

Hallelujah! Ex-Mob Boss Gets Saved, Preaches Heaven and Hell

Michael Franzese, a former mob boss, preached the sermon on Sunday at Pastor Greg Laurie's Harvest Christian Fellowship, insisting Christians should have a fear of hell and eternal damnation, but should also share the good news of Jesus to nonbelievers in a gentle way.

Franzese, 71, a one-time member of the Colombo crime family in New York, is now a Christian author and speaker. The son of former mob underboss Sonny Franzese, he was arrested 18 different times for various criminal activities. At the age of 29, he was named to the rank of "caporegime," overseeing a crew of 300 mob soldiers. His influence in the family continued to grow, and in 1986, *Fortune* magazine listed Franzese as number 18 on its list of the "50 Most Wealthy and Powerful Mafia Bosses."

Franzese was released from prison in 1994. It was while he was in prison that he discovered the gospel of Jesus Christ when a guard gave him a copy of the Bible while he was in solitary confinement.

He told Laurie's Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside, California, he developed a "healthy fear of hell" during the time he spent behind bars.

"When I was in prison, I spent 29 months and seven days in solitary confinement in a six-by-eight cell, 24/7. Me and God ... That's not easy. We weren't meant to be solo creatures. We were meant to be social. When those lights went out at night, a lot of guys did not do well; a lot of moaning and groaning," Franzese recalled.

"I dove into my Bible. I prayed every day. It was my closest time with the Lord because I had no choice. That was it ... And thank God, I turned to Him and nowhere else ... But you know what happened in that hole? I developed a healthy fear of hell," he admitted.

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