A Voice From The Wilderness

My Need Of A Saviour

Christ says, "... without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. How often have we spoken these words and lacked understanding in how they apply to our lives in our every day experience! "Without Me: - without an ever present and abiding, every loving and drawing Saviour - "we can do nothing."

You see friends, we need a Saviour not just to **forgive** us of our sins (I John 1:9), but a Saviour who **can and will keep** us from entering into sin (Jude 24) and to **cleanse** us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9). But I'm afraid that all too often the **self** in us is the ruling power. It is our **self** that likes to be in control, to make decisions and hold opinions that strengthen our selfish nature - the ME FIRST - I'M RIGHT - MY WAY; for our self outside of Christ is naturally agreeable to, and in harmony with, the "power of darkness." We are told, "unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one ... It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to **ally** ourselves with the kingdom of light." Desire of Ages 324. This allying of ourselves to Christ is the yielding of self to His control. It is not a one time -once saved always saved - surrender; nor is it a once a day submission - it is a moment by moment decision to yield self to the rulership of Jesus Christ, for without Him we are hopeless but with Him "all things are possible." Matthew 19:26.

Why is my need of a Saviour so great? Because I know how strong the **self** in me is and God is showing me that my failure is coming from within. It is not the trials and circumstances that cause me to fall. It is not when my husband misunderstands me that is the blame for my "hurt feelings." It is not my child's action that is the reason for my agitation. Nor is the problem our family, friends, neighbors, coworkers or the church - the PROBLEM is that **self** is unsubdued, and "while self is unsubdued, we can find no rest." Desire of Ages 336. Praise God that He loves us enough to show us where the real battle lies - in MY (OUR) own heart(s). Mark 7:15 says, "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that

defile the man."

Friends, how easy it is to assent with this in theory - but in our practical everyday experience we continue to believe and act as if the problem lies outside of ourselves, for I well know how this is. That's why my need of a Saviour is so real to me. For I have prayed that I would not only be forgiven of my sins, but that He would, "cleanse me from ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS." I John 1:9. And it has been through this desire, this prayer, that God is answering in a mighty way to show me where the real battle lies - **within self** - for "self is the enemy we most need to fear." Ministry of Healing 485. It is not the trials, circumstances or people who enter into our day - those are but the vehicles or means, "God's appointed workman." Mount of Blessing 10 - They are God's "chosen methods of discipline, and His appointed conditions of success" Acts of the Apostles 524 - to refine and purify our character. They are not our enemy! They are not the battle! It is the **warfare against self**.

I knew in my heart that He had a better way

This warfare is so great because it deals with the **roots of self**." In Bible Commentary 7A page 962 we are told our problem is three-fold: **self-deception, self-justification and self-love** (pride). It is from these that self is so tenaciously strong, and I have seen that these roots lie at the very foundation of my failure. I would like to share with you some personal experiences that illustrate this clearly and have been the means by which I have seen my own **self** honestly, and have helped me to understand more fully why I have such a great need of Jesus as my Saviour.

SELF-DECEPTION: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:19.

SELF-JUSTIFICATION: "And He (Jesus) said unto them, Ye are thy which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Luke 16:15.

SELF-LOVE (PRIDE): "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee ..." Obadiah 3.

One beautiful summer afternoon we were sitting by the pond in our back yard visiting with some friends who had come to visit. As we were talking, a family's name came up that we both knew (who were not present). After a few minutes in conversation I shared something that was true about our experience with this family and their response, but no sooner had I finished when I had the overwhelming conviction that what I said wasn't necessary. (I had prayed that morning that I would be kept by my Saviour.) God is faithful - He was calling to me to live by His Word (Philippians 4:8) "whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report - to think" and speak on those things. Are the words we are speaking about someone else making us look good to the person we are sharing with? Are the words belittling needlessly the other person? Are our words going to change the way the person we are speaking to will view the other person. We need to examine carefully the motives for what we share with others. You see friends, I needed a Saviour - first for forgiveness for speaking my own words and second, to give me the power to overrule my natural nature to **justify myself**, because what I had said was true. As I heard (in my conscience) my Saviour call to me, I knew in my heart that He had a better way for the discussion to go and that I needed to confess before my friends that what I shared was inappropriate and unnecessary. I knew the call and **self** was tempted to **excuse, justify and defend** its position, but I **yielded** my **self** fully to Christ to be my Saviour and in His power humbled myself before my husband and friends, confessed my fault, and asked their forgiveness **without making any excuses**. It was then that I had **peace!** And it took the **power of God** to accomplish it!

As I thought back over this experience I realized that even before I spoke those words my Saviour had called to me to not say the thoughts that were running through my mind, for we have a faithful Saviour that is

trying to save us from sin and to cleanse us from within. We are told, "Christ is ever sending messages to those who listen for His voice." Ministry of Healing 509. But at that time when the message to be saved from self came, I was so busy thinking about **self** and what **I wanted** to say that I had **deceived** myself to think that it was okay to speak since what I had to say was true and **justified** myself to go ahead. The Lord showed me that the real issue was the **love of self** the **pride** in my own heart, to want to be viewed by our friends as having done my "Christian duty" to this other family.

This **self-love** is the root of our problem for it is the **love of self** that leads us to our **self-deception** and **self-justification**. I liken this to the root of a vine (or any plant). There is always the tap root or main root on which all other roots branch. Then off the "main or tap" root there are usually a couple secondary roots, also very large and strong. That's why Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." John 15:5 For branches do not have their own roots, but rather are connected to the vine. We must be severed from the roots of self and grafted into Christ that we may bring forth His fruits. We may **try** to lop off ugly branches and bad fruit or try to hide them in the foliage of other branches, but unless we are willing to be severed from self and grafted to Christ the roots of self will strengthen and grow deeper and left intact we will be consumed with them when Christ comes and the glory of His righteousness burns up anything remaining with sin. Oh friends, are we really willing to have all of the self-deception, self-justification and self-love removed from us here? Christ wants to be our Saviour to cleanse us fully and completely while there yet remains time.

At that moment friends, I needed a Saviour

One hot summer afternoon I was in town with my three children getting supplies for our home. We had just come out of a store and I was carrying a sack with two oil filters for our Bronco (you know, the large, heavy oil filters used in trucks). Just as we got to the truck door I had the thought to hand the sack to one of my children who I felt needed a little more practical responsibility in handling things carefully. My thought was to let them hold the sack while I unlocked the door. At the very moment that I handed the sack to my child I had a flash thought that "something was going to go wrong" AND IT DID! Right then and there, at that very moment the sack of oil filters fell and smashed my toes. The pain was awful! At that moment friends, I needed a Saviour, because it was at that moment when self was wounded, it was at that moment when self wanted to rise up and take over. The **"battle"** was on, the wrestling inside as to who would rule. I spoke no words at that point. I opened the door for my children (who could see I was struggling) then I walked around to the other side of the truck, got in, shut the door, started the motor and opened my mouth and what poured forth was not the words or spirit of my Saviour who was trying to keep me - **but all of "self"!** I had thought that my children must be corrected for their carelessness, especially since I had specifically chosen this opportunity to help them grow in that area. I didn't curse, I didn't even use bad words - I didn't have to - but the message was loud and clear, they were being chastised with frustration and irritation. You see friends, I just **felt** that if I could express **myself** I would "feel better." But as I began to, I felt worse because "as long as self is unsubdued we can find no rest" (Desire of Ages 336) - there is not peace. And I had not peace, self ruling did not bring me relief, I did not feel better, I felt worse!

Praise God, we have an ever-loving, every-drawing and pleading Saviour who wants to redeem us from the power of sin and live within. Christ continued to call to my heart even in the midst of my turmoil and even as I was speaking to my child, He was earnestly bidding me **"let go of self."** I heard His call and realized my awful condition. Immediately I yielded to His control (oh, that I had the first time when He warned me of the trial, and in the first moments of the battle

when He was pleading with my stubborn heart, "let Me rule.") At the very instant I was willing to let myself be yielded to Him, He gave me true repentance and brokenly I humbled myself before all three of my children who had tears running down their little cheeks. I told them how sorry - oh, how sorry - I was for not letting Jesus be my Saviour and then asked their forgiveness which they gladly gave and we prayed together. It was here friends that I had the real peace - the rest I wanted from the very beginning but was **self-deceived** to think that I could handle lit and would feel better to put my children in their place. You see, I had **justified self** that it was their fault and correction was needed. As the wrestling was going on in my own heart before I spoke, I felt I had a "good reason" to be upset and rationalized my **self-justification** because the **love for self** was wounded both physically and emotionally. It was my love for self - to let self be in control - that brought the **self-deception** of feeling better to let it out! Oh friends, I can never take back those unlovely, unkind, selfish words. I can never remove from my children's minds the picture of MYSELF in control (or should I say out of control). But my Saviour has used this experience as a very real and vivid picture of my need for Him only and always in all things and a lesson for my children also that we need Jesus in everything regardless of how small a thing we may be doing, like buying oil filters - that without Christ the little things can turn into big ones, for we cannot serve self and Christ at the same time. Luke 16:13.

I am thankful we have a Saviour who longs not only to forgive us of our sins but to cleanse us from all unrighteousness and will, because of His love for us, bring us over the same ground again and give us opportunity to have full victory in Him. Patriarchs and Prophets 437. This time instead of two oil filters, it was a three gallon water cooler full of water that landed on my foot. The pain was of far greater intensity, but so was my realization of my need of a Saviour. Immediately I surrendered all the temptations that flooded my mind and allowed Him to guide me through the entire situation. I had no disposition to want to "set my child straight." I only wanted the peace and rest that comes from my heart being under the control of Christ. My child felt badly, but they had to suffer no wrath from their mother, and they saw how it was to be kept with Jesus through the "little trials" of the day. What a blessing this experience has been to our entire family.

Oh friends, that we could only realize our need of a Saviour to keep us in all things, through the entire day - and not just to forgive us but to cleanse us from the sin and self that remains within. "Let us individually examine our own hearts in the light of God's Word, and let us question our motives and every action of our lives." 5 Testimonies 610.

If we are willing our Saviour will warn us as we are tempted to enter into **self-deception or self-justification** because of our **self-love**. He longs to transform us so that our old ways of acting and reacting are replaced by conscious choices to maintain our vital connection to Him through every trial and temptation. He says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26. **That is why I (we) need a Saviour!**

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