

# David Spurgeon's Testimony

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 03 October 2021

Preacher: David Spurgeon

[0:00] you are somewhat new around here or been coming here a little bit or even visiting with us today. I hope you know that you see a little life in here. You see that we're singing and singing about things that come out of this book, the Bible, because we believe it and we're alive.

We're alive in Jesus Christ and we have something that I hope you see it as different because it is and it's real. It's very real to me and so thank you for being here with us. If you are visiting for the first time, I'm not going to embarrass you or put you on the spot, but I hope that you got a card, a little visitor's card, and if you didn't get one, please get one before you leave and fill it out just so we can keep a record of your visit and then we have a gift for you, something we'd like to give you and by way of saying thank you for coming. And so I could introduce Brother Spurgeon, but I don't think I need to because pretty much what he's going to do is introduce himself for the next 45 minutes or so and tell us all about his life story. So that's probably a much better job than I could do by introducing him. So Brother, you come.

All right. Praise the Lord. Thank you, preacher. Appreciate it. Thank you for coming out today. And I concur with what the pastor said. John 14, 6 says, Jesus saith unto them, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. Personally, I'm glad it's that simple. I'm glad it's direct. I'm glad it's not multiple choice. I made a lot of bad choices in my life and we'll talk a little bit about that this hour. But I think back in that, if it was multiple choice on what path to go, whether it was religion or turning over a new leaf or whatever it may be in some of the methods that the world prescribes, if it was multiple choice to get to get into heaven, based on my track record, I'd have probably got it wrong. And I'm not the only one in here. And it's not multiple choice. It's one choice is Jesus Christ plus nothing, minus nothing. Say, well, that's just your opinion. That is not my opinion. It is what this book says.

Again, we're Bible believers. So we're not trying to convince anybody into believing like us. We're trying to just open the Word of God. Pray that it lands on good soil. Amen. I've been asked to give my testimony this morning. So I'm going to do what I was asked to do. But I'm not going to be bragging on how sinful I used to be so that I can then thank Jesus for being so good to me.

I'm not going to brag on sin. I'm not going to glorify sin. If that's what you thought you were going to hear this morning, you're going to be disappointed. But I'm going to give a testimony of his amazing, saving, life-changing grace. David Spurgeon didn't turn over a new leaf.

[2:52] David Spurgeon got his sins forgiven. The rest is icing on the cake. All right, let's pray. Father, thank you for grace. And thank you for those that have come this morning. It's good to see old friends.

It's good to see some new faces. It's good to be in a place where what we have in common is the Lord Jesus Christ. Other than that, we're different in many ways, and that's fine. That's okay.

But God, help us to focus for a little while on what your Bible says about what you can do. And may it be illustrated clearly in what you've done for me. Help me, Lord. Guide my thoughts.

And may it be a blessing to you. Help your people. And Lord, if there's somebody in here this morning that does not know where they're going to spend eternity, it is a privilege to be able to tell them that they can know. And I'm glad I know. There's a lot of things I don't know, but I got that one. And Father, please, meet with us. Move in our midst. And we'll give you the glory for it in Jesus Christ's name. Amen and amen. Take your Bible this morning. Turn to the book of Luke. The book of Luke.

[4:07] Wow, that is warm, isn't it? You deal with that all the time, don't you? Amen. Amen. I'm just saying. You've never been up here. You don't know. It's warm up here. Amen. So Luke chapter 16.

And look with me in verse 19. And the Bible says this. There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus which was laid at his gate full of sores and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. Now, this is a story of two men. Those passages refer to these two men. Now, one, by society's standards, had it made. I mean, look what it says. Verse 19. Well, it says he's rich. He's clothed in purple and fine linen. He dressed well. Amen. Purple's never particularly been my color. But in the day and age in which it's referred to it, it meant this guy has got some nice threads. Is that what you'd say? And now that he fared sumptuously. In a time in history where people were not, not, didn't have a lot of choices about what they ate, where they ate, it makes a point to say that this guy is, in other words, he's got it made, doesn't he? He's got it made. And then the other guy, and he doesn't have any of that going for him. And he would be what we would call rude, crude, and socially unacceptable. Amen. They're as different as night and day. No doubt about it. But as different as they are, they had this one thing in common, very much in common. Verse 22 says this, And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And in hell he left up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Amen.

These guys are different, but the biggest difference is one went to hell and the other one didn't. Amen. I heard that passage for the first time preached in the county jail in Dayton, Ohio in November of 1990, almost 31 years ago. Now, I'm a motorcycle guy. I didn't say was. I am. I'm a motorcycle guy. Golfing didn't work for me. Fishing. But motorcycling is what I got a hold of as a young man. And I enjoyed it then. And I enjoy it now. I enjoyed it a little too much. When I got out of the military, I started working at a Harley shop. And things were innocent enough. But because of some of the skills that your taxpayer dollars helped me to learn in the United States Army, I spent the first 15 years out of the military in organized motorcycle clubs. Well, we called ourselves a club. The federal government called it organized crime. And truth is, usually somewhere in the middle. We weren't really very organized. I get reminded of my past. Not in church. Not on the street. I get reminded of customs.

[8:05] Amen. I've had the opportunity to preach in Mexico and Canada and in England and Scotland and I don't know other places. That's probably it. And always when I'm coming back into the United States, I get pulled aside at customs and I get jacked up and separated from my family. And I guess they told me, Border Patrol said, you're on a list of people that we have to document when they come to the border. We want to find out why you're coming into the country from Mexico or why you're coming back from England. And I said, well, I'd be happy to tell you. I'm over there telling people about Jesus Christ. I'm over there telling people they don't have to die in their sin. By the way, you don't have to die in your sin, sir. Could I tell you what Jesus Christ did for you? And we get about there, they go, you can go now. Amen. And that was kind of good. They let me go. But I don't know, it's been a few years, about 15 years now. I was trying to get to southern Mexico to do a youth camp.

And I was flying out of Dayton, Ohio, and I had to go to Chicago. And there was a mix-up. And they said, well, we can put you on a plane to Toronto, and then you can make it into Mexico City tonight. And the only thing stupider than suggesting that you go to Toronto from Chicago to get to Mexico, because it's like opposite directions. The only thing dumber than them suggesting it was me standing and they're going, okay. Because when I got to Toronto, I got pulled out of line, and I didn't get questioned. I got incarcerated. I got locked up. I got put in jail for the night. And it's Friday night. And I've been in jail on Friday nights. It's usually, you know, Friday night, the fights.

And, of course, I've been serving the Lord now for about 15 years. I thought, well, this is interesting. I'm not sure how I'm supposed to handle myself. And the Lord knew I probably wouldn't handle myself right. So he put me in a cell by myself. And I was happy about that. I've been, I don't know, it seemed like a long time, hours, maybe, maybe minutes. I'm not sure. But I spent a lot of time complaining to the Lord because I'm unjustly locked up.

I'm not a criminal anymore. I've had a clean slate for 15 years. I'm trying to get down to southern Mexico to preach at a youth camp. And I'm serving you. And this just doesn't seem fair. And while

I'm whining and complaining, and some of you have been there, it was really silent on the other part of this conversation. In other words, the Lord wasn't answering, wasn't sympathizing, wasn't saying anything until I got done. When I got done, I was there and it felt like the Spirit of God was saying, geez, virgin, this kind of looks like where we met. And I started looking around and there's a rack, you know, and there's a little toilet sticking out of the wall with a very convenient little sink right on top of it, which doubles well as a drinking fountain. That sounds weird, doesn't it? And a washing machine. Oh, it's very ingenious. Amen. And I realized that, yeah, that is where we met. I was locked up.

[11:20] I was looking at 37 years in federal prison when I came to my senses and bowed my heart and gave my sin and my life to Jesus Christ. And that morning, that reminder helped me and I apologized for complaining and just told the Lord, whatever, however this goes, it's fine with me. And I didn't know if I'd be deported the next day. I was actually put on a plane and sent back to, and sent to Mexico. And then I had to wonder for eight hours if I was going to be locked up in a Mexican jail for the next night. And I wasn't. Amen. So, but let me say to you, my problem started long before I got my first Harley in 1975. My problem started as a rebellious teenager in the 60s. I grew up out in the country and the 60s were a rebellious time. Some of you remember, some of you, it's just history books, but I see that. But things were crazy. And someone asked me, I mean, they were protesting the Vietnam War on college campuses and up there in Haight-Ashbury, up by San Francisco. That was when it was known for something other than what it's known for today. The hippies and, come on, liven up.

Wake up. Come on, Russ. Amen. And things, you know, I'm caught up in it just like everybody else. And I'm just a farm kid. I'm not a city boy. And somebody asked me, he said, by this person, how are you so affected by what was going on in the country and the rock and roll and all that stuff? How are you so affected? And I'm going to tell you, the same way people are affected now by what's going on. Only now it's worse. We only had three channels when I was a kid. And they went off by one o'clock. Now you got a hundred TV channels.

You got a thousand radio stations. I didn't even know what FM was until I was in my twenties. And you got the internet. And all the garbage of it. And you say, well, there's virtue to those things. Okay. I'm not going to argue that. But I'm going to say all the garbage and filth of this world were pumping right into our living rooms at an unprecedented rate.

And if you think it's not having an effect on you, let alone your children, you're willfully deceived. Amen. Amen. By the time I turned 18 years old, I was sick and tired of being told what to do. I had mom and dad. I had them old fashioned parents that like believed you ought to, you know, go to school and, you know, work and things like that, you know, old school.

And I was sick and tired of being told how to wear my hair and how to dress. And I couldn't take it anymore. When I graduated from high school, and yes, I did graduate, there was no other option. Not in the house I grew up in. Amen. And when I got out of high school, I had to break away. I had to get away. I wanted to get out there in the bright lights of the world. I wanted to see what was going on. I wanted to have some fun. And I didn't know any other way to get out. I didn't have any money. I didn't have any skills. And so I think the only thing I could do, this was 1971, is I joined the Army. Now you think about that. I didn't want to be told how to wear my hair. I didn't want to be told how to dress.

[14:35] I didn't want to be told how to live. So yeah, it occurred to me that I made a big mistake when the bus pulled up at Fort Knox, Kentucky for basic training about midnight with rain coming down. And that drill instructor told us recruits to get off the bus. He used terms that I had never heard in my life. He called us things that my mother had probably never heard, let alone ever said to me. And I thought, ooh, I don't know if this is a good idea or not.

Next day, they walked us through Quonset Hut, a middle hut. And there was like three barbers on each side. And I mean, it didn't take long. People were sitting there. And this was back in, like I say, 1971. People were coming in with long hair. And my hair was longer than my mom and dad liked.

But, you know, it wasn't like real long. But the barber said something I didn't expect the hair. He said, you want to keep that hair, son? And I didn't even know that was an option. And I said, yes. And he said, hold out your hand. What you can catch, you can keep. Amen. Amen. I was the only guy in a platoon that could shave. Probably not.

But I mean, for me, I could shave and comb my hair with the same washcloth. Amen. Amen. I remember the first night in the barracks after getting that haircut. Still amazed. I can't believe this. I'm sitting on the top bunk. This is their old Spartan type World War II barracks. And there's no furnishings. There's no walls. There's nothing. They're just bunk beds, one after another. Light bulb hanging from the ceiling. And I'm sitting on the top bunk. And I could see the reflection of something round on the wall with handles on it. And I knew there wasn't any lamps or fixtures. And I turned around to see what it was a reflection of. And there's nothing there. And I'd see it. And I'd turn around. And about the third time in my peripheral vision, I realized that that object was moving about the same time I was. And then I don't think I started crying. But I wouldn't admit it if I did. But I realized that was my head. That looked like a basketball with handles. Amen.

[16:41] Amen. Amen. Now, I will say this. I became a weapons specialist and joined an elite paratrooper unit and served my country honorably for three years. And it wasn't because I was a good soldier. I was there for the wrong reasons. I just, I was there out of rebellion. But I had a World War II combat infantryman veteran father. And there was never an option to bring any other type of discharge home than honorable. I got a lot of things in my past that I'm ashamed of and that I regret. But I'm glad I served my country. I'm glad I got an honorable discharge. Amen. I'm happy about that. But as soon as I got out, I told you already, I spent the next 15 years using the skills that I learned in the military to become a professional rebel. And all for one reason. I just, I just didn't want to be told what to do. Amen. I didn't want to end up like I ended up. I just, I just wanted to, you know,

I was a young man. And, well, I thought I knew everything. And boy, I'll tell you what, they haven't found a cure for that yet, I've noticed. All right, take your Bible, go to Galatians chapter 6. Galatians chapter 6. Profound verse is there. Verse 7. Galatians chapter 6. The Bible says this, Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever man soweth, that shall he also reap. You know, there's a law of sowing and reaping, but it's interesting that the verse is preceded by a warning. Be not deceived. God is not mocked. You're going to pay for the decisions that you make unless you get in on the Lord's mercy. Amen.

Amen. Whatsoever man soweth, that shall he also reap. Sowing to sin. By the time I heard that, I was 37 years old. I'd spent 15 years in these gangs. I was a drunkard. I was a drug addict. I was a convicted felon. And all that sowing to sin required some reaping. The Bible says in Hebrews chapter 11, Moses acknowledged there was pleasures in sin for a season. And I'm here to tell you, there's truth to that. I did a lot of things that I had a lot of fun. But seasons change.

[19:13] The most beautiful season back east is fall. And the ugliest season follows it. It's called winter. Winter. Amen. Some of you may not be well aware of that. Trees die. Everything falls. It's ugly. It's cold. It's nasty.

Amen. Especially if you're not a skier. I'm not a skier. Never been on a snowmobile. Are you kidding? I'm a Harley guy. Amen. Moving on. For me, the season of sin, the season of the pledges of sin came to a screeching halt on October 30th, just before your mother-in-law's birthday. Hi, Mom.

And came to a screeching halt on October 30th, 1990. And I'd been up for about three or four days, cocaine binge and crash. Thank God I had crashed the night before because if they would have come in on me while I was still wired, I probably wouldn't be here today.

Amen. Amen. But I was asleep. They took the front door off my home with a battering ram. And I don't know, about three or four agencies came rushing into my house.

I was arrested on an alcohol tobacco and firearm warrant. The FBI guy there, DEA was there. They were looking for a fugitive. There was a local task force. My home filled up with cops.

[20:30] And, you know, that day, I got an interesting perspective on the M16 that I didn't previously have. Because, I mean, I was a weapon

specialist. I knew the cyclic grade. I knew the muzzle velocity.

I knew the maximum effective range. But, boy, that morning in October 1990, I got a bird's-eye view of what the business end of about five of them looked like. And they were all pointed at me.

I said, hey, fellas, calm down. I'm a professional. Who's in charge? You know, I know what to do. Don't get excited. Amen. Amen. And I was arrested. A lot of stuff was taken.

Corvettes, motorcycles, lots and lots of money, lots of gold, lots of stuff. And I laughed about it. I said, easy come, easy go. Stuff doesn't matter.

And then they took me. That mattered. I don't know why I forgot that. And I was held without bond on federal drug and weapons charges. And I intended to make bond.

[21:26] I was going to try to be a star on the TV show America's Most Wanted for as long as possible. But they didn't give me an opportunity. They didn't let me make bond.

They helped me. They no-bonded me. And here's the reason. This guy Spurgeon's a member of an international criminal organization with the capability to flee to avoid prosecution.

And the guy nailed it. The federal magistrate nailed it. We had a plan in place. And they said, he's no-bonded because he's a menace to society. Which I took as a compliment at the time.

I was an outlaw. I thought that was, thank you for saying that. And then they put me in a cell, a 12-man cell. And, of course, they want to test the new guy in a 12-man cell. And so, you know, I was not a kid.

So they said it was a riot. It wasn't a riot. I did not start a riot. It was just a fist fight. Me and 11 guys in a cell. And I was doing very well.

[22:26] And for a second time that day, the place where I lived filled up with cops. And they did give me a private room out of the deal. And sometimes you've got a picture for a private room. But not in jail.

All I can do is punch a couple people. And they put you in a hole. And they put me in a hole. And I was happy about that for about a week. It started getting a little boring. And I would fill out a little note.

And I had a notepad. I don't know why. But I had a notepad. And I would fill out a request. Request to go to the library. And you roll it up and stick it in the hole. Because I didn't have bars like everybody else.

I had a big steel door. Because I'm in solitary confinement. And I denied. Request to go to the library. Denied. Request to go to recreation. Denied. Request to go see a counselor.

Denied. And they knew I didn't want to. I just wanted to get out of my cell. Because moving around in a jail is how you figure out what's going on. Who's who in the zoo. Type of thing. I'm sure you have no idea what I'm talking about. I hope you don't.

[23:23] Believe me. And I denied. Denied. Denied. Denied. I said what's up? They said we got it on here. You're a menace to the other prisoners. And again.

I thought that was a compliment. I said thank you. Yes. You're right. I am. A menace to the other prisoners. But a couple more days. And it was really getting boring. And I rolled up a kite. Just for a kite. A note. Just.

That's what it's called. Just for fun. And I stuck it in the hole in the door. And it said Spurgeon request to go anywhere. And it was a joke. It was just for fun. And a couple days later they came to the cell.

And they opened the door. I don't know. About 8 o'clock Saturday morning in November. And I've been locked up. I don't know. Less than two weeks. And they opened the door. And a guy had a clipboard. This is the old days. This wasn't pushing button.

This was like big key. You know. Dungeon stuff. And they opened the door. And a guy standing there with a clipboard. And he says Spurgeon. You're going to church. I said.

[24:21] No I ain't. In no uncertain terms. So let me just throw that in there. Amen. I said. Yeah. I got a note here. I got an order here.

Come up and get you. Take you down to the church service. And I didn't want to go to church. And. But listen. Let me make something clear. It wasn't because I didn't believe in God.

I was raised in a good home. I was raised in church. I believed in God. I just didn't believe God. Would have anything to do with a person like me.

Who made a conscious decision as a teenager. To turn his back on him. And everything I was taught. And go out there. And prove that I was as stupid.

As they told me I was going to be. If I turned my back on God. You know what we see all the time. We preach in church every week. And we find people. That are bound and determined.

[25:14] To prove us right. Thank God. He's a merciful God. Thank God. He's a forgiving God. Thank God. He's a God of chances. And I wouldn't limit him to the second chances.

Besides. I believed in God. And. That. That. That. Big bang theory. Like they're teaching your kids in public school. If you're not careful.

That big. That the world was created by an accidental explosion. Let me tell you something. I've blown some stuff up in my time. That's all the details you're going to get on that.

And. What's left after the smoke clears is not beautiful. I was just up in northern here. A couple hundred miles watching the sunset.

In the Pacific Ocean. I don't know about you. That's beautiful to me. Maybe it's because. I know who made that ocean. I know who made. You know what I mean. And it just. The creation does declare the glory of God.

[26:15] And I'm going to tell you what. What's left after the smoke clears isn't beautiful. Like. Like. I had a grandson. Born. Two months ago. That ain't what's left after an explosion.

I'll tell you what's left is a mess. And I knew that. God. That. I had no reason not to believe. That. That this world came about exactly the way I'd learned in Sunday school. As a kid.

That God created it. And put things in order. I believe that. Fifteen years. Outlaw. Drug addict.

Criminal. I believe what the Bible said about creation. And I'll tell you something else.

That evolution thing. Listen. The crowd I ran with. We were smart enough to know that was a bunch of junk. I did a search on my family tree.

No. There ain't no monkeys on it. I think this. I think this. You got to get really educated to get stupid enough. To believe that evolution. That don't even make any sense.

[27:11] Amen. So what I'm trying to say is. I knew. There was a God. But I'd been out there. A long time. And I'm going to say it again. I didn't believe he'd want to have anything to do with somebody like me.

But I went. I went. Guy in the next cell. He said. What have you got to lose? So I went. I went. Amen. Amen. And ended up in a church service.

In comes this guy. Short hair. Suit. Tie. I don't know if he's a lawyer or another detective. Turns out he was a preacher. Not that much different. He had a Bible. He opens the Bible.

The ones that was in the service. I haven't been in any kind of church service in 20 years. And he opens the Bible and says. Oh. Hey man. And I already didn't like him. I didn't like his haircut. I didn't like anything about him. And.

And. He said. We're going to look in the Bible. And see what it says about you. And I rolled my eyes. Like some of you probably doing. And. And I said.

[28:07] That's a pretty big book man. You don't know a thing about me. I said to myself. He went right to Romans chapter 3. In verse 23. And he quoted. And he said. All have sinned. And come short of the glory of God.

And I remember thinking. Wow. That was fast. That was easy. Yeah. It didn't take long to find me. I mean. I was a sinner. I knew I was a sinner. I worked at it.

I was going for my second PhD. In sin. Amen. Listen. That's why we like preaching in prisons. In juvenile detention facilities. You take them.

To where it says. All have sinned. And you know what? They hang their head. They know they're sinners. It's church people. You got to convince them. They're sinners. Before you can get them saved.

Because compared to so and so. I'm pretty good. Compared to so and so. You might be the best person in town. Compared to Jesus Christ. You have come short.

[29:06] Romans 6.23 says. The wages of sin. Is death. And he said that. And I. I buried. 41. Of my own guys.

In my years. With the clubs. 41. 41. Funerals. We had 11. One year. I think it was 79. I knew about death.

You know. What was common to be said. I said it myself. Many times. I officiated. 13 funerals. As an outlaw boss. Before I ever became a Christian. Amen. I said. I'll see you in hell brother. God forgives. Outlaws don't. And I'll see you in hell. And I was more doctrinally sound. At that point. Than a lot of preachers. Standing behind pulpits. This hour. In this state. That preacher. Opened that book. To Luke chapter 16. The passage I read. Where it said. In hell. He lifted up his eyes. And he said this. That book says. Hell is real.

[30:03] It's described. As a lake of fire. It says. It lasts. Forever and ever. Say. Well. I don't. I don't believe that. Well. Okay. I mean.

God bless America. You can believe. Whatever you want. What we're here. What we're obligated to do. Is to tell you. What the Bible says. And the Bible says. Hell is real. I don't like it either. But that's what it says. Amen. That preacher said. You die in your sin. You die without the forgiveness. That Pastor. Pastor Walski. Mentioned.

And. That only comes through. Jesus Christ. Amen. And you die in your sin. And you might be the nicest person. In the room. But. You'll spend all eternity. Use three terms.

Weeping. Wailing. And gnashing of teeth. Now. You know. I think I'm a tough guy. Biker guy. Gang number. And.

[30:56] I thought to myself. There aren't enough people in this building. To make this guy cry. Weep. Or wail. And there was. I mean. Probably. But. That's just stinking pride.

And I admit it now. And I confess it now. And. But that last part of that. Gnashing of teeth. I never heard that phrase before. Gnashing of teeth. I never heard it.

But I'd seen it. On a bike ride up in northern Wisconsin. Like seven years prior. We had a car come across the center lane. And clip the last guy in the pack.

And push his. Push his. Left leg into the primary drive chain. Open primary pan head. For some of you that might know. And it cut his foot off. And his foot got caught in that sprocket.

And I turned around. I was the first one back. And I reached down there. I grabbed the bloody stump of his lower leg. And pulled him out of that sprocket. I was covered with blood. He was covered with blood.

[31:52] I'm trying to stop the bleeding. It's squirting. I'm thinking to myself. He's dead. He'll never. They'll never get an ambulance out here. They'll never get a paramedic out here. We didn't even have cell phones back then.

And I thought he would die. And I tried to stop the bleeding. And I looked in his face. And I'll tell you what I saw. I saw a gnashing of teeth. You know what that is? That's a person in so much pain. Their teeth are clenched.

Their eyes are closed. They're not crying. They're not cussing. They're not screaming. They are. And I thought to myself. I have never. Two things. I've never seen anybody in that much pain.

And I would never want to be in that much pain. And that guy lost his leg that day. And he lived. He lived. But I hadn't thought much about it.

Life goes on. We had all kinds of horror stories from life in the club. And then seven years later, I'm sitting in a jail cell. And the federal government gets its way. I'm going to do the rest of my natural life in a penitentiary.

[32:52] And then the guy says, that ain't nothing compared to this. And I thought to myself, wow. I thought chaplains. I thought preachers are supposed to cheer you up.

So after you spend the rest of your life in prison, you're going to burn forever in hell. And I didn't like that. But I'm going to tell you what I did like after I thought about it a while. The Bible says in John chapter 8, verse 32, And ye shall know the truth.

And the truth shall make you free. Freedom is an important thing to me. Amen. I thank God to this day that that preacher had the guts to come into the belly of that jail, down in the basement of that jail, and tell us the truth.

And I didn't like the truth. But I'm thankful for it. Amen. That preacher told us about hell, and then he preached Jesus Christ going to the cross.

The Bible says, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[34:03] And he gave an invitation like we'll do, an opportunity if you'd like to trust Christ as your Savior, let us open the Bible and give you more information. We'd love to do that. That's what we're here for.

He did something similar to that. It was my first church service. But I know this. I didn't budge. I didn't budge. My stinking pride kept me from responding to an invitation to get my sins, which were many, to get them forgiven, to get my name off the roster that was on its way to that place called hell, that lake of fire, that weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

And he laid it out. Real simple. Forgiveness is there because Jesus Christ gave his life. And I went, no thanks.

I wasn't going to let some preacher think he got through to me. Amen. You know, on the way out, on the way out, I say, man, you know, you got one of them Bibles, and he gave me a Bible.

I was in the hole. I had nothing in there. I got a couple gospel tracts and a Bible and went back up there, and I started reading it. I read it. I read some of the things. You know what I was doing?

[35:09] I was looking for a loophole because that hell thing, I mean, I didn't want to become a Christian, but that hell thing, that didn't sound too appealing either. And I was looking for a, you know what? I preach in some church every week.

And, you know, that's how churches are full of people. They're looking for loopholes. You don't want a loophole. You need Jesus Christ. It's so simple. Amen.

I thought about it for three weeks. Amen. And if you're in here today looking for a loophole, you're not going to find one either. Amen. Like me, you've heard the truth, and you're going to have to act on it.

The Bible says this in Mark 8, verse 36. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

I'm obligated to tell you, you die without Jesus Christ, it won't profit you anything. On the contrary, there's hell to pay. Jesus Christ went to the cross to make a way for you not to end up there.

[36:17] Amen. There's no better deal than that. There's no better option than that. The truth of the matter was, according to the Bible, like I say, I got a lot of free time. I don't have television and radio and internet and screaming kids, and I don't have work, and I don't have all that, all those distractions that kind of steal the word of God.

And when we're, I'm sitting in a jail cell going, oh, brother, that's great. Thanks a lot. And as hard as I tried, according to the Bible, I had bigger problems than going to prison. And I couldn't get away from two things.

I was on my way as a sinner. I knew. I was on my way to a literal burning hell, and I knew this too. According to the Bible, Jesus Christ went to the cross, so I wouldn't have to.

It took a couple weeks, but that morning of November 30, 1990, I laid that Bible on the floor next to my rack, up in the cell, and I started talking to God like He might really be listening, not the normal way, not taking His name in vain.

I started talking to God, Lord, if you and me both know I deserve to be here, I knew that. And according to that book, you and me both know I deserve to go to hell.

[37:31] I got honest with myself about something God and I both already knew, and that's the secret to eternal life to this day. You need to get honest with yourself.

If you're in there this morning, you're not saved, you need to get honest with yourself about something you know. You're a sinner. Quit comparing yourself to other people. Maybe you never did this or did that. You've done something, and Jesus Christ, it cost Him His life to make a way for that sin for you to be forgiven.

And you need to get it forgiven. The Bible says, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Amen. If you've never done that, that's what you need to do. You'd do well to do it today.

Amen. I said to God, if what that preacher said, he showed me in the Bible, and if what it says about that gift, see that verse said, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And I said, if that could possibly, in any way, include somebody like me, well, personally, I just felt I'd be a fool if I didn't get in on it, and I got in on it. And my situation didn't change.

[38:40] My appearance didn't change. I'm still on my way to prison, but according to the Bible, I wasn't on my way to hell anymore. And with great joy, I wrote my mother a letter, and I said, Mom, thanks for praying.

Sorry for all this shame and disgrace and heartache I put you through, but I just want you to know your prayers have paid off, and I trusted Christ as my Savior, and if I never see you outside of a federal prison waiting room on this side, I'll spend eternity with you, and I meant it.

Amen. Amen. And a week later, I got a third bond hearing. The federal government came to my attorney and said, we'll offer Spurgeon a plea deal.

If he'll plead guilty to possession of cocaine and possession of weapons, we'll drop the machine gun charge, and an automatic weapon charge was worth 30 years, and now my sentence, my max went from 37 to 7, and it saved the government a lot of money, and I said, I'll take that.

I was going to tell the lawyer to withdraw my not guilty plea anyway. I had just pled guilty to the creator of the universe for every sin I'd ever done, and I wasn't going to go to court saying I wasn't guilty when I was.

[39:50] You know what you need to do is quit playing games, and I'd been saved three days when I knew that, but they offered that deal, and I never, I said, I'll take it, and a week later, I was granted a third bond hearing.

I'm the first person in the history of the sixth federal territory to ever be granted a third bond hearing after being no bonded twice by a federal magistrate on a federal drug and weapon charge, and I don't care what anybody says.

I'm giving the credit to God for doing that. I made a \$95,000 cash bond, and instead of going back to the clubhouse, I went to a little church house on the backside of Dayton, Ohio, to thank people for praying, and the way I was received by those people who were more concerned about what I'd done with Jesus Christ than what I'd done in my past, I came back that night and that midweek, and that's been over 30 years ago, and I'm still with that same group.

Amen? I ended up getting five years federal probation, a thousand hours community service telling others how I got off dope, how I got off liquor, and how I got off, I got out of the gangs, and I told a federal judge, I asked Jesus Christ to save me.

I had no idea what I was getting into. I never saw this preaching thing coming. Believe me. Amen? And I did that five years community service and probation, and even did an extra hundred hours community service telling other people about Christ.

[41:20] An extra hundred for that Jewish judge that sentenced me to preach. And people said, well, let's see what he does when he gets off probation.

Let's see what he does when he's not in danger of going to prison. Listen, I wasn't afraid of going to prison. I got more friends behind bars than some of you got out here.

I was afraid of going to hell. And I ain't ashamed to admit that to anybody. And I ain't going for anybody. Amen. Amen. And when I got off federal probation, I'll tell you what I did.

I went full time into evangelism. That was 25 years ago I've been doing the same thing that judge told me to do ever since. Why? The book says, therefore, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature.

All things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. Amen. I'm different. I never even quit. I just became a different person. Let me wrap it up. I was 37 years old when I got saved.

[42:21] I wasn't a bad kid. I grew up in a good home. I got good grades. I graduated from high school. I served my country honorably. I even went to college for a while on the GI Bill.

And I never in a million years dreamed, when I was young, I never dreamed I'd end up with a testimony like this. Let me show you something. There's a gospel tract back on the table and the original version had a picture on the front that was taken from this banner.

This was taken at a car show just a couple months before I got arrested. Amen. Now, I've talked to you tonight, this morning about a gang member and a dope addict and a drunk and a professional

criminal.

But that's not what that's a picture of. You know what that's a picture of? That's a picture of a young man who grew up in church in a loving family who knew right from wrong who just didn't want to be told what to do and went out there and made a total disaster out of his life.

That's what that is. And if it could happen to me, it could happen to anybody. You know what somebody told me one time? They said, Rose Virgin, you know, you went out there and you did all that crazy stuff and then you got saved and you got your life on track and you're a preacher and you got a wife that loves you and friends and it seems like you turned out all right.

[44:00] Let me tell you something. I did not turn out all right. Okay, you see, these right here, for example, these are reminders of the life.

And I'm not preaching against tattoos, but every one of them means something. And every one of them means something bad. And they're there and I'm stuck with them and they're reminders of the decisions I made.

But I'm going to tell you something. They're nothing compared to what's going on up here. Most of the time, what I got to live with, and nobody's fault but my own, my decisions, my choices, thank God for his grace, thank God for his mercy.

I can't even close my eyes when I pray most of the time because of what? Boom. You follow me? I didn't turn out all right.

Wish I'd have got saved younger. Wish I'd have got tapped in much younger. Wish I'd have had the guts to stay on track instead of feeling some need to go with the flow and to take all the dares and be a stinking rebel because I wasn't a rebel at all.

[45:20] I just went along with everybody else. I'm going to tell you what I respect more than anything else. I respect man, woman, boy or girl that's got the integrity to say, bless God, I'm going to live for Jesus Christ out of gratitude for what he did for me and I'm going to prove it by telling others what he'll do for them.

That's what I respect. Amen? I can't do anything about it, about my choices, my decisions, but I can try to encourage you.

I got a lot of regrets, but I'm going to tell you something I don't regret. I don't regret getting my sins forgiven. Never one time have I regretted giving my sins to Jesus Christ.

And I want to say this to you. If you're in here this morning, you might be saved, but if you're playing around with sin, let me just tell you, it's not playing around with you.

It's setting you up for a major fall. Amen? And if you claim to be saved and you're not living like you should, why not?

[46:32] Why not? Afraid of what your friends might think? Let me tell you something. You're in dire need of some new friends. You know, God may have this going on here this morning.

I mean, I got a lot of things I'd rather preach than talk about what a knucklehead I was. Amen? But God may have this going on here today to give somebody in here another chance.

Just like he did me. Praise the Lord. A chance to turn from a world that's going to chew you up and spit you out and boy, he's giving you another chance, another choice.

My prayer is that you make the right choice this time. Somebody in here this morning might be on a crash course to a rude awakening than what I've warned you about today.

True. If that's you, could I recommend changing courses? You can. You need to make a U-turn and get somewhere and start talking to God like he's real because he's real and he cares about you and he's long-suffering and if you think he's somebody up there just waiting to bring the hammer down, you better be glad he's not because if he was, you'd be dead already and you're not because he loves you.

[47:52] Boy, I tell you what, man, it's time to come to Jesus. Maybe you're saved and off track, get it back on track. Maybe you're not saved.

Boy, what a privilege it is to tell you that God committed his love toward us and that while we're yet sinners, Christ died for us. What a privilege it is that you've graced us with your presence and your attention to come in here.

So, you know, I don't try to make people feel bad but I feel an obligation to tell them the truth and the truth is you need the Lord. You need the Lord's forgiveness and you can have the Lord's

forgiveness.

He's not the one playing hard to get. He's easy. So, let me ask you this. Head bowed, eyes closed. Right where you're sitting, just if you would and I want to ask a question and within your own, the quietness of your own spirit, you answer.

If you were to die in your present spiritual condition, and be honest, where would you spend eternity?

[49:00] Now, you might hope you'd go to heaven or you might sit there and say, well, I'm not even sure if I believe any of that. Let me tell you something. If heaven isn't your answer, then hell is.

Those are the only two choices and if you're not saved, I'd love to pray for you with heads bowed and eyes closed and nobody looking around. If you'd be honest and just by slipping your hand up and say, Brother Spurgeon, I don't know where I'd spend eternity.

I'm not a Christian. Would you pray for me and I'm not going to, you know, embarrass you. I'm a visitor too. But if you'd like me to include you in a prayer, just slip your hand up.

Just be honest. You'd be amazed what God would do by just being honest, acknowledging that you need to be saved. Would you do that? Anybody like that in here?

Father, just slip your hand up, take it back down and I'll pray for you. Amen. Let's pray.

[50:01] Father, I love you and I thank you for grace and I thank you for sending somebody to tell me the truth and I didn't like it much and maybe some people didn't like some things that were said today but God, you know my heart and I sure don't want to hurt anybody.

you love these folks and God, I pray that maybe something was said that your spirit can bear witness to it and it would result in what you'd have it to accomplish.

And Lord, nobody raised their hand and I understand how that goes and Father, but I don't for a second believe everybody in here is saved so if somebody's not, I pray God, you just, I pray that some seed was planted that give them something about like it did me and for it's all said and done before they take their last breath, I pray they'd cry out and ask you to forgive them and save them. For those that are saved and they're severely distracted by the world, we understand that. The devil is the God of it and he's good at what he does but the Bible says greater is he that is in you than he is in the world and I thank you for being a God of many chances and I pray that today someone might make a decision to change course.

I love you as I recall this, this story that I've tried to bring forth today without glorifying sin. I'm thankful for reminding me of just how good you've been for me, to me and I pray that, Lord, I might be even better for you in the days and weeks to come.

[51:35] I pray it in Jesus' name. Now, the pastor's gonna come and you just listen to him, do what he says. Let's say it together.

Let's do it. Let's do it. Let's do it. Let's do it. Let's do it. Let's do it. Let's do it together. I hope that I hope that we realize it's going to be a hard we're but a few we're we're Thank you.