

Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

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WORLDS APART

Whenever I visit Eilat in the south of Israel, I enjoy walking along the beach and meeting new people. On a recent visit, I met two men who looked disheveled, and when I tried to speak with them about faith in God, they became upset.

"You can see the sorry state of our lives," one said. "How can you speak to us about faith? We are worlds apart from you. We have done so many bad things God could never forgive us."

I took out my Bible and read John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." I explained, "This passage does not say God will accept people based on who they are or what they have done. God said, 'whoever,' and the only condition is that you believe on His Son. If you will accept the Lord Jesus as your Savior, God will forgive and forget whatever you have done thus far in your life, and He will give you the means of receiving forgiveness of any sins you commit in the future."

The man earnestly responded, "We are insignificant to God. It will not help us now to come before Him and ask Him to forgive us. We are poor and homeless. We live here on this beach, and we are so dirty people hate to even look at us."

I then read the comforting words of Psalm 118:22: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." I said, "Do not say

that you are beyond hope, my friends. In God's sight, you are of as much value as any other person. God's Son was rejected by the Jewish leaders, but God the Father did not reject Him. Rather, through His death and resurrection He became the Messiah and Savior of the world."

One of them asked, "What do you want us to do?"

I answered, "For me, you do not have to do anything. What you must do is for yourselves. You must come to God, worship Him, be faithful to Him, and bear fruit for His glory. Regardless of what you see when you look in the mirror, you will be children of God and will never again doubt your worth before Him."

They opened up and told me about their lives. They were alcoholics and had lost their families and homes.

I told them, "It would be easy for you to stop drinking."

They were surprised, and one asked, "How?"

I replied, "Open your hearts before God. He will listen and answer your prayer. He will enable you to turn from alcohol."

"Shall we do it now, or wait until we go to bed?" one asked.

I could not tell if they were being serious or mocking, so I said, "If you are not serious about this, I will be glad to leave you alone."

"No, we are very serious," he assured me.

"Good," I responded. "You can go to a quiet spot on this beach and pray silently in your hearts. Tell the Lord of your sins and ask Him to forgive you and become your Savior."

“Will you wait here for us?” he asked. I assured them I would.

I waited and watched for more than a half hour as they both sat quietly under the hot sun with their heads slightly bowed and very serious expressions on their faces. As I waited, I prayed the Lord would open their eyes and hearts and draw them to Himself.

The two men returned, full of joy because the Lord had taken away their stony hearts and given them hearts of flesh (Ezek. 36:26). The Lord had given them a new heart and a new Spirit—the Spirit of the living God—and they were rejoicing in Him. And so, of course, was I!