

Week 34—A Call From Below

Read

Taken from a message preached by Jack Hyles:

My father was an alcoholic. He is buried tonight in a drunkard's grave in Italy, Texas. My father heard me preach two sermons, one on Sunday morning and one on Sunday night, New Year's Day, 1949.

New Year's Eve I got burdened for my dad. So I got in my car in Marshall, Texas, and drove 150 miles to Dallas to the Hunt Saloon where my dad was a bartender and a drunk...My dad was sitting at the bar drinking beer. He was a big man, weighing 235 pound, and the strongest man I ever knew.

I said, "Dad, this is Saturday night, New Year's Eve, 1949. I am going to take you back today to Marshall, Texas, to hear me preach tomorrow."

My dad cursed me. "I'm not going to go and hear any preacher preach."

"Dad, you weigh 235 pounds, and I weigh a little over half that. But we are going to have a brawl here in this bar, or you are going to go with me to Marshall, Texas."

He realized that I meant business. I gave him enough coffee to sober him up a bit; then we got in the car and I took him to Marshall, Texas. On New Year's Eve, 1949, my father went on our watch night service with us. We got on buses and rode around town and sang songs and had a wonderful time. We came back to church and prayed the old year out and the new year in.

Sunday was on New Year's Day that year. I stood to preach, and my dad sat on the fourth row from the front. The invitation time came, and he clawed the pew in conviction. I pleaded for him to come, but he would not.

That afternoon we went for a walk out in the pasture. I put my arms around his shoulder and said, "Dad, I want to see you be a Christian more than I want anything in the world. Dad, will you not be saved?"

My dad opened the joybells of Heaven when he said, "Son, I am going to get saved. I am going to go back to Dallas and sell out. I am *going* to move to Marshall. I am going to buy me a little fruit stand or a small grocery store and set up a little business here. I am going to get saved in the spring and let you baptize me."

I said, "Dad, that is wonderful! That is good enough for me."

I wish I could relive that afternoon. I wish I had a chance to try again. I thought he had plenty of time. He was only 62. I clapped my hands. The last word my dad said when he got out of the car on Washington Street in Dallas, Texas, was, "Son, I am going to let you baptize me in the spring."

Every time I baptized that winter, I heard him say, "Son, I am going to let you baptize me in the spring."

On May 3, 1950, about ten o'clock in the morning, my telephone rang. The operator said, "Reverend Jack Hyles?"

"This is Brother Hyles."

"Go ahead, sir."

A man's voice said, "My name is Smith. Reverend Hyles, I worked with your dad. We hung dry wall together. He was up on a sawhorse this morning hanging dry wall on the ceiling, and he just a few minutes ago dropped dead with a heart attack."

I didn't say anything. I just put the phone down.

"Son, I am going to let you baptize me in the spring."

I got in my car and drove back to Dallas, Texas, to the O'Neil Funeral Home.

My dad was buried in Italy, Texas.

Several months passed. One Sunday night past midnight there came a knock on the door of my study. I went to the door, and my only sister was at the door weeping. "Earlyne, is it Mother?"

"No, Jack. Would you tell me how to be saved?"

"Sure I will." And I told my only sister how to be saved, and she was saved in my study about one o'clock in the morning.

After she got saved I said, "Earlyne, why tonight? You could have been saved anytime through these years. Why did you choose tonight, and why did you come so late at night to get saved?"

She said, "Jack, you know that I was daddy's pet."

"That is right."

"Daddy did not care much for you, Jack, but he loved me very much."

"That is right, Sister."

"Jack, when dad died, I thought I would die too. I couldn't sleep at night. I lost weight. I cried almost every waking hour. I had a dream shortly after he died. I dreamed that I was taken into a big building, about like this, by a heavenly creature up to the second floor of that building. I was taken to a corner. There I saw a casket. I looked in. The corpse had a look of peace on its face. There was a casket next to that. In that casket was a corpse. That corpse had a look of peace on its face. And the next and the next and the next. The entire wall was lined with caskets, and in each was a corpse. And on each face a look of peace. The same thing across that wall and across this wall."

She said, "Jack, we got to the last casket, and the heavenly creature said, 'You can't look in that one.'"

"I said, 'I must. I have to look at all of them.' The creature said, 'No, you can't look in that one.'"

She said, "Jack, I saw two hands raise themselves above the casket. They were daddy's hands. Jack, daddy was saying, 'Sister! Sister! Sister!'"

"I broke away from the creature and went over and looked in daddy's face. Jack, his face was writhing in pain, and daddy was saying. 'Sister! Sister! I—I—I—ju—j—bu—bu—I—I—Sister, Sister!' I said, 'Daddy, what is it? Tell me!'" He said, 'Sister, Sister!, I—I—I—eh—B—je—je—be—, Sister, Sister!'"

She said, "Jack, the creature took me then, but I knew what daddy was saying. When I heard you preach tonight on the rich man in Hell who said to go tell my five brothers not to come here, I knew that daddy was telling me not to come to Hell where he was."

And now for these twenty-four and a half years, the thing that has motivated my life and my ministry has been the fact that somewhere in the torments of the unprepared, my daddy says, "Jack, tell them *all* not to come here. Tell them *all!* Tell them *all!* Tell them *all!*"¹

Reflect

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire." But Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us." He answered, "Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment." Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them." "No, father Abraham," he said, "but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent." He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

Luke 16:19-31

Respond

Write your thoughts here:

Prayer Requests for yourself, your students, and others with whom you serve in ministry:

Remember

A generation ago, Jim Elliot went from Wheaton College to become a missionary to the Aucas in Ecuador. Before he was killed, he wrote, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”²

¹Hyles, Jack, “Four Calls for Soul Winning,” [1974], Hudson, Curtis, ed. . *Great Preaching on Soul Winning*, (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1989), p. 54-57.

²Billy Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983), pp. 94-95.