

“DON’T BE ALARMED!”
I Kings 17:17-24, John 4:43-53, Acts 20:7-12
June 28 & 20, 2025

“Dwight L. Moody made a mistake on October 8, 1871. He preached to his largest audience in the city of Chicago. The text had been, ‘What Will You Do Then with Jesus Who Is Called the Christ!’ He said something he had never said before and, frankly, never said again. He was very fatigued and because of that he said to the audience after he presented the Gospel, ‘Now I give you a week to think that over. And when we come together again, you will have opportunity to respond.’

“Then Ira Sankey came and began to sing. Even before he finished the song, you could hear the blare of the sirens in the streets of Chicago as that great fire broke out and left 100,000 homeless. Hundreds of people died in that fire. And Dwight L. Moody rose to the occasion a few months later and he said, ‘I would give my right arm before I would ever give an audience another week to think over the message of the Gospel. Some who heard the Gospel of Jesus that night died in the fire.’”¹ They died without the opportunity to receive Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord of their lives. They died unable to receive eternal life with God.

There is urgency when it comes to taking the Gospel message to the people of the world. We never know the day or the hour that our time here on earth will be completed. If we neglect to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those who have never accepted Him as their Savior, we are condemning them to an eternity in Hell, away from the presence of God.

The Apostle Paul told the people of Corinth, “*As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For He says, ‘In the time of My favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.’ I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:1-2). Today is the day of Salvation for each person, and it is important that we*

¹ (Charles Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Ultimate Book of Illustrations*, [Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998] p. 506)

remember that some will not have another day beyond this day to make a decision for Jesus Christ. It is imperative that we take the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world so that people might make their choice today, for they may not have a tomorrow in which to choose Him.

I applaud the work of the Holy Spirit in each one of our lives to draw us into a relationship with Jesus so that we might be able to enjoy eternal life with Him. But we must remember that the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus, is not to stop with us. As followers of Jesus, it is vital that we share our hope with those around us who so desperately need to hear the message of Salvation through Jesus. They may not have another day to make their choice.

It was true in the life of the widow at Zarephath in the days of Elijah the prophet. During the great drought that encompassed all of Israel, God had directed Elijah to the widow's house, where God graciously provided food every day for her family and for Elijah. But then the widow's son became sick, and finally stopped breathing. In great distress, the widow exclaimed, "*What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?*" (I Kings 17:18). She had not yet accepted the Lord God Almighty into her life as her God.

So Elijah took the son and presented him to the Lord and pleaded for his life to be returned. And God was gracious to give him back his life. At this "*the widow said to Elijah, 'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth'*" (17:24). Out of death came life, and God was glorified in the work of the prophet Elijah. It was the day of salvation for the widow and her son. Elijah gave them hope and life through the Lord.

In the same way, Jesus brought salvation to the house of a "*royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum*" (John 4:46). When this official sought out Jesus to heal his son, Jesus simply told him "*Go ... your son will live.*" *The man took Jesus at His word and departed*"

(4:50). He trusted Jesus' authority and went with the hope of new life for his son. And when the servants told him of the exact time when his son became well, he rejoiced, knowing it was the exact time Jesus had said "*your son will live.*" "*So he and his whole household believed*" in Jesus and became His disciples (4:53). The whole house! Men, women and children all included!

We never know the day or the hour that we will face death, so it is vital that we be active in sharing the Good News of Jesus to others so that they might believe **before** they die. Unless a person makes a decision for Jesus Christ before they die, their fate is forever sealed, and they are counted as enemies of God, thereby living in God's absence for eternity.

In these two incidents, the healing and new life given to the children was instrumental in bringing the whole household to faith in the Lord. Life was given, not only physically, but spiritually, because the households had the opportunity to hear about the salvation that comes from God, and to believe in Jesus as God's Son, the Messiah. Today we hear about another opportunity for people to receive Jesus through the miraculous work of the Lord. Listen to the account found in Acts 20:7-12. (READ Acts 20:7-12)

Paul was on his way back to Jerusalem when he and his traveling companions stopped at Troas, in Mysia. On the last day of their stay, Paul spoke to the people after breaking bread together. But since he was planning on leaving the next day (Acts 20:7), Paul began telling the people about the Good News of Jesus. It was a very long discussion and though his presentation was not boring, one young man grew weary and fell asleep while sitting in the window of the third floor room.

Now folks, you think my sermons are long! Paul preached all night, because he valued the lives of the people there at Troas. He wanted them to come to an understanding of who Jesus is so that they might put their faith and trust in Him as their Savior. Paul wanted to use all the

time he had available to save as many people in Troas as possible. They might never see Paul again, so it was imperative that they hear the Good News of Jesus. They kept the room lit up as much as they could to help keep people's attention, but the inevitable happened. Eutychus fell asleep in the window, and as his sleep allowed him to relax, he rolls right out the window and falls to the ground, tunic, sandals and all. And as everyone rushes out to see what has happened to him, they discover that he has died because of the fall.

Now, that's not the kind of impression that Paul wanted to make to the people of Troas. They could easily have cried out like the widow of Zarephath, *"What have you to do with us, man of God. Have you come here to convict us of our sin that then kill our son?"*

But before they could respond, *"Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. 'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'He's alive!' Then he went upstairs again..."* (Acts 20:10).

AMAZING! God gave life back to Eutychus as an example of what Jesus does for all those who claim Him as Savior and Lord. In paraphrased words of John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace," "I once was lost, but now I'm found; *was dead but now I live.*"

And imagine the impact that had on the people of Troas? Their boy, Eutychus, was dead, but through the power of Jesus Christ, whom Paul preached, life was given back to him. It was an example that Paul could use to bring the importance of life with Jesus Christ to the people. They saw what Jesus did for Eutychus through Paul. Why wouldn't they then give their lives to Jesus and find everlasting life? Jesus saves us not only dramatically in physical healings, but also in spiritually, awakening us from the sleep of death.

Paul couldn't have planned it any better with the live example of the resurrection power

of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. God used that deadly incident to demonstrate to all the people the power of life through Jesus Christ our Lord. No other pagan god could ever do that, nor has one ever done that before. Only Jesus gives us life, here on earth, as well as beyond this life. Only Jesus can bring us back from the dead. Only Jesus can rescue us from slavery to sin.

Let me give you another example of the grace of God through Jesus Christ. “In October of 1987, a little girl named Jessica McClure fell down an abandoned well shaft. The shaft was eight inches in diameter and twenty-two feet deep. She was lost to her parents with no way for her own to get out. She was trapped. In this little town of Midland, Texas, she became the focus of the whole nation. Every major news network focused in on Midland, Texas, and the girl named Jessica, who was trapped in the well.

“For fifteen hours, men dug and drilled a companion shaft next to the well that Jessica had fallen into. They didn’t know initially that to get to her they would have to go through some limestone. This stone cracked the bits on the drills they were using to make their way down alongside the well shaft. Getting to little Jessica took a lot longer than anyone expected. After fifteen hours or so, someone was able to get down into that parallel shaft and dig their way over to Jessica. He then untangled little Jessica’s legs, and brought her up to the top. (He was like Paul saying ‘Don’t be alarmed! She is alive!’)

“Cameras blazing upon the opening to the shaft caught the man bringing Jessica up out of the shaft and into the arms of her waiting parents and paramedics. The site, filled with people hoping and praying, was filled with joy at Jessica’s rescue. The rescuers were crying, the parents were crying, newscasters were crying, and onlookers across the nation were crying because little Jessica, who was most certainly dead, was now alive. Little Jessica, in order to live, had to have somebody else save her.

“Similarly, every member of the human race is trapped. We have fallen into an abyss out of which we can never lift ourselves. If we want to get out of this hole we’re in, somebody up there has got to come down to where we’ve been trapped by sin. Somebody has got to drill a hole to where we are. Even though we try hard, the hole is too deep and we can’t climb out.

“At the heart of the Gospel, that’s what Jesus did. He saw you and me in a hole. We were trying to get out with good works, but we weren’t getting anywhere. But God, coming as the person of Jesus Christ, entered the hole of our death, and offered deliverance from above. Not only did God offer deliverance, He also offered assurance. The same Jesus Christ not only saves, He also assures.”²

But imagine that when Jesus comes down to us while we are stuck in our hole of sin and death that we tell Jesus, “Thanks for the effort, Jesus, but no thank You. I’m fine right where I am. I’ll pass. I don’t want Your help. I can do it by myself.” That would be as problematic as getting all the way down to little Jessica, and her refusing to let the rescuer take her out of the well she was in. To say “no” to the rescuer would only have saddened the whole rest of humanity who were hoping for her rescue.

But folks, that’s what is happening right now as people say “no” to Jesus. They may have become so hurt by others within the life of the Church, and the rest of our society, that they turn their backs on Jesus and refuse to accept His offer of rescue. First, they have no idea that they’re stuck in a hole of sin that they cannot get themselves out of. Second, they assume that they can get out of their situation any ole time they want to. Third, they may not even know about the opportunity for rescue. Many assume that’s where life has gotten them too, so they’re stuck with it. And that’s where we come into the picture.

² (Tony Evans, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations*, [Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009] pg. 268, #801)

We have to be willing and able to share the Good News of Jesus' Salvation for all the world with those around us who are still stuck in the pit of sin and death. We have to see their situation and then love them enough to do something about saving them. If we do nothing, we show only contempt and hatred for them, for we condemn them to eternal death. But if we step up and begin working to bring them to the rescue of salvation, it will be hard work. We might run into the hard rock and limestone of pleasures and riches that prevent us from proceeding further. We might find our drill bits of tactics breaking against all the opposition. We might even come up upon the outright rejection of that person to be rescued.

We must not let setbacks stop our reaching out to them however. We have to adjust our tactics and keep on working to rescue them. We must keep showing them love and respect, and living the life that Jesus has called us to live, so that they might see the difference that Jesus makes when we receive Him as our Savior. It may ultimately take us much longer to rescue that person from their death-trap, but we should not stop trying to reach them. Today is the day of Salvation, so we've got to get started. All heaven is anxiously waiting for their rescue.

But folks, I have to tell you, this church is not the end-all for people. Becoming a member of this congregation, or any church congregation, does not save anyone. Rather it is the process of getting the people to know Jesus Christ that brings life to them. That's what the work of the church is about. We don't save anyone. It is only through the power of Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, that brings life. But that doesn't mean we leave it up just to Them to do it. God has called each one of us to become a part of the rescue team to reach those who are lost right next to us.

For some, it may take a miracle before they come to understand the power and love of Jesus Christ. For some it may only take walking alongside of them in support of them through

difficult times that brings them to Salvation. For others, it might just be hearing the Good News of Jesus. We don't know what it will take for the person right next to us to find the Salvation of the Lord Jesus. But the important thing to remember is that we don't know how long they have yet to live here on the earth, so every opportunity to guide them into a life-saving decision for Jesus is essential.

The people of Troas, having seen Eutychus brought back to life through Paul, were encouraged and “*greatly comforted*” (Acts 20:12) by the new life given to Eutychus. It opened up their eyes to the possibility of greater things for them. It gave them the assurance they needed to continue on in faith in Jesus, AND to take the Good News of Jesus to others so that they might have hope and life, too.

Paul's life-giving words and actions brought hope and life to a whole community. So what might God do through you as you participate in the Great Commission here in our community? What person at the point of death might find comfort and encouragement as you take the Name of Jesus with you to them? What circumstance might you use to help those stuck in the well of sin and death to bring life to the people? Don't wait for someone else to do the work that God has called you to do. Be brave, confident and obedient and take the hope and life found only in Jesus to those around you. Let's pray.

Father, You have told us, “Today is the day of Salvation.” Give us the heart to hear those words and follow You with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Guide us by Your Holy Spirit to the person TODAY that you appoint for us to share Jesus with so that they might hear about Him, receive Him and be saved by Him. Don't let us put off taking Jesus to others, for they may not have another day left. Give us such love for them that we do all we can to lead them to Jesus, for it is in His Great Name that we pray. AMEN.