

Testimony

David Gooding

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Testimony

John has invited me to come and give my testimony, but most people who give their testimony have a very dramatic story to tell.

We seem to like people who used to beat their wives or get stone drunk, or something like that. Those who were in dire trouble and found the Saviour. They are good stories, aren't they, because they remind us of the reality of Christ's power to save.

I feel shy, therefore, giving my testimony because I got saved at the age of ten.¹ When all is said and done, most ten-year-olds haven't gone deeply into drinking and drugs and beating their wives and other such occupations. How do they get saved, then? And is it real?

I've got some special friends here tonight. I've been talking to them outside the tent. They're boys and girls, about ten of them, that Miss Gregg brings regularly every night. They come from Saintfield. They've been to the tent every night, and that's marvellous. It's lovely to see you, and we thank Miss Gregg, as you wanted us to, for bringing you. And I'm going to tell you, boys and girls, how you could be saved.

I was saved when I was your age, only it isn't very dramatic because I was brought up by a father and mother who told me the gospel and I can't remember a time when I didn't know the gospel and how to be saved.

So you say, 'Well, how were you saved then?'

One night—I can remember it clearly, I was in bed and my father came up and prayed by my bedside, as he did every night. I can't say I was listening; he prayed so much I didn't often listen. But, as he prayed, a verse of the Bible came into my boyish head:

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Rom 10:9)

I said to myself, 'Yes. I do believe that Jesus is God's Son and he rose from the dead, and I do believe in my heart.' And in my childish way, I said, 'Well, Lord, I believe, and your word says I'm saved.'

I didn't even remember the first bit about confessing it; I didn't tell anybody. I just turned over and went to sleep.

I want to tell you that what happened there to me, as a young boy of ten in my bed that night, has lasted sixty-four years plus. And in those years I have faced criticisms about God and the Bible from some of the most sophisticated brains in this world, having given myself to the study of the word of God and the manuscripts in which it comes. And my testimony would be that, the more I have studied the Bible, the more I have found that it is the authentic word of the living God. It is that which has kept my faith as an anchor throughout all my life—my professional academic life, and elsewhere.

¹ His mother died the same year.

There might be some here tonight who know the gospel, and what you're saying in your heart is, 'But what have I got to do to be saved?'

What have you got to do? Well, let me point to myself as one testimony. You have to just take Christ at his word, and say, 'Lord, you say it and I believe you.'

You say, 'Is that all you've got to do?'

Well, yes. You could be saved tonight too, couldn't you? You know that you are a sinner and that you need to be saved, and that Christ has come and died for you.

What do you have to do? Well, you have to receive him; hear what he says and respond to him by saying, 'Lord, I believe you and I believe your word, come into my heart.'

It's as simple as that. There could be many here tonight, who haven't any great dramatic testimony to give of the most deep-seated sin. Men and women and boys and girls need only to know that they are sinners and they need a saviour. And it's so simple, you could be saved this very night.

So as we pray, let's ask the Lord to show us how tonight we could pass from death to life, from being lost to being found, from being unbelievers to being personal believers in the Lord Jesus.

Shall we pray.

Our Father, we thank thee for the love and kindness of our friends who have organised these meetings here in this tent this week. And we thank thee for thy word that has been preached in our hearing so clearly and effectively.

Tonight, Lord, we come to do business with thee. Impress upon all our hearts, we pray, that there is something we have to do. We have to meet the Saviour; we have to come to the Saviour; we have to receive the Saviour. We have business to do with thee. So help us now, we pray.

Take from our minds and hearts all those things that will distract us. We have business problems, maybe, and family affairs, and one thousand and one things to think of regarding this temporary and passing world. Tonight, in thy mercy, take our burdens from our shoulders and from our minds so that we may concentrate on things that are eternal, and help us to see what we have to do.

Put within our hearts that determination to seek the Lord while he may be found, to seek thy salvation, to give all earnestness to making sure we have entered the door of salvation, so that tonight we may go away as saved men and women and boys and girls.

To that end, give us good understanding, and, by thy Spirit, illumination in our hearts.

Meet with us, blessed Lord Jesus Christ, we pray, for thou hast come not only to save, but to seek and to save those that are lost. Seek our hearts tonight and grant that we all, according to our needs, may respond. And those who need to find thee for the first time as Saviour shall this very night find thee and be found by thee.

We ask it for thy name's sake. Amen.

About the Author

DAVID W. GOODING is Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Greek at Queen's University, Belfast and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He has taught the Bible internationally and lectured on both its authenticity and its relevance to philosophy, world religions and daily life. He has published scholarly articles on the Septuagint and Old Testament narratives, as well as expositions of Luke, John, Acts, Hebrews, the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament, and several books addressing arguments against the Bible and the Christian faith. His analysis of the Bible and our world continues to shape the thinking of scholars, teachers and students alike.