

Rev Macdonald Reflections 4.3.18

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Preacher: Rev. A.I. MacDonald

- [0 : 00] And it'll have past eleven. Surprised that you haven't learned a paraphrase. That's also, I think, it used to be Hymn 137 in the old hymn book.
- But anyway, you'll learn it for the next time I come. We've got to finish by night. Right.
- Right. Okay. Will I talk testimony? Well, I think what's been going through my mind is I gave a couple of examples from my earlier ministry.
- And I think because I was 26 years in Inverness, people will have jumped to the conclusion. You know, he was busy in Barwas and Gerlach and these days. Didn't do a thing for 26 years in Inverness.
- So to correct that, I'm going to give two incidents of people who came to know the Lord in the course of my ministry in Inverness.
- [1 : 06] And the first one, I'm sure you may have known yourself. Charles was his name. And I remember your mother-in-law telling me how your wife, when she was a little girl, he was her Sunday school teacher.
- And she used to think that if you put sandals on Charles, he would be like Jesus walking today. Charles was a very clever boy.
- He came to Inverness because at the time he was lecturing in Napier University in Edinburgh. He was a first-class honours graduate in electronics and physics.
- Now that even makes my brain sore. But he was a very able fellow and he had just finished a master's degree and he had an invitation to go to York University to complete a PhD.
- He decided he wouldn't do that and he came to Inverness and he started working at A.I. Welder. Before that time, there was an elder of the East Church in Inverness, a man called Donald Rose.
- [2 : 20] He was from Olapool, which has a family connection as well. And Donald Rose had been praying all his life as a worker at the A.I. Welder on Rose Street.
- He was praying that God would give him an opportunity to witness at his work. And one day, as the bosses were doing a tour with some visitors, executive visitors who were around, and the boss said to Donald, and Donald, where were you yesterday?
- And Donald said, I was at church morning and evening worshipping my Saviour and my Creator. And he laughed at him. And he said, oh, you clown, he said.
- We were up in Olapool and we were out fishing in Olapool all day. And that's your home territory. Wouldn't it have been wonderful if you had been with us?
- And Donald said, no. It was wonderful to be where the Saviour is uplifted. The bosses went.
- [3 : 29] And Donald said, well, there I am. I got the chance to witness and I made a mess of it. But that afternoon, Charles, who had been with the boss, came back to Donald and said, Donald, see what you were going to say to the boss and what you said about worshipping.

Tell me about it. So Donald started talking to Charles and he got Charles reading his Bible and he got Charles coming to church.

And then I got a phone call from Donald and said, I've been talking to this one man, Charles, and I had known that.

And he's been coming to church, but he said to me that he's going to stop coming to church. And I said, has he telling you? Yes, he said, if he keeps on coming to church, he's going to end up in, as it was then, Craig Dunane, which is the mental hospital.

And he said, that's where he is. And he says to me he has to stop coming to church. Do you mind talking to him? And I said, well, I'll see him. So to cut my very long, long stories short, he came to the man's and he came in and he spoke to me.

[4 : 50] And I said to him, what's wrong, Donald? Well, sorry, Charles. And he said, well, he said, I see myself so such a bad person.

As I read the Bible, I see I'm such a sinner before God, as we heard about conviction of sin. And I said, do you know why Jesus died?

Well, he said, it's funny you should ask that. Because this morning, as I was trying to read my Bible, I said, well, it's such a pity that this man didn't live until he was 90 or nearly 100.

What a lot of good wisdom he could have taught. And taught us all so much more instead of being tragically killed by these persecutors in Jerusalem when he was about 33 years old.

I said, well, Charles, that's why he came into this world. Jesus came to die when he was 33. That was God's mission for him.

[5 : 56] And I spoke the gospel to him as best I could. And I said, oh, I need to go away and think about all this. And he went away.

And he came back later, a week later. And there were folk in. And he was a very sensitive person. And when I said to him at the door, he had seen a car.

And it was actually the session clerk and his son who were in at the time. And he said, no, no, I can't come in. And I walked him to the gate. And I said, OK, Charles. I know, he said.

I found the solution. He had come to know Christ in that week. And he went on to live for Christ.

He was an elder in the East Church. He was a teacher in a Sunday school. And when the Highland Theological College opened, just to give you an inkling into the kind of fellow he was, when he was interviewed, they had people, they wanted electronic folk to set up, you know, all the connections between all the colleges, you know, in Starnoway and up in South Shore and all over the place.

[7 : 09] And when they were interviewing, and it was Professor McGowan who told me this, he said, he put a question to Charles. Tell me, he said, why we should choose you for this work rather than anybody else.

And he said, Charles looked at the floor and said, oh, possibly you could get someone else. They got a person, and he was with them for six months, and he couldn't make a thing of it.

And McGowan sacked the fellow, phoned Charles and said, come. And Charles set up the network for the colleges that are still going to this day.

When Charles was about 50 years of age, he had a headache, a stinging headache. He was taken to the hospital. And he was diagnosed with a tumour on the brain.

He refused surgery. People in the East Church, and I know that maybe John was one of them, gathered round Charles and supported him.

- [8 : 20] And I still remember him. He could hardly speak anymore. Going out the door of the church on Sunday, and he just shook my hand and said, it won't be long now. I'll be in heaven. I saw him in the hospice. And he died that week. Went at 50 years of age to glory.
- Part of the reason that this came to my mind is that the first time we ever sang in Christ alone in the East Church was at Charles' funeral.
- You think of all the testimony that is in that hymn. And that was Charles.
- That was the one, because he knew he was dying. He said to me, you'll sing that for me. So that's one story.
- [9 : 21] I'm tempted to tell you, when I was a child, my dad was a missionary. That's why I was in Scalpe for a part of the time. And then we went to Ness, and then I went off to various places on the mainland.
- And when I was converted in Glasgow, and the first sermon I ever did in Gaelic. Now I left Scalpe when I was nine years of age.
- Somebody heard me, a Harris person, heard the service on the radio, the Scalpic service. And I'll say it in English first. He said, who is that Lewis man, Lewis, who's got a Scalpe tone in his voice?
- After leaving there at nine years of age, who is that Lewis man with a Scalpe tone in his voice?
- So that was, well, when I was young in Scalpe, and then we went to Ness, my dad would be preaching. And I'd be watching the clock. And when it went from six to quarter past seven, I'd try to catch his eye, lift the Bible and do that.
- [10 : 37] And I would get it when I got home. And ever since, I've had difficulty stopping in time myself. And I sometimes think it might be God's judgment on me for being so disrespectful.
- The other story I want to tell you, I went to visit in the RNI, which was operating in Burness for quite a while, the old Royal Northern Infirmary.
- And I went in, and the wards there were quite huge. I would say there'd be about ten patients anyway in the surgical ward. And I went to see one of the folk from the East Church.
- And as I spoke to him, he said, do you mind going and speaking to that man over there? I had finished the visit, and I had prayed with the man. He said, go and talk to that man over there.
- He was taken to theatre this morning. And they just opened him and closed him. And he's been told he's only got a few days to live.
- [11 : 42] I went over to see the man. And I told him who I was. And he said, well, he said, I'm not a church person.
- He said, I was in the BBs at one time. He said, but all I can do now is die and face God and take my punishment.
- What do you say to a man who says that to you? I said to him, well, I said, I will also die.
- I don't know when I might even die before you. But I know that if I had to take my punishment, my punishment would be to be condemned to hell for all eternity.
- I said, but I am so thankful that God sent his son in the passion of Jesus, and that on the cross of Calvary, he took my punishment.
- [12 : 48] And that's why I'm standing here today. And if you trust him, he will take you to himself as well, if you truly cast yourself upon him.

And he just said to me, by this time, the tears were coming down his face. And he said to me, will you pray for me? And I took his hand and I prayed with him.

And twice, if not three times, as he held my hand on all the tubes and everything else that was around him, he said, thank you for telling me that.

I went to see him the next day, and he was at peace. And the next day, again, when I went to see him, he wasn't there anymore.

The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day, and there have I, as vile as he, washed all my sins away.

[13 : 58] Dear dying lamb, thy precious blood shall never lose its power, till all the ransomed...

Can't remember the rest of... Home to God. Come on, together. God is saved to sin no more. Thanks for helping an old man.

I think I'll leave it there. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.