

Testimony of William Lavery

On June 24, 1932, a shy boy named Bill was born in Northern Ireland. His parents got saved and they took Bill to all the meetings of the assembly. His father became a serious student of the Bible and he lived for Bible Studies and meetings. His father even shaved with the same razor for one year to save money to buy booklets about the Bible.

However, as Bill grew, he became more interested in soccer than his soul. As a teenager he went to meetings out of respect for his father but, by age sixteen, he began smoking, drinking, and dancing to overcome his shyness. Soon there were nights where he would stumble home or lay in the street all night.

God kept speaking to Bill through a car accident and the deaths of friends. Once he was waiting in line for a show. A man came down the line giving out tracts. The man stopped only at Bill and asked him how old he was. When Bill answered, the man replied, "That would be a great age to be saved."

One evening Bill went to a dance hall where he met Margaret. She had gone to a Gospel Hall Sunday school as a child. Soon, they were married.

After having two children, Bill and Margaret decided to leave Ireland. At that time, an aunt who lived in Detroit, Michigan, USA wrote offering to sponsor them to come to Detroit. On March 15, 1961, Bill came to the USA. Margaret and their two children followed in June. Her aunt and uncle attended the Gospel Hall in Ferndale, Michigan. Out of respect, Bill and Margaret would attend occasionally.

Despite the drinking and "fun," Bill struggled with his emptiness until one night, he picked up a Bible. He didn't know where to read so he randomly opened the Bible at Psalm 49. He read about people who die and "leave their wealth to others." Immediately, he saw the emptiness of his life. Then he flipped through the Bible and read, "...he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat" (Isa. 55:1). Bill thought, "God is offering something that fits my budget; salvation is free." He immediately thought of his father in Ireland, a man who was financially poor but spiritually rich because he knew he was saved.

On March 9, 1966 in the middle of the night, Margaret got saved through John 3:16. Very simply, she trusted Christ as her Savior. She told Bill in the morning.

Bill went to work in Detroit as his sins and emptiness weighed heavier and heavier. At a break at 2:00 PM, Bill went to the men's room to get alone with God. He decided he would not leave until it was settled.

His mind went to, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matt. 7:13). Bill knew He was going to destruction because he deserved it for his sins. Even worse, he didn't know how to be saved. His thoughts went to Peter who began to sink after walking on the water. Bill knew he was sinking down to hell. Like Peter, he called to the Lord to save him. Right then, Bill realized the Lord Jesus could save him because He had paid the price for Bill Lavery when, "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6).