

POINT

Every day I need Christ as Saviour

DR. DAN REILLY



AS FOR ME, MAY I NEVER BOAST about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died (Gal 6:14).

When you look in the mirror, do you see someone in need of saving? Is the person looking back someone who is lost and without hope if left to your own devices? Do you deeply and truly know that you need a saviour? I confess that I often don't see myself that way. For those of us who have grown up in the church and followed its rules fairly closely, the centrality of Christ as our Saviour can easily get missed. After all, we're pretty good people right? Only those beyond hope, those who are helpless, need a saviour. Sure we sin a little now and then. So a little rinsing is required. Christ doesn't need to save us, just to clean us up a little bit. We treat Christ more as maid than as master.

I see failure to maintain a daily awareness

of my need for a saviour manifesting itself in my life in how I see and treat others and myself. When the person in the mirror isn't conscious of his need to rely on Christ, pride and arrogance creep into my thoughts and actions. Decisions are made without first being surrendered to Christ. Entitlement begins to allow me to justify pursuing my own pleasure at the expense of others. When others make demands of my time and energy, annoyance is my response. I need to control situations and people so that the right outcome is ensured. In the end, I am tired and others are hurt.

When you look at those who oppose you, do you see someone in need of saving? Are they lost and without hope? Are they in exactly the same situation you are in? I confess that I often don't see those who disagree with me that way. For those of us seeking to defend truth and justice in society, the centrality of Christ as our opponents'

Saviour can easily be ignored. They are bad people in need of defeat by the righteous. I wear the white hat and they wear the black. Heroes defeat the enemy, not save them.

Whether I am looking in the mirror or the face of one who has decided that he is my opponent, I must see one whose greatest need is for Christ our Saviour. Spending time in scripture and paying attention to God's standards keeps me aware of my true need. Fellow believers with whom I am transparent and who hold me accountable push me back to Christ. Pursuing spiritual disciplines and failing frequently helps me see the man in the mirror clearly.

Every day I, and every person I encounter, need Christ as Saviour.

Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me" (Lk 9:23). ➔

COUNTER POINT

Salvation comes to us through grace

DR. JOHN PATRICK



When the Stranger says, What is the meaning of this city?
Do you huddle close together because you love each other?
What will you answer? “We all dwell together
To make money from each other?”? or
“This is community”?
And the Stranger will depart and return to the desert.
O my soul, be prepared for the coming of the Stranger,
Be prepared for Him who knows how to ask questions! —*TS Eliot*

THE WONDER OF THE GRACE IRRUPTING into an individual’s life never fails to move me deeply. Recently it happened to three Asian students whilst I was teaching. We were discussing the nature of inward truth and its being the first step to repentance. I was thinking about disciples; God was working on the lost sheep. The questioner of souls arrived

and grace irrupted within those souls.

Part of the reason for this wonder is the whole mystery of holiness (1 Tm 3:16) as it was brought to me by the life and sacrificial death of Jesus. We should celebrate the mysterious nature of grace and never try to fit it into the box of modern scientific explanation. Grace is not irrational but super-rational. It does not reduce our intellectual capacities but deepens and widens them. Reductionist science can be properly practiced by a Christian but a secular scientist cannot fit faith into his intellectual framework. Science can never handle grace because it is without material existence and has no units of measurement.

Jesus taught us this. When Nicodemus came seeking the authority that Jesus had, he was told that it was impossible until he was born again by the Spirit. He was utterly unable to comprehend what was being said. Only looking backwards, do we begin to understand our conversion and salvation,

but even then only as an undeniable change comparable to a blind man beginning to see, not a mechanistic explanation. Creeds and catechisms do not a Christian make; their purpose is to build the Christian mind, preparing us to see the lost, the needy and those whose souls are searching.

Once we have bent the knee before the risen Christ, then salvation can begin to flow into every area of life as He gently knocks and seeks admission into our lives as in Revelation 3:20. It would be good, therefore, if testimonies were much more concerned with the long-term changes which our Lord is working in our lives, rather than indulging in a display of our own self-will to determine how we want to live. Salvation is in the present continuous tense! We, however, have to say, yes. He will not force us because His story is a love story.

Note: The selection is from TS Eliot, *Choruses from the Rock*, something well worth reading. +