

Reverend Ronnie Morrison Testimony 10.3.24

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Preacher: Reverend Ronnie Morrison

[0 : 0 0] Well, thank you for, first of all, for asking me to come here. I've never been here. Well, I was here at the conference some weeks ago, but I'd never been in this building and never was it with you, and it's been quite a revelation for me.

We're in use and we're thin on the ground. We are currently without a minister, other than some old retired guys who have passed their cell by date. But other than that, we plod on.

So the other thing I hadn't thought about was that there's actually three sons of the manse here. Yourself, where has the other guy gone?

He's always hiding down at the back as usual. And Kenny and me. I'm also a son of the manse. Some of you will know that, some of you don't. And some of you will know that I actually went to school in Scalpy.

Maybe that accounts for a lot of things, I don't know. But I was in Scalpy. We were in Scalpy as a family for, well, some of us were for four years. And somebody said to me tonight, when did you leave Scalpy?

[1 : 0 5] And I said, 1950. And the man said to me, I wasn't born then. So there we go, showing our age. If you want to do the math, I was nine when we left Scalpy in 1950.

So if you work out how old I am, you'll let me know after I've said my book. I find it quite difficult, actually, sometimes to speak about the way in which my spiritual journey has unfolded.

Partly because it's a long, long time ago. And sometimes I see things differently to the way I perhaps saw them when I started on the journey.

But probably around about the age of 19, something significant happened in my life. Nothing dramatic, not like the jailer or anything like that.

But nevertheless, there was something that, as I would probably define it now, as the work of God, the work of the Spirit in my life, turning me around, changing things, and altering my perspective.

[2 : 1 0] But perhaps, and this might be the case with some of you younger folks especially, this was my big problem in those days. I was, as I say, I was 19.

It's a long time ago. And I was afraid that if I stepped onto this road that I wouldn't keep going.

And I'm sure that's the case, perhaps with many people, perhaps even some of you, well, I don't know if there's anybody as old as me here tonight, but people who are even up in years.

You know, you're wondering about commitment, you're wondering about this, wondering about that. It seems so fraught with difficulties and fraught with dangers.

And in many ways, that was something that was a stumbling block to me as I set out on the journey. But, you know, here we are, many years later, and we're still, hopefully, on the journey.

[3 : 17] And my point is simply this, you know, when he begins a work in you, when God, through his spirit, begins a work in you, he will bring it to completion.

And it's interesting when you think about that completion, because it's described for us in the Bible as we, as sinners, saved by his grace, we are actually, in the end, presented faultless before his throne with exceeding joy.

Now, that seems mind-blowing for us tonight, because we're sitting here, and I'm standing here, and we still have all our difficulties and our struggles. But, you know, I say that to encourage you.

And for me, as I've tried to explain sometimes to people in the past, my story, my journey, I found it more useful to major on the fact that he has kept me on the journey.

Because, if I was left to myself, I wouldn't be on the journey. He keeps where he begins the work. He keeps us on the journey.

[4 : 36] So the journey unfolded at the age of 19, and it's quite interesting, actually. Some would say, well, you're very fortunate, because when I was a year old, I don't remember this, but when I was a year old, we were in a place called Kinloch U.

It's in west of Ross. Perhaps some of you have never heard of it. But we were there, and we were moving to a place called Koyoch. And apparently, I was in my pram.

You can imagine that. It was in the days, some of you who are my vintage will remember prams that had hoods over them. And not little things that you shove at your people carrier today and away you go.

These were proper prams. Real four-wheel drive stuff. And apparently, and they reckoned it was perhaps with the furniture being moved, but anyway, I was in the room asleep, and plasterboard from the ceiling became disjoined from the ceiling and crashed down on top of the pram.

You know, and it seems it wasn't humorous, I'm sure, to my parents. But as I think about it today, it's amazing how God, even at that stage, you know, was having his hand upon the life of a one-year-old.

[6 : 01] And there was something else that, this isn't much nearer to some of you here. And again, it reminds me as I look back on it, although it's humorous sometimes, there's something much deeper in it.

When I was probably about, I don't know, six or seven, we were living in Scalpy. So we went from one outpost to another outpost to another outpost. It was quite a journey.

But anyway, when we were in Scalpy, probably none of the Scalp books know about this. Maybe I shouldn't. This might have to be edited out when we're finished.

my father was away at a communion. I think, I'm not very sure, I think probably in Liverpool. And he came home on Saturday, Monday evening.

And he had obviously come straight from a service because he still had his fancy black hat on, stripes and all the stuff they wore in those days. And one of them, the body from the island, perhaps he'll remain nameless.

[7 : 10] He volunteered to go and pick my father up in Tarbot. And I went with him. And we went there, got the buttock on board, off we went back to Scalpy. And as we came to what you Scalp know as the station, we pulled in alongside the key and the skipper of the boat, the buttock, he put out the boat hook and latched it onto a stone at the stern of the boat and my father, in his haste, grabbed me, I was six or seven, I must have been a bit smaller than I am today, grabbed me and his bag and stepped onto the pier at the bow of the boat.

What do you think happened? These young folks, what do you think happened? The skipper's holding the boat at the stern with the boat hook. My father gets up and steps onto the shore at the bow of the boat.

What's going to happen? Is there no budding seamen here at all? Oh, well, you folks, you're not going to get a crew, whatever you are. The girls know at all, no? I mean, it's not rocket science.

You must even get this in school, surely. I don't know what you get in school nowadays. Anyway, I'll tell you what happened. The boat went out. Where did we go? We were a couple of Jonas.

My father and myself, complete with his full minister's kit on. It must have been quite a sight. And down he went. And my father, he just kicked the bottom up.

[8 : 52] He came and grabbed the pier and all was well. But, you know, things like that make me think sometimes, you know, how God's hand, these seem almost like trivial things.

And they're humorous. They are humorous. I mean, we've had great laughs thinking about this. But my mother didn't think it was a laughing matter at all. I know that. It shows how God is in control and takes us to different points and stages in our lives.

And that's why I say my emphasis nowadays as I try and speak a little bit about what God has done for me. My emphasis is on the consciousness I have of the way he has kept.

And he goes on keeping. And I say that, as I've said already, to persuade you, to encourage you, not to be afraid to step out on the side of Jesus.

Don't be afraid to step out on the side of Jesus. Yes, it'll be tough. tough. Of course it'll be tough. It's tough if you're down to the bottom of the sea at the station in Scalpy.

[10 : 07] But nevertheless, you get up and you get on with it. And so we, just by way of finishing up, we moved from Scalpy in 1954 and we went to Glasgow.

So that was quite a transition coming from an island to Glasgow.

But, you know, you learn quickly. You have to survive in Glasgow. but nevertheless, it was, that's a place that in many ways is very dear to me because it was there that all these spiritual developments came to pass within the city.

There I became a member and there eventually after many years and struggles I faced the challenge of becoming a minister.

All these things have challenges. Every one of them. None of them comes easy. And it's never promised to be easy. Have I said enough? Any questions? No?

[11 : 18] That's good. Anybody with a question? I'm quite happy to answer if I can. If I can't, I'll pass the moment to Kenny or to David. It's all so perfectly clear.

The calling. Some people are not too sure of what way they're called, but events like this bring to the fore choices and that.

And then you see in your life and when you hear stories about your life when you're very young, you were saved for a reason.

And the reason is that God is calling you for a purpose here on earth. And it's that purpose that people find it very difficult in finding their purpose in life.

Well, I can tell you a little bit about my calling, seeing it's being raised. I struggled with the whole idea of ministry because my father was a man.

[12 : 27] I knew what it was like living in a manse and so on and so forth. but inevitably in all of our journeys, whether you're looking for a job or whether you're wondering whether to go to college or to do apprenticeships or go to CE or whatever, quite often there's something that just triggers off an activity or an action in your life.

And as I, my wife, would just throw up her eyes usually when she says, I think I should be a minister. You know, here it goes again.

But, you know, eventually, I can remember, this has stuck with me, this is my, in a sense, the way in which I know that God called me to minister.

I went to bed one night. I must have been in turmoil as I sometimes was. My way of dealing with these challenges was to try and get another job and involve myself in that and plunge myself into that and that took the pressure off for a while until the job became really something that was of no interest to me.

And that's the stage I was at at that point. I'd started another job. I was in probably nine months, ten months at that point. And I went to bed this night and I never wanted to pick up the Bible and just a verashada random jumping out at me.

[14 : 03] But in this case it stuck me, as I say, right between the eyeballs. And some of you will be familiar with it. It's chapter one of Jeremiah. And there Jeremiah is told quite clearly something of God's purposes for him.

And as you think about it in the stillness of your own room, to have the consciousness of God speaking to you at that level, that kind of stays with you.

I'll just read it briefly for you. Now the Lord came to Jeremiah saying, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I consecrated you, I pointed you as a prophet to the nation.

I'm not saying I'm a prophet, but this is the sense of calling. And this is me speaking the words of Jeremiah, Our Lord God, behold, I do not know how to speak, for I'm only a youthful house, probably 30-something at that point, but nevertheless the substance of it is relevant.

Lord, I said, behold, I know not how to speak, I'm only a youth, but the Lord said to me, you see, it's difficult to get away when the Lord has his hand on you.

[15 : 25] It's difficult to wiggle your way out of his purposes for your life and for mine. God, and he said, Lord God, behold, I don't know how to speak, I'm only a youth, but the Lord said to me, do not say I'm only a youth, for to all whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.

Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord. And it's that sense of his dealing with you at a personal level, just as we heard tonight.

He deals with us at a personal level, and he makes us and brings us to where we are today. And we try to go on, and the words of the psalmist come to mind, and I will constantly go on.

But he adds this to it in the words of the psalmist, in the strength of God the Lord. And that's so important for us, to go on in the strength of God the Lord.

There you are. That's the story so far. If I live another five years, I might come back and tell you.