

“From an Altar Boy to a Preacher Boy”

By Pastor C. E. Lang

My Testimony

I was born and reared in the foothills of Pennsylvania in the Monongahela Valley where steel mills lined the river banks and families worked hard to make a living. To begin my education, I attended a small Catholic School on the same street that I lived on. I grew up believing in God and going to church on Sundays with my father. I grew up with the fear of the Lord and came from a very loving family. I was taught to believe many of the basic doctrines I still hold to today but somehow I did not have a personal relationship with the Lord. God was distant to me so I never really sought to know Him better.

I never read the Bible and never was encouraged to. I did not know it was something God required. I learned religion at school and at home but it was something to get out of bed for on Sundays and that's about it. No one talked about the Lord during the week and I never met a “Born-Again” Christian. I never heard of a “Personal Relationship” with Jesus. I never told anyone I was a Christian, I always said I was “Catholic” and somehow I thought that would be all the religion I would ever need.

I graduated at the age of 17 and took a summer trip in 1978 to the West Coast with two friends. We landed in San Diego for awhile before moving north to Tacoma, WA. From there I landed a job in Seattle at an engineering firm where I met Dana Wilson, the very first self-professed “born-again” Christian I ever knew. I never met someone so into religion as Dana and I noticed she had something I did not possess. Christianity was full time for her but not with me. I was part time at best. I never met someone who talked about God on a regular occurrence.

And then there was the issue of her Bible. She actually took it with her everywhere even to work. She even had some of it memorized. I watched her as she freely shared her faith with many of the engineers that we worked with and challenged them to be bolder for Jesus. I was amazed at what I beheld and at age 23, she seemed so wise. Dana made a profound impact on my life back in the days before I too became a Christian. I met other people from Dana's church (Tabernacle Baptist Church of Seattle).

I rented an apartment from David Quey, a Deacon who had this same refreshing spirit about him. He freely witnessed to everyone about the love of Christ. David guided me into an understanding in the Scriptures that I was sinful in God's sight and that no matter how religious I acted for an hour on Sundays I was condemned to die because of my sin and would spend an eternity in Hell if I did not accept Christ's free gift of eternal life.

We had many discussions about God and the Bible but all I knew was a little catechism I picked up through the years. Once I realized that I was trying to earn something that was a free gift and not for sale, I trusted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and asked him to come into my heart to save me.

In summary, here is what I learned and I hope that you will take this to heart and trust Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Let me ask you the same question David asked me back in 1978. The question is this; “If you were to die today’ are you 100% certain that you would go to Heaven?”

Did you know that you can know? My friend the Bible says in First John 5:13 *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

And this is how you can know.

#1. Realize That You Are A Sinner.

Romans 3:10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:* and again in the same chapter the Bible says,

“Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

Bottom Line: Your sins are a heavy debt that you owe to the Lord that you can never pay by yourself.

#2 Realize That God Has Placed a Very High Price on Our Sin

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; (Not just the grave-but eternal separation in Hell)*

Romans 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

Bottom Line: Separation from God eternally is the price the lost person faces for sin after death.

#3 Realize That God Loves You Enough to Pay This Sin Debt For You

Romans 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Romans 5:9 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

Bottom Line: If you go to Heaven it will be because *God loves you*. If you go to Heaven it is because *Christ died for you*. If you make it to Heaven it will be because of the *blood of Christ* that was shed for you. And finally, if you are saved from wrath it will be only *through him (Christ in verse 8)*.

#4 Realize That Jesus will Save Only Those Who Call Upon His Name and Ask Him To Save Them.

Romans 10:9-13 *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. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Bottom Line: You can know the major tenants of the Bible and still go to Hell if you never place your faith in Christ as your Savior and your only hope for eternal life. God has paid the price and is rich unto all that call upon Him.

Neither good works, nor being religious, nor trying to live a good life can save;

Titus 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

Jesus Christ will save you if you ask him to. He also will change your life completely. You will be born into God's family and will become a brand new creature. You will desire spiritual things you never desired before and you will begin to hate your sin as God does. Salvation will free you from past debts and a close walk with Christ will empower you to live in the energy of the Holy Spirit setting you free from old bondages to bad habits-miraculously. You will never be perfect but you will be forgiven.

Are you ready to become a Christian and receive Christ into your heart and life? Do you realize that without Christ's forgiveness and salvation you will die without Him and go to Hell?

On November 2nd of 1978 I prayed a simple yet profound prayer for salvation and you can join me by doing the same thing. I came to Christ by saying a prayer much like this; (Why not bow your head and from your repentant heart pray this prayer to Jesus).

"Dear Jesus, forgive me of my sins. I trust You today, Jesus, and only You, to take me to Heaven when I die. Thank You for dying for me. Amen."

If from your heart you have received God's forgiveness and accepted Christ as your Savior, you will need to make your newfound faith public. Begin immediately by informing the people closest to you and then you need to find a faithful Bible believing Church.

- Be baptized by immersion
- Join the church and get involved
- Read the Bible daily
- Pray regularly
- Ask the pastor to assign someone to mentor (disciple) you
- Be a tither and support God's work
- Read other good books on how to grow in your faith that your pastor recommends
- Choose your close friends from among those that love the Lord