

Marion Maclean's Testimony

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Preacher: Marion Maclean

[0 : 00] So Marion, it's good to see you here. Thank you for agreeing to share a testimony. And I'm going to ask you just one or two questions and you can answer these questions or you can go your own way.

So the first question is really just how... Can I stop, please? I can't go there. Sorry.

Okay. The first question is when did God first begin to work in your life or what's your memory of God's...

the beginnings of God's work in your life? Please. I think most people probably know me anyway. Maybe. I'll leave it this way. I'm sorry, sorry.

So most of you know I was born and brought up in Shillabost on the west side and although our home wasn't a Christian home, we lived with our grandparents and probably our family was probably quite typical of most of the people at that time.

[1 : 08] We all went to Sunday school. Things like that. Did our prayers. You know, the Bible was there. Oh, nobody was professing Christians.

So... I didn't really prepare pretty much for this at all tonight, but I was thinking about it just a wee minute ago and I was thinking how... you can have...

you know, you can try and raise your kids the same way. You can do the same things to all your kids, but, you know, God's spirit moves in different ways. Like, I was just thinking that... I heard stuff in Sunday school all the time.

I heard... I went to YF and stuff and... I can honestly say I don't think I was moved by any of it. You know, and like when it says in the Bible, you're dead, you know, you're dead in your trespasses.

That is how I was, you know, and whereas, you know, I've heard Teenie, my sister, say since then, you know, she... maybe she's more compassionate than I am. She felt really, really sad for the story about Jesus, you know, and I wasn't moved by it.

[2 : 08] I was just... that's how stone, you know, my heart was. That's the truth of it, you know.

When I went to YF, you know, I enjoyed being there and we used to have a time of, like, sports and that and then we'd have, like, a wee break and we'd listen to people talking about God and, yeah, I enjoyed it and stuff, but it didn't really have an effect on me, I would say.

It didn't, you know, go in and didn't penetrate my heart at all and I know now, like, you know, you need God's spirit to change your life, you know. It's not just, you know, hearing words, so... You know, that's kind of like my background and then growing up as a teenager, I had, again, I really... I'm not saying it to sound like a smart aleck and I don't want it for my own kids, but I didn't have a desire for God. I had no desire to be in church. Didn't go to...

Didn't really go to church after going into secondary school at all, actually. When I... You know, I was affected by some things, but not really to the point of wanting it.

When I stayed at some of my friends' houses, just a couple, they would have family worship and I did sometimes think, oh, that, you know, that feels like... You know, it was nice and I kind of felt like that's the way it should be. These kind of things, you know, when I look back, I think they affected me a wee bit, but definitely was not seeking after God.

[3 : 31] So that's before. Okay, so... I know. There obviously was quite a change from your early years. Even though you were going to church and Sunday school and YF, there was obviously a change.

Was it a gradual change? Was it a very abrupt change where you went from death to life, where you went from the point of being not touched to being touched and moved to actually...

to seek salvation? Yeah. Yeah. You know, when you hear, like, testimonies, my testimony is definitely a...

you know, it's definitely a really quick change. I was converted quickly and I know that loads of people come to faith, you know, gradually over a long, long time, really, sometimes, and there's, like, a struggle with that in itself.

But, you know, so I don't want it to sound like a very dramatic thing because I know a lot, you know, it's not what everyone has, we're all different, but my conversion was really dramatic.

[4 : 39] I, like, not in the way that I didn't see amazing things and stuff, but I had people, I suppose, I was working in Spectre Lions up there and Duncan and Donna McSween from Scarfie were working with me and they were very nice to me.

They witnessed to me. You know, and I did listen and stuff, but I was still a bit like, you know, you've got this idea that Christian people... I had an idea then, the same as a lot of people do today, that they just think that, they just take this whole church thing a wee bit too serious and they're a wee bit holy and whatever.

But I genuinely didn't believe. I was dead in my sins, you know. I genuinely didn't believe that you had to be saved to go to heaven. You know, if I had a conversation with somebody and I did have a conversation with somebody and I was really horrified, I said, that's so narrow-minded and that's the kind of way I thought.

I was really offended by it. I thought it was really offensive and stuff like that. But I was converted very suddenly. It's really important, like I was just saying to Peggy there, as Christians, and I'm talking to myself, I'm talking to myself, to keep doing stuff.

Like, I used to, you know, Margot asked me to go to church when she wasn't a Christian at the time and she asked me to go to church and I just thought one day, oh, well, fine, I'll go to church. You know, I was living in Harvard then with James and we had Natalie.

[5 : 55] We weren't married. And I went to church with her and that's when I started, you know, going back to church and he's in the word and how important it is for us all just to keep doing that, to ask people to go to church and not to kind of give up.

And then with Duncan and Donna, they gave me a magazine from their church and I was, it was a couple of days before Christmas and I was sitting on the couch and I read just an article and it said, if you die in your sins, you'll be lost and you'll be in hell.

And, you know, I had heard it a few times before but it had never affected me and it went right to my heart and I was just so convicted. Like, it was, for me, it was very, very frightening. I didn't, it was very, very frightening.

I felt my lostness. I felt very, very lost and I could not shrug it off. I felt really sick. I couldn't unknow it.

It was horrible. It was really, really horrible. Anything else? So that was the point when you realised that you were in your sin. Mm-hmm.

[6 : 59] Um, which was obviously very abrupt and a bit of a shock. Mm-hmm. What happened next? Um, I mean, it was all kind of a bit mind-blowing and I'm not going to lie, I did think to myself, am I being converted?

I was a bit freaked out by it because I didn't really want to be converted, actually. You know, at that point, I really didn't. I thought, what am I going to say to people? This is going to be a nightmare. How am I going to explain all this? You know, I honestly didn't know how to explain it and, you know, we weren't married and stuff and I was just like, I don't understand what God is doing right now.

You know, if God is, what's he doing? You know, but I knew the change, you know, I knew what I'd known before and I knew now how I felt so I knew it wasn't a lie and I knew it was true and like I say, I couldn't unknow it and, er, so people, I know a lot of people who have struggled with assurance and things like that for a long time and I do feel for people who are on the road like that because, erm, I feel lucky for the way it happened to me, you know, but then everyone is so different but I, you know, I didn't struggle with lack of assurance or any of these things because I knew how I felt before and I knew how I felt now so I knew I was converted.

I really knew I was converted. And how were you converted? I mean, if somebody's sitting here tonight, perhaps, and, erm, maybe, er, they've come to the same point that you've come to, perhaps more gradually than you've come to and they know that they are in sin, er, they know that if they die, er, they are lost.

You were at that point very suddenly. How did you get from that point to, to have that assurance of, of being saved? And if somebody was to say to you, like I'm saying just now, well, you know, I, I

know, I know in my heart what you knew but I want to become a Christian and how, how do I do it? [8 : 53] Well, I mean, I had a Bible in the house anyway and I, I started reading the Bible and I started in the Gospels and, er, I actually thought to myself, it can't be that you just have to believe that Jesus died for you.

I thought it's, you know, I can't believe this. I can't, I can't believe that that's all it is. But, you know, I spoke to a couple of my friends who were Christians and they were like, you have to trust that Jesus died for you and I was like, I just couldn't believe the simple, you know, I couldn't really get over how simple it was.

And, erm, I had a lot, I suppose I had a lot to learn about the Bible and, erm, I read the Bible and I just, I, I don't want to say just believed it because I know it's, I know for some people it is hard but, I prayed, I prayed and I just said to God, if you, if you're, if you're supposed to be saving me, I said, then I, then I'll, then I'll, then I'll follow you, you know.

And, er, like I said, it's hard to, it's hard to put into words but, erm, my heart totally, my heart did really change that. that, that time and I just trusted Jesus and then, I thought, hmm, what will I do? Will I tell people? Or will I not tell people? Because, I mean, we were living together and it was really, really difficult and I thought, I'll just wait, maybe when we get married I'll tell people and, but I, I just thought, I'll have to tell people.

[10 : 12] I thought, I'll have to tell people, I'll have to tell my family anyway and, so, er, one night when I was in bed, I, it was really quick, this is all over like a couple of weeks really. So 23rd of December was the moment of realisation.

Yeah, and it was like New Year's Eve, I remember, New Year's Eve, there was a dance in the hall and my friends were texting me saying, some of my friends were saying, are you going to come? And I had said, in the day, I said, maybe. And, and, and actually, later on that night, I was thinking, maybe I will go because the devil was really starting to annoy me and I was thinking, maybe I will go because nobody knows I'm converted, so maybe I will go.

But then I was like, no, no, I wouldn't. It was a horrible battle, you know, really horrible battle. And, er, at New Year, I thought, I'll just, I'll just send a message to everyone in my phone book. So I sent a message and I said, em, I've been, I've been converted and I'm going to follow Jesus now and some people sent me like a thumbs up and some people were like, eh?

Eh? But most people were very nice to me and, er, I sent a scripture verse and, and that was my way of telling people it was a bit of a cop out but I just, I chose to do it that way and got it all in one go.

What was the verse? Can you remember? It was, it was the Acts one but I can't remember exactly. You know how God is, he's very near to us, calling him for, he's very near to us. Is it Acts? Is it Romans 10? Or is it Romans 10?

[11 : 33] Or is it Romans 10? The word is near. Yeah. If you believe in your heart. In your hand. Was it on your mouth? Yeah. It was that one. But, one negative response which actually was so timid it was barely negative.

Imagine many people would think carefully before giving you a book on the name of this question. I don't know. These verses there, is it?

The word is near you. Yeah, the word is near you, it is in your mouth and in your heart. That's it. That if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. For it's with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

And I just thought I'll just send it and I sent it and it was really fine. It was fine. Thank you, Mary.

And, so we're in, we're in a Hogmanay now and, I know, this was a few years ago.

How many years ago was that? I think it was 2007. 2007. So, maybe just to, to, to finish off, could you share a little bit about your Christian walk over the years?

[12 : 48] Sometimes we hear testimonies where, you know, we hear a whole lot about the back story and then there's the point of conversion and then it's like a cut off. But, you know, you know and I know that that's when God comes in.

Derek was preaching about union with Christ. Jesus comes in. He saves us from sin. He saves us from hell. He saves us from all, all these things which are, which are fearful.

But he saves us into union, relationship with him. You walk with him. So, maybe, could you say a little bit about your, your walk as a Christian over the years? Has it always been steady?

Has there been ups? Has there been downs? Has there been constant peace, bliss, happiness? Yeah, this is probably the bit that is, yeah, probably, for most people.

When you asked that, when you said that, ask David to let me know what questions he was going to ask me. It is the most thing that kind of, you know, pricks at your heart probably because everyone knows being a Christian is not easy.

[13:51] It's not like a big stone in the park. But when I was first converted, I was actually, I was really bold. I was really, I was totally convinced of what I had believed. I was totally convinced of what I believed. I, when I was thinking earlier on, I was like, oh yeah, I went round my queen seat with tracts.

Well, I, you know, my boldness is not at that level right now. You know, and you'd think, you know, I would like it to have got better, but it's, you know, it's not. I was really bold when I was first converted. I would talk to quite a lot of people about God quite freely and stuff.

And then I think, you know, as much as we don't like to talk about it, you know, if you don't guard your heart, which I'm saying at times I haven't, you can really let the world kind of scare you into being a wee bit quieter and kind of get distracted by what the world is interested in and things like that.

I've definitely had ups and downs. There was a period there where we were still in the hall and I was trying to put my finger on it earlier on and I was thinking, I don't actually even know, I actually don't even know what it was, but I just started getting really lazy and I just started thinking, you know, it doesn't matter if I don't read the Bible every day.

It doesn't matter, you know, because it's not a legal thing, you know, God's still, I'm still saved and all that and I got, I think I just got a bit lazy. I can't really think what else it was and then I got discouraged about a few other things in my life at the time, maybe things I expected to be happening, I don't know and I started getting a wee bit sloppy and just the danger of that, you know, I didn't go to prayer meeting for ages and I remember, I said this to you already, I was going to go back one night but it was like the one before the communion so I was like, I'm not going back because the one thinks I'm only going because the communion's are on and I felt really mortified but then I went back and I felt so much better being back, you know, praying with people and, you know, I was praying to God to give me a desire for the Bible again and, you know, and during that time God was, he was preparing and strengthening us because like a couple of months after Murdo got cancer and I always thought, isn't it funny, you know,

[16:09] God brought me, brought me back to be in the Word and to be amongst praying people because it was a horrible time and, you know, so things definitely have been up and down but right now I feel like what I am just now is I feel like I'm just sort of I'm trying to trust God and what he says about you as a Christian in the Bible more than what I'm thinking and what I'm feeling because a lot of the time what I'm feeling is, you know, I feel like that's rubbish and this is rubbish and no one's converted and we're praying and no one's converted and it's just like it's so, you know, you can get really easily discouraged if you're just thinking about me and ourselves but I'm trying just now to you know, really focus on what God's saying in the Bible about what you are as a Christian and what you can do as well, you know.

Margo asked me to go to church that's all she did she wasn't even a Christian you know and now we're both Christians and I was just thinking how much I shy away from saying to people you know, do you want to come to church when you know what can happen from it Duncan and Donna gave me a magazine to read God used the spirit to totally convict me of my sins I'm not handing out tracts of a Queen's anywhere when really you don't know what would happen if you had the courage to, you know, to do so that's where I am right now anything else?

That question didn't sound like a question I know anything else sounded more like a sort of dare than a question no it's fine if I've not been cleared no no you've been very clear and very honest and it's encouraging to to hear your testimony is there anything you wanted to leave with us?

I'm just going to read this wee bit two wee bits oh no three you sound like me preaching at the end three wee bits it just when you preached it when we were doing Joshua it really stuck with me it's just a couple of verses well it's actually just one verse but over the last wee while you know like Stuart preaching about serving two masters and then we had the confidence about contentment and it's just really been you know it's really been the same kind of message for a lot you know for quite a while really for me anyway and you know I really liked this verse when when you did it in Joshua first a while ago and it kind of stuck out tonight when I was thinking about it it was talking

about when Moses had given the inheritance to all the tribes and he had said and I did think at the time that's a bit mean but it's really it's really really good really it says just one verse it says but to the tribe of Levi but to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance for the Lord the God of Israel is their inheritance as he promised them and

I was just thinking like to myself what a challenge that is to have you know just to be just happy with God as my inheritance nothing else really you know yes it's nice to have things and it's nice to have this and that and all that but just to have God as my inheritance it should be enough for me you know and then it kind of ties in a wee bit with my total favourite verse in the whole Bible which is 1 Peter 3 to 9 so it says praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ there's so many this is not the Bible that's to me there's so many really good promises in these verses and when I feel rubbish I do read this because the promises are just great in his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish spoil or fade kept in heaven for you who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time in this you greatly rejoice though now for a little while you have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials these have come so that your faith of greater worth than gold which perishes even though refined by fire may be proved genuine and may be resolved in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed

[20 : 21] I really like this though you have not seen him you love him and even though you do not see him now you believe in him and you are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy for you are receiving the goal of your faith the salvation of your souls which I really hope you know that everyone here can say that I know in a place like Harris it's not that easy to you know it's not that easy to come out and say I am a Christian because you know people have their own view of what a Christian is or whatever but at the end of the day we all say it you know we all do say this we say oh you know we never know if we're going to be here tomorrow or anything but really we really don't know if we'll be here tomorrow and our chance will be over and my daily the daily verse thing on the phone today and I thought oh it's a bit but it is the whole truth of the bible so I just want to read it and leave it at like that it's John 3 36 and it says whoever believes in the son has eternal life but whoever rejects the son will not see life for God's wrath remains on them so

I just I just pray that anyone who hasn't already would accept what Jesus has done for them and everything else will work itself out