

The Testimony of Pastor Cal Morrison

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: 27 February 2022

Preacher: Pastor Cal Morrison

- [0 : 00] Well, as I said, the idea of the last Sunday of the month in the afternoon is to be more evangelistic, to be reaching out more, and to share stories.
- And so I'm going to share my story, but there are people in every pew here who have a story. You have a story. And if you would like to share your story, then you're more than welcome to.
- Please speak to myself or Stephen or David or Robert or someone. And we're having various people every month sharing their testimony of what the Lord has done in their life.
- But by all means, if you have friends, family, neighbors who you think could benefit from hearing real-life stories, then bring them along. Bring them along on Sunday afternoons at the end of the month.
- And we'll have, you know, in time, we'll have time to fellowship afterwards together as well. And it'll be more casual, be more friendly, more welcoming to those who are not used to church.
- [1 : 13] But if you know people in your family or your neighborhood that could do with hearing real-life stories, then by all means, at the end of the month, bring them along. I'm going to start by reading a short portion from Ephesians 2.
- If you have your Bible, you can turn to that. If not, don't worry. I love the book of Ephesians. In the book of Ephesians, Paul takes what people see on the ground and uncovers the heavenly reality of how things really are.
- And I really feel like anyone who knows the Lord, anyone who's a Christian, anyone who went from death to life, well, your testimony is right here in Ephesians chapter 2.
- And so I'm going to read this, Ephesians chapter 2, from 1 to 10. Paul writes,
- Amen.
- [3 : 25] Amen. We pray God would bless the reading of his word. This is the testimony of someone who's went from death to life. This is the testimony of what the Lord came to do.
- So who am I? Who am I? I'm Cal. I was born the younger of two in 1985. In a humble home, working class, a good family.
- And I grew up with a loving mum and dad and big brother. One of the things I particularly enjoyed in life was God's creation. Although I didn't attribute it to God, but stars, space, the world, the universe out there, the planets of which they were nine at the time.
- When I was younger now, there's only eight. Poor Pluto. Didn't have want or need. The parents worked hard for me and my brother to have the things that they didn't have.
- And we were raised to be kind. We were raised to be considerate and loving. But we weren't raised in a godly home or a religious home. And when I became a young teen, there were other influences in life.
- [4 : 34] In fact, I had a life, what you could perhaps say, with not many guardrails, not many things to keep me from indulging in sin and selfishness.

This is what it says in Ephesians 2, 12. Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

That was my upbringing. Far off, separated. Strangers without having hope and without having God. And when that's your upbringing, there's not many guardrails to stop you indulging in sin.

So I was easily influenced. I was easily influenced and clowning around, partaking in bullying in school. And at that time, I associated with gangs.

But I thank my parents. They raised me to be sensible enough not to get into serious trouble. So I quickly disassociated with these things when it came to police visits or other gang rival members causing trouble.

[5 : 45] But here's the thing. They are not the only ways to indulge in sin. These are not the only things to indulge in sin. Ephesians 2, verse 3 says, We all lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of our body and mind.

You see, I didn't indulge in drink or drugs or violence. But I did indulge in crude talk, destructive words and a hot temper. I did indulge in vanity and sex and self-confidence and pride.

You see, some sins, some sins the world recognizes as being destructive. But other sins are often denied. Other sins are welcomed and sometimes even celebrated.

These were the sins that I indulged in. Things that were welcome and celebrated in the culture. In the workplaces that I was in, whether it was in factories or in sales work or DJing and music.

These things were welcomed and celebrated. A life of sex and pride and vanity. This is what Ephesians 2, verse 2 calls, Following the course of this world.

[7 : 00] You see, I had a motto in life when I was younger. My motto in life was, Music is life. That was it. That was my purpose. That was what I lived for. That's what I thought life was all about.

Music is life. And I had another motto in life. Once you're dead, you're dead. And that's it. That was my purpose. Music is life.

And my outlook for the future. Once you're dead, you're dead. But I had this question burning from a young age all the way up. Why am I me?

Why am I me and not you? Why am I me? Question of origin, identity, purpose, outlook. Does my life even matter? Does your life matter?

Your life probably does matter to family, to friends, definitely to the tax man. But why are you you? And why does that matter?

[7 : 57] You see, I thought I was alive back then. I thought I was living. But Ephesians 2 says that the way that I was living, I was actually dead in my sins.

And my view of once you're dead, you're dead was wrong. But I didn't have an answer to it. And I didn't have an answer to why am I me?

Does my life matter? Or does it only matter if I make something of it? Am I loved? Or am I only loved if I make someone love me? You see, in 2005, when I was 20, I was introduced to the answer.

But the answer wasn't a philosophical answer. It wasn't scientific. The answer was a person. In Ephesians chapter 2, the only thing that makes a difference between a person like me or any of us being dead in our sins and being alive is a person.

Christ Jesus. This refrain throughout Ephesians, Christ Jesus in Christ Jesus. You see, I wasn't looking for him when I was 20. I wasn't looking for him at all in my life.

[9 : 07] I was lost. He was looking for me and he found me. I remember ways in which he was doing that and I didn't even realize it.

Some of you have heard the story about this little church in East Kilbride, threshold church. The big letters on the outside. Not even a person preaching to me, but the letters on the side of a building preaching to me.

Because they were from this book. John 14, 6. Jesus said, I am the way. I used to walk past that and mock it. The way to what, Jesus?

How are you the way, Jesus? The way to what? You have no way. Every time I walked past that, it was like a stone in my shoe. It just stuck with me.

Jesus was prodding at me. Like Paul says about the kicking against the goads. Other ways, you know, I met this girl who was part of a church.

[10 : 08] She was happy to live a life that wasn't quite Christian. But she did go to these things. And so, they were the times that she wasn't with me. And I was curious about what you're doing when you're not with me.

I want to go and find out. I want to go and be hostile to these Christians. Never pick a fight with God. And I went and I found these people who were totally different from what I expected.

People with an answer to the questions that I had. People with a different attitude to the kind of life that I'd been living. And people who welcomed me.

And one Sunday that I went along very, very early. Either the first or the second Sunday or whatever. The only way I can describe it is that God opened my heart.

And opened my eyes to see Him. A dear lady after the service said to me, What do you think about all this? Do you want to be a part of it? Or do you think about Jesus? And I said, Yes, I do.

[11 : 13] Oh, yes, I do. I want to know God. We prayed. Sins forgiven. The thrill of knowing that God is there. And that you do matter to Him.

And that He did this through Jesus for you. It was a thrill. Now, I remember growing up with these audio cassettes going to sleep. The ones that I had were Narnia.

Lion, witch, in a wardrobe. Loved them. Dramatized. And in 2005, the year that I became a Christian, they remade the movie. I remember the BBC ones. I remember the white witch in the BBC ones with the straight black hair and the white face.

She was terrifying. But they remade it in 2005. And I went to the cinema just out of pure sentimentality. And I sat in the cinema, absolutely gobsmacked, finally realizing, Aslan is Jesus.

How have I not known this for 20 years of my life? Aslan is Jesus. This is all about Jesus. And I was blown away. The son of the great emperor beyond the sea.

[12 : 21] And so, in being introduced to Jesus, I saw that He was the answer to the questions that I had. In Him, there was a different story than the one that I had been living with.

You see, music was not life. Music is not life. Music's good. But it's not life. And once you're dead, you're not just dead. It's not the end.

So why am I me? Why are you you? Well, Ephesians 2 says that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.

This is why I'm me. This is why you are you, created and redeemed. You see, Ephesians 1 not only says that I have purpose, but three times it says according to His purpose.

You see, He has a purpose in all of this. He has a purpose in creating each one of us. He has a purpose in sending Jesus to the cross to redeem us.

[13 : 23] And if we are merely accidents of evolution, then we don't have an inherent worth or purpose. But if we are part of a purposeful creation, made for a reason and made in the image of God, then my life does matter.

Even if to no one else but the God who made me. And if my life matters, then your life matters. If this is why I am me, then this is why you are you.

And it is all according to His purpose. Suddenly, suddenly things became clear. Things became so clear. You see, this is what it says.

Ephesians 5, 8 says, At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light.

In his book, The Weight of Glory, C.S. Lewis said, I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen. Not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.

[14 : 29] That's what happened to me. I walked in darkness, but now I walk in the light. Ephesians 2 says that I was dead in the sins in which I once walked.

But at the end of this section, it says that I was created for good works in which I should now walk. You see, being a new creation in Christ is the very fulfillment of what God created us for in the first place.

It says, I'm not perfect.

Not even today. I'm not sinless, but because of Jesus, I'm no longer in the darkness. I'm no longer, as Ephesians says, far off. I'm no longer without hope.

I'm no longer without God and the world. I am redeemed through His blood and forgiven according to the riches of His grace. I am adopted by God. I am adopted by God. Destined to be with Jesus where He is and have an inheritance with Him that cannot be ruined by anything that I do.

[15 : 59] And if you're in Christ, that is the same for you. I am walking in the light of all of that. Now battling sin instead of indulging in it.

Now despising sin instead of celebrating it. And now overcoming darkness instead of walking in it. Do I fail?

Just about every single day. But I stand on His victory over sin, not my own. His victory over death, not my own.

You see, because Jesus has brought me out of the darkness into His marvelous light, I have seen for the past 17 years that He is a gracious and merciful God. Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Because of Him I have a better life, I have a better story, I have a better future. Than I would have had had I been left in the darkness indulging in my own sin.

[17 : 00] I was dead, but now I'm alive. He has made me a fellow citizen with the saints and members of the household of God. And meeting many people who have come to know life in Christ.

You people. He's given me a lot to be thankful for. A wonderful godly wife. Two beautiful boys.

He's always given me work. He's always given me favor in work. He's always given me food and a roof. Transport. It is right to give thanks to God for all these good gifts that He gives us.

Every good gift comes from God. But here's the thing. Ephesians 2 says that despite my past, He has given me a future with Him.

Despite my past, I was once dead in my sins. While I was still dead in my sins, He made me alive with Christ. Despite my past, He has given me a future with Him.

[18 : 07] And He has given me good things to do here now. You see, the mouth that I once used crudely and to tear people down, He has given me the ability to use for Him and His glory.

The confidence I had in myself, I now have in Christ. The pride that I once had is now an enemy to me. And He's shown me the way of humility through Christ.

You see, when I left school, I had nothing. No qualifications, no hires. A complete distaste for reading, writing, and public speaking. And all I wanted to do was play music, write music, create music, and in the end, make a name for myself.

But Jesus has made me new that I might make a name for Him. And here's the good thing. I do not need to impress Jesus.

We do not need to impress Jesus. Unlike the constant vanity of my life before. Always trying to impress. Always aiming to please.

[19 : 14] Always trying to be loved. I don't need to do that with Jesus. He loved me long before I even acknowledged Him. I'm not saved because I impressed Him.

I'm not forgiven because I made myself lovable. I'm not adopted because I pleased Him. No. Ephesians 2 says, By grace I have been saved.

For by grace we have been saved. Through faith in Christ. Not of our own. It's a gift from God. And it is according to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us.

Glory to God. It's because of His name that He did this. Not because of my name. And it is true that God did this because of the great love with which He loved us.

But His great love for us and His lavish grace is not because we are somehow deserving or special apart from Him. His great love for us does not depend on us being lovable.

[20 : 22] His great mercy and grace towards us does not depend on us impressing Him. He is a gracious and merciful God. He loves us.

You cannot love. You cannot earn your way into His love. And you cannot sin your way out of His love. Alan used to say that to me. And so while I may fail on a daily basis, not only do I have the hope of eternal life without sin or darkness, but I also have the assurance to know this.

In Ephesians 2, 7 it says that our lives, our very lives, will show in the coming ages the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

You see, your life matters. My life matters. Because it shows off the grace of our great maker and creator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me pray and then we're going to sing a song.

Oh, Jesus, I thank you for saving me. And I thank you for saving each person in here who knows you.

[21 : 42] I thank you, Father, for the great grace and love that you have shown through your Son, Jesus. I thank you for the grace of which you lavish upon us through Christ.

Your grace is immeasurable. You are still rich, lavish, and free. This is the kind of God that you are.

And you have pulled us out of death and darkness so that we might see you and know you and love you and live with you for eternity. And you have done this through your Son, Jesus, who died on the cross for each one of us.

God, I thank you for Christ. And I thank you that we can come together here today only because of His grace. And so we give you praise in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.