

# **THREE MEN AT THEIR LAST THREE HOURS ON EARTH**

**By**

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***One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"***

***But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."***

***It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. Luke 3:39-44 NIV***

## **Introduction**

### **Three Men at their last Three hours on Earth**

What would you do if you had only three hours to be on earth?

The bible records the account of three men and how they used the last three hours of their lives. They were not told; they were not warned that somebody nearby was taking record of everything they did or said. Perhaps if they were told, their attitude would have been different. Come to think of it, how could one imagine that somebody will be so naïve to stand around to record such gruesome moment? Yet, somebody did, hence we have the bible record. As we give attention to try to understand what happened on that day and the meaning of the discussions that resulted from the last three hours of the persons condemned to death, we cannot but learn very deep lessons.

The purpose of this little book is to encourage us to do a more heart searching, yielding ourselves further to the Holy Spirit. May God grant us the grace to make the utmost of the lesson as we wait for the Lord's imminent return.

It was like the stage was set; each of them was a character with a part to play. They were allowed to be themselves and do what they felt was right. We are the observers in this life scene. Ours it is to judge them, but we are also to be fair to them so that we will not miss the lesson the Lord will want us to learn. The soldiers had concluded the crucifixion; most people who were hoping the sentence would be reversed were on their way back home. There was three hours in front of them. Three hours of intense pain. Before these three hours which will usher them into the grave, they were permitted to make their last speeches. What they said bared their hearts, and forms the bases for this little book.

## **Chapter One**

### **The man on His left – the Blasphemer**

***One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him:  
"Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"***

That's how some people identify him, even though the bible never referred to him so. But that is for those who believe that "left" position speaks negative, hence his attitude.

1. **Unrepentant**- This man never showed sorrow for his past sinful life that landed him in the present predicament. If he came down from that cross, he was not promising to follow Jesus. It will be opportunity to return to life of sin. It is not wrong to say that that was why he was condemned to death. He had abused several opportunities given to him to change his ways. Perhaps right from his home, he had disregarded the rebuke of parents and elders; perhaps at school, he had disregarded the rebuke of the teachers.

Who knows if he also insulted preachers who tried to warn him about the impending consequence of his evil ways, but ignored them? As a street evangelist I have heard people who mock and insult me for no crime save that I tried to advise them to turn to Christ.

I have people tell me that we all preachers are into this because of money. I have heard people claim that I am judgmental because I tried to point out what they did that was wrong. They refuse to see their wrong or much more understand that their negative behavior have hurt the lives of other. There are those who believe that suffering can help people reconsider their ways. But in this man's case we see the opposite, in spite of his present condition he remained a blasphemer.

***They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him. Rev 16:9 NIV***

Look at a man at the very door post of Hellfire; look at a man with only seconds between him and eternal damnation; see him still hardening his heart. Here again we see God's mercy displayed to the utmost; we see God trying everything that is possible (even the intense heat of public crucifixion) so that this soul will not be lost. Yet, you see the heart of man bent towards evil; see man doing all within his power not to look at anything that can save him; refusing to accept the lifeline. Here is grace and mercy stretched to the extreme limits, and see rebellion and willful sin stretched to its extreme level. God wants to help, man refusing to be helped. For those who argue that God is too kind to send anyone to Hellfire.

Let's see in this story that they are right. Let's see in this story that of a truth that God will send none to Hellfire. But let's also see that those who go to Hellfire went there by choice after they have blocked every avenue created by God to save them. One thing God cannot do is to violate our will; He cannot force us into heaven, just as Satan cannot force us into Hellfire. It is for us to make the choice. That is why this book is in your hand today. God is trying to make sure that if perhaps you are a blasphemer, that you should accept the lifeline and be saved.

It is needful to state here that not everyone had this extreme opportunity. And you cannot be sure that you will have it. The Lord Jesus Christ warns us to REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE (Luke 17:32). Hers was a sudden end. It was sharp and fast. She became a pillar of salt; she never had opportunity to say something. What can be more terrible than sudden death? But

sudden death s only there for those who are not prepared. Anyone who has not made peace with God through Jesus Christ is truly not prepared. I plead with my reader here to consider this well and ask the question, "Am I prepared?"

## **Chapter Two**

***"Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"***

### **Blasphemous-**

That's how we must define his attitude; he is the kind that opens his mouth and utter abomination. The bible called him a criminal, and that was why he was hung on that cross. One would have thought he would be sober and full of regret instead he hurled insults. Obviously he did not learn this overnight. He had never regarded persons or God Himself; hence, he never regarded the person of Christ. The way the other condemned man sounded showed that they knew who was hanging with them. But obviously they might not have known that He was there because of them and their likes. Many on the street today still do not recognize the fact that Jesus went to the cross because of them. Even if they knew, the blasphemer would not have changed.

***The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. Matt 12:35 NIV***

Some make reckless statements and then say, "I was only joking." Yes, but that garbage came from inside you. Why was it that you did not say something else, why was it that it was only indecent things that you said. If you are the kind that jokes with your tongue even in things relating to God, please read this,

***But I tell you that men will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." Matt 12:36-38 NIV***

He said, "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us. Do you not claim you are a man of God? So why are you suffering too? That is how some people talk about God and His servants. For them God and His servants are nothing at all. They don't deserve to be respected, so they join everyone else to insult them. Now, hear this; you are playing with fire. Go through history and see how those who insulted God ended. Then you say, "Nothing will happen!"

***So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. Rom 2:3-5 NIV.***

Did you read that well? You that say, "Nothing will happen!" Please go and ask Pharaoh of Egypt.

***Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.'"***

***Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go." Ex 5:1-2 NIV***

Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him? That is man for you; an ordinary human being that is only a breath boasting as if he has his life in his hand. I once rebuked a police officer who boasted, "Even if God comes down from heaven...". If God comes down



from heaven, will you be standing to talk? Pharaoh blasphemed and threatened God. Then God responded,

***At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead. During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the Lord as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me." The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. "For otherwise," they said, "we will all die!"***  
***Ex 12:29-33 NIV.***

Where was he when the Lord struck his son dead? What could he do but cry? Ordinary head-ache makes mighty men cry. Some people struck hand on their chest to prove how powerful they are, but when high blood pressure (HBP) comes they cannot endure noise. We dare not talk of death. I have watched the faces of men who spread terror in their neighborhood as they lay cold in death.

Must you go thus far before you repent of your foul language? Pharaoh's judgment will be nothing compared to judgment in Hellfire. All descriptions of Hellfire, including that of Jesus Christ Himself, are understatement compared to the real experience. There is no kind of suffering on earth meet to describe Hellfire. What kind of place on earth is painful enough to punish devil and his demons? (Matt25:41). When the bible talks of worms and gnashing of teeth, it is a poor imagery. My best advice is that you

do everything within your power to avoid Hellfire. That is the agony that God tried to save that man from; that is the agony He is trying to save you from.

## **Chapter Three**

***One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him***

### **Reckless and Insensitive**

How else can we describe such a man? A man that values nothing, even his own soul. On the cross what did he have left? Nothing! Yet he did not care. All the labors of his parents and family was wasted and publicly reproached. Yet, he cared less. His life was cut short by his mindless pursuit of wealth. He cared nothing. How if he had wife and children, what about them? He cared nothing. After this life, since he was already doomed, what next? He does not care. Did he fulfill his destiny? That was not among the least of his worries.

How unfortunate are those who have such a person to call their own? Today, some young men call themselves, "Gay". They think it is the reigning thing. Have you considered what it means to be Gay? Do you understand that it means that the purpose for your existence has been wasted because you decided to be something different from what you were created to be? You were made to be a man, and you decided to be something else. Do you try to understand from the very nature of things that God who created this world will call you to account one day? What will you tell Him? What will you answer? Do you consider that God who created this world did not consult you, and will not consult you when He decides to judge the world? How about the expectations of your parents and loved ones at your birth? It does not matter?

If you are living in sin and have never asked yourself these questions, then you are thoughtless and reckless. I advise you

to wake up and show some concern for your soul. For once in your life, value yourself.

### **Inensitive –**

To lose sensitivity is a serious problem. In fact, when one loses senses of a particular part of his body that could mean the symptom of a terrible disease; how much more when one loses the senses of his very person? It is death itself. Life without Christ is death. Have you ever seen a dying man without appetite? That is how it is to find a sinner suffering the consequence of sin, yet not knowing it. That reminds of those addicted to tobacco and alcohol, who argue that there is nothing wrong in those things. The producer printed on the packet that tobacco is dangerous to your health and could kill you before your time. And you are arguing and defending your frustration.

Some have allowed their sexual perversion to gain total control of their souls, that they have lost all public respect and decorum; yet, they believe they know what they are doing. Some involved in occult and violent crime, refuse to see that it will not be long before they face justice. They keep hoping that there is still time. Here is a person rushing into early grave, and God is calling him to wake up, but he blasphemed. Oh, the agony of the cry in Hellfire, “Had I known!” Reader, please I plead with you, don’t ignore your soul’s need. Whatever it maybe that is distracting you are not worth it.

***What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? Matt 16:26 NIV***

Who has ever gained the whole world? King Solomon could not. If it were possible history would have told us stories of men who gained the whole world. But the case of this man is far from it. He was condemned to die, was close to death, yet he snubbed salvation. He was insensitive to the present need of his soul.

That was how he responded; how will you respond?

## **Chapter Four**

***"Don't you fear God?"***

**He rebuked him.** I can boldly say that this condemned criminal showed better sense of judgment than all the religious and political leaders of his time; let us leave for public opinion if that goes for our own generation too. Though condemned he was not willing to allow anything spoken against a Holy Man. I wonder how those who heard him felt when he said, "Do you not fear God?" He preached what the bible calls the eternal gospel.

***Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the ETERNAL GOSPEL to proclaim to those who live on the earth — to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, "FEAR GOD and give him glory Rev 14:6-7NIV***

The call for people to fear God is quite urgent but how strange it is that this is coming from a condemned criminal? If the religious leaders of that age feared God, how come a man whom the man at the right hand side said was innocent was hanging on the cross made for criminals? How come?

Let us break it down. There are four things the man did.

**Light in the midst of darkness** – By rebuking the other man he condemned evil publicly. The other man wanted to pursue his own interest by joining the crowd to do wrong (Exo23:2), he was hoping that by joining forces with those who crucified the innocent man, he may be pardoned. But this man said "No". He beamed the light. I have seen situations when even men of God closed their eyes to what is wrong because it may hurt their friend if he commented on them. Here is a thief condemning us.

When blasphemers speak they voice the mind of the devil, they pollute the atmosphere with demons and poison the emotion of their hearers. It is the spirit in them that speaks through them.

Jesus said that the good man out of the good in him brings forth good things. That is why we have to learn to resist the devil by speaking out LIGHT. When the good man speaks the light in him dispels the darkness generated by the blasphemer. If he said nothing that day, the audience might have gone home with the blasphemer's view. But when he spoke, he overthrew the darkness and propagated the breath of life into the horizon. Now you can understand why Christ said that we should let our light to shine. That is a command not a suggestion; hence ***“he rebuked him”***.

What the blasphemer said was a lie, a misinformation and an odious contamination of the truth of who Jesus is and what He is able to do. By rebuking him, he shut-up the evil, and repositioned the Christ for what truly He is. May God raise many more voices that will have the courage to beam the light in every community where lies have become prevalent; voices that will silence the occult men, witches, wizards, vile and blasphemous tongues. And may you be the vessel, in Jesus Name. Amen!

## **Chapter Five**

***"Don't you fear God,..... for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.***

**He preached the eternal gospel-** If he had one second to live, even though he had missed several opportunities, he was willing to make sure it went into God's account. For him he was addressing the other thief, but here is the mystery of the eternal gospel he preached. He did not know that somebody was writing his message down. He was only discharging his duty but the Holy Spirit was also planning to carry it further. The message he preached that day has been reproduced in almost all the languages on earth. It has been read by kings, queens, lawyers, governors, generals, captains, rich, poor, children, adults and all that are beyond our comprehension. Thank God he preached. We won't be able to tell how many went from the foot of the cross that day cut in their hearts by the rebuke of the condemned man. It was a last word, but besides the words of Christ himself, I don't know of any other message that has affected more lives than this. Did he preach a new gospel? No! It was the same old gospel. In fact, King Solomon had preached it earlier.

***Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: FEAR GOD and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. Eccl 12:13-14 NIV***

He was telling those at the foot of the cross to watch out for God's judgment if they do not turn away from their own sins. For this reason I make it a point of duty never to entertain when I am called to preach. Every time and everywhere I preach, I preach like I am preaching my last message because I do not know who may be hearing me for the first and last time. How if they are not able to



hear me again? May their blood not be found on my hand. How if no other preacher met them after? May it not be said that nobody told them the whole truth. You don't need all the ages to declare the whole gospel. There are basics which every preacher must be swift to present if there is no time to do the rest.

Don't beat about the bush while preaching a funeral; some people there may never hear you again.

Don't beat about the bush preaching a crusade; some passers-by are hearing the gospel for the first time.

Don't beat about the bush preaching in a commercial bus; some of the travelers were brought in by divine providence to hear you for what may be the first and only time.

Don't beat about the bush preaching in the market or the park; you don't know whose heart the Lord has brought along that path.

Keep your preaching skills for your church members, entertain them with your "theology" but when you have the kind of opportunity the condemned man had, please make the most of it. Then keep your problem for your quiet time. How if he spent the time bemoaning his misery? The chronicler would have turned away. Do you not know that several people had been crucified in the same location under the same conditions but what they said was not worth writing down? In every occasion make your words count.

Finally don't assume some body would have preached the salvation message before you came. No! Still start there. It is the eternal gospel; it does not matter how many times they have heard it. Teach them to fear God and flee the wrath of God. Better let it be that they heard it ten times than that they never heard it at all. No matter the topic you are discussing, give it ample time. Make sure it is clear and plain. But if the time be too brief like the condemned

man had, then concentrate on it. Who knows if that is why God brought you to that point?

## **Chapter Six**

***We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve.***

**Acknowledged his sins** – We see that this man is quite different from the other man. His plea, “***We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve***”. The Psalmist says that God desires truth in the inner most parts (Psalm51:6). Sin is the root of all our troubles, not God or Satan. But we often neglect it or even justify it. Some argue that it is not right to punish us so severely for so small an offence. That is also why it is so difficult for many of us to get God’s forgiveness. Forgiveness is for those who are willing to call their sin by its real name. God does not just forgive sinners but sinners that confess their sins.

***If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 NIV***

***Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins? Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord. Lam 3:39-40 NIV.***

***Return, ..... to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall! Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips. Hos 14:1-2NIV***

***He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Prov 28:13NIV***

No sin is too much for God to forgive; yet God does not forgive sins we are not willing to renounce. There are preachers who do not mention sin issues from their pulpits. They say it demoralizes the people and weakens their faith and boldness in prayer. Perhaps they are better preachers than the Lord Jesus, Peter and Paul who condemned sin and warned their audience of the danger of involvement in sin. If the preacher does not present sin in the light God sees it, how can the hearers know the danger of involvement? Does that not explain why most believers today indulge sin with impunity and still fill church pews every other Sunday? If a man cannot open his mouth to speak against sin, how can he turn from it himself? Is it not true that people are shut-up before sin because they have been overcome by same?

Jesus Christ -

***Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Luke 13:1-3 NIV***

Paul-

***The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal 5:19-21 NIV***

Peter -

***For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful***

***speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." 1 Peter 3:10-12NIV***

These are the opinions of pillars of the faith we profess; if they dealt with sin so uncompromisingly, direct and ruthlessly, whose legacy are we following if we do otherwise?

***No one calls for justice; no one pleads his case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments and speak lies  
Isa 59:4 NIV***

***When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Isa 1:15 NIV***

When we acknowledge our sins, we open for ourselves a world of good things. We make the atmosphere set for discussions. Against that, God cannot endure our presence and prayers.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **The fear of God...**

Here in is the major distinguishing factor among those you may meet on the road; those who fear God and those who do not. On the cross of Calvary Christ stood in between as if to distinguish them. The bible says, ***“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline”*** Prov 1:7NIV. Those who claim to be wise but neglect the fear of the Lord are fools. The man on the left wanted to be seen as a wise man. For him he knows how to get what he needs. When he opened his mouth he betrayed what was in his inside, yet he never got what he wanted. I can feel the gloom over his soul when he was rebuked.

***Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools Rom 1:22NIV.***

I have heard some advocates of free thinking argue; in all their efforts to prove that they know, all one can see is their empty head struggling to prove some points from what they claim they know. Then you wait for them to prove they believe that they know, all you hear are what other people told them. Most of the books they quote from they have not read themselves. They just want to prove they have some different higher knowledge. A number of them who tried to quote some things from the bible, have not really read the scriptures themselves. Their arguments are based on the interpretation of some great guru. Some believe they have to introduce something new; among these are those who advocate modern day cult like Eckankar, Grail Message and the like. They don't see how one man can die for the world but they can manage a man with esoteric knowledge who claims man is god to himself. They believe in reincarnation, but instead of proving it from their

religion they refer to the bible as their authority. In the process they pervert the scriptures to try to prove their points. To them Christianity does not make sense but they ignore millions of lives that have been transformed through the gospel of Christ. They advocate free thinking but will not allow you to think. In their teaching halls, you are not allowed to reason or challenge their views. Yet, they say that they are free thinkers. Truly they are fools in their desire to be wise.

Readers, foolishness is too expensive for this life and eternity. Picture in your mind what the end will be for those who do not believe that Christ died for the world. Picture for yourself what the end will be for those who argue that there is no hellfire, hence continued in their sin; what will eternity hold for them? How will they face the torture of Hellfire? And to think they went to Hellfire just because of some porous arguments that actually lead to nowhere; to think that they held such argument because it permitted them to ignore the danger of their soul. Imagine the man on the left talking rubbish when he should have been reconciling with God. See how he shut his mouth while the wise man on the other side was settling a glorious future for himself. "We are under the sense sentence..." the man on the right said. But so quickly, though from the same geographic point he changed his verdict hence his destiny, ***"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*** So simple but fools cannot be wise. How can it be that for the carelessness or neglect of such opportunity you miss heaven? Why not change yours now? Right from where you are reading this book, you can change your destiny; from gloom to joy, from pain to gain. Jesus' response is ever loving and encouraging, "Today you will be with me." Through away those books, or much better, read them with the bible by your side. Ask God to speak to you; open your mind to the Holy Spirit. God forbid any reader of this book will be another bad example.

## **Chapter Eight**

***Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."***

He made peace with God through Jesus Christ.

This is the kind of prayer that God has been hoping that sinners will utter. Reader how will it be that in your forty years or more on earth, you were so clumsy and indifferent that you could not utter such a short prayer? How will it be that a condemned criminal could recognize a suffering messiah as a king with a coming kingdom, and you, who are living in an age when Christ has been proved as the glorified one, who died, rose again and ascended to heaven, yet have not taken a decision about Him? Who will you blame for your future woes? Who will you blame for your doom? The criminal had no pastor, nor bible or church congregation to learn from.

There were no Radios or Television; there were no gospel tracts and millions of gospel newsletters, yet he could believe in Christ. He could believe in Him in spite of the fact that Christ was naked, bleeding and groaning in pain; he could believe in Him though all other voices hurled insults at Him. He recognized Him as King of kings and Lord of lords Yet, you, in spite of great testimonies of people whose lives Jesus had changed; in spite of many who have been healed in the Name of Jesus Christ; in spite of whole empires that have crumbled under the mightiness of His coming, yet, you have not believed in Him.

What other signs are you waiting for? May it not be that this man shall condemn you on the judgment Day. May he not ask you, "What kept you from believing, when I could believe in Him under



such despicable situation? Are you hoping that your chance will come? This is your own chance, please, believe in Him now. Accept Him as your savior and Lord of your life this minute.

It is wonderful that the criminal did not end his own discussion at that point. It is possible he had missed other opportunities before now. But today, the last day, the only day left and the last hour, he called out to be remembered. He was promised with all certainty, "***Tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.***" I believe that from that point death lost its power over this man. All the dread which death had held over his soul lost their control. From that point, he conquered Satan and all his host of darkness. He became an over-comer. Glory to God!

You know what the bible says about this? The sorrowing angels at the foot of the cross broke out in music (Luke15:7). Their sadness was turned into joy when their Lord dealt another terrible knockout on Satan and his host of darkness. The grace of God for this man was not in vain. Here again we see the grace and mercy of God. But more wonderful in this case is that it was not wasted. Reader, take note, God wills that all shall be saved. But all shall not be saved, lest the word of God proves to be a lie. Hellfire shall not lose the company of the souls of men. Yet, all shall not be lost because even as you are reading this book, many souls are making a positive decision to follow Jesus Christ. The choice is yours today. What do you say?

Do you trust in another name or another religion other than Christ? Are you of the opinion that there are other names or ways that will still get you to God? Have you been told that there are other messiahs whom God will still listen to and receive you in His kingdom? Those are false hopes. They are uncertain paths. Eternity is too important to leave in the hands of such empty and baseless

arguments. The bible clears the air over such matters with regards to Jesus and other ways and names.

***Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me  
John 14:6NIV***

***Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.  
John 10:7-9NIV***

***Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12 NIV***

## **Chapter Nine**

***"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."***

The last Man is a life giving spirit (1 Cor15:47). In Him was life and the life was the light of men (john1:4). See the power of an indestructible life; see the power of inextinguishable spirit; behold the power of unchangeable purpose. Who else can carry on the purpose of his existence to such height? It is unbelievable that someone can still believe in himself and his purpose and desire to follow such purpose to such a point and height. The bible says that He shall save His people from their sins. We know He ignored His throne to come to the earth to save mankind, but how could He ignore His own need and pain to the level of wanting to save this one soul even though He had only minutes to live? We know that He came to save that which was lost but we are shocked that even in this hour of pain, He is willing and able to save to the utmost those who come to God through Him. (Heb7:25).

He said with authority, "***I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.***" He was certain and emphatic, He knew the very day and He knew the exact location (paradise) he was going to meet the soul of the man who had asked to be remembered.

That is power. He is not like our modern day gurus who had read books and met people, who have as their authority the views of others. He spoke like the authority Himself. He did not need to consult somebody else before He made the offer. He knew that in spite of His present suffering, He was able to take up His life again because He was the one that laid it down.

## **Today He still saves.**

***Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death Heb 2:14-15 NIV***

In Christ death loses its power and fear of death is baseless.

***"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 15:55-57NIV***

Here we see also that Jesus is mighty to save. Nothing can keep Him from saving. Beloved, no matter where you are now, Jesus Christ can still save your soul. Compare your situation to that of this condemned man. At the very door posts of Hell. See the position of the man when he was saved. Does it not beat any imagination? The powers of darkness would have concluded that they have dealt a final blow on the man's soul. The last demon would have submitted his file to Lucifer and announced, "Mission concluded. He is finished; no more hope for him." Yet, Jesus reached out His mighty hand and snatched him away. Praise God! Jesus is mighty to save!

Remember the demonized man at Gardarene in Mark5; remember that he was living in a cemetery when Jesus Christ met him. That is another example of a helpless and hopeless case. When Jesus met him, all the forces of legion of demons could not keep him from being saved. He was discharged from the dungeon and the fetters of the devil and his host of darkness. Jesus is mighty to save! Remember the demonized man in the synagogue in Mark chapter

one; as Jesus spoke the demons could not endure the power of His words; they challenged His right to disturb their abode. With one word, He silenced and cast them out. Jesus is mighty to save! Remember the woman bent over for eighteen years by spirits of infirmity; Jesus commanded them to let their prisoner go. They had no choice than to obey. Jesus is mighty to save!

Even Lazarus who was in the bowels of death itself; he had been eaten up by death, buried and his flesh was eaten up by worms of the earth. Jesus called for him with a loud voice. At his voice even maggots vomited what they had eaten and the man came out in full view of all. Jesus is mighty to save! Remember Mary Magdalene who was oppressed by seven demons; at the command of Jesus they fled to allow her to love Jesus with all her heart as was her desire. Jesus is mighty to save! Remember the woman with bleeding for twelve years; one touch at the hem of His garment, her story changed. Jesus is Mighty to save!

Let me share this testimony with us. It was in a conference I ministered in Zing, Taraba State of Nigeria. After the first night, my wife and I went to pay a visit to our host, Apostle Job Agio. In his house we met a woman who said she was in our meeting the night before. She was a Muslim and suffering from the terminal stages of AIDS. When I made the altar call for those who would give their life to Christ she had stepped out. After confessing Christ she discovered that all the symptoms of AIDS were gone. She said that since then up to when I met her, she was healthy. Jesus saves completely.

Do you have an unbelieving brother, sister, husband, wife or whatever? Are you afraid your son or daughter might be doomed forever? Let this accounts encourage you to continue to intercede. He could still be saved; they can still be saved. Instead of not being saved at all, may they be saved at the very door post of Hellfire. Is it

a matter of diseases and evil curses? Call upon Jesus. He is mighty to save

I beg you to bow your head in prayer now and call upon Jesus. If He could still save others at the point of His own death, what can He not do when He sits enthroned at the right hand of the Father as the soon coming King? Perhaps you have not believed yet; call upon Him to help your unbelief.

Jesus can still save?

## **Chapter Ten**

### **Influence of the Home**

It will not be right to conclude this work without reference to the family. There was this account of some missionaries who called three girls who were below the age of five and brought each of them before a painting of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each was asked to identify the person on the painting. The first girl looked puzzled that she was asked to identify such a stranger. The look on her face said that she has never had anything to do with that person or his kind. Owing to that fact that she was expected to give an answer, she said, “Na oyibo man wey get biabia.” (It is a bearded white man). The second girl was not that surprised; the look on her face said that she is familiar with the image. She answered, “It is Jesus”. Her response was cold and distant. Even though she is familiar with the painting she showed she does not have any attachment to it. The third girl was brought in who beamed a warm smile and turned to the missionaries said, “It is my mummy’s daddy! That is Jesus Christ.”

From their response the missionaries could tell how their families responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ. That also will show how they will respond to the gospel message anywhere. Let me say that the first girl possibly came from a home where religion was mocked. Perhaps she had a blasphemous father. This is the kind of father who would come home to drink alcohol in the parlor with friends who mouth offensive words against God and the church. Perhaps the mother is the kind who was always busy running after money and fashion. It is possible that in the home she comes from, lying was no sin, manipulation was normal, deceit was a normal way of life and there was never a talk about life after death. How then can the young man see the danger he was into? That must be why he mocked and blasphemed. His partner was so shocked at his

indifference to truth. God will send His missionaries to reach this type, but what a difficult time they will have. There is nothing to start with; no history, no testimony nor bible story.

Reader, if you are in this fix, hear this now, you have no excuse. God has brought you thus far to draw you to Himself.

Readers, if you are a parent, strive that your own children and wards will not be like this.

The attitude of the second person showed that some work had been done before now. The laborer might have concluded that his labors were wasted, but the Holy Spirit was yet to take hold of the same labors. Where did he learn what is the fear of God? Perhaps as he slumbered at the family altar while others prayed. Where did he learn that Jesus was the coming king and had a kingdom? It is possibly that it was when his family sang over the Lord's Supper. Where did he learn the principles of justice? Perhaps, it was when his father warned him on the consequence of stealing or raping women. We may not be very certain, but are sure that something was done before he got to the cross.

Readers, if you have such rebellious youth in your custody, do not be weary in doing good. Onesimus was a young man staying with a believer called Philemon. He was a slave but was not treated that way because the home he lived was also a church. So he took advantage of it and fled. He could not have dared that with his master if he were not a believer. There were instruments of the state to recover such slaves in those days and the punishment could be death. Onesimus despised the love and fellowship of the family. Perhaps Philemon bought him from the slave market when he heard his name, Onesimus which means "Useful". Onesimus by his attitude became something contrary to the meaning of his name; he became useless. I believe that the church continued to pray for him.



When he left he went into crime, was caught and jailed. In the jail he met Paul who was also the father in the Lord to his master, Philemon. Like the thief on the cross, he had now to pay attention to the gospel he disregarded at home. He was converted, in Paul's own words became useful and he willingly returned to his master with a letter from Paul. (Read Paul's letter to Philemon).

There was this account of some armed robbers who were robbing a luxurious bus along Lagos road. They told all the passengers to lay face-down on the tarred road. An aged woman was struggling to obey the instruction when one of the criminals went to kick at her. The report said that the leader of the gang rebuked him. He personally came over and escorted the old woman back to the bus. He doused her fear and begged her to forgive them; sighting that they got into crime because of joblessness. Please, go into prayers for all such that the devil will not push them into Hellfire before somebody reaches them.

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