

Testimony

by Pastor Harry Timmins, Grace Baptist Church, Lahaina, Maui Hawaii

“And I thank Christ Jesus our LORD, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our LORD was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

1 Timothy 1:12-14

I was raised in a happy, yet rather Godless home. My parents did take me to attend Church on a few occasions. I sang in a large boys choir in one of the biggest churches in Southern California, but unfortunately I never heard a clear message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. At age 12 my family moved to a very rural community and the only church was a Spanish Catholic church, so from that point through my high school years it never occurred to my family to attend church. At age 14 the “hippy movement” began to sweep across America and I found myself soon smoking marijuana, taking LSD, and experimenting with other drugs. At 18 I also began drinking more frequently and soon found that drugs and alcohol were an everyday pastime for me, and without giving it much thought I became completely dependent on both. God had gifted me with two passions in life, music and surfing, but in both those worlds the drug and booze culture played a big role for everyone I knew.

In 1976 I moved to Hawaii to the Island of Maui to live the surfer lifestyle, working all manner of odd jobs and eventually becoming a waiter by night, a trade that paid very well but was also fraught with the same cultural peer pressure.

In Hawaii I met my wife to be and we were married in 1984. Our first child was born to us two years later and by 1993 we had three children, and a year later a fourth. Although I was faithful in work and marriage, and even fatherhood, I was extremely selfish, spending most of my extra cash on pot, beer, toys, and other short term pleasures. My wife was growing weary of the day to day existence, and I was shrinking further into my self absorbed lifestyle. At this point we began to be surrounded by Christians and were being witnessed to, however I still didn't get it. I told one friend, “Oh, I believe in God, but this Jesus, who was he?” Well, a week later on July 10, 1993 one day after my 42nd birthday, that same friend got me under the preaching of the Gospel and I was saved, changed, and made a new man in Christ. Up to that point in my life, for all the searching, through drugs, Eastern religion, and even from time to time attempting to read the Bible, I had never heard a clear cut Gospel message.

Three verses stuck in my mind that day:

- 1) First, Romans 3:23, *“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* I had never heard that, and what a relief it was to know that all mankind was on a level playing field before God. I assumed, as most do, that if your good outweighed your bad you were a shoe-in for Heaven, but this verse and the next verse I heard would say otherwise.
- 2) Romans 6:23 told me, *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”*. That spoke of two promises of God, death through sin, or eternal life through Christ.
- 3) The next verse was the clincher for me, Romans 8:1, *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.”*

So by now my only question was, how do I get “in Christ Jesus”? When the answer came from Romans 10:9 and 10, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*, the altar call was given and I couldn't wait to come forward and confess that Jesus was Lord unto the glory of God the Father. I begged Christ to have the taste for drugs and alcohol taken from me, and to be the husband and father I always knew I should be and could be, but because of sin was unable to be. When I got up off my knees and walked out of that service, I KNEW I was saved, I KNEW I was freed from the bondage of drink and drugs, and I have God and God alone through Christ to thank for every day that I experience now, with fresh, childlike wonder, unencumbered from the desire and effects of those things I left

behind me on that great day. Now the proud father of four, and joyful grandfather of four, and more in Love with my dear wife who stayed with me through the hard times, I serve my Lord as Assistant Pastor at my Local Church. My life verse's are these, 1 Timothy 1:12-14, *“And I thank Christ Jesus our LORD, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our LORD was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”*

It is my fervent prayer that someone in the similar situation as I was in, will consider the claims of Christ and be born again unto life anew and life eternal. May God richly bless you.

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