

10. IT IS GOING TO BE OK

*Yes sin isn't fair, but neither is
salvation!*

#NCSAMENTALHEALTHDEVOTIONS

IT IS GOING TO BE OKAY

Isaiah 41:10: "Do not be afraid - I am with you! I am your God - let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you."

A few years back the children's story at church was told by a lady. It was the story of the Israelites being set free from Egypt. The story commenced where they reached the Red Sea and Pharaoh's armies were behind them. With the Red Sea in front of them, the people went to Moses complaining bitterly and angrily about why he had brought them there into the desert to die. God told Moses to tell the people what to do. At this stage of the story, the lady who was telling the story asked the children the question: "What do you think God said to the people through Moses?" A little girl in the front row shouted out and said: "It is going to be okay!" This is truly a beautiful illustration of exactly what the gospel tells us. The gospel's message is summed up in these five simple words: **It's going to be okay.**

Sometimes we are faced with fears and doubts. Currently there are lots of conspiracy theories going around because of the unusual state of affairs that has come to us through COVID-19. With these affairs, Christians and non-Christians have been asking the questions: "Is the end approaching? Is this a sign that Jesus will soon come?" That is followed by questions like: "Am I ready to meet my Maker? Is my salvation sure?"

When people are faced with the reality of '*what if Jesus comes soon*', many of them struggle with anxiety regarding their salvation.

**THE GOSPEL'S MESSAGE IS
SUMMED UP IN THESE FIVE SIMPLE
WORDS: IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY.**

Luke 21:26 tells us that this is going to happen, that men will be scared. It says, as one of the signs of the last days: *“Men's hearts will fail them for fear.”* This fear is not a fear of persecution, or bodily harm, or because of the last plagues that are going to fall. The fear is associated with the fact that we are uncertain of our salvation. The Bible is saying that people will literally have heart failure because of the anxiety surrounding the question of, “Am I saved?”

I remember a few years ago while I was at university, my brother called me one Friday evening. He was in quite an anxious state when he made that call to me. He asked me whether I've heard that the Pope is implementing Sunday laws? These laws are going to be finalised. My brother went on saying that if one looks at the signs of the times and the things that are happening in the world, like the increase of earthquakes and tornadoes and natural disasters all around, it is 100% certain that we are closer to the end than ever before! He paused for a second and then asked me: “Nandi, are you ready?” The question was posed by a concerned older brother wanting to make sure that his younger sister's salvation with God is right. He added by saying: “By the way, the reason I am calling, is to make right with you. If there has ever been a time or a place in my life where I have harmed you or hurt you, will you please forgive me?” Then he started crying. I was quite a bit confused. At that time, I was 21 and he was 26. I asked him: “What is wrong?” His reply quite shocked me: “I am scared. What if I don't make it?”

This fear and this question of “what if I don't make it?”, have been in each of our minds some or other time in our lives. It has become a reality for us at some stage of our lives. When did we become so uncertain regarding our salvation?

**THE BIBLE IS SAYING THAT
PEOPLE WILL LITERALLY HAVE
HEART FAILURE BECAUSE OF THE
ANXIETY SURROUNDING THE
QUESTION OF, “AM I SAVED?”.**

We feel that we cannot earn salvation. We lack so much, we are so far from God's ideal. We could never do everything that is needed in order to be saved. We are right when we feel this way, because the Bible agrees. Isaiah 64:6 says that: *"Our good works are like filthy rags."* Romans 3:10 says: *"There is no one righteous, not even one."* We cannot earn our own salvation. We cannot save ourselves.

We cannot even save ourselves from gaining weight. We cannot even save ourselves from illness. Let me illustrate. When I was younger, growing up in my family, I was told that from my mother's side of the family we have inherited a disease called 'polycystic kidneys'. I was told that myself, my brother, my cousin, my mum, her aunt as well as my grandfather have it. I have now learnt that the disease does skip some people within the generations, but when I was growing up, I believed that everyone has it. According to my knowledge then, my life was in danger of death, not immediately, but eventually. Regardless of my knowledge, I still could not do what was needed to be done in order to save myself from this disease, like following a plant-based diet, avoiding certain unhealthy foods, drinking lots of water, avoiding salt. I struggled to do this, even though my life literally depended on it. I could not save myself from dying, even though I had all the remedies, even though I knew what worked and what was available to me in order to save myself. Even though the textbooks were telling me what to do, I could not save myself. How then am I going to save myself from eternal death, if I cannot even save myself here on earth from mortal death and bodily harm?

**IF WE CANNOT SAVE OURSELVES
FROM PHYSICAL ILLNESSES THAT
WE KNOW THE REMEDIES AND
CURES FOR, HOW DO WE EXPECT
TO SAVE OURSELVES FROM THE
ILLNESS OF SIN THAT LEADS TO
ETERNAL DEATH?**

This realisation can sometimes bring anger within us. Perhaps you've made some statements like: "If I cannot save myself, then this is really unfair. Why did God allow Satan to come and tempt us? Why should I die because of the sins of Eve and Adam, somebody that I have never met? I did not choose this life, I was born into sin." Add to that 6000 years of weakness and it really is a recipe for disaster. Now we have to fight this battle that we are losing every single day. I suppose the question is, "Who has ever asked us to fight? Who asked you to fight? And if there is a fight, what are we fighting? Self? Satan? Temptation?"

The Bible illustrates time and time again that although there is a fight going on, this fight is not our own. God is to fight for us. A beautiful illustration comes from the story of Israel crossing the Red Sea. They crossed through the Red Sea by God's providency. He opened up the waters for them. They crossed through and Pharaoh and his people followed suit. The Egyptians pursued them. As they reached the Red Sea, the Israelites were anxious, because they feared for the loss of their lives! They needed to be saved from the pursuing armies of Pharaoh! Moses stood on the other side and he saw their anxiety and he declared to them as we read in Exodus 14:13,14: *"Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. The Lord will fight for you. You must just hold your peace."*

This is very much the same when it comes to our salvation. We feel like we have to fight some battle against Satan, some battle against sin. We try and do a lot of things; reading the Bible and following the proper diet, avoiding unclean foods. We do all the things the Bible prescribes us to do, because we think somehow we can earn salvation through it. But the truth of the matter is that there is nothing we can do to save ourselves.

**WE THINK WE CAN SOMEHOW EARN
SALVATION, BUT THE TRUTH IS
THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO TO
SAVE OURSELVES.**

The Lord says to us: *“Stand still and see My salvation.”* The Lord also says: *“I will fight for you, just hold your peace.”* Isaiah 41:10 says it so beautifully: *“Do not be afraid - I am with you! I am your God - do not let anything terrify you!”* God says: *“I will make you strong and I will help you; I will protect you and I will save you.”* Nowhere in this equation does God ever say you need to do this, you need to do that to earn salvation.

There are so many powerful illustrations in the Bible where God fought for His people. In the story of *Jericho*, the Bible tells us that God gave the people a simple command. March around the city. This could never have had conquered the city for them, but God said they must make the small effort of what He told them to do and He will do the rest. Another story is where *Gideon* and his 300 valiant men went out to fight. Three hundred men could never have fought that war, but God told them to do the small part that He had given them to do: “Blow the trumpet and I will give you the victory that you need.”

And this is exactly the same for us in our lives. The reason why we struggle with anxiety and with uncertainty regarding our salvation, is because we really do not understand the Great Controversy. Because we do not understand the battle, we feel that we have to put on our armour. We need to take the sword in hand and we need to literally go and fight for ourselves in order not to die the eternal death.

The bigger picture is what we truly need to understand. Yes, we have this fear inside us that we will not be saved. It is a daily battle, but that is the smaller picture. There is a greater picture of what really is going on.

**THE REASON WHY WE STRUGGLE WITH
ANXIETY AND WITH UNCERTAINTY
REGARDING OUR SALVATION, IS
BECAUSE WE DO NOT REALLY
UNDERSTAND THE GREAT
CONTROVERSY.**

It is not about the fear and anxiety of, “Am I going to make it, or am I not going to make it?” What then is salvation truly about? Salvation is not about saving our lives. Salvation is not about death versus life. Salvation is about something more. But what?

The word salvation means to be saved. Saved from what? The Bible says from sin. Sin in what sense? What exactly did sin do to us that we need to be saved from the consequences of sin? The Bible tells us that the only thing sin brought into our lives is a separation from God. Salvation is going to give the unity back to us. We lost something when sin came into this world and that is our connection with God. Adam and Eve used to walk and talk and communicate with God, face to face. Once sin entered into their lives, God had to get them out of the Garden of Eden and they could no longer see God face to face.

The battle is about a restoration of the separation and of a lost connection. It is not about “am I going to die, or am I going to live?” It is about “can I be restored back into a relationship with God?” Sin separates us from God and it does not allow us to come to Him in full confidence. Salvation is a plan to get us back with God.

During the lockdown we also experience separation. Separation from our friends, from our families and from our colleagues. We can think of salvation in the same manner – that there is a plan being brewed to get us back to the normality of life where we can live in harmony with one another again. We need to get back to the normality of heavenly life where we can live in harmony with God and the angels again.

**THE BATTLE OF SALVATION IS ABOUT
THE RESTORATION OF THE
SEPARATION AND LOST CONNECTION
BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. IT IS NOT
ABOUT “AM I GOING TO DIE IN HELL,
OR AM I GOING TO LIVE IN HEAVEN?”**

The Bible says it is not fair that we are separated from God. It is not fair that we have to face sin and temptations now.

Romans 5:12 and 1 Corinthians 15:12 talk about condemnation which came through one man, that is Adam. Salvation came through one man as well, and that is Christ. Neither of this is fair – not the condemnation that came through Adam, or the salvation that came through Jesus – because we played no part in any of it. This is why Christ really came, because He knew that we were innocent in this.

If salvation is about getting back to God, the question remains: “How will we get back to God?” In John 14:6 Jesus answers us and gives us the remedy to sin and separation. He says: *“I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”* In other words, the first step towards reconnecting, the first step towards salvation, is to have a relationship with Jesus. Jesus is that Person who connects us with God. He is the invisible tie.

When I was young, I had a friend that used to come to my house. My father is a pastor, so when she would see my dad at church, she would call him Pastor. When she would come to my house to visit me and she saw my dad (as Nandi’s dad), she would call him uncle. But as time passed, she started mixing the two titles and she started calling him uncle pastor. The interesting thing about this is that because of her relationship with me, and because of my relationship with her, she was able to have a relationship with my dad in the sense that she could feel free to call him on a very cute strange little title and neither one was offended by this title. This is exactly how it is with Jesus when He is our friend.

**JESUS GIVES THE REMEDY TO SIN
AND SEPARATION FROM GOD. HE
SAYS: “I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH
AND THE LIFE; NO ONE COMES TO
THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH
ME.”**

When Jesus is our brother we become children of God. We re-establish the tie that was lost in the Garden of Eden and then we can come to God the Father, through Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote if we truly understood salvation, sin would lose its power. In Ephesians 2:1 and Colossians 2:13 Paul says: *"I am dead to my transgression. Sin no longer has power over me."* In other words, sin does not scare me because I have already been set free from the power of sin. Jesus has paid the price when He died on the cross. The first step towards reconnecting that connection has already been done – Jesus, the Way, came into this world and He died for us.

The reason why we often fear is because we misunderstand what exactly salvation is about. It is not about heaven. It is not about whether I live or whether I die. We often focus on the aspect of: "When Jesus comes, will I go to heaven?" We focus on the place more than on the person. We are not here to be reconciled with heaven. We are not here because we lost heaven. We are here because we lost God. We really need to learn to take our focus off the place and put it on the Person we need to restore our relationship with.

Think about it this way; what will happen if we told God that the only reason we wanted to be saved, is because we want heaven? That it was not about Him, the Person, but about the place. I've asked people in the past, "If Jesus came and He said to you: 'We are not going to heaven, but we are going to live on Mars where there is nothing beautiful or attractive, just you and Me', would you still want to go?" Where is our focus?

**THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS
RECONNECTING TO GOD AFTER
THE FALL HAS ALREADY BEEN
COMPLETED – JESUS, THE WAY,
CAME INTO THIS WORLD AND HE
DIED FOR OUR SIN.**

We need to learn that salvation is about our relationship with God. In other words, we cannot fix ourselves to become better people. Even the process of growing and becoming beautiful people in Christ (sanctification), we cannot do for ourselves. We cannot save ourselves from sin. We cannot make ourselves better people.

There really is nothing we can do. We cannot save ourselves from sin. We cannot make ourselves beautiful in our characters and perfect ourselves. We definitely cannot take ourselves to meet God, the Father up in heaven. Jesus has done it all for us already. The verse that we've started off with says it so beautifully: *"I will make you strong. I will help you. I will protect you. I will save you."* I really believe that these words are true in terms of our reconnection with God, the Father.

We cannot go into the presence of God the Father, filthy. There are certain steps that need to be taken in order for us to be safe. The Bible calls these steps: **justification**, **sanctification** and **glorification**. We cannot accomplish any of these by ourselves. Jesus has to accomplish it for us and He already did. The truth is that the separation between us and God has already been removed.

Looking at the sanctuary service and what it represents, we find the following description in the Bible: In the temple (the earthly sanctuary) in Jerusalem, there were two compartments, the holy place which was the first compartment and the most holy place which was the second compartment. Only the High Priest was allowed to move from the holy place into the most holy place where the Ark of the Covenant was.

**THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO TO
SAVE OURSELVES, GOD SAYS: "I
WILL MAKE YOU STRONG. I WILL
HELP YOU. I WILL PROTECT YOU.
I WILL SAVE YOU."**

The most holy place represented the throne room of God. In heaven there is also a sanctuary. Heaven represents the most holy place where God, the Father is. Jesus came to this earth, the first compartment, to do service on our behalf. He came to serve us, to die for us as our sacrifice so that eventually we could move from the first compartment which is represented by earth, to the most holy compartment, which is represented by heaven, into the presence of God, the Father. As Jesus hung on the cross and He was about to die as our sacrifice, He shouted: "It is finished!" What exactly was finished? Was He talking about His life, in other words, "I am dead"? No, this is not what He was shouting. He was declaring to the world that the plan of salvation was completed.

When Jesus died, everything that needed to be done in order for us to reconnect with God, the Father (what the plan of salvation really is about), was completed. The Bible tells us that the moment when Jesus died, the veil in the earthly temple, the curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place, was torn from top to bottom, signalling that there was no longer a separation between God and man. Salvation was indeed finished. It was completed. There was nothing more that needed to be done in order for us to go to God, the Father. Jesus covered our sins. He reconciled us with God and now, through faith in Him, we are adopted into the family of God. Jesus has done it all.

Yes, it is not fair that sin came into this world through Adam, but it is also not fair that salvation came through Jesus. It is a gift we need to accept like when somebody writes a test for us.

JESUS COVERED OUR SINS. HE RECONCILED US WITH GOD AND NOW, THROUGH FAITH IN HIM, WE ARE ADOPTED INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD. JESUS HAS DONE IT ALL.

Jesus wrote the test for us. He studied for us, He wrote for us, He got the answers, He got 100% on the test score. And He says to us: "Here you go, now write your name on the test." Jesus has done everything we needed to do. Now we just need to learn to trust God, not only with our temporal needs, but also with our eternal salvation.

It really works this way; Jesus has done it all, we need nothing else than to accept Him. If we have Jesus today, we already have salvation. If we have Jesus today, we already have heaven to a certain extent. When we realise this, our lives will be much different. We will live with confidence, not in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 asks: *"Death, where is thy sting; grave, where is thy victory?"* In other words, when I understand that salvation and living for ever is dependent on me reconnecting with God, the Father, death and the fear of death in this world, will have no power over us. Jesus is our everything. Jesus plus nothing is everything.

Jesus says: "I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the Water of Life. I am your Redeemer. I am your salvation. I am the One that will change you from inside out. I am everything that you need. I am your heaven right now."

John 17:3 says: *"Now this is eternal life - that they may know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."*

Remember the promise in Philippians 1:6: "He who started the good work in you, will complete it till the end, in Christ Jesus." When we realise that we have this opportunity to connect with God, we will be able to do it till Jesus comes.

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ALREADY HAVE SALVATION. IF
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ALREADY HAVE HEAVEN.**

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