fullest without God’s presence with us.

While there are plenty of things that we can do for ourselves, “do-it-yourself salvation” does not work. We are always disillusioned about what the truth really is. **We tend to believe the things of this world more than we do the things of God.** We have that yearning to be in control of our own destiny. And we are often so stubborn that we don’t trust that God has the goods to provide us with an abundant life. So when we try to fix ourselves and make us right in the image of God on our own, we ALWAYS fail. We don’t recognize that we’re traveling through this life with Satan in the back seat ready to hurt us or wipe us out completely.

So that’s why Jesus came to the earth, to show us the truth so we could get it right. He took our place on the cross so that we wouldn’t have to die in our own sin, forever separated from God the Father. He demonstrated the love of the Father for all of us, and He exposed the dangers of trusting in the ways of this world, dominated by Satan’s influence. And Jesus tells Pilate, “*Whoever belongs to the truth listens to Me*” (John 18:37). **The truth sets us free to believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior.** The truth sets us on the pathway to righteousness. The truth sets us up for an eternity with Jesus as we listen to Him and follow His ways.

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<sup>3</sup> (Tony Evans, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations*, pg. 275, #821)

But it demands that we first recognize Jesus as our Savior. We have to stop running away from Him, trying to do life our own way, and allow Him to become our Lord, the One who rules in our life as we follow His commands.

It means that **we have to stop trying to be self-sufficient in our faith.** We can only see a small part of God's whole plan for our lives, and unless we let Jesus get into the driver's seat of our life, we find ourselves taking all kinds of detours and miss His blessings for our lives.

It also means that we become open to allow Jesus to direct our lives, each and every day as we turn to Him for guidance. Jesus has promised us the Holy Spirit to empower us to do great things for the Lord our God, but until we open up our lives so that He can begin working in us, it's like a circuit breaker that is never turned on – the power and ability to do great things is ready and waiting for us, but the connection hasn't been established to enable that power and ability flow into us. And that demands that we humble ourselves before the Lord Jesus, and let Him take control of our lives.

But for Jesus to be our life, He first must get rid of the dangers that we have in the back seats of our lives. He has to clean house, take out the garbage of our lives that is rotting away within us, and then he can bring us to newness of life.

**But the choice is ours to make. Jesus will not come live within us while we allow Satan to occupy our hearts and minds.** It doesn't work to have both Satan and Jesus in the same body. We have to make the choice as to which we will allow to become the Lord of our life.

If it is Jesus we want to bring new life to us, we must allow Him to stop us in our tracks to remove the sneaky characters traveling along with us. If we want Jesus to be the Savior of our life, we must submit everything into His authority. It's the only way that we can find life in Him.

The time to make that choice is right now. Now, today, is the day of Salvation. Don't put it off any more. Don't continue running away from Jesus. Stop and let Jesus make you a brand new creature through Him. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for following us! Thank You for providing us with a Savior who loves us

enough to care about our every need. Thank You for giving Jesus to us as the Sacrifice for our sins so that we might become freed from the bondage of evil and death. Thank You for Your great love for all of us.

O God, Help us to recognize the danger that we are in. Help us to stop running away from You so that You might protect us. Help us to stop trying to provide for ourselves, in Your absence, but come to depend upon Your will and Your way for us. Give us the courage to let You open every door in our life and remove all that is wicked and evil from us, so that we might not have to worry about what might happen to us. Give us the willingness to humble ourselves to You, Jesus, so that we might find You as our Way, our Truth and our Life. Give us eyes to see, and ears to hear the truth You have for us so that we might trust in You, believe in You and receive You into our hearts and lives.

This we pray in the holy and powerful Name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. AMEN.