

Salvation and Service Testimony

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Preacher: Mike Wolski

[0:00] All right, good morning. I want you to take your Bibles, please, and turn to the book of Psalms. Psalm 40.

It's good to be with you again this hour. If you weren't here, there's a few more people than were here for Sunday School. So I'm glad to have you here as well.

If you weren't here for Sunday School and you've not met me before, as I was introduced, I am my wife, Peggy, myself, Toby's parents, Carla's in-laws.

Oh, she left. She was there a little bit ago. She left. And she's my favorite daughter-in-law, Carla. And she says, come on, Dad, I'm your only daughter-in-law.

Okay, well, but by the same token, she could be an unfavorable daughter-in-law, but she's my favorite daughter-in-law. So we're glad to be here with you. We're glad to come down every now and then.

[1:14] Last time we were here was last fall, I believe, a little bit. We had an incentive to come last fall. We were here a year ago also, as far as a wedding.

Then we had an incentive for our first great-granddaughter. I know, as was stated, I'm not old, but I am older. And when we were in Poland, we learned to say that because you didn't call people like an old woman or an old man.

You said an older. And that's just the way. It's a little more delicate, I guess, when you're talking about people as far as offending somebody. You know, well, this older gentleman or this, you know, of course, then you start getting into, oh, they're experienced or whatever and that type of thing. And then it starts to get a little bit too far. I do want to give you this. I was asked to give him my testimony, but actually my son had asked me in regards to salvation, but more importantly, to move beyond that.

So I have to give you my salvation testimony. Then I also want to give you my service testimony. And I don't, you know, I don't view myself any different than anybody else by any stretch.

[2:27] You know, in Christ, as we talked about in the first hour for a little bit, in Christ, we're all the same. We're all one in Christ. There's no hierarchy whatsoever.

Now, you're going to have in a church, just like you have a husband and a wife in the sense that, you know, he's to be the leader in the church. Or in the household, the husband and then the wife to be the follower.

Well, that's understood. You can't have two-headed monster. You know, which way are you going to go? Same thing goes to a church. You have a pastor. You can have pastor. You can have deacons, et cetera. But everybody's not going to be the pastor.

Again, how would you get anything done if everybody had the ultimate say-so or veto or whatever that case is? But in the Christ, it levels us all, doesn't it?

We're all the same. There's no hierarchy in Christ. You may be in the Old Testament. It was all, you know, the men that were the priests, et cetera. But guess what? You women in Christ are priests, too.

[3:25] The same way that every man. We're all a priest. We all have equal access to the Lord Jesus Christ. Not just one man, one time a year, like the high priest in the Day of Atonement.

But every one of us, anytime, anywhere, have access to the Lord Jesus Christ. So sometimes when I get up here, in my mind, I was going through what Jacob said to Pharaoh.

Few and evil have been the years, the days of my life. And I've not attained to the years of my fathers, that type of a thing. And so, you know, Jacob kind of, you know, reduced himself a little bit in light of being there in front of Pharaoh and to, you know, talk to him and speak to him a little bit. And so here in front of you, I just want you to understand, I don't, my life is nothing. I don't see it as anything unusual whatsoever. I'm just somebody that God picked up and saved his soul. So I want you to look in Psalm 40. Let's have a word of prayer first, and then we'll begin. Our Father, I want to thank you for your goodness to us, your mercy, your grace. I thank you so much for saving my soul 53 years ago.

[4:37] Lord, I'm so grateful for that. I'm amazed that you were willing to save me. I'm amazed that you loved me enough to save me, and you loved me enough to want to use me.

I pray, Father, that you'll bless now, help something that's said to be an encouragement and an incentive to others that are here today, to just pick up the mantle and go with it.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So Psalm 40, verse 1, a beautiful set of verses, kind of goes along the lines of, He lifted me. I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, set my feet upon a rock and established my goings, and He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it in fear and shall trust in the Lord. So my life begins, I was born at an early age. Okay, we'll leave those kind of, you know, silly puns and whatever else off to the side.

[5:44] But obviously that's the way you start out and whatnot. But I was born into a Catholic family in the Chicago area, where my wife also was from. I was born in Chicago, and she outside of Chicago, we both met in a suburb of Chicago, northwest suburb a little bit later on.

A Catholic family went to church every Sunday, basically. Sunday morning went to church, Catholic church, with my mom.

Us kids, we'd go with my mom to church. My dad didn't go to church. He was Catholic. Later on, when I witnessed to him, he trusted in his baptism, is what he said. Mike, I didn't go through, I didn't, you know, have something happen to me like, you know, you talk about.

But, you know, I got baptized, and I'm thinking, wow, dad, you never even went to church as a kid. The only time he would go to church would be for, if there'd be, you know, like a christening, or they had a baptism of little babies, or there'd be a wedding or a funeral, he'd show up in church.

But other than that, he didn't darken the door of a church. And his beliefs, you know, really was, you know, hard to pin down, as far as that goes. But I always went to mom.

[6:57] Mom was faithful to going to the church. She had us go to the church. Also went to what they called a kind of a Catholic Sunday school, which was for the kids that were parochial kids, meaning we didn't go to a Catholic school.

My wife grew up. She went to the Catholic day school and grade school and all. And so she didn't have to go to a CCD class is what they called it. So on Saturday, the public school kids were, they wanted them to go to this CCD class, and I would attend it.

And then one time we had the nun that taught the class had us write an essay on something. I have no idea what it was about, whatever. But I had such an insight and so insightful as a young Catholic boy that I won the prize.

Whatever. But it showed there was an interest I was drawn. I liked religious movies, you know, like The Robe or Ten Commandments or things like that as a kid growing up. Or you'd have something there about John the Baptist or Bible, even about Samson, whatever.

I was kind of drawn to that. And one time when I was probably around when they had confirmation, I'm not sure if that's upper elementary or maybe seventh grade, fifth, sixth, seventh.

[8:10] I'm not sure exactly what age it is. But you have First Communion where you can come forward then and take the Lord's Supper or the communion and the mass in the Catholic Church and where you're supposedly receiving Christ.

And then later on, several years later, you have confirmation where you're confirmed into the Catholic Church. We had to take some classes and have the listen to the teachings and whatever else. But when we had the confirmation ceremony there and some, I guess, some bishop was there

and he at some point in there, he asked, you know, the crowd of people, you know, the boys and the girls separate and whatever.

And he'd say, how many of you, you know, young men in here, young boys, you know, want to grow up to be a priest? You know what happened? My hand shot up. You say, you wanted to be a priest? Well, I don't know. I did. I responded to it. And all I can say, looking back on that, and I even told that to somebody else right around that time, somebody asked me. I remember that I wrote it down at some point.

I forgot about that also. But it was a couple that had moved from Texas up to our area. They live right by us. And I was in the car with them going someplace. And they'd asked me, so what do you want to do?

[9:20] What do you plan on doing? And evidently, I said to them, I want to be a priest. So that was the second time. And it turned out, I didn't know it at the time, turned out they were a saved couple. Later, when I got saved in the church I went to, they attended.

They never talked to me. They never witnessed to me. But I imagine they had rolled their eyes when they heard me, this little Catholic boy in the back seat, say he wanted to be a priest. And it kind of makes me wonder why they didn't witness to me.

But that's beside the point. So it shows, in my mind, looking back at it, I think it just shows there was a sensitivity to God or spiritual things.

Even though, as it turns out, as time went on and I got into my teenage years, I became totally disenchanted with the church. You know, the hypocrisy. This is the one true church, right?

Catholic church, they teach. They're the one true church. Well, if that's the case, then how come they act so different inside the church as they do outside the church? How come, you know, they're so sanctimonious inside?

[10:21] Oh, you don't swear in church. You would never think to smoke in church. You wouldn't be drinking in church, except the priest that drinks the wine. But you wouldn't do those things in church. Oh, don't say that you're in church.

But then when they're outside, anything and everything goes, right? It's as if God's presence was in the church, but it wasn't outside the church. And some of the kids that I knew from that area, because this is our so-called local church, local Catholic church.

It's only a couple of blocks away from where I lived and grew up. Some of the Catholic kids that I knew of, the boys, were some of the worst kids around, literally were.

Swearing and whatever else. I'm thinking, wow, one true church, huh? Well, I know why I saw that hypocrisy and it just made me pull away from it. I thought, well, there's not real spirituality here. And there's not a desire or an interest in one another.

And I grew up, of course, you know, I'm talking about, you know, in high school then in the late 60s. So there was a lot of the Vietnam War was going on. There was a lot of unrest in this country at that time.

[11:22] Gee, kind of like we turned to another chapter and we're in the same place. A lot of unrest going around now and all that type of thing. But anyway, I just kind of pulled away from the Catholic church. Before I finished high school, I stopped going, you know, on a weekly basis.

I just stopped going whatsoever. And then I had a friend. Now, you know what the Bible says about Amnon? Remember Amnon, David's son, Amnon?

Remember Amnon had a fascination and a lust-love relationship or desire for his half-sister, Absalom's sister, Tamar. But he didn't know how he could go about it and do anything.

And the Bible tells us what? The Bible says Amnon had a friend. And that friend said, that friend was more worldly-wise and whatever else. And then he conceived a plan whereby Absalom could get Tamar by herself, etc.

And you know the rest of the story. Well, I had a friend too. He was my older brother. Four years older than me. He was in college at the time. So he's close to finishing up college.

[12:27] He'd come home and he introduced me to doing drugs, smoking dope and whatnot. I had a friend. Don't you love friends like that? I was that friend for a lot of people too, unfortunately.

So he got me involved in drugs. Later when I went to college, drugs became a way of life for me. My appearance changed from being a clean-cut kid and kind of, you know, sprouting out.

My hair sprouted out. I had hair down to my shoulders. You know, I couldn't even try to. I couldn't ever get there if I wanted to now. I could be an aesthetic and get away for a couple of years and it still probably would only be about here, it seems like.

But it was down to my shoulders, goatee and the whole shot. My whole appearance changed. I went, you go into college, I attended the classes, I still got decent grades, but my life revolved around drugs and partying.

That was my priority. In time, throughout that time, in time, that year and all that, drugs began to take a toll on me. Just, it's just like, I remember walking one time out.

[13:28] I think it was wintertime. It was cold, clear sky. I was on the college campus. I remember walking and just looking around. I was lonely. I was all by myself, you know, several hours away from home and all.

And I'm looking, I'm thinking, is this all there is? Is this all there is? At the end of that year, I just, I was going through some things in my heart. I was searching for something.

I didn't know where to look, what to, I looked into drugs. I looked into Eastern religion, meditation, all that type of thing. But I remember being on my bed in my dorm. I remember sitting on there and I did something I'd never done before.

And I said, God, if there is a God, I need help. And I remember crying out to the Lord distinctly at that time. I didn't get any answers. There was nothing revealed to me at the time.

I finished out that year. That was probably in May or so. I finished out that year. The summer worked. And I went back to the college. I didn't go to, I didn't attend.

[14:29] I left, I dropped out of school. But I went back there and just did some working. And there were some friends of mine and whatever. Eventually I left, came back home. And around that time, Peggy and I started going out.

And yes, I still was a long haired, you know, I call it a hippie wannabe. I wasn't a hippie. I didn't pull out of society. I didn't go to Haight-Ashbury and all that type of a thing at that time.

But the look was there, obviously. And my lifestyle was there at the same time. I got a job. My dad worked for the phone company. He was a foreman on the maintenance department.

I ended up getting a job also at the local phone company. And I was doing maintenance for them. And I was doing a lot of painting for them. And I was going through some different things.

And I was just searching for some truth. I remember talking to the fella. And I don't remember what he had to say to me at the time. I think I talked about this the last time I was here. I won't go into it to any degree as such.

[15:26] But God just gave me an insight that I had nothing to offer God. And I was on my way to hell. And that just as a reality just struck me.

Around that same time, I was at another building. And again, doing painting. And I met another fella there. He gave me a... We were talking and all that. And he mentioned about a book that was popular at the time.

A Christian book called The Late Great Planet Earth. And it had to do with Bible prophecy. Not a very thick book whatsoever. Hal Lindsey was a fella that wrote. I believe he passed away since... He's written several other books from that. And it may be a dated book. It was obviously back at the time when Nasser was the prime minister, president of Egypt.

Personalities changed. But there was Middle East conflict and all at that time. And in that book, he presented things that I'd never seen in the Bible.

[16:31] Now, I was not a Bible scholar. I never read my Bible. All I got from the Bible was what I got out of the Catholic Church. Whatever the priest would say. And a little bit that he would read on a Sunday morning.

But I'm hearing things about the rapture. I'm hearing things about the tribulation period. I'm reading things about the Antichrist coming. And the terrible things that will be going on in the tribulation period.

And also about the Lord coming back. And Armageddon. I'm reading about all those things. I'm like, whoa, this is in the Bible? And at the end of the chapters, the author was wise.

And he had an invitation. He said, you know, it was an outreach book. And he just tried to draw you in. And he said, listen, if you've never trusted Christ as your Savior.

And I'm, you know, just my words, not his. You know, you need to bow your head now. And believe on Jesus Christ as your Savior, etc., etc. And I did that. I responded to it.

[17:29] I was open. I was looking for truth. And this was truth as far as it resonated with my heart. And I prayed. Then another chapter come around. And I'd read it.

And I'd do the same thing. And I'd pray again. Well, nobody told me, hey, one and done. I mean, all you have to do is pray one time to get trust Christ. If you're saved, you're saved for good. But I didn't know that.

I wasn't talking to anybody. I wasn't going to church. Nobody was talking. I was just had a book in my hands. And God speaking to me and the Holy Spirit speaking to me at that time. Right at that time, also, I went to another building.

I was painting. And I was doing offices that they had. The ceilings I was painting. And, of course, I couldn't do it in the daytime when people would be there.

So I was working from 8 o'clock to 4 in the morning. So I'd be there painting and doing the ceilings. You know, day in and day out. Day in and day out. And probably it took me a month or something like that that I was doing that stuff.

[18:28] But in that time, what happened is, what you don't understand I didn't mention, is all that time, for that fall into winter, I was meeting with my friends every day, every night.

I'd work during the day. We'd meet in the evenings. And, of course, you know, getting dark earlier. And so we'd be out. We'd be someplace partying. Smoking dope, drinking, whatever, getting together, partying.

If we didn't have a house that we could go to, we'd be out in the forest preserve someplace. And it's getting cold. But we didn't care. But, hey, if you're jacked up on weed or you're jacked up on beer or whatever else, you didn't feel that.

It didn't make any difference. But that was every day we were meeting. Every day we were getting together. Every day we were just frolicking about, having a good old time. But God had a plan.

Remember, I prayed back in May. And God had a plan in my life. And God said, okay, now, right now I'm going to flip the switch. Now you're going to work nights. Remember when you were partying?

[19:34] There ain't no partying when you're working and painting the ceilings. So I'm there painting the ceilings and everything else. And I'm separated from my friends. I'm separated from the parties and whatever else.

And if I see them at all, I see them in the daytime. Well, you're not out there doing the partying and drugs and whatever else in the daytime. And you say, well, brother, you just got saved.

How come you? Well, I didn't get locked into a church, like I said. And nobody was discipling me whatsoever, teaching me whatsoever. But somebody was. God was working my life.

So I'd come home from work at four in the morning. I'd come home. I'd shower up. Everybody in the house is still sleeping. I'd shower, clean up, go to my room. And I had a little New Testament Bible that I was reading.

At first, I had started reading my Catholic Bible that my parents had. And, you know, just sitting on a shelf someplace. I started in the book of Genesis and reading through. I go, whoa, this is pretty dysfunctional families that we've got in here.

[20:35] And I think, man, this is something. And then I got into Leviticus talking about holy days and feast days. I'm thinking I got to get a calendar and mark what days I'm supposed to observe. I mean, I had no clue whatsoever. Somebody talked to me and said, well, no, you need to read in the New Testament.

So I had this New Testament and I'm reading that. And it just felt like I'd set it down beside my bed. It just, I know it didn't glow and whatever else. But to me, it seemed like it glowed.

Because when I went from the Old Testament reading there and I got to the New Testament, I was reading the words of Christ and looking at the life of Christ. It just, the Bible came alive to me and

just resonated with my heart.

And it spoke to me. And in that month's time that I was doing that painting, something changed. I began to grow. Things, all of a sudden, I wanted to do some things that I never would have wanted to do before.

I wanted to read my Bible. I wanted to go to church. I didn't know about any church. But I wanted to go where there were people that believed like I believed. That somebody could teach me and preach to me like I was learning about.

[21:42] And there was something else in my, all of a sudden that was filling me and something else was leaving me. I didn't want to do the drugs. I didn't want to go to the parties.

Now I did, later on, I did go to some of those parties, but it wasn't to get involved with anything. I went because I wanted to, they were my friends. They were the people I knew. They were my only buddies.

And I went there, but I'd end up, instead of drinking, smoking, whatever else, I'd end up talking about the Lord. And I was a downer for them. And I'd call people on the phone.

Every time we had services, I'd be calling people up, inviting them out to the services. And praise God, some came out here and there. One good friend of mine got saved, came to my house that May or the end of April, whatever, came to my house.

And I witnessed to him. And when he left, he prayed and got saved right outside of my house. Praise God. He ended up in Bible school, pastoring and everything else. God's good.

[22:42] So God changed my life. I want you to turn over to 2 Corinthians chapter 5, please. 2 Corinthians chapter 5. While I was still working at that, at the company, and I met some other Christians that were there, some young people, and they mentioned to me about a church that was close by in that same town.

And it was Des Plaines Bible Church, an evangelical church, but a church that taught salvation. It taught good New Testament doctrine, etc. So it was a good place to start out.

And actually, it was right between where I lived and where my wife's parents lived. My parents and my wife, just about between there. So as I headed over to her place, it just, you know, past the church and whatever else.

So I started attending that church. And, of course, when I first came, now again, some things were changing on the inside, but the outside didn't change yet.

So I went to that church. I thought, well, man, I can't wear the clothes that I'm wearing now. I wear, you know, holy. They weren't the holy jeans you buy. These are the holy jeans that you wore out.

[24:05] And then, you know, you were cool, anti-establishment. So you patched them yourself and all that kind of a stuff, because that was just the way you went. You know, there was anti-establishment.

There was a pride in it anyway. There was still pride in that thing. It's kind of like, yeah, I'm not like them wearing this new stuff. I wear this old, used, worn out stuff.

I keep it until, you know, there's nothing left to hang on to me. Anyway, so I'm thinking, what am I going to wear? Well, my brother had been a business major. He wasn't home now.

He was out. He was out and I was prancing around up in Alaska or down in Mexico, Yucatan Peninsula, or wherever he was on his jaunts. But he left in the back of our closet.

There was a sport coat there and, you know, shirt, tie, whatever else. And they fit me. So I'd wear this sport coat, tie that I hadn't worn in years. And I went to church with my hair down to here, goatee and everything else.

[25:05] And he'd say, well, yeah, but we see people like that. We might have somebody walk in today like that or whatever. Yeah, but this is going back to, what, 1972. So this is going back before longer hair came into evangelical churches, much less any other churches whatsoever.

This is going back a ways before any of that stuff kind of came out. So when you walked into church like that, you know, people are, well, you turn the heads because that's not the way. Everything was clean cut and all that back then and in that church.

But nobody said anything to me about it. They had grace. They did. They just let me come in. I had a smile on my face. I went to a church.

I went to something. I said, whoa, this is different. These people are friendly. These people are talkative. These people enjoy being where they're at. They're enjoying what they're doing. There's more of a family atmosphere.

It wasn't like anything I experienced growing up in a Catholic church where people kind of go in. You're by yourself and then you leave as fast as you can. And you have nothing. You don't get anything out of it.

[26:05] You don't put anything into it. And these people were altogether different whatsoever. In time, you know, I went to every church, every service that was possible. I even went.

Here I was 21 when I got saved. So it was right in that year. I heard they were having a sunrise service for Easter. And I didn't realize it was for high school kids.

Well, I went and I showed up. Why? I was just going to plug into anything and everything that I could. I didn't realize it didn't pertain to me when it was being announced. So I showed up. Then I found out.

But later on, the pastor saw there was a couple of kids, you know, young people that got saved. They weren't church people. And so he had a Bible study. He started to have a Bible study with us on one Thursday, Friday night, whatever it was.

And but after a little bit, he couldn't have it. He was too busy. He couldn't handle it. And yet we still wanted to meet. And so there was a couple, a young couple in the church, a brother and sister.

[27:05] And they must talk to the folks. And they opened up their house for us on a Friday night. And so we had we started out with about maybe 10 or 12 of us having a Bible study. It was actually the assistant pastor from the church was there to sort of monitor things.

But after a week or two, he told the pastor, well, they don't really need me. So it was by we're by ourselves on our own. And we just we break up into small groups. And somebody, one of us that had just been saved ended up leading the small group Bible studies.

And we just, you know, probably at first is just, you know, a couple of people in each group and 10 and 12. But that thing began to grow. And all of a sudden, you know, after a while, several months, you know, there were 30 of us meeting in the house.

And it was too many for the house. So somebody else opened up the house. Another girl in the church that was a church member. Her folks were church members. She opened, they opened up their house for us and we'd meet there.

And that thing was in 30. But then that thing continued to grow until we're, you know, we have 50 some people coming out. But these are young people. Some were in high school still. Most were out of high school.

[28:09] We weren't people of the church. These were not people that grew up in the church. A few might have. But the most of us were just people that came out of the world, got saved. Just word of mouth.

It was just the Holy Spirit moving in that area amongst us. Somebody would talk to somebody. For instance, you know, Peggy, a young Catholic girl that got saved, that I met and all that, and fell for. And still head over heels over. And she, you know, she gets saved. A fellow that was a good friend of mine, Matt, he got saved. His girlfriend, she gets saved.

And then a brother or sister of his gets saved. And then somebody else knows somebody. They get saved. Their sister gets saved. Or a friend of theirs gets saved. And just little, little, word by word.

We got to be, like I say, 50 some. So after a while, we couldn't meet there anymore. And the pastor opened up the lower level of the church. It was a good-sized church. I don't know, 600, 700, whatever that showed up.

[29:08] So we met down there on Fridays. And that thing grew till the end of the one summer. By me, all together, maybe two years later, it grew upwards to over 100 kids were coming out.

100 young people coming out. This is not, there weren't a church. This is just meeting for a Bible study. We didn't have anything else to offer. We didn't offer food. We didn't offer games and play. Obviously, people would go off on their own afterwards, maybe get something to eat and whatever else. But we went for a Bible study. We'd have it organized. We had leaders' meetings. There were maybe seven or eight of us that were so-called leaders.

And we would meet separate and organize things. When we had the Friday night, we'd meet. We'd have songs. We'd break up in our, you know, different groups. We'd get together and close in song and whatever else.

And it was just God doing something. A couple of those fellas, we got some material from Dr. Ruckman, one of the members of the church. Got into Dr. Ruckman's material, King James Bible issue.

[30:08] And he funneled it to some of us young fellas. And we got a hold of that and had an interest. I remember one time, Peggy and I walking back out of church Sunday morning to a, it was kind of a satellite area where the cars were parked.

And I remember us talking, just walking back to the car, just a couple minutes. Remember just saying to each other, said, you don't want to really want to do something for the Lord. Just want to do something else for the Lord. He's so good.

He's done so much for us. Just feels like we want to do something. You maybe go out to Bible school or whatever the case is. I don't want to interject something here. You know, if God is going to use you or God is going to use anybody and call somebody, I think to me, there's three different things.

And the first thing is simply this, that that person has to have a desire, an interest to serve the Lord. Something inside that it just awakens a desire to pay the Lord back.

Second Corinthians chapter five, please. Look at the verse here. This has to do with a service testimony. In verse 14, look at verse 14 with me.

[31:13] And it says, For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then we're all dead. And we were, right? We're all dead and trespasses and sins. Then he says this in 15, And that he died for all, that they which live.

Are you alive in Christ today? If you're saved, you're alive in Christ. So you live. They which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.

So I think there's three criteria in my mind that if God's going to use you, call you to do something, first thing is you're going to have a desire. You're going to want to pay the Lord back for what he's done for you.

A desire to live for him. A desire to serve him. You're going to see verses like this. Number two, you're going to personalize them. You say, yeah, that's me. That's verse talking to me.

Paul says, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. And you say, yeah, that's me. That applies to me. Not just John Doe.

[32:15] That applies to me. And then thirdly, that you're doing something. You're doing something. And we were, we had a desire. We were personalizing verses like these.

And at the same time, the Lord was using us to a point and we were involved in this group and the Lord was leading through it. We went down to PBI in January.

I believe it was 75. We got married in 1974. So two years after I got saved, my wife and I got married. That January, we went down to PBI. And that next fall, we wanted to get started.

So we went down, took a couple of classes, just getting, enjoying and learning some things. And that fall, we had some other young people from our church come down there. We had probably over 20 young people from our church, over 20 at PBI at the same time.

That's quite an influx of people that came out of that one particular church. Just God doing something and working through there. My last year at the church or at PBI, I had an opportunity to preach at slash pastor in a place called Wing, Alabama, South Alabama, small eye blink of a town.

[33:29] I'm not even sure looking back at it, it had a stop sign at all. It just kind of, it was smaller than Brogue, Pennsylvania, where you grew up. And I went there, it's called Wing Missionary Baptist Church.

And I'd go, we'd get up in the morning and we'd, at that time, Joy, our oldest was with us and she was coming with us. Toby was born before we left.

But when we started out, he wasn't born yet. And we'd drive up there about an hour away Sunday morning. I'd teach Sunday school, I'd preach. And then if we didn't eat out with somebody there in their homes, then we'd drive back down to Pensacola and attend services.

And so my Fridays and Saturdays were just, you know, I'd go to school Monday to Thursday. And then Friday, Saturday, I put time in to get ready for Sunday school and preaching on the weekend. And before that year was out, they had, that church there wanted me to stay on as their pastor. About the same time, Dr. Ruckman came up to me after the service one day and he said, brother, would you be interested in being an assistant pastor up in Pennsylvania? I said, yes. I wasn't saying no to the church and wing, but it was an opportunity.

[34:41] I learned this. I have become to learn this. I'll put it that way. I didn't know at the time, but I said, if God opens a door for you, go through it. Go through it until God shuts it.

If God opens you, gives you an opportunity to do something. Say pastor here asked you to do something. Lord lays it, you on there, his heart about something. And he asked you about, hey, would you be willing to do something to do?

If God opens the door, go through it. That's an important lesson to learn. Now, if God says, I want you to be a missionary someplace and it weighs on your heart, go through it.

Now, if God shuts that door and says, well, listen, I was just checking you out. I'm not wanting you to go, but I was wanting to see if you were willing to go. And God will do that sometimes.

I went up there, which turned out to be Redline, Pennsylvania, where we ended up. I went up there and preached and all the pastors there wanted us to come, but I had the decision to make. Do I stay here?

[35:40] And after I finish up school, go to this small church in Alabama, and then my kids will all be spiking with a southern accent, which didn't make any difference, but I'm a Yankee.

They're going to take a Yankee. And my kids would have been growing up eating, what, frog legs or whatever else, that kind of a thing, which they taste like chicken.

I've had them taste like chicken. It's good. But anyway, I had a choice to make. And I really didn't have any peace about it. I didn't know what God wanted me to do. And sometimes you're going to come across that, aren't you?

You're going to come across something where you have, I have this choice and this choice. Now, Bob Jones Sr. said, duty is never conflict. If you have a choice between doing right and doing wrong, and you're drawn to doing wrong, but doing right is the right thing.

So duty is never conflict. But if there's a choice between doing something right and doing something right, sometimes it's really hard to make that, you know, determine. What should I do?

[36:39] I had a pastor friend that counseled me. He said, well, listen, I think maybe what you ought to do is think about this and pray about this. Which choice is going to help you grow personally the most?

Is the best thing for you to do is go to this small church here and just preach every week and all that? Maybe that's what you need to do to grow and lead, be a leader. Or does God want you to be involved in this other church here?

And because you won't be the leader, you won't be the pastor, you'll be a second man, but it'll give you other opportunities. And I thought about that and prayed about that.

And I didn't have any peace. But finally, when I felt the Lord leading, I felt, it wasn't any clear, but I felt a leading towards the church up in Pennsylvania. Once I said, okay, I believe that's what you want, Lord.

Then all of a sudden the cloud lifted, there was peace. Sometimes peace doesn't come until we actually make that decision. And in my case, that's what it was. Went up to Red Lion, the larger church, tasked with a lot of different ministries, starting a youth group from scratch.

[37:47] And I was raised in a Catholic church. I didn't go to a youth group. I didn't know what a youth group was. We didn't have anything like that at Pensacola when I was there going to Bible school. So I had to start that, lead singing, start a choir, start a choir.

Yeah, all kinds of stuff. You know, Bible school. I mean, the Bible Institute there, actually I taught a couple different classes through the years. And then, but the Christian school that we had, I taught Bible classes there.

Sunday school for boys, also for a bus ministry, a visitation, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. After 15, over 15 years of being there, the Lord began to move in me.

I had no desire to be the pastor of that particular church. Nothing wrong with it. It just wasn't what I felt God wanted me to be. And I had, but at the same time, God wasn't opening a door. If he opened the door, he shut it. And he didn't know what was going on. Finally, one time, I say one time, but finally in time, a fellow is around 95 now, 1995.

[38:50] A friend of mine that was a missionary in Greece came back. He came to our church. We supported him. He came by and he mentioned something just in passing. You know, you never know when a decision comes up that you're going to make.

You never know what day that decision is going to come. You never know what day that opportunity is going to come. For me, the opportunity that changed our lives for the next 20 plus years came that day.

When he said to me, he said, Oh, I was at a missions conference up in Treasure Valley Baptist Church in Idaho, where I attend now. He said it was a good conference. He didn't say anything more about it. He didn't pressure me whatsoever.

But something said to me, you ought to get those tapes. Now this was backed with tapes. I wasn't getting, I wasn't getting anything. You know, I wasn't downloading anything or whatever else. I was getting the cassette tapes of real physical things. Anyway, so until I finally got them, the Lord used those messages from that missions conference to speak to my heart and tear me up about missions.

[39:53] Now I was in the winter. He had been there in May. I didn't get those tapes for months and months and months. Finally, it was around January of the next year, 1996, and I had, or 95, 96, had those tapes.

I listened to them and God just spoke to my heart about surrendering to missions. I said, Lord, if that's what you want me to do, you want me to leave here, this area, whatever, and go out somewhere, wherever you lead to be a missionary, I'll go.

But he didn't tell me where. That's the first stage with my surrender. And all the second stage was that in a couple of months, two and a half months later, it turned out to be April 1st.

Something about that date, April 1st. April 1st. God's joke on me. I'm not sure if that's what it was or not. But on April 1st that year, I don't know if it was a holiday or whatever, but I remember being home until you had the computer in your room.

And I remember being in his room on a computer that had at the time. And I, for whatever reason, don't know why, just that the Lord prompting me. He didn't tell me ahead of time, but I had a desire.

[41:00] My ancestry is Polish. I'm all the way around. All four of my grandparents came from Poland or Polish, etc. So 100% Polish. I always had a interest, inclination in that direction.

Even when we'd have missionaries come by, I'd ask them, hey, you know any missionaries in Poland? And no, I haven't heard any. One guy was going to the Czech Republic, and he said, no, I haven't. What about you?

Why don't you go? But it didn't, that didn't, I wasn't interested. I wasn't motivated in that direction.

That was before I surrendered to go to, it was a year or two before that. So it didn't like hit me.

Like, boom, you know, like, you know, Paul seeing the Lord in the road to Damascus. So I'm looking at this and I'm looking at Poland. And the one thing that this particular program had, if you'd click on a city in Poland, it would give you a little readout, printout of information.

And the very first thing every time was the population. And now again, ordinarily, if God's not working in it, you just look at it and say, okay, so many people, half a million, okay, blah, blah, blah. But something spoke to my heart.

[42:06] Like I said before, when Bill said, my friend said to me about a good missions conference, something in my heart said, you ought to get those, you ought to listen to those. You ought to listen to those.

Now I'm looking at this computer screen and something inside of me is saying, look at that 500,000 people. He said, do you know any missionaries there preaching the gospel?

I said, I don't know. Are they hearing the gospel? I don't know. Well, don't you think, do you know the gospel? Yes, I do. Well, don't you think you could be used to teach and preach the gospel there?

Yes, I could. And I click on another city. I, you know, okay, that was just been, just must've been a vision. I must've had something bad to eat that night. And it's just, no. And I click on another city, 250,000 people.

And it'd be the same thing. And do you know anybody there preaching to God? I don't know of anybody. Are there people there? I don't know. Maybe there are. Could you go and be that one? I guess I could. And I click on another.

[43:06] And every one, it was the same thing. I surrendered. I said, Lord, if that's where you want me to go, I wouldn't have picked Poland, but that's where you want me. I'd have picked Hawaii.

I'd have picked Tahiti. But I wouldn't have picked there. I remember that next day, taking a shower in the morning. And I didn't say anything to anybody.

I remember taking a shower. I remember thinking to myself, my grandmother, my, that survived. My grandparents, three of my grandparents died when I was very young. My grandmother survived until I was married, had children.

And Stella Gorski. And she came from Poland as a, about a 20-year-old. And she came over as a lost 20-year-old Polish Catholic.

And here, lo and behold, she raised her family. And lo and behold, one of her grandkids gets saved. And here now, God is going to send him back to her homeland to preach the gospel that she never heard.

[44:08] If I'd have been, if she'd have stayed, and I'd have been born in Poland, who knows if I'd ever heard the gospel, whatever, I don't know. Anyway, I didn't, I didn't know what was going on.

And I thought to myself, in about two weeks or so, Dr. Bruckman was coming to our church. And I thought, well, I studied under him for three and a half years. I'm gonna, I just want to talk to him. I didn't mention anything to Peggy at all.

And so I, I spoke to him. When I picked him up at the airport down in Baltimore, drove him back up, I mentioned to him about that. He said, well, brother, that's, you're doing it good. Go taking it easy, taking it slow, blah, blah, blah.

Okay. And there was, didn't really say much. Okay. I took him back at the end, that next, that Monday following the weekend service, I took him back. And I thought, you better bring it up. You better, if you want to try to get something, you better bring it up again. So I brought it up again to him, talked to him a little bit. And he said, eventually he said, well, brother, I think what you ought to do is pray that God sends a missionary to Poland to cross your path.

[45:04] that's your counsel. Hadn't met anybody. We supported a lot of missionaries at our church. I hadn't met anybody.

I didn't know of anybody. And now my confirmation of my call is going to be a missionary to Poland is going to come across my path. And I said, I said, you mean you really think I ought to put out the fleece like Gideon putting out the fleece, you know, Lord, it's make that.

So I can confirm my, what you want me to do, make the fleece wet in the ground dry. Okay. Well now how about reversing that? Make the fleece dry in the ground wet. Okay. So I know what you, he said, yeah, I think that's what you ought to do.

After I let him out and on the ride back, I said, that is not what I wanted to hear. But I said, I asked him and that's what God wanted me to do.

I believe. So I waited. That was probably around April. We usually had him over around Easter time. I waited thinking that the end of that school year, because I was a principal also in the Christian school and teaching there and involved in youth group still and all that, I could resign the ministry and then go on deputation.

[46:19] Nobody was coming. Nobody came. No confirmation. I kept going. May went by. June went by. July's going by. Nothing.

All of a sudden, I'm in my pastor's office and he had one of these monthly or yearly planners. Every month of the year on there, little squares, and he'd mark stuff on there, what's coming up and all. He had on, for the next Wednesday, he had on so-and-so missionary to Poland. I said, what's this about?

And then he told me, he said, somebody called me and said, well, when did you put that on there? Oh, probably back in a couple months. It's been on there for a couple of months. I didn't know

anything about it.

So when he, when this fella came in, I talked, you know, I took him out afterwards, pumped him for all the information I could and all that. And by the way, when God confirmed my call, he confirmed my call to Poland.

[47:18] That's when I told my wife about going to the mission field and she was excited. She was on board. The strange thing is that was in Pennsylvania on a Wednesday.

That Sunday, we had a planned trip to Chicago, home area. We're going there, visit our folks, et cetera. And we go to church there. When we went to that church that we go to, King James Bible Baptist Church was the name.

And they were having a special services, kind of a camp meeting that week. And so he had people stand that were in attendance that were visiting, preachers, missionaries, whatever. And tell them, you know, just tell us who you are, where you're from.

Right in back of me, I had a fella stand. I'm so-and-so. A missionary to, want to guess what country? Poland. Two, 700 miles apart within four or five days.

God gave me a confirmation. And I told my wife, like I said, and we ended up in Poland. And after two years of deputation, we ended up in Poland. Stayed there for 19 years.

[48:25] First five years, we were in Warsaw. Warsaw, you know, language school, a tough year by all stretches of imagination. Then left there after our first furlough, down in Wuj, another city, for eight and a half years, trying to start.

I was working with a couple of fellows in Warsaw, helping to get their church started going. We went with one of them down to Wuj, eight and a half years, trying to get another church started.

Eventually moved back to Warsaw for a different ministry.

A lot of our ministry there was on the street, street work, evangelism, tracking, preaching on the street, et cetera. Summer, winter, about the, when it got to be about 10 degrees, so it'd be about, yeah, about 10 degrees is about the lowest we would go out.

If it was below 10 degrees, then we wouldn't go out because we're out there for a couple hours. It gets pretty cold. When it's 10 degrees, it's pretty freezing. And people aren't really open to getting tracks anyway, whatever.

But other than that, if it was snowing, we'd be out there. If it was up 15 degrees or above, whatever, we'd be out there, everything. Eventually, the Lord moved us to leave Poland, come back, retire from the mission field, but not retire from the ministry.

[49:38] We locked into the church in Treasure Valley. We have some friends there. The pastor was a personal friend, also attended Bible school. What we did was from our home church as well in the Chicago area. I had no promises of any ministry opportunities.

He just said, yeah, come on, if you're interested and you want to come here, come on, we have things here. We'll try to plug in somewhere. And before I left Poland, I got a text or an email, rather, from a friend there that was involved in Bible Institute asking if I'd want to start and teach an institute class that next year.

I said, I'm on board. After I got there, just before the Sunday school classes started, because Sunday school classes there, the adult Sunday school classes divide up, and they go basically like a school year from like Labor Day to Memorial Day.

And then in the summer, they break and they have a combined class. So it was almost Labor Day right around that time. I get a phone call. We're driving in the car someplace in the area, and the pastor there said, hey, I've got one of those Sunday school teachers has to back out of their class this year.

Would you be interested in teaching? I wasn't sure at the time. I said, I'll get back to you. Well, I ended up taking it, and I've been teaching that Sunday school class ever since. And I've been locked into the institute.

[50:53] I've taught five different courses in the institute, and God's been continually to use us. And we're just glad for it. I want you to take your Bible. We're going to close with this. I want you to look at three places with me, and we're going to close.

Proverbs 20. I'm going to get you, I'm going to ask you to turn to all of them first, and then we'll read them before we close. Proverbs 20. After you find that, I'd like you to turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 4.

1 Corinthians chapter 4. And when you find 1 Corinthians 4, one last place I'd like you to turn to is 1 Timothy chapter 1.

1 Timothy chapter 1. Proverbs 20, verse 6. Here's the bottom line.

As far as my life's concerned, I think one thing I've learned is this. You don't have to be the most flamboyant. You don't have to be the most outspoken.

[51:57] You don't have to be the best preacher, whatever else the case is, the greatest effervescent personality, and all that type of thing. What God is looking is for somebody that's available and somebody that's dependable and somebody that's faithful.

That's what God... You know, you might have all of the charms. You might not have all of the gifts or the abilities that somebody else has. Okay?

If I wanted to be a basketball player, I'm not going to make it in the NBA. If I want to be like Mike, as the expression used to be before, I am... My name is Mike, but I'm not like Mike.

And I can't do what he could do on a basketball court whatsoever. And I can't be the D.L. Moody or I can't be a Billy Sunday or whatever the case is or a Dr. Ruckman.

I can just be the best Mike Walski I can be. Be available, be dependable, be faithful. What does the Bible say? Proverbs chapter 20, look at verse 6. Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness, but a faithful man...

[53:07] Who could find faithfulness? Faithfulness. That's what God wants. 1 Corinthians chapter 4. 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse... Well, we're verse 1 and 2. Kind of ties in with what we said in Sunday school.

Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.

And lastly, 1 Timothy chapter 1. 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 12 says this, And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.

So again, as I said to begin with, I don't consider myself anybody or anything or necessarily having done anything. If anything, I've accomplished or if I can be an example of anybody else, it's all because of what the Lord's done.

Salvation is of the Lord. And when somebody gets saved, man or woman gets saved, when that changes your heart and your life and you want to pay back, you sense the value in that and you want to pay it back, not that pay it forward type of thing, which is fine, but if you want to pay it back and you want to do something for the one that's done so much for you, you could do worse than giving your life over to the Lord.

[54:28] Right? You could do a whole lot worse. Lose your life in Him and guess what the Bible says? You'll find it. When you keep it for yourself, you squander it and you get to the end of the road, you may look back and you say, well, I didn't really accomplish much.

But you know what? There are people looking at you and they see your faithfulness or your lack of faithfulness. They see your attitude or your lack of a good attitude.

You're either a good example to them or you're not. And you know what? You don't have to have the talents. You don't have to have super abilities. But just be the best you can be and be faithful. Be available. Be dependable. And God will use you the way He wants to use you. Let's pray. Our Father, thank You for this time and opportunity.

I want to thank You for this privilege. I pray, Father, that You'll bless to Your ability. And we thank You for it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.