

## **“Saving Private Lynch”**

**Luke 4:16-21; 22:42**

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We don't know his last name. For security reasons, it was never released. The media referred to him simply as Mohammed. This is the man that risked his life and most certainly his family's, too, in order to save Private Lynch. You recall that she was the wounded American soldier that was captured and held for ten days by the Iraqis.

Mohammed was visiting his wife in an Iraqi hospital when he noticed several guards outside one room. He saw a female soldier being questioned and slapped. This broke his heart for he felt that no one, regardless of nationality, deserved this kind of treatment.

As a result, he walked six miles to find the United States Marines to tell them where an American was being held. Twice he returned to check on Private Lynch and scout the layout of the hospital. After being supplied by Mohammed with hand-drawn maps and sufficient information, the Special Operations forces landed in Black Hawk helicopters next to the hospital, stormed the hospital and rescued Private Lynch. She was quickly transported to a U.S. military hospital in Germany for treatment of broken bones and gunshot wounds.

This miraculous rescue would have never been possible without the assistance of one man, Mohammed. How easily he could have turned away from Private Lynch and refused to help her. Perhaps others did, but he could not.

What made him different? Why did he respond to her need? Based upon what I have read, there were two reasons. **Mohammed is a compassionate and courageous man.** Neither trait would allow him to be indifferent. Both traits provided Jessica with all the hope she needed.

These same traits in Jesus provide us with all the hope we need, too. It was Jesus' compassion and courage that enabled him to come into our world and deliver us from our plight.

**It was the compassion of Jesus that made him sensitive to our needs.** Through eyes of mercy, he saw people being held hostage by fear, anger, selfishness, confusion, grief, insecurity, prejudice, meaninglessness, inferiority, temptation, bad habits, legalism, guilt, and death. What he witnessed broke his heart.

He saw people as isolated, scared and abused as Private Lynch. He saw people more afraid of dying than excited about living. He saw people surviving rather than thriving. He saw too much to be indifferent. He had to come and show people another way to think, relate to others, arrange values and priorities and handle problems, challenges and temptations. He had to. Like Mohammed, he could not have lived with himself had he remained silent, and so he spoke.

“He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it he found the place where it is written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for

the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, 'Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing' " Luke 4:16-21.

These were the words of a compassionate man keenly aware of the cries and needs of his people. But compassion alone would not have caused him to act. **He also needed courage.** The mission was dangerous and the risk was great. He had to have an enormous amount of courage and he did.

Do you realize that Private Lynch was the first American prisoner of war to be rescued from behind enemy lines since World War II? Surely you recall what happened the morning President Carter sent the helicopters into Iran to rescue the fifty-two American hostages. The helicopters crashed in a sandstorm and the mission was aborted.

Rescuing hostages and prisoners of war is risky business. Always has been. Yet, Jesus came and did that very thing. It cost him his life in the process, but he did it, nonetheless, because he was a man of great courage.

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done" Luke 22:42. These are the words of someone that knew the risk and decided to take it. Only the most courageous person could pray this prayer.

**Are you compassionate and courageous?** Think about it as we share the elements during communion and ask God to help you be honest and make necessary changes. For I assure you, Private Lynch was not the last hostage that needed to be rescued. The world is full of them and many go to school or work with you each day. Some may even live with you and need your help. I hope you will come to their aid just as the Marines came to the aid of Private Lynch.