

Testimony

Mark Crooks Tells His Story

Mark Crooks

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Saved Forever

I was born into a Christian home (my mother and father were both saved). From a very young age, I knew that I was a sinner and that I needed salvation. However, knowing something and acting on it are very different things. I live in Northern Ireland, which is a very favoured land where the gospel is preached freely and has been blessed by God.

As a young lad, I always wanted to be saved and never really thought that I would miss it, but I never got the great matter settled till sometime after that. I was a quiet boy in junior school, but when I got to secondary school, I started to see my life as a bit of a drag. Going to hear the gospel preached never appealed to me, but I continued to go to keep my parents happy. At about 14, I started to make new friends. By this time I wasn't so quiet. My friends and I started to try beer and other drink. As young lads, we never stopped to think about where our new activities would lead us, and that the Bible said we were on the broad road which leads to Hell. I continued to live like this for two years, always covering up my lifestyle so as not to upset my parents. During this time, I never had a single thought about my soul or where I would spend eternity.

At the age of 16, I started to get into the world a bit more and I had less respect for my parents. I left school and started working with my uncle in the building trade. Around that time, a series of gospel meetings started that would continue for 3 months. I still attended the meetings and had many Christian friends. I feared they would find out about the way I was living. A snooker room opened in my village at the back of a man's house. This started to take up a lot of my time, and booze was always on offer there, so I started to drink a lot more. My mother and father knew the way I was going; causing them a lot of grief. As I attended the series of meetings, I heard a simple gospel preached with power. My cousin got saved and this spoke to me very loudly. She hadn't been brought up in a Christian home. She hadn't heard the message all her life like I had, and there she was, saved by the grace of God. The Spirit of God convicted me of my sin, and the life I was living seemed empty. It was!

It came to July 11, 2001, and I was under deep conviction of my sin. I came home from work, and my cousin asked me if I was going to the meeting. I made a foolish choice not to go because a friend had phoned to tell me that they had bought lots of drink for a big night. I rejected God's only Son for the pleasures of this world!

That night, I got in trouble with the police, and my father had to collect me at the police station. I will never forget what my dad said during the interview. When the police man said, "I guess it will remain secret what happened tonight." My father replied, "You're wrong, God knows!"

It was a turning point in my life. I stopped drinking and going out as much. Unfortunately, I also stopped going to the meetings. I thought my opportunity for God's salvation was gone. About a month later, on what was to be the last night of the series of meetings, my mum pleaded with me to go. To keep the peace, I went along. God spoke to me again that Friday night. I thought about my life and all that had happened during the summer. I longed to be saved!

On Monday, after a weekend of struggle within myself, I finally decided to go in for God's salvation. The meetings were continuing another week because someone else had professed to be saved. That night, standing in my bathroom after the meeting, I simply accepted that, "I, Mark Crooks, am a Hell-deserving sinner, but Jesus died for me." I was saved! There were no big feelings or bright lights, I just accepted that Jesus bore my sins on the cross, and I knew that if I died, Heaven would be my home.

That was two years ago now, and I haven't regretted it one bit. Sometimes life hasn't been easy, but I find pleasure in praying and reading the Bible. I was baptised and accepted into assembly fellowship in Cardy Gospel Hall.

That is how God saved me. "I am so glad that Jesus loved me; Jesus loved even me."

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