

Testimony; Donald Macsween

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Preacher: Donald MacSween

[0 : 0 0] Good evening and a warm welcome to the service this evening, especially for any who might be tuning in for the first time. Over the month of September in the evenings we have been thankful to have heard from various people about how God has worked and is continuing to work in their lives.

We heard from Hugh Morrison, Hugh Brownie and Stuart and Joyce. We heard from Andy Longway, the minister, last weekend and tonight I'm thankful to have Donald McSween sharing testimony with us this evening. And so I'm going to hand over the service, the first part of the service to Donald now and he'll lead us in worship. We're going to sing from Psalm 23, the first four verses in Gaelic and then after that Donald will lead us in a Gaelic prayer and then the rest of the service will be in English. Donald will share testimony in English and then hand over to me for the second part of the service. So I'll hand over to Donald now as he leads us in this time of worship.

I'll chine. ZANGS BEI Que disciple Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[2 : 5 8] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[6 : 0 0] Thank you. Thank you.

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

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

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I don't think I need to be introduced because we all know one another in this congregation.

[1 2 : 5 1] We were one happy congregation and very happy worshipping together and very much aware of the presence of the Lord when we were able to gather in the church.

Things change as we go on in life. We never thought about this time last year, but we have to be doing this year.

Firstly, I would like to thank our minister, the Reverend David, MacLeod and Gordon and all our elders and deacons and all others who work so diligently.

And the young girls that sing the hymns with us after the services so that we would be able to sit at home and hear the Gospel.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. This evening I would like to share a few words with you.

[14 : 16] How the Lord has been working through my own life. I proclaimed my faith publicly 40 years from last Sunday.

I had a desire a few years before that to come forward, but I wasn't getting the courage.

At that time we used to have testimony meetings every Friday. We had brethren coming from other congregations. They were always called upon to give their testimony.

And most of them, when they spoke, they could tell the hour, the day, the place where the Lord spoke to me.

But I have to admit, I can't say that. I can't give a time, or a day, or a place where the Lord spoke to me.

[15 : 43] It was something that, sort of a desire that grew from day to day. Until at last I came to the place, I had to admit that I was in need of the Lord.

A year before I came forward for communion, Rachel came forward. And when she came home from the service, we sat having lunch and she was telling me about the service.

And it was a Findlay, I think it was a MacLeod, it was not MacLeod MacDonald, he was from Grosby anyway. He was MacLeod MacDonald's father, MacLeod MacDonald's father.

He was a minister out at Loch Luchos and he had happened to be in Harris. And he preached in the Saturday service. And he preached from the second chapter in John, the wedding of Cain and Galilee.

And the verse he took for a service was, when Mary told the maids, the servants, she said to them, what he asks you to do, do it.

[17 : 11] When he turned the water into wine and he preached from that service, from that verse that day. And Rachel got the strength to come forward and Professor Feer.

And following on from that, I always had that version in my mind. What he wants you to do, do it.

And the following communions, we had a preacher in Scalpe, Alistair MacDonald. He preached on a Friday night. And he preached from 2 Samuel chapter 9.

I'll never forget. He preached on Matthew Booth, being lame on his two feet.

But still he was called into the king's palace. And to be sitting at the table with the king and all his good people.

[18 : 25] And he mentioned that when Mother Booth had sat at the table, you couldn't see his lame feet. And he said, let me tell you, Jesus is able to hide your sins too.

If you come, if you come, and I fall on communion. I couldn't go any further. I had to commit. I had to commit my faith.

And I'm very glad I didn't refuse that day. But since then, thinking back, there's none of the elders and none of the ministers that was in that box that day.

There's none of them here now. They're all in glory. And we're seeing a lot of changes and difference.

But thank the Lord. Nothing has changed. In God's work. He's still calling us out.

[19 : 48] Coming to me all year. At labor and heavily laden. And I will give you rest. There's no difference in that call.

It's as fresh this evening as it was when he spoke to these people 2000 years ago.

I would like to share with you a few things that the Lord made very known to me in my years. Coming forward.

I think it must be about 25 years ago. I was attending the Royal Infirmary in Glasgow. The first time I went there, which was for a couple of hours, for tests and stress tests and scans.

I was attending the consultant and said, I'll be calling you back. And he did call me back within two or three weeks.

[20 : 58] And I was admitted at two o'clock in the afternoon. To be ready for the first thing in the morning, I was going to the theater. I was quite happy.

I went in at half past two and everything went well. And Rachel was in the ward with me and my brother. And they went away home about five o'clock.

I had my tea and the consultant came in and sat beside me and told me everything was going to happen the following day.

And he told me I would go to the theater on the second person. And after he left, he left, but the devil came in.

And the devil took me to pieces. I didn't know what to do.

[22 : 06] I was switching on the lights, switching it off, turning, twisting, putting on the lights. I was trying to pray and I couldn't put two words together.

I was opening my Bible in places where I knew I should get peace. But it was like reading anything else.

I was in one turmoil. I couldn't sleep. And most of the patients in the ward, they switched off their lights and they were sleeping.

But I was coming over at twelve o'clock, there was a lady came down the corridor. She was pushing a trolley and picking up cups and newspapers and everything in the ward.

And she was passing, I was beside the door and I was passing. She said, I don't think you're sleeping at all. No, I'm not. She said, would you like a cup of tea? She said, I would love.

[23 : 18] I would love a cup of tea. if you have some tea before they ■■■■ how to give a cup of tea. This good lady, she left the trolley besides my bed and she went through the , boy, she was away.

There was newspaper folded on the trolley. And one of them was a daily record. And it was folded, opened and folded, where there used to be a Bible, read a Bible verse every day.

And it, as if probably the Lord did guide me to that verse. It was a version of Mark's Gospel, chapter 5, verse 18.

And it was when Jesus went across to the land of the Gadarenes, and he met the man that lived amongst the tombs and the mountains.

And Jesus spoke to the legion, and he came across the mountain. And the mountain was in perfect state.

[24 : 34] But when Jesus was leaving the place to go back over, this man tried to follow him.

But Jesus wouldn't allow him into the boat. And he said to him, you go home to your friends and family and tell them what the Lord has done for you, and that he had compassion on you.

And the verse clung to me. And the good lady came with a cup of tea and a slice of toast. By the time I had finished drinking the cup of tea, I was in another land. I was in a land of peacefulness, stillness.

Oh, I can't describe it. I know everything went. All the weight that I was carrying, as if it had been lifted away.

[25 : 48] And I put my cup of tea when I finished on the desk and I slept soundly at night, all night in the morning.

And when the morning came, they took me through to the theater. I was quite happy, whatever they wanted to do.

He told me, the man that was doing this, he was giving me an angiogram. And he said, if you watch the screen, you can see everything that we're going to do.

But I didn't watch the screen. I wouldn't make any sense of it. And I closed my eyes. And I prayed to the Lord.

And everything went very well. I came out of that hospital that evening at 8 o'clock. I went to my brother's house. And I came home.

[26 : 50] Thank the Lord. Nothing's bothered me since. It's amazing what the person's got to go through and meet and see.

Another time, I told before, when I had trouble with the fishing boat.

From trouble to trouble, after a couple of weeks after I took it home, it started giving me bother. And I wasn't getting rid of it.

Sometimes the machinery in the engine. Other times the hydraulics. Everything. Electrics. I spent every penny a heart trying to get it sorted.

And in the end, I was heavily in debt. But we were praying for him. Praying about it. It's the only way out or else to away with it and leave the fishing altogether.

[28 : 01] But we prayed and prayed. I wasn't a person that would be taking this work home. I always wanted to leave my work on Friday or Saturday in the boat and then go home.

But it was on our minds all the time. And we prayed. And we were fishing for clams, scallops, ten miles of a scallop.

We used to pick up everything anyway. Old shoes and old boots and old bags and old wipes and things. And this day we picked up a length of cable.

It was thrown into the toolbox along with the rest. And it laid there for long enough.

And we carried on and tried to think nothing of it. But my cousin, he had a child and he was attending the hospital in Glasgow.

[29 : 15] He phoned me from Glasgow and he said, I've got very good news for you, funny news. What's that?

You know, he says that length of cable we thought we had in the toolbox. It's a very valuable length of cable.

It's a length of torque, gold. And he says, I took it to the museum. I saw something similar on the telly a couple of weeks ago.

And they tell me it's very valuable. And to make a long story short.

When it was sold. And we shared the money. My share of the money paid my debt.

[30 : 13] What could I say? But praise the Lord. And the thing I was thinking about is later on in life.

What God had sent me. I prayed that the Lord would send me do something for me. And he did. And I said, what did I do with it?

I threw it in the toolbox. And I was 37 years old. When I realized I needed a savior.

And what did I do with my savior in the first 35 years, 37 years of my life?

But trampled him under my feet. Along with the other people calling away with him, away with.

[31 : 18] We don't want this man to be our king. But thank the Lord, he was patient. He was patient. And he's been showing himself in many, many ways. From that day onward. And still this. And the older I am getting. And getting very old. The more I see. And the more I see it in other people's lives.

People growing in grace. Who was young like myself.

When we came forward. It's noticeable. It's noticeable. In men and women. And it's more. I think.

[32 : 16] It's more now a burden to me. That I'm not doing enough for the Lord. And that those who are without Christ.

Are not enough a burden on me. To bring them to the Lord. Before I sit down.

I'll tell you a story. About an old man. A devout Christian. But he had his moments. Like every one of us.

He had his moments of doubt. And at this time. He was very, very low. Spiritually.

And as in the morning. He prayed to the Lord. And he said to the Lord. Lord.

[33 : 20] My God. I shall not be going to church. This morning. But I am going to walk.

Along the path. Between our two villages. And if I see. A person.

At the well. That's between the two villages. I'll be convinced. That I am one of your.

Disciples. And seeing a person. At the well. At the well. These days. It wasn't heard of. So.

A man. He started walking. When other people. Went to church. He walked along that path. And he passed the well. And there was nobody to be seen.

[34 : 17] So. When it was time for him. To turn back. And. To be going home. When the people came out of church. He turned back.

And when he came in sight of the well. There was a young lady at the well. There was a container in her hand.

And he walked. And he walked. Towards her. And she walked. Towards him. And she walked. Towards him. And she said to him. I'm sure. She said. That you'd be surprised.

To see me here. This day. On a Sunday. No. He says. My dear. I'm not surprised at all. And she said. Well I'll tell you. He told her the story.

I'll tell you. She says. There's a young man in our village. She belonged to the next village. Who was on his death bed. And his mother asked him this morning. Is there anything you would wish to do? To see him. To see him. And he said. And she said.

[35 : 15] I'm sure. But I'm sure. I'm sure. And I'm sure. And it's a young man in our village. And she said. Well I'll tell you. I'll tell you. I'll tell you. And she says. There's a young man in our village.

She belonged to the next village. Who was on his death bed. And his mother asked him this morning. Is there anything you would wish us to do for you?

Today. And his wish was. to get a drink of water out of the well in the valley. She says that's what's leaving me here this day. And the man got his wish and he was convinced he was a true Christian. Even although it was a sad journey the woman had to the well, his prayers were answered. So it shows us it's not all smooth. We have our good days and we have our bad days. Some days we're right on top of the mountain. Other days we're right on the valley. But he's in the valley too. I heard an Irish pastor closing a service not so long ago. And he said if you are blessed don't be distressed. And if you are anointed don't be disappointed. May the Lord bless us all together.

I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear. I while I live will call on him who bowed to me his ear. Of death the cords and sorrows did about me compass round. The pains of hell hell took hold on me. I grief and trouble found. Upon the name of God the Lord then did I call and say. Deliver thou my soul O Lord. I do thee humbly pray. God merciful and righteous is.

Yea gracious is our Lord. God save the meek. I was brought low. He did me help afford.

[38 : 38] Just going to read a short portion from God's Word. Matthew chapter 11 verses 25 to 30. One of the passages that Donald referred to in his testimony. At that time Jesus said I praise you Father Lord of heaven and earth because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children. Yes Father for this was your good pleasure. All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me all who are weary all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Over these past few weeks it's been refreshing, it's been encouraging to hear of how God has worked and is working at present in the lives of his people. And over these past few weeks as well as we've heard testimonies from today we've also glanced back at passages of scripture and we've seen how various people in scripture came to know Jesus. We've thought about the apostle Paul and the drama of his testimony how sudden it was that Jesus met him on the Damascus road.

We we've gone to the other extreme and thought about Lydia and how quietly and how gently she came to know Jesus and we've thought about Timothy as well that young man who had been taught the Bible by his grandmother and his mother and who in God's time came to faith, came to believe in Jesus. So we've looked back and we can look back almost 2,000 years and we can read about how the Lord was at work in the life of his people back then and we've listened in recent weeks to the testimony of Hugh, Hugh Brownie and Stuart and Joyce, Andy Longway the minister last Sunday evening and this evening Donald McSween. We've heard about how the same Lord Jesus is still at work in the lives of real people here today. He is the God who does not change and his work is ongoing throughout the ages. But the question I want to ask tonight as we bring this month of testimonies to a close is, is Jesus working in your life? We've thought about how he has worked in biblical times. We've thought about how he is working in present times in the life of other people. But the question for you and I is, is he working in our lives? And you might ask in response, well, how do I know if God is working in my life? And I want to, to this evening give four signs, just very briefly, four signs that indicate that God is at work. And the first sign that indicates that God is at work in our lives is that our minds open to the person of Jesus. Our minds are opened to the person of Jesus. That's an indication that God is working. We can perhaps think back to a time in our life when anything to do with the Bible was boring to us. The Bible was set aside. It was on a shelf somewhere. We never went near it. But now we find that we're picking the Bible up and we're reading it and the Bible actually seems to be reading us.

Why is that? It's because God is at work. We can perhaps think back to times when we sat in churches and as the sermons were preached, we were planning our week. Planning where to put the pots out for the creos or planning the menu for the dinner table for the week. Planning the tasks of work that would come to our desk. The sermon was ongoing, but as far as we were concerned, it was of no relevance to us.

We were just daydreaming our way through the time, but now when we hear sermons from different places at different times, it's as if the preacher seems to speak right into our lives.

We ask the question, why is that? And the answer is because God is at work. Or perhaps at one time we can recall when anyone talked about Jesus, we became uncomfortable and we walked away as fast as we could. But now when people begin to speak about Jesus and share testimony, we're drawn to them. Why is that? Well, it's because God is at work in our lives.

[43 : 46] There's an interest in the things of God that wasn't there before. Our minds are opening to the person of Jesus. And tonight, if you're watching this and you're not watching Strictly Come Dancing or the football or whatever else is on television on Sunday night, I expect that's because there's an interest in your life. So take that as an encouragement that God is working in your life.

We don't seek him. He seeks us. Romans 3.10 says there is no one who seeks God. Jesus, when he was speaking to his disciples in John 15 verse 16, he said to them, he said to them, you did not choose me, I chose you. And when our minds open and become interested and engaged in the things of God, it's not because we've chosen suddenly to seek Jesus. It's a sign that he's seeking us. It's a sign that God is working in our lives. So the first sign that God is working is our minds open to the person of Jesus.

There's an interest in our minds that wasn't there before. The second sign that God is at work in our lives is that our ears open to the voice of Jesus. Donald in his testimony tonight, he read the verse that I read just a moment ago, Matthew 11.28. Jesus said, come to me all who are weary and burdened, all who are heavy and who are who labor and are heavy laden, as it says in the old version, and I will give you rest. And Donald, when he made reference to that verse, he said, that's the voice of Jesus and it's as fresh as ever, said Donald.

It was heard in Galilee 2,000 years ago almost. It was heard in Scalpy by Donald 40 years ago, as he spoke of.

And I wonder, can we hear that voice of Jesus tonight and perhaps in past weeks? Because if you and I can hear the voice of Jesus over all the noise of this world, it's an indication that he's working in our lives.

[46 : 11] And you might say, well, how do I know that Jesus is speaking to me personally? How do I know that he's calling me? Well, just look again at that verse that Donald referred to.

Jesus says, come to me all, not some, but all. All who are weary and burdened. Now, what is it that makes you and I weary and burdened?

What is it that weighs us down and leaves us with that sense of guilt? Well, it's sin. That's what the Bible says. So tonight, if in our hearts, if you and I know that we are sinners, if we can feel the weight of that sin, then Jesus is not sending us away from him, but he's calling us to come to him.

He's working in our lives. And his promise for those who come to him, it's a promise of rest. Rest for the weary. And that too is a sign that God is at work in our lives.

When God starts to work, our hearts initially become increasingly restless. The things that once seemed so shiny to us are now dimming.

[47 : 26] The things that once gripped us and took hold of us, we're losing interest in. The things that once seemed to satisfy us, they don't satisfy us anymore.

We're looking for something more than we have. We're looking actually for someone more than we have. And that someone is Jesus. And he's the one who is calling us to come to him.

He is the one who is opening our ears to hear his voice. It's the Rolling Stones that sang that famous song, I can't get no satisfaction, but I try and I try and I try.

And you know, that's the song. That's the testimony of everyone who has not yet come to Jesus. There's no satisfaction wherever we look, no matter how hard we try. The more we get, the more we want.

But there's another song that we sometimes sing. It goes like this. Now none but Christ can satisfy. No other name for me. There's love. There's life.

[48 : 37] There's lasting joy. Lord Jesus found in thee. You know, in these words, that song is the testimony of every Christian.

So how do we know that God is working in our lives? Well, our minds open to the person of Jesus. And then our ears open to the voice of Jesus.

And perhaps there's someone who's listening in just now, or who is watching, and who is hearing this, but is asking the question, can I trust this Jesus?

I hear his voice. I seem to be drawn towards him, and towards his people as they speak of him. But can I trust him? Because we know that in this world, there's many people who call us to come to them, and they make all kinds of promises of love to us.

But these promises, over time we realize, they're hollow promises. These people prove not to be trustworthy. So how can we know that Jesus really loves us?

[49 : 47] How can we know that Jesus really can be trusted? And that takes us to the third evidence, the third sign that Jesus is working in our lives. And that is that our eyes open to the cross of Jesus.

Because that's where we see how it was made possible for sinners like us to come to this holy God. That's where we see the sins that weighed us down being lifted off our shoulders and placed upon Jesus.

Sometimes we sing in that hymn, how deep the Father's love for us. Behold the man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders.

And the cross is the place where we see the vastness of God's love for us in doing that. 1 John 4, verses 9 and 10 says this, this is how God showed his love among us.

He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love. Not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

[51 : 03] See, when God is working in our lives, we find that we are drawn time and time again to the cross. We're drawn to that place where we see what God was doing.

And we see at the cross that what he was doing, he was doing it for us. It's not just some emblem that relates to a place far away in another age.

We see that the cross is the place where Jesus was working on our behalf. We see it was there that Jesus was doing the work of salvation.

1 Corinthians 1.18 says, For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

And when God is working in our lives, we have our eyes open to see that. We see, we focus on the cross of Christ when God is working in our lives.

[52 : 14] We hear the voice of Jesus. Our ears open to the voice of Jesus when God is working in our lives. Our minds open to the person of Jesus when God is working in our lives.

And finally, our hearts soften to the call of Jesus when God is working in our lives. Psalm 95 verses 7 and 8 says, Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. And that's the verse, if I can be personal for a moment, that's the verse that God used to bring me to himself.

At age 10, I could honestly say I had a very real interest in the things of God. I could hear the voice of Jesus as the Bible was read and Sunday school lessons were shared.

I could hear the voice of Jesus actually telling me about my sin, which I could see and acknowledge. I could hear the voice of Jesus calling me to himself for forgiveness and for that rest for the weary.

[53 : 31] I could see what Jesus did on the cross and I understood that he did it for me, but I needed to act on that. And I wasn't acting on that at that point in time.

And I knew at that point in time, if I was to die in the state that I was in, I would be lost. I would spend eternity apart from God in hell.

You know, the gospel is an offer. Salvation. Eternal life. Forgiveness of sin. Place in heaven.

Avoidance of hell. It's something that's offered to us. It's not just something that we need to know about in our heads. It's something that we need to act on.

You know, like all offers, we need to respond. As I was preparing this short message, the computer pinged at this point. And an email came in, and it said in the email, last chance flash sale at RAC.

[54 : 42] And it came up in the details of it. Mr. McLeod, you have the offer of 40% off breakdown cover. Now what did I do with that offer? I'll tell you what I did with that offer.

I did nothing. And you know, all you have to do to lose out on an offer is nothing. So can I urge you, at the end of this month of testimonies, can I urge you, as an old elder urged me in the high church in Stornoway 36 years ago, the night I became a Christian.

He urged me not to do nothing. Today, he said, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart.

And can I simply echo these words? Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. Don't turn away from the Jesus who is seeking you.

Don't close your ears to the Jesus who is calling you. Don't look away from the cross that Jesus is pointing you to.

[55 : 58] Don't harden your heart. Don't miss out on the offer of this gospel, of this eternal life, of this forgiveness of sins.

But ask Jesus to come in to the heart that he is softening. Don't harden your heart, but ask Jesus to come in to your heart if he's softening it.

Ask him to do that work of salvation in your life. Ask him to bring to you the reality of that forgiveness, and that full, abundant, satisfying, eternal life that he alone can bring.

We'll pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for, we thank you for the fact that you're the God who calls us and who calls us to trust you.

and we thank you that as we look to the cross, we see how much we are able to trust you. For God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

[57 : 15] We thank you, Father, for sending Jesus, your son. We thank you, Lord Jesus, for being willing to do everything for us so that we could be saved, being willing to go to that cross.

And we thank you that that cross did not hold you, but that having completed the work of salvation, you rose from the dead and promise everlasting life to all who will believe.

Holy Spirit, be working amongst us, we pray, that we may be given eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts that are soft and able to respond in faith to the call of Jesus.

Thank you for all the testimonies that have been shared over these weeks. Thank you for your word that is open before us. And we ask that each person who listens, each person who watches, would even tonight not harden their hearts, but respond in faith to the God who calls us to come.

And we pray that in due course each of us may not just have the interest to listen to the testimony of someone else, but we pray that you would give to us our own testimony of how you have worked in salvation and how you continue to work in each of our lives.

[58 : 41] So hear our prayers. Be at work, we pray, and we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me and rest.

Lay down the weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast. I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad.

I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad. I heard the voice of Jesus say, Behold, I freely give the living water.

Thirsty one, stood down and drink and live. I came to Jesus and I drank of that life-giving stream.

My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

[60 : 31] I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light.

Look unto me, my fall shall rise, and all thy day be bright.

I looked to Jesus and I found in him my star, my sun.

And in that light of life I'll walk till drowning days are done. I looked to Jesus and I found in him my star, my star, my star.

I looked to Jesus and I found in him my star, my star.

[61 : 48] And in that life of life I'll walk till travelling days are done.

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

Amen.