

Too Late - By Lewis Paul

Scene One: It is early morning; John sits at the beach beneath a tree. He is deep in thought. Up comes Skimper jogging. He spies John and jogs up to him.

Skimper: Hey John, like you have worries man!

John: Worries man? I wonder if is just worries

Skimper: What is the matter man? Of late I see you behaving strange. Like you get dottish or what! We en see you on the blocks; you say you stop drinking and is Christian song I hear you singing these days. What's the matter with you man?

John: You don't know Skimper; you don't know.

Skimper: How you mean I don't know. I may not know how to cook but I know how too drink; I know how to dance and I know how to fete. That is all a man need to know in this life.....and how to make money.

John: Tell me Skimper you know about the rapture?

Skimper: Rap what? Rapture? The only rap I know is rap music. What is that?

John: Well you remember that day them people were preaching and we passed by and the preacher was saying how Jesus will come back to take the Christians?

Skimper: (nodding) yea

John: Well I went back to him and ask him about that and he tell me that the coming of Jesus for the Christians is called the Rapture.

Skimper: (seemingly amused by this) Man you let that preacher fool you. You believe that crap? Since I was a little boy I hear them preachers talking about Christ coming; where Him? My granny die and He en come; my grandpa die and He en come. Them preachers just fooling people. John you believe that. Man with all that education you have you believe that? Well I never see. John tell me you really believe that?

John: (Rising) Yes Skimper I believe it. With all my heart. I used to think like you but I change my mind.

Skimper: Oh ho; so that is why you getting on so dottish? So you want to go to Heaven? I want to see **which** God will take a man like you to Heaven with all them sins you have. You steal the

old woman frying pan; you steal Ma bolo fridge; you pushing drugs more that a wheel cart and you think God will take a man like you in Heaven; and by the way, you owe me a hundred dollars.

John: Yes Skimper, all you say about me is true and you have not said half of then but I know God can forgive me. The preacher said Christ died for our sins and he died for mine.

Skimper: Man is little sins Jesus die for but not them big sins you do already. You think a sinner like you can ever go to Heaven? Go to Fig Tree and Saddlers and Boyds and tell all them people sorry for all the bad things you do to them and maybe God will forgive you.

John: God is not like you Skimper; He can forgive me and he can forgive you too.

Skimper: So you turn preacher now? Ladies and gentlemen, this is preacher John (holding John around his neck.) He say God can forgive Skimper. Welcome preacher John! I am your audience; preach; preach (.he sits)

John: (holding out his hand to Skimper and lifting him up) Come on Skimper don't make fun of me and don't make fun of the Bible. This is serious Skimper; you will regret it. Let's go. (They are departing)

Skimper: So John you really serious about this thing?

John: Yes Skimper; dead serious. (They Exit)

Scene Two: Scene opens with a few folks drinking at Broadway Bar. Skimper is there along with Poker.

Poker: Hey Skimper, where your friend John? Long time I en see him.

Skimper: (chuckles) Poor John; if I tell you, you won't believe: The man turn preacher.

Poker: Preacher!

Skimper: And preaching to me too! He say he want to go to Heaven

Poker: Heaven? Is jail he should go. He steal ma Bolo fridge and use the money to buy coke. He lucky the police on his side.

Barim: (the Barman) But poker if it was you, you would be glad.

Poker: True but I make jail twice; that man never make a jail. All them policeman for him.

(In comes John. Stops at the door momentarily, then walks in)

Skimper: Here comes the preacher! Ladies and gentlemen, this is preacher John; and what is the preacher doing at Broadway Bar. I know you could not keep up with this thing. The smell of the rum pull you in. (holding up his glass to John) you want a drink?

Poker: Yes give the preacher a drink and let him tell us about Ma bolo fridge. John you mean to tell me you carry a whole fridge on your back? The man cross the river with that big fridge on his back; climb that big hill; walk three miles with that fridge on his back; tie a rope and pull that big fridge over that wall? Where you does get your strength from boy?

Barim: Ok Poker give the man a chance.

Poker: Chance what! He too tief! Boy I have to make you take a jail.

Barim: Ok Poker; that is enough.

Poker: Alright, alright; give the preacher a drink.

John: Gentlemen (Poker clears his throat teasingly and sits) Gentlemen I have come to let you know that.....

Skimper: that I still love rum (laughter)

Barim: Let the man finish what he saying

John: That I have received Jesus Christ as my Lord and personal Saviour and that I can no longer continue with you in this kind of life. (Turning to Barim) This is your money for the drinks I took on credit (turning to Skimper) and this is your hundred dollars you borrow me.

Skimper: Man is a joke I make. Keep it man

John: No I can't. It is your money and I must give it back. Now if you gentlemen want to turn your lives to Jesus, I will be glad to show you but for now I must go.....Goodbye. (He walks away)

(There is silence for a few seconds)

Skimper: (gulping his drink) Give me another drink (he gulps it) Nah something en right here....nah Barim something en right....so John gone for true.....that man really do that for true

boy?John really gone? All the time I think the man joking... but the man gone boy....the man gone.

Poker: Gone where. I give him three months to come back. Sliding spend three weeks and look I hear he is the biggest coke king in Basseterre . that man doing just that; and for all you know is some girl he must be see in the Church.

Barim: You see John, I think he dead serious. Sliding was not serious. He himself tell me is the preacher force him. John is a fella when he make up his mind to do something nothing stopping him.

Skimper (meditatively) Barim that thing is serious man that thing bothering me. Boy I never think John would take that thing so serious. That man have me worried.

Poker: Worried what? Is the rum that is in your head. Who you think you fooling?

Skimper: Serious man; that en no joke; boy I feeling strange... Barim what you think?

Barim: Well boy all I can say is a man is not a man until he can change his mind. People can say what they want but that is the best decision a man can make. And you see me; I myself tired of this old life. I tired of this rum shop. Is Moneyman that get me in this thing and now he gone and leave me in this thing. If you thinking of changing your life, that is the best thing you can do; and I think I go follow you too.

Skimper: Barim you have a Bible here?

Barim: No

Skimper: Boy only if I could hear some preaching man.

Poker: Well I never see. You curse every preacher in town; you push them from your mother house; you burn your sister Bible and now you want to listen to preacher. Well look it; Skimper looking for Bible. (He laughs)

Skimper: But you do the same thing too and you do worse than me. You stand up in the Church door and you call the preacher liar.....all them things you do already...and by the way Poker, only a fool wouldn't change his mind.

Poker: So you calling me fool. Boy let me tell you something; if you ever become a Christian I eating every hat in Saddlers and I walking on my head from Basseterre to Sandy Point .

Barim: Poker stop making fun of these things. That is serious man.

Poker: You shut up there Barim! Who you think you fooling? You make all your money selling rum. You make your money on us; every day fellas passing out in your rum shop; the poor women waiting for the man to bring some money home and the poor children waiting for their father to bring something for them. All the time you have them sitting in your rum shop drinking rum and they go home with no money and now you talking about Christian? You think God will forgive a man like you? No way boy; not a man like you.

Barim: Ok Poker, talk your talk, but God know my heart. God know how I got in this thing and He know I want to quit. As a matter of fact, mark my word; from today I finish with this place. (He slams the counter)

Poker: What? Man that is the only rum shop around here and you say you finish with this place? You cannot do that to me man. (Goes up to Barim) Is joke I making man. You is me friend man.

Barim Remember my words; only a fool wouldn't change his mind. Skimper lets go. (They are about to leave. (Enter John)

John: Hello Gentlemen

Poker: You see the same thing I tell you. Them fellas just pretending. Look the preacher come back in the rum shop. Just a while ago you leave and you come back already? Is rum you want!

Skimper: Poker why you en shut up?

John: Poker look like your friends are leaving you behind. (To Barim) Barim I was outside listening to the conversation. I heard exactly what you said to Skimper. If I am correct you said you finish with this place, right?

Barim: Yes it is time man, it is time. Oh ho so you were listening?

John: And that you have decided to turn you lives to Jesus, right Skimper?

Skimper: Yea but we en make that decision yet; if you can help us we would do it; right Barim

Barim: Yea that's right. Boy I glad you come back John. Boy God send you here.

John: Ok, maybe I'll take a seat (to Barim and Skimper) Take a seat (Poker looks on in disbelief) I have a little New Testament here. Let me share something with you.

Poker: John you see that Bible you have in your hand there, is white man that write that to fool we black people. I en no fool and I en letting no man fool me.

Barim. Poker now let me tell you something; this is my place; now you either behave yourself or get out. You understand?

Poker: Ok man but mark what I say

Barim: Poker I say shut up or get out!

Poker: Ok man ok (he withdraws a little distance)

John: Ok now let us get started. Now this is quite simple. The Bible tells us in Romans Chapter three and verse twenty three that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. You see our lives are not right in the sight of God. We are all sinners; you understand? (They nod) Furthermore the Bible tells us again in Romans Chapter six and verse twenty three that the wages of sin is death. That means Hell fire.

Poker: (jumping to his feet) John you lie! There en have no Hell. The Jehovah Witnesses tell us Hell is the grave.

Barim: Poker for the last time, keep quiet.

John: As I was saying; because we have sinned we all going to Hell. So right now you are on your way to Hell.

Skimper: Really? To burn in fire? Forever?

John: Yes Skimper; forever. Hell is a terrible place. This is why Jesus died; to save us from this terrible place. He paid for your sin and mine and He wants you to invite him into your heart.

Barim: Right now?

John: Yes Barim; right now. The Bible says "Now is the accepted time.....now is the day of salvation"

Skimper: We must bow our heads?

John: Yes bow your head and close your eyes.

Barim: Tell us what to say.

John: Just tell God that you are a sinner and that you are going to Hell and that you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for your sins and ask the Lord Jesus to come in into your heart to save you.

Skimper: Just that? So simple?

John: Yes just that and so simple. Just bow your heads (they do. While their heads are bowed, Poker mockingly sings)

Poker: (singing scandalously) Nearer my God to thee... nearer to thee....I learn that song since I was a little boy humm.....humm...I forget some of the words.....John what is the words of that song again?(no reply) Looks like all you dead serious....Nearer my God to thee.....hummm....hummm.

Skimper: (as they lift their heads) Wow! This is real! This is real! (He looks around) This is real! I feel so different. That weight is gone. Boy I feeling light, light, light. I am saved! Jesus really saves. Thank you John.

Barim: (Wiping a tear) Boy I never know that is how people get saved. I feel so new. Everything is looking so different. Thank you John (they embrace) let us go and tell the guys. Poker I closing this place; you have to leave now'

Poker: Leave the key with me. When I finish drink my rum I will lock up.

John: Poker we are leaving. You coming? Coming where? You think I am a hypocrite. I en going no where. I staying right here.

Skimper: Goodbye Poker (As Barim throws the keys to Him. Barim, Skimper and John leave)

Poker: (Sneeringly sings) Three blind mice, see how they run.... (He goes to the bar and takes a drink) I en no fool..., I en letting no preacher fool me. There is no Heaven and there is no Hell. There is no Rapture; as for death Poker cannot die.... (He takes another drink)Poker cannot die. Tell them three blind mice Poker cannot die. (A sharp pain strikes on his left side. He clutches his side, reaches for a chair and crashes to the floor. He is Dead.

(Group comes in, including John, Skimper and Barim. They say together)

You grew up here in Sunday School;
You heard the Word you knew the rule;
You died like Abner as a fool;
Too late,

Your friends were more to you than God;
You never cared which path you trod;
You owned not Jesus as your Lord;
Too late.

You pushed the preacher down the stairs;
You lived your life you never cared;
You fumed and fussed I'm great you said;
Too late.

You did not know death was so near;
You thought you're strong you have no fear;
I'm Poker Prince I do not care;
Too late.

You said you're young you'll never die;
You said those preachers always lie;
You had no thought of God on high
Too late.

Now Poker gone returning never;
There to burn in Hell for ever;
As a fool he died like Abner;
Too late.

So come my friends oh come today;
Jesus says I am the way;
Trust Him now and you won't say;
Too late.