

# Jackie's last letter

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Dear friend,

My life is almost at an end. By the time that you read this, I will be in heaven. In these last days, I have been convinced that I was not always plain enough with people during my life. We all need Christ; without him, we will perish. Yet, it can be difficult even to ask your own family, "Are you really trusting in Christ?"

At this point, it is hard for me to put more than one sentence together, but somehow I want to say what could not easily be said, and what should have been said.

Many of you have wilfully rejected Christ. Your conscience convicts you and you know that you will give an account, but you suppress the truth. Friends and all as we have been, I must say that you will not get away with that. You are without excuse. You need to trust in Christ; without him, you will perish.

We all need Christ. It is easy for us to be self-righteous hypocrites, even looking for opportunities to point out that other people are self-righteous. But that will not do. We cannot depend on any thing that we do. We all need Christ, and all we need is Christ.

Someone has translated this extract for me from the sermons of the French preacher, Adolphe Monod. He says here what I would like to say to you myself.

Faith, not works; that is the gospel. That is what distinguishes it from all human systems. All the doctrines conceived by man and all the false interpretations given to the doctrines of God by religions throughout the ages say to sinners, "Do this or do that and you will live." Sacrifice your life, your health or your well-being, throw yourself under the wheels of a juggernaut, sit on the ground, hold your arm outstretched until it grows stiff and withers, keep silence for the rest of your days and your sins will be forgiven. Do penance, go on a long pilgrimage, withdraw from society and bury yourself in sad solitude, fast, abstain from things, mutilate yourself, crucify yourself and your sins will be forgiven. Do good works, help the poor, visit sick people, fight your temptations, be sober, just, without reproach and your sins will be forgiven.

How different is the language of the gospel! Believe! Stop being consumed with fruitless efforts to work your own reconciliation with God. You will never ever succeed. A way to be saved is still available to you but it is by completely giving up hope in yourself.

It is in crying to God, "Grace, grace, be merciful to me a sinner. "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." No matter who you are it is by faith you can be saved.

But what do you have to believe?

*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."* "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" is a phrase you will have heard so often, maybe even repeated it many times yourself, perhaps since you were a little child, so that it hardly even occurs to you that you could do with it being explained. It is so simple that even a child can understand it and that is perhaps partly why most people don't understand it.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Do you really understand this? Place all hope for your salvation in him. Build on him. Do not be afraid to lean on him. He is the Rock of Ages. Believe in Jesus Christ. Dwell in him. Clothe yourself in him. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ then, and you will be saved.

Consider this my friend, because you will follow me soon enough.

Yours sincerely

John Walter Ross



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