

The job of Savior is already taken. (December 2011)

We rarely encounter a person who does not struggle with a need to rescue or fix at least one other person—husband, child, parent, boss, friend...etc. A friend and fellow prayer minister recently asked if my approach to ministry had changed over the years so that I no longer feel the need to rescue my clients. Her question prompted some contemplation.

There was a time when “sympathy” for a client drove my actions to help them fix their situation by giving them good advice and spiritual support through prayer ministry. I felt sorry for them, wanted to help them, and my best thoughts were for their wellbeing and happiness. I wanted to save them from their heartache and trouble.

It was finally made clear to me that my best efforts were standing in God’s way and that His plans were better (much better) than my plans. In other words, the job of Savior was already taken.

Over the years, I have come to a place of being able to **empathize** rather than **sympathize**. What a relief for everyone! Empathy expresses a willingness to share your pain, to recognize the truth of your situation and be willing to walk with you through the trial. But I must acknowledge that only Jesus can heal your wounds, bring you peace and relieve your pain.

The power of prayer ministry is in discovering that Jesus was there with us in the painful, hurtful places, and that he can empathize because, in his humanness, He experienced every kind of hurt we might experience. Moments of rejection and betrayal, **all** forms of abuse and a sense of agonizing aloneness were part of his life-pain. Because of his life-pain, not just his death, He can (and does) empathize with every situation or circumstance we encounter.

From Jesus’ perspective, He declares “even so” when he sees us hurt by the ungodly choices of others. Through His gift of salvation He states: “This is not the end of it.” “There is abundant life beyond this.” “I have healing and newness for you.” Sue Monk Kidd says that *new life scratches its way through the scar of our wound*.

When Jesus announces, “I was there with you, walking beside you, crying over the fact that you were being hurt, you were not alone,” it allows us to see our lie-based pain from His perspective—a new and bigger perspective.

Jesus offers empathy—a **knowing** that only He can fully share. But there are days when He allows me to walk with Him beside another person who needs to know that I have experienced the same kind of pain, I survived, and I can direct them to the one who will bring healing and peace—the Savior who came at Christmas.

