

# Salvation

## Part 6 - It's in our nature to save too

It's not surprising, then, that being made in God's image **it's in our nature as humans to save too** - Paul being a great example. In **Romans 9:2**, for instance, he told of his "great sorrow and unceasing anguish" for his fellow countrymen. "It's an enormous pain deep within me," he wrote, "and I'm never free of it. If, somehow, I could be cursed by the Messiah so they could be blessed by him, I'd do it in a minute" (3-4, The Message).

And by "blessed" Paul meant "saved," because his "heart's desire and prayer for the Israelites was for God to **save them**" (10:1). And amazingly, he'd willingly give up his eternal life too, if that's what it took for his fellow Israelites to be saved.

Something extraordinary had come alive in Paul, but as he'd explained earlier in **Romans 8:10-11**, it was already in his nature - or in his "**spirit**" as Paul described it - that the **Holy Spirit** had then brought to life in him. Which is wonderful to know, that tucked away inside each of us is what God gave us in the beginning, a little image of himself that's just waiting for the Holy Spirit to spark into extraordinary life.

And we get clear hints that this "spirit" in us **includes a desire to save**, because we're in there like a shot if faced with the need to save something or someone. Find a bedraggled kitten mewling on the doorstep, for instance, and what's our first reaction? It's to save the poor little thing. Wrap it up in a towel, drip feed some milk into it, tuck it up inside a box, and lose sleep worrying about it.

Saving that little kitten's life, no matter what, becomes an enormous pain deep within us, just as it is for those who desperately want to "save the planet," save the whales, save the forests, save the oppressed and marginalized, save women from brutal men, save children from sexual predators. save the indigenous, the homeless, the hungry, the drug addicts, the poor, and every immigrant seeking sanctuary, no matter who or what they are.

And we see it in war too, when the desire to save one's country from power-addicted madmen tells many a story of men and women willingly putting their lives on the line for the sake of others. And in very personal ways too, when saving a fellow soldier's life by leaping on a hand grenade that's landed beside him without him noticing, or charging a machine-gun post single-handed, or stretcher-bearing the wounded under heavy fire, or staying with a dying comrade.

And without hesitation we'll charge into a burning building, or toward a car on fire, to save its occupants. We leap into raging rivers, scramble 'til our hands bleed to get to those trapped in earthquake rubble, risk years in jail for exposing injustice, or risk having bank accounts frozen to protest government overreach. Agree or not with people's reasons for what they do, deep down inside us we admire bravery and courage, and the willingness to put one's head above the parapet to fight for a cause, or taking down a madman wielding a knife.

No wonder, then, that the gospel of salvation correctly preached touches that inner spirit God gave us, because at the heart of the gospel is a man who willingly sacrificed his life for others, who happily put his head above the parapet to draw the fire of evil to himself to destroy it, who with joy served the needs of his fellow humans, who single-handedly took on the worst that the pompous, uncaring, self-centred world could throw at him, and even to his death thought only of what his God had given him life for.

Agree or not with who or what Jesus was, one cannot help wishing the whole world was like him. He truly was an extraordinary man. But what the gospel of salvation also speaks of is that the Holy Spirit - who brought that extraordinary life of Jesus into reality in an ordinary human being - has been given to us to do the same thing. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children," **Romans 8:16**, meaning that in cahoots with what God already put in us naturally, the Holy Spirit brings to life a supernatural child of God in us too.

Which Paul describes this way: "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and **you have been given fullness in Christ,**" **Colossians 2:9-10**. Everything that the happy, loving, courageous human Jesus was, we can be too. Which is what we're all being saved to be....  
(continues in Part 7)