

# Gillian Macsween Tsetomony

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[ 0 : 00 ] I'll sit down and you can stand up thanks Joanne you can stand yes Joanne I've never been up here other than like cleaning the church I was quite content with that but anyway that was very encouraging what you said because I was thinking actually this week like so many times I've kind of ashamedly like kind of given the devil that that fruit holds kind of like in the sense that I've been saying to myself like I'm so young and there's so many wise people here and you know what can I say but you know there's no sense in that because what I think of all the stuff that Jesus has done for me I would be cruel and selfish I think not to share that it's a joy to be here and to share what Jesus has done for me I'm very lucky that for all that Jesus has done in my life so thank you I think most of you know me I don't think there's anyone that

I don't but I think probably just for a bit of background I'm 19 and I'm a student nurse so I'm living at home so I was I'm living in Scalpe which I suppose it's kind of a good place to start so I was brought up in Scalpe which was lovely very thankful for my upbringing I was praised by lovely Christian parents and grandparents but even more than that like school teachers and neighbours you know Scalpe is such a god-driven place and you know that was a massive benefit to me like yes it was my childhood but I think I probably didn't kind of appreciate it as much then but you know as I've gotten older like all the you know Sunday school and all these like little things that kind of I was involved in growing up that kind of really shaped me and you know I'm so thankful for that now so it's yeah like it's that you know there's not many kids that can kind of say they were grown up in that kind of such a Christian environment so

I was very fortunate and privileged for my upbringing so like I could have you know I knew all the stories and all the catechisms and everything and I think so that was you know lovely like from a young age and I like I think even as I suppose I got that wee bit older and you know the people in my class kind of started tailing off church and you know my older sister as well I think well you know granted I had my lazy days but I kind of don't want to go out but I think I there was such a sense of warmth and importance in being a church and I never kind of that never left me I think I I always knew that church was important and in well I probably didn't understand the whole concept of all I was thankful that I was there and I knew that that meant something for as long as I can remember so but I don't think it was kind of until I was probably 10 or 11

I think the law started to kind of intervene that wee bit more and kind of I suppose challenged me a wee bit so I kind of it started I think this one night it's so random this one girl who I knew quite well I'm not not close friends but I knew she went to church and she we were walking home from youth club one night and she turned to me and she just asked me out of the blue like if I was a Christian and that really it really threw me like you know I if anyone has to know the answer to that like a very young friendship you know that should have been me and I should have known exactly what to say but I didn't I cannot I didn't understand you know what she was asking of me and you know I blew it off I was just like oh damn I won't I you know I kind of bluffed my way through it but as much as I kind of tried to throw it off and forget about it it it was eating away at me that question and I knew there was more to that than I was kind of understanding so yeah

I kind of I carried on and I I tried to forget about it but I I couldn't it was eating away at me and this went on for I think a few weeks and I remember one night being at a sleepover and it was like three in the morning and all the girls I was with were fast asleep and I was thinking to myself you know this was just pulling them in the back of my mind and I just thought to myself well you know I've heard so many prayers and I've you know I know that there is this God up there and I thought well I'll just ask him myself you know what is a Christian and so just totally simple you know I just said I put that out to Jesus and kind of that was me I kind of forgot about it I suppose that wee bit but I think the following the following week or sometime after I was at a church camp so my first one actually we were in Scarladale and we on the Sunday went to it was Gower Church actually and

[ 5 : 17 ] I remember I was seeing this at girls group the other day like I remember I had my new bible and my new notebook and I was so prepared for the service I felt like so lovely and ready to take down on my notes and but as the minister I kind of it was like the structure of a service I don't think my pen touched the paper it was all about like he just gave it as three points he was like we're going to be looking at Christianity what is a Christian what does it mean to be a Christian and I think it kind of hit me all then that you know there is a lot more to faith than I realised I think for the first time I'd kind of had a personal kind of more intimate relationship with Jesus I kind of realised that actually he is there and he is listening and he has answered me and I I found all these things from my youth that I had learnt and seen in church and seen off like these older wise Christians I think it kind of all flooded into one and I realised for the first time that you know it's not a case of

God being up here and me being down here and he's looking at me but rather it's you know he's there right beside me and it's a personal relationship he's a friend so kind of the more the service went on the kind of you know the more convicted I was because I realised you know I don't have what these people have yet like I go to church and I know other stories but actually I don't know God personally and that that really hit me and you know I had that total conviction and you know I had to do was just run home and you know pour my heart out to Jesus but I remember it was like the longest night of my life like I had to go to a youth fellowship and have pizza and all this and then I had to go I remember it so clearly like there was two million buses going back to Scaladale and one went back and no bother and one I was on was like loaded with Christians who all started telling their testimonies and we were on that bus to like two in the morning and the more they were shooting the more I was convoked and I felt I never felt worse you know so it was the longest night ever but eventually you know I did I did get back to my bed and I just you know

I broke and I just poured my heart to Jesus you know there's no rest for you in that complete realisation of how distant you are from Jesus and I that really I couldn't I think I tossed in terms of air which I eventually fell asleep just you know soul broken but yeah it's a bit like it's a bit cliché but I did I woke up the next morning just with that complete you know overwhelming peace of the Lord and just that kind of you know that sort of passing peace that he has and that was poured over me and I had complete clarity and complete assurance that you know I was one of his and I feel like I should say you know that was my experience you know I had that complete assurance I know that a lot of my friends didn't have that same kind of you know assurance so if that's you you know that's you know everyone's different I suppose but for me I had that complete assurance so that I had been converted and that was a really lovely time like so I was 11 then 11 when I was converted to that camp and

I wouldn't say that much changed really in my faith you know at that time I was kind of I was still in Scarborough school at that time so you know that nothing changed I was still going to church as often as I had been I mean I think kind of ashamedly I didn't I didn't profess my faith for a couple of years later I was 13 when I went forward and it was purely just I think because I love church and I love being there and I thought you know if I go forward and they you know turn around and say like no you can't you know don't be stupid I was like I have to see these people every day in my community and I love them and I I really put off for as long as you know yeah for a long time but I was quite challenged I had a lot of there was no young people in Scarborough which was quite tough in itself but I did have a lot of Christian friends kind of elsewhere and they were very encouraging and seeing them go forward and the joy that gave them you know that really that kind of convicted me and I knew it was the right thing but yeah

I was so you know stupidly I was so afraid of what people would think a mother you know they would think oh it's just a phase and I've got a verse actually I better find it which kind of I think this verse challenged me and not soon after finding this verse I did start going to the prayer meeting but it's in 1 Timothy chapter 4 verse 12 it says let no one despise you for your youth but set the believers an example in speech in conduct in love in faith and in purity so that that did challenge me and I did eventually plug up the colours to go forward and that was a really a really lovely time so that was in Scalpy as well and that was a like I felt like I was in such a lovely Christian bubble kind of you know 11, 12, 13 I was so I hadn't gone to First World yet but I was so you know I loved church and I was really kind of growing in my relationship with Jesus getting to know him more and more so I was in this lovely bubble and it was you know all lovely but it didn't last very long to be honest so I went to First Year and I

[10:36] I very much juggled with I think that that transition just because Scalpy School was so tiny and we were so close and you know jumping from P7 to First Year just I think anybody you know 2020 that's not a hard that's not an easy year kind of for a teenager to be growing in and there was such pressure and just constantly feeling like you're needing to do more and be more and you know I struggled with things you know popularity and reputation and building up this life for yourself and I feel like it was a lot of things at once and it's such a massive change so I kind of I did let myself get lost in that which was very challenging I think kind of my faith took the back seat because there was all this new stuff in my life nothing to the point of you know I was never you know drinking and things like that never never my scene but in a way I think that's kind of even more challenging we were talking about this that life was growing not that long ago just you know how the devil uses like that kind of secret saying that you know

I was so lost and Jesus was no way in my life you know Jesus was at the root of nothing you know I was kind of I'm such a control freak and I was kind of sort out this life for myself and build up you know my own my good Instagram page and my good friend group and everything like that and that was tough you know Jesus was not anywhere to be seen and I think on the way I was you know doing fine you know I had a I had fairly good grades and like good job and good friends but yeah I was very consumed by the world I think which is not easy there's actually a couple of verses in Hosea which I kind of think sums up my teenage years kind of that struggle that I had sums it up quite well it's in Hosea chapter 2 I will punish her for the day she bouded incense to the gods she decked herself with vines and jewellery and went after her lovers but knew she forgot declares the

Lord therefore I am now going to allure her I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her there I will give her back her vineyards and will make the valley of trouble a door of hope there she will respond as in the days of her youth and as in the day she came out of Egypt so that does kind of sum up you know my teenage life I was who's my dad I was I was kind of I was very consumed and that was difficult and I love in Luke 10 that kind of the encounter Jesus has with Mary and Martha my girlfriend actually and I'm very much a Martha which sees as Jesus and her disciples were on their way he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him she had a sister called Madie who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said but Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made she came to him and asked

Lord don't you care that my sister does left me to do the work by myself tell her to help me Martha Martha the Lord answered you are worried and upset about so many things but few things are needed but indeed only one Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken from her and so that was very much me I was worried about this that and the next thing but not Jesus and you know I look back and I just think we're such fools we're not always running to Jesus with every worry and every burden I always think here it must break his heart watching us find contentment and satisfaction and absolutely everything else we're always constantly looking around us for the love that he is so desperate to give God was always waiting for each of our requests so eager to grant them and yet we were always chasing something different so yeah

I was chasing all of these things getting nowhere I think kind of thinking I was in quite good control of my life and really there was no foundation to anything whilst I think everything looked quite good on the outside there was no purpose no contentment because Jesus was just not at the root of any of it so I had a fragile faith really kind of through my through my teens yeah like I think you know even as lost as I was you can still make good choices still look like you'd on the outside you know I was still going to church and I was still you know I think as well like there's such a danger in measuring your own holiness kind of based on other people's sins like I would say to myself well okay well maybe I'm not going to the prayer meeting in a while and I've probably not prayed as much as I should but you know I don't go out and I've been a member for this many years and you know it's such a dangerous kind of way to think you know all that school keeping

[16:07] I think that can be so damaging you know we have to you know worry about our own faiths I suppose so I think kind of gradually through my teens I was kind of slowly you know it's amazing how God kind of reigns us back in we wonder so far and yet he reigns us back in I think gradually through my teens quite a lot of things would kind of not go my way and were kind of slipping at my grasp and I was questioning you know why I'm doing all this good stuff and I'm you know I've got good grades and I've gotten to my degree job and a good long term relationship but that slowly things were kind of slipping out of my reach and I think it kind of got to the point where you know I realised I'm actually not in control of absolutely anything at all and pleased be that I'm not because I'd be a hot mess really and I think it took me a while to kind of you know from the time I accepted Jesus when I was 11 to kind of walking with Jesus daily and picking up my cross daily and you know living a life with him that took me a long lesson to learn

I think just because there's so much the world throws at you and it's so difficult to get you know not caught up in all of that but you know we kind of I think the Lord kind of opened my eyes and showed me you know I'm in the world not of the world and this is the path of abundance and that's you know if we're totally rooted in Jesus like you know in all the world of changing things our souls can still be steady and you know in every circumstance we can choose you know the calm over chaos and peace over perfection I saw things I think something today somewhere that said now that I don't have to be perfect I can be good and that's so liberating you know I don't have to know the answers to absolutely everything tonight I don't need to you know have my whole life figured out I don't need to be perfect I don't have to have this many followers I don't need to have this you know this presented in my essay because ultimately you know

I just if I'm good in his sight you know I can't go far wrong so that's there's such you know it's so liberating isn't that really yeah what else can I say yeah I think it's it's tough being a Christian I think in this year but it's so kind of there's so much purpose in the cross you know I look back and I just think hey unsatisfied and just going around in circles there's no peace in that at all but when we're kind of rooted in Jesus you know that's so life giving you know and I'm only 19 and I've got so much to grow and learn but you know it's a joy to be on this path and to learn to be more Christ like every day and you know that's what we should be striving for each and every day amongst all the chaos you know just to be more like him to look like him to walk at his pace and it's kind of you know respond

I guess to the world and all its you know difficulties to respond to that I think with scripture and the gentleness that the Lord gives us you know but to do that you know we have to we have to be rooted in scripture we have to be you know firm in our faith and look with him and meet with him you know be at the foot of the cross and and I'm so guilty of getting so sidetracked by the Sam the next thing but you know when we're when we're rooted in Jesus that's so you know he'll what's that verse seek ye first the kingdom of God and then all these blessings you know when we follow Jesus blessings follow and that's that's such a joy so I'm very thankful for my faith it's it took me it did take me a long time to kind of I think really learn of God's grace and that you know as I said like he's not up here but rather he's down here with me yes Jesus is a saviour and almighty and you know he's got that power to save but I think for me like

Jesus is first you know he's a friend he's a friend that sticks closer than any brother you know it's he knows he's here in our head he's you know right there beside us you know cheering us on and wanting to be present in every decision and you know no matter who we are or at what stage we're at he's you know waiting for us and there's such joy and peace in that so I think that's kind of all I'll say I think if I don't shut up I'll be keep on going thank you thank you very much I can relax now thank you very much thank you for sharing that testimony it was very honest very simple in terms of when you came to faith as a little girl really and not a huge drama which I think is encouraging for lots of people because that's how lots of us came to faith certainly that's what I knew and it was great to hear your honesty about the teenage years which you're still in and the ups and downs sometimes we hear testimonies and it's like

[ 21 : 57 ] I loved a life and I did this bad thing and that bad thing and the next bad thing and the bad thing after this and then I met Jesus and he saved me and I lived happily ever after and the reality is that's not true but it's often not said and so it's encouraging to hear you saying that that there's a reality about walking with the Lord and we do as people we are prone to wonder as we sometimes sing with the Lord to go as those ourselves as we as a me as shut the for up and I was I would I was to