

Evening Service 6.9.20: Testimony by Hugh Morrison

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Preacher: Hugh Morrison

[0 : 00] Good evening and a warm welcome to the service this evening. It's good to have people tuning in and listening in on the phone. It's actually good if you're tuning in for the first time.

This month, the month of September, we're doing things slightly differently in the evening and various people from the congregation are sharing testimony. They're speaking about how God has worked and is continuing to work in their lives and this evening Hugh Morrison, Hugh Brownie as we know him, is sharing testimony. So for those who may be tuning in, especially to hear what Hugh has to say, it's good to know that you're on the side of that camera and we pray that God will speak through Hugh this evening as we listen. We're going to begin by singing a psalm.

Psalm 1, and we'll sing the whole of this psalm. That man hath perfect blessedness who walketh not astray in counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinner's way, nor sitteth in the scorner's chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law and meditates on his law day and night. This is a psalm which speaks about walking close with God and we sing this psalm to God's praise and then afterwards Gordon McLeod will lead us in prayer.

That man hath perfect blessedness who walketh not astray in counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinner's way, nor sitteth in the scorner's chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law and meditates on his law day and night.

He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river, which in his season yields his fruit and his leaf fadeth never.

[2 : 53] And all he doth shall prosper well, the wicked are not so, but like they are unto the chaff which wind drives to and fro.

In judgment therefore shall not stand such as ungodly are, nor in the assembly of the just shall wicked men appear.

For why the way of godly men unto the Lord is known?

Whereas the way of wicked men shall quite be overthrown.

Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, as we bow before you this evening, we thank you as we come into your presence, that although we may be scattered in various different homes and in different locations, that as we gather in your presence we have your promise to us that you're in our midst and you are there to bless us.

[4 : 34] So we pray, Heavenly Father, as we gather to worship, as we gather to hear your word, that we would indeed know your blessing upon us.

That as we gather in our different situations, as we gather with our different burdens, that at this time as we bow our heads before you, that we would indeed open up our hearts to you.

You have promised us that you are a God that hears and answers prayer. You ask us to come unto you if we are weak and if we are heavy laden. You call upon us to cast our cares and anxieties upon you.

So whatever our situation is this night, we pray that each one of us would indeed unburden ourselves before you. That we would indeed, Heavenly Father, leave with you all our cares and all our worries.

That we would indeed be able to focus on your word this night. As Hugh comes and shares testimony, Heavenly Father, of how you have worked in his life.

[5 : 42] That we would listen to what he has to say. And how, Heavenly Father, you have drawn him close to you. And while there may have been times of challenges, your promise that you will never leave us, that you will never forsake us is true.

And Heavenly Father, that you have drawn him closer to you. And we thank you for his witness and for his testimony. So as he speaks this night, Heavenly Father, and as we listen, we pray that each one of us would examine our own hearts.

That we would examine where we are with you. That we would not, Heavenly Father, seek to listen to this message and walk away and think that it has no impact upon us.

You have taken us here this night for a purpose. You have taken us here, Heavenly Father, to hear your word. And we pray that each one of us, as we listen, that we would open our hearts and our minds to you.

O Heavenly Father, we know that there are many within our community this night that are burdened. Those that are sick at this time, we pray that your hand of healing would be upon them.

[6 : 55] Those that are mourning, that, Heavenly Father, that they would know you as their God of refuge, their God of strength. That they would know you as a very present aid at this time of trouble for them.

O Heavenly Father, we know that we do indeed go through the valleys at times. But you have promised that even through the valley of the shadow of death, that you are there with us. And your rod guides us and your staff comforts us. So we pray, Heavenly Father, that as we commit this community to you once again, that, Heavenly Father, that we would indeed know your hand upon us.

Your hand of comfort and your hand of guiding. We pray, Heavenly Father, for each home that is represented here tonight. We pray for the different situations that each one faces.

The challenges that we have gone through in these past months. And all that that has meant to each home. You know the situations, Heavenly Father. And we pray that you would guide and that you would direct.

[8 : 06] That even as there may be additional stress upon families, Heavenly Father, that they would bring that stress to you. And that, Heavenly Father, that they would recognize.

And that they would understand. That if they put their trust in you. As we have prayed already that you will never leave us. That you will never forsake us. And that, Heavenly Father, walking with you, while life may not be always a bed of roses.

You have a plan and you have a purpose for us. So guide us as we come this night. Bless us in our meeting together. And as we sing your praise.

May each one of us, Heavenly Father, know what it is to meditate upon your word. In Jesus' precious name we ask all these things as we ask forgiveness of our sins. Amen.

I want to take just a moment or two to read a short passage from God's word. It's Romans chapter 16 and verses 25 to 27. And it says this.

[9 : 10] Now, to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden, for long ages past but now revealed and made known, through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him, to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ.

Amen. Sometimes you might read the theory of something. And as we read it or as we hear about it, the theory of whatever it is, it's of interest.

But it's not really until we see theory, what we've heard in theory working in practice, that it makes a real impression on us. That's often the case. You know, for example, driving.

We can get the highway code book in through the post. We can set the theory test even and pass the theory test. But it's not until you actually get behind the wheel of the car that you really feel and understand what driving is all about.

Or another example would be swimming. You can read books on swimming. We look forward to when the swimming pool is going to be open again. We can read books in advance of that to learn about swimming.

[10 : 33] We can speak to people who are experts in swimming. And we'll get a grasp of the theory of it. But in order to really experience swimming, we have to get in the pool. We have to dive in.

Now, the verses that I read a moment ago from Paul's letter to the Romans, they're verses which came from the Apostle Paul in the form of a letter.

Paul, the Apostle, Apostle simply means a messenger sent by Jesus. And he wrote this letter to a cluster of probably about five small churches in Rome.

And in that letter, he tells them all about Jesus, the good news about Jesus. The fact that Jesus lived the perfect, righteous life that no one else could ever live. The fact that Jesus died on a cross to pay the punishment for our sin, and all of us are sinners. And the fact that Jesus, he didn't remain dead.

[11 : 33] He rose from the dead. And his promise is that he shares with us the resurrection, the eternal life that he has. He shares it with us when we believe in him.

That's the gospel. That's the message that Paul is sent to deliver. It's the message that's so much on the heart of the Apostle Paul.

It's the good news about Jesus Christ. And Paul, as we read in these verses, as he finishes his letter to the Romans, he says, God hasn't hidden this good news away from us.

He hasn't kept a secret the fact that we can be forgiven of our sin and receive eternal life. He's made it known. He's made it known to me, says Paul.

For a long time, Paul didn't know it. He didn't understand it. But on the Damascus road, Jesus met with Paul. He revealed the good news about Jesus to him. And then Paul, he wants to pass this good news on to the Romans so that they too will believe and be saved and have this everlasting life.

[12 : 42] Now, you might listen to this and say, well, that's a very interesting biblical theory that dates back to almost 2,000 years, AD 57.

But you might say, well, what's that got to do with me in the year 2020? And the answer is it has everything to do with you and it has everything to do with me.

God is the eternal God. God doesn't change. Jesus Christ, as the verse says, he is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

And so the good news about Jesus is not just good news. It's not just a message that was for the Romans in AD 57. It's a message for us. The God who was speaking to and working in and through the life of the apostle Paul, the God who was working and speaking to the Romans in AD 57, he's still working.

He's still living. He's still speaking. He's working in the lives of real people here today. People like Hugh who we're going to hear from in just a moment.

[13 : 59] Now this morning in the morning service, we finished reading this letter that Paul wrote to the Romans. We've spent the last 16 weeks going through it, the chapter at a time.

And Paul, as he brings the letter to a close, he speaks about a whole lot of people. He gives us a whole catalogue of names of people that made an impression on his life.

He gives us the names of people like Aristobulus and Herodian and Narcissus and Tryphena and Tryphosa. And they're strange names to us, but they were the names of real people in that place. People who had encouraged the apostle Paul in his faith. And in a moment when Hugh speaks, we'll hear Hugh telling us about real people.

We'll hear the names of people that we remember, some who've passed on from this world into eternity. We'll hear the names of some people who are still with us, people that we know and we recognize.

[15 : 03] They're the names of people that made an impression on Hugh's life as they pointed him to Christ and encouraged him in the faith. This morning as we looked at Paul's letter, we heard Paul speak about some of the struggles of the Christian life, some of the pressures that can cause us to drift away from God.

Paul's very honest about that in the letter to the Romans. And in a moment when Hugh speaks, he speaks with great honesty, he speaks with great candour.

Saying the same kind of things, the fact that the Christian life, at times it can be a struggle. At times we can drift, but the reality and the blessing is God keeps pulling us back, even when we do drift.

And as Paul, in his letter to the Romans, as he finishes, he tells them, and this is the verses that we read, he tells them that the thing that gave him greatest peace and joy and purpose in life was in knowing Jesus.

Paul was a man who before he met Christ, he had great money, he had a great reputation, he had amazing prospects, he was on the track to be one of the most influential people in that place at that time.

[16 : 33] But none of that satisfied him. None of that gave him any contentment. And so, he walked away from that when he heard the call of Jesus.

And his testimony, Paul's testimony was that there was nothing more satisfying and more joyful than seeking to live his life, to stay close to Jesus and glorify Jesus.

And the reason that Hugh agreed to give his testimony is because he wants to tell us the same thing. So as we listen to the Hugh's testimony, we hear a whole lot of echoes, actually, of what Paul was saying in biblical times.

As we listen to Hugh's testimony, we hear about how the biblical theory that Paul teaches in Rome in AD 57 still working in practice in this place, 1,963 years later.

The God who worked in and through Paul, he's still at work in and through people like Hugh. The God who spoke to the Romans, he's still speaking to people like us.

[17:52] So this evening, I want us to be encouraged to listen to what God is doing in Hugh's life.

But don't stop there. Just listening to what God is doing in Hugh's life. Be encouraged, as you listen, to ask this real, living God to come into your life.

so that you and I will not simply know the theory of a God who is somewhere out there, but rather will know the saving and satisfying reality of a God who is living and working in here, in our hearts, in our lives, in this place today.

So, I'm going to stop talking now and we'll hear Hugh now sharing his testimony. Good evening.

It's a blessing and a privilege to be able to share a word of testimony with you all. It does feel a bit weird standing before a camera, but I pray that you'll all hear it and it'll be good to see you all once the church is open again, God willing.

[19:16] David messaged me middle of last week asking if I would be willing to share a word of testimony. He caught me a little bit off guard.

He phoned me early in the morning and I just agreed to it. But no, it is an honour and we should be ready. I went to the golf course with Eulia McLeod, Willie Woods as we call him down in Scalastar for the round of golf and we were talking about the theme of testimony and these particular verses came to mind from 1 Peter 3 verse 15.

But in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy ready at any time to give a defence to anyone who asks you for the reason for the hope that is in you. I'd just like to thank you all for your prayers in the last few days and I'm just going to share what God has done in my life.

So yeah, I think it's quite difficult preparing for testimony. Sometimes we can be ushered into this mode of thinking what have we done but it's simply you know we have to give all the glory to God. That's the common theme in everybody's testimony. Some people go on to become ministers, some people have other jobs and we find God and we come to an understanding of God who is in many many different ways but the common theme is that we're convicted of our sin, we accept Jesus into our life and through faith we have a personal relationship with him.

[21:00] It was incredibly encouraging just before lockdown when we had our communions we heard two very, very different testimonies. We heard one of them Gordon Thompson and one of them Gillian McSween and they were both really, really encouraging and it just shows that God works in completely different ways in different people's lives.

I stand here completely in his thanks. I just pray and have been praying that what I do say this evening comes from God and none of myself will be glorified that all the glory would be to God. I understand that this is going to be online so I'm sure there may be people who do not know who I am tuning in. So my name is Hugh Morrison I'm 23 years old and I've grown up in house I've lived in house more or less all my life.

I'm the middle child of a family of three so Jane Jane is my older sister she's also based in house and I have a younger brother Andy I grew up in a very very loving family I was completely spoiled and loved as a child and it's an incredible place to grow up I love living in house and I've worked the past year for my dad in the shop and it's great to work in the community and get to know everybody so going back to my childhood and growing up I was blessed my parents very diligently took us along to the local church the Church of Scotland we went to Sunday school each week my parents are not believers but they were very diligent as the word they were always taking us along to services they were always reading us the Bible and I'm truly grateful standing here now that they did that it's so important at a young age to gain a foundation and a knowledge of who God is and it was just of paramount importance to me growing up our Sunday school teachers were so loving they taught us so well

Kirsty Kirsty Mackellar was my first Sunday school teacher from I think it's the age from like primary one to primary three she's just such a great example of somebody who has such joy joy in her life it

was always quite fun though when we transitioned between her class and Joan Joan Martin's class you know we would give up the custom of the end of class raisins for chocolate biscuits and sweets so that was always exciting age P4 to P5 getting that Joan Martin as well had so much patience with us and I'm so thankful for them and you know as you get older you understand the work that these people did how great servants they are to Christ and I'm sure they were praying for us praying for us all the time yeah that's fine there's a voice especially that my granny so my granny lives down the bays

[24 : 24] Julia Julia Munro she would always say to us when we were little and it was remember your creator in the days of your youth before the days of Thubble come and the years approach when you will say I find no pleasure in them so that's from Ecclesiastes chapter 12 as I said a solid foundation is so paramount and gaining an understanding of who God is at an early age is just so important I was actually speaking to my dad we were talking just a couple of days ago and he was talking about how Bill Kenyon used to teach them in Sunday school and even my dad who isn't a believer was just astounded at the assurance he had in God and the fact that once he parted from this world that he would go to be with his saviour that's something

I found absolutely astounding I had many different influences great Christian witnesses when I was growing up and in particular the lady who lived next door to us Mrs. Shaw was just again a completely such a gracious lady every day I would come home from school I would run straight up the wee bray up to the house and I would chuck my bag on the porch and run straight over to Mrs.

Shaw's where a cold glass of iron brew salt and vinegar crisps and a couple of pancakes would be waiting for me and I'd be there probably until around dinner time my mum wasn't best pleased though she didn't like me having so much iron brew and I would tell her no mum no I haven't had anything but the big orange lines around my mouth would suggest otherwise Mrs.

Shaw she was just as I said such a gracious lady she was so God fearing and I think gaining a sense of that at a young age it's difficult to explain that she was she was always repenting I can recall that really well that she was always repenting of her sins and that made me question because to me Mrs.

[26 : 51] Shaw was she was perfect you know she read her bible she was always praying she always spoke about the Lord but if Mrs.

Shaw was in need of repentance what was I was far worse than she was I had far more sin in my heart and even at that age I would have maybe been about seven or eight those kind of seeds were sown at an early age that I was indeed a son I it was yeah I was Mary her daughter was round at the house a few weeks ago for dinner and she was telling me it was slightly embarrassing and just shows how callous I was at such a young age that I had asked her when Mrs.

Shaw wasn't well if I could attend her funeral it was a little bit cheeky of me and I was pretty embarrassed at that but I remember it was really stiking her funeral I remember going to it and thinking it was sad because I'd lost such a great influence in my life but it was also there was such a peace at that funeral Mrs.

Shaw completely thusted in the Lord and she had gone to be in glory so in a way there was a great sense of peace that particular family were great ambassadors for Christ Mrs.

Shaw was Nanny's sister and there was Willie from Scadabay and Archie they were just an absolutely incredible family and they were completely devoted to God it was just a special generation and it was such a privilege knowing Mrs.

[28 : 36] Shaw in terms of my own spirituality I think I don't ever think there was a time in my life where I didn't believe that there was a God I know a lot of youngsters probably go between phases but I don't think I ever thought no there couldn't possibly be a God and also the fact whether or not Jesus was the Thucan Amman that was something that was preached to us quite a lot and I think I didn't really question that I didn't really question that at all but as I kind of progressed got a wee bit older I remember being at Duncan McKellar's for a sleepover and for those of you that know Duncan an absolutely lovely guy he's got a way of asking questions he's he's a great person at digging deeper so we were staying over we were sleeping in the bar and ultimately the conversation turned to we read a passage together and then the conversation kind of geared towards where we were in terms of our own walk what had we done with

Jesus and at that point I knew that Christ was the son of man but I knew for certain that I wasn't a Christian so obviously a few of the other boys were asked and they were Christians that they had

accepted Christ as their saviour and then it kind of came to me and it came to Craig as well and we were kind of like no we're not Christians and then the question comes why aren't you a Christian and I think it's almost impossible to answer because if you know that Christ has died for your sins which I did I knew that I was a sinner but why I wasn't a Christian I couldn't honestly answer I think it was just a sense of I'm still quite young I don't really know my Bible well enough it was those kind of answers which the devil definitely puts in our minds at a young age so that really stuck me and it's something I remember to this day that was definitely a point in which

I thought I'm denying I am denying Christ yeah so further on Duncan had managed to convince me to go to Christians and Sport Camp it was a great opportunity to play football to play sport I loved football football was probably my main hobby at that age so I thought oh yeah definitely and there was a good squad of us going as well there was a good number of boys and girls that wanted to go to Christians and Sport so I definitely went for the football anything else was a bonus and to be honest with you most of the way through that camp nothing had really stirred me at all I was just enjoying playing with playing up against good footballers and just having good fun on the Thursday evening the second last night we were reading in Luke's gospel in chapter 15 about the prodigal son and I distinctly remember we listened to it there was like a mass kind of like assembly of us we would all join together and we would hear the core message and then we'd break off into study groups with our own teams and something stirred in my heart that night especially when we were discussing the fact that God the father came back to meet the son who had completely squandered his life who had led a life of sin but yet the father came running towards him and welcomed him and kissed him and this it didn't it definitely stirred something within me and I think at that age was I a sinner of course

I was but had I gone to the extremes of completely doing crazy stuff at that age no I wasn't I wasn't doing that but it completely took me aback and I remember thinking that night when we were talking that God God's really speaking to me here so that night I went to my bed and I cried out for mercy I cried out for the forgiveness of my sins I was convicted of those sins and there was such a peace and there was such a blessing asking Jesus into my life knowing that he was the only way that my sins could be cleansed and even at that it's incredible to think back because I would never have thought going into that week that my life would be changed even that morning it was just a normal morning we went and played football but that night everything changed the gospel became real to me and I felt the real presence of God and the spirit still of my heart and it's amazing revisiting that moment in which we come to accept

[34 : 08] Christ all too often in my life I didn't spend enough time thinking about it and thanking God for saving me and I think of such diligent preachers we've had such as the Reverend Roddy Mollison and he always talks about his conversion and his time at the shipyards in Glasgow we need to be so thankful as Christians for the fact that Christ came down and died for us and the only way that our sins can be forgiven is through his blood so the prodigal son and that parable was completely life changing it's difficult even explaining the moment in which you realise that God has come into your life but there are no words to describe it so the next day I woke up full of zeal I remember coming home on the boat we came storing away and telling everybody that I had given my life to

Jesus and it was so reassuring and they were so welcoming and so loving everybody it was so encouraging my sister had become a Christian around two years before I think and she was such a great witness as well Jane you know she's got a really resilient personality and she was always you know I'm sure she was praying for me at that point and she was a great example of a Christian to me as well so it filled me with immense pride when she came forward and professed her faith publicly I think our whole household was a really moving point and even my mum and dad were completely so encouraging to Jane when she did take that step and profess her faith so continuing on school was a time of great blessing it's incredible actually to think back on our times in school we would have bible studies we would have prayer meetings there was scripture union we would have testimonies we used to have testimony at lunch time in

Mr McKenzie's room old history teacher and the amount of people that would come to them people who wouldn't normally come to church even teachers it was absolutely incredible it was such a time of rich blessing that we could go into school and we would still feel the spirit we would know that God was near us it was just absolutely incredible so further on I didn't profess my faith the first communion that came up after I had become a Christian I kind of you know I didn't have that

courage I was kind of a bit pessimistic and I was saying things like and thinking things that maybe I'm a bit young to profess faith it's such a big step and the devil really works against you in these kind of situations and looking back on it

I think why didn't I just profess my faith but at the time when you're young you care so much about your image and you think you're going to be viewed differently but when a work of grace has been done in your heart which it had been in mine it was a great shame that I didn't go forward at that point but it wasn't my time and in God's providence I came forward the next communion after there was still a battle going on in my heart my parents possibly weren't so encouraging I think they were looking out for me and thinking you are quite young I would have been about 13 or 14 possibly at the time but I knew that God had come into my life and especially the previous communion the Reverend Kenny Macleod was preaching and he was talking about when the

Son of Man comes how he will separate the sheep from the goats and it was a battle and it broke my heart really to think that I was sitting outside the table knowing that Jesus had come into my life that he had taken away my sins but I was happy to sit outside the table so I vowed that the next time the next communion that I would go forward and I remember being led to that passage where Jesus talks so for whoever is ashamed of me and of my words of whom will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the Holy Angels Luke chapter 9 verse 26 I really prayed to God after those communion services I knew there was nothing that was going to stop me from going forward the next time the communions came up and again I prayed to God for that courage to be bold to be led by his spirit and

[39 : 42] I eventually came forward on the Thursday night of the communions along with Karen McRae who lives in Scalpe and what a blessing it was I'd been praying for assurance beforehand in the service and God really spoke to me in that service and moved me so I went forward along with her and it was just incredible the sense of God's presence at that time and I distinctly remember leaving what was the church hall and going out and just how welcoming people were having that sense of Christian and brotherly love when you have Angus Alec there shaking your hand such an example for us all and I remember Kirstie McKellar as well someone who would have been praying for us throughout our lives being there hugging us and welcoming us in and it was such a blessing because there was other people in my class as well who came forward

Peggy and Deborah as well the next night that was just in my own class and there were others as well and it was such a great time of blessing there was such a strong cohort of young Christians in the school and Christ was really at work at that particular time and I remember one of the communes as well going to the fellowship at Gordon and Gillian's house David our minister just now was actually preaching at those communes and I remember sitting there thinking this is just a real taste of what heaven is going to be like the house was packed we were all in different rooms and we were just all giving glory to God and rejoicing and it was just one of those moments where you just felt out of the box that this is what heaven will be like so in a spiritual sense things were very bright in school and then luckily as a

YF we got to go to Nepal and it was an incredible experience it was something very different for us all growing up in Harris and then travelling all the way to Nepal I think the farthest I'd been before Nepal with the school on a tip maybe I can't even think probably only storm to be honest with you so jumping on a plane and going to Nepal was a bit of an adventure but it was such a blessing and you got a real sense of the assurance and the devotion and the commitment that these people had the amount of people that you would meet in Nepal Nepal is a predominantly Hindu country and when people came to faith if they were from Hindu families their families would banish them they would have nothing to do with them so that really started me and I was thinking to myself if I was in their situation would I do the same thing would

I be as bold would I be as courageous so that really stuck with me how committed these people were they were just so absolutely in communion with God and it was amazing to see and it really challenged me as a young Christian completely challenged me there was many different things in Nepal Nepal is a very poor country you could see the poverty all around that was a real eye opener but in times of you know for Christians I think there was a real sense of a darkness as well there particularly when we went to the Hindu temple it was a very dark place in yeah so in that temple just praying to God seeking God in a place where it felt like

God wasn't present but God is present everywhere and there was a few other occasions in Nepal you could really feel the devil working against us and working against young believers the church

was young there and they were such committed people it was honestly amazing to see and there was one night I was completely oblivious to it but I went to sleep we were in Chitwan so that's a national park and I was just having fun riding elephants and all that kind of stuff and I was sharing with Chris Marrow we were the only two boys in the foot so he was probably sick of me by the end of it but I remember going to bed and waking up the next morning and Chris just usual we would just have usual chat we do a bit of reading together and he said how did you sleep last night and [45 : 01] I just turned and I slept like a log Christopher yeah I just went to bed said how did you sleep and he said I didn't sleep well at all and I was thinking oh well I wonder what it was maybe there was a spider in the room or something so anyway we went to breakfast and there was a few others in the group as well that were the same they felt really uneasy that night and that was completely new to me it was just something that can't really be explained they just felt this presence they felt uneasy and there's no doubt that it was definitely the devil kind of working against us Nepal was like that I remember being in a healing church as well and I felt completely distant from God at that point as well it was something that I just thought it was surreal when I was in church it was just normal services and it felt completely alien to me but there were so many faithful people in

Nepal and I still pray for those churches that more people would come to know God so Nepal was an incredible experience it was a complete eye opener and it's worthwhile doing if there's youngsters watching definitely getting it in your comfort zone can be a good thing to see how committed other Christians are to see the way God works in different places is truly amazing so I think growing up more so into my teenage years you become more aware of what the world has to offer and it wasn't as if I went chasing after all the things of the world but I definitely distanced myself from God and when coming up to leaving school there was definitely a sense of that I had kind of thrifted from

God and then by the time I came round to applying for university I wasn't very sure it wasn't something I prayed a lot about I didn't really commit myself to praying and to figure out what God had planned for me I studied biology and chemistry in school I studied them to advanced higher and I didn't really work that hard in school to be honest so I just thought I'll mix them together so I went to study biochemistry in Aberdeen and yeah it's always difficult probably leaving home it can be quite tough but I just felt I needed a change I felt like uni would be quite good to study in and Aberdeen was the only place that would take me so I went to Aberdeen I think first year was an experience in terms of where I was with God I remained quite close I would be going to church the church building in

Bonacord was actually being refurbished so the first Sunday I turned up in the evening and I looked on the Facebook page or whatever and I messaged another boy that I knew who was going there what time church started at and he was like 6 o'clock so my parents thought me off and went to stay at home so that was me I was left by myself and I was standing there at the church got to about quarter to six thinking to myself is anybody going to turn up here usually Angus Al opening the church at quarter past five or whatever everything would be set so I'm thinking what do these people do in Aberdeen came to about five to six and I was like there's definitely something going on here there's something weird and eventually it turned out that that was the first Sunday that they were starting to refurbish the church so they were worshipping in a community centre instead so I just had the long walk back to my halls embarrassed about not getting the

Sunday service I think further on in university so into second year I began to become more focused with my university work I changed subjects actually so I wasn't doing biochemist anymore I was studying pharmacology for those of you that don't know what pharmacology is it's just basically looking at thugs and how they work and stuff like that and I had become more distant so things that I enjoyed at home football was a huge part of my life back home I had no desire to play football over in Aberdeen I didn't care about it didn't give me joy also going to church and stuff like that just became more sporadic there was a great number of students in my first year that went to church in Aberdeen but then the numbers started to dwindle further on like going into second and third year so it was quite discouraging probably as a student as well and I didn't feel like I was very accountable to myself so I just lifted farther and farther from

[50 : 27] God at that point and when I would come home over the summer I would go to church I wouldn't go to the prayer meeting it would have been really evident for people within the church that I was in a spiritual desert but there was nothing I did I just kept on going I was quite happy living my own life studying away and working hard the only gratification I got was working hard and making

sure that my grades were good because I didn't even care about football at that point so yeah after I'd finished third year by that point I felt I was in probably quite a low place there was nothing really that gave me any sense of joy I had completely turned my back on my faith I had completely turned my back on God and it was a pretty lonely place so

I went back to study in fourth year but during that summer between third and fourth year I really wanted to make an effort and get back to the prayer meeting and there would be some football matches on a Wednesday night and I told the manager I don't really want to play on a Wednesday night I'd rather go to the prayer meeting but I think I said that just out of trying to create a habit rather than turning to God so the first opportunity it came there was a game I think it was Halas and we were playing against Point on a Wednesday night down in Tarvat got a message from the manager maybe about three o'clock on a Wednesday and he said what kind of law numbers do you want to play so I'm thinking feeling a bit conflicted I'd promised David I'd be getting to the prayer meeting but I just knew in my heart that I wanted to go and play that football match more so than I wanted to be at the prayer meeting and ashamedly

I went to go and play that football match and I didn't go to the prayer meeting and that's a really dangerous thing for a Christian especially young Christians not to be fed and not to meet for corporate prayer prayers the most important thing to us it's the most important thing for a Christian to be speaking to God and to be in communion with God but I'd completely push that to one side I wanted to play football football had become a huge idol when I was back home when I was in Aberdeen I didn't care about football but when I was at home it was a complete idol it took the place of God and it came to a point where I was just like you know it's ridiculous but I spend more time playing football and thinking about football than spending time in fellowship and in prayer so when I went back to start my fourth year in

Aberdeen I got to a point where and I didn't expect it at all because I had you know just worked hard over the summer and was quite happy with my studies I'd be doing well in my studies and I went back and I just couldn't couldn't get out of this kind of low place and you know I really wanted to stay in Aberdeen I really wanted to finish complete my studies but after talking with you know people they were just like you know you should probably maybe go home go home and see how you feel you know in the next year or two and that to me was such a disappointment I felt you know a huge disappointment in my family because I'd worked so hard up until that point and coming home was a sobering experience because I was completely ripped of any pride that I had had and yeah it was I didn't know where what direction my life was taking so it was quite a scary point in my life and I remember the Aberdeen reading

Revelation was the first book I ever read properly my mum was in Stornway and she spent tons of time in the shop so I had enough time to read the whole book of Revelation and I remember thinking back to Revelation chapter 3 particularly about the church in Laodicea I know your works you're neither cold nor hot with that you are either cold or hot so because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold I will spit you out of my mouth and that was the position I was in I was just I didn't care about things I didn't care about Christ I didn't care about things in life and that really stuck me so the next couple of months when I was at home I kind of continued my own way I was just kind of playing a lot of football didn't really care I wasn't going to the prayer meeting we'd go to church and that was about it wouldn't engage in the Sourmonds but then around January time I completely you know

[55 : 36] I'd lost the plot with football just didn't even care about football again and was put up to a place where I had to just give everything over to God and that was such a refreshing time and sobering time because I had been living a life of sin I wasn't outwardly going out and partying and doing things that maybe other university students would do but I was living a complete life of sin I wasn't seeking God I wasn't praying I wasn't reading my Bible and it came to a point where it completely came to a head and I just had to go down on my knees and pray for repentance again and again and again so that was completely worth it and I can see how God's hand worked in those situations it was a completely hopeless situation I found myself in a complete valley but God used that to draw me closer to him again

I was completely brought to my knees but thankfully and in his providence I am now back and I'm worshipping God and giving all glory to him in everything I do obviously we still struggle as Christians just because we've given our life to Christ doesn't mean that we don't sin and we don't make mistakes but being in close communion with him and being back in the prayer meeting and

being challenged in my faith as well is so refreshing David had asked me if I'd wanted to join in with the Connect Club so the Connect Club is just a youth group with kids and that was great as well it was something that I hadn't really done before giving messages to the kids the gospel message to them and that challenged me and it was great and it was something that I could never have imagined doing beforehand but thankfully

God in his grace brought me back to that place where I was able to talk to these youngsters about Jesus and about the amazing work he not only did in my life but has done in everyone else's life and it's just a case of whether or not we accept him as our Lord and Saviour so we need to keep continue praying for these kids it's amazing when I think of all the people that had such great influence on my life being in that position where I'm now able to talk about Jesus with these kids is incredible also just being closer to Christian brothers so Duncan was home over the summer during lockdown and it was such a blessing to study scripture with Duncan you know is such a great servant he's such a great teacher and a great friend and we went through the book of Philippians with each other and it was just incredible to feel that brotherly love that we're united through our love for Christ and yeah it was honestly all the things kind of fell into place at that point

I had come from a position that I thought was completely hopeless but I could now see God's hand completely at work so each day you know I just continue to seek God each and every day and it's just incredible being at the prayer meeting I know it's different very different in these circumstances but the number of people that attend it's such a great blessing and it's the fact that you know you want to be there each Wednesday night instead of things like football and other things that we'd get in the way it's amazing how God works and God points you in that direction I think going forward I don't really know what God has in store for me but certainly I'm not seeking to do things in my own strength which I had previously done God has a plan for each and every one of us and I remember at the start of lockdown myself

I was over at the mance and myself and David were just discussing about the future and things like that and we were drawn to the verses again seek first his kingdom so it's so important as Christians to seek God each and every day to give him the honour that he deserves and especially when there's other things in our lives that take priority these are nothing and I can give testament to that doing well in academics or doing well at a local level in sport mean nothing if you're not giving glory to God so I'm completely thankful that I was taken out of that place and I'm here tonight giving you my testimony thank you all for listening and blessings to you all thank you I just want to thank you for sharing this testimony this evening we'll pray now for a moment our heavenly father we thank you for this evening we thank you for your word which we have read and we thank you for the testimony that Hugh has shared of who you are and what you have done and what you are doing in his life we thank you that you are the God whom we can know you're the

[61 : 41] God who has revealed yourself to us and made it possible in and through Jesus for us to know you we thank you for the life of Jesus for the death of Jesus for the resurrection of Jesus and for the promise that all who believe will be saved eternally and Lord we thank you that when we do believe we are given purpose in our lives as we walk close with you and as we seek to glorify you as we seek to lift up Christ we thank you for Hugh and for the ways that he has done that and is still doing that at this time and we ask that you would bless him and that you would continue to speak through him even as we get the chance to have conversations with him in the shop we ask Lord that you would bless him and that you would use him for your glory because we know that that is his desire we pray for any who are listening into this tonight who don't yet know Jesus we thank you Lord that as we see our sin and as we see

Jesus in the words of scripture and through the testimony of people like you we thank you that when you open our eyes and our ears to hear that you are calling us also to put our faith in you so we ask Lord that even this evening there might be someone who would pray Lord God take away my sin come into my life and be my Lord and Saviour we thank you that a prayer even like that prayed from our heart is the means through which we are saved so Lord be working we pray to seek and to save those who don't yet know you and we thank you Lord for the encouragement of all that we have heard this evening to those who do know you help us Lord we pray to walk close with you and help us to seek to put you first in our lives so hear our prayers and go before us in the rest of this night we ask all this in Jesus name Amen we're going to sing the final praise which is Hugh's choice amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me I once was lost but now I'm found was blind but now I

see it was grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved how precious did that grace appear the hour

I first believed my chains are gone I've been set free my God my Savior has ransomed me and like a flood his mercy raised unending love amazing grace the Lord has promised good to me his word my hope sick and good even my shield and portion be as long as life endures my chains are gone I've been set free my God my Savior has ransomed me and like a flood his mercy reigns unending love amazing grace my chains are gone I've been set free my God my Savior has ransomed has ransomed me and like a flood his mercy reigns unending love amazing grace the earth shall soon dissolve by snow the sun forbear to shine but God who called me here below will be forever mine will be forever mine you are forever mine will be forever mine and now may the grace of our Lord [67 : 43] Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forever more Amen