

# I Threw Myself on Jesus' Mercy, But Nothing Happened

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This one is from Jeremy. He asks this: "What does seeking Christ look like? I've been unsaved for quite awhile, but I know that in the Scripture that if we seek Him, we will find Him. And I'm just wondering what it means to truly seek Christ to where I find Him and He saves me from my sins. Thank you for your help, Pastor Tim."

Now, again, I want you to think here. You're sitting across from this guy. What does seeking Christ look like? Listen, we ought to have an answer for that for Christians. "I've been unsaved for quite awhile, but I know that in the Scripture, that if we seek Him we will find Him and I'm just wondering what it means to truly seek Christ to where I find Him and He saves me from my sins." You know, I don't know everything that's going on in the guy's life, but there's no better questions than this.

(From the room) I think of the verse where it does talk about seeking the Lord in Isaiah 55. Like literally the next verse... "Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near." And the very next verse says, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

Tim: Well, here's the thing. Listen to his question. He's asking: "I'm wondering what it means to truly seek Christ." So start in about (Isaiah) 55:4 or so and just start reading. "Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you because of the Lord your God and of the Holy One of Israel, for He has glorified you. Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near."

Ok, stop right there. Seek ye the Lord while He may be found. Call ye upon Him while He is near. That's one that we sing. We sang it at Community. We'll have to introduce that one here too. But here's what's interesting: Both those phrases are relatively synonymous. They're two ways of pretty much saying the same thing. Seek ye the Lord while He may be found. Call ye upon Him while He is near. Maybe be found; when He's near. You basically have kind of a parallel statement; just a repetition. If you take it that way, what does seeking mean? What's the parallel to seeking? Calling. Listen, what does it mean to seek the Lord? You know, in the days of the rich, young ruler, blind Bartimaeus, it may mean I'm waiting for Him to come. If you're blind Bartimaeus, He happens to be coming through my town today. Or if you're Zacchaeus, I'm going to climb up in a tree and I'm going to see Him. Or you're the rich, young ruler and you take off running to where He is. How do we seek? How do we seek now? Is seeking not to set the mind and the heart on something? Is that not how we seek now? In fact, open your Bibles to 1 Chronicles. Somebody look at 22:19. But to set the mind and the heart on Christ, that's what it is to seek. Or you

think about how John put it. Here's all these signs. Here are these miracles that Jesus did, and I've given you these that you might believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that in believing in this Christ revealed in Scripture, you might have eternal life. Well, how do we seek that Christ? Well, you go to Scripture, and you read it, and you let the truth in those words come up off that page into your eyeballs. Your brain processes those ideas that are being communicated, and your heart and your mind fix on those realities. Somebody read there. This is Solomon here. . Somebody read that. "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God."

Tim: Isn't that interesting? Set what to seek? (from the room): Your heart and soul. Right. So we see in Isaiah 55, there's a calling aspect. We see here that there's a heart and mind aspect. Something you do with your heart, your mind, you do it with your intellect. You do it thinking on Christ. Calling on Christ. You're communicating with Christ. That's how you seek. You seek Him by calling, by pleading. There's a text in Job 8:5. You can see the connection between seeking and pleading. Somebody have that? "If you will seek God, and plead with the Almighty for mercy?"

Tim: See right there? The seek and the plead? Anyway, why do we not seek the Lord? You know, in my devotions this morning I read Psalm 10. Somebody look at Psalm 10:4. We're told why a person doesn't seek. "In the pride of his face, the wicked does not seek Him; all his thoughts are, 'There is no God.'"

Tim: So, it's pride that leads us not to seek the Lord. Now look, is it possible that people might have the wrong idea about what seeking is? It's very possible. Is it possible that people may seek Him for the wrong things? Look, the guy in the foxhole under fire, bombs are coming in; a lot of those guys call on the Lord. The Lord spares them. A lot of guys get sick. People get sick. People get in very difficult situations; very traumatic situations. They call on the Lord. They make all sorts of promises and then what happens? God delivers them and they never fulfill. They never go through. (Incomplete thought) What went wrong? What goes wrong in situations like that? (from the room) God helps them in that situation and then all of a sudden, they start to feel better or get whatever they asked the Lord for.

Tim: Well, what were they seeking? They weren't seeking salvation. They weren't seeking God's honor. They weren't seeking Him for salvific purposes. They were seeking to be delivered from the incoming bombs. They were seeking to be delivered from pain, from suffering, from the traumatic, from the fear. But the true genuine seeking; we don't see Christ, but we know He's here. We know He hears us. We know He even knows our thoughts from afar off. Whether we're sitting or rising or running or walking. He knows us. And He knows our thoughts. He's close to every one of us. We can speak to Him in the thoughts. But one of the things is there is a false Christ. There is such a thing. We want to be dealing with the true Christ. As much as we know of Him. And I think that's where John writes, I've written these things so that you can know Who this Christ is. What we want is people going to Scripture and finding the true Christ and crying out to Him and calling upon Him. It's pride that keeps people from seeking His face. They're self-sufficient. They really don't need Him. You see, the thing is, the guy feels his need when he's in the foxhole. But the need that he's feeling is he can't control the flight of the bombs. He can't control if he

gets shot or not. But he's really not concerned to have his sins pardoned and to be delivered from its dominion. So many people are seeking God for the same kind of reasons that they seek Him when the bombs are coming in, and they're in the foxhole. They don't like the thought of hell. But look, we've already heard some of these. One thing I know about this, that if you're seeking the Lord and He has not answered and He doesn't answer, we have to ask ourselves who we're seeking and what we're seeking him for. If we're seeking the God of Scripture; if we're seeking the Christ of Scripture, and it's because we truly want to be saved from our sins; we truly want to be pardoned; we truly want to be rescued the way Christ rescues, can you tell me any verse (and we've already heard some of these) - give me a verse that promises that if you seek, you will find. (from the room): Jeremiah 29:12-13 Go ahead and read it. "Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will hear you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart."

Tim: You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart. What else? We heard Isaiah 55:6-7. Seek ye the Lord while He may be found. Call ye upon Him while He's near. Somebody look up Deuteronomy 4:29. Somebody else look at 2 Chronicles 15:4. (from the room): Romans 10:13 "For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

Tim: Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord, will be saved. (from the room) "Draw near to Me and I'll draw near to you."

Tim: Draw near to Me and I will draw near to you. How about Luke 11? Can anybody think of anything in Luke 11 where it just talks about prayer? That everyone who asks, everyone who seeks - Ask. Seek. Knock. What does Scripture say there in Luke 11:9-10? "And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find;"

Tim: There it is. Seek and you will find. Keep going. "Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives, and the one who seeks finds..."

Tim: The one who seeks finds. There it is. You have promise. I've actually heard some people in the reformed camp that say God's not under any obligation to save you, and just because you ask, He's not under any obligation. It's like pretty prominent figures in the reformed circle, I've heard make statements like that, and it's like what? Where are they getting that from? God has obliged Himself to save all who call upon Him. No, initially, He was under no obligation to provide a way of salvation. But He Himself has promised that if we seek, we will find. And did anybody look up the text in Deuteronomy? Or 2 Chronicles? Deuteronomy 4:29 "But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find Him, if you search after Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

Tim: Yeah, 2 Chronicles 15:4 is similar. Can you think of a place where it says that you ask and you do not receive? Somebody go to James and dig that one up. You ask and you do not receive. I'll give you this. It's in James 4. "You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss that you may spend it on your pleasures."

Tim: Ok, right there. You may spend it on your pleasures. Or you may spend it on your what? Passions. So here's the thing, what we're told in Scripture is we're given promise. If you seek Him, you will find Him. There's some that say if you seek Him with all your heart; there's others that say seek Him while He's near. There's other's that just say seek Him. Or call upon Him. You have promise that you will find Him. But, you ask and you receive not because you ask amiss. So that's the issue. Obviously there are people who want to deal with God - here's the thing, some people come to God, and they want to lay down the terms. They come and it's like, well, I'll be saved if - like the rich, young ruler - I'll be saved if I can keep this stuff over here. But you know what? He went away because whatever he wanted and why ever he wanted it, in the end, he was just looking to tack it on his lusts. One of the things to be saved is we need to be ready to be saved from all our lusts and all our idols and all the sins. Lord, save me. Whatever... How many times I've heard that people have come to the place where - Carlos was just telling me today; he was telling me about his salvation and reminding me years ago how he was in a certain situation and he had just met Stephanie not too long before that and he felt like Stephanie was becoming this idol. And he said he went in before the Lord and was like, "Lord, take her if that's what's necessary." That's where the person comes to that's seeking the Lord genuinely because they want the Lord. When you are seeking the Lord genuinely, then all your own passions, all your own pleasures are not in that equation. In other words, Lord, I'm seeking You, and I want You, and it doesn't matter what You take away; it doesn't matter what it costs; it doesn't matter about the pleasures; it does not matter about the passions; it does not matter about my former loves. Lord, whatever it takes, save me. If you're there and you want to negotiate... There's only one reason people negotiate and that's because they're married to some sin. They're wickedly in bed with some idol and I don't want to get out of the bed. That's the issue. They're wickedly wedded to their lusts. And you see that. Luke 14. Everything is prepared. Come. Well, you know, I would, but... I've got a new team of oxen. I've got to go try them out. I just bought a new piece of land. I've got to go look at it. When people come and are just like Lord, I just need You. I need You to save me. See, that's seeking the Lord. Not just what the Lord can give. It's seeking the Lord. Right? Not just seeking something from Him. Lord, I want You. I need You. I need You as a Savior no matter what else is involved. No matter what it costs. Lord, no matter what else might be true. Lord, no matter if You take that girl away or that guy away, or You take my money away. Not like the rich, young ruler who, oh yeah, he would have taken heaven. If he could have tacked it on.

Brandon D. was telling me last week that in Nepal it's a bit more difficult to street evangelize than it was in India. He said the people are more violent. They're more resistant. He said they're handing out tracts that say that if you come to Christ, you've got to forsake your Catholicism, your Hinduism, your Buddhism, your Islam, and they hate that. Because they're a Hindu country. People don't get offended a lot of times if you just preach Christ, but when you say, no, you've got to forsake all that, that really heats things up. That's the issue. Seeking.