

Testimony 2.9.17 evening

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[0 : 00] Two things. One was to speak out and the other was to take it slowly.

If I speak too loudly and I speak too slowly, it's Ian's fault. When I was asked to speak, I suppose I had what must be a normal response.

I was shocked, horror, I can't do this. But very quickly I found myself saying yes. Very quickly. I actually did say yes. And then I started thinking, why did I say yes so quickly? And how was I going to do this?

I stand here for the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15 verse 58 says, So my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable.

Always work enthusiastically for the Lord. For you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless. But secondly, I stand here with the Lord.

[1 : 09] Hebrews 13 verse 5 says, I will never fail you, I will never abandon you. And as I stand here, I don't stand here alone. I suppose my story begins, like most stories, with when I was young and went to church.

We always went to church. It was, I think we went to church, it was deemed a respectable thing to do. And I used to read the Bible to my granny.

I used to read it in Gaelic and I was really not very good probably. But I couldn't understand why she wanted me to read the Bible to her. Because actually she was a word or two ahead of me anyway as I read it.

But I know now why she wanted me to read the Bible to her. My first Sunday school teacher in Penavine Trusco was Mary Flora, a castle, a buddy McCastle sister who had a shop here in Talbot.

And it was great because at the end of the lesson we got three or four sweeties as we left. So I'm afraid my focus was more on the sweets than on the lesson.

[2 : 19] My auntie Modina, who I never knew as Modina, she was auntie Modra to me.

She was a big influence on me. Can you hear it? She lived in the same house down the other end and still known as Down the Other End and always will be, I think.

And she cared for my granny. She was a Christian lady and she was my second Sunday school teacher. She had friends who we called the Barnings.

I think they were a Mr. and Mrs. Barnings and their friend. And they used to come up to Harris. And when they came up to Harris they used to come to the Sunday school. And they taught us choruses.

This was 50 years ago in Harris. So to be taught choruses was something just very exciting. Most of them I can't remember.

[3 : 33] Except one. Trust and obey. For there's no other way. To be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey. After a period of rebellion during my teens.

Nothing very unusual there I suppose. I left Harris to go to work in Edinburgh. This is probably where you're waiting for me to see. That I went off the rails altogether.

But it's actually quite the opposite. I spent ten months working in Edinburgh desperately homesick for Harris.

I stayed in the YWCA. Didn't really make any friends. And longed for the weekends. Because at the weekends I went to stay with my auntie. It was like going home.

She had worked as a housekeeper in Edinburgh for years and was now retired. And she stayed in a high rise block of flats in Craigmillar. Not the nicest of areas of Edinburgh.

[4 : 38] But I loved being there. Because it was like going home for the weekends. Sundays with my auntie. Sundays with my auntie Kate were a marathon.

We started off by walking to the morning service at the Baptist Mission Church. Back home after church we had a quick lunch. Which was usually cold chicken and crisps.

No fancy Sunday dinner. But I still love chicken and crisps to see. And it always reminds me of her.

And very fondly think of her and her kindness to me. And I realised no she didn't really have that much at that time. It was then off in the bus to Princess Street.

And we went to Charlotte Baptist Chapel. For afternoon ladies fellowship. Most of the ladies seemed really old.

[5 : 38] When I look back. But they probably wedded. Probably in their 30s and 40s. Because I was only 17 at the time. But it was wonderful fellowship. And it was my first experience of true fellowship.

And I didn't quite. I just felt safe there. And I felt very much at home there. That was the feelings I had when I was there. Then there was the ladies prayer meeting at 5pm.

Ladies praying together. And that kind of rival the Sunday school choruses. That was something totally mean for me at that time. I didn't know that happened.

Then there was the church service at 6pm. In Charlotte Chapel. And that was followed by fellowship. With guitars.

So it was all very new. Very wonderful. But after 10 months I came home to Harvest. I thought a lot before I actually decided what to include in this testimony.

[6 : 52] In my story. But I can't tell my story without talking about my alcohol addiction. It's very much part of my story.

I got drunk a number of times in my teens. Thinking it was a cool thing to do. And always wanting to be the one who could drink the most.

In some vain attempt to be admired. But didn't make friends easily. And looking back that was the seed of my addiction. I'm going to fast forward now.

Fast forward 30 years. Well not a year. To the 15th of April 2007. A Sunday morning. Waking up with a hangover.

And knowing the quickest cure for a hangover. Was to start thinking again. I was on my second glass of whiskey that morning.

[7 : 56] I don't have a good memory. But my memory of that morning is very very clear. And I realised that I didn't want to live my life like that anymore.

I had tried to stop drinking my own strength. With good intentions. But it always ended up the same way. With me feeling worse about myself than I ever did before.

But that morning was different. That morning I asked God to help me. I had tried everything else. And how often do we try everything else first?

Before we come to God. In desperation when all else fails. God did help me.

And although she had died 10 years before this happened. The words of a text. My auntie Mujak had sent me. She had sent me these wee cards with texts on.

[8 : 58] And she had sent me this card at a particularly low point in my life. And it just simply said. And it just simply said. Casting all your care upon him.

For he cares for you. 1 Peter 5.7 I've put subtitles on my notes as I'm going through them.

And the title of this part of my story is Road to Recovery. By 2007 drinking had begun to affect lots of things in my life.

Mainly relationships. But when I began to speak to people about my alcohol addiction. Once I had admitted to myself.

The problem I had. I started talking to others about it. Many said. I would never have believed you had a problem.

[9 : 59] I always thought you were a social drinker. See I wasn't a classic alcoholic. I didn't drink every day. I had a good job. I didn't show any outward signs of my addiction.

Perhaps to people who were closest to me I did. To my family as I related. But most people didn't see any of that. And that was actually one of the hardest things.

Because people didn't take me seriously. And you know. Many people have addictions of all kinds.

Seen and unseen. But if someone admits to you that they've got an addiction. Please don't dismiss it. I said that the title of this part of the story is Road to Recovery.

That's a very good reason. I'm part of a Road to Recovery group. And we meet on a Tuesday night. Every Tuesday night. Not all of us. But a few of us meet every Tuesday night.

[11 : 02] In Talbot. At 8 o'clock. If anybody here. Feels the need. To come along. Or know of anybody. Who might benefit from that.

Then please. Please. Pass the word on. And if anybody would prefer. To speak to someone one to one. We can do that as well. From the day I asked God.

To help me. To break the chains of my addiction. He has walked with me. We often sing the first part of Psalm 40. But verse 13.

Don't often reach that far. When we're singing the Psalm. But verse 13 says. Be pleased to save me Lord. Come quickly Lord. To help me. And that's what I had said that morning.

And he did. That wasn't. That was part.

[12 : 01] I would say. Of one step. In what I would call. My conversion. I guess. I don't have a. A particular moment. But rather a journey.

With significant. Steps along the way. While I give thanks to God. For my sobriety. I became increasingly aware.

Of my past sins. I know. What that is now. But at the time. I didn't fully understand it. I was becoming.

Under conviction of sin. There were many things. I have done. That lay heavily on me. But there was one. Significant thing. In my past. Which lay so heavily on me. I never thought.

I would be able to deal with. I actually thought. About going to counseling. For it. But then I. I didn't even think. I could speak to a counselor. About it. Today.

[12 : 57] My assurance. Rests on God's forgiveness. And the proof. Of that forgiveness. Is me being able. To forgive myself. And forgive others. In turn. Psalm 25.

Verse 7. Do not remember. The sins of my youth. And my rebellious ways. According to your love. Remember me. For you Lord. I do. I said.

There was. A number of steps. On the way. One of the steps. Was actually. When I went along. To Christianity Explored. I decided.

To go to Christianity Explored. Because I wanted. To study the word of God. In a structured way. Because that's what I thought. Christianity Explored was. Which it wasn't. But. I thought.

I would find the answer. For some deep. Theological teaching. The teaching. Christianity Explored. Was to be held in Scalby. I didn't know.

[13 : 52] Who was going to be there. And. There are some here tonight. To wear there. I was. Welcomed in. But I knew. I had to go.

You didn't have to go. To the course. You just had to turn up. On the first night. And as I passed through Talbot. And on to Sunny Hill. And. I just thought. I'm going to turn back.

I don't know anybody here. I don't know what's expected of me. My stomach was in knots. And I began to pray. I became calm.

And focused. And I suppose. The closest word to it. Is excited. As I got near. To the community centre.

In Scalby. I was on the right road. Literally. On the right road. I worried. I still worried. I would make a fool of myself.

[14 : 48] A bit like tonight. Because I didn't know the Bible. As well as. I should. And what if I couldn't answer. If they asked me a question. This wasn't the way it worked.

And. I think. Not sure if it's week four. But we came to the cross. The week. Cross. Was the focus. And it was just like that. Light bulb in my mind.

You know. If ever there was one. And words. We memorise. And recite. As children. Almost. Too often. That we don't listen to ourselves.

Become. So so real. John 3.16. Came so so real. For me. For God. So loved the world. That he gave his only begotten son. That whosoever.

Believes on him. Should not perish. But have everlasting life. Another destination.

[15 : 47] Along the way. Was the ladies group. That meets on a Monday evening. Teeny asked me along. To the ladies group. On a Monday night. And my fears. Were similar to those.

I had. When I went to Christianity. Explored. How in depth. Would the bible study be? What if I said something wrong? It was hard to work.

To walk in that first night. But. Boy am I glad I did. Such fellowship. Such encouragement. Such a work.

And still the same today. My husband always encourages me. On a Monday night. And admits it's due to the fact. That he knows it sets me up. Whatever that week is going to bring me.

If I go to ladies group. On a Monday night. I spoke about. The chorus. Trust on a bee. I thought I was going to.

[16 : 46] Out of my mind. Because. All I could hear in my head. Was trust on a bee. For there's no other way. To be happy in Jesus. But I trust on a bee. Over and over and over.

And I don't mean just sometimes. I mean all the time. I guess I knew the Lord. Was calling me. And every Sunday. I sat in this hall. Listen to the minister.

In a way I had never listened to. A minister before. Desperate. For that road to Damascus conversion. Because. I thought that nothing less would do.

No. And on communion Friday. The 27th of February. 2015. The Reverend Roddy Morrison preached.

On Matthew 27. Verse 22. What shall I do then. With Jesus. Who is called the Messiah. Hearing the words. If you do not accept him.

[17 : 40] You are rejecting him. I was in blind panic. There is no middle road. You are either accepting God. Or you are rejecting him.

There is nothing in between. Service ended. And I was having a cup of tea. And I was standing. Right over there. And. I met. David.

The minister. And he said to me. How are you tonight? Probably he had said that. To lots of people. And they had said fine. I was fine. And I said. Not good. And I told him. Why I wasn't good.

I knew. That just as I had trusted God. To release me. From the chains of addiction. I know how to obey his word. 1 Corinthians 11.

24. And when he had given thanks. He broke it. And said. This is my body. Which is for you. This is due in remembrance of me. And that Sunday morning. I sat at the Lord's table.

[18 : 36] For the first time. In some ways. This is only the beginning of my story. Don't worry. I'm almost finished. But it is. The beginning of my story.

The beginning of a closer walk. With God. If anyone's looking for an easy life. You don't find it as a Christian. Yes. There are times when life is good. But there are times.

When it all seems to be going wrong for us. We find encouragement in prayer. In the word. And in fellowship. And sometimes we find encouragement. When we least expect it. From people we least expect.

And in situations we least expect. Equally. There are times. When we find discouragement. Where we least expect it. From within our own families. In our workplace.

Or even other Christians. But at all times. We stand firm in the Lord. So I'd just like to finish with words from Jeremiah 17.

[19 : 33] Verse 7 and 8. Thank you for listening.

Thank you very much.

She would have fun. She's a single word of testament. Amen. Thank you.