

# I'm Lost and Have Little Time to Live

Tim Conway | [illbehonest.com](http://illbehonest.com)

**Question:** "Dear Pastor Tim, I've been ill for several months. A nominal Christian, i.e. Not a Christian." In other words... a nominal Christian, that is, not a Christian. "...for most of my life. (Incomplete thought) I've recently become aware of your YouTube channel and have come to the conclusion that I'm most likely unregenerate, complete with the knowledge of what that brings. (being unregenerate) Although, I still harbor doubts. In the time I have left..."

So, it sounds like he's assuming this is a terminal disease perhaps. "In the time I have left, what should I be doing? Since I'm a writer, should I use this awareness to inform others of what the embrace of sin leads to? Or is that a pointless endeavor? I'm also concerned a public revelation might bring shame upon my family, especially those who are committed Christians." I think what he's saying there is if I came out and made it public that I wasn't really saved, I'm concerned that that kind of public confession or admittance might bring shame upon my family, especially those who are committed Christians.

## **Discussion:**

**Tim:** What do you think? This guy's across from you.

**(from the room)** I'm confused. Is he saying that the public revelation was in regard to his illness?

**Tim:** I think in regard to not being regenerate. At least, that's what he's saying. So, let me go through it again. "I've been ill for several months. A nominal Christian, that is, not a Christian, for most of my life. I've recently become aware of your YouTube channel, and have come to the conclusion that I'm most likely unregenerate, complete with the knowledge of what that brings - although I still harbor some doubts. In the time I have left, what should I be doing? Since I'm a writer, should I use this awareness to inform others of what the embrace of sin leads to? Or is that a pointless endeavor? I'm also concerned about a public revelation..." Now it might be a public revelation about the embrace of sin. That might be what he's talking about too; that if he actually began writing openly about what embracing sin, and he confessed what sin he embraced, that might be the public revelation that would bring shame upon his family, especially those who are committed Christians. So, there you have it. You guys have Bibles? What do you say? What do you do? Where do you go?

**(from the room)** I think the first thing he needs to do is - he says he's not a Christian, so, confess the Lord Jesus as his Savior. First off.

**Tim:** So, he says he's not a Christian. And that's interesting. Here's something that jumps out at me. That he says, "I've come to the conclusion that I am most likely unregenerate." I have concerns when somebody says that about themselves. Why do you think?

**(from the room)** Because they're not truly owning up to their lostness; they're not being honest completely it seems.

**Tim:** When people start talking regenerate and unregenerate, this is my feel, that it's God's fault. Or that they're putting it in God's lap. Now look, it's true, somebody is regenerate or unregenerate. But you know what I think about? Let's look at John 3. We need to keep John 3 in our minds. Because it's our Lord dealing with a lost man. He's inquiring. But, as he deals with what it is to be born again... I know we don't get the regenerate - unregenerate language here, but we get synonymous terminology. The born again language.

But notice the flow, John 3, Verse 1 - Man named Nicodemus, ruler of the Jews; 2 - this man came to Jesus by night. "Rabbi, we know You are a Teacher come from God." 3 - "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Well, Nicodemus begins to ask questions here. "How can a man be born when he's old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb?" Jesus answers, verse 5, "I say unto you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'you must be born again,'" Verse 8, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes, so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

And see, what He's doing here is He's constructing salvation as a bring born again, being born of the Spirit, the Spirit is like the wind, the Spirit blows where He wishes. You see the effects of it, but you can't see the wind. You can't see the Spirit. But you can see the fruit of it. The fruit of this is that a person is made alive. They're born again. It's by the Spirit. It's not something that we cause to happen. It's something that the Spirit causes to happen. "And Nicodemus said to him, 'how can these things be?' 'Are you a teacher in Israel, and you do not understand these things?'"

In other words, you're a teacher in Israel, there's enough light on this subject in your Old Testament Scriptures that you should know about this. And He keeps going on here. The thing is, He doesn't leave him at this point. He doesn't just shut the conversation down. You're not born by the Spirit, and so, just basically sit there and wait for God to do that to you. It's interesting. Jesus has no problem moving out of the realm of what God does right into the realm of responsibility. He just flows right into it. In His own teaching, in His own mind, in His own logic, there's no bump here for Him. He just very naturally flows right into this. And He says, in verse 14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life." See, that's interesting. You must be born again.

But here's the reality, the Son of Man is going to be lifted up, just like that serpent was lifted up in the wilderness by Moses. And whoever looks, just like back there, whoever looked at the serpent was healed. That prefigured Christ all over the place. And that's the picture here. The

Son of Man is going to be lifted up, and whoever believes is going to have eternal life. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him, is not condemned. Whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

Well, then He goes on to say this: "This is the judgment: The light has come into the world, people love the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. Whoever does what is true, comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God." So you have a man here that basically says - it's almost like he's resigned. Well, I think I'm unregenerate, and so what should I do? Should I take up my pen and start writing? Like what? To warn people if you embrace sin like I did, you end up ultimately sick and? Maybe he has a disease that's connected with the sin that he embraced? And now he's dying? I mean, you can kind of put pieces together. Perhaps you can see what that looks like. But, he doesn't call himself an unbeliever. You see, when you call yourself an unbeliever, it really places a whole lot of responsibility. If you say, "I'm an unbeliever." Well, see, now you're really putting that more in your own lap. Or if you say, "I'm unrepentant." That's really putting the thing much more in your own lap. To say you're unregenerate is to say God hasn't caused me to be born again.

"God hasn't regenerated me." So that jumps out. Now what he meant by that, I don't know. But it just has that hyper-Calvinistic flavor that perhaps there's not a whole lot I could do. I would say to a man like this, it's almost like, well, I'm not a Christian, I'm not regenerate, and... It's almost like I can't do anything about that so I should just go on with my life and please give me some counsel about what I should do. Isn't that kind of how it feels? I think you press the man. Can anybody think about a place in the Scripture that presses urgency?

**(from the room)** Today is the day of salvation.

**Tim:** Do you know where that is? In the New Testament, it's found in 2 Corinthians 6:2, I believe.

**(from the room)** For He says, "I heard you in an acceptable time, and I helped you in the day of salvation. Look, now is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation."

**Tim:** "Now is the day of salvation." We want to press people. There's an urgency. We don't know if a man has tomorrow. We don't know if a woman has tomorrow. There needs to be an urgency. If you're talking to this guy, it's like why are you standing there? Why are you standing still? Why are you standing on the brink of destruction and just standing there thinking about whether you should start writing? What's important in your life right now is not whether you're an author or not. Your greatest need right now is to be saved. Your greatest need right now is

you're on the edge of destruction. There's an urgency. You want to talk to this guy a lot like the author of Hebrews would talk to those he's writing to. There's an urgency. "It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." And you're not saved by your own admission.

Listen, Scripture talks about fleeing from the wrath to come. Scripture talks about going to Christ. Scripture talks about what must a man do to be saved. What can I do to be saved? Paul didn't say nothing. Well, you're unregenerate. Just sit there and take up the pen and start writing to your family members. He didn't say that. Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. There's no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. You do not want to despise this. You do not want to despise such a great salvation as this. You want urgency.

That's what you want to do with people that basically come... Well, you know, I don't think I'm saved, but what? Well, if there's no urgency, or if they're not at all asking questions. His question isn't what must I do to be saved, like the Philippian jailer. His question is, should I write? It's almost like he's throwing in the towel. It's almost like he's writing like, well, you know what, I'm not regenerate. I've got this sickness. I don't have long to live. Is there any good thing that I can do with the rest of my life? That's kind of how this sounds. You do not need to be thinking about writing. You don't need to be thinking about anything but one thing. You're perishing. You're in trouble. It doesn't sound like you have much time left. You want to press the issue that now is the day of salvation. Now. Now. Now. Now.

Brethren, one of the things, we've dealt with this at different times. But you know what you want to keep an ear open to as well? You get the feeling a lot of times that people are looking at themselves as to whether they are regenerate. Or, they're looking at themselves as to whether, you know, I think I'm in; I'm just not quite sure I'm in. Brethren, saving faith is not believing you're saved. Saving faith is believing that Jesus Christ is everything that Scripture is saying. It's not like you have to believe every single thing. But saving faith is believing on and casting your hope on, your trust in this Christ that's revealed in the pages of Scripture. That's the issue.

Brethren, to me this is massively helpful. Look at John 20. If your Bible's like my Bible, last two verses are basically in a paragraph by themselves. John still has another chapter to go, but listen to this: This is John 20:30. "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in His name." Listen, on a regular basis, and that's what all of these are. And we get lots, lots of emails. And I'm sure I only see the tip of the iceberg compared to what James sees. People who, they're all over the place. They think they're saved or they think they're not. They're battling. They thought they were saved at one time, now they're thinking they're not. They looked at tests of assurance in Scripture, or in a message, and now they're believing that they're not converted. Or they've tried to repent and they can't. Or they've tried to believe and God's not saving them. We get this kind of stuff all the time. Listen to what John says. You wonder what you tell people. Think with me. These signs - John has recorded them, so that we would see these things, we would see

the Christ Who did these things, and our minds would engage these works and see the kind of Christ this is, and trust that Christ, believe on Him as the Son of God, and in believing, have eternal life. (There's a place right here, sister, if you don't mind moving to the front.)

So, think with me there. Recently, I had a guy write me and say what am I supposed to do? Don't tell me repent and believe. Here's what he said. He said because if it was that simple there would be all sorts of people doing it. And he's tried to do it and he says it doesn't work. Listen, brethren. That's what Scripture says. And people in Scripture who repent and believe get saved. But the problem is that people think they're doing something that isn't what they think they're doing. But I would say this, a lot of people get hung up with whether they actually believe or not. And they're always trying to figure out whether they really believe. And see, what they're doing is - their real issue is do they believe they're believers? And so they're constantly examining that and constantly asking themselves how they feel, and constantly looking at various fruits and various emotions and various feelings, and they have ideas about what's going to happen when it really happens. And they don't feel like they've had this certain experience that they obviously think that they're going to have.

But brethren, saving faith is not coming to believe you've had a certain experience. It's not coming to believe that you're a believer. You know what? You may have serious doubts about whether you're a true believer, but if your faith is firmly planted in Christ, you're saved. Because He is the Savior. He is the issue. It's like Charles Leiter in J&R about the bridge - remember the rotted bridge versus this big, stout, steel girder bridge? Your faith can be ever so hesitant and weak, but if you step out on that bridge, it's going to hold you. You can be ever so confident, step out on the rotten thing and you're going to plunge to your doom. Think about what John's doing. I have set this Christ before you. I've written these things. What I would tell this man, I tell people this. This man who said don't tell me it's repent and believe. Some months ago, I sent him to the book of John. I said study the book of John. And I said call upon that Christ. Anybody have something else they'd say to this man?

**(from the room)** If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit. This idea of him going and making writings to help people, that's pride, self-righteousness, that's just crazy.

**Tim:** Oh yeah, if we want to go after that part of it, him writing and seeking to help people... For him to try to help people avoid perishing when he himself doesn't have the remedy is not going to be a very effective witness. Here's a man that sounds like doesn't have much time left. He's basically settling down in this fact: I'm unregenerate. But think about the passages that invite sinners to come. Give me one. Revelation 21. What does that say? There is one in Revelation 21. There's one there - without payment. (from the room/incomplete thought) That's not the right one - it's in 22. Well, there's one in 21 too. But go ahead and read the one in 22 if you can find it. Revelation 22:17

"Both the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.'"

**Tim:** The Spirit says come. The Bride, that's the church, we say come. Whosoever will. And you're to come without price. There's another invitation to come. Matthew 11 "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me. For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you'll find rest for your souls." Can anybody think of another? Isaiah 55 "Come, all you who are thirsty. Come to the waters. And you who have no money, come buy and eat." Somebody else think of one? Remember what Jesus said in John 7? The great day of the feast, He stood up and He cried out. Can anybody remember what He said? If anyone thirsts, let him come. Come to Me and drink.

Think of any other invitations? Just think with me here. What must I do to be saved? The wedding banquet. Luke 14 Isaiah 51 Listen to Me, you who pursue righteousness; you who seek the Lord." But think with me, what must I do to be saved? The answer is never: nothing. Now that doesn't mean that you go to work to save yourself. But it's always going to Christ. It's always setting your eyes on Christ. It's always finding your hope in Him. It's always seeing Him as the One Who gives rest. He's the One that gives to drink. He's the One that give the rest. He's the One that there's no other name. It's only His name whereby I must be saved. It's believing in Him. It's coming to Him. That's the thing. It's never: do nothing, but it's never: do something in your own strength. It's never: you try to save yourself. It's never: you're trying to do works that are going to get you in. It's always: you can't do anything, you go without price and do business with Christ. That's always it. Christ is always calling men to Himself. That's always it.