

Testimony of Wesley Regular

Throughout my life I have always been aware of God, sin and the need of forgiveness. I am incredibly blessed to have been brought up in a Christian home and am grateful to God for surrounding me with true believers. I have attended Spring Road since birth and have had the privilege of hearing the gospel faithfully preached for as long as I can remember.

Growing up attending the Sunday school and weekly services allowed me to gain an understanding of the need to believe in Jesus and to follow the teachings within the Bible. I was 'different' to my friends and sometimes found it hard to accept that I would not be able to participate in the activities my friends did on Sundays – as my family would seek to keep the Lord's day. God blessed me with sporting talents and the majority of my friends would play Sunday league football and although I resented the fact that I could not officially join a team, I respected my parents' position. I was known amongst my friends as the 'church boy' and was seen as odd by most of them because I did not swear and didn't go out to play on Sundays. However, looking back now, through forming some of these friendships, many of them would come along with me to the Friday Club and I feel thankful to have been used by God in this way to further His work. Despite none that I know of actually coming to true belief in Christ yet, over the years whenever our paths have crossed, many still remember the experience of the clubs and speak highly of their memories. The fact God has sown His seed in their hearts has been a great encouragement to myself.

During my teenage years, I always felt closest to God when surrounded by His people, whether that be on Sundays at church, or through the youth works, but mostly on the church Houseparties. Despite having this knowledge of God and access to faithful ministry, I found myself in a constant yo-yo state. I would pray to God – asking for forgiveness of my sins and asking Jesus to save me – but these prayers were often empty spiritually. I felt as though I had to do something or feel a sudden change in order to gain life in Christ. Even though I had listened to countless sermons on being saved through faith (not by works) I still didn't fully understand how to be right before God. I knew salvation could only be gained through Jesus and His life but I still felt that I had to have some 'input'. The only input that is needed is the work that Jesus has completed fully and the obedience and faith to believe in Him.

Looking back on my life, God has been with me – leading, guiding, loving, protecting and forgiving. A pivotal point in my life arrived when I found out the news that my partner (now wife) was expecting our first child. I still remember the conversation that no 17 year old wants to have with their parents. However my deepest fears were removed by the love displayed by the Lord's people and other people who God had placed in my life to support me in unimaginable ways. Twelve years later, God continues to provide for us.

He has led me through many trials and brought me to safety despite my constant wanderings and selfish motivations. A particular trial brought me to my knees – God used this to teach me about total and utter dependency on Him. I think this was the point (if I had to pick one chief turning point) that caused me to see His undying love for me and showed that there was nothing I could input to save myself, only to believe in Him. Believing with all my heart that Jesus died for me, just as I am. *Ephesians 2:4-5*

‘But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved.’

In November, we had a visiting preacher who delivered a sermon on *Psalms 119:176*:

‘I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.’ I remember finishing the final hymn with tears streaming down my face. A helpless sinner, prone to wander, yet loved by the Lord.

My parents would sometimes hesitate to discuss my spiritual state, not because they didn’t want to or weren’t concerned, but because they knew that for the majority of my life I have kept a ‘foot in the world’. Yet God provided an opportunity shortly after the previously mentioned sermon, for my mum to ask me about my spiritual state. We contemplated about the path my life had taken and yet God’s undying, undeserved mercy and love was (and is) evident in every stage. We discussed ‘assurance’ and have prayed deeply since. What more assurance could I need or want, than being where I am now, having faced some incredibly difficult trials and God continuously providing opportunities for me to learn more about His grace and love. God has shown His love for me in countless ways, but recently I have become more aware of how God uses His people to reflect His Christ-like love. I have always struggled to motivate myself to read, but since Covid, I have enjoyed delving into the ‘Bookworms’ books and have even been more attracted to and reliant on scripture to lead and guide, both individually and as a family.

I am afraid of my past self and the power and pull of sin. In recent months, thanks to God’s intervention through wise counsel and other means, I have felt a change in my motives. The things I once prioritised now seem less attractive and the things of God and His word guide me. There is no doubt I am still a sinner, but I trust in Jesus and His life – I want to serve Him as I should. A particular illustration stuck in my head for many years about a bike wheel and spokes, and that God has to be central, not just a

spoke in your life. God has worked in me and without Him I am empty. I feel the pain and conviction of my sin. I believe His perfect plan for me has reached the point where I can no longer remain in the 'world', not even a fingertip.

I am a sinner with countless flaws but God is merciful and gracious. God specialises in taking broken things and not just fixing them, but repurposing them for something far greater. I have committed my life to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think. I want to put on the full armour of God and serve Him as I should, leading my family and others to follow the Lord and Saviour. A particular part of scripture that I have found a real encouragement throughout my life is *Jeremiah 9:23-24*.

“Thus says the Lord:

Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,

Let not the mighty man glory in his might,

Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;

But let him who glories glory in this,

That he understands and knows Me,

That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth.

For in these I delight, says the Lord.”