

Testimony

Don Hammersmark Tells His Story

Finding Christ in a Logging Shack Personal Story of Don Hammersmark

Every Christian has a story to tell about how they came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my personal story with you.

At the age of 28, I took a long look in the direction down the road I was travelling. One of King Solomon's Proverbs in the Holy Bible says: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Proverbs 16:25

The Lord Jesus taught that there are only two destinations after death for every person: heaven and hell. The way I was living and the path I had chosen was not taking me to heaven.

After high school, my inclinations took me quickly further along the "broad way that leads to destruction."

Life in the Sixties

It was the mid-1960s. There had been three notable assassinations in recent history. President John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Senator Robert F. Kennedy during the 1968 primaries.

Young people were disillusioned. I was easily swept into the current of the counter-culture of the day. Society was in an uproar. They were revolutionary times. Civil rights marches across the U.S.A. were constantly in the news. Sit-ins and strikes occurred in universities across the States, and even in Canada too. There were race riots on the streets of Los Angeles. Protesters against the war in Viet Nam filled the streets.

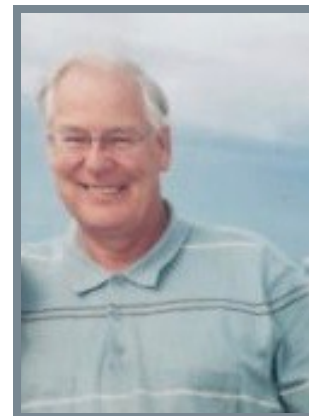
There were atrocities being committed over in Viet Nam, such as the My Lai Massacre. Half a million young people, mostly young men my age were drafted to serve the United States in the war in Viet Nam. Many left their country behind and came to Canada. They were called draft-dodgers. They burned their draft cards and effectively said "No! we won't go." If they tried to return to the U.S., they would be arrested at the border and face imprisonment. So, in a sense they brought "the revolution" to Canada – my home country.

Spiritual Searching

In those days, the traditional Judeo-Christian moral influence that was once dominant in North America began to give way to New Age teachings and eastern religious beliefs such as re-incarnation, transcendental meditation, Buddhism, Hare Krishna type Hinduism, Kundalini Yoga. All these and more, promised a path of spiritual pursuit that led to self realization and a measure of peace in the soul. Sadly, I tried out some of these ways.

Some time in my early youth there were words impressed upon my young heart – "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." I wouldn't have been able to find them in the Bible, or even known who said them [Jesus]; but they stayed with me. Those words seemed to compel me to keep searching, until I found I knew not what.

When God created the first human – body soul and spirit, He built into us a void that only He could fill. Counterfeits, no matter how good they look or sound, or how much they promise, are bound to fail the test of reality.



Slogans to Protest

Those were the days of rock and roll, and protest and a libertarian, anti-establishment, permissive way of living. Marijuana, cocaine and LSD, although illegal, were commonly available. The slogans of the late 1960s and early 70s included: “Make love, not war.” “Tune-in” to the music, “turn-on” to the drugs and “drop-out” of the mainstream society. “Hell no, we won’t go”- to the war in South East Asia.

Hippies and Communal Living

There was a “back to the land” movement during those times too – hippies getting together and living communally, mostly in rural areas. I, with others, moved into a small community on Vancouver Island. We survived by doing odd jobs and just getting by with anything that came our way.

The years that should have been used to further my education were wasted in ‘riotous living’ – the lifestyle Jesus described in Parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke Chapter 15.

Source of Discontentment

However, an old friend of mine had been ‘saved’ and he invited me to attend what he called a ‘gospel meeting’ – where two men preached from the Bible. They told us that the source of a people’s discontent was their separation from God. Sin had come between God, who is holy and individuals who are sinful. And no one can ever be truly happy until they are at peace with God.

I attended a Christian Conference where there were hundreds gathered. They had one thing in common – the experience of God’s salvation. I was so impressed by their conduct and interest. I thought: these people have something worth having and they want me to have it too and they tell me I can have it “without money, and without price.”

Alone at a Winter Logging Camp

In the winter of 1974, I was offered a job as a watchman in a logging camp up north on the east coast of Vancouver Island. The Lord had brought me to a place where finally without much outside influence, He could impress upon my empty soul the consequences of living and dying, having wasted my life without any purpose. The Bible says: “O, that they were wise and understood this, that they would consider their latter end.” Deuteronomy 32:29

Bad Hives and Living Water

There was a heavy snowfall that winter. The road was closed until spring and I had only a short-wave radio and an old camp dog for company. Before long, I broke out in horrible hives. I thought that I wouldn’t be able to stay there. But something told me to get my drinking water supply from a stream a little further from the cabin. And when I did, the hives cleared up.

Incidentally, when the snow melted, I discovered that the first stream came from under a pile of cedar logs and must have been contaminated even though I couldn’t taste it. I believe The Lord directed me to the stream of living water so that I wouldn’t be discouraged and leave.

I had been brought up in a Roman Catholic home, but had cast-off Christianity entirely because of the faults and excesses and history of that organization. Consequently, I never read the Bible and I never considered the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finding Christ in the Logging Shack

It was sometime later in a little shack in that logging camp on Vancouver Island when I trusted Christ for the first time. It was winter, and I was alone. Snowed in and isolated. I was reading a Bible that I had acquired and listening to gospel testimonies on my short-wave radio.



I was under the conviction of a heavy burden of sin, and I asked God to save me. By faith, I believed that the Lord Jesus Christ had died for me. The burden of guilt and the unbearable load of sin was lifted. I understood that God loved me, and that Christ had died for my many sins on the cross outside of Jerusalem.

Christ took my place: as my substitute, He took upon Himself, the punishment that was due to me. He finished all that God, being holy, demanded to satisfy His own righteous claims against sin. He was buried – proof that He truly died. And rose again from the dead – proof that His claims were indisputably true and that He had power over death, and that God was satisfied with the sacrifice that He had made on the cross.

*The blood [speaking of His death] of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin.
(1 John 1:7)*

It was a revelation to my soul that has never lost its wonder.

*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world
to save sinners; of whom I am chief.
(1 Timothy 1:15)*

That's my story, to God be the glory, I'm only a sinner saved by grace.

For You Too

Thanks for reading my story. I am glad I can tell you that you too can be saved, by repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Your search can come to an end. You can have eternal life and wonderful peace.

*For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.
(Romans 10:13)*

*If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised
Him from the dead, you shall be saved.
(Romans 10:9)*

*Jesus said: I AM the way the truth and the life, No one comes to the Father but by Me.
(John 14:6)*

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