

## Testimony Of Jesus

After listening to some powerful testimonies of the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ and hearing living proof that He IS the Lamb of God who came to take *away* the sins of the world, (John 1:29) I felt the Holy Spirit put on my heart to write out the testimony of Jesus in my life. There are two main objectives behind me asking Jesus to give me the words to share His love: First, He would receive honor and glory through my life and receive the reward of His suffering. Second, others and myself would overcome the world, flesh, and the devil by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. (Rev 12:11) Jesus I pray the words on these pages will be with grace as though seasoned with salt, (Col 4:6) and give grace to those who hear (Eph 4:29) the Word and point all praise to Your Holy name. Amen.

When I was a young child, around the age of five, my family and I were at a church service where I heard the message of the gospel. I had an understanding that I was on my way to hell if I did not ask Jesus in my life, for He is the Way to heaven. I told my parents that evening that I wanted to pray and ask Jesus into my heart. They asked me if I knew what I wanted to do and I said, “yes,” so we prayed to God for salvation from my eternal damnation. Reflecting on that time, I believe that by the grace of God I had a soft heart and a desire for the things of the Lord. I can also see now the ways in which the devil had attacked and came against the work Jesus did and wanted to continue to do in my heart. My encouragement in light of the things I will share in this testimony is, as another brother has said, “I can start in the darkness; but brother, I can end in the light!”

When I was young and impressionable, growing up in Surrey, B.C., I remember different devices and schemes of the devil and the seeds of lust that were planted by him through my sinful flesh. I think back and I'm not sure exactly how it started, but early in my life I had been exposed and had an inclination for lust and immorality of the mind and body. Without having knowledge or understanding of the seriousness of these things, I sowed to the flesh that which I would later reap in my teens.

When I was between grades two and three, we moved to Aldergrove. I wasn't too happy about moving away from my friends and was quite shy. One reason know why I was shy and didn't have much confidence in public situations (especially speaking) was I had a speech impediment which I took speech therapy classes for. My tongue naturally did not move properly to make various sounds such as 'thhhh' and 'sssss.' I was bombarded and overcome by inferiority and shyness partially as a result of this. But, what the devil meant for evil, God meant for His purpose and good. (Gen 50:20) An example how the enemy was seeking to steal, kill, and destroy my soul took place around grade 6. My best friend at the time said he wanted to show me a magazine he found in a bush. Interested and somewhat a follower, I went to see what he found. Once finding the magazine my friend showed it to me and I discovered it was a pornographic magazine. I remember being disgusted with it and knew it was wrong (every man's conscience bears witness. (Rom 2:15) Another significant thing which transpired in elementary school is I fell in love with another god, which is really not another. My brother, whom I looked up to and loved, started to play basketball in high school. Seeing him play and practice made me want to play also and in this way be like my big brother. At first my motives and intentions towards the game were harmless, but later in high school the game obtained a hold and place in my heart which Jesus was supposed to have. (First Commandment - Exo 20:3-6)

Naturally (outwardly) I, for the most part, enjoyed my high school years and by the gift of God did fairly well academically. I continued to pursue sports and it became my source of self-worth and identity. While fashioning my idol with my hands and with tenacity, I continued to attend church, Sunday school and youth group. But, as I continued to live for myself, sports, and sacrificed to the devil through his music and movies; my desire for God and church grew colder and colder. Eventually Christianity became something I said (very rarely) that I was a part of, but with my life and actions not many would have known. Being a Christian also became to me something I was because I attended church and was brought up in a Christian home, but Jesus wasn't my desire. After high school I attended a College for one year and played basketball there.

After that year I decided to take a year off to make some money for further post-secondary education and to look for another school to play basketball.

In my year off, by God's providence, I ended up playing basketball with a small Christian Bible College. I really enjoyed playing with the guys there and realized that the atmosphere and speech was much different than the previous team I played with. Through this experience and getting to know an assistant coach of a Christian University, I was persuaded to enroll at their school for basketball and the rest of my studies.

During my time there my pursuit for other things, pleasures of this world and my idol grew stronger and I became 'lukewarm' at best. (Rev 3:16) The hypocrisy of my life & callousness of my conscience (1 Tim 4:2) and heart increased. I became a slave to lust, (pornography and masturbation), self, and the devil (2 Tim 2:26). I was deceived and had a false peace and joy. I thought I was a Christian (disciple of Jesus Christ) and even professed to know Him, but denied the power thereof (2 Tim 3:5) and denied Jesus by my actions (Tit 1:16). I had been taught and believed that by my prayer as a child (confession with the mouth) I was saved and would be eternally secured of my salvation. But my disobedience to the Word of God and bondage to sin proved that I did not believe in my heart that God raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:8-10).

Outwardly it may have seemed that I was a 'good' person and things were going well, but inwardly I was full of dead man's bones (Matt 23:27) and my heart was far from God (Matt 15:8). As a result of my unbelief and self-seeking life, the condition of my heart did not improve. I became more in bondage to lust and self and only experienced the false joy and peace the world offers, which is not the true joy and peace and does not remain. I was given over by God to a deluding influence (2 Thess 2:11) and believed THE Lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator (Rom 1:25). I thought because I prayed a prayer and went to church (on occasion by this time) that I was saved and going to heaven no matter what. I was deceived by the serpent of old and did not truly know Jesus and the power of His resurrection (Phil 3:10). My mind was darkened (Eph 4:18) and my eyes blinded by the deceitfulness of sin, (Heb 3:13)

deceitful spirits, and doctrines of demons (1 Tim 4:1). I distinctly remember being an adulterer in the heart and mind and having some conviction about it and thinking, “well, I guess this is the way it will always be. And besides, it doesn’t really matter in light of eternity because I will be going to heaven anyways and when I get there I won’t be sorry about my actions (deeds) This is a lie straight from the pits of hell, which was in my heart and mind and originated in the garden of Eden: You can eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and “You surely shall not die!” (Gen 2:1-4) In other words, you can live for your self and be a slave and practice willful sin and not perish in the lake that burns with fire!

Approaching my graduation from University I still didn’t have much direction in life spiritually or naturally. What kept me going through University was mainly basketball. I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do career wise so I just took classes I enjoyed and received a bachelors of Science. Things regarding basketball weren’t necessarily going the way I wanted and I found myself wondering why I was there. God in His infinite love and mercy had plans for me and ultimately used my time at university for His purpose, the redemption of my soul. In my senior year a good friend and teammate of mine had a touch from the Lord and his life took a 180-degree turn for Jesus. He decided to forego his senior year of ball and focus on his new love for Jesus. The light and inexpressible joy, full of glory (1 Pet 1:8) that my friend was radiating, started to shine and expose the emptiness and darkness in my heart and life. Praise the Lord for His lights in this world and the power of His testimony and saving grace in the lives of His people! This brother was so excited about Jesus and His Word and it was showing in his life and speech.

One evening, according to God’s sovereign plan, a group of people went to another friend and teammate’s house for a going away gathering. It was there that one of God’s faithful stewards felt led by the Holy Spirit to share the things that he had been learning and the gathering turned into a bible study. That night, for what I see as the first time, I heard the full counsel of God and the message of the cross, which is the power of God to those who are being saved (1 Cor 1:18). He shared his testimony of how the

Word, the Spirit, and the blood of Jesus set him free from sin. Through a revelation of God's truth, by His Spirit, I *heard* there IS freedom from sin in Christ and *heard* of the TRUE grace of God that teaches us to deny ALL ungodliness and worldly lust in this present age. (Tit 2:11, 12) Also, by the mercies of God, I *heard* of the wrath of God against all sons of disobedience (Eph 5:6; Col 3:6) and the fact that no unrighteous person who practices sin will inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:16-26; Eph 5:5, 6; Rom 1:28-32). "The day you eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall *surely* die" (Gen 2:17). This gospel was not received well by all hearers and much opposition was raised. But thankfully, most of the evening the Spirit was convicting me and revealing to my heart that a slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does (John 8:34, 35). That evening, by the grace of God, I received the Rhēma Word (G4487 – that which is or has been uttered by the Living Voice, Word; an utterance) and became obedient to the teaching that is according to godliness.

No one knew at the time, but all evening the Words spoken penetrated my heart and I knew I needed to repent and be saved from the wrath of God (Rom 5:9). I drove a long way home and poured out my heart to Jesus and asked Him to set me free. I *knew* where I would spend eternity depended on Him and realized, through years of experience, that I could not overcome sin in my own strength and will. By the kindness of God, that night I was saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8) and was lead to repentance (Rom 2:4). I didn't necessarily understand what was happening, but I received God's grace and mercy and that night the Lord broke the bondage to pornography and masturbation, which I was in enslaved to for seven years. I had such joy and peace on me that at times I couldn't hold it in and just laughed for no natural reason.

This is how the Lord Jesus Christ found me, a chief among sinners, and caused me to be born again to a *living* hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for me (1 Pet 1:3-4). May I just throw in here, as so powerfully believed and lived by a brother, "it's grace, it's grace, it never was us!" Thus began the Lord's work of sanctification by His Spirit (2 Thess 2:13) He began to lead me by His

Holy Spirit to put to death the deeds of the flesh (Rom 8:14, 13) and bear fruits worthy of repentance (Luk 3:8). One of the first things God dealt with in my life is the devil's secular music that I loved to listen and sing to. The Lord gave me eyes to see that I could not overcome lustful thoughts and have a pure heart and mind when I was feeding on the corruption that is in the world by lust (2 Pet 1:4). As a result, He eventually led me to dispose of my secular music. Another work of saving grace the Lord performed in me was my unclean eyes, which were being defiled by TV and movies. This was an area in my life in which I needed to cut completely off in order not to enter hell with two eyes (Mk 9:47). I was deceived and always said and thought what I listened to and watched didn't affect me and thought I would never do the things I heard and saw. Yet the word is so clear: Whatever one sows to their own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption (Gal 6:8) and friendship with the world is hatred towards God and whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (Jas 4:4). It seems clear now, but that is only because the veil has been removed in Christ (2 Cor 3:14).

Another blessed work of the Holy Spirit's regenerating work in me, was and is, a love and desire for His word. Growing up the bible became to me a 'good' book that had good ideas and morals. But it did not change me and when I read it, it didn't speak about or to me. Yet, bless the Lord, when mercy came and opened my eyes and faith was granted, I started reading the Word and seeking to know Jesus. I began to receive the Word in my heart and it proceeded to perform its work in me (1 Thess 2:13) Hallelujah! It truly is a *living* Word, active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb 4:12). The Spirit was leading me and guiding me into all truth (John 16:13) as I sought Him with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength and obeyed, by faith and out of love, what I was reading. I started to gain a true knowledge of the Scriptures (Jesus) and it continued to set me free and sanctify my heart.

“You shall know the truth (Jesus) and the truth SHALL set you free. And whomever the Son has set free IS free indeed” (John 8:32).

Since then, about three year ago, the Lord has led me through many waters, tests and trials. He is continuing to show me His everlasting mercies and unfailing love and is causing me to overcome and be more than a conqueror (Rom 8:37). Jesus has given me grace to lay down the idolatry of sports and to serve the one and only Master in heaven (Mat 6:24). He *has* delivered me from so great a death; He *is* delivering me and will *yet* continue to deliver me from ALL temptations, weights, and sins (2 Cor 1:10). Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive ... honor and glory and blessing (Rev 5:12). He IS the Way, the Truth, and the LIFE (Jon 14:6) and when Christ, who *is* our life, is revealed, then we also will be revealed with Him in glory (Col 3:4). God has been so faithful to me and to His word. He lovingly disciplines me as a son (Heb 12:7) and is leading me on the narrow and difficult path that leads to life (Matt 7:14). My beloved brethren, we are NOT indebted to the flesh, to live according to the flesh (Rom 8:12) and if, by faith we come to Jesus with *all* our hearts, we are not under law but under grace (Rom 6:14). Therefore, let us grow in the grace and the *true* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18) and deny ourselves, pick up our cross daily, and follow Him (Luk 9:23, 24). He has called us into fellowship with His Son (1 Cor 1:9) and in sanctification, (1 Thess 4:7) so we may be a vessel of honor (1 Thess 4:4) useful to the Master, prepared for every good work (2 Tim 2:21).

May we all, have faith and patience (Heb 6:12) in order that we may endure to the end and be saved (Matt 24:13; Heb 10:36). I urge you, reader, by the mercies of God, which are new every morning (Lam 3:22, 23) present your bodies a *living* and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual act of *worship*; so we may not only know but *prove* what the good and acceptable and perfect will of God is (Rom 12:1, 2): Our sanctification (1 Thess 4:3), that we rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks (1 Thess 5:16, 17), and that we hear the word of God and do it (Luk 8:22; Matt 12:50). Let God continue to bless you and me (Acts 3:26) as we seek diligently with *all* the heart after the RISEN King.

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