

Expressing Our Need

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I had almost gone past the poor little thing before I saw him.

I was walking near a concrete drainage ditch when I heard him flapping furiously in the shallow water. It was a little bird. It had somehow fallen into the ditch, gotten its wings wet and could not fly out. Time and again it tried, but to no avail.

I almost walked on. Suddenly it struck me. He can't help himself. If I don't do something, he'll die there. There is no one else.

It was about three feet down to where he was. Lying flat on my stomach, I reached down, expecting him to move away from me, but prepared to try and catch him. Instead, he didn't move. He was as still as could be. It was as if he was inviting me to pick him up. It was like he knew he had done all he could.

I got him out, shook the water off, and set him out on the dry ground. He flapped his wings, shaking the water from them, and scurried off, listing precariously to the left as he ran.

I was glad I stopped. I went on my way thinking how the aging process for animals is so much shorter than in humans and how that several "years" had been added to the little bird's life.

Man is much like that little bird. He can't help himself. Jeremiah says, "Oh, Jehovah, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23). Man may become very wise, he may ingeniously concoct many wonderful things; but he could never have devised a means for his own salvation. As long as he trusts in himself, he remains helplessly mired in sin (Rom. 6:23).

In Proverbs 14:12, we are told "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death." Just because man thinks he has found a solution to his problem does not make it so. Religious people everywhere are putting their confidence in some creed, some religious organization, some charismatic person, or in some subjective religious experience, thinking they have found the way. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," says Paul (Rom. 1:22).

We are not as smart as the little bird.

Why is it that we refuse help? Pride? Rebellion? Unconcern? Perhaps all of the above.

Part of the reason is we don't choose to see ourselves as God sees us. We don't want to admit that we have a need. Like the little creature, we are flapping around furiously, thinking we are getting somewhere when we are in fact falling right back into the same place after every flurry.

Jesus, in John 14:6, described himself as the true and living way. He emphasizes that fact by affirming that, "no man cometh to the Father but by me." That's strong language, folks. It says emphatically that there is but one way, and that one way is Jesus Christ.

But how does that become practical? Is it enough to just accept that fact?

In John 12:48, Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

If he is the way and if his words will be the basis on which we are all judged, then we cannot divorce his way from His word. The word is the way. That means that there is no difference in the man and the plan. In fact, the man is the plan and the plan is the man. One cannot be without the other.

His way is plain. He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"(Mk. 16:16). Nothing hard about that. True, it's not man's way. Man says, "He that believeth is saved and can be baptized." But nowhere in His word, the word of Jesus, will you ever find that.

Will you follow man's ways, or God's ways? No one else can help us. We are lost if he does not take an interest in us and rescue us from sin.

Let us submit to his will and he will set us free.