

Why Do I Even Need a Savior?

Luke 10:25 *And behold, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying,*

“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

Matthew 19:16 *And behold, a man came up to Jesus, saying,*

“Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”

C.S. Lewis said,

“If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.”

Lewis was pointing us to Christ as Savior and Lord.

Many today explain that desire in another way. They believe that it is the exploration of space, to boldly go where no one has gone before, that will satisfy that desire.

Many today believe that “Space Exploration Represents the Best of Humanity!”

Nancy Atkinson writes:

“Space exploration challenges us to not only to be and do our best, but reach beyond the ordinary, push the boundaries of our scientific and technical limits, and then to push even further. That “intangible desire to explore and challenge the boundaries of what we know and where we have been, has provided benefits to our society for centuries. With space exploration, our desire to answer fundamental questions about our place in the Universe can not only help to expand technology, but it helps us look at things in new ways and it seems to help foster a sense of cooperation, and – if I may – peaceful and enduring connections with our fellow humans.”

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Why are people looking beyond our own planet to find these answers?

Because many people are not finding them here!

Matt Damon starred in a movie called ***The Martian***, which tells the story of fictional astronaut Mark Watney. Watney finds himself stranded on Mars after an emergency evacuation of his space station. The story follows his ingenuity, innovation, and resilience, in fighting for survival. Basically, he gets to play Kirk, Spock, McCoy and Scotty all rolled into one character!

Having returned to earth, the final scene of the film depicts Watney talking to a group of NASA cadets. He tells them, “***...If you solve enough problems, you get to come home!***”

Watney’s declaration is a powerful reflection of the creed that increasingly drives modern society. We are repeatedly told to:

- study hard,
- work hard,
- apply ourselves, and
- to live out the truth of who we are.

This mantra of self-sufficiency is one we have taught ourselves for thousands of years.

- The sociologists call it self-sufficiency,
- the psychologists call it self-actualization,
- philosopher Carl Jung called it individuation.

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It is the same idea that underpins so much of the self-help, life-coaching, and new-age philosophy we see today. We are called to look into ourselves and pull ourselves up by our own moral, physical, emotional, and existential bootstraps.

Status, worth, and personal value are inextricably tied to how well we perform in our work. This elusive goal of self-sufficiency permeates every profession and workplace across the world.

The universal call to self-discovery and self-help has been the great cultural driver of the 20th and 21st centuries. However, the results have been questionable at best. We are more:

- technologically,
- academically,
- intellectually, and
- financially advanced than ever before in human history.

We are told to ***find ourselves, to please ourselves, and to define ourselves.***

Yet many of the indicators of human flourishing are in free-fall.

- Suicide,
- depression,
- divorce,
- anxiety,
- substance dependency
- and social dislocation are at all-time highs globally.

It is the so-called ***“era of human rights,”*** yet there are more slaves now than ever before in history.

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Increasingly powerful mobile technology sees us more connected than ever before and yet loneliness is the greatest cause of teen suicide globally.

We claim to be on a march to moral perfection and yet we killed more of each other in the 20th century than in all nineteen preceding centuries combined.

Our moral condition remains — as ever — dangerously untethered and our technological advances have made our struggles ever-more visible to us.

In his letter to the churches in Rome just a few decades after the resurrection of Jesus, the Apostle Paul wrote,

Romans 3:23

For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

King David said it 1,000 years earlier.

Psalm 51:3–5

For I know my transgressions,

and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned

and done what is evil in your sight,

so that you may be justified in your words

and blameless in your judgment.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,

and in sin did my mother conceive me.

We see these truths in our lives every day.

We need look no further than our own hearts to see evidence of our deepest needs. We seek:

- justice,
- forgiveness,
- belonging,
- identity,
- peace, and
- fulfilment.

Yet our tendency to put ourselves first to find these things seems to constantly leave us wanting more.

Of course, there are those that deny the human need for help. Society tells us that we have everything we need within ourselves and therefore, all we need to do is look deep down inside for the answers we seek. Superficially reassuring though such sentiments may be, experience points in another direction. The more we look inside ourselves, we not only see an absence of answers but even more questions. The evidence is undeniable: **We need rescuing from ourselves.**

When we run into trouble, we seek help from beyond. It is an instinctive and automatic reaction. We seem to know that our needs within must be met from without.

When we look closely at the great superhero stories, some common themes emerge.

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The selflessness of Ironman as he flies weapons of mass destruction beyond reach of the Earth;

the compassion shown by Superman when — even with his life on the line — it is said of him by his enemy, “He cares. He actually cares for these Earth people;”

the fearlessness of Wonder Woman who fights to protect the human race, even after discovering their inherent capacity for evil, for the sake of their inherent capacity for good.

Superheroes offer us a unique combination of sacrifice, justice, and compassion, all brought together in **acts of rescue**.

What if the ideals we admire most in our superheroes — power, sacrifice, compassion, and justice — were brought together **in a Savior that actualized them to rescue you and me?**

What if the offer of rescue was made outside of the fictional world?

What if our imaginary superheroes were but hopeful glimpses of a rescue mission that was not fictional?

It is in this context that the Christian story emerges with three life-changing pillars unsurpassed in human thinking:

1. **A uniquely honest understanding of the reality of suffering in our world.**

The Christian message doesn't pass off suffering as an illusion, meaningless, a product of karma or something that can be avoided. It correctly acknowledges it as an unavoidable reality.

2. **An accurate diagnosis of the struggles of the human heart's desire for justice and forgiveness; and**

3. **A rescue mission of the most unlikely kind:** The entrance of God himself into His world as a person, Jesus Christ. God as man who died on a cross to do away with all of our brokenness, shame, guilt, and wrongdoing.

In these three Christian truths, we find the most compelling analysis, diagnosis, and response to the human condition in human history.

Jesus not only satisfies our deepest need, that of rescue, He also satisfies our deepest desires, those of belonging, purpose, identity, and fulfillment. Consider his own words:

John 10:7-10

Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

He saves us!

He rescues us!

And He does it through grace, by taking away our guilt and shame, covering over our imperfections with His perfection and adopting us into the family of God, where we are assured of an eternal identity as his children. It is the greatest rescue mission ever carried out!

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Interestingly, even the film *The Martian*—amid its explicit sub-theme of self-reliance—makes a glaring concession. Yes, astronaut Mark Watney deserved the praise he received for surviving all those weeks on Mars. However, in the end **he was not able to save himself**. All of his ingenuity did nothing for his ultimate situation. He needed rescue. His final journey back to the safety of Earth only occurred by virtue of **a rescue mission from beyond**.

God’s word tells us clearly that we were lost but Jesus came to seek and to save those who were lost.

We were dead in our sins, but God made us alive again through faith in Jesus, the Savior.

“If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.”

When we find that Savior, or rather, when we are found by him, it changes everything for us.

1 Peter 2:9–10

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood,

a holy nation, a people for his own possession,

that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people;

once you had not received mercy,

but now you have received mercy.

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We don't need to look out into space to find the answers to humanity's problems. Life eternal and life abundant are ours as a gift of grace which we receive by faith in the Savior Jesus. He rescued us and wants us all to live by his grace and the power of the Holy Spirit he gives us.

Just imagine if everyone in the world followed Jesus. The world still wouldn't be perfect, that won't happen until heaven, but it would sure be a lot better!