

Malcolm Maclean Testimony 5.10.25 Evening

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Preacher: Rev Malcolm Maclean

[0:00] I was converted a long time ago, over 50 years.

! One of the effects of that is that sometimes I get the order of events wrong.! That's the reason.

I was brought up in a free Presbyterian household in the Burness. I went there to Sabbath school and learnt many Psalms and the Shorter Caxom and numerous chapters of the Bible.

Strangely, these things are still with me today. The things I learnt first are still in my mind.

So I'm very grateful for that, that I had that kind of upbringing. When I was a child, my parents had not been converted.

[1:25] And therefore there was obviously a certain limitation in what they could convey to me at that stage. But later on they were converted and that's to God's glory.

So I grew up in a religious home with my brother. And as long as I was in primary school, life carried on as normal all the time.

And we had to remember, it was the days when there was no internet and no Facebook. And TV was black and white.

And half the time went off even though there wasn't a power cut. So we had to basically amuse ourselves and we managed to do that.

When I went to secondary school, things started to change. And it was the time of the spring of the 60s and lots of new ideas were being brought into the public square as it were.

[2:44] And everybody in my, well, virtually everybody in my year of school were developing the same ideas.

And we just concluded that the old way of doing things was no longer any use. And I suppose in some ways Bob Dylan was our spokesman.

And when he told us the times they were changing, we believed them. And of course they were changing.

A whole new world was appearing. And we're still seeing the consequences of that today. But anyway, at the time I embraced it with enthusiasm.

No matter how silly it made one look. I didn't mind sitting outside the Rennes Castle with flowers in my hair.

[3:52] And at that time I did have hair. A lot of it. And it was kind of way down my back. And I suppose I was on a search.

A search for the mean of life. And I had concluded probably by the time I was 15 that Christianity didn't offer it.

And I started to read English books in the public library in the Inverness. And I read a lot of them.

And thankfully I'd forgotten all that I'd read. But anyway, I read them. And I didn't find any answer in them either. Then I left school.

And just started doing what everybody else at the time was doing. And I couldn't get rid of this emptiness within me.

[4:59] Initially I was blaming everybody for it. It was society. It was the past.

What our country had been doing. It was people weren't allowed to be free. Whatever that meant. And I just blamed everything.

This was the reason why life was so frustrating and pointless and empty. It was a period of about a year.

And during that year God started to show me that actually the problem with me was me.

And that there was something skewed within me. And he just taught me that.

[5:57] At the same time, a group of Christians in Inverness began to hold open-air services. They were young like myself.

Teenagers, some a bit older. And they were quite fearless in their faith. And they were quite prepared to speak to me and my friends about Jesus.

And they didn't tell me anything I didn't know. But they did speak about him in a way that I hadn't seen before.

I'm not saying that others didn't speak in that way. It's just that I hadn't noticed it. And they were enthusiastic about witnessing for Christ.

And they were quite willing to tell me that if I was to do what the Bible said, then I too would experience what they had.

[7:01] At the same time, a group of Christians came to Inverness from elsewhere. And they were handing out the New Testament.

And at the town hall, that's where everything happened in Inverness in those days. That's where the open-air were held. And that's where they were handing out their New Testament. And for some reason I took one.

I had no explanation for taking it. Because my house was full of Bibles. And from one point of view, the last thing we needed was another New Testament in the house.

But anyway, I took it. And I put it up on the shelf in my bedroom. And I left it there. It was a Gideon's New Testament. I never heard of the Gideon's, but it was a Gideon's New Testament.

And as we know, at either the beginning or the end of the New Testament, there's a list of topics that you can look up and see what the Bible has to say about them.

[8:10] So, one day I was feeling quite down. And I saw it in the New Testament. And I knew there was that list of things in it.

So, I took it down to see what it would say about life. And it told me to turn to John chapter 10, verse 10.

It was the authorised version where Jesus says, I am calm that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

And that really shook me. Because at that moment I thought Jesus had died 2,000 years ago and was still dead.

And that here he was telling us what his mission really was about. That he could give life to those who want it.

[9:10] And not just life, but abandoned life. Or as other versions put it, life to the full. So, I wasn't converted when I read that.

But it started to make me think, how could somebody that lived 2,000 years ago give life to me, living in a culture very different from his, and a long way away from it.

It's intriguing the things that God uses to convince people that Christianity is true.

The thing that convinced me probably wouldn't convince you. But that's maybe because God's got another way of convincing you. But one day, it was like one night, about 3 in the morning, a friend of mine and I were sitting outside the town hall.

I told you everything happened at the town hall. So, even at 3 in the morning. And we were sitting there, and it was pouring rain.

[10:29] And we still sat there. And about that time, this car came by.

And it was driven by one of the Christians that spoke to the open air. And he saw us and gave us a toot. And we said to each other, that's what Christians do.

Give us toots. And we thought that would be him going away home. But five minutes later, he appeared.

He had gone and parked his car in a pouring rain, and came to see us, to see that we were alright. And that told me that Christianity was true.

But I still wasn't converted. But here was a man, prepared to get soaped, just to ask two teenagers if they were alright.

[11:31] And the incident had no effect on my friend, and it told me that Christianity was true. true. But I still wasn't converted. I still didn't know how to get in contact with Jesus.

Where is he? But my father had a selection of Christian books in the house and despite my own later interest in books, I had no interest in books back then. But anyway, for some reason I took down a yellow cover and it was a set of sermons by Spurgeon. I had never heard of it, but I may have had, but I hadn't heard of it when it was said. And anyway, he was a voice from the past. And up until then I didn't believe in listening to voices from the past.

They had to be from the present. So I started to read one of his sermons. And when I started to read it, the sermon, I had no idea how to get in touch with Jesus. But by the time I finished it, I did. And all he said, he was actually describing his own sermon, his own conversion, and how he was exhorted by a preacher to look unto him and be saved all the ends of the earth. And he just described what it was to look, to look at the invisible state. And as I read that, I just looked and trusted in him. And I just think it was quite interesting that God used a person from the past to be instrumental in converting a person who didn't like the past.

But anyway, that was it. And I told the Christians at the open air and discovered probably then who they actually were. And they were Christians from a local brethren assembly.

So since it was them that were interested in me at that time, I started to hang around with them. And this is what they were doing. And they had lots of things on preempe. And I just took part in it. And eventually, after a couple of years, I joined them.

[14:47] And I looked back to my involvement with them. And I looked back to my involvement with them as one where God was very good to me. They had a kind of church life that was totally different from anything I'd ever seen. And where individual involvement was always encouraged. And that sort of focus has never left me.

And I'm grateful to them for that. And I'm grateful to them for that. I'm also grateful that at the same time, I remembered the shortcut character. And as time went on, I began to realise that they didn't agree with anything that was in the shortcut character.

- [20:21] And anyway, about the year 2000, worked out that in a year's time I would be 50.
- And if I was going to do anything I better start doing it in and then. The strange niggles that I had also said I should apply to the Free Church.
- Which may have surprised one or two people. but anyway I did. And I got through the interview process and went off to Edinburgh to study and enjoyed that.
- Don McLeod was still there. John L. was still there. And it was a very informative period. And I'm very grateful for that.
- For the other professors as well. Then there came the year I left to college and where was I going to go?
- [21:35] Well, I haven't a clue. And that's the normal. And for a few months I was given nothing.
- and I was asked to go to teach in a couple of places and I went and but no, there was no sense that these were the places to go to.
- And then I got an invitation to go to Scopy and I'd never heard of Scopy prior to then, don't think. I didn't realise it was paradise few miles from Charlotte but there you are.
- So I went to Scopy and the actual Sunday I was there.
- It was a leave of that a communion. So half of them were down there. So that wasn't really a good start but anyway as I was teaching there I just sensed that I was going to go there.
- [22:51] But of course you can't manipulate Presbyterian systems. So they asked me back and on the second occasion most of the congregation were there and I sensed the same thing.
- As I said it's not my hand so I wasn't too surprised when James McEver phoned me after some meeting they had to say that they had signed a call to me.
- So I was very glad to take it and we both enjoyed our five years in Scopy it was a very pleasant time.
- I have said to it's not always wise to make deals with God but I suppose the fact I was 50 was part of the process but I did say in a kind of way that I would spend at least five years in Scopy and that if there so happened to be a call during that five years I wouldn't take it.
- That was fine. That was it. Years passed great friars in Inverness although I'm from Inverness I had no contact with great friars in my life prior to then but anyway they asked me to go and preach there because they were vacant there.
- [24:38] Their minister had decided to become a missionary in Africa. So the only Sunday I was free to go was the Sunday of the Hallows Conference and I can't remember was that the first or the second time I preached in Great Friars but I know I preached twice but I said I'll come on that particular Sunday and as I went to Great Friars on that occasion and preached there I hadn't saved since then as I had when I first came to Scarf that I was going to be the minister there and I also realised I don't even know if this means anything but it was actually five years to the day when I came to Scarf so we're very sad to leave
- Scarf the call came from Great Friars if it had been possible for me to be in two places at the same time I'd have been very happy to do that but Great Friars they called me and I was to spend the rest of my time there and God was good to us and we were happy there as well this is a summary of my life it's had many ups and downs the one thing I discovered is that God is faithful that he helps us in all kinds of situations and things that I imagined I could never have done he enabled me to do it things I thought I should do he's wise and it's providence prevented me doing it and looking back I'm very happy with them too I had lots of friends before

I was converted but not one of them prayed for me I have had lots of friends since I was converted and all of them have prayed for me and to me that's the big difference a friend is somebody who should do the best thing possible for you and there's nothing more helpful than somebody praying for you so I'm very glad for all the friends who prayed for me over the years and sometimes they reveal that they were praying for a particular thing and I have to say to myself oh that's why it happened and I was thinking it was something else the Lord has been good he helps me to understand his word and I'm very grateful for that the Bible is a living book ever since I read that verse

John 10 10 years ago I've discovered that the Bible is full life and where Jesus says I will give you life and give it more abundantly he gives it through his word and all his countless promises and so on and he keeps them from a certain point of view most of the ones he keeps there's nothing spectacular about them they just happen and that's good sometimes as he did when he called me to different places he works in a way that's more striking than normal but that's it so and his word I'm going to stop at this his word gives me a vision for the future what's life going to be like in a thousand years time because we're going to be around in a thousand years time we've got souls that never died and what's life going to be like in a thousand years time and perhaps by then the eternal world will be here and the new heavens and new earth for righteousness dwells and we'll all be in a perfect world or maybe in a thousand years time

Jesus has not yet returned where will we be we'll be in heaven and that's life isn't it so the bible is full of life life in the present and life for the future and forgiveness for all the sins that we commit so that's my school thank you again welcome for your ministry over the beginning