

Hello friends, I wanted to make sure you knew about the most important "love" of my life... Jesus. Even though growing up in a Christian home and hearing the gospel in a Southern Baptist church, it still took 20 years before a true saving knowledge of Christ came about. I knew that I was a sinner needing a Savior but the actual moment in time for my "believing on Him" came years after I had walked the church aisle at 9 years old.

Because of my young church experience and being surrounded with Christian parents, relatives and friends, I believed that I was born again and had no further need to seek for the truth. I attended church very regularly, and was active in youth groups and Bible studies. Yet at 20 years old I was alone in my dorm room at Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma reading Luke chapter 23 when I came to the part where the Lord Jesus was crucified. I was particularly moved by the conversation between the 'malefactors' or 'criminals' who were with Him.

"And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. 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 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. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 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, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man." Luke 23:32-47

After reading that passage I bowed my head in prayer asking the Lord Jesus to save me just like that criminal did. It was as if blinders came off and I understood what Jesus' sacrificial death meant to me.

This all happened while I was alone as a young man enlisted in the military. I had read and had known my whole life of Jesus' death, burial in the tomb and His subsequent resurrection from the dead. I knew and believed *John 14:6*, "*Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.*" None of this was new to me, but upon reading those verses in Luke it was all very new to me in a different way. Even though unable to verbalize it back then, I now know that what happened were two things... what is stated in *Luke 18:13* when the tax collector said, "*Lord, be merciful to me a sinner*" and what the Lord Jesus said in *John 6:44*, "*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.*" Very soon after this I contacted my pastor and told him. I also made arrangements to be re-baptized because I knew that it was a true conversion for it was the Word of God that gave me faith to believe in Him according to Romans 10:8 & 17.

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach" Rom. 10:8.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. 10:17.

From that time on, I have grown in the knowledge of God's Word and definitely freed from the guilt of sin. The occurrence on that evening was similarly described in *Acts 20:21*, "*repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*" *Hebrews 6:1-3* calls it a '*foundation*' to our Christian life, stating that we must now pursue '*maturity*'. Even in seeking His maturity I am not always successful, yet I thank God for His care as a Heavenly Father, "*For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives*" *Hebrews 12:6*. The difference from before is that I am assured that I not only 'know' God but that He 'knows' me, *Matthew 7:23*.

Now that you have read my testimony, if you have never come to know Jesus, please understand that He is waiting to enter your heart...why don't you let Him come in?

"...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."
2 Corinthians 6:2