

Donald Miller, CEO of StoryBrand, went to hear a folksinger in concert and between songs the folksinger told a story that helped Donald resolve some things about God. The story was about the folksinger's friend who is a Navy SEAL. The folksinger told the story like it was true...

The folksinger said his friend was performing a covert operation, freeing hostages from a building in some dark part of the world. His friend's SEAL team flew in by helicopter, made their way to the compound and stormed into the room where the hostages had been imprisoned for months. The room, the folksinger said, was filthy and dark. The hostages were curled up in a corner, terrified. When the SEALs entered the room, they heard the gasps of the hostages. They stood at the door and called to the prisoners, telling them they were Americans. The SEALs asked the hostages to follow them, but the hostages wouldn't. They sat there on the floor and hid their eyes in fear. They were not of healthy mind and didn't believe their rescuers were really Americans.

The SEALs stood there, not knowing what to do; they couldn't possibly carry everybody out. One of the SEALs, the folksinger's friend, got an idea. He put down his weapon, took off his helmet, and curled up tightly next to the other hostages, getting so close his body was touching some of their bodies. He softened the look on his face and put his arms around the closest hostages. He was trying to show them he was one of them. None of the prison guards would have done this. He stayed there for a little while until some of the hostages started to look at him, finally meeting his eyes. The Navy SEAL whispered that they were Americans and were there to rescue them. "Will you follow us?" he said. The hero stood to his feet and one of the hostages did the same, then another, until all of them were willing to go. The story ends with all the hostages safe on an American aircraft carrier.

After hearing this story, Donald remembered that he never liked it when the preachers said we had to follow Jesus; sometimes they would make Jesus sound angry. But Donald liked the story the folksinger told. He liked the idea of Jesus becoming man, so that we would be able to trust Him, and he liked that Jesus healed people and loved them and cared deeply about how people were feeling. When Donald understood that the decision to follow Jesus was very much like the decision the hostages had to make to follow their rescuer, he knew then that he needed to decide whether or not he would follow Jesus. The decision was simple, Donald says, once he asked himself, "Is Jesus the Son of God, am I being held captive in a world run by Satan, a world filled with brokenness, and do I believe Jesus can rescue me from this condition?"

I think Paul (the biblical one) would have liked the folksinger's story, too. It's a good illustration of the point God was making through Paul's pen in 1 Corinthians 9:22 as regards reaching the lost: "...to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Ask God to give you compassionate discernment for those people you're attempting to rescue from the darkness of sin and lead into the light of the good news of Christ. Grace & peace, love you. PK.