

Edgar's Personal Testimony

by Edgar Reich

Edgar Reich shares his powerful testimony of survival, faith, and the importance of gratitude amidst life's challenges.

Duration: 48:29

Scripture: Isaiah 6:6

Topics: "Testimony"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal vision he had where he found himself trapped in a grave, bound by ropes representing his sins. He realizes that if he goes to hell, it would be his own fault. The speaker then transitions to sharing a story from his past, where his mother chose to stay in their home during a dangerous time in Germany. He reflects on the challenges he faced when immigrating to Canada and how God helped him find employment and learn English. The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God and prioritizing worship, even in difficult circumstances.

Transcript

And so I did pray for you and I want to thank Pastor Melton again and his dear wife Stacey for their hospitality, for their kindness and for receiving me with such love. It's such a joy to be with you and to meet everyone in this church. This is a really special church and I also met Tim and Donna Lunk and what a joy that is and then Jason and April Cummings.

He slept this afternoon, he's feeling a little bit better, praise God. And then for, I thank also God for Tim Schenker who does this worship together with his team and everyone on that team, you're a blessing to me. So thank you for inviting me.

I'm really humbled and grateful to God that I am able to be with you. Such a joy. If I may pray, please.

Heavenly Father, Lord, I thank you what you did with an unworthy man, with an unworthy human being and you saved him and you made something out of him, but it's all to your glory. It's all to your honor, Father. Now as these words come over my lip to declare your glory, may you be seen only and that Christ be seen only because you are worthy.

And yes, you want us and you love us. You want us in your kingdom. You want us to work as your ambassadors for Christ and I thank you for that, but we give you all the glory, the honor and the blessings.

In Jesus' name, amen. And I met Pastor John as I walked in and he's sitting right over there, praise God, and he's a better speaker than I am. He couldn't stop, you know, for 15 minutes, I didn't get a word in.

So he's a better speaker than I am, but God is good and wonderful. I was born in 1942 in East Germany, East Germany between Berlin and the city of Posen in Poland. My father was on the front, we call it.

He was fighting in Russia against the Russians. He had gone with the 6th German Army towards Moscow. They were unable to take Moscow and then were told by Hitler to go south to Stalingrad.

And in Stalingrad, the 6th Army was totally annihilated. They were destroyed. But my father in August of 1942, he was killed, he was shot and his lower bowels were blown up and he died.

He never saw me. I never saw him. So I grew up without a father.

And, you know, in First Thessalonians 5, 18, it says, in everything, give thanks for this is the will of God. Why should I thank God for that? There's got to be something wrong if God asked me to give him thanks. But you see, if your own mom and dad don't take care of you, then he takes care of you.

He is there for you. And he's a better father than an earthly father or mother, because an earthly father or mother has sin in their life too. And so that's what we need to realize.

In 1945, the German stormtroopers came to our house in Gostingen. They told my mother she had two hours to leave with the children or she would be shot. She said, I'm going to stay.

They said to her, if you stay, you will be raped by the Russians. You will tell about our positions. So we will shoot you.

We will not leave you alive behind. And so my mother thought, what should I do? And then she said, well, for the sake of two children, one was me and the other one was my sister. She took a baby carriage in the winter of 1945, put a bed in it, put the documents of the house and the farm on the bottom of the baby carriage, and she started to walk in the snow of 1945.

And as she went on that refugee track, there were white bums all along the road. And she asked the other people and she said, have they mapped out a track for us that we can go on? And they said, no, no, these are people. They couldn't go on.

They sat down in the snow and they froze to death and then snow fell on them. And so they are your markers on this refugee track. We came to the River Oder and there was a bridge across the River Oder going towards the city of Berlin.

And the soldiers that were at the bridge, they didn't say anything. There was a full refugee stream. We had just crossed the bridge and the bridge was blown up with all the refugees on it because the German soldiers didn't want to take time and argue and cut off the refugee track.

So they killed everyone on that bridge. I should have died. But Scripture says in everything, give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

We were walking by night and hiding by day because during the daytime, the fighter planes would come in and they would shoot at all of the refugees and throw bombs on us. So we had to hide during the daytime in some woods and then at nighttime, we would come out and we would walk in the nighttime. And that

was actually good because it got a lot colder during the nighttime and many people froze to death anyhow.

So it was better to walk in the nighttime than it was to walk in the daytime. On the way, we met a relative who had a little horse-drawn cart with two horses in front. It sounds like a movie.

He had a wooden leg and he wasn't inducted into the German army. And my mother knew him and she wasn't able to walk and push that carriage in the snow. It was very hard.

And so he put us on this cart drawn by two horses. And on February 13th, 1945, we arrived in the city of Dresden. The city of Dresden was attacked in the Second World War by 3,600 American and British planes and they dropped 3,900 tons of explosives on Dresden and a firestorm developed.

The firestorm was so intense and so hot that people who were hiding in the cellars and thought they would get away from the fires, the cellars got so hot that they turned into puppets. They shrunk in the size of puppets. When they opened up the cellar doors, they thought they were finding all of these children, but they were actually adults who had shrunk with the heat of the firestorm.

And, you know, we arrived on the morning of February 13th and my mother was so glad that we were there. She said, well, the Red Cross is here. We're going to get some milk for your kids.

Maybe we'll find a little food. And this relative said no. My mother's name is Tabitha and Tabitha in German.

And he said to her, we cannot stay. We got to leave. And she said, why? We are in the city.

There are people here. And he said, I don't know, but we got to leave. And she said, well, I cannot leave.

I cannot walk anymore. So we got to stay. At that moment, soldiers came and took the two horses away from the cart.

They said the horses are now government property. They belong to the army and we need them for the war and you can stay in the city. And this relative with the wooden leg, he said to my mother, we cannot stay here.

We must leave. And my mother said, why? And he said, I don't know, but we've got to leave. She said, I cannot leave anymore.

And she said, your horses are gone. You see, that's a sign from God that we are to stay in the city. And he said, no, we must leave.

And she said, why? And he said, I don't know, but we must leave. And so it got a little bit dusk and dark later on in the day. And this relative got up and my mother said, what are you doing? And he was hobbling around on his wooden leg and he took some cloth and some rags and he said, I'm going to go and look for the horses.

And she said, well, if he even find the horses, you're going to be shot to death because once you touch them, they're no longer your property. He said, I don't care. We cannot stay in the city.

And so he went inside the city. He found the house, the horses bound up outside the house. The soldiers on the inside were having dinner and he saw the horses.

He took the towels he had brought. He put them around the hoofs of the horses because in those days it was all cobblestone and you could hear the hoofs of the horses. He bound the towels around the hoofs of the horses, brought the horses out of that area, brought them back to where we were.

He put the horses in front of the cart. He put us children on the cart and he said, now walk, we must go. And, you know, as we were outside the city, just a couple of miles, the first wave of bombers started to come in.

And what they did is they laid bombs in a circle around the city and then they dropped fire bombs on top of the first level of bombs to incinerate everything. And that's how the firestorms started. So we should have died.

We should have died. But in 1 Thessalonians 5, 18, it says in everything, give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. We ended up on a cattle train with 56 cars and it was supposed to go to Munich.

We went on the cattle cars and the cattle train was attacked by fighter bombers and 55 of the cars were destroyed. Only one car remained. We were in the cart that was not blown up.

So again, God kept my life. I don't know why, but you see in everything, give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. We ended up in a refugee camp between Munich and Salzburg.

I was three and a half years old and I started to die of malnutrition, of the cold, of all kinds of complications. And my mother went out on the streets of Rosenheim, the city of Rosenheim, and she asked soldiers to give blood for her son. She couldn't speak English, so I don't know how she talked to the soldiers.

And there was an American soldier who came and gave me blood that I might live. So you see, I'm practically an American. I've got blood in me off an American.

And how God arranged that the soldier would have the same blood type, I have no idea. And the soldiers were very careful because they didn't want to get involved with the Nazi underground and they stayed away from women. So how a man gave me blood, I have no idea.

But scripture says in everything, give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. We were starving. We had no food.

We were refugees, even in the country of Germany. The farmers there, they were hiding their food. They had food from the fields, but they wanted to live, and so they wouldn't share.

And so we started to look for food in the woods. We ate pfiffeling. My brother knows what they are, poor as a pfiffeling.

And that's what we lived on. We ate contaminated food. I had worms growing in me.

When we went to the toilet, we saw worms dancing in our excrements. And so that's how poor we were. We didn't have to eat.

But in everything, give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. At the age of 10 years, I was sexually misused by the closest family member. And you know, that really affected my life until the

age of 62.

I had no idea what that did in my life. Now, at the time, it only happened once, but I made a determination that this must never happen again. And I said I would never let anyone get close enough to me to let this happen again.

And when I made that decision, I carried it into my adult life, which means I started to form a castle, a white castle on the inside. And I said that real me, Edgar Wright, is going to hide in that castle. No one is going to get close.

But you see, it wasn't a white castle. It was a prison. And it becomes a prison when you're all by yourself because you don't trust anyone anymore because you think human beings are bad.

And Satan then gets to you in your loneliness. He will work you over and he will make you do things and help you do things with the flesh that you cannot imagine you will do in your life. So it is a terrible thing when you put up this wall.

But I put up the wall and I thought I was safe. And because I put up this tremendous wall, it later on affected me with my wife. I left my wife and children later on because there was this wall.

I never allowed my wife to even get close enough to me. At the age of 10 of my two daughters, I wasn't able to hug them anymore. So some of you kids who have never experienced love from your parents, don't be mad at them.

They're sinners. They're human beings like you and me. Maybe they had gotten hurt that you don't know about.

And so you need to forgive your parents, too, because they are human beings. And so after the age of 10, I'm going to jump forward to the age of 19. I started to work at a very early age, at the age of 13.

My mother had a heart condition. I said I must provide for her. And I left school in grade seven, seven and a half.

And that's all the schooling I had. At the age of 19, my mother got a pension because she had saved the documents from the house and the German government gave a restitution payment. And so she could choose between a payment and a pension.

And she took the pension. So I said, mother, give me a chance in life. I haven't had a chance.

Let me go my own way. And she said, all right, son, you go. And I went to the Canadian consulate in Cologne, Germany, and they threw me out.

I was there all day. And by the end of the day, the consul came out. He came with an interpreter.

He spoke only English. And he said through the interpreter, I wanted to see the audacity of that young man who came to apply to go to Canada. He doesn't speak English.

He hasn't got a trade. And he has no schooling. What did you think to come here? You're going to be a welfare case.

And I stood up slowly and I said to him, now, sir, you have signs all over Germany. They say, give yourself a new chance in life. But it doesn't say that you have to have the language.

It doesn't say that you have to have a trade. And it doesn't say that you have to have schooling. But you're so badly behaved anyhow.

I don't want to go to Canada. And I turned around and I walked out. But six months later, I got a visa in the mail for Canada.

And then I changed my mind, you know, because something happens, you see. So in everything, give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. I had three jobs almost within two weeks.

I was running an elevator for four floors. I only needed to know one, two, three, four. And that was good enough.

And then I did two cleaning jobs. So God helped me. And then I went to a government school.

And they taught English, English immersion. And after six months or so, maybe a year, they had us write essays. And I wrote an essay about Canada.

And the teacher came and was all excited. And she said, you've won, you've won, you've won. And I was hoping I had won money.

I needed money. And she said, no, you didn't win money, but you won a speech before the Queen of England. And then they said that the essays were all collected from across Canada and that my essay had won.

And so I thought maybe I'm able to learn because I thought it was stupid. You know, I had left school at grade seven and a half. And I really didn't think that I could learn, you know.

And so then I thought, well, maybe I'm able to learn. The Queen didn't come. She sent someone from the Royal House and the Governor General of Canada came.

So that was exciting. But the main thing was that I thought that I could learn. And then I put an ad in the newspaper for tutors because I didn't want to go back to public school and high school.

By that time, I was 22 years old. And I said, well, I earned enough money with cleaning and with doing the elevator that I can pay for some people to help me. So I had an ad and the ad said I need tutors to teach me every night from five till 11 p.m. and I'm paying one dollar an hour.

And so two students from the University of Toronto answered. They were red Chinese students. They had come from the Mao Zedong area and Mao Zedong didn't allow their parents to pay for their upkeep.

They were able to get the money for schooling, but they had to work to pay for the upkeep. So I said to them, look, I want to learn and I don't know how much you can do. But I said I want to go to the University of Toronto in the fall of this year and six months from now, I want to go to the University of Toronto.

And they asked me how much schooling I had. And when they found out, they said to me, you know, you've lost your mind and we can't really help you. And I said, well, who's paying you? And they said, you are.

And I said, let us try. And so we tried and we studied. And then they were using this Chinese language all the time.

And I learned some Chinese words from them that they were saying to me and I didn't know what it was. And someday they came and I said these Chinese words to them and they looked shocked at me, you know, and I said to them, all I want to know is what does it mean? What does it mean? And they said, oh, you must never use these words. We are swearing at you because you don't understand.

And so I learned how to swear in Chinese. But now I'm a Christian, so I don't do that no more. And in the fall, I went to the University of Toronto as a senior student.

And I jumped also over three years to university. God made it possible that I went into a postgraduate program right away. And but God did it, you know, and everything give thanks for this is the will of God.

But I studied hard, guys. I know that you're going through boot camp and that is tough stuff. I saw you working the other day and I said, man, these poor guys, what they have to go through.

But I'm so proud of you. I'm proud you're doing it. Bless you, bless you, bless you.

And also, young women, it's such a blessing for me to know that you're doing that out of your free will, because God will reward that. You see, in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. I got married to an Irish gal.

Irish gals have temper and Germans have temper. And Germans are very, very stubborn. They come from a Prussian background and they want to be right in everything.

They have to be right in everything because they're German, you know. And so we become impossible human beings at times. And I was an impossible human being.

And I feel for his wife. She agrees with me. So we know that we have traits that we acquire through our culture and they're not always good.

And, you know, your parents have traits and what they taught you is not always right because their character has been affected by sin. So what your parents taught you, and if it's wrong, don't follow it. Don't follow it.

Follow this book here, okay? Follow this word. You don't need to do what your parents did. We do it automatically, even if it's bad.

If your dad has drunk a lot, you are going to be very much tempted to also drink a lot. If your mother has done evil things, you as a daughter are tempted to do the same. But don't do it because you don't need to.

Christ will set you free and Christ has set you free. Praise God. So I had this beautiful wife and two beautiful daughters.

They were born in 73 and 75. And then some things from my past reappeared because I had been misused but I did not know what was happening to me. And I got into pornography.

Then I got into bad company with people. I got with some people that had drugs and I started to hurt greatly. I could not get along at home and I ended up leaving home.

And I left behind two beautiful daughters and a wife. And it's a terrible thing when you say goodbye to those people that you love. And I actually loved them, you know, and still I had to get away.

I couldn't understand what was happening in myself. I had this prison inside of me. The real me was locked up in that prison and only available to Satan.

I wouldn't open up to anyone. Nobody knew that I had been sexually misused because I was too ashamed of it. You know, I wouldn't share that.

And so it overtook me. And so I got into bad company. And yet at the same time, I was hiding everything well.

I was hiding it so well that people didn't know. And at that time point, our company did a huge acquisition in Europe of a 900 million dollar company. And because they knew that I could be trusted, a German can generally be trusted for the work he does.

And they knew they could trust me. They sent me over to Europe to run that 900 million dollar acquisition for a period of time. And I also ran a 600 million dollar company.

With that comes lots of money. It comes living in castles. It comes living in limousines.

It comes using private airplanes and all of these things. But beloved, beloved, I was totally miserable. I was totally without joy.

I was totally without hope. I had all kinds of money, but it meant nothing. It meant nothing.

And here I was away now. My wife and I, we decided we would have a divorce. And I lived with a woman that was an exotic dancer.

She took off her clothes. And I lived with her for 18 years. It's hard for me to tell you these things, because somehow we want to keep some self-respect.

But you see, she was a better person than I was. She had a better perspective of humans than I did. And so, however, I was in that situation.

And in the meantime, my two daughters were Christians. And at the age of 11 and 13, they started to pray for a wayward father and husband. They prayed for me for 18 years.

They never gave up. So, guys, if you have issues and parents in your life, never give up praying. They never give up praying, because God will hear, God will draw, and God will do incredible things.

After the period of time in Europe, I didn't want to stay there anymore. I was in Frankfurt. I worked out of Geneva, Switzerland.

And then I came back to this country, because they owed me by contract to bring me back. And I worked then with another Fortune 500 company here. And in 2004, at the age of 62, I was in my bed at home on a Saturday morning around 7 a.m., and I had a vision that it was in a grave six feet down.

The grave was neatly cut out. I was lying flat on my back. There was a late afternoon sun above the grave.

There were rustling leaves. And I said, what am I doing here? Let me get out of this grave. And I tried to sit up, and I tried to move, and I couldn't move.

And then I looked on myself. Why couldn't I move? And here I had these huge ropes all around me with all of my sins that I had ever committed. I was bound by my own sins on the bottom of this grave, and I was lying flat.

And I knew that this was bad news. I had to get out, and I started to call for help, but nobody would come. Nobody showed up.

I called for a long time, and then the sides of my body started to turn white. The flesh started to disintegrate. The flesh started to fall off me, and worms were coming out of the side of the grave, and they started to feed on me.

Then I realized that if I went to hell, it would be my own fault, that maybe I only had minutes to live before I would disintegrate, and my only future would be hell for eternity and eternity and eternity and eternity and eternity. And I knew from church, I had gone with my wife and the children to church, that there would be only one hope for me, and that is the Son of the living God, the Lord Jesus Christ. And I started to call for his help.

I said, Jesus, help me. Jesus, help me. Jesus, help me.

Have mercy on me. Do I need to go to hell, or will you have mercy on me, living God? And you know, after a long time, a person appeared at the bottom of the grave, and he came, and he stood, and he reached with his hands down into the grave, and he put his hand around my neck, and he helped me to sit up. And as I sat up, all of these sins snapped off my body as if they were threads.

And I believe it was the Lord Jesus Christ who came to help me. That moment I woke up out of that dream and vision. I had fallen out of bed.

I was next to my bed. I knelt to the bed, and I asked the Lord Jesus for forgiveness of my sins and to come into my life and to make me a new person. And at the age of 62, you know, there's a lot of water that has gone down the river.

And for God to do that, I am eternally, eternally grateful and thankful. And you know, after that, and we heard of that brother who started to give everything away, and that's what God seemed to lay on my heart. And so we gave everything away, and we started to make restitution.

But I knew that restitution would not save me. It would only be God who saved me through his son Jesus. But scripture tells us that there are steps to take after we get right with God.

And you know, after I was right with him, I said, I love you, Lord. And every time I said I love you, he said, if you love me, keep my commandments. And I started to go to church and join a congregation, a Baptist church.

And every time I prayed, he said, if you love me, keep my commandments. I said, but Lord, I got saved. You know, what do you expect from me? And he said, keep my commandments.

Then I found that I was lying, that I was a habitual liar. In business, you always say the most positive things to keep your job. You always put a twist on things, you know, and you make it your way.

And so I couldn't stop lying. I open up my mouth and I lie. I said, God, what do I do? Then one day I read Isaiah chapter six and the prophet Isaiah went into the heavenly throne room and God took one of the cherubim, one of the angels, went to an altar with fire, took a hot coal, touched his lips, and he didn't have to lie anymore.

And, you know, so we know that that God can do wonderful things. I said, God, you did it for him. I know I'm nothing.

Do it for me. Three days later, nothing seemed to have touched me, but I didn't have to lie anymore. And so that's what God did.

Then God said to me, you know, why not keep my Sunday holy? And I said, all right, Lord, I'm going to try and keep the Sunday holy. And then the chairman from our company said, let us travel to Florida to my villa and we'll have business meetings there and we'll travel on a Saturday. So I said to him, look, Brendan, if it's all right with you, I'd like to go to church on Sunday.

And he said, oh, that's fine. No problem. So then we went down to Florida and just a couple of days before a cancer started to grow on my face.

And it was an awful looking black cancer and it was dripping and all kinds of stuff. And I rushed to the doctor. The doctor said, it's cancer.

We got to operate, but it's going to take 10 days before we operate. So I said, do I have time to go on a trip to Florida? The doctor said, yes, go. So I went on a Saturday, Sunday morning.

The chairman said after breakfast, we're going to have a business meeting for this day. And I said, Lord, what are you doing? I asked him to have Sunday off to keep Sunday holy, to keep it as a day for you. What am I supposed to do? And God wouldn't answer me.

Now, young people, if you are in big business and you have a job and you go against your president, you're through. It means your job. He will not say it right at that time.

Perhaps sometimes they do say they say you have a choice between your job or you do what I tell you to do. OK, so I knew that this was serious stuff. He had decided that we would meet.

And so I said, Lord, tell me what to do. And the Lord wouldn't answer me. And so I had my shower.

I came back out and I knelt on a little carpet there. And I said, Father, you've got to tell me what to do. It's probably all right if I keep another day and that should be all right, Lord.

But the Lord wouldn't answer me. And so I said, well, what am I going to do? What am I going to do? And I started to sweat and big blotches of sweat came on my body. And then I decided and I put on a new shirt.

I went out and here the chairman and the vice chairman were sitting at a table full of papers waiting for me. And I said, now, Chairman, I have to tell you that I did ask you yesterday whether I could worship God and I really have to worship God this morning. The vice chairman turned to me.

He pointed his finger at me and he said, if you walk out, you're fired. You see, I needed income, too. I need to provide for daughters, for a wife, for all of my circumstances, you know, and then I looked at them and I said, well, I've become a Christian, so I really need to worship God today.

I really respect you and I hope that we can have the meeting another day. But I got to go and worship God. And I turned around, started to walk towards the door of the vice chairman, turned to the chairman and said triumphantly, he said, you see, you're not God after all.

You're only in second place. And then he shouted at me and he said, you are fired if you touch that doorknob. And I turned the doorknob and I said, now, Satan, I used to be in your hand, but now I am in the hand of God.

I walked out. Amen. I went to a small church.

It was sort of a very dreary, quiet service, nothing happening. But during the service, it was like someone touched me on the shoulder and a voice said, I have healed you because you've honored me. And, you know, I touched my face, I look around, I can't see anybody.

And so I said, what if, you know, what's happening here? So I went back to our chairman's villa and I came in. I was all excited. And I said, God said he's healed me.

And they looked at me and they looked at this cancer on my face and they thought I had gone off out of my mind, you know, and but they didn't fire me. They didn't ask me to leave. We had the business meetings the next day and everything seemed to be fine.

Then we traveled back and in the airplane I was praying. I said, God, you said you had healed me. What's the matter? And he said, if you love me, keep my commandments.

And I said, Lord, what do you mean? And I said, I think I have done almost everything that you're asking me to do. And I'm really trying to live this new Christian life. And I need your help because I can't do it.

But what is it that you want me to do? And then he said, well, you've had a relationship and your first wife is still alive. And that relationship that you have is not righteous before me. And you need to cancel it.

And so I was really shook up. I got off the airplane. I went to the church where I worshiped.

I talked with the pastor there because I wanted to be sure that I wasn't just talking to myself. Because sometimes you talk to yourself and what you think is the voice of God ain't the voice of God at all. And I'm very careful about that.

I pray at least three or four times. If I think that God has said something, I pray and I pray. And I also ask for confirmation through others because Satan comes as an angel of light.

He can also mislead you. So I spoke with this pastor and he said, well, go ahead and cancel it. And I didn't want to do it because I had already hurt one family terribly.

How could I hurt this other woman that had held on for 18 years expecting that I would marry her? But I called up that day and I spoke on the phone. And for two hours, she shed tears and her hurts and everything came over the phone, just in an incredible hurt and sorrow. And I said, I'm so sorry, but I've become a Christian and I really need to do what God says, what I need to live by.

And you know that that same woman six months ago, she called me up and she said, you know, I wanted to thank you, she said on the phone. And I wanted to thank God because if God had not taken you away from me, I would have never found him. So she became a Christian too.

Okay. And then the next day I was washing at home. It was a day before the operation now.

And I was washing at home and in my wash basin, there was this black little animal glistening. And I thought what has come through the pipes? You know, it looked like it was moving and it looked terrible. And I didn't know what it was.

And then I looked up and I looked in the mirror and that cancer had fallen off my face and was in the sink. So what God had promised he did, he healed me from cancer. Praise God.

And you see, this is a testimony about God. Now, God has done many miracles since that time, since he saved me and because of the limited time and I think you have to leave very soon. We have a few minutes, so I'm going to jump ahead.

I'm going to tell you when God called me into ministry, I didn't think that this was a real call of God. I couldn't believe that God wanted to use a guy like me, a failure who had gotten into drugs, into all kinds of things, into a sinful life who had left the family. How can God possibly use a man like me? And I was praying every week with a missionary leader and the missionary leader got mad at me and he said, you declare that God has called you.

And I said, well, you know, what am I to do? I'm called for revival. I have no connections with churches. I don't know what to do and I don't know where to go.

And I went home on a Thursday afternoon and the thought came, enter revival into your computer. I entered the word revival and up came Wall Street Revival, Pastor Bruce Berliner. And I said, what am I supposed to do? Am I supposed to contact this pastor? And there was no answer.

The next morning at 6 a.m. I went to a man's prayer meeting 40 miles from New York and I went to sit at a large round table. There was a man across from me at this round table and I said, good morning. And he said to me, good morning, pastor.

And I said, I'm not a pastor. You know, I'm just a sinner saved by grace. And this man looked at me and he said, no, you're called of God.

You're a pastor. And I got very angry because in business, you know, when you're in big business, people try every come on in the world. And so you always look for the come on.

And I thought, well, this guy is out of his mind. He doesn't know what he's talking about, you know. And so I said in a testy voice, well, who are you, you know? And he said, well, my name is Pastor Bruce Berliner from Wall Street Revival, New York.

And the Holy Spirit has told me to be here this morning. And he said, I have two churches to take care of and I have a funeral this morning. And he said, I don't know why I'm here, but I have to be obedient to the Holy Spirit.

I have to be here. And I could not tell him that I was called because I could not share at that moment that God might possibly use a sinful man like me for his glory. So young people, when you look at me, I've sinned more than you have.

You think you're a sinner? I've had a few more years on you, okay? And so I've gone through it. I know what sin is. Don't go that route.

Don't go that route. Give your life fully to Christ and ask him to take you and make you new, to make you that new person in Christ Jesus. And then you tell him, use me the way you want to and make out of me what you want to make, because he has great and wonderful and incredible plans for you.

He saved me at the age of 62 because that was probably the first time where I could be saved, because I was so self-contained and looking out for myself. And so I'd like to tell you that I was then called by the home pastor where I go to church. He called me to the pulpit and he made me a reverend.

And then on April 2nd, just last month, I got fully ordained as a pastor in the ministry. And God did that. It's not me.

It's God who did it. And so God did an incredible thing in my life. And when you look at my life, look at your life.

And I want to close with this story, with this little eagle story, because you have this wonderful name of Thunderbirds. And this story came to my mind about Thunderbirds. You see, there was once a little eaglet and the eaglet, he got hurt terribly because he fell out of a nest and he got hurt underneath this tall tree, but there were pine needles there and somehow he survived.

He was still alive. And then chickens came and chickens surrounded that little eaglet. And the chickens adapted the eaglet as their own.

And then he bird with them in the ground and he looked for little seeds and little worms. And that's what he lived on. And then after a while, he thought that he had become a chicken, that he was just like all the other chickens.

And then one day he looked up into the sky and he saw that beautiful, beautiful, magnificent Thunderbird soaring up in the sky. And he asked the chickens about the bird and they answered him and they said, oh, oh, that's an eagle. That's an eagle.

And the little eaglet said, oh, I want to be like that eagle. And all the chickens laughed and they said, oh, you can never be like that eagle because you are just a chicken. You look for grubs and seeds all of your life.

But the eaglet had put into his heart that he would be what God had made him to be, a son of God and a daughter of God. He would not listen to the chickens laughing at him. And he waited and secretly practiced his wings.

And after a while, he got a few steps. He could wing it and fly a few steps. And then the day came when he opened up his wings and put the air of faith on his wings and he started to fly.

He started to soar and he left all of the chickens behind. And as far as I know, that Thunderbird, that eagle is still flying up there above the clouds today. And you see, that can be the story of every young person here, of every Thunderbird here in this room, of every adult.

I don't care how old you are. God has a purpose for you. He saved me at the age of 62.

If he can do it with me, he can do it with you. He can give you a future and a hope. It is Christ who is our all.

Won't you trust him this day? Won't you let faith soar under your wings for you to become a Thunderbird, to become an eagle in the sky, in God, because God will lift you up. And Isaiah 40, 31 says, but those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mound up with wings like eagles.

They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. And therefore, we can be ambassadors for Christ.

We can have that new life, that exciting new life in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so I want to encourage you young people and middle-aged and old people that there is a future and a hope in that Savior that died for you and for me on that cross. He will come into your life.

He will lift you up. He will help you. You look for him and you walk in this book because he will do mighty and wonderful things through you.

Twelve men changed the course of this world. They walked with the Lord Jesus Christ. And we've got maybe double or triple the number of young men here and young women.

And you know, you can change this country, the United States of America. You can change Canada and you can change the world if you trust God and give your life to him. Pastor Melton.

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