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### Saved!

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Saved!

Think of the many times and ways we have been saved. As a child, I was saved by Penicillin when I had an allergy to the only other drug then used to cure a serious infection. Some of us might have been saved from near-death by someone pulling or pushing us out of harm's way. We have probably all been saved from physical harm by a clear warning, or sometimes by a sudden intuition. Many of us can recall how a bit of advice from a teacher or a friend was enough to keep us from making a truly bad decision about a job or a relationship. We have been saved, each of us, many times.

We have many gifts of mind, body, and spirit. But we cannot do everything, and we surely cannot control every aspect of life around us or even within us. We all have experiences when someone does something for us that we cannot do for ourselves. That we sometimes need to be saved is not a weakness, but a positive reality of our human condition. Most of us are accepting of modern medical "miracles" worked on our behalf. We might have special gratitude for a person or persons who cared for us enough to tell us the truth about a direction we were about to take that would have caused us and others great harm. Being saved is a common experience for which we can be quite grateful.

If we see a sign on a Pentecostal Church, "Jesus Saves," we might not immediately relate those words with our personal experiences. But experiences are the criteria for judging whether or not we have been saved by Jesus, by God, or by anyone.

Aside from being physically saved, as by a firefighter bringing us out of a burning building, most of our encounters with being saved involve some level of faith. We cannot prove that a friend's sound advice saved us from making a bad decision. Medicines work with healthy elements within our bodies, so we might say that they help, but do not "save" us from death. And the sudden inspirations we received could be described as "only" thoughts. Our sense of honesty will help us identify which of our experiences were those of being saved.

No one requires us to ascribe to God even a single instance of saving us. But we can, if we choose, reflect on some of our experiences, and perhaps find much cause for gratitude. Being saved can be an every-day experience of having Jesus (or one of God's friends) doing something for us that we could not do for ourselves. Many of our past experiences might have involved asking for help and having received

it, as when we could not get past a fear-causing or other powerfully negative thought on our own. How very ordinary, we might think, to turn to God in time of need and to experience not being taken out of the situation, but to be enabled to deal with it. "God, help me" is not just a throw-away expression. At times we have meant it, and, if we reflect, we probably experienced getting through, rather than being overcome by, the situation that brought us to ask for help.

We have perhaps told ourselves in some difficult circumstances, "you can get through this," and we did. We would not describe ourselves as saving ourselves. The deeper truth, for which we might experience gratitude, is that we have gained self-confidence, perhaps after many instances of having sought and received help from God.

Who will save us from fear of suffering or of death itself? Jesus is with us as God who knows suffering and death from the inside, and stands with us in face of both. Who saves us from all the wrong moves we have made in life, and that we continue to make, however small they might be? Jesus stands with each of us in all circumstances, ready and able to accept, to understand, to heal. Have we ever faced thoughts and attitudes suggesting that life is meaningless, or that we have no value to anyone? Jesus has never given up on us, even if we were at one time caught up into thinking that we were solely responsible for either the messiness of the world about us, or for making everything work to our advantage.

Many of us have so many experiences of being saved, that we need some time every day to identify at least some of them. "Saved" translates readily to "Thank God."