

Greg Laurie: This Could Be Why You Have Such a Hard Time Trusting Jesus

Have you ever lost anything in the ocean? You can pretty much kiss it goodbye. You probably won't ever see it again.

Years ago I was scuba diving, and I was cruising along at about 15 feet below the surface. I could see the ocean floor, which was about 30 feet below the surface. I went out a little further, and the ocean floor dropped to 60 feet. I went to a depth of 30 feet and ventured out even further, until the ocean floor was at about 80 feet below the surface. Then I came to a ledge that dropped off, and I could no longer see the bottom of the ocean. I took one look into that dark abyss, turned around and went back the way I came. That is a long way down. If you drop something there, you will never see it again.

The Bible says of God, "He will ... cast all of our sins into the depths of the sea" (Mic. 7:19). God will take our sin and throw it into the deepest part of the sea. He will take our iniquities and cast them into the depths of the ocean. God also promises, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more" (Heb. 8:12). Isn't that good news? God will forgive your sin. He will forget your sin. We should not choose to remember what God has chosen to forget. It is forgiven.

The Bible tells the story of two thieves on the cross. They were being crucified on the same day Jesus was. The word "thief" the Bible uses is a much more intense word than the one we use. They were not just men who stole things. They probably were murderers and insurrectionists revolting against

Roman tyranny. That is why Rome would hang people like that on crosses.

Here was this man, hanging on a cross, and next to him was Jesus Christ. That thief was hanging there because of his own sins. Jesus was hanging there because of the sins of others. The crowd began to mock Christ, saying, "He saved others. let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen One of God" (Luke 23:35). Both criminals joined in this chorus of mockery at first, but then Jesus said something that amazed one of them: "Father, forgive them, for they not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). The man looked at Jesus and said, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). He believed on the spot.

You can believe in Jesus that quickly. It doesn't take a year. It doesn't take a month. It doesn't take a week. It can happen in an instant.

The thief was hopeless up to that point, but he found hope. Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Talk about being in the right place at the right time. Can you imagine how his heart must have leaped with joy?

Have you lost hope today? It has been said that man can live 40 days without food, three days without water, about eight minutes without air, but only one second without hope. Jesus Christ can give you hope today, just like he gave to the thief on the cross.

He had what we might call a deathbed conversion. Some say, "I'll wait until my deathbed, and then I'll believe in Jesus." What makes them think they will have the luxury of a deathbed conversion? Sometimes death comes without warning. The Bible says, "As it is appointed for men to die once, but after this comes the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). Death will come for everyone. One out of every one person will die. And life can end

unexpectedly.

There was a man known as Saul who was, in many ways, one of the most evil men who ever lived. He was a heavy-duty sinner. Ironically, Saul of Tarsus was also a religious man. He was part of an elite religious group called the Sanhedrin, which made rulings that affected the whole nation. Saul made it his business to hunt down followers of Jesus and put them to death.

One day, a young man named Stephen was brought before him. Stephen was fearless, and he stood up in front of Saul and the other members of the Sanhedrin and began to lay out the gospel without any shame or fear. As he spoke, they got really angry. In fact, they were so angry they put their fingers in their ears and started screaming. (You know your message isn't going over well when people start doing that.) Yet Stephen kept speaking. The Bible says that his face shined like an angel. The command was given to execute Stephen by stoning. As the rocks were hurled at Stephen's body, he cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60). It sounded like Jesus on the cross. It enraged Saul that someone could die like that.

Stephen wasn't afraid to die. Death for the believer is not the end; it is just a continuation of life in another place. This does not mean that Christians walk around with some kind of death wish. I don't think anyone loves life more than Christians. What is great is that we don't need drugs or alcohol to make life fulfilling. We have a relationship with God.

But when that day comes (and it will) the Christian will be ready. As the apostle Paul (formerly Saul of Tarsus) said, "For to me, to continue living is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). That is the hope of the follower of Jesus Christ. And only those who are prepared to die are really ready to live. {eoa}

Greg Laurie (@greglaurie) is the senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship, an author of more than 70 books, and an evangelist leading Harvest America, a live nationwide event streamed to thousands of host locations. More at .

This article appeared at and was originally taken from his weekly column at World Net Daily.