

I remember seeing on one of those amazing video shows where a curious cat (what other kind is there?) got trapped in the vent duct of the house that it lived in. It had nosed its way in, but couldn't back out of there. Due to the construction of the vent system, the rescue squad was in a dilemma as to how to retrieve it. They tried all sorts of ideas to solve the problem, and finally poured enough liquid soap on it and worked with it long enough to slip it out. It was quite a story! But I'll never forget the horror of the pet owner as one particular idea was discussed: that of cutting up the cat. (Well, they couldn't just let it die in there and rot!)

I was rather shocked by this idea as well. I'm glad that they didn't have the same thought when that little baby fell into the well some years ago. But the situation was similar: a being that was much loved had gotten themselves into a situation that had no easy way out. My dad used to tell me that we could run into trouble, but we generally had to crawl out.

In a manner very similar to that of sinking in a deep hole, we have all sunk deeply into the mire of sin. We may have even enjoyed it, as the child who sang the first line of "I was sinking deep in sin" and then yelled "Wheeee!" But eventually, we realize that we could die there, and we begin to concern ourselves with getting out. And our own attempts to get ourselves out only make it worse, like someone floundering in quicksand.

We must be extricated from our situation by someone who has the power to do that. I had a very good friend who discovered a knot in his neck one day. It was determined that he had cancer, but the doctors could not understand much about it. When I asked him why they couldn't operate to remove it, he said that he had been told that there were too many important nerves and blood vessels in the area. It was too delicate an operation. If the goal was only the removal of the tumor, that could be accomplished; but the doctors were trying to protect the patient, not the tumor.

Another real life problem that is very similar is that of Siamese twins. A set of such twins can be attached in many different ways, and thus experience different levels of sharing functions in each other's bodies. Sometimes there is only one vital organ to be shared between them, and there is no chance for a surgeon, no matter how skilled, to separate them. But in other cases, even though the vessels and nerves are intermingled, the operation can be performed successfully. Similar to Solomon's baby dilemma, this requires great wisdom. And we must have confidence in the surgeon.

God is our spiritual surgeon, and we also have to have confidence in His ability to rescue us. David had this confidence, for he wrote in Psalms 18:4-5, "The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me." Have you ever transformed a nicely organized cord into a tangled mess? If you are normal you have. Usually we find that the only thing that we can do is cut it apart. But as someone once said, "Never cut what you can untie." Tangled cords are mainly loops that have been trapped against other loops. If you know enough about it, you know which strings to pull to unravel it all. God has that infinite wisdom to get us out of any situation that we can get into.

Still, there are times that something must be ruined to get solve the problem. I have done this plenty of times by accident, like when I bent the fender of my car trying to change the oil. It ended up costing me a couple of hundred dollars! There have been many times that I have caused myself much more trouble trying to fix something myself. But God only destroys when it is the only way. Remember, for instance, that God totally changed the nature of the universe when man sinned. Then He destroyed the earth by flood in the time of Noah, He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah to save Lot, and He destroyed the land of Egypt as he brought His people out of bondage. Finally, He promises to consume the earth by fire in the final days and present us a brand new home.

We must have confidence that God knows how to save us, and loves us enough to do so. He accomplishes this without ruining us, even though He may destroy what is entangling us. In this process of destruction He has also suffered, for it is through the sacrifice of Christ that we are saved.

*The Lord knows how to rescue godly men ...* .

*2 Peter 2:9*

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