

Heavyweight Champ Died in Locker Room, Overcame Death After Meeting Jesus

Bludgeoned and bloodied after his heavyweight boxing match with Jimmy Young, George Foreman was ready to go home and die. He had lost, and the spirit of death was all around him in the dressing room.

But then he heard a voice within him say, "You believe in God. Why are you scared to die?"

"I was afraid. I tried to offer money to save my life," Foreman told Charisma News' John Matarazzo in a recent interview with the former two-time heavyweight champion of the world. "I heard a voice saying, 'I don't want your money. I want you.'"

"Then my legs gave out on me and I was in this dark place. Over my head, underneath me, all around me was hopelessness. There was no more George. I was dead. I've not forgotten the smell of death to this day. I said, 'I don't care if this is death, I still believe there is a God.' I was rescued from nothingness. I was alive in the dressing room laying on the table. I told my doctor who was standing behind me to move his hands because the thorns on his head were making him bleed. I told my masseur, I told him, move your hand where he's bleeding where they crucified him.

"That was my first experience with Jesus and my belief in God and Jesus. I jumped off the table, jumped in the shower and started screaming, 'hallelujah, I'm clean. I'm born again.' That was 46 years ago, and I have not stopped screaming that yet."

That dramatic scene from 1976 is sure to impact millions who

will go see “Big George Foreman,” an Affirms film which will open in theaters nationwide on April 29. It’s a biopic that reveals Foreman’s transformation from a man filled with hate, to one who learned how to forgive God, himself and others and found the peace of God he had so long sought.

Later in life, God called Foreman to be a pastor. More than 10 years after he retired from boxing, he returned to the ring through a vision that the Lord gave his wife, Mary Joan. At the time, Foreman weighed 350 pounds, and many chided him for his decision to return to boxing.

“If God tells you, then [you] really need to do this,” Foreman says. “I needed to lose weight and get back into shape. I need to support my youth center. I said I’m going to be heavyweight champion of the world again. I was almost 40 years old. I was the oldest person in the gym, and it was an experience for me. I felt everybody laughed at me, and while they were laughing, I was praying. And God brought it about.”

 Foreman wants everyone to understand, first and foremost, that the movie, “Big George Foreman” is not a boxing film.

“It’s a movie about love and redemption—a second and third chance at life,” Foreman says.

Foreman extolled the faithfulness of God, praying: “God, this is not about me, but about my testimony; how God walked into my life and showed me Jesus and made everything right. Every person that can go to the movie can understand that if you lost everything, Jesus is always there and He’s always been there for you.”

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