

Personal Testimony

by Edgar Reich

Edgar Reich shares his powerful personal testimony of overcoming adversity through faith and gratitude to God.

Duration: 1:12:13

Scripture: Matthew 5:27

Topics: "Testimony"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal journey of transformation and redemption through the power of God. He describes how God touched his lips, freeing him from the need to lie. The speaker also reflects on his struggle with wasting time on TV and sports on Sundays, realizing that God's day is holy and deserving of reverence. He then recounts a powerful experience of feeling overwhelmed by his sins and calling out to God for help, leading to a profound encounter with Jesus and a desire to live a righteous life. The speaker emphasizes the importance of confessing sins to God and learning from both the blessings and challenges in life, ultimately leading to a revival in his faith.

Transcript

Thank you for all of your kindness and for your love. It was such an incredible experience to come and be with you last Wednesday night. The Lord just blessed my heart with your prayers and with your love.

And I said to my daughter, Suzanne, and to my son-in-law, who have put me up, I'm sort of a refugee again, rejected in America. And they took me in and I shared with them your wonderful spirit of joy and of love and of reaching out to everyone that comes and how precious you are. So thank you for inviting me.

And I want to thank Mark. And I don't know if I would ask someone to speak if I just knew them for a week. So he's a brave man.

And he's a very, very special person. And I believe that it was by divine appointment, a divine meeting that we should meet. So I thank God for him, his life and for everyone here that I met.

I am so humbled to see so many young people here. And if it gets boring and I see you get up, then I know I got to stop. So that's going to be a good sign for me.

But God put me on a course of action in my life that he wants to be a testimony to you. And whatever good you hear, God has done. I didn't do that.

Okay. So anything that comes across to you as something that I might have done, I did not do. It was God's mercy and grace that did that.

So if I may share with you one verse from 2 Thessalonians 5.18. 2 Thessalonians 5.18. And people often ask me, what is the will of God? Well, there's several verses in Scripture, which is the will of God. And this one says, in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God.

Now, what does that mean? If I may draw on my own life and for some of the young people, I got, I'm ancient. Okay. I got to go way back to when I was born in 1942.

I was born in East Germany, East of Berlin. And my father was in the war in Russia. He was fighting in Russia with the sixth army.

He was between Moscow and Stalingrad. And as he was fighting there in 1942, in August, he had never seen his son. His son is me.

And he was in that war fighting and was blown up by hand grenade and died. So why should I, why should I thank him for that? And I wrestled with that a long, long period of time. This was a terrible happening.

So why should I grow up without a father? Why should I not have a father? And in time, he showed me that he's the father of widows and orphans. So there was a benefit that I didn't understand. And so he became my heavenly father, eventually, and led me in a way that I ought to go.

However, that wasn't the only thing that happened. Then in 1945, three years later, the Russians were coming towards Berlin. And my mother had two children, myself and a sister.

We were in a house in East Germany, and the SS troops came, the German soldiers came, the SS troops, and told her that she would have to flee. And she said, No, I don't want to flee from the Russians. I'm going to stay here.

I live or die with my children. And so they told her, If you do not flee, we will shoot you and your children. Because you will be raped many times, you will be misused, you will suffer greatly.

And you will tell about the German positions that you know about. So we will shoot you. And so for the sake of the children, my mother took the two children, put them into baby carriage, and started to walk in the winter of 1945.

By the way, East Germany is a little bit like Canada, it gets very cold in the wintertime. So you freeze to death easily, especially at night. The refugee track had to walk in the winter of 1945.

During the night, there were two reasons for that. If you walk during the daytime, you were attacked by fighter planes and you were shot, and bombs were thrown on you. And the second issue was that if you slept at night, you would likely freeze to death.

So the best thing was to walk at night when it was cold and to try and sleep during the daytime while hiding. So God saved my life about 10 times during that period of time. The first time was when we crossed a bridge going towards Berlin, we crossed the River Oder.

And as we crossed the bridge, we had just passed, the German soldiers blew up the bridge that was full with refugees. They didn't bother to tell the refugees because the Russians were coming quickly and they didn't have time to argue or to do anything to convince, to let people across. So they simply blew up the bridge with all of the people on the bridge.

So why should I thank God for that? Why should I be thankful? Well, God said, I gave you life so that someday you would testify for me. So be thankful for that. And then we walked through that deep snow and there were bumps in the white snow all around us.

And my mother said to the other refugees, is this how we ought to go? Is this the sign for us to know which way to go? And the other refugees said, no, no, no. These are people who were frozen to death. They sat down, they couldn't go on, they died, and then ice and snow fell on them and they became the way to go.

My sister was very young then, she was only about four and a half years old, but that was her early memory in life. She was walking next to a woman and as we stood next to a river that we were supposed to cross, this woman started to scream uncontrollably. She couldn't stop screaming and my sister didn't understand.

And this woman took this little child she had been holding on her chest and she held it up and it was frozen to death. And my sister could not deal with that anymore. And from then on, she could never go into a funeral parlor or see a dead person.

She was so afraid of death and of dying. And so my question to you is, do you know where your future is? Do you know where you're going to go if you don't have God in your heart? Do you think that there might be such a person that loves you? There might be such a person whom you cannot see, but who has love and good for you in mind? So we went on in that track. We went to a city called Dresden and in Dresden, 100,000 people died.

They were burned to death and they were incinerated in the city. They became like small dolls, some of them, because they turned into charcoal. And the day we were there, there was a man with us who said, you cannot stay in the city.

And we went on that same day or else we would have died in that city. We went on to a train with 56 cattle cars full of refugees to go to the southern part of Germany towards Bavaria. And the train was attacked by fighter planes and bombed.

The train was destroyed, 55 wagons. There was only one wagon left that had living beings in them. And we were in that 56 wagon.

So again, why should I praise God? Why should I thank him in everything? Give thanks for this is the will of God. And so he let me live in Bavaria below Munich in a very beautiful area between Munich and Salzburg. We ended up in a refugee camp and I started to die of malnutrition and of the cold and of other illnesses.

I had contracted and the doctor said, your son is going to die, they said to my mother. And my mother gave blood for me. But the doctor said, your blood isn't strong enough to help your child and we have no other blood to give him.

So my mother went out on the street begging for my life. I don't know how she did that. She didn't tell me all the stories because she wept so much whenever she told me.

And the letter she wrote me about these things was full of watermarks. And so I know that I only heard part of the stories. I don't know what she did to beg for my life.

But obviously, she didn't speak English and how she got the right American soldier, I have no idea, because his blood matched mine. And so I got a blood transfusion and I lived. So I have some American blood in me.

Not Canadian blood, but American blood. So God saved me. I grew up very poor.

Again, I nearly died as a child. I had worms growing in me because we had to find food in the woods. But God again, kept me alive.

And so he says in everything, give thanks for this is the will of God. Now something unusual happened when I was 10 years old. And my mother misused me as a child.

She misused me sexually as a child. Okay, some of you cannot identify with that. Others of you can.

But this is a horrible thing, because this is sin. And God does not condone sin. God is not responsible for sin.

Now Satan sometimes may ask to sift us and he gets permission from God to do that. But when we sin, God is not responsible. When I sin, God is not responsible.

When I hurt you, God is not responsible. When I do evil, God is not responsible because he is a righteous and just God and he cannot sin. However, when we do sin, then God will take what is meant for evil.

And Joseph said that to his brothers. For those of you who know the story, Joseph's brother sold him to Egypt, and he had to stay in prison for many years. And then God lifted him up.

And then one day, he met his brothers again, and he forgave them. And he said, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. Okay.

So here we have the situation that I was misused as a child. And certainly, how can I give thanks to God for that? Well, I had a very unforgiving character. I had a very condemning character.

I would judge you, each person of you, I would see. I would judge before I would even know you and make up my mind who you were or whether I could trust you or how you were dressed and how you talked and what you did. And you know, after this happened and God brought me back, he gave me a new heart and a new mind so that I would have compassion for those that had been hurt in life, that I would have compassion for those that were hurting, that I would have compassion for someone that falls on the street and gets drunk.

And before, I wouldn't get my hands dirty. And now, it doesn't matter, you see, because that person is made in the image of God. That person has a future.

That person has a soul that exceeds the value of this world. So that is what I learned from that. So I praise God.

And this is the will of God to give thanks and everything to him. And I know that many of you went through hard times, but when you look back, you know how you learned and what God gave you in turn to reach out to others and to show Christ and to show God through your life now that they might know that God lives, that Christ lives, that there is a future and a hope. It isn't just damnation and hell.

Yes, you can walk that way if you want to because God gave you free will, but there's a future and a hope. Praise God. And so after I was misused by my mother, I put that aside and I made a decision in myself and I said, from now on, I will not let anyone get close to me so that I cannot be hurt.

And I built a castle in myself, a white castle in which I could hide where the real self in me could hide. I would no longer get hurt by anybody. You got too close to me and I would push you off.

Okay. If you got too close to me, you would see how vicious I could be. If you got too close to me, I rejected you.

And Satan used that. Satan used that white castle not as a protection, but as a prison for myself because I was alone. And when I'm alone, then I'm open to the attacks of the evil one.

We should never be alone within ourselves or with others. And so I had to learn that this castle had become my prison. And later on, we will share how God opened up that prison.

I have a jacket today and there are little handcuffs on that jacket and I'm set free. But sometimes I prefer to go back to the old prison. Okay.

That's my will. That's my own self. That is not God's way because he has set me free.

Now let me walk in freedom. Let me trust people. Let me love people.

Let me love you. I don't care what you've done. I don't care where you've been now.

I don't care where you've come from. But let me help you to know where you can go if you want to. It's your free will.

It's not my will. It's yours. You can never blame me if you end up in the wrong place in eternity.

But there is a future and a hope. And so let us give thanks for the will of God in our lives because he does mighty and wonderful things. So I was super poor.

Then at the age of 19, my mother got a pension from the German government. I had started to work at the age of 12. I left school in grade seven and a half.

I had no schooling, no future, and no hope at that point. And God made it possible for me to go to Canada. And after I went to Canada, I got cleaning jobs.

I had two cleaning jobs, an elevator job. And I thought that maybe I ought to go back to school. But then I thought I was not really able to learn.

And I went to a government school to learn English. They asked me to write an essay. I wrote an essay on Canada about the freedom of choice in Canada.

And the teacher came back and said, you won. I said, what do you mean I won? What did I win? Was this a class competition? She said, no. I sent all of your essays to a Canada-wide competition and you won.

And I said, oh, great, great. Give me money. I need money.

And she said, no. What you won is to make a speech before the Queen of England. And the Queen of England used to come to Canada in those days.

And we were new Canadians. And so I had a chance to make a speech. Unfortunately, the Queen of England felt sick.

She didn't come. So she sent someone from the royal family. I don't know who it was.

I made that speech. But what God impressed on me was that I might be able to learn because I had won. And so, again, in everything give thanks for this is the will of God.

This was something good I could identify with. This is something I could praise God for. But don't just praise God for your good things in life.

Also praise him for everything that you need to learn because we learn in the valley. We don't learn on the mountaintops. We learn in the valley.

And when we're in the valley, then God draws us close to him so that we might know him and understand him. The next step for me was to meet a young lady in Canada. Her name was Mary and her background was from Ireland.

She had red hair and we fell in love and we got married. I didn't know that she had been misused as a young lady. I had been misused and so we both perhaps were keeping apart from each other to some extent because we could never share what truly happened in our lives.

And because my mother was also my hero, I really had suppressed it. My mother had fed me when I was hungry. My mother had taken care of me when she could have taken her own life and ended her life.

My mother had given her life so that I could live. So maybe she had a right to misuse me. But this was wrong.

This was very, very wrong. She should have never done that. Parents, you have no rights to mistreat your children.

You have no rights to do wrong to your children. And God will judge. God will punish you for doing that if you do.

My mother lived for all of the rest of her life with guilt. My sister told me that my mother lived with guilt and she didn't know why. I didn't know why for many years until God opened that white castle.

And we'll share that a little bit later. But I never knew, you know, I held it in very high regards. I never held it against her.

And so she was my hero and my hero could do even wrong, even that. And so when we got married, we had two daughters and I had a daughter, Angela, and daughter, Suzanne. And during that period of time, I felt that I had to go further back to school as a mature student.

I was working during the daytime, but yet I felt that I needed to go back to school. But I had no high school. I had no undergraduate degree.

I had no university. So what was I to do? I ended up putting ads in the newspaper and I asked for tutors. And two Chinese students came who wanted to tutor me from the University of Toronto.

They had come out of the Mao Zedong area from China. They were in Canada. Their parents were allowed to send them to university, but not to pay their upkeep.

They had to work so that they would have food to eat. And so they came and I said, I'll pay you \$1 an hour. And here's the deal.

This is February or March of the year. In September, the University of Toronto starts and I want to enter the University of Toronto in September. That's the deal.

And they looked at me and they said, well, we're sorry, but you're not right in your head. This is not possible. You can't do that.

You can never jump high school and get to university. And so they started to teach me. I said, you try, I try.

I studied every night for seven hours from five till 12 midnight for six months or so. And that they would tutor me so that they would bridge me. Now, by the way, when I want God to set me free, I have to do my part.

Okay. God didn't do just a miracle and say, I give you a degree without studying. And that's the same for my Christian life, because I have to battle.

I have to go into battle against that old nature that God has given me also and the new nature. And they will be in constant battle, in constant battle until God lets me to be with him. And that old body passes into eternity and turns into dust.

That's my outer body only, but my soul lives on forever and ever and ever. And it becomes holy before God through Christ Jesus, not through what I do. And that soul is safe forever and ever.

So I had to realize that I had to do my part and learn. And I didn't like it. And my wife didn't like it.

And the children weren't there yet. But I said, I got to do this. I got to do this.

And during those four or five months of study, I also noticed that an undergraduate degree wouldn't do anything for me. So I looked at some of these degree courses that were subsequent to an undergraduate degree. And I decided, well, I got to not only jump high school, but I got to jump university and I'm going to go into a postgraduate course.

And the Chinese students who were teaching me, they said, you have flipped your switch and we cannot rely on you that you can think straight. And however, they were so determined, they were working so hard with me. They were always using these Chinese words when I didn't understand.

I finally asked them, what is it you're saying? And they said, well, we're swearing at you. And so I learned how to swear in Chinese. Lord forgive me.

I'm not using those words anymore. I learned a little bit of Chinese. And in September of that year, I started in a postgraduate course for an accounting degree.

And I passed all of the initial courses. And God did it, not I, okay? Because when we look at it objectively, everything that God gives in our mind is from him. It's not from me.

All glory belongs to him. Nothing. Don't look at this man.

I'm just dust, okay? But God is our great and wonderful God. He can do mighty and wonderful things. Now, after I had gone through school, I started a very good job at a vice president of a chemical company in Canada.

It was an international group called Whitco Chemical. And they then made a huge acquisition in Europe of a \$900 million company. So they asked me to Europe, to go to Europe and run that \$900 million company.

And so I went to Europe and I left my wife, my family, my children behind. But during all of these years, dear sisters and brothers, I was not right with God. Some of these things that I had learned as a child followed me.

And there were addictions in my life. There were sexual addictions. There were addictions to other things in my life.

And I never knew how to cope with them. So somehow they had to be acted out. And I went with the wrong people.

I went to parties. I went drinking. I went into drugs.

I went with wrong women. And when I was put into high positions, I was very careful to hide all of these things. And so I became an expert liar as well.

I became an expert liar. And then I left my family and my wife and I didn't know each other anymore. And I left.

And my two daughters had become Christians at a very young age. And at the age of 10 and a half and 12, they started to pray for that wayward father. So young guys, if you're a Christian, and even you see older people in trouble, don't just judge them, but pray for them.

Pray for your mom and dad, your older people. Don't give up praying for anyone in your family that has gone the wrong way or that has not accepted Christ. But just remember that they will have to go to hell for eternity if you don't give that witness, because God has given you a witness.

Maybe he has let you go through hard times. Share that, how God released you from that. Share that, what God did in your life.

Give praise to glory and God. Give thanks to him for this is the will of God. Give thanks in everything to God for this is his will.

And so here I was in deep sin in Europe and didn't know how everything would end. I ended up in Geneva running this huge corporation. Then I had a deal that I would come back to the United States.

And by the way, I should have been struck dead many times. I should be in hell today. I should not be here at all today.

Thank you Lord for salvation. I'm sorry, sometimes I have to cry a little bit afterwards. I didn't cry when I sinned because sinning is good at times.

If a preacher says sinning is no good, he's never experienced it. But sinning and those good times only last for a little time. And we don't fear God because God doesn't always strike us dead when we sin.

I don't know why he has so much grace, so much forgiveness, so much love. I can't understand that. He's so gracious and so kind.

So when I sin, I really deserve the ultimate penalty, but he has mercy and grace to forgive me. So he was waiting for me. There were two little daughters praying.

They said, God, we're not going to give up on this man. Yes, maybe he deserves death and hell, but we won't give up. We're going to keep on praying for him.

So I came back to the United States. The company that I was with, we did well in Europe. We made \$50 million the last year that I was there.

And when I came back, however, the company was sold and new management came in. They did things differently and I saw things wouldn't last. So I went with a company that was called AP Industries, Inc.

They were selling plastic products and they had international businesses that weren't doing well. And so I went with them and I ran roughly \$300 million worth of businesses that had companies in New Zealand, in Australia, in Japan, in France, in Italy, in Germany. Actually, in Germany, it was just a distributorship and in Denmark and so on, in many countries in Europe.

Again, young people, all of this sounds very, very glorious. The money sounds good. The traveling sounds good.

But believe me, if you're apart from the Lord, it's not worth it. There's a verse that says, what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? It's not worth it. It's not worth it because if you lose your own soul, then you have death and hell for eternity and eternity.

Death and hell for eternity. It's not worth it. The other thing is that many of these big money people, they have issues.

They're addicted to power. They're addicted to sex. They're addicted to money.

They're addicted to something. And I was in a white castle. I was in a prison cell.

Do you think I had all that much fun? At times, I had fun. But no, looking back, what a waste of time. What a waste of time.

Young people, give your heart to God. Give your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. Do worthwhile things for him.

Don't try sin. I said, God, why did you make all of these commandments? These commandments are no good. They're keeping me from fun.

But scripture says that these things are not keeping us from fun. They're giving us fun in life. And I said, Lord, that can't be right.

You've got it all wrong. You've got it reversed. No, he said.

No. I give you fun because when you do right, you no longer have to lie. When you do right, you no longer have to hide.

When you do right, you can look people into their eyes. When you do right, you don't have to fear the dark. When you do right, you don't have to fear the future.

When you do right, you don't have to fear eternity. When you do right, you don't have to fear hell itself. And so what a wonderful release that is, my beloved young people.

And you older people know, I don't even have to tell you, that is truth what I'm telling you. You already know it's truth. And so I just share with you, and God, for whatever reason, for whatever reason, has let me experience the lows and some of the highs in life.

But they're not worth it. It is Christ Jesus, the living Son of God, that is worth it. So now you ask, well, how did you get rid of this white castle? I was about five years ago, and I lived alone, although I had a relationship with another woman for 18 years.

I had left my family. I was not back with my family. And this woman still lives in Canada, by the way.

I still talk with her. I talk with my wife now. We're all friends now, by the way.

And I'll tell you how all of that happened. But we are no longer lovers, okay? We're no longer living together, because I told her that I accepted Christ and how that happened. I was at home on a Saturday morning.

It was maybe 7 a.m. in the morning. I was half awake and half asleep. And all of a sudden, I was in an open grave, six foot down.

The grave was inside a graveyard. There was a tree on top of the grave. The sides of the grave were neatly cut out.

I was lying on my back looking up. There was a late afternoon sun. There was a cold air coming through the grave.

And I said, why am I here? Let me get out of this place. I cannot stay here. So I tried to lift myself up, and I couldn't move.

And I said, why can I not move? And so I looked at myself, and here I was bound up with great big robes. And all of these robes were my sins. And they were heavy, heavy robes.

And they kept me bound inside this grave. And they were so heavy, I could hardly breathe. And I said, how is this possible? I need to get out of here.

I cannot do this. And I started to call for help. And I called, help, help, help.

And I said, why is my voice so low? Why can I not shout? And my sins were pressing down on my chest. And I could not shout for help. And I shouted, help, help.

And I just whispered. And I said, I must get out of here. And as I was whispering for help, the sides of my body started to turn white, and started to turn into dust.

And then there were bugs coming out from the side of the earth. And the worms started to feed on me, and to bite me, and devour me. And I said, Lord, what is happening? And the answer came immediately.

If you die right now, you are going to hell for eternity, if you die right now. And you know, I realized that that was the truth. That was the truth.

Because of my sins, there was only one place that I deserved. And that was hell for eternity. And I had gone to church at some time point.

And I knew that Christ Jesus was the way. And at that point, I started to call for help. And I said, Jesus, come and help me.

Jesus, come and help me. And I cried out for him that he would come and help me. And as I was laying there, it seemed like for an eternity, I seemed to waste away.

Eventually, a figure appeared on the bottom of the grave. And that person bent down, put his arm around my neck, started to lift me up. All of the ropes snapped off me as if they were thread.

I sat up. At that moment, I woke up. I'd fallen out of bed.

I knelt next to my bed. And I asked the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to come and save me and to make me right with him and to fix all of the things that were wrong with me and to make me a righteous man before him and to work through me and to do the things that he needed to do in my life. And beloved, once we get saved, we still have a lot of old baggage that we carry.

Even so, God makes us new. He gives us a new soul that is now holy before him through Christ. The old body has a lot of old habits.

And so, a process of revival started in me. And the process of revival has seven points. And the first point is really the confession of every known sin to God.

The confession of every known sin to God. After I got saved, I got so excited about God and I wanted to do all these right things, you know. But then some of these old things came back to beset me.

And I said, what is this, God? And he answered me and he said, if you love me, keep my commandments. If you love me, keep my commandments. And the next day I prayed and I said, I love you, Lord.

And he said, well, if you love me, keep my commandments. And the third day I prayed, well, Lord, I love you. And he said, well, if you love me, keep my commandments.

And I said, what do you mean, Lord? I'm getting frustrated. What's wrong with me? You know, I accepted your son and what is it you want me to do? What is it you want me to do? And then the Holy Spirit started to show me step by step through the Ten Commandments what I was doing wrong. And because of time, I'll just share a couple with you now.

But I was a compulsive liar, not only because I had to hide things, but also because of business. And whenever you talk to someone about business, you automatically say that everything is perfect. Everything is good.

Nothing is wrong. And so maybe these are little white lies. Maybe they're not so important.

But God calls me a liar. Come on, Lord. Do you have to be so specific? I mean, isn't that self-righteousness, Lord? You mean I have to give up every sin? I mean, sometimes I ought to say things just to please people.

Don't you agree with that, God? No, he said. And then I tried to stop lying and I couldn't. And I tried and I tried.

And one day I read Isaiah chapter 6. And here the prophet Isaiah was called into the throne room before a holy God. And when he came into the holy throne room, he said, Woe is unto me, a man of unclean lips. I cannot stand before this holy God.

I cannot even be in this holy throne room. I'm dirty and filthy with this sin. God will not tolerate this sin.

And so a cherubim, an angel of God, came and he took one of the coals of the altar of God and he went over and he touched the lips of Isaiah and he became clean. And I said, Lord, Lord, I know I'm nothing. I'm nothing.

Pray right now. You send an angel to me. You touch my lips so that I don't have to lie anymore.

And three days later, I don't know how it happened. Nothing seemed to touch me. Nothing seemed to happen.

But three days later, I didn't have to lie anymore. So praise God. God did it.

In everything, give thanks for this is the will of God. In everything, give thanks for this is the will of God. Then I had some issues with Sunday.

I love TV. I love ball games. I love to waste my time.

I'm sorry. I love to watch TV. And so God said to me, well, my Sunday is holy.

And I said, well, Lord, what I'm doing really is relaxation. So don't look too closely what I'm doing, but I'm just relaxing here a little bit, you know. And surely this must be all right with you.

Surely this must be okay. And surely this must be all right with you for Sunday. And then I had not canceled this adulterous relationship I had.

God says, don't commit adultery. Don't commit fornication. And I said, well, Lord, that's not humanly possible what you ask of people.

So I somehow can argue perhaps a little bit. Somehow I can rationalize this and say, no, I don't have to walk holy before you. But he said in Psalm 24, who can ascend my holy hill? He who has clean hands.

Lord, it's not possible. I can't do that. And during that period of time, when I was arguing, every time I prayed, he still says, if you love me, keep my commandments.

Lord, I don't want to hear that anymore. You know, I'm tired of this. Why are you telling me this? Why do I have to go that route? And he said, no, if you love me, keep my commandments.

I was invited during that period of time. I was still running these big businesses. And our chairman in our company, he said, come to Florida to my villa in Florida.

We're going to have a meeting in Florida. We're going to look at all of your foreign businesses. We'll see how well they're doing.

And there'll be only three of us, the vice chairman of the company, the chairman of the company worth about \$100 million, and you. So I said, all right. So a few days before we went down to Florida, I started to get cancer on my face and a big blob started to form here.

So I rushed to a doctor and they took a biopsy and they said, yes, it's skin cancer and you need to have an operation. We can take it off. We think it's in the early stages.

We don't know how deep it is, but normally we can tell that when we take it off, when we cut it out. So I said, when are you going to do that? And they said, in about 10 days, I said, I have to go to a conference down to Florida. Can I go? They said, yes, you can go.

So I said, all right, I'll go. So I went and our chairman's wife, Linda came along as well. And she looked at me and she said, Edgar, you look terrible.

At least put some bandages over this thing that you have on your face. It looks horrible. And as I was traveling in the airplane, I was praying and I said, Lord, we are traveling on a Saturday down to Florida and you asked me to keep Sunday holy.

How can I keep Sunday holy? We're going to maybe have meetings and things like that. And God said, well, ask him, just tell him that you want to keep that day holy. And I thought, well, Lord, that's a little bit too much to ask to keep the day holy.

You're going to think I'm a holy roller, you know? So maybe what I'll do is I'll just say to him, could I go to church on Sunday morning? And that's what I said to Brenton Barber, who was the chairman. And he said, sure, no problem. You want to go to church, go to church Sunday morning.

And I said, thank you very much. So Sunday morning came and after breakfast, Brenton Barber said, well, folks, after breakfast, we're going to have a planning meeting. We're going to look at your businesses, Edgar, and we're going to work through all of the various countries that you're responsible for.

And he said, everyone have their shower first and then we'll meet. So I went back to my room and to have a shower. I had the shower and in a villa, every bedroom has its own bathroom.

So this was quite something to be in this kind of environment. And I said, Lord, how am I going to give a witness here? What am I going to do? So I had my shower, then I knelt and there was a carpet like this. I knelt in the middle of that carpet and I started praying.

And I said, Lord, what am I going to do? He said for me to ask about Sunday. And I did. And he said, we're supposed to, you know, look at these businesses.

What am I to do? And he wouldn't answer me. And then I said, Lord, surely it's okay that I keep another day holy. So I don't really have to do this, do I, on this Sunday? Surely I could keep another day in the week holy and serve you and love you and no answer.

And I said, Lord, why don't you answer me? Why don't you help me? I don't know which way to go. And I started to sweat because I knew that if I went back and I made a stand that I might lose my job. And by this time, I had a number of families to support.

God had laid a number of missionaries on my heart to support. And I knew if I walked out that I would risk my job. And so I rationalized and I said, now, Lord, there are many people who have to work on a Sunday.

And by the way, I'm not talking to you. If you have to work on a Sunday, I'll leave that between you and God. That is how maybe God structured your life.

But in my case, we didn't have to work on Sundays. Okay. We didn't have to work on Sundays.

And so I went back on my knees and I prayed and sweat was dripping off me. I looked in the mirror, had to change my shirt. I had six big spots of sweat running down me.

And then I opened the door and I walked out and Brendan Barber was sitting in a room of this size with all papers on the table. Paul Feeney, the vice chairman, was sitting there and I walked out and I said to Brendan, I had asked you yesterday whether it would be all right with you that I go to church this day. And I said, I really must go and honor God and I must go to church.

And I apologize if we could have that business meeting another day, I would really appreciate it. The vice chairman, Paul Feeney, he pipes up and he says, if you walk out that door right now, you're going to get fired. Then he turned to Brendan Barber and he said, you see Brendan, you're not God after all.

You're only in second place. Brendan looked at me, Paul looked at me, what I was going to do. And I said, Brendan, I really apologize.

But I said, I must go to church. And if you don't mind, we're going to catch up the day after. I turned around, walked out of that villa.

As I came to the door, I said, Satan, my life is not in your hands. I now belong to God. Whatever will come, will come.

If this is a test, Lord, that I must lose the job, so be it. So be it. I'm going to honor you from now on, God.

So I walked out and I walked into a little park and a man helped me to find a nearby church. I've never gone to that church. It was a really, really, really dry church.

But guess what the pastor was speaking on? The pastor was speaking on the subject. If you had cancer and only three days to live, what would you do? And I touched my cancer on the side of my face and I sat down and I worshiped God. And during the service, it was as if someone touched me on the back of my shirt and there was a voice behind me which said, I have healed you.

I have healed you. After the service, I was full of joy and I went back to the villa and I said, Brendan, God says he has healed me. And Brendan looked at me.

He looked at my patch. He looked at the black coming from underneath the patch. And he thought again that probably this man has lost his mind.

But he didn't say anything and he didn't fire me. So the next day we did our planning meetings and so on. And every day I'm praying now and I said, God, you say you have healed me, but it's still there.

Can I trust your word? Guess what the answer was? The answer was, if you love me, keep my commandments. And it still didn't dawn on me. It didn't dawn on me.

And the next day I prayed, God, you promised to heal me. And the answer came back, if you love me, keep my commandments. And I said, Lord, what is happening? You promised to heal me.

And he said, if you love me, keep my commandments. And then it started to dawn on me. There was this woman I was still living with in adultery.

And I said, Lord, surely you couldn't mean this woman, would you? I mean, the other family is finished. How can you not accept this new relationship? What's wrong, father? What about your son? Doesn't your son have mercy? He caught this woman in adultery. He had mercy on this woman in adultery.

Why don't you have mercy on me, God? Why don't you have mercy on me, God? And God said, I want you to do what I have told you to do in scripture. So I went to see the pastor of the church that I was now going to, Mount Zion Baptist Church in Hackensack, New Jersey. I told the pastor about my wrong relationship.

I told him that I needed to break it. And we prayed together. And I called up the second woman.

Her name is also Marie, by the way. My first wife's name is Mary, and this woman's name is Marie. And I said, Marie, I've got to finish our relationship.

I'm truly sorry I did wrong. But I accepted Christ Jesus into my heart. He's my Savior and my Lord.

I'm now right with God. I did wrong in the past. And we're not married.

And I cannot go on. And the way I read scripture, we cannot get married. My first wife is still alive.

So the way I read scripture, I cannot proceed. And it was a horrible time of pain, of betrayal. You know how you feel when you were betrayed in the past, either through a partner or in church, or through people that love you.

Betrayal is a horrible thing. So I had to ask her for forgiveness. And after I asked her for forgiveness, the Lord just lifted this incredible burden from my heart.

And the next day, it was two days before my operation, I was washing my face in the morning in the sink. And all of a sudden, I saw this little black animal in the sink. It was glistening.

It was black. It seemed to move with the light. And I looked in the sink.

Had it come up through the sink? And I didn't understand. And it was this blob of black and didn't know what it was. And then I looked into the mirror, and I looked at my skin on my right hand side, and it was white, like baby skin.

And the cancer had fallen off my face. That is what God said. He had healed me.

But there was something I had to do on my part to be right with him. And then God permitted me to share that testimony with others. But the first thing for us to be right with God is to confess every known sin in our lives and to get rid of it.

Sometimes you cannot do it on your own. Sometimes you need help. Then you need to go to your pastor, you need to go to a brother or a sister, and you need to confess.

The second step towards my personal revival was to forgive those that had hurt me, to forgive those that had hurt me. I really didn't feel that there were many people that had hurt me, but God had led me to a pastor, Ed Grant. Ed Grant was also a psychologist, and I had shared with him that from time to time I had these terrible attacks from the past.

And as he asked me questions about my life, he also asked me about my childhood and did anything unusual happen in my childhood. And I realized that my mother had misused me, and I really didn't want to share it. I had a compulsion almost not to share it, and then I said, well, I better share it.

And so I shared with him, and then later on he told me what that had done in my life. And he said, you had then made a decision to not let that happen to you again. You then made that decision.

And I said, yes, I did. And then he said, well, you set yourself apart from people. You set yourself apart from your wife.

When my daughters turned 10 years old, I couldn't hug them anymore, because hugging them told me in the back of my mind, not at a conscious level, just at an underlying level, that if I hugged them, they would be too close to me. Something wrong could happen. So I was not permitted to hug them.

And so he started to help break down that castle inside of me. And he said that that castle had to come down. And then he also showed me that it wasn't just that sin, but that there were other things in my life where God had permitted that castle to remain for so long, because there was so much else in my life, unforgiveness, being judgmental, being horrible with my children, being horrible with my wife.

This is Father's Day, fathers. Perhaps this is a time when fathers need to go back to their children and say, daughter, son, I have wronged you in the way I've brought you up. Sons and daughters, I have wronged you with the way I've treated you sometimes, because I've dealt with you in anger.

That's what my parents taught me. That's what I've used to deal with you. But I know I'm supposed to be different from Scripture.

I have misused you. Forgive me and help me. So I had to, this pastor said, I had to forgive my mother.

And I said, no, no, no, I cannot do that. She's my hero. She's the person I look up to.

And he said, but she hurt you deeply. It was wrong what she did. And you must admit that it was wrong what she did, so that you see sin in the right perspective.

There's no excuse for sin before a holy and righteous God. You must forgive her. And so he had me compose a letter.

My mother was 90 years old by this time point. And he had composed me a letter of forgiveness to my mother. And as I wrote this letter of forgiveness, I started to realize that this had caused part of my addiction.

This had caused part of my marriage breakdown. This had caused part of my hangups in my life. This had caused irreparable damage in a human sense, but it could be repaired by God.

But this pastor said, you forgive and you forget. And I think of many of you here who have been hurt, maybe in situations, in family situations, being misused by your father or your dad or relatives. I think a few that have been misused in church situations where you have been rejected.

Your number two step is to forgive all that have hurt you. And you say, what do you base that on? Why should you say that? Well, in Matthew chapter 6, 14 and 15, Matthew chapter 6, 14 and 15, which are two verses in explanation of the Lord's prayer, Matthew chapter 6, 14 and 15, it says, for if you forgive man their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive man their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.

God is saying here, if you forgive, I forgive you. God says, if you don't forgive, I don't forgive. And if you don't forgive, you think the other person is somehow hurt.

They couldn't care less if you forgive them sometimes. Forgiveness is for you to get bitterness out of your system, to get anger out of your system. To forgive means that you forgo that heart attack.

You forgo stomach ulcers because you cannot sleep at night because that person has hurt you. You think about that person all the time and you somehow have to get back at that person. And you say, if I forgive that person, I'm doing them good.

Let me tell you, dear sisters and brothers, maybe that's true. You also do them good, but you do good for yourself first. And Corrie ten Boom, she was in a concentration camp in Germany.

Corrie ten Boom later on was released from the concentration camp. She was misused and experienced terrible things. But God saved her from the concentration camp.

Her sister died in the concentration camp and she later on went on a speaking tour throughout Europe. And one day she was in a service and a well-dressed man came up to her and he says, Miss ten Boom, I just want to shake your hand. And she started to reach out to his hand and he said, I am the prison guard in the concentration camp where you and your sister were.

And Corrie ten Boom could not touch that man's hand because all of the hurt from the past came upon her. She knew how this prison guard was responsible for a sister being misused. She knew how that prison guard was responsible for his sister dying.

She knew how that prison guard was responsible for what happened to her. And so she cried out in her heart and she said, God, you have to help me. Lord Jesus, you have to give me forgiveness.

I cannot do this. And she said, as she cried out to God, he gave her strength to forgive. And she said, as she raised her arm, the Holy Spirit came from up high through her arm.

And as she touched that murderous hand, forgiveness came upon her life and her heart. And she was set free from that unforgiveness in her heart and her life. And Beloved, forgive.

And perhaps the last point this morning, and perhaps God will give us another time to share more, but let me close with this illustration. The worst person in the world that I had to forgive was Edgar Reich. When I realized how I had failed God and how I had hurt my first wife, how I had hurt my daughters, I needed to forgive myself and I couldn't do it.

And I said, God, no, I cannot forgive this man. He's not worthy of forgiveness. And I ended up again with another pastor and we were talking about that.

And he said, well, you're full of pride. That's your problem. I said, what do you mean I'm full of pride? You know, I feel so badly about myself.

And he said, well, he said, let's take a look at this situation. Now you cried out to God in that grave and after you knelt. And what did he do? I said, he forgave me.

He said, what do you mean he forgave you? I said, yes, he did. He made me a new person. He made me a Christian.

He forgave all of my sins through that blood of Jesus Christ. And he said to me, isn't that wonderful that God forgave you? Now he said, let me ask you a question. Are you greater than God? I said, God forbid.

No, no, no, I'm not. He said, are you bigger than God? I said, no, no, no, God forbid. And he said, yet he forgave you and you won't forgive yourself.

You make yourself bigger than God. If he forgives you, you forgive yourself. And so I came to a point where I knelt again before God and I said, God forgive me.

God forgive me because Satan leads me in wrong thinking and wrong understanding. So beloved, we got to stop here because our time is up. But perhaps someday in the future, I'd like to share seeking forgiveness from those I have hurt and then making amends and restitution.

Is there such a thing where we need to make amends and restitution? Is the woman that I lived with in adultery, did I need to make amends and restitution? Then there came a part of surrendering to God, a part of obeying the leading of the Holy Spirit. And then the seventh point going public with my witness. So if you think about your Christian life, God wants you to reach that point of going public with your witness of sharing how you've been hurt in life and how God made you new and giving that great salvation that God has put into you to others.

Maybe God has given you something in your life and if you have never accepted Christ as your savior, then just cry out to him. Just cry out to him and ask him to come into your life. And Pastor Mark or myself, or I know there are a number of Christians here, just ask them to help you.

And then if you're struggling with sin, if you're struggling with those things that somehow don't want to go out of your life, again speak with Brother Mark or Pastor Mark or myself.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net