

# *Testimony*

*Thomas Laverty*

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I was born on May 24, 1969 in Ballymena, Northern Ireland. My family attended public worship in the Presbyterian church in the nearby village of Ahoghill. I must confess that I never remember a time when I did not know my need of a Saviour, due to the fact that we had a faithful minister of the gospel and faithful Sunday school teachers.

At age 16 I left school, and a short time later, I got a job in Dale Farm Dairies in Ballymena, where I worked for 13 years. Like many my age, I began to live for the pleasures of the world and sin. I had many good friends who still remain to this day.

In August 1998, an evangelist came to do a gospel mission in Ballymena as a result of some believers in the town being burdened to pray for the district. A two-week mission was planned to be held in a little mission hall. That gospel mission lasted for nine weeks and it was marked by prayer. There were prayer meetings every morning at 6:30 a.m. as believers gathered to pray before going to work. There was further prayer before and after the meetings.

I did not attend the mission for the first two weeks, but on the third week I decided to go. I didn't hear anything I didn't already know, but I began to come under terrible conviction of sin. Never did I feel my sin and guilt so much. Never did I feel the depth to which I was in trouble with God. I remember leaving the meeting really troubled at the prospect that death could come at any moment and I would be ushered out into God's eternity. It didn't matter where I was, or what I was doing, there was this awful sense of conviction of sin in my soul.

I decided to return to the mission one more night the next week, and again the presence of God was there, again there was trouble in my soul. By the end of that week, I decided that I was going to go out and get drunk and forget all about what I'd heard because I thought, "I can't go on like this."

I did get drunk, but discovered in the pubs that much of the conversation was about the mission. Unknown to me, many people were beginning to attend on different nights. The whole atmosphere in the town seemed to be different. God was speaking through the preaching of His Word. I spent most of that weekend drinking, but I could not get my need of Christ out of my head. Alcohol does not remove the power of conviction of sin.

When I was in the bar for a drink the following Monday, I decided to return to the mission that night, which would have been my third night attending, and the fifth week of the mission. The preacher spoke on a message he entitled, "A Carnival near Hell." He spoke on God's judgment for sin and the only remedy was found alone in Jesus Christ. That night my soul was in turmoil. I knew if I came to Christ, I would be saved; I knew if I didn't, I would lose my soul, and it would be my fault. I knew I must step out on the promise of God, and turn from sin and come to Christ.

It was September 28, 1998 and that was the night this sinner passed from death unto life. That night this sinner found redemption through Christ's blood, even the forgiveness of sins. The whole town was touched by the Lord's presence at that mission, and many souls came to faith in Christ as Redeemer. I thank my God for every remembrance of those days when the burden of my heart rolled away beneath the cleansing blood.

Ten years later, I began training for the Christian ministry at the Whitefield College of the Bible. I want to make it abundantly clear that I am unworthy of this calling. It is an unspeakable honor to be asked to say a word for Jesus Christ.

I do thank God for His mercy and grace in my life. I have a Father in heaven who loves me. I have a Saviour who died for me and the Holy Ghost as my comforter and guide. I have the Word of God as my only rule of faith and practice.

I end this testimony by giving all the praise and honor and glory to the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

*... Gleaned from Quarterly Publication of The Free Presbyterian Church of North America*