

My Journey Towards Heaven

Personal Testimony of Paul Prins

1959 - 2009

Paul Prins died on July 11, 2009 – just a few days after his story below was updated. He originally wrote his story several months ago. But last week he wanted it updated to reflect his current status as he prepared to say goodbye to the family he loved and his many friends. His story below will be given to everyone who stops by to pay their respect and to express their condolences to his widow Stacey and the family.

As you read his story reflect on your own life.

I am sharing my personal story with you because it means so much to me. I would like you to understand the benefits and blessings of knowing Christ personally as your Saviour. If you were me right now, which type of 'spiritual' story would you like to own – mine or yours? Here's mine:

Genuine Christians

There would be seven more after me but I was the first to be born to Martin and Mary Prins of Sarnia, Ontario. Four more boys and three girls would follow me. My parents were Christians whose lives had been changed by Jesus Christ. They were saved.



The overarching priority of our home was God and the things of God. He had first place. The Bible was our daily guide and from my earliest days I was taught the basic truths of that great book. We went to church three times on Sundays and attended any other special services that came along. If there were special Gospel services in buildings or tents within an eighty kilometer radius our family would be there.

A Wild Child

Having Christian parents and attending a Christian church sure did not make me a Christian. In fact, it doesn't make anyone a Christian. I was a wild child wanting to go my own way. After my eighteenth birthday I spiraled out of control. I just wanted to live it up. This life style of partying made it impossible for me and my parents to live together. I ended up getting my own place in Sarnia on Charlotte Street where I began my journey into alcoholism and drugs. After two or three months, I moved into our family's cottage in Grand Bend to stray in the same path. The cycle was: get up for work, drink all day and party at night. It was party after party.

Hitting Bottom

No one can live a life like that without feeling the repercussions. I broke my leg in a motorcycle accident, and then got picked up by the police for trafficking drugs. Things were going from bad to worse. My life was becoming darker. No job and a possible conviction. My life was at an all time low.

Not everyone follows the same path but all travel the same road downward until they are stopped. Some stray into religion; others stray into fame and fortune. I strayed into the path of pleasure and parties. But all paths on the downward road lead to the same place.

My brother John and I had been attending Gospel meetings which were being held in an old garage. Although we started attending just to please our parents, it was obvious God was speaking to us loudly – trying to get our attention. John rolled his truck and was made to think of the shortness and fragility of life. He trusted Christ as his Saviour on January 5, 1981.

I was becoming more deeply aware of my sin. I knew the road I was traveling on was leading me to Hell. I sensed that God was speaking to me and if I didn't listen, it may be the last time He would try to get my attention.

The Best Day of My Life

On January 22, 1981, I stayed home from work to focus on this critical matter. My eternal destination was at stake. I stayed in my room and began reading my Bible. I looked up all the different Gospel verses I had memorized years before. This led me to John Chapter 3.

Burdened about my sin, I read John Chapter 3. Then I came across this verse: “... **as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up...**” I realized it was Jesus Himself who was telling Nicodemus how to be saved. All Jesus was asking Nicodemus to do was to accept that Christ Jesus himself had to be lifted up on a Cross.

Jesus used an Old Testament story to make it clear to Nicodemus that all his religion could not save him. He told him that just like every other person he too needed to be born again if he was ever going to be in Heaven. In the story many Israelites were dying from deadly venom. The only cure was to *believingly look* at the brass serpent on the pole and God said they would be instantly healed or saved. (Numbers 21)

Jesus told Nicodemus that just like the serpent on the pole, Christ also would be lifted up on a Cross and whoever turned their eyes to Him in faith would be saved. That’s when I realized that all Paul Prins had to do was look to the Savior to take my sins away. One look of faith to Christ and I was saved!

When my eyes were first opened to this revelation the most joyous relief came to me as I thought about the Lord Jesus; just to think that He was willing to die for me and for my sins alone. It was a deeply personal experience. I thanked the Lord right then and there for His Son and for showing Him to me. I knew I was saved.

I immediately went up the stairs to the kitchen of our old house on London Road in Sarnia to tell my father. Dad said, “*Well, that’s wonderful Paul – how did it happen?*”

I am sure he was delighted that a lost prodigal son had finally come home to Christ.

I have never doubted my Savior although I have doubted myself and the way I have lived.

Cancer Strikes: Get your house in order!

On my 49th birthday, February 12, 2008, the cancer Specialist met with us to tell us the grim news of the severity of my lung cancer. He told us that it had spread to my sternum, ribs, pelvis, hip, and spine. The specialist was very frank with me. He told me to *get my house in order* and to attend to my personal affairs. Even with chemotherapy treatment, I only had ten months left to live at best.

Thankfully, I was able to receive the birthday news with peace and acceptance. Back on January 22, 1981, I had attended to life’s most important matter – my relationship with God. My house was in order for eternity. My soul was saved and I was ready for the journey. Can you imagine what my reaction would have been to such devastating news had I still been in my sins on the road to Hell? **Thank God for the moment of my salvation back in 1981.**

I received that news on my 49th birthday. How thankful I am that I was allowed to celebrate my 50th birthday with my family that I love so dearly. But my condition is deteriorating; the cancer is taking its toll. I will soon be going home to be with my Saviour.

I love my wife **Stacey** and my children – **Alexander, Frazer, Spencer, Olivia,** and **Anastasia** but soon I will have to say goodbye. I pray for their future, but for me, my future is heaven and it’s nearer every day. I have peace because I have Christ.

I am so glad my eternal destiny was completely settled as a young man of twenty-two. God’s salvation is awesome in the best of times but it is even more awesome in the worst of times - when the storms of life hit.

The greatest news our family could receive at this difficult time is to hear that *you* have turned to Christ for salvation and the forgiveness of your sins. I would love to think that I will see you again in Heaven but that will be an impossibility unless you turn by faith to Christ and embrace Him as your personal Saviour.

If my illness and brief life was used by God to lead you to personal faith in my Saviour I couldn’t be happier. Please let my family know. These may be the last words I ever write. So can I ask you friend, will I meet you in Heaven or will you be somewhere else?

... **Paul Prins, Sarnia, ON, Canada**