

11.6.23 PM & Kenny "Kuna" Morrison Testimony

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Date: 11 June 2023

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good evening. A warm welcome to the service, those who are here. Also those who are watching online and probably those who will watch online afterwards. One or two intimations just as we begin. Just to say really one intimation in particular. The Blytheswood Appeal, I mentioned it this morning, there's a poster in the foyer out there. But if you want more detail, speak to Amman or leave donations in the church lobby or leave them at Island Bites by the 16th of June, which is the end of this week. Is it Thursday or something of this week? So that's just an update on the Blytheswood Appeal. The rest of the intimations I think are just as were in the morning. We're going to begin this time of worship. We'll sing to God's praise and we'll sing from Psalm 51. And it's Psalm 51, we're singing the first two stanzas of this psalm. And we're looking forward to hearing from Kuna, Kenny, tonight as he shares testimony and as he professes his faith in Christ. And the praises tonight have been chosen by Kenny.

So he's chosen Psalm 51, which is my favorite psalm. So we're going to begin with that psalm. And I'll read the first two verses. After thy loving kindness, Lord, have mercy upon me, for thy compassion's great blot out all mine iniquity. Me cleanse from sin and thoroughly wash from mine iniquity. For my transgressions I confess my sin I ever see. These two verses, we sing to God's praise. We sing in Galax, so we'll remain seated to sing. And after that, Father Corb will lead us in a short word of prayer in Galax, please.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

EnNING Thank you.

Thank you.

[3 : 45] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[7 : 15] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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We thank you for this letter that we've been spending so much time in over the last while. We thank you for the instruction within it, for the challenge that we receive, for the encouragement, the comfort, the direction that we receive as we listen in to this personal letter addressed to those long ago far from here and yet equally addressed and carried in the power of the Holy Spirit to us here today.

We ask, Lord, that as we take just a few moments to think about one verse, we pray that you would guide us, that you would lead us, and that you would help us to understand and respond to your word.

[21 : 37] So help us, Lord, we pray, in this short time. Speak to us, we pray. Open our ears, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

Probably one of the verses that we would have known best from 1 Peter if we hadn't been so much in it over the last while. But it's a verse that we see on car stickers and fridge magnets and all that kind of thing.

We see it in pictures. Verse 15 says, Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

And tonight it's great that Kenny Kuna is going to share testimony tonight. And we're encouraged and we look forward to hearing that.

[22 : 57] But what Peter is telling us or what Jesus is telling us through Peter in this verse is that every believer should share their testimony.

Every believer. Every Christian. Every person who has hope in Jesus should be willing to share their testimony.

I wonder when you last shared your testimony. I wonder when you last explained to somebody why you have hope. Who it is that steadies you.

Where your purpose for life comes from. If you're a Christian, when did you last share your testimony with someone?

When did somebody last ask you? Can you tell me about what I'm seeing in you that's different? Well, Peter says that we should always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

[24 : 02] So every believer should share their testimony. And there's three things, very briefly, I want to say by way of guidance as we think about our testimonies. And the first thing is our testimony should be a ready thing.

We should have a ready testimony. Peter says, always be prepared. And when we think of these words in our culture, we probably think of the Scouts.

I don't know the Cubs have the same motto. But I remember the Scouts had that motto, be prepared. And Robert Baden-Powell, I think you found out of the Scouts, wrote, the Scouts motto is be prepared, which means you are always in a state of readiness in mind and body to do your duty.

I think one of the things perhaps that we overlook today is that every Christian has a duty to tell people about Jesus.

It's not just me. It's not just the elders. It's not just people like Donny Faith Mission who go from village to village. Every single Christian has a duty to tell people about Jesus.

[25 : 21] We don't always have a desire, truth be told. Some days we don't feel like opening our mouths, but we have a duty to tell people about Jesus.

Sharing testimony is not an optional extra. For the turbocharged Christian. It's not something that we do when we feel particularly holy on one special day.

It's not something that we do just in response to being emotionally stirred. No, it's our duty. And Peter knew that. He'd seen that from the early days of being a disciple.

Remember in Luke 10, Jesus sends out the 72. That they're sent out to different places. Matthew 10, Jesus sends out the 12. And when they went out, they went out in the name of Jesus.

And they went out to tell people about Jesus. That the kingdom was near. That the king was there. It was their duty.

[26 : 25] As disciples. They hadn't been to theological college. They'd only been on the road for a very short while. They had things a little bit mixed up in lots of different areas in their minds.

Their witness wasn't always consistent. But from very early on, they recognized that they had a duty to tell people about Jesus.

And we have that same duty. We have that same commission. Jesus said in Matthew 28 to the disciples then and now.

Therefore, go. And make disciples of all nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always. To the very end of the age. It's very instructive. It's very forceful. It's not think about things. It's not. Well, if you feel like going, then maybe go.

[27 : 23] No, it's very clear. Go. Whether you're crossing the road and you're going. Whether you're going to a different room. Or whether you're called to go to a different continent. Jesus says, go.

In my name to proclaim my gospel. That's the commission that we have been given. And so, let me ask the question that I first asked of myself.

And then ask of you. Are we prepared to fulfill this commission? Are we ready to share our testimony?

Are we ready? Prepared. Poised to tell people about what Jesus has done. And is doing in our lives.

Peter says to us. You need to have your testimony ready. When I was writing this, I was thinking about Archie. Whose house I now live in. And Archie would be in the East Church in Inverness where I was for years.

[28 : 28] And he'd be coming to prayer meetings. He'd be coming to Christianity Explored. He'd be coming to all kinds of meetings. And he would always have a stack of papers like that. Under his arm.

Very obviously there. And I remember asking him. What's on the papers, Archie? Is that a sermon? Is that corrections for the ministers at Christianity Explored Coast?

And he said. No, no. I'm not correcting the minister. I'm just complimenting the minister. But I've always got a pack of papers ready. I've always ready to say something.

I'm always ready to speak up. And that's the way we're to be. Not just in church and at prayer meeting. But in school. In hospital.

In our workplace. In the playground. Boys and girls. We're to be ready. Always. To tell people about Jesus if we know him. To ready testimony.

[29 : 25] The second thing is it's to be a responsive testimony. Because just because we're always to be ready. Doesn't mean we're always to be active. We're always to be speaking. We don't force feed people with our testimonies.

We don't arrive at work tomorrow morning and say. Right, everybody sit down. We're not doing anything until I've got my testimony out. That's not how we're to be. We don't force feed people with our testimonies.

I was force fed spaghetti hoops for a week. Once on a holiday. A rich relative. That we were staying with.

Obviously anticipating that there was a clan of us coming. Managed to get a deal. On a supersized bucket. Of bashed spaghetti hoops. And we had it for breakfast.

And we had it for lunch. And we had it for dinner. And I didn't like it before I got to the house. And after I left the house. I was sick of this stuff. And today. You know.

[30 : 24] If you ask me out for lunch. I'll come and I'll eat almost anything. But if you put spaghetti hoops in front of me. I'm leaving. I just can't even look at them. Because I was force fed them for a week.

And we're not to do that with our testimonies. We're not to ram the gospel down people's throats. Our testimonies are to be responsive things. Peter says always be prepared to give an answer.

To everyone who asks you. To give the reason for the hope that you have. So Peter here is anticipating a question.

That requires an answer. And so. What would prompt people to ask the question? Can you tell me about your hope? Well.

What would prompt people to ask us the question. About the hope that we have is. Is a life that looks different. If we. Are Christians.

[31 : 23] Then our lives. Should be different. Jesus said you're to be salt. You're to have a distinctive flavor about your life. You're to be light. In a dark world. And so.

Our calling. As Christians. Is to be different. And when the church. Or when individual Christians. When we want to be the same as the world. We have a problem.

We have a problem. Because Jesus called us to be different to the world. To be light. In a dark world. Not to hide our lamp.

Under a bow. But let it shine. And when people see something of the light of Christ about us. When people get something of the fragrance of Christ. From our lives. When people taste something.

Of the flavor of the gospel. They're going to ask us the question. What's different. About your life. Why are you remaining calm. When everyone else is angry.

[32 : 24] It's brought the change. I've seen James there. He was telling me a story about a guy called Dan McPhail. Who became a Christian.

And he played football. And I guess he was. He had a bit of a high temperature. Sometimes when he was playing football. But on this particular occasion.

The word had gone out. He'd been converted. He was a Christian. And on the pitch. A challenge was made. Dan McPhail was perfectly innocent. And yet he was called guilty.

And the referee pulled him up. The referee gave him a talking to. And sent him off. And the old Dan McPhail would have blown the stack. But the new converted Dan McPhail.

Picked up the ball. Handed it to the referee. And calmly walked off the pitch. And the rest of the team would be looking and saying. What's changed?

[33 : 26] What's different? And there's a chance then to say. The one who is enabling me to remain calm. Is Jesus.

And that people should see that in our lives. When everyone else is worried. Not that we are immune from worry. But there should be a steadiness about our lives. Because we know that the Lord is sovereign.

When everyone else is reading the papers. And saying the world is doomed. Everything is hopeless. And we don't have that sense of hopelessness.

When they ask the question. Why? We respond with the answer. Jesus. We're to give an answer.

To everyone who asks. Our testimony is to be ready. It's to be responsive. Finally. It's to be reasonable. Always be prepared to give an answer. To everyone. Who asks you to give the reason.

[34 : 24] For the hope. That you have. And that's the main point. Of any testament. We have to tell people. The reason. That we have hope.

You know. It's possible. When we're sharing testimony. Whether it's at a platform. Or whether it's. In a private conversation. It's possible. To. To lather a testimony. In emotion. And to.

To have great drama. In it. But. Sometimes. In. So doing. We lose the reason. Of the testament.

Think of the woman. At the well. Her. Life was shambolic. And yet. One. Meeting with Jesus. Her life was transformed. The people. Would have been shocked.

When they saw this woman. And how her life had changed. That when she shared testimony. In that. Samaritan village. The people's response.

[35 : 22] Was to look to Jesus. They knew. That the reason. Behind everything. That she shared. Was Jesus. And that's what must come through.

Our testimony. The reason. Behind. Everything we say. The reason. Behind the hope. That we have. The reason. Behind. The forgiveness.

That we enjoy. Is Jesus. A reasonable. Testimony. It is one. That doesn't. Shine a light on us.

But it points to Jesus. As being the reason. For the hope. That we have. To do. Do you have hope tonight. Do you have a testimony.

To share. If you don't have. A testimony. To share. If you feel. Hopeless. Look to Jesus. It's a simple.

[36 : 23] Answer. That I. I say. Week after week. Look to Jesus. Trust in Jesus. Come. Come. To Jesus. And for those of us.

Who have already. Come to Jesus. If we have hope. Then let's. Be sure. That we have our. Our testimony. Ready. Let's be alert. Tomorrow morning.

And Tuesday afternoon. Let's be. Alert. And responsive. To. To share. The testimony. That God has given us.

When the opportunity. Comes. And. When that opportunity. Does come. Let's make sure. That we tell people. That Jesus.

Is the reason. For our salvation. Jesus. His life. His death. His resurrection. Is the reason.

[37 : 18] That we have hope. Let's pray. For a moment. Lord God. We thank you. Again. For your word. We pray.

That you would help us. Not just to be hearers of it. To be. But to be doers of it. When we go back to school. When we're. At work. When we're in our homes. Enable us. If we are yours.

To be. To be ready. To be responsive. And to tell people. Clearly. And simply. The reason. For the hope. That we have. And for anyone tonight. Who doesn't have hope.

Who's still lost. In sin. Who feels still. The weight. Of. Of a life. Lived far from you. We pray. That they may.

Even. This evening. Come. To the Lord Jesus. Through. The testimony. That is being shared. And. Give their lives. To Christ. So hear our prayers.

[38 : 13] Help us. We ask. In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to sing. From Mission Praise. 1164. Come. O faint. Of every blessing. Tune my heart.

To sing. Your grace. Dreams of mercy.

Never ceasing. Lord. For songs. Of loudest praise. Songs of God's abundant treasure.

Sung by angel tongues above. Songs that tell the boundless pressure. Of my Lord's unchanging love.

I remember God's great mercy. By his help I've safely come. And I know he will not fail me.

[39 : 26] But will surely bring me home. Jesus taught me when a stranger. Wandering far away from God.

And to rescue me from danger. Shed for me his precious blood. Through God's grace.

I am his debtor. Daily eye this thought renew. Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter.

Bind my wandering heart to you. Go to wander, Lord, I feel it. Go to leave the call I love.

Take my heart, O take and seal it. Seal it from your course above. Just before I call Kenny to come up.

[40 : 38] I'm conscious that there might be some who are here who have trusted Jesus and have not yet come to profess that faith.

And just to reassure you. Normally what would happen is you would meet with the elders. And the elders would put to you these questions that I'm about to ask Kenny.

And you would respond to these questions. And then you would be warmly welcomed into the membership of the congregation. Usually it would happen in that room through there.

And it's not very clearly seen. Kenny came and spoke to us on Wednesday evening. And I knew he'd been wrestling for a while.

And he said he wanted to profess his faith. I felt stirred to ask him the question. Is this something that you would want to do with just the session?

[41 : 39] Or would you want to take your vows before the congregation? And he said that he would be happy to take his vows in front of the congregation. I pushed that a wee bit further and said we have testimonies quite often in June and July.

Would you always be prepared to give the reason for the hope that you have? Would you be prepared to share something this Sunday evening? And he agreed that something that is clearly an obedience to God's word.

Something that may encourage others to come. He would be willing to share. So Kenny's going to profess his faith in front of the congregation. He's going to share testimony.

For those who may be thinking about coming, don't fear. I'm not going to haul you up onto the platform. I sometimes ask the question. The last time I asked the question was of Mihaela.

And as she came forward, she thought it would be okay. Her heart rate monitor started bleeping in emergency mode as she stood there waiting for me to ask the question. So it's a nerve-wracking thing, but it's for God's glory.

[42 : 44] It's for the encouragement of his people. It's for the challenge of those who are not yet the Lord's people that there's the opportunity to do this. So, Kenny, can I ask you to step up, please?

And I'm going to ask you these questions. And you can respond. Kenny, do you believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

And do you confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord? I do. Do you promise to join regularly with your fellow Christians in worship on the Lord's Day?

I do. Do you promise to be faithful in reading the Bible and in prayer? I do. Do you promise to give a fitting proportion of your time, talents, and money for the church's work in the gospel in this world?

I do. And do you promise, we always underline this next bit, do you promise, depending on the grace of God, to confess Christ, to serve him, and to walk in his ways all the days of your life?

[43 : 50] I do. The Lord bless you and enable you faithfully to keep these promises. And as you have made confession of your faith, I do now, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, admit you to the fellowship of his table.

I welcome you into the fellowship of this congregation and offer you the right hand of fellowship. Neither of us are huggers. All hugs can happen afterwards.

So, it's great to see you come forward. It's great to hear of how God's been working in your life. And before you share your testimony, what you're going to do just now, I'm going to pray.

Heavenly Father, we do thank you that you are at work in our lives. And we thank you for your work in Kenny's life in particular. We thank you for opening his eyes as he opened your word.

We thank you for unblocking his ears as he heard your voice. We thank you for touching his heart. And for calling him to come close to you. We thank you for the Lord Jesus who has opened up the way.

[45 : 01] His life and death and resurrection is the means through which the way into your presence is open. And we thank you for the invitation. That call of the gospel is a call that Kenny has heard.

And we pray that it would be a call that many more would be hearing, even through him tonight. As he's taken these promises, Lord, we pray that you would help him in living these out in his life.

We are conscious, all of us who are yours, that we, as we have sang, are prone to wander. We are weak. We are frail. When we think we are standing strong, we are in danger because your word tells us that that's the time that we may fall.

We are ever dependent on you. Apart from you, Lord Jesus, we can do nothing. So depending on your grace, we pray that you would help us to stay close to you.

And Kenny especially, that he would walk close with you, that he would glorify you, and that he would know your hand upon him. We pray for Mags as well and for Alistair.

[46 : 03] Bless them, we pray. We pray for Andrew and Seamus, perhaps watching at a distance. We pray that your hand would be upon them also, that you would bless them. And we ask now that as Kenny speaks, that you would give him that sense of your presence, that you would take away nerves, and that you, Lord Jesus, would be glorified through all that is shared.

We pray these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Thanks, Kenny. Okay. Thank you, David.

And I thank you, David, for that message just now. And I would say I had a ready testimony. It was only 10 minutes long, but David wanted 20, but we settled on 15.

So thank you so much for just allowing me to be able to tell you on how God has worked in my life. Our God is a God who works miracles, and he's still working miracles tonight and today.

And I'm testimony to that. A year ago, if anybody had asked me, I would have told them that I didn't believe in God and I didn't believe in the Bible. I had got that far away from God.

[47 : 20] And here I am tonight, professing my faith and telling others of how he worked in my life. It was difficult for me to put this together in a way that would kind of make sense.

I think that's because there isn't one single defining event in my life that would say that's where I was saved. My story as I give it tonight will be, it'll span around 30 odd years in terms of God working on me.

But most of it that what I'm going to kind of concentrate on will be a period of nine months from around September last year. I'm not sure if I have the right timeline and everything, but I think as another might have said, I have all the right words, but not necessarily in the right order.

It's been easy, easy enough to write down the testimony, but not so easy to speak it. I think as you'll hear a wee shake in my voice, but I would welcome your prayers and I know that God has put me here tonight.

Harris, of course, it's a small community, so some of you will know a bit of my history. Others will have no idea. I guess I'll be starting from the beginning and testify to God's grace and mercy in his dealings with me.

[48 : 33] And this is not my story. This is his story in me. As the song goes, I am not my own. I was born in 1972. I was brought up in Scalpey.

I'm the younger of two brothers. My mother, she was a Christian. My father wasn't when I was growing up, although he did profess faith in latter life.

Even though he wasn't a Christian, we did have family worship each day, especially when we were young. Went to church both ends on a Sunday. And, of course, Sunday school.

And back then it was from three to four in the afternoon. I can't say that I enjoyed church. And I probably stopped around when I was 15 or 16 years of age.

When I was 19, God did start working in my life. I have trouble here in being coherent in terms of this part of my testimony. And I'm not going to go into great detail of that period.

[49 : 33] But I do know that he started working in me. Because this was through a boy that I'd met in Stornoway. He was a young Christian. He was 18 and I was 19.

He had just become a Christian. And through just speaking with him and him witnessing to me, things turned in my own life. In terms of...

And two years later I professed faith. And this is when I was 21. That's back in 1993. Mags and I, we got together around this time as well.

And she professed faith shortly after. We got married in 1997. So, for 22 years I professed to be a Christian.

And what did that look like? I think the earliest years I'm not 100% sure about. But I know the latter years I'd lived the life of an unbeliever.

[50 : 31] I might have been going to church, to prayer meetings. But there was nothing there. I've just taken vows to say that I would be praying and reading the Bible. That was non-existent for quite a few years.

Unfortunately, my way of living also brought Mags down. And in 2015 we left the church that we had been attending. So, I would say that there wasn't anything big or dramatic that made us do this.

It's just that we couldn't take it anymore. And another thing I would notice that it had nothing to do with the church we were in. It was all about us. As far as I was concerned, I wasn't saved.

And my life did not reflect the profession I was making. I think now that if I had been left to die in that condition, I could well have been one of those that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 7 where he said, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of the Father who is in heaven.

So, that was around June in 2015. We stopped attending church for a couple of months. And then later in 2015, we joined this congregation back when we were meeting in the community center.

[51 : 57] Now, I'm not going to give Mags' testimony, but suffice to say that she was very quickly restored. But that was because she had something to be restored to. And since joining this congregation, David has been a constant witness to me.

To either come back to Christ or to be saved for the first time. Always encouraging me to read the Bible. This was like water of a duck's back for me. And as I mentioned in my introduction, by August last year, I had concluded in my heart that I did not believe in God.

And I did not believe in the Bible. At the latter end of 2022, things started changing. There was nothing different outwardly to David asking me to read the Bible.

But I was telling him I had nothing. I didn't want anything. I was happy with my life. And I was. I was content where I was. But he simply asked that I try reading it, even if I didn't want to.

What was different is that I did read it. And this time when I read it, God was there. There was passages and verses that I read, that I must have read a thousand times.

[53 : 12] And this time, they had come alive. I was saying, you know, I've never read that. This bit. I've not read that either. But I had. I'd seen them. The Holy Spirit was working now.

There was no bright lights. No writings on the wall. On the outside, there was no huge conversion experience. But he was changing me.

There were sins in me that he had removed. And that's not to say that I'm not a sinner anymore. But there were certain ones that were removed. God was speaking to me in the word.

And I couldn't, at this point, get enough of the Bible. Either reading it. Either reading it or it being preached. And I think this is a reminder to us all that we should point people to and encourage them to read the Bible.

We might get resistance face to face. We might get resistance face to face. But we have no idea what's going to happen after the conversation has ended. The word of God has incredible power.

[54 : 11] I'd say one of the first changes back then that I noticed was that, I think some of you will know that I'm going, I go to America in a couple of months to play a match of golf.

And before this, I was looking at this, right, what's the golf course look like? What's the hotel? I was on Google Maps, Street View, everything, trying to figure it out.

But now all I was interested in, where's the churches? How do, where am I going to worship? I'm only there one Sunday, but that's what I was more interested in. This didn't lead me to a position where I knew I was saved.

I spent quite a few months here just having no idea where I was. There was like a fog around me. And even though I was trying to do everything secretly, I was like my Bible was on the phone on an app.

I'd be listening to podcasts when I was out on the walk on my own. Everything was done in secret. But Mags knew. She had spotted this very early on. And when I asked her, How did you know?

[55 : 17] All she said was, You've changed. You've changed. And I was, I was looking at myself a bit like a, if you think a thousand piece jigsaw, where there's 999 pieces make out the outside frame of it.

And there's one central piece that fits in and completes the whole picture. That's what I was missing. And that central piece was Jesus. I was trying to understand what it meant to follow and believe Jesus.

And I'm not sure who I heard speaking about this, but they spoke about the calling of Matthew, the tax collector. Matthew was sitting in the tax booth when Jesus passed by.

Jesus said to him, Follow me. Matthew, he got up, left all that he had, and followed him. This is what I was trying to get to. What does that actually mean?

What do you mean by, what would he have done when he got up and followed Jesus? Well, it meant that he went where Jesus was. He listened to him speak. He spoke to him, and he joined with people, with his people.

[56 : 25] That's what I was wanting. At this point, this is what I was wanting. I was wanting to be where Jesus was. I wanted to hear his words. I wanted to speak to him. And the most obvious thing is that I wanted to be with his people.

I knew at this point, I knew that we are presented in the Bible with a standard that we are to live by. We cannot meet that standard, but Jesus has already met it for us.

He's lived the perfect life that we cannot live. He's died the death that we deserve. He rose and has ascended up to heaven, and there he intercedes for us.

It's all about Jesus. I was looking for something emotional happening, that I would somehow feel like a Christian. I did not, and I do not.

Another thing that changed in me, and it was quite an obvious change, was when we, when I thought about heaven.

[57 : 32] Before this, and before last year, I would think of heaven, I would think, no, not for me. Worshipping Jesus for eternity, not for me. Now I imagine heaven as one of the most exciting prospects ever.

We do enjoy worshipping Jesus today, but what will it be like when we worship him, when we no longer have sin? Today, everything is tainted with sin. Everything we do, from coming out to worship, to praying, to standing here, is full of sin.

But when we go to be with him, we will be perfect, and we'll be perfect in every single way. All our anxieties will be gone. The eyes, and the ears that are feeling, will be restored.

Those bones that are hurting, will hurt no more. And I know, that there is hurts in here, that are hurting. They will hurt no more. While I recognised all these changes, I was still worried.

That I would be the same as I was last time. And God in his providence, put a podcast before me, for testimony by an American preacher. This man, he spoke of being saved at seven years of age.

[58 : 54] In his teens, he went to seminary, and became a preacher for ten years. And he was preaching for ten years, before he knew he had not been saved. And this is what he said.

So here I was, an evangelist, with two earned seminary degrees. Known by many around the world, and I doubted my own salvation. There was a huge component of the gospel, that I did not understand.

I did not know what to do. I did not know to whom I could go. After all, I was supposed to have all the answers, but I didn't. I was a whitewashed tomb. He mentioned there about a huge component that was missing from his life.

And this is, this component that was missing in his life was missing in mine, and that was repentance. He goes on to describe repentance like this. The classic definition of repentance is a change of mind.

That is true. It does literally mean a change of mind, but it is more than that. When God grants repentance to us, our minds are changed, but everything about us is changed.

[60 : 00] Our hearts are changed. Our desires are changed. We begin to love what God loves, and hate what God hates. We desire to grow in Christ, and when we sin, it grieves us.

So for me, repentance came just, I mean, as I said at the beginning, the timeline I'm not sure about, but it's all around the same time, around November last year. And repentance came to me when I was listening on a sermon speaking about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

You know, this is just before he was arrested and being tried and crucified at the cross at Calvary. He knew that this was ahead of him, and he prayed, My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me, yet not as I will, but as you will.

The sermon went on to describe Christ looking at our sins in that cup. He was looking at the sins of mankind that he was to suffer and die for, and I was seeing my sins there.

And this wasn't just sins from the recent past. This was long forgotten ones. They were there vividly before me in the suffering of Christ. So my relationship with sin was changed by him, and I was changed by him.

[61 : 19] This is absolutely and undeniably a work of God. And I can only give praise to my Saviour, Jesus, for his long suffering and patience with me.

We easily cast people off who wrong us. We are slow to forgive people. How different we are to him. So then I was looking at it in terms of professing faith again.

Now this is something I did find very difficult. I wanted to do it earlier this year, but I was still concerned about my past sins, and I was also concerned about being a lukewarm Christian.

I spent so long professing faith while doing things that were just plain wrong, while living the life of an unbeliever. One day I will know whether I was saved in 1991 or in 2022.

Right now, I don't see salvation in my earlier days, but I don't know because God was working. What I do know is that between last March and today, God has taken all uncertainty away from me in regards to my faith and regards to my profession.

[62 : 32] Again, no big dramatic messages, just another miraculous quiet change. So on Wednesday, just past, as David mentioned, I was to meet with a session in preparation for tonight.

And this was going to be done after the prayer meeting and before the prayer meeting, I was at home, I was reading the Bible and asking God to help me. And this is the verse he put before me. And it's found in 1 Timothy 6, verse 12.

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you are called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

It was one of those moments where I said to Max, come here, hear this, see what God's saying. He doesn't leave us to ourselves. When we need him, he's there. And when I met with the elders, I had a calm assurance of the profession I was making.

Again, after the meeting, God again reassured me. I'd been listening to a podcast on the way up and when I got back to the car, when I put the car back on, the podcast started up again and the person was quoting the late R.C. Sproul when he was asked, what do you do with people who come to you when they are haunted by their past and it is stopping them moving forward?

[63 : 56] His reply was, this is what I tell them to do. If you still feel condemned, then pray to God again. But this time, don't ask him to forgive you for the sin that is haunting you.

Rather, ask him to forgive you for insulting his integrity by refusing to accept his forgiveness that is found in Christ. When God promises to forgive his people after they repent, he is not playing games.

If you want to get past your past, you have to release your past to God and Jesus. So as I come near the end here, I could say his story in me is that he started working in me when I was 19 years of age and not only did he not give up on me after years of disobedience, but when he granted me repentance, he released me from the guilt of my past.

Just to finish, I'll give you a wee analogy and try to summarise it. Most of you, I think most of you are from Harris here and if you're not, up the Clisham Road there, there's a bunch of turbines.

So, first time I went up to the turbines, I reached the path just underneath the first one. And there, you will see the turbine. You can look up and see the other ones and see the Clisham maybe.

[65 : 25] See, down to the main road, but that's about it. Not much to speak of. The next time I went up, I went beyond that first turbine by only 50 metres.

And there, the vista opens up. You can see everything clearly down the west coast, the beaches, out to Tarency and beyond to the Atlantic. A quite stunning view.

And this speaks to me of my life. At 19 years of age, God started working in me. But I stopped at the first turbine. When I repented of my sins, everything opened up before me and I could see the wonder, the mercy and the love of God in Christ.

If you do ever go up there, you'll see what I mean. And if God is working in your life, don't stop at the first turbine. Don't be like me. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Amen. Thank you.

[66 : 34] Amen. Thank you, Kenny. E&A;, will you lead us in a short word of prayer, please?

You can just come up here. Amen. Loving God and eternal Heavenly Father, we praise you once more this evening for that reinforcement through the message we've just heard that you are a God who loves his people and you're a God who will go to the ends of the earth to have his people.

And Lord, we thank you that you made it so clear to Kenny that that love was always there and that you never let him go. And we praise you, Lord, each one of us here tonight because we all have that same story that when we were wandering, that when we were far, far away from you, yet, Lord, your eye was always on us.

And Father, we praise you that despite our sin and despite our past, this is no obstacle when it comes to your grace and when it comes to your forgiveness. So, Lord, we thank you for what we've heard tonight.

We are mindful of the angels in heaven who rejoice when a sinner is saved. And yet, Lord, we think of so many more who have yet to experience that wonderful salvation.

To this I hold my hope is only Jesus, all the glory ever more to him.

[73 : 14] When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat, yet not I but through Christ in me.

And I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit, be with us all now and forever more. Amen.