

Never Too Far

Never Too Far

Come Back from
a Life of Defeat and Disappointment
to a Life of Purpose and Power

Louie Giglio



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Overture

The Storms, the Rain, and the Wind

We all share one thing in common. In all our lives there will be winds that blow. Headwinds of difficulty brought on by our own decisions and gale-force winds of adversity due to circumstances we never saw coming.

Yet ultimately, God is in charge of the winds.

That means a sovereign God—who is both good and glorious—sits above the fray, and his plans will always prevail, even when our plans don't.

I think back to our May 2003 Passion Conference. Tens of thousands of young adults were heading to a ranch property north of Dallas–Fort Worth to worship God and pray for their generation. Scheduled for two days and three nights, this was going to be an outdoor event where people would camp in tents on the property.

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The day before the gathering officially started, our team was on-site, working feverishly to finish the final details. The night before the majority of people were scheduled to arrive, thunder and lightning struck and threatened to blow all our plans apart.

If you've ever lived in central Texas, you know the storms can be fierce. That night the rain fell with a fury. The storm sat directly on top of the ranch and wouldn't budge. It rained for eight hours straight, and in the morning, while it was still raining, we had to make a decision: cancel the conference or somehow go forward with it.

The ground was a quagmire, squishy to the point it would swallow your shoe or boot and not give it back as you pulled your foot away. You couldn't take a step on the property without a fight, much less drive a car on it. We had no idea what to do.

So we prayed.

And prayed and prayed. In fact, the previous night, just before the rain began to fall with such force, we'd gathered a group of our speakers and leaders in a huge tent, asking God to show up in power during OneDay 2003. Suddenly the tent was getting sloshed by wind and rain, and we started praying harder. We were calling for the wind and the waves to cease, but soon we couldn't even hear ourselves, the storm was so loud.

Finally, one huge gust came along and lifted a portion of this massive tent on its poles and then lowered it back again. At that exact moment, a huge lightning bolt struck the ground maybe a hundred yards away. Thunder

boomed in our ears. Everybody ran for cover. Our RVs were set up some distance from the main tent, and that's where we headed.

Around midnight, the rain was still pelting the ground. I couldn't sleep. I knew the conference was doomed. My wife, Shelley, and I got down on the floor of our RV sometime early in the morning and literally sobbed. It felt like an entire year and a half worth of work was destroyed. Our hopes, our dreams, our finances were being washed away. We just cried out to God, "Please, please let the storm pass!" But all we heard was more rain pounding the top of our RV.

At 4:00 a.m. it was still raining.

At 5:00 a.m. it was still raining.

At 6:00 a.m. it was still raining.

At 7:00 a.m. it was still raining.

At 7:30 a.m. we held another meeting.

Rain was still falling, but it looked to be slowing. The wind was still gusting hard. After a lot of prayer and discussion, we decided to go forward with the conference. Honestly, I'm not sure why. It was a gut decision. God had brought us this far. We were moving ahead.

By 5:00 p.m., when the conference started, the rain had stopped, and cars were being driven onto the property twenty feet from the trailer where that 7:30 a.m. meeting occurred. And here's the amazing thing: the ground was as hard as a table. Thankfully, the same wind that had blown in the storm had also dried the sandy Texas soil.

The fact that anybody was walking on that ground, much less driving on it, was a miracle. We looked upon that event as a “comeback”—what appeared to be a total wipeout turned out to be a life-altering event for some twenty-three thousand Jesus followers.

Our plans were changed to God’s plans, and God’s plans are always for good.

YET AGAIN AND AGAIN

Here are a couple of twists to the story.

Despite the large number of students who’d braved the weather and shown up, thousands more had turned for home before they arrived, thinking for sure the gathering was a no-go. Without the ability to quickly update our website or tweet the latest info (these were the days before social media), people were left to their own conclusions.

The lower attendance cost us. We ended up being one hundred thousand dollars in the hole, with no idea what we were going to do. It looked like we were sunk. What we needed was another comeback—and quick.

The Saturday following the conference, Shelley and I were at a wedding reception in Houston. A friend asked me how the conference ended up financially given the storm, and I told him. He made one lap around the room, talked to a few people, came back, and told me that the one hundred thousand dollars we needed was secured; it would be wired to our offices on Monday.

Wow. We had no sooner told our board the good news when another crisis hit. In spite of the money that had just come in, we still had payroll to meet along with normal operating expenses. We needed another seventy-five thousand dollars—in about two weeks’ time. We needed yet another comeback.

That day I got a call from a friend in Chicago who said, “Hey, this is kinda awkward, but I’m overnighting you a letter today that’s been sitting on my desk for the past three weeks. Somehow it got stuck under a pile. I’m really sorry about this. It was supposed to come in time for your conference. It’s from our foundation, and it includes a check for seventy-five thousand dollars.”

Amazing, right?

How incredible that while we were praying and asking God to come through yet again, he was looking at that check he had already provided, hidden under a pile of stuff on my friend’s desk.

READY TO START YOUR COMEBACK JOURNEY

By sharing this opening story, I’m certainly not comparing the potential cancellation of an event with the loss of your husband or wife, or child, or business, or sanity. What I’m saying is this: if your dreams have seemingly gone up in smoke, or in a sudden burst of wind and hail, don’t count God out of the equation.

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He is the God of the comeback, and if you're longing for some sort of a turnaround, then this book's for you. In the pages ahead you'll see that even when things look bleak, they may not turn out that way at all. You might be in tears on the floor of your RV, but help is at hand. Hold on until the morning. Hold on until the evening. Hold on for the next day. The wind that brought the storm will make the ground solid and dry again, ready for whatever good God has prepared for you.

Your comeback is in God's plans right now. It's not too late, and you're never too far from his love.

Louie Giglio
Atlanta, Georgia
July 2015

One

A Deeper Kind of Comeback Story

Everyone loves a good comeback story.

The classic comeback story contains one of two twists: either an underdog who falters and then succeeds beyond his dreams, or a champion who falls, fights hard, and makes a big return. Either way, it's about a person in pain whose pain is alleviated or who is able to see pain in a new perspective. There's a reversal of fortunes.

Great comeback stories give us hope. We can all relate to the experience of spending time in difficult places where we wondered if we were ever going to make it back. We've all been in seasons when we've longed for something better than what we're experiencing right now.

What kind of challenge are you facing today?

- Maybe you're facing conflict with your friends, coworkers, or relatives. Relationships are strained, and you don't know what to do. You need a comeback to renewed relationships.
- Maybe you're struggling to overcome an addiction or some sort of sin. You need a comeback from despair and darkness to victory, strength, and confidence.
- Perhaps you're overwhelmed at work. Or you hate your job. Or you can't find a job. You need a fresh perspective, a new direction.
- Maybe you're going through a rough season academically, and you wonder if you're ever going to graduate. You need a big dose of hope, an infusion of fresh strength.
- Maybe you have all the money and resources in the world, but your life feels empty and purposeless. You need a new purpose, a bigger purpose than you've ever had before.
- Maybe someone close to you has just died. Or something you once valued is no more. You need to journey forward in spite of your grief.
- Maybe you're in the midst of tragedy. There are no words to describe what you're going through. You just hurt. You need help taking your next breath.
- Maybe the problem is a serious and deep disappointment: life hasn't turned out the way you hoped. You're disillusioned or directionless. You want to know which way to go.

The good news is that Jesus calls us all to enter a life of comeback. It may be the kind of comeback where we overcome obstacles by God's power, or it may be a deeper sort of comeback, where Jesus redeems the worst of circumstances for his glory and our best.

The big hope ahead is that when we're at a low, God offers us a hand up. Through fires and trials, God offers us a closer walk with him.

WELCOME TO THE STORY OF US

Have you ever thought about this deeper sort of comeback—the kind that only God can offer? God offers it to everybody. Just think of some of the remarkable comeback stories in the Bible.

In the garden of Eden in Genesis 2–3, Adam and Eve had everything they needed. Yet they failed miserably when they ate the forbidden fruit.

In his grace and mercy, God appeared to Adam and Eve in the midst of their failure. Yes, they suffered the consequences of their sin, and yes, the whole world has experienced those consequences ever since, because we're all in this together. But the mercy of God also came into the garden in a big way, and Adam and Eve went on to have a hope and a future and a great story with God. Even after their failure, God loved them, cared for them, blessed them, and sustained them.

We've all heard the story of Noah's ark in Genesis

6–9. Noah built a big boat, gathered all the animals inside two by two, and also saved a remnant of humanity from complete destruction during a worldwide flood.

Right after Noah and his family climbed out of the boat onto dry ground under a fantastic rainbow, one of the next things Noah did was plant a vineyard and get drunk. His actions caused big conflict in his family. Fortunately, that's not all there is to Noah's story. Hebrews 11 describes how Noah became an heir of righteousness in keeping with his faith. Noah had a comeback, and God used Noah powerfully, even after his mistakes.

In Exodus, the story of Moses is told. Moses had an anger problem and killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave. Because of that crime, Moses was banished to the wilderness, where all he did for years was tend sheep.

Far away from anything, on the back side of life and in the middle of nowhere, a bush caught fire and blazed without burning up. From that burning bush God spoke to Moses: "Take heart! I know it looks like life has passed you by, but I'm going to use you to lead my people out of bondage in Egypt and into the promised land."

Moses had a great comeback story over his anger and failed opportunities. He also had a speech impediment and lousy self-confidence. He didn't think he could do anything useful for God, but along with his brother, Aaron, he went to Pharaoh and told him to let God's people go. Eventually Pharaoh did that, and the whole nation of Israel had a comeback story.

Moses disobeyed God a few times after that, and as a

consequence, God wouldn't let him go into the promised land. But in the New Testament is a story of Jesus hiking up on a mountain with three of his disciples. There something supernatural happened. Jesus' clothes turned a radiant white, and he shone in brilliant glory. Alongside Jesus, two others suddenly appeared, and one of them was Moses.

We could talk about story after story like these. In fact, the entire story of humanity is a story of people who have stumbled and fallen, yet somehow, in the ocean of God's grace and mercy, he provides a comeback for anyone who puts their faith and hope in Jesus.

In the pages ahead we will explore the stories of men and women who have gone through the fires and trials of life and come out believing in the faithfulness of God. These stories show us that no matter what we might be walking through, we can still have confidence that our story is not over as long as Jesus is in it.

Everybody needs a comeback, and if we seek God, everybody is offered a comeback. No matter our obstacles, no matter what mistakes we've made, no matter if we're in a season of wandering or darkness, we're never too far. God's purpose and plan will still prevail.

God is all about restoring us and anything that has been lost—sometimes now, sometimes in heaven. Even if something doesn't look restored now on earth, we're invited to have confidence in God's purposes, and that yields hope and peace for us today.

I know this to be true because I've experienced a comeback personally.

A SONG IN THE NIGHT

A few years back, life was pumping. In a six-month span, Passion hosted events in seventeen global cities. It was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. Yet it also required an enormous amount of leadership and courage, and the toll was greater than I thought. Add to the mix, we were planting a church in Atlanta and dealing with massively challenging circumstances swirling around our family. The world economy hit bottom. And ultimately, so did I.

One morning at 2:00 a.m., completely out of nowhere, I woke up with a jolt and sat straight up in bed, sweat building on my forehead. My heart was racing so hard, I thought it might blow out of my chest. And I thought, *This is what it must feel like when you die.*

I got up and tried to walk it off, eventually washing my face with cold water. I tried to calm myself down, but couldn't. I held on till morning, but not much changed. Sitting at my desk at work, I felt another wave coming on and eventually headed to my doctor.

The short story is that I was back in the ER that same night with convulsions, random numbness, intense pains, and other crazy symptoms. I said to the person at the ER desk, "I'm fifty and I can't feel my face."

Immediately I was hooked up to multiple machines and the tests began. My blood pressure was so high you wouldn't believe me if I told you. Scans followed. Then nothing. The attending doctor came in and said, "Your

heart is fine. You don't have any signs of major illness." And then he left.

Interestingly, my blood pressure began to drop, starting a cycle that would repeat for weeks to come. The meds the doctor gave me instantly calmed me down, and I was able to sleep that night. But what I didn't know was that underneath it all, something was broken inside me that wasn't going to reset quickly or easily.

The 2:00 a.m. wake-ups kept coming. The symptoms changed day to day, but persisted. My vision blurred. And every day I thought I was dying from a new ailment. Yet visit after visit to doctor after doctor found nothing. Every test turned up negative, and I do mean every test possible.

Finally, someone said the word: *depression*. Some kind of anxiety disorder had taken hold of the control center in my mind. By now I was taking medication to reset my brain, but night after night the dread and darkness would come calling.

Of course I prayed. And the people around me who knew what was really going on had been praying for months. Yet I was feeling numb from the meds and lost in the fog. Finally, something changed.

I'll never forget the 2:00 a.m. *boom* that night and waking up feeling more desperate than ever. I thought, *I can't do this anymore*. Nothing had helped the situation. No doctor was able to bring about a change. I didn't know what to do. All I knew for certain was that I couldn't go on this way.

Almost on reflex, I felt my arms rising to heaven. Without words, my heart prayed, *God, you've got to help me.* That's all I could muster. Sometimes our best and most profound prayers are the simplest. *God, please help me.*

There was no bolt of lightning. No fast fix. But the smallest snippet of Scripture floated through my mind. It's from the book of Job (35:10) and talks about how God gives us songs in the night. Worship had been my go-to many times before in life, and I said, *God, I don't know what else to do, but if you'll give me a song in the dark, I will praise you.*

Almost instantly this little line of praise to God just dropped into my mouth. It was, "Be still, my soul, there's a healer." That's all I had. "Be still, my soul, there's a healer." I sang it over and over again, a little melody emerging. I knew the truth of that line. I knew it deep in my gut. I knew it was backed up by Scripture. The psalmist said, "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God" (Psalm 43:5). *Put your hope in God.*

Have you ever experienced a moment like that? Times come in life when you're going through the valley of the shadow of death, and in that moment you need to start proclaiming the living Word of God to yourself.

That's what that little line was to me. It wasn't a promise that God would heal me then and there. And he might not heal me the next day either. Yet God was still a healer, and I believed in him and his purposes, and that was enough for the moment. That's what I needed to remind myself of.

Then more words came. *His love is deeper than the sea. His mercy is unfailing. His arms a fortress for the weak.*

I sang it again. I kept singing it over and over.

What happened the next morning? Was everything all okay with me?

Nope.

The next night, 2:00 a.m. came . . . and I sat straight up in bed, wide-awake with my heart racing and feeling a huge sense of dread. A cloud of darkness descended over me. But one thing was different that night: I had a song.

The next night was the same. First the cloud, then the song.

The night after that, my pattern alternated: cloud, song, cloud, song.

The night after that, I woke up on my own before 2:00 a.m. I was prepared for the cloud. That night the order was song, cloud, song, cloud.

For nights, weeks, and even months to come, I experienced a strange rhythm of dread and peace, peace and dread. Some nights it was cloud, cloud, song, song. Other nights it was song, song, cloud, cloud.

Gradually, mercifully, it became song, song, song, cloud.

Then one night it became song, song, song, song. No cloud at all.

Then, tentatively, the next night it was song, song, song, song.

For weeks and months on end, it remained simply song, song, song, song.

AN INVITATION TO RAISE YOUR HANDS

Yes, I had the help of a doctor during that season of recovery. I made lifestyle changes. I required medications for a time. It all helped. Yet I know it was the song of praise that pierced the deepest heart of that darkness and brought me back to the light of day.

“So, has that sense of panic ever happened since?” you ask. Full disclosure: I have struggled with it to varying degrees in the years that followed. But, praise God, I have never gone back to that debilitating place.

I want to say two things to anybody who feels they’re in a dark place: you’re not crazy, and you’re not alone. Your circumstances may be black, but Scripture says that God is light. Trust in him and he will give you a comeback.

Life deals us blows, yes. Circumstances come up that are beyond our control, and obstacles keep us from living the life we dream of. Sometimes we deal blows to ourselves. We make mistakes and wrong decisions and choose paths that are harmful, not helpful.

But there is hope.

Over the next several chapters, I’m going to share some incredible comeback stories. The premise I want to raise in your mind is this: *I need a comeback*. The question I want to raise in your mind is this: *How do I get one?*

Part of the beautiful solution I can offer you is that the solution isn’t about you trying harder. When people read books by preachers or hear talks at church, too often the solution points to something you need to do to

change: walk forward or backward, or commit yourself to fifty days of something, or light a candle, or put a stick in the fire. But then no lasting change comes, and you wonder what you did wrong.

The solution I'm pointing you to is a solution of faith. It's not a formula, but there is real evidence that it works. The solution lies in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

The psalmist described the need for a big comeback: "O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Psalm 63:1).

Those are the words of a man in turmoil. Then the psalmist remembered to have faith. He said to God, "So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you" (vv. 2–3).

And here comes the song in the night, the comeback. The psalmist said, "I will bless you as long as I live" (v. 4).

If you need a comeback, the solution I'm pointing you to begins with praise. When you lift your hands in praise, you're acknowledging that someone exists who's greater than you. You don't need to have all the answers. Acts 16:31 invites you with one straightforward declaration: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

That's what hands lifted in praise to God represent. It's the way humans respond when they don't know where else to turn. *Someone help me.*

That's the invitation this book holds out to you.

The comeback God offers you starts right now. Lift

Never Too Far

up your hands in response to him reaching down to you. Lift your hands in praise above the darkness; above death and the grave; above cancer, loss, a bad job situation, a strained relationship; above depression or turmoil or stress or whatever has come against you.

Lift up your hands to believe again and to declare that although God has led you into this valley, his plan is not to leave you in this place but to give you a comeback and lead you all the way through.

Two Paradise in a Garbage Dump

Jesus wasn't drawn to the people whose lives were perfectly put together. (Actually, those people never existed.) Jesus was drawn to people whose lives *weren't* all together. People just like us. In fact, some of the people he interacted with were a real mess.

Think about the story of the thief on the cross. We see in Luke 23:32–33 that even in Jesus' last hours on earth, God chose to put Jesus in close proximity to two really messed-up people, two common criminals.

One of the criminals hanging alongside Jesus hurled taunts at him. Think of it: in his last moments of life, as his last act in the world, this dying man—a thief—chose to wound another person by insulting him.

The way a crucifixion went down is that they nailed you to a wooden cross and you hung there by the spikes

driven through your hands and feet. The weight of your body caused your chest to sag, putting enormous pressure on your lungs. The only way you could breathe was to push up against the nails in your feet to lift your body enough to take a quick gulp of air. Eventually the pain exhausted you until you no longer had the strength to push up and breathe. Sometimes you would die by blood loss, if your earlier beatings had been severe enough, but usually a person died by suffocation. Depending on what physical shape you were in, you might hang on a cross for days, gasping for air. If your death took that long, eventually a soldier would break your shins. You'd no longer have the ability to push yourself up to breathe, so you'd die more quickly.

Picture the thief who was flinging insults at Jesus. He only had a few breaths left, but he was using all his strength to lift himself up so he could gasp for air and spit out some final words of insult to someone else. That was how much pain he was in. His life was so full of hatred and hurt that insulting others had become his default action.

Some of us today understand what it's like to hurt that much. So many wounds have been inflicted on us over the years that all we know how to do is to strike back. Retaliation has become our form of self-preservation. Wounding others has become our defense mechanism by which we'll somehow stay safe.

But here's a contrast. There were two criminals on the crosses beside Jesus. One was insulting Jesus. Guess what the other criminal was doing?

But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” (Luke 23:40–41)

I would love to know if more words followed. If I’d been that guy, I would have turned to the scornful thief and said, “Will you just shut up? What are you thinking?! You’re hurling insults at God! Today we’re going to die, and you’re telling me you don’t even fear God now?”

The second thief understood the gravity of the moment. Maybe he’d heard Jesus teach or seen Jesus do a miracle. He had somehow connected the dots. He understood so deeply what Jesus was about that in verse 42, the thief’s final recorded words are this poignant plea: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

A nine-word prayer. It wasn’t a grand theological statement, and it might have been the only prayer this thief ever prayed in his life, yet it demonstrated that he had a clear view in his heart of who Jesus was.

Have you ever prayed a similar prayer? *Jesus, please remember me.*

Isn’t that really what all of us are hoping for today? That somehow God hasn’t forgotten us in this crazy world?

The great news is that Jesus met the praying thief exactly where he was. Jesus answered, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise” (v. 43).

WELCOME TO THE GARBAGE DUMP

Historians and archaeologists tell us that the little section of land called Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified, was actually a landfill.

Have you ever seen a landfill up close? Flies buzzing around. A bad smell in the air. Everywhere you look is pile after pile of rotting, stinking trash. And Golgotha was the worst sort of primitive, barbaric landfill possible.

When the Romans were crucifying criminals, often there'd be nobody around afterward to claim the bodies. Nobody wanted anything to do with folks who'd been in trouble with the law. So the soldiers would peel the bodies off the beams and toss the corpses into the garbage heap. Then the wild dogs and other feral animals on the outskirts of the city would eat the flesh off the bones. That's the place where Jesus was crucified.

The fact that Jesus told the thief on the cross, "You will be with me in paradise," is highly significant for you and me. We may be living in a garbage dump today, but paradise can still find us. Our lives may be disgustingly messy and flies may buzz all around us, but Jesus is always near. There's always hope. If the life of someone we know looks completely messed up, we don't need to count that person out. God is the God of the great comeback.

How does a great comeback begin? It springs from a heart that believes enough to pray: *Jesus, please remember me.* That prayer only requires a breath. We don't need to

be high and mighty to get to heaven. We get to heaven because of a simple prayer of faith.

In that prayer we acknowledge that we have nothing to offer God. We come to Jesus as helpless in our pain and despair. We look at Jesus on the cross beside us and say, “You’re God. You’re innocent of any crimes. You could get down off that cross if you wanted, but you’re there by choice for a purpose. Will you please remember me?”

Sometimes people put more words around that prayer—and that’s fine. You might understand more about spiritual matters than the thief did. Maybe you grew up around Scripture and you know we’ve all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Maybe you know that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), but Christ came to take away our sin (1 John 3:5) and his sacrifice removes the stain of our sin (Hebrews 9:28). That’s wonderful if you know those things.

But if all you know is that Jesus was innocent but crucified for things you had a part in doing, and if you believe he stayed on that cross for a reason, and if you just want Jesus to remember you, then your prayer is heard.

Jesus is not put off by the stench. Jesus will bring paradise even to a garbage dump.

IT’S NEVER TOO LATE

Comeback begins with Jesus. Does that seem too simple for you?

We often think we need to do something great ourselves in order to have a comeback. We need to jump high hurdles or climb ladders to heaven. At the very least, we mistakenly think we need to be in the right place at the right time.

The good news is that the essential action has nothing to do with us. In fact, when it comes to being in position, it's only important that Jesus is in the right place at the right time. And you can count on him not to miss his cue.

There are so many stories in the Bible that show how Jesus is always on time and in the right place.

Once there was a woman who'd been sick for many years (her story is told in Luke 8). No doctor could help her. She knew she needed to get close to Jesus and he would heal her. But there were huge crowds around Jesus. Getting close to him seemed impossible.

Yet it wasn't too late for her. All she did was reach out and touch the hem of his garment as he passed by, just a finger brushing lightly against the edge of his robe.

Jesus knew that power had gone out from him. He said, "Daughter, stand up; your faith has made you whole." Immediately the woman was healed.

Luke 19:1–10 tells the story of a man who worked for the government who'd been involved in some shady business dealings. People knew about his dealings and hated him. The man knew he needed help, but who was ever going to help a corrupt businessman?

He desperately wanted Jesus to come to his home so they could talk in private. But there was another problem:

the man was really short and Jesus was always surrounded by crowds. Getting close to Jesus seemed impossible, and inviting Jesus to his house seemed out of the question.

But it wasn't too late for that man.

Just before Jesus passed along his street, the businessman climbed a sycamore tree. And when Jesus came to that spot, he stopped and looked right into the man's face. Before the man could get out a word, Jesus called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Come down from that tree. I'm going to your house today."

Everybody in the crowd was shocked that Jesus would go to the house of a tax collector. Tax collectors were known to be cheats and scam artists. But Jesus didn't care. And right then and there, Zacchaeus realized that money would never satisfy the truest longings of his heart, and he vowed to give half of his possessions to the poor and pay back four times more than he'd taken from anybody he'd ever cheated.

It wasn't too late for Zacchaeus, because Jesus is the God of the comeback.

See, we don't need to shine ourselves up and sit in a beautiful church sanctuary. We don't need to gather our children and spouse together and figure out how to become the world's most functional family. We don't need to get well *before* we meet Jesus. That's what he does for us!

It doesn't matter how messy life has become; it's never too late for God to restore your family, your health, your mind. Never too late for him to put your life back together. Never too late to heal the wounds inflicted on

Never Too Far

you over years. Never too late for Jesus to speak to you when you're hanging on a cross in the middle of the punishment you deserve.

The good news is that paradise connects with landfills. Today, thanks to Jesus, paradise can come to us.