

Let me tell you about a man named Jimmy. I met Jimmy through one of the men in my church in Shelbyville, Tennessee. Jimmy was living with a woman and he had been an alcoholic for approximately 30 years. He most recently had been placed in jail for DUI and was depressed and facing some serious trouble. I agreed to visit Jimmy and the woman with whom he was living.

As we sat down in their trailer and talked, I sensed the conviction of the Holy Spirit working in Jimmy's life. I shared the story of Jesus dying on the cross to forgive us for our sins and told Jimmy that because of Jesus' shed blood on the cross, he could be forgiven of his sins and become a new man. Both Jimmy and Peggy bowed their heads and prayed to ask Jesus in their lives. They married, and became involved in church.

The last time I saw Jimmy was when he was lying in the hospital in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He had just had surgery for throat cancer. He couldn't talk so his family brought him a small dry erase board that he could hold and write sentences. I went in to see Jimmy and there he was with a big smile on his face. Although he was facing radiation treatment and the uncertainty of facing cancer, Jimmy was smiling and beaming with joy. After spending some time talking to Jimmy, I prepared to leave and he motioned that he wanted to say something to me. He took his dry erase board and he wrote these words: "I love you!" and he thanked me for sharing Jesus with him. The power of the Gospel!!!

Jesus was crucified with two sinners, one on His left and one on His right. Each man responded to Jesus very differently. One harassed and challenged Jesus. The other was broken and repentant. **He found forgiveness when he was honest about his spiritual condition and cried out to Jesus!**

Key thought: You will find forgiveness when you are honest about your spiritual condition and cry out to Jesus.

GOD'S PATH FOR FINDING FORGIVENESS REQUIRES YOU TO...

Draw near and see God's holiness and righteousness (verse 40)

"Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"

Draw near and admit your sin (verse 41)

1 John 1:9

"And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds;"

Draw near and believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (verse 41, 42)

"But this man has done nothing wrong."

"Your kingdom"

Draw near and cry out to God in repentance and faith (verse 42)

Romans 10:9-10; 13

"Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"

Draw near and receive forgiveness (verse 43)

Ephesians 2:8-9

"Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."