

Jesus Christ in Butler Cabin

“I might be the only guy who’s ever publicly mentioned Jesus Christ twice in eight years in the Butler Cabin at Augusta National.”— Bernhard Langer

Beginning with a televised remark in 1985, the name of Jesus Christ has been associated with Bernhard Langer for thirty-three years. He’d just won the Masters tournament, was in the Butler Cabin and was asked by CBS Sports’ Jim Nantz if he had looked at the leader board during the tournament. Bernhard’s response? “As I walked off the ninth green I looked up at the board and said: ‘Jesus Christ, I thought I was improving and now I’m four shots behind Curtis Strange.’” That verbal faux pas caused a firestorm of letters to Bernhard from offended people all over the world.

Eight years later, Bernhard referred to Jesus Christ again in the Butler cabin. He’d just won the Masters a second time on Easter Sunday in 1993. Jim Nantz asked what winning twice was like for him. This time he said that to win on Easter Sunday, during the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, made the victory that much more special. So what took place in Bernhard’s life to make the name of Jesus Christ so personal and reverential? Bernhard explained it to a group of us like this:

“1985 was an exceptional year for me. I was ranked the number one golfer in the world, was newly wed and had money, houses, cars and fame. However, something was still missing. I had a void in my heart I couldn’t explain. Then Bobby Clampett invited me to attend a Bible study one night on tour. PGA Chaplain Larry Moody was the speaker. He talked about Jesus’ discussion with Nicodemus about the need to be born again to enter heaven. Larry went on to explain that we are all born with a sin nature we can’t get rid of on our own, and that we can’t ‘earn’ our way to heaven. I was raised to believe the opposite—that by living a ‘good life’ and doing the ‘right things’ I would be acceptable to God. However, after studying the Bible, I came to understand that Jesus did for me what I couldn’t do for myself by being punished on the cross for my sins. I saw that only by accepting Him into my life would I have true peace here and assurance of heaven. So I turned my life over to Him—and everything changed drastically. That void was filled.”

In reflecting on his first Butler Cabin reference, Bernhard went on to ask, “Why do people only swear in the name of Jesus Christ? Ever think about that?”

That’s a great question, and one I hadn’t ever considered. Could it be that people instinctively acknowledge the highest and most powerful of all names when expressing their emotions of frustration, anger, relief or gratitude? For Bernhard, that name is no longer a visceral reaction to life circumstances—but a friend with whom he’s proud to be associated and the One he proclaims as Lord. What does the name, Jesus Christ, mean to you?— *Steve Silver*

Click on the link to watch Bernhard's 3 minute story

<https://vimeo.com/324168895>