

Face to Face

Forgiven

One character on stage (called Jim in the script but substitute actor's name throughout). Perhaps use a spotlight. Voice of 'Jesus' over loudspeakers but actor unseen, impression always of a voice within or close by - not a long way away, not in any particular place, certainly not any impression of a 'voice from heaven' - much more intimate.

Jim (really upset, perhaps tearful): Now I've really blown it! They told me that I was born again, that I was made new inside, but it can't be true. Yesterday was bad enough, but today has been worse. I thought maybe a little white lie was OK, telling my boss that my bus was late when I had really overslept - well, I thought it wouldn't hurt anyone - but now I feel terrible. I tried to talk to Bill about Jesus today, but I just knew I was such a hypocrite that I couldn't say a word. *(Sighs - a deep, hopeless sigh)*
(more slowly now) Oh well, I suppose that's that, then - I can't call myself a Christian any more - back to 'normal' life again. It was great while it lasted, I really felt good about God's love for me. Suppose it was too good to be true. Trust me to blow it! *(Shows frustration in some way - kick an empty can or similar!)*

Jesus: Jim! Jim! Can you hear me?

Jim: What was that? I felt as if God was talking to me, like he did the other day.

Jesus: Yes, I am here - are you listening?

Jim: But . . . I've blown it, haven't I? I'm a sinner again, just like I was before. God doesn't want me now, he can't do, he's perfect and I've let him down! *(frustrated again)*

Jesus (calmly and deliberately): Yes, I still want you. Don't you remember? - I love you.

Jim: Oh, so that's the deal, is it? Your love is that great, is it? You're prepared to let me off because you love me! How far does that go? What can I get away with before you give up on me?

Jesus: I will never give up on you, Jim - that's my promise. But you're not going to 'get away' with anything with me around!

Jim: But I thought you said you still loved me *(suddenly angry)* - stop playing games with me!

Jesus: Jim . . . Jim . . . Yes, I still love you, and I want you to be close to me. You really felt great, didn't you, when you came to me for the first time? *(Jim nods sadly)* But now it's not the same, is it? *(Jim shakes his head)*

Jim: No, it's not - don't rub it in! I thought you had some sort of answer for this. If you don't, then please stop making it worse!

Jesus: Yes, there is an answer, that's why I'm talking to you now. But you're involved too, you know. There's something you need to do.

Jim: But I thought you were going to let me off because you love me - sort of 'not notice' that I had done anything and just pretend that everything's OK really - isn't that it? I can't do anything about that!

Jesus: Here's what you have to do, Jim. Just agree with me that what you did was wrong, it was sin, it was what I died to set you free from.

Jim: Hey, that's a bit heavy, isn't it? All I did was tell a little white lie. Nobody got hurt, nobody died, no-one even lost any money over it. Don't try and make me feel guilty about it!

Jesus: But you already do feel guilty! You know things aren't right - you were just talking about giving up and going back to your old life again. You need to be forgiven, and I'm showing you how.

Jim: OK, I admit it, I do feel guilty - over such a silly little thing, too. I never used to worry about things like that before I got involved with you. (*Thoughtfully, to himself*) Now it's like I've got a super-sensitive alarm system built in - even little things like telling a white lie seem to trigger it off!

Jesus: That's part of the Holy Spirit's job, Jim, letting you know when you step out of line. But now you need to respond to the 'alarm system' and get things right with me again. I've told you what you need to do. You need to agree with me that what you call a 'little white lie' was really sin, it was disobedience.

Jim: It still seems like a lot of fuss over a little lie, but I don't want to go on like this. Is there no other way out?

Jesus: There's only one thing that can come between you and me, Jim, and that's sin. You know the relationship is wrong at the moment because you need to be forgiven but don't want to admit it.

Jim: When I came to you the first time, there was a lot of talk about forgiveness then. I thought that was all dealt with. They said that was why you died on the Cross, something about your blood paying the price for my sins.

Jesus: Yes, that's right. All your past sins and failures were dealt with. I paid the debt you owed and your account was cleared. You were able to walk freely into my Father's presence without fear. But now there's another 'debt' - that lie you told your boss yesterday - and you are certainly not enjoying being in touch with Father at the moment, are you?

Jim: No, it's a mess right now. I know I want to talk with him, but I just can't. Doesn't seem possible that something so small could make such a big difference. Whatever I said before, I've just got to agree with you now - that lie must be the thing that's caused the problem. OK, I admit it, it was sin, it was disobedience - please just do something about it - I can't go on like this!

Jesus: Right, that's it. It's done. You're forgiven.

Jim: What, just like that? No waiting? No crying, no confession, no dramatic repentance? Is it really that easy?

Jesus: But Jim, you just confessed - you agreed with what I had been telling you all along, that you had sinned. As for repentance, what do you think you've been doing for the last few minutes? You started out thinking that it was just a harmless little white lie. Now you've had a change of heart about it, and you know it was serious, real sin that had spoiled your contact with Father. Sounds like repentance to me!

Jim: But what about my lie to my boss? Has that 'debt' been paid off? It has been paid, has it?

Jesus: Yes, Jim, don't worry, it's paid. I paid it when I paid all your other sin debts. That's what they mean when they say that my blood washes you clean from all sin. The price I paid covers it all.

Jim: I'm beginning to understand your love a little more now, Lord Jesus.

END

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