

My Credentials Acts 2:

by J. Henry Brown

J. Henry Brown shares his personal journey of faith while exploring the significance of Acts 2 and the early church's response to the gospel.

Duration: 32:01

Scripture: Acts 2:37-43

Topics: "Personal Salvation", "Christian Conversion"

Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker shares their experience of attending a Sunday school and witnessing the dedication of the teachers in keeping the attention of the children. They then talk about their encounter with an evangelist who was inviting people to special meetings. The speaker reflects on their own life and realizes that despite living a morally upright life, they still need Christ as their personal Savior. On the last night of the mission, the speaker publicly accepts Jesus as their Savior. They receive advice from the evangelist and are greeted by a fellow believer who assures them that they are now 'all right' in Christ.

Transcript

I'm very pleased to have this opportunity of being with you. It's our first visit to this part of America, and we're going to be down here for a few weeks, it seems, it's not longer, and I thought this evening, my first opportunity of speaking to you, that I might sort of present our credentials, that you might know enough about us not to be obliged to ask questions. So I thought that this evening I'd spend a little time in bringing before you that which helps you to know us a little better.

I have in mind a verse or two of scripture, need not turn to it, I'll read it to you, it's in the Acts of the Apostles, in chapter two, following, you remember, Peter with the eleven, when he stood up and began to preach the word to those that were gathered there. Verse 37 of chapter two of the Acts of the Apostles, now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall cause.

And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added

unto them about three thousand souls, and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, and fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles, and all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions, and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people.

And the Lord added to the church daily, such as should be saved, or such as were being saved, or even the saved ones. One note of that largely has been what has accompanied our preaching of the gospel over the past 50 years. Now, I'd like to try and get you before you this story, because I think it's very interesting, that I was born way down in South Wales.

My parents are not Welsh, I'm not Welsh, but that's where I was born, and I went to school down there, and I learned to speak Welsh. I spoke English, I spoke Welsh, but I spoke English with a very strong Welsh accent. Then, at nine years of age, my parents moved to the north of England, and I became the laughingstock of the boys in school, because of this strong Welsh accent that I had.

Well, eventually I got over that, and I managed to speak English without so much of the accent. Now, I'm spending a lot of time trying to learn how to speak American, so I hope you won't find my accent too difficult. It'll improve, I've no doubt, as time goes on.

Well, now then, at nine years of age, I came up into the north of England, and then found I had a grandmother there who was a very fine old Christian. When I first was introduced to her, she had a big bible on the table near his hand, and she often opened that and read a few verses to me, and then she would give me a present. Sometimes it was an apple, or a pear, or a packet of sweets, something like that, candies, and of course I went there quite a lot.

Not for the bible readings, or the sermons, but for what came afterward. Nevertheless, I believe that much that my grandmother said in those days, it really remained in my mind, and was made a blessing to me. I thought at that time that she was just a religious old lady.

I found out later, of course, that she was a very fine Christian. Well now, over and again I visited her, and as I said, she tried to help me, and I know that she prayed for me. And then when I was about 17 years of age, I was employed in a very large steelwork, and I was promoted.

And the next job that I got, a man had to come along there every Saturday morning to make an inspection. And the first Saturday morning he came, as he came through the door, he saw I was a new man on the job, and he looked at me, and then he said, good morning to you. I said good morning to you, and he said, and how are you this morning? I said, I'm all right thank you.

He said, no you're not. But I am, he said, I'm all right for eternity. So he went on with his inspection, and when he finished, went back to the door, and looked at me, and said, morning.

I said, good morning. I thought, well that chap must be a bit queer. He asked me how I was.

I said, I'm all right. He said, no you're not. He's all right.

He says, he's all right for eternity. Queer. But all that week I was thinking this over.

Now what did this man mean? And then the second Saturday morning, he came through the door. He said, good morning to you. I said, good morning to you, and how are you this morning? I said, I'm half right.

He said, no you're not. No you're not. He said, you're either right or, I beg your pardon, either right or wrong.

I'm all right. He said, I'm all right for eternity. He went on with his inspection.

When he finished, he went back there to the door, and he looked back at me, and said, morning. I said, good morning. Simply look all happy.

Another week to think it over, and he came back again. The following Saturday morning, I said, good morning to you. I said, morning to you, and how are you this morning? I said, I'm all wrong.

He came over to me, put his hands on my shoulders, and said, when a young man finds out that he's all wrong, God can do something for him. Now do you mean what you say? I said, no. You have obliged me to say it.

Well anyway, we won't argue about that, he said. You know, we've got a man preaching the gospel at our place. I'd like you to come and listen to him.

I said, I'm not interested. He said, I know that, but I'm asking you to come and listen to him. I said, I don't want to.

I know that, but I'm asking you, will you please come? Why should I? Well he said, you'll hear a man preaching the gospel, and I'd like you to hear him, and then you can tell me what you think about it. I said, well I know, I don't want to come. I'm not interested.

Now he said, they tell me you're a good fellow. You like to please people, he said. You don't drink, you don't smoke, he said, but you go out of your way to help people.

I said, now look, why not be kind to me? I'm asking you to come and listen to this man. Now, will you be kind enough to come? Oh, I said, well, maybe. Well, I'll see.

And now look, he says, the meetings are starting on Sunday night. John McAlpine from up in Trood, Scotland, he's down here to preach the gospel, and you'll be interested. I said, oh well, I'll see.

And on Sunday night, I was going, and I was not going, and I was walking past this building, this hall, you know, and as I passed the door where he was there, evidently waiting, and he put it down to my shorts and said, oh you're coming are you? I said, no, I was just going for a walk. I said, if you're calling me to push me through the door, and he says, that's all right, you can go for a walk afterwards. Here's a bible, here's a hymn book, now you come in, and I'll find you a nice seat.

So, as he went through the door, he was going up to the front, and I said, I'll sit here at the back. No, no, no, he said, those are for the late comer. So, I thought, oh.

So, then away we went up the front, he said, I want you to sit with my brother. So, I sat with his brother, and for the first time I listened to the gospel. I'd been in a church once up to that time, once only, and I'd been into a Sunday school once.

I didn't get on well. It was my first time in, and I found the other boys could answer questions, you know, scriptural questions, and well, I couldn't. So, I said, I'm not going there again, and I didn't.

So, then I'd been in a church once, I'd been in a Sunday school once, now for the first time I listened to the gospel, and I was deeply interested. I'd never heard anything like that. So, the next night I was walking past that place again.

I was going, I was going, and he was there again, and he took me by the chair, and he said, so you're coming again? Well, I said, I was just going down the street to see some friends. You can see them afterwards, you come in. Here's a bible and a hymn book.

So, I said, well, I sit on this back seat. No, it is my brother's up there, and he doesn't like to sit alone. I thought, no.

So, up the front I went again, and once more I got the full blast of that preaching, and I was pretty sure that they'd been telling that evangelist all about me, because he was telling me all about myself, you know, and when he pointed, he always pointed at me, he pointed at me. I knew he was pointing at me. He never pointed at anybody else, and when he looked at anybody straight, you know, he looked straight at me.

I thought, no, this is terrible, but I couldn't get away from it. And so, after that, I didn't find it difficult. I went every night.

And so, under the sound of the gospel, I was beginning to realize that although I didn't smoke, and I didn't drink, and I didn't swear, and I was living quite a good kind of a life, there was still something wrong. I really needed Christ as my Savior, and on the last night of the mission, I stood to my feet in the midst of a big congregation of people, and I said, I'll accept the Lord Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior. I had a talk with the evangelist afterwards, and he gave me some good advice, and then I came out, and I found there were three of the brethren there who were collecting the hymn books and bibles and stacking them, and among them was this man who came to make the inspection.

So, he came across to me to shake hands, and he said, well, how are you? I said, I'm all right. Yes, he said, you're all right, so am I. We're both all right now. We're all right for eternity.

Is that it? I said, yes, that's it. Then I went outside, expecting to find all the people had gone, but they hadn't. They were there, and they were still waiting for me, and as I came out, they all wanted to shake hands and say how glad they were I'd accepted Christ as my Savior, and believe me, my hands with fingers were tingling for days after this.

They really meant it when they shook hands. So, I would say the next thing was, very soon they said, of course, you know, those who believed were baptized. Well, I said, I don't know what you mean by baptism.

I think I was probably baptized when I was a baby, sprinkled, and suddenly, but I said, I don't think about it. Well, they said all those who are in fellowship here have been baptized, and so I said, well, I'm quite happy about it if you tell me what does it mean. So, they explained to me what baptism meant, and I said, well, I'm very happy to be baptized, so I was baptized.

Well, then I found that in this place, they had a very large Sunday school, over a thousand children in it. You ever seen one like that? Well, I have, I've seen another one. I saw one in London.

I spoke to 900 children in one big room. Well, this Sunday school that I was in, over a thousand children, and they said, we'd like you to be in the Bible class, the men's Bible class, because you'll learn a great deal there. Had a 70 men in it.

I said, that's great, and they said, we've got a women's Bible class here too. Got 75 women in that, and we've got an infant school too. So, I said, well, and later they said, now you're making good progress.

Would you like to be a substitute teacher? I said, well, I don't want anything. I've never been to Sunday school. I don't think about it.

Well, no, but if you're willing and ready to help, well, then we'll put you in for it, and you'll get on all right. So, I remembered that I had been praying ever since I was saying, because I heard somebody use this verse of scripture, Paul on the way to Damascus. Lord, what will thou have me to do? And I've been praying that, and now I began to think, well, maybe this is what the Lord wants me to do, do some work in the Sunday school.

And at last they called on me, and they said, we want your help in the Sunday school. Go down to the infant school. Oh, I thought I'm going to begin at the ladder.

So, I went around to the Sunday school, and I pushed open one of the doors, and I got a bit of a fright. There were 200 infants sitting there, 100 on each side, and a man standing with a desk, and he was speaking to the children, and on the front I noticed the man standing there, the one standing here, and I watched them for a moment, and I saw that they were looking at the children, and watching the children, and the moment a child lost interest, you know, it would click the fingers. So, I thought, oh yes, they're keeping the attention of these little ones on the speaker.

So, after a moment, the man speaking says to me, you come to help? I said, yes. You go to the back, he said, and the man at the back there will tell you what to do. So, I saw a man at the back, so I went to him, and he had a long rod, like a fishing rod.

So, he said, another one in the corner, go and get it. So, I said, watch me. Well, these at the front could get the children's attention on the speaker, you see, but they couldn't reach the back one.

So, he showed me what to do. Watch the children, and if you see a child turning his head to speak to the next one, you tickle the top of his head with it, and he'll sit up and fold his arms and listen. So, that's when I began.

In the Sunday school is the infant with a tickler, right down, right down the bottom of the ladder. Well, I thought, well anyway, I'm doing something, and then they said, now, after a while, they said, they want you to speak for five minutes. Oh, I said, not speaking.

I can use the tickler. I keep them in order, but don't ask me to speak. Oh, everybody has to take the turn, so you've got five minutes.

No, I said, I'd rather not. Oh, you can't refuse, everybody. So, I said, oh well, I'll try.

So, I got enough material together, you know, to last me for about half an hour. And when I stood up, I never knew where it all went in just about three minutes. I said, don't know anymore.

So, they said, you've done very well. So, this was helping me to come on in work for the Lord. Well, then, the first night I went into that building, the evangelist had gone into the street, and he had a concertina, and he was playing hymn tunes, and a crowd of young people were following him, and they were singing.

And every now and again, they stopped, and they called out to the people in the street, we're having these special meetings, we invite you to come along, you know. So, and after they'd been round the streets for a little while, singing and calling out an announcement, then they made their way back into this hall. And I was sitting right away up the front, and when they came in, almost dead on time, they all made their way up to the front to leave those back seats for the late comers.

And I happened to turn round to look at these young people coming in, and some of them came and sat just over on the side, and I looked at one of them, I looked straight into the face of a girl that I remembered. She was in the same school, she was in the same class, I haven't seen her for years. Oh, so she must belong to this place then.

So I said, well, haven't seen her, haven't seen her for a long time. So, and the night I was saved, I noticed that she was among them waiting there to shake hands, you know, and I looked at her again, and I reminded her, I said, you were same school, same class. She said, I don't remember you.

Well, I remembered her anyway. Now, as time went on, still interested in the work of the Lord, going out, open air meetings, teaching a little here and there, working in the Sunday school, the war broke out. And as a young man, I began to wonder, well, is there something I should do? And I listened to the brethren, you know, the elders, and some said one thing, and some said another thing, and some didn't say anything.

And I thought, well, back again to my text, Lord, what will thou have me to do? So I prayed very earnestly about this. I had a good knowledge of medical work, I'd been privileged to be with students, medical students, and also I felt I had quite a good knowledge of God's way of salvation. And at last I felt clear before the Lord that I could use my medical knowledge to help men who were sick and wounded, and at the same time I could probably help them to know Christ as Savior.

So I volunteered to go into the medical corps, and immediately, because of my knowledge and experience, I was put on duty with no training at all, and I worked for a time receiving all those that came over from France, wounded, sick, and I had many opportunities of speaking to these men, of giving them a tract, of giving them a gospel of John, and so I thought, well, the Lord is helping me. But after I'd been down there for a time, we were sent up to a depot. Things were beginning to get very grim over in France, and all able-bodied men were being gathered together and sent over there, and as I was Class A1, I was sent up to this depot for training.

So when I got there, I found myself among about 16 or 17 other Christian fellows, and we began to have some good times together, although we were there in training. And then one day the Sergeant Major came along, and he had a long list of names, and he began to read them out, and he said, now all you men whose names have been read out, you're all on drought. You're all going to the quartermaster's store to draw your tropical kit.

So I thought, well now this is a terrible blow, because during the the few months that I had been saved, I had heard a lot of missionaries. Most of them came from Africa or India, and I thought at the time, well we haven't got missionaries in any other part of the world, only Africa and India. And when I listened to them,

and when I looked at the pictures that they threw on the screen, I said to myself, well if ever I was to be a missionary, I would never go to India.

I would never go to Africa. And I said to myself, if you felt the Lord wanted you to go out as a missionary, well where would you like to go? And I thought, well I would like to go to Iceland, because I like the cold weather, I don't like the hot weather. I get on better when it's snowing, and blowing, and freezing, and well I reckon a cold country would suit me better, but I didn't know what cold country there was, until in a missionary meeting I heard somebody talking about a place called Iceland.

Oh I said, that's the place then for me, Iceland. Who's there? Oh there's a man there named Gook, Mr. and Mrs. Gook are working there. Anybody else? No.

Well I said, I think he needs a bit of help. So, Iceland. And I began to prepare for it.

I prepared for it in such a way that my mother, and father, and sisters, and brothers thought sure enough I'd gone mental, because I was going out almost without anything on to get hardened up for Iceland, you see. And I thought, well now this is it. The Lord will certainly open the way up for me to go to Iceland.

And now here the Sergeant Major says, all you men, report to the quartermaster's store and draw your tropical kit. I went to him, I said, Sergeant Major, are you sure that's my name you've got there? Yes, he said, this is your name. So I said, I think there's a mistake.

He said, we don't make mistakes in the Army. Well I said, you know there's a lot of browns, other browns. Well I said, I'll tell you this, Sergeant Major, it's not a good use of sending me out there to the top because I won't be able to stand a climate like that.

He said, you'll stand anything when we've finished with you. So I thought, there's no getting out of this. And so I drew the tropical kit, and I came back again.

I put it down on the ground, and I said to myself, well I don't care what they give me for the tropics. They can give me a big cork helmet, and they give me a scarlet spinal cover, you know, to save me from getting a sudden stroke, and they give me khaki drills, suits, shorts, and what have you, but I don't care what they give me. If they're going to send me out to the tropics, then it won't be long before John Brown's body lies a-moulding in the grave.

I'll never stand a climate like that, never. But anyway, the Army's got to do what you told. And so, in due course, we sailed from England in a troop ship, packed like sardines, chased by submarines, but eventually got away, and we arrived in Cape Town, and I went out a few days off in Cape Town.

I went round and found some of the Christians. I told them my story, and they said, we'll pray for you. I said, I'll need it.

And then slowly went up to Durban. We got ashore for a few days. I found the Christians.

I told them my story. They said, we'll pray for you. I said, I'll need it.

And up we went until we got to Dar es Salaam, way up in East Africa there, and then we were put ashore, and we began to work in our hospital work. Well, it was a dreadful place, and I thought it wouldn't be long before I was down like the rest of them. On the ship, we had a lot of Welshmen, and as I knew the Welsh quite well, I got them singing.

And so we, in the evening, we sang hymns, and then I would have about 20 minutes to 25 minutes preaching the gospel to them. So these men on the ship, they knew me quite well, and they'd heard the gospel from me over and over again. But when we got up onto the east coast there, these men began to go down with typhoid fever, and with black water fever, and there was no hope for them in those days when they got there.

And so it wasn't long before many of them were being buried. I know some of them, men that have listened to me preaching the gospel. And one day I went along to that little cemetery, and I saw those little wooden crosses with the names of men that were with me on the ship.

And I thought to myself, well how long will it be before there's another wooden cross there with my name on it, because this is a dreadful place. But the Lord kept me fit and well. And then one day when I went out, I found a little group of men, Africans, sitting on the shore, and one of them reading a book.

He sat in the middle there, and he was reading a book all year, and they were sitting around listening. And the long white gowns on him, white caps, he put them on his head. And I thought, well they must be Mohammedans, you know.

And the man there is reading the Quran. And I passed several times, and every night they were there. Then one night I got rather interested, so I went to the man as he finished, and I put my hands out to the book, and he gave it to me, and I had a look at it, and I thought, well, terrible language this is.

But my eye caught sight of a word at the top of the page. It was the word Marco. And I turned over a few pages, and I saw Luco.

And a few more pages, I saw Ioanni. And I turned back, and I saw Matteo. I thought, Matteo, Marco, Luco, Ioanni, well, it must be a New Testament or a Bible this fellow's reading.

And I got interested. And so I looked at it. Well, I don't know the language.

But as I looked at it, the man put his finger on the words, and he began to read them again. And he read them very slowly, and I noticed that it was divided up, it was syllabic, you know. And it came rather easy.

So I thought, well I'll try. So I tried, and they all sat down again, and, oh well, come on, you read. I don't know your languages.

So, you know, you read. So I began to read, and I went every night. And I got interested in the language.

In about five months, I was able to preach the gospel in a simple way. And then the powers that be found out I could. And so they sent me a way out into the bush with about 400 men, and I had to manage best way I could.

No transport, no supply column. We had to live on what we could find. But I'd loded in this opportunity that I was in the army, that I was doing missionary work.

I was preaching the gospel to the Africans. Well, now, I've got to make a story short, this long story short. After the war was over, I had nearly four years, we found ourselves back in Dar es Salaam, and I had this crowd of men with me.

Some of them had died, but most of them were there, and they all came round and said, you know, we, many of us are now Christians, and you're going back to England. What are you going to do when you get back there? So I said, well, go back to my employment. Well, they said, we think you ought to come back here.

So I said, well, I've got to go and pray, Lord, what will they have me to do? And they said, well, we're going to pray that too. You've got a father and mother, sisters and brothers, you want to see them. We've got fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers, we want to see them.

So when you've been over there and stayed with them for a while, we want you to come back. Come back to us in our country, and if you come back, we'll build a house for you, we'll supply you with food. If only you would live among us and go on preaching this gospel.

We're going back, and we're going to tell our people what we can of the gospel, but we want you to come back. Now, will you come? And I said, you pray, and I'll pray. And so I came back to England, and I went back to the assembly, back into the Sunday school, back into the Lord's work as much as possible, but I could never get away from that crowd, and I had eventually to say, Lord, here am I, send me.

Well now, during this time, I got the second blessing. The Lord gave me a good wife, and so the two of us, we began to think about missionary work. She was interested, I found she was interested, so was I. But the trouble was, we were pulled apart.

I had been thinking about Iceland, she was thinking about a nice hot country, and so we had to pray a lot about this, but eventually, as you see, the Lord overruled, and he took me out to Africa and brought me back. So otherwise, Iceland for me, Africa for her. But the Lord took me over there, and so it was Africa for me as well.

So eventually, we both went out, and we've been out, as you've heard, for 20 years in the Congo, about 20 years in Zambia, and the Lord has blessed that work. We have been able to establish many assemblies in the Congo, and they're still going on very well indeed, managing their own affairs, and we established a number of assemblies in Zambia, what was at that time Zorba and Rhodesia, and they seem to be managing very well. Then we came down into South Africa for the past two and a half years, and whilst there, I've been able to write five books in the African languages, and they are now in circulation.

The ministry is proving a great help and a blessing to them. By the will of the Lord, we hope we will be able to get back again there, and may still be able to do a little more, and maybe a little more writing, and we can get a visa and go up on a visit for about three months, and visit those assemblies, and I know they'll be very pleased to see us, and we can give them a little more encouragement. So I'll leave it at that, and ask that you might remember us in prayer.

Remember those people over there who are still trying to carry on the work of the Lord, and pray that we too may be guided and directed. We are supposed to be on vacation now, but the moment we leave Africa, after working in the languages for five or six years, we get back to England. They say, Brother, can you give us some ministry here? Brother, can you give us a series of gospel meetings here? And this is how it goes on.

So we have a kind of a busman's furlough, you see. So now part of the furlough is over here, and we're moving around, and we trust that the Lord will make us a blessing for many whilst we're here. Now there's

quite a good deal of teaching, and if it pleases the Lord for us to put that model of a tabernacle up, I'm sure that you will find that these talks will be a real help and a blessing to you.

So I'll leave it at that.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9775.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-henry-brown/my-credentials-acts-2/>

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