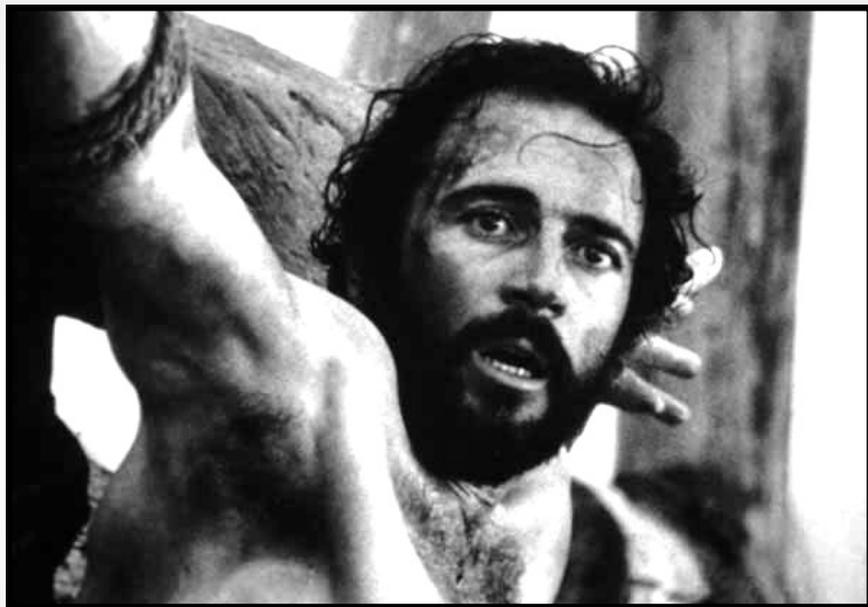


YOU CAN COME TO JESUS
IN DARKNESS ALSO



R.T. NUSBAUM

This little booklet is transcribed from a bi-weekly blog that “Friends of Life in The Spirit” regularly produces in video, audio, and now printed format. We have chosen to retain the conversational flow of the original teaching rather than edit it into a bookish type feel.

*If you would like to also listen and watch this blog,
you can visit our website at:
www.friendsoflifeinthespirit.com*

Dying Seeds Publications

©2018

YOU CAN COME TO JESUS IN DARKNESS ALSO

I want to start with quoting 1 Thessalonians 5:16, “Rejoice evermore...” Do you know the rest of the verse? No? That is because that is the whole verse! “Rejoice evermore.” The other day, I was looking through my Bible, and I looked down and saw that verse, “Rejoice evermore,” and I thought, “Even if you’ve done something wrong? Or you’ve messed up? You’re still supposed to rejoice?” Should I always be rejoicing because it says “evermore”? And the Spirit of God just said, “Yes, because you know the Lord hasn’t changed, so you can rejoice in Him and you can love Him. You can always open your throat and your heart to Him, regardless.” You can come to Jesus anytime. You can always come to Jesus. For a lot of people, when they sin or fail, they do not feel like they can come to Him, but they can. We will get into why that is true and the importance of that.

“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, if thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself” (Luke 23:33-37).

The basic theme of these verses in Luke is that they crucified Jesus and the people began to mock Him, they wagged their heads, and said, “If you’re the Son of God, come down off the cross.” The people, the high priests, and the Pharisees

are all there saying these things as they pass by. The important thing to notice is that while Jesus is hanging on the Cross, nobody sees who He is. They see Him between two criminals and assume He is a criminal.

“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened...” (Luke 23:39-45).

We have this situation where Jesus is hanging on the cross, and there are these two men on either side of Him. One of them is mocking him; he is going along with the crowd. But the other one is responding, and here is something we need to see clearly: he is hanging on a cross for his own failures. He is in darkness. They are all in darkness during this time. Maybe this thief’s mother is there, or family, or friends. He is in the worst possible situation he can be in.

What makes this situation so unusual? The fact that this thief would reach out to Jesus in the particular way that he did. When we are surrounded by darkness and failure within our own being or in our own situation, it seems almost reasonable not to come to Jesus, to stay away. But this thief came in the hour of his darkness. And in his moment of greatest doubts about his whole life, about what he had done and the decisions he had made, he turned and he spoke to Jesus in a completely different manner than what is normal. Usually fears are highest at points like this, but he pressed past himself and into Jesus. He made a decision to come to Jesus in this darkness and the Lord received him.

In Luke 18:16, Jesus said: “Suffer [allow] the little children to come unto me...” If you are coming to Jesus as a child, there is a difference between that and when you are in deep darkness and failure. They are really two different things. When you come as a child, it is like you are empty and He is going to give you knowledge or He is going to fill you. But coming in darkness and failure and confusion is worse than being empty. It is harder than coming as a little child; it is not easy. It is not easy when every motive says, “Stay away from the Lord.”

Everyone has probably experienced that in relationship to going to church. You know, one morning you wake up and you just do not feel right spiritually and you think, “The last place I need to be is church.” No, that is the first place you need to be, but greater than that we are talking about the Lord, not just going to church. We are talking about meeting with the Lord; we are talking about coming unto Him.

This thief turned to Jesus. There is no reason why he should look to Jesus in the manner that he did. There is no reason why he should. He should have been caught up in his own situation, in his own hurts, in the things that have been unfair that put him there, even if they were not. You know how we are, we say, “This is unfair!” and we blame everybody. We get in all this flux in the muck and mire in our mind and in our emotions.

But this thief did not do that when he turned to Jesus. He did not even turn to Jesus just to repent or to feel sorry for his actions. That would be us: “I’m going to come to Jesus in my darkness and in my fears and I’m going to repent and I’m going to feel sorry for my actions because this is what you do when you come to Jesus in your darkness instead of rejoicing

Jesus makes this kind of believer an open display of faith in the midst of darkness and his own failure.

evermore.” But this thief says, “I am coming to honor Jesus in His death,” and that is exactly what he does.

If you were to look at Jesus on the outward, then He is just a guy that looks like a thief and you are going to be stuck in that place if you do not look past the outward and see who is really there.

Somehow, this thief quit looking at himself. Somehow, he quit thinking about himself. Somehow, he was not going, “These are my last minutes on earth.” Somehow, he was looking at Jesus and saying to the other guy, “Leave him alone. We deserve this, but He has done nothing wrong.” He was knowing Christ Crucified. He was not talking about Jesus of Nazareth who had just healed him or his family or fed them. He was not coming on that approach at all. He was talking to Christ Crucified. That was the Jesus he was beholding, and maybe he was never at any of the events where Jesus was, and he was saying, “This is the One that I see, this is who I know.”

When we get in this darkness, we can have confidence. We can have a confidence that overrides all those fears, but our confidence comes from knowing His view of us. How would He see us if we came to Him in our darkness? “For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). You are in Christ, or as He would say, “You are in Me.” See, we say to one another, “You are accepted in the Beloved,” but if we come to Him in darkness He would say to you, “You are accepted in Me. I am beloved of the Father and I put you in Me. You are Me, not ‘in Christ’ in some theoretical way, you are Me.” He would say, “This is what I believe, and it is not just a belief. I put you in Me and even if you do not feel beloved, that is okay because I am the Beloved and you are in Me and whatever your reactions about yourself, or your mind, or your thoughts, or the crazy things that go on in you, this is My mind and if you take My mind then you can have confidence even in darkness and can rejoice evermore.”

Now see Jesus' response to this thief: "This day you shall be with me in paradise." This thief, of all people, has found a backdoor to communion with Jesus: he came in through the darkness. Everyone else would want to meet Him in the light, but he came in through the worst of his situation; everyone else comes when they are doing well, but the thief found the straight shot. Nobody else came immediately to be with Jesus except this guy, this criminal, that found Jesus to be the Christ of the Cross and not just Christ the Healer or the Christ of the miracles.

He embraced the crucified Christ. And Jesus, in His response to the thief, this reprobate, this criminal—Jesus makes this kind of believer an open display of faith in the midst of darkness and his own failure.

To Jesus, this thief is shining forth faith and Christ Crucified in the midst of his own darkness. In the worst day of his life, he is shining forth Christ Crucified and faith in Christ Crucified. And the open display of this guy is when he is on a cross. We want to be behind a pulpit, we want to be a great missionary, we want to do great things, but this guy found the back door into communion with Jesus. This is amazing.

In the first verses we looked at, Luke 23:33-37, a whole lot of people had already passed by Jesus and they are looking at Him on the Cross and saying, "We thought you would be the one," and, "If you are the Son of God then come down," and they are mocking Him and wagging their heads at the great fall of the one for whom they had such high hopes. It is easy to turn on somebody.

But Jesus seems to be only fully aware of the Father and this thief. When He did have a thought for the people mocking Him, He said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." And then, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

And then He had one other personal interaction: He is hanging out with a thief, really hanging out, on a cross. He is hanging out, and miracles are happening, but not the kind that everybody is looking for. Jesus says, "That is a miracle, that in this darkness and confusion and pain you have taken note of Me and identified Me as who I really am: Christ Crucified." The thief says, "This is a miracle, this is a day of miracles: here I am in darkness and confusion and in pain and the worst day of my life when I will give up the ghost, and as soon as I do I will be with Jesus in Paradise because I embraced Him as Christ Crucified." Hallelujah, glory to God, rejoice, rejoice evermore, all the time, at your worst, at your best, anytime!

Lord, we just thank You for opportunities to live past our cross and glory in Your Cross. To ignore our darkness and our lack and our confusion and to hear Your beautiful healing words this day: "You're with Me, this day." Father, may we become less mindful of our selves. You said set our affections on things above where Christ sits. Well, let us set our affections on Jesus because He is the One that sits there above. Not on things on the earth. Help us to be more mindful of Your reality, having Your mind and Your view so that, in our darkness, when we come, we come like this thief did. He came to You in the worst; that darkness was over as soon as he acknowledged Christ Crucified. Jesus said, "It is over with, you are with Me from now on."

Help us not to be so mindful of everything else; like the scripture says, not to set our affections on, not looking at temporal things, but those things which are eternal. And those eternal things are not doctrines, and they are not teachings. They are You, Jesus. You, Christ Crucified. You, the realness of who You are, and You did it all in Yourself so that we would be safe and could rejoice, evermore. Thank You, Lord Jesus. Thank You for being our life. Thank You for joining us to You.