

Victim, Villain Or Hero: A Fourth Choice For Christians

Contributed by Dr. Madana Kumar, Phd on Sep 10, 2020

Scripture: Ezekiel 14:12, Jeremiah 15:1-2, John 10:9, Ezekiel 14:15-16, John 10:11, Ezekiel 14:19-20, John 11:25-26, Ezekiel 14:17-18, John 14:27, John 6:35, John 14:6

Denomination: Evangelical/Non-Denominational

Summary: Victim, Villain or Hero? What role are we auditioning for as we brace the Pandemic? Christianity gives us a fourth choice. Let us embrace it.

Victim, Villain or Hero

By now, you must have heard it a thousand times. We are living in unprecedented times. We are going through trials. We are preparing for the Future Shock or a new normal. The world is not going to be the same again etc etc. You probably have heard several messages about the biblical interpretation of the current times. I certainly have preached on that subject a few times during the last couple of months. We cannot escape the reality of the pandemic that is still raging out there. Being believers we all know and believe that God is in control and nothing happens without his permission. But beyond that belief and faith, how do we respond to such situations in our lives?

This morning I will ask us to turn the attention on us, on our responses, on how we respond to such trying times. Our responses to troubles. I have titled my message Victim, Villain or Hero.

My studies show that these three are the standard responses of people to troubles. Come to think of it, you will see these three roles in any Hollywood or Bollywood movie that you catch on Netflix or Amazon prime or Hot-star or wherever you see movies during the pandemic. (Unless you are so spiritual that the only form of entertainment you have is watching God TV and reviewing your Theology Courses. If you are in that category, you need not listen to this message anymore.) If you are a regular guy like me, Let us look at each one of these three and see which one fits us more.

The Victim response is probably the most familiar one to all of us. When faced with troubles the Victim will feel that it is unfair. The victim will feel singled out. The victim will think the entire world is conspiring against him/her. Their conversation with friends will be about how hard life is. They will strongly feel that others are more blessed than themselves. They truly believe that others do not know how difficult his/her situation really is. They will blame others and/or situations for their suffering and troubles. They think no matter how hard they try, their situation will not change. They find it difficult to get over the past mistakes and failures, and they perpetually live in guilt. You can add on to this list, but I am sure all of us have felt some of the above sometime or the other. Victims are people who feel some of these often.

Phycologists opine that Victims, as and when they can get out of the victim state, end up becoming either a Villain or a Hero. The Victim to Villain transition is very natural.. When one gets fed up with staying in the victim stage, a victim will start planning actions that can hurt others. That is when the Villain is born. A Villain will take revenge. A villain will become aggressive, violent, and will hit back at others with whatever he/she can. A villain will not worry about public opinion. A villain will soon start enjoying the role so much that he/she will fall in love with themselves in that role to the detriment of

others. Many of us might not be explicitly getting into a villain role, but think again. We are taking the villain role, when we scream at someone, we are taking the villain role when anger gets the better of us, whether it is at home or outside. Sometimes we get into a villain role without even realizing it.

A more positive transition is the one from Victim to Hero. A Hero does not have to come out of a victim. Heroes emerge otherwise, too. A Hero wants to save. This is what psychologists call the Savior's Complex. Someone with a Hero Mentality will swoop down on a suffering victim and do all that is necessary to save him/her. At the outset, you may think there is nothing wrong with being a Hero. But think again. All that the Hero might care about is saving the Victim. A Hero might not seek the Victim's permission or acceptance before getting into the saving act. He/ she might not enable the victim to get over the situation. The Hero might not bother about making the victim self-sufficient. The Hero might not bother about their own safety and/or well-being while doing the saviors act. The Hero will sometimes even endanger himself or herself and many around them, including their own families to perform the rescue act.

Let us pause for a moment this morning and ask ourselves this question in the middle of the pandemic we are in. What role are we auditioning for? Do we feel like a victim of the situation around us? Are we tempted to take on the Villain role, so we can take revenge or we can "pay back" for the sufferings we have gone through? Or are we donning the cape and taking the role of a superhero, trying to save everyone who is suffering, not bothered about our own safety and the wellbeing of the ones who love us?

In the Hollywood and/or Bollywood plot that I referred to earlier, the Victim-Villain-Hero triangle is always about the Good triumphing over the Bad. How about the spiritual realm that we are supposed to live in? In the spiritual realm, there is a trend to reduce the whole aspect of faith itself to the battle between the good and the bad, with the good ultimately prevailing. There are many world religions that ultimately propound this theory of exalting the Good. So the Victim-Villain-Hero trilogy fits well in the "Good triumphing over the Bad" plot. How about Christianity? Does Christianity prepare us to break away from the Victim-Villain-Hero trilogy? The answer is "yes". Christianity gives us a fourth option, an option of being a Leader. Christianity tells us we have a fourth alternative. We don't have to be stuck inside the Victim-Villain-Hero Triangle. So what does the fourth option entail? What does "Being a Leader" mean in this context? Let me make it very simple. A Leader in this context means someone who leads others to Jesus. Yes. You don't have to be stuck with the three options of being a Victim or a Villain or a Hero. You can choose to be the fourth alternative, a Leader who leads others to Jesus.

- A leader who points a victim to Jesus because Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30).
- A leader who points the Villain to Jesus because Jesus said 27 "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. (Luke 6:27-28).
- A leader who points a Hero to Jesus because Jesus said John 15:5 (NKJV) I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

This morning, God is asking us to make a choice. A choice different from the Victim-Villain-Hero trilogy.

God is asking us to be a Leader who leads others to Jesus.

What makes the Leader in this context different is the fact that we are not pointing the Victim or Villain or Hero to Jesus merely because Jesus is a Good Man. The entire world accepts Jesus Christ as a "Good Man". Actually, as long as we put Jesus in the list of Good Men, there is no problem. No one will persecute you. No one will put you in jail, no one will oppose you if you just say that Jesus was a Good man. But Jesus is not just a Good man. Those of us who have studied the Bible know very well that mere good men cannot save us from troubles and sufferings of the world.

Only Jesus provides hope for our sins. Only Jesus can save us. Because he is the ultimate symbol of perfection, He is God incarnate. He is the ultimate sin offering and guilt offering. He is a lot more than just being a Good Man. Through the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:12-14, the Lord told the Israelites who came to inquire of the Lord, a few Good men cannot save you from famine. Jesus says John 6:35 (NKJV) "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. The Lord said through the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 15:1-2) that a few Good men like Moses and Samuel cannot save them from Captivity. Jesus says John 10:9 (NKJV) I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The Lord cautioned us through Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:15-16) that even Good men like Daniel, Noah and Job cannot save them from wild beasts. Jesus says John 10:11 (NKJV) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. The Lord told the Israelites through both Jeremiah (Jeremiah 15:1-2) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:19-20) that a few Good men cannot save them from diseases or death. Jesus says John 11:25-26 (NKJV) ,"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." The Lord spoke through Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:17-18) and confirmed to the Israelites that a few Good men cannot save them from war. Jesus says John 14:27 (NKJV) Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Only Jesus can save. Not a few Good men. So when we get into the victim role, let us not start looking for a Hero to save us. . Avengers or Krish or Chotta Bheem cannot save us. True saving can come only from Jesus Christ and the blood that was shed on the cross for our sins. When we are tempted to play the villain role, let us remember that "revenge is the Lords". And most importantly, when we are tempted to don the cape and be a hero and want to save the world, let us accept our utter helplessness that without Jesus we are nothing and only in Jesus we have everything. Whether it is during times of trouble, during times of the pandemic or in our ministries, there will be times when others come to us with problems. At those times, we will be tempted to become superheroes ourselves to save our sheep from trouble. Let us remember again that our job is to point them to Jesus, who alone can save. Our job is not to become a superhero and try to save the world. Jesus summed up the message when he said John 14:6 (NKJV) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Let us use even this pandemic to point people to Jesus.

Let us pray.