



WHO NEEDS A SAVIOR? Do you?

By Mimi Ignatius

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16) was the profound answer uttered by the apostle Peter, for this was revealed to him by God the Father. This declaration was in response to the question our Lord posed to His disciples,

*“Who do you say that I am?”
(Matthew 16:15)*

Take a moment and ask yourself who is this Jesus? For more than two thousand years, people have attempted to answer that same question. Most responses usually begin by affirming one’s religious beliefs, which is appropriate. However, we can think deeper to the core of our soul, and consider who Jesus really is on a personal level. Can this personal bond be easily detected? Accounts of the Holy Gospel describe various situations in which our Lord Jesus Christ established a personal relationship with an individual. By doing so, Christ reveals that He is a personal Savior. He has a personal touch with every individual. At every occasion, He addressed a specific need or a void and replaced the emptiness with an enriched repentant heart.

Simon the Pharisee invited our Lord to a banquet at his house. He was one of the two individuals personally addressed

at the gathering; the anguished woman distressed over her sinful life and Simon, a man of prominence secretly judging her. Both had emptiness in their lives. She tried and failed to fill the void in her life with lust and he attempted to fill his emptiness by judging the weaknesses of others. Christ gently addressed them both according to their needs. The real difference between Simon and the woman was that the woman was aware of her needs, and so our Lord acknowledged her first, forgave her, and sent her away in peace (*Luke 7:36-50*). Despite this occasion for Simon to open the heavy door of his own heart and welcome his Savior, no account is given that he seized that opportunity. By his choice, it remained shut. Therefore, neither peace nor forgiveness for him was recorded.

Samaria provided the perfect environment for salvation for one individual and an entire population (*John*

4). It was there in Samaria, that our Lord met the infamous woman named Photini. By a well, she met her Savior, and the Savior, Himself, traveled that route purposely to meet her. Almighty God sat by the well and conversed with a simple careless woman living a very questionable life. She seemed to not really care, since this was the sixth disgraceful attempt to live with yet another man (*John 4:17,18*). Her life is a reminder that our spiritual lives are sometimes like hills and valleys

*“If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there” (Psalm 139:8)*

For it was in this low hellish life that she finally saw Him there. Actually, He had traveled there with her, and it was there that she finally recognized Him. He transformed her into a disciple carrying His message of salvation. The same people who once could not bear to see her,

“ She needed to be there for she was forever indebted to Him for compassionately rescuing her from the torments she endured for so long ”

were willing to hear her.

“Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world’” (John 4:42)

At the end of her life on earth, St. Photini was thrown in a well as part of the plan to destroy her. She is recognized by many Orthodox churches as a saint and martyr (see reference below).

A peculiar setting of death row existed two thousand years ago. It was during this dreadful time that a hopeless career criminal was finally sentenced to death. It was not strange for him to be accompanied by other criminals such as himself. What seemed bizarre in his mind was having Jesus innocently hang on the cross beside him and all the while forgiving those who treated Him cruelly. With both arms outstretched and with brutal pain and humiliation inflicted upon Him, Jesus reached out to both His death penalty convicts. Both villains were given the same love and kindness and hope for salvation. Both saw and heard the same message from the Savior they both so desperately needed, but they made different decisions which resulted in very different outcomes.

“Lord, remember me when you come into Your kingdom” (Luke 23:42)

Demas was his name, a.k.a., the Thief on the Right. “

And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise’” (23:43).

How precious is that!

By the tomb of Christ was Mary Magdalene. Unsuspecting to her, was her beloved Lord asking her

“Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” (John 20:15)

Why was she so compelled to be there? For generations to come, this obscure woman, once possessed with seven demons, would always be associated with the holy resurrection. Ingrained in our minds is the icon image of her using her hair to wipe the blood of her Lord on the wood of the cross. There is no biblical support of that depiction, but the image of her outpour of love for the Lord has been illustrated with this passion and sorrow. She needed to be there for she was forever indebted to Him for compassionately rescuing her from the torments she endured for so long. She may not have understood the broad comprehensive plan of salvation, but she knew that her life

had changed. She knew that it was this Jesus, (whom she referred to as “Rabboni” Teacher) who had saved her. Because He knew that in her sorrow she needed to be there, He, in turn, desiring to ease her pain and complete her understanding of salvation, allowed her to be the first representative of humanity to proclaim His resurrection.

Journey through the Holy Scriptures and discover the promised Savior, Jesus Christ. He is God, the Word, the Only Begotten Son, and the Savior of the world. It is He who fulfilled every prophecy leading to salvation. A devoted elder of the Jewish faith named Simon waited for years for the moment to declare the onset of salvation. Revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, in his arms he beheld the Savior of the whole world, for Jew and Gentile alike.

“Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your Salvation, Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32)

This is He, Jesus Christ, who would bruise the head of the serpent (*Genesis. 3:15*). It is He who would offer the ultimate sacrifice with His own flesh and blood. It is He who was the flame of fire in the inconsumable burning bush (*Exodus 3*). It is He who delighted to walk among the three youth in the furnace, whose faith in Him and resilience to all atrocities for Him was being tested (*Daniel 3:25*). It is He whom Isaiah the Prophet foretold of His bitter suffering (*Isaiah 53*). It is He whom David the Prophet and King foresaw His might and glory (*Psalms 110*). To be a guiding principle for all people throughout all time, it is He who gave us commandments of law (*Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5*), and it is He who added the commandment of love (*John 13:34*), for the Father and the Son are One.

Thorough analysis of one’s own life will clearly identify Christ Jesus in every hill and in every valley, in every angle and in every bend, and at every occasion. From weddings (*John 2:1-11*) to funeral processions (*Luke 7:11-17*), He has traveled every step with every soul. In His meekness He awaits the fog of the clutter and pollution in each individual’s life to settle so that He may finally be noticed. He is always there. All emptiness and any void experienced in life are the result of

the lack of a personal relationship with the Lord. No money, fame, power, prestige, friends, family, temporary indulgence, or any kind of earthly thought of security will fill that void. There is an evident yearning for a connection with God in order to experience real fulfillment in life. It is about true religious beliefs in conjunction with a vibrant personal relationship with the Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the Savior of hopelessness, loneliness, laziness, sinfulness, hatefulness, drunkenness, resentfulness, carelessness, selfishness, and emptiness.

The path of salvation is opened with the keys of a holy baptism, nourished by the church sacraments, and sustained by the most important bond one can ever attain. At every occasion of an individual’s life, the Lord Jesus Christ is ever present, but most unmistakably in prayer and in each of the seven sacraments. He gave us, the believers, these holy mysteries so that in them faith is manifested and unity with Him is possible.

“If only I may touch His clothes, I shall

“ With both arms outstretched and with brutal pain and humiliation inflicted upon Him, Jesus reached out to both His death penalty convicts ”

be made well” (Mark 5:28)

Each experience adds to a real and unique relationship of love and hope, repentance and forgiveness, joy and service. It is a relationship that endures, grows, and matures. It is a relationship that in itself is wholesome and complete, lacking nothing, and desiring nothing. We have an innate need for a Savior. He is there!

References:
Nelson’s NKJV Study Bible
St. Photini or St. Photina, The Samaritan Woman

