

Jim Sim Testimony 3.3.18

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Preacher: Jim Sim

[0 : 0 0] Everest Mountaineer from Talbot, but I'll have a go. You did well, Peggy. I don't think I would have got past the first step. Before I start my testimony, I would just like to say that Catherine and I have been here for three weeks, four weeks.

And I'd like to say thank you for inviting us to come. It's been great. I've had a good time with you guys and some of the ladies too in here working.

And I must say it was a privilege to work with you, to see the work that you did, the willingness, coming home from work and going back out in the dark and all sorts of things happening.

Guys who tried things they'd never tried before. And it was really special. And as I was saying to some of the guys, I've never been in the opening of a church before.

First time. God is good. Anyway, thank you. My testimony.

[1 : 1 6] I was brought up in a Christian home. I guess at the time I thought it was a pretty strict Christian home. And I think my father had reason to be the way he was.

He was quite strict with us, but everything in love, of course. But he himself knew the difference. He knew what a Christian home was and he knew what the bad side was.

His father had what we might call weekend alcohol problem. This goes back some time.

And his father was a ploughman. And his want at the weekend was basically to go drinking. And that was all he did. And my father said himself that when he was coming home at night, he used the full width of the road to get home.

And that went on for some time. And I think my father experienced these years. Probably not in such a great way.

[2 : 2 7] But my grandfather got converted. And it was a real conversion.

It wasn't just a weekend conversion. It was complete. It was the inside out. It was a total reformation. It was complete redemption. The drinking stopped.

And what he used to do on a Saturday night after that was he took the chair out of the kitchen and he stood on the pavement and he stood on the chair and he preached as his old drinking buddies came up the road.

He was there preaching. So my father had seen the two sides of things. And he was meticulous in everything he did.

We went to church every Sunday. We were at every service. My father ran a, amongst all the other things he did in the church, he ran a Friday night meeting.

[3 : 3 0] And he used to take all the kids, as many kids as he could find. There were sometimes between 100 and 200 kids in this church hall. And they were taught choruses. They were taught Bible verses.

They were given prizes to learn the scriptures. And they were told stories. And at the end of every evening, they were asked quite bluntly to give their hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And many of them did. Many of them did. And my father did that for over 20 years. So there was lots of kids who went through that meeting.

And I think everybody in the town had either heard of it or been in it of a certain age. And, of course, I had to go. And I can remember, as just a young boy, this man got up and he told us a story about sheep.

And then he came to the verse when he said, all we like sheep have gone astray. And we have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him. And he explained to us Calvary.

[4 : 33] And I knew, young as I was, I knew what I had to do. And I went home that night. And my father and myself knelt beside a big chair.

And I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus just as a young boy. That was the start. Now, what happened in heaven at that point in time?

I believe God hears every prayer. Young and as innocent as children might be, I believe in child conversing, let me say that. I stayed in the church.

And I guess a bit like Peggy, I just kind of drifted along. It was okay. I was going to church. Every Sunday I was going to the meetings and doing fine and all the rest of it. Wasn't getting into any bother.

I was about 16 and not really making a lot of progress, shall we say, spiritually. One night, one Sunday night, the minister came to me.

[5 : 38] And he button-holed me in the back of the church. And he got me in a situation where I couldn't walk away. He was blocking the entrance.

And he basically said to me, what are you doing? What are you doing with your life? Where are you going? And I kind of shuffled about.

And he said to me, you know, you need to make a commitment one way or the other. We were in a Baptist church and there was a baptismal coming up.

And he was saying to me, what are you going to do? Are you just going to limp along and just be a Philip you all your life? Is this what you want to be?

As I say, I shuffled about. And then he turned to me and he says to me, when God calls you, that's the time to respond.

[6 : 36] And he said, God might not always call you. And in my father's Bible, there was a few lines there in my father's Bible that he had written.

It's a little poem. And it says this, There is a line by us unseen that crosses every path. The hidden boundary between God's mercy and God's wrath.

And I knew that, young as I was, 16, I thought, God doesn't ask me again. What will happen?

And I believe that's true. I believe, you know, we think it's okay to wait till the next time. We think it's okay that I'll give my heart to Christ when I'm old.

I'll get full of fun. I'll have all I need in the world. And then I'll give my life to Christ. What if Christ doesn't call again? Why should the creator of heaven and earth, the one who put the stars in place and called them all by name, why should he ask a skinny little 16-year-old kid like me twice to do something?

[7 : 54] And I knew what I was going to have to do. And then a few weeks after that, I made the decision and I was baptized along with my friend at that time.

There was two of us baptized together. It kind of changed things for me because then I started to get involved in the church. And my father had always told me that one of the worst things, one of the worst things for a Christian is the fear of other people, or the fear of man, as he put it.

And it was much as what Roddy was saying on Thursday night about Nicodemus and Joseph of Armathea, frightened of what other people. So my father had always told me, don't be frightened of other people.

I was at work one day, not long after this, and there were some people I knew from meetings in Glasgow that used to go around and they had a few instruments and they would meet in the street and they would have open airs.

Just Pitt Street, Suckey Hall Street, they would have an open air. And I came out of, I was working in a big engineering company, must have been about a thousand people maybe working in a place.

[9 : 10] And one day at lunchtime, I finished my lunch, went outside and I met one of these fellas and we chatted. I was like, how are you? And I said, now what are you doing here? He says, we're going to have an open air at the worst gate.

Come on along with us. You're a Christian. I thought, no. Oh. And open air at the worst gate. And they did. They did.

They were a great bunch of guys and they stood there at the gate and I had to stand with them. And then one of them says, come on, you give your testimony. You know the boys here. And I had to stand there and give them a testimony with all these guys leaning against the wall that I worked with.

And it nearly killed me. But I got through it. And by God's grace, he gave me that strength to do that. So I started to progress.

I used to, on a Saturday night, we used to go to a place called the Tent Hall, which was a large mission hall in Glasgow, a big independent church.

[10 : 15] And one Saturday night, I looked there. I saw this lovely girl. And, you know, there was a nod and a wink. So I thought I better wink back.

So I did. That's not true. That bit. Anyway, I met Catherine. And in God's grace, we were married in 1971.

Two. One. Two. 1971. This is all true, by the way. And, you know, a testimony is about how God leads, how he provides, how he walks with you every day.

And he did. And we got married. We got into this house. Cost us a fortune and a mortgage at the time.

And the miners went and strike. Some of you might remember this. The miners went and strike. And we were reduced to three days working out of five.

[11 : 29] And that lasted for quite a few weeks. And I don't know how we got by, but we did. And these things just proved that God was with us.

He was walking with us. We, by this time we had three children. It wasn't a minor strike that caused it, but.

We had three children. And we felt that the Lord was leading us to back up to Stornoway. Well, to Stornoway, not back.

But Catherine's mum and dad were here in Harris. And I got the offer of a job in Arnish. So we went to Stornoway. We thought, where are we going to worship here?

How is God going to use us in Stornoway? So I think the first church I went to, we went to, was Kenna Street.

[12 : 30] And Kenna Street was packed. You were trying to find a seat. And I thought, is this where God wants us? Are we really going to make a difference in a place that's so full?

And so somebody said to us, why don't you try them? High Church, Matheson Road. So we went to the High Church. And there was plenty of seats empty.

It was at a time where the minister, Mr. McEwish, was, I can't remember whether he had retired or was just about to retire.

But things had got to a pretty low web. And we felt that the Lord was leading us there because there was things needed.

There was very few men in the congregation. And so we decided, right, we'll go to the High Church. A little while after that, they called Roddy Morrison from the U.S.

[13 : 38] And Roddy came to be the minister. And some people started to come to the church. Some more people started to come. And some more and some more.

And it just seemed to grow and grow. I think Roddy gave you some numbers when he was here speaking about it on Thursday night. I've never experienced anything like that in the years that we were there.

God just blessed and blessed and blessed. And people kept coming in. And it was a busy time. It was a time where things were happening.

There were so many young people starting to come in. The Sunday school got so big that we started a Bible class. Catherine was in the Sunday school. A teacher and I was in the Bible class. And the kids were there.

And it was a wonderful, wonderful time we had. And it's just the way God leads you. The way God uses you and leads you through these things.

[14 : 47] And that was our time in the High Church. Analyze closed and we moved on. And different things, different places.

And I can say that in all the years where we've been, to know the hand of God with you. To be walking with God. Yes, it's a conversion.

It is a conversion. But that's only the start. You know, he says, I've come to give you life more abundantly. And the testimony is that I have walked with the Lord for 50 odd years.

And he's never failed us. He's never let us down. He's been with us in trials and tribulations. We were in 2002.

Catherine lost her mum through an accident. And that was a hard blow to us. In 2009, my own father died. Within six months, my mother died.

[15 : 58] And then Archie died in 2011. Catherine's dad. And suddenly, we had no parents left. And that was another significant change.

That I had no, I had nobody there to go to. My own father was a great man of prayer. And so was Archie. And we, they were there for us, like Boaz.

Like we were talking on Friday night with Boaz. Boaz was there for Ruth and Naomi. And these two men were the men that we looked at. And problems, difficulties, wherever it was, we went to them.

But suddenly, they were gone. And we were grandpa. And you think to yourself, how am I going to be like them?

How am I going to cope with this, with the family and all this? How can I do that? And there's only one way. There's only one way I can do that.

[17 : 01] And that's from my knees. And I know my father prayed a lot. And I know that's why the blessings came to us. I know Archie prayed a lot for us. And our mothers, too.

Their prayers made a huge difference to us. And that's something that we have to think about. Our prayers make a huge difference. And our lives make a huge difference.

And our lives make a huge difference. You know what the scripture says about generations and the blessings of generations.

God will bless his people. And he will bless his people's children and their children. When we're faithful to him.

And suddenly, Catherine and I, we're the oldies now. We were the young ones running about, but now we're the oldies. And we have a responsibility.

[18 : 00] God gave us seven grandchildren. And the wee fellow, the youngest one, Archie, we get to see him far more than I saw the other grandchildren. And it's lovely. But my heart's desire for all of them is that they will walk with the Lord.

And I can give them nothing better than that. If I would, I could buy them houses or cars or whatever. I'd give them a great education and the best school in the land. But if I can give them Christ and see that they will walk with Christ, there's nothing better.

There's nothing richer than giving them that. And that's why I have to go on with the Lord. And that's why we have to pray for them, the little ones, and keep them.

We finished up this morning on Psalm 16. And Psalm 16 in verse 8 says, I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand.

I shall not be moved. Psalm 112 in verse 2, I'll read this to you. It says, The generation of the upright will be blessed.

[19 : 16] Our life affects our children. The generation of the upright will be blessed. Maybe I can finish with just one little story.

Just to show you how what we do makes a difference. At my father's funeral, I met one of the deacons that used to run this meeting with him on a Friday night.

And he told me that he had been preaching in Glasgow sometime before that. And he had met a woman. He'd gone to a woman's meeting and he'd preached on this woman's meeting in Glasgow.

And after the meeting, this woman approached him and said to him, I think I know you. I think I know who you are. And he said, Oh, where do you come from or what do you do?

She says, You used to lead a children's meeting with Alex Sim. And he says, Yes, I did. She says, I was a little girl that went to that meeting.

[20 : 23] And she says, In that meeting, as a little girl, I gave my life to Christ. And that was lovely.

The little girl grew up and she emigrated to Canada. She got married in Canada and lived there for quite some number of years.

The marriage got into trouble and they parted ways. And the stress of it and one thing or another led the girl to start drinking.

And she was drinking quite heavily. And after one Saturday night out, she was walking along a street in Toronto on a Sunday morning along the pavement.

And she heard some music coming from a building that she was walking past. And she stood and listened to the music and she recognised the tune that was being sung.

[21 : 31] And she recognised it as one of the one of the songs that she had learnt many years ago in the children's meeting where she had given her heart to the Lord Jesus.

And she went in and she found some Christians there who were having a service. And they took her in and they helped her and they got her sorted out and got her restored to the Lord.

And she was back home in Scotland at this woman's meeting and she passed on the story. So these are the things we do as Christians. We do things.

We teach things in the Sunday school. We tell our kids. We don't know what God's doing with that. We don't know how far that is going to reach. David was talking about ripples a few weeks ago.

We don't know where it's going to spread. So, my testimony is we walk with God and He takes care of everything.

[22 : 37] Thank you. Thank you. APPLAUSE CLOSED APPLAUSE Thank you.