

Testimony

by Kenny Deason

Kenny Deason shares his powerful testimony of rebellion, addiction, and the transformative power of God's grace in his life.

Duration: 46:59

Scripture: Genesis 1:1

Topics: "Personal Testimony", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his past as a young boy filled with pride and anger. He recalls singing songs that boasted about going to hell with his companions and idolizing men who embodied the same pride and anger. However, as he grew older, he realized that God had removed his hand from him and allowed him to experience the consequences of his actions. The speaker acknowledges that he took for granted the love and benevolence that God had shown him and now understands the foolishness of his past actions.

Transcript

I'd like to start just by praying, and Almighty God, Lord, our maker, our father, who is in heaven, Lord, I do adore you. Lord, as I have come, Lord, with so many others through, Lord, this veil of this flesh and this life, the eternal throne of your majesty, God, I worship you. And I look at you, and I do behold a beauty, a substance, and a life, God, that I know created not only me, but everything that my eye sees and every eye in this place has seen, that you are God, you alone are God, and we worship you.

And I pray that just the testimony of your work in my life, God, I pray that it would, Lord, be effectual in the life of many. I pray for your spirit, Lord, who has moved through my life, has moved through so many men here, Lord, come and be with us. We invite you to move upon and across our hearts.

Speak to us, Lord, and I just pray that you would let me be your instrument this morning. Just to speak of the glorious things that you do in the lives of men. I love you, in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, amen.

Amen. Yeah, Andy had invited me to come and share something with you all, and he just asked me to really pray to God and pray that God would put on my heart what he would want me to share with you all. And I did, when I had thought about it.

I'd really felt very stirred to share with you all what God did in my life. And I know in this room, where I am right now, and looking across this room, I feel like every one of you all know me, and I believe that. And I think by the time I'm finished sharing this testimony, you'll understand why I said that.

And I think my life is a very generic life in a lot of ways. As a young man, very early on in life, justice was being breathed upon me. A justice that I could have, should have, and at any moment, I really do believe, I can't believe it didn't happen, that I did not get plummeted to a depth of hell that would have tormented me for the rest of my life.

And in God's justice, as he looked at a young man who did not honor his father, did not honor his mother, and the mother and the father that God gave me, as so many times they turned around in my anger and my hatred, whether it was my finger lifted up behind them or in my heart, I'm despising and hating them, that God in his justice could have and should have at any moment, at that time, plummeted me. And how many times did I look at God as I went to church with my mom and dad and sat in such light-hearted folly, scoffed at a word I was hearing breathed from a book that a man was speaking to me of the life of Jesus Christ. And as I scoffed in my folly, I looked at him, and I did.

I just considered, what foolishness. As I sat in that place and with my friends, even as a young man, I can remember so clearly who I was and God in his justice could have and should have plummeted me to a tormenting hell at that. And that was at a young age, as I grew up, and again, I feel like I'm probably, I can't be any different than anyone else in this room.

I believe that. Well, as I grew up, and me and my pride, and again, I'm scoffing at God, I'm laughing at him, well, I believe God began to laugh at me as God removed his hand from me and said, young man, I will turn you loose to the end of your ways. And you show me who you are.

You show the world who you are. Who scoff at your mother and father, and you scoffed at me, and in your pride, and in your anger, have lifted yourself up to be somebody that I tell you, as God is telling me, you are not who you think you are. You have taken for granted what I have made you.

You have taken for granted that I have stood before you, not only in my creation, but through the life that I've given you, I have extended more benevolence and more love to you than any, as Brett was saying, as any man could or would on the face of this creation. And now you're laughing at me. And God cut me loose as a young man to my own ways.

I, you know, as I look back, and I remember, I'm just in fifth grade, I'm a fifth grader in school. I'm singing songs, bragging about the party that I'll have in hell with all my companions. And that's the highway I'm riding on, and just utter boasting, I'm on a highway to hell.

My friends are gonna be there too, I'm not joking. As I sang those songs, I looked at these men who I idolized so much, that in them I could see, ooh, they've got what I've got. They have what I've got, and that's this power in me and this pride and this anger, and oh, I loved them so much.

I loved the pride of men. I gloried in it. As that fifth grade kid who, before I was even out of fifth school, my parents are looking at this troubled child, long hair, angry, coming, you know, even before fifth grade, I had to go to a school counselor every single week to meet with them and have a note coming home to my mother and father and saying, has the progress of this child changed? Who scoffs at the teacher in the classroom, gets at fights in the playground and all this, and by the time I'm in fifth grade, my parents just

thought, something's gotta change in this kid, and my mom and dad, they took every black shirt in my closet and ripped it out, they cut my long hair off.

My mom said, you will not be who you wanna be in this house, and so they ripped me out of the public school, let's take him to a private school. And on outwardly, clean cut, got the hair parted to the side, looking good, going to the private school. I'm in a family, very preeminent family or prominent family in the community.

My dad, a very righteous man, I really do, I love him a lot, and my mom. He's a dentist, he was an elder in the church that he went to, led worship there, and my mom and dad, I think all they wanted is like, I want a son who we can love. I'm sure they loved me in some way or another, but I can't see it in all honesty.

They would have said they loved who I was. So they're trying to implement these changes. Well, nothing ever happened.

That kid, though, a shell got put on me between age fifth grade until the first drug overdose that I had at age 17, where I fell to the floor flopping like a fish in a grand mal seizure. A lot had happened between fifth grade and age 17, where this kid being cut loose to his own way and his own pride, just a, you know, it was like there was two things people were looking at, and I don't know how many of you can relate to this in the own rebellion of your heart that so many people couldn't see, but on an outward appearance in my high school, sophomore class favorite, great guy, Kenny Deason, great guy. Let's vote him sophomore class favorite.

Wrestling champion, championship wrestler. You know, excel in that. And behind the scenes, pot smoking, PCP smoking, drinking constantly, fighting for money, getting arrested.

I got arrested three times in less than a month as a freshman in high school. On that third arrest, I remember my dad in justice, as I sat in the vehicle, he went into the police department expecting my older brother to be there. I was supposed to be at home.

Walks in and it's his son, Kenny. You know, what are you doing here three times in a month? And my parents were just wondering what is wrong with this kid? Well, at age 17, after my first drug overdose, I went into a hospital for the seizure and then into a drug rehabilitation center. And all of them, they told me, you have a problem, you have a disease, what they called it.

And they told me, we have these 12 steps that we'll give you and as a part of that, we give you all the gold you need to make the God that you wanna make. Make a God for yourself and do these 12 steps and you'll get healed. And I honestly, by that time in my life, I was broken.

I was coming to the end of the terms that I hated who I was by then. I really did, I hated who I was. And I went after it and I really tried and I fabricated this God out of gold.

I worshiped this God, this God I allowed to teach me, which was still this God of my understanding who I made. And I began making me, just like I told you, God let me do as a young man, I began making me. Things did not get better.

In fact, every time after this hospital, I go in and go out and I'm trying, trying to do my best and suddenly I'm out again and this time plummeting even worse and faster. Living in downtown Oklahoma City, a group of other people were selling drugs out of the house. Again, violence is still persisting in my life.

All the thrill and the addiction of adrenaline, you know, I was living with. I loved every minute of it. Again, this young man just full of pride and full of anger.

It's the pride keeps swelling and God's just waiting. What will the end of this young man be? After I graduated high school, my mom and dad, they're about at the end of themselves and just, you know, Kenny, we wanna bless you. We wanna do the best for you.

We hate what's going on in your life. We'll give you one last chance. We'll send you into a detox place and we'll take you to Phoenix, Arizona to a halfway house.

There's an art school there that wanted me to go there and so I'm giving it another shot and six months later, I'm out again and by that time, last conversation I had with my mom and dad, I'm threatening them with a murder and suicide in their house and telling them I hate them. That was the last discussion we had for two years. And in the next two years of my life, this proud young man was gonna plummet fast and furious in it.

I kind of immediately was living on the streets of Phoenix, Arizona, had a company of companions that we were all in it together. We were stealing together. We're selling drugs together.

We're fighting together. Just the whole love and the thrill of it and I had determined every one of us and we were so much better than everyone else. I lived by this motto of my own righteousness that I upheld so much.

Ooh, I hated this capitalist civilization that we live in and I hate this Christian church that surrounds me and I'm an anarchist and I hate police and all these things and so we ran around with piercings through our face and dreadlocks and mohawks and just really were the rough and the tough out on the street and again, my pride's just swelling and we're all in this together. Well, I began that God that I created in that hospital as I kept pursuing, there was something that I was chasing after spiritually and this is what was gonna take me by surprise that it began with just sweat lodges and worshipping. I'm after this primitive state of spirituality and I'm chasing after this spiritual dream that I'm after.

I'm feeling there's gotta be more to life than this. Well, from a sweat lodge in Oklahoma with another recovering alcoholic or what have you, that God that I began chasing suddenly took a transformation at this time of my life on the streets as I start taking blades and cutting the flesh of my body and spilling blood and other body excrements, worshipping blatantly demons. That is no game.

It is no game. And this young man was taken by surprise as suddenly something started happening to me that there's already enough shame and ignorance that I'm already embarrassed looking at who I am up to this point, but suddenly things are gonna change. At this time as spiritually, not only is there rebellion, there's drug abuse and all these things, I'm literally pursuing spiritual principalities that they were bigger than me.

They were sharper than me and they were quicker than me. And I don't know if you've ever been conned, taken advantage of, and you're led down a city street sidewalk and you're hoping to get one thing and you wind up with nothing. In that, I got taken.

My reality that I began living at at this point, and I wanna just paint this picture of who I was at that time. And again, I told you I'm ripped up with piercings and wouldn't bathe for three months, really. And was proud of that, whatever that might mean.

Proud of the fact that I wouldn't bathe in three months. Shiny pants, we called vegan leather, vegetarian leather. Our denim pants are full of body oil, that they're shiny in that.

Go figure how somebody gets proud of something like that. But I've got lice, I've got scabies, I've got a needle in my arm, I'm shooting heroin, cocaine, and crystal methamphetamines by this time. I'm doing things right now in my life that I'll tell you if somebody would've asked me as a young man, I would've chosen death before I would've done any of the disgraceful things that I'm doing in my life right now.

At that time in my life, I would've chosen death. I would've told somebody I never would do that. I never would do that to somebody and I never would do that to myself.

And suddenly the decisions that I'm making, they're beyond the capacity of normal human reason. I am what I began creating, which was an animal of my understanding. I was a monster of iniquity.

I mean a beast of sin. Unreasonable, unsensible, it's beyond comprehension what I suddenly became in that. And the whole while I'm proud of it in that.

And God, I can't imagine what I could've looked like as He began looking down on me and I inside, and this is no exaggeration, if anybody's ever read in the Bible and they hear about a child who the father's grieved because his son kept falling to the ground, convulsing in that. And I'm not exaggerating, I've been in hospitals with grand mal seizures that I would fall to the ground flopping like a fish. My lungs would get just compressed in fears.

Voices were roaring through my head, screaming inside of me. I'm trying to turn them off. And I would ask them, what are you doing? They would just scream at me.

What? I'm terrified inside. I am terrified. People, conversations going on, people don't even know me and I'm thinking they're talking about me, speaking of secrets about my life they shouldn't even know and suddenly I'm in this reality.

It's like a nightmare. I'm a demon-possessed maniac. I am out of control.

I'm scared to death. I couldn't trust anyone. There was no one I trusted.

And in all that confusion, I'm pumping my body full of more drugs, more alcohol. Violence is accelerating. I'm finding myself in situations where, you know, I remember the fear and I sometimes would call my mom.

And, you know, I needed, you know, hoping I'd get into a situation on the streets of New Orleans. I gotta get out of this town. I don't wanna risk hitchhiking, getting out of here.

I gotta get out now and calling my mom and pleading, I gotta get out of here. You know, no, Kenny. Just off the phone.

My mom and dad, they would have nothing to do with me. But they were doing everything for me. My mom, she took a vow on herself during this time.

She's not even gonna cut her hair. She's praying unceasingly for her child. She's driving down the road and God's telling her, Barbara, pull into this church.

Get on your knees and pray. Pray for Kenny. She would go into the church and she's praying and she's telling other people, please pray for my son.

All these churches all over the area, they're praying for her son. Missionaries in Ecuador, they're praying for her son. The saints of God's kingdom are interceding on behalf of this demoniac, this maniac out on the streets.

And I started having these, you know, again, I'm in this world of confusion and terror and suddenly, this other interruption. And this is all spiritual. There are very few men or women who on a face value were involved in my life as God was gonna come in and change me.

But suddenly, inside of that world I'm living, and I remember the first time it happened. I'm in San Francisco. Anybody ever been to San Francisco? Streets of San Francisco? All right, familiar with the zones.

Well, I'm on Hayton-Ashbury District and we're, you know, involved in a drug deal, me and Max, and we got burned. It was a partner on the streets of mine and we get burned and so, you know, we're looking for somebody. It's three o'clock in the morning and we're running up and down Hayton-Ashbury and through Golden Gate Park, this really big park where you got more needles in the bushes than you do bark.

And we're looking for this guy and suddenly, we're walking down the sidewalk and I get seized with fear and panic. I fall to the sidewalk. Max is right beside me and I'm panicking and my vision just turns to black and I see like this picture, two beings embraced around each other, spinning and I hear all this roaring and suddenly, I hear somebody say, high five, smile.

And it's just a wingnut on the street. Anybody know what a wingnut is? All right, it's a nickname that we give to guys and this is exactly where I'm heading in my life is right where they're at and they've hit a point of no return in their insanity and this is what the guy looked like to me. It's just a typical wingnut on the streets.

He's saying, high five, smile and I curl under again and I hear it again, high five, smile and he comes up and he takes my hand. We start walking down the sidewalk and he's just saying what seems like obscure things but where I was at at the time, he said, I have friends in high places. Look, you can see they're looking at us.

I'm walking with him and I'm terrified and all of a sudden, I hear this voice and everything just stops and something very clearly says to me, no. That's all it said, no. And it seemed like time stopped when that word was spoken, no.

Why was it said or what did it mean and who is this guy? He's talking about friends in high places and I remember we sat in front of this bagel shop and by then, the people are coming in the morning to get started with their bagels and we're sitting down outside and he looked at me and he said, it hurts, doesn't it? And all I knew is he's talking about what's happening to me inside and that was the beginning of something that started happening to me. That same city, San Francisco, I'm sitting around a group of guys and I'm lying to them, telling them stories I never did and you know, anybody ever done that? And I'm in the middle of this and God is suddenly, I started, I am now articulating this was the voice of God and the conviction of my maker coming to me but that same voice came to me in the middle of that and said, tell the truth, just very clearly and again, it was like time stops and suddenly I'm just panicking and guys, I'm

lying to you all. That never happened.

I never did do that and just even start opening up about other things and everybody's looking at me like, Kenny, what's the matter with you? And in that same city, San Francisco, Scooby and Scrap go out one night and they jack a heroin dealer. They rob a heroin dealer on the street and come back with a bunch of dope and for whatever reason, Kenny's a close friend and we'll give him some. They give me a CC of dope and I get it in my hand and I've been on a binge and it's not like, I don't know if anybody ever did needles, don't do it but I'd been on a binge.

I'm doing stuff again and I'm telling you, I would have chosen death before I would do the things I was doing then and they give me a CC and I wanted it, I needed it and when it hit my hand, that same voice that said no and here comes the purpose of it, it says no and I took it and I just busted all of it to the wind. I never picked up a needle again from that point on and again, I didn't get saved at that point but something began happening inside of me. After other courses of events, I'm having these experiences inside and it was a powerful authority coming upon me, a presence of authority coming upon me that I'm in terror, I had no idea what was right, I had no idea what was wrong but I knew where I was going was not where I needed to be.

The reality I was living was just insanity and I had this undergirding sense from when that guy was saying about these friends in high places and suddenly these weird spiritual experiences that kind of seemed to be right. You know, it almost seemed to be a guidance or a direction. I didn't know where it was coming from.

I had no idea where it was taking me but all I knew is this seemed like truth. It seemed like something right and so I was taking these experiences and feeling like maybe something good could happen to me. Maybe something good could happen to me and I got off the needle but I didn't stop drinking and my alcoholic binges by this time, imagine a heroin addict now trying to supplant heroin with alcohol.

What does that guy look like? You know, a puking, disgusting wretch. I would urinate in my pants about every night in blackouts. You know, my closest friends with their faces ripped to pieces through my violence the night before.

I've got blood and cuts all over me constantly. Find out I was just a weeping, mourning drunk. They said I would just fall to the ground just crying and saying things like, does anybody love me? And just, you know, my mind is hitting this point of pain inside, confusion and fear.

I had no idea what to do. I'm just getting more and more scared but these weird spiritual experiences are happening to me and one night I have a dream and my mom's in the dream and I'm telling her, can you not tell that I'm trying to kill myself? And the next day I woke up and I remembered the dream and thought about my mom and I wanted to call her again. Well, that day God told her, when Kenny calls you, pursue him.

Pursue him. I called her and she said, Kenny, where are you at? Well, I'm in Phoenix. I want to come out there.

I hadn't seen her in two years. My mom comes out to Phoenix, Arizona. She said under one condition, you don't do any drugs or any drinking while I'm there.

I'll leave right when you start. I said, wow, okay. And so I start trying to muscle it up and dry up and my mom comes into town and she put me up in the hotel with her and again, she's looking at a son.

She hadn't seen me in two years at that. I wrote a few years ago, my mom gave me for my birthday a journal that she was taking at this time in her life. We're meeting at the halfway house where she last saw me when they dropped me off in Phoenix.

Here comes Kenny. I can't believe I'm seeing my son. All we did was hold on to each other.

God, I want my son well. In another place, she wrote, sat by a fountain outside, Kenny talked of his pain and cried. He said he's really messed up his life.

She's cleaning up language there. I can hardly stand the pain myself. I love Kenny.

Kenny talked of his fear of AIDS and his past. Feels suicidal, feels he won't live to age 24. He cried and cried.

I held him and said I'd stay as long as he needed. He needed me and I'd be with him. At that time in my life, things really start stirring.

I start, I'm cleaning up, which I had some other experiences detoxing in county jails. If the stay would hold me there for 45 days, I'm detoxing for this and that. It's just jail time detox.

This time, I'm with my mom. I'm detoxing off all the booze I'd been just thrusting through my body and started working at a temp work agency. She felt like maybe that was going to help me.

I was really aggressive and really angry during that time. After three weeks, my mom invited me to go back to Oklahoma with her. A decision that I took her up on.

Because again, I just felt like even this encounter with my mom, and I have no idea where I'm going, but I feel like this is something of this hope that I started holding on to. That something good might be able to happen to me. And so I went with my mom to Oklahoma.

I get to Oklahoma and I do wonder, maybe this weird reality that I'm living in, maybe it was the drugs. Maybe it was just the drugs. And you know, maybe the people I'm around.

And so I've been clean for a while. I go to Oklahoma City and meet some of my old punk rock friends and things like that. And we're hanging out.

And it comes back, the fear, the terror, the voices. Nothing's changed. I'm not on drugs.

I'm not on alcohol. And I'm still this maniac inside. One of the last things that happened, my foster brother, who I, you know, would have thought I really loved the man a lot.

We grew up together. My foster brother, I see him and I don't know what got into me. Blew up into a violent rage.

His teeth are punctured through his jaws. He gets sent to the emergency room. He's a bloody pulp.

My mom and dad, he calls them from the hospital and just, you know, it was the first time he'd seen me in years. Calling my mom and dad and I just saw, I'm at the emergency room. I just saw Kenny, you know,

basically just beat me to a pulp in that.

And that night, my mom and dad, they knew I was going to be at a coffee shop and they called the coffee shop and said, you get back home. And, you know, I imagine they were just at a place, you get out of this state. And on the way home, I just started weeping.

And I'm telling you, my hatred for what was inside of me was beyond, you know, all this aggression that I'm having and it's coming out on other people. You know, it's kind of turning inwardly and I'm just beginning to hate who I was and what is all this? And I tell my mom and dad about this, what I really am feeling about myself and I'm glad God gave them the grace to give me another day. And it wasn't too much long after that that another kid named Sean Sundstrom, a kid on the streets, Oklahoma City, somebody I knew before I left Oklahoma, given me a little green Gideon's Bible.

And he's telling me, hey Kenny, you should read this stuff. I think these guys were seeing aliens. And, which, you know, take that for what it is.

But, you know, and I tell him, I don't want to read about Jesus. I've got tattoos of my body scoffing at Jesus. I've, you know, in my heart, I don't like Christianity.

I don't want to look at that. That's got no, you know, I don't even want to look at that. He said, come on, just read it.

Read the book of Revelations. And so I went ahead and took the book and reluctantly put it in my pocket. And when I went home, I actually didn't go to Revelations.

I opened the book of Matthew and I just started reading. I grew up in church. To be honest, I don't know whether I just wasn't listening or they just weren't teaching or what it was, but I was reading something I'd never read before in my life.

I'm looking at this man, Jesus Christ, where I expected Him to be one thing. And maybe some of that was from the churches or the Christians I had seen. I don't want to take that too far in that.

But to be honest, I was seeing something of a glory that I had never seen in regard to this Christianity or what have you. As I started looking at the life of Jesus, and I was taken by surprise. Soon I've got a piece of paper and I'm writing down all these things that I'm seeing through this Word, whether it was demonized kids.

I'm seeing that and I'm like, wait a minute, that looks like me. And seeing Jesus had power over this. Or I'm looking at His wisdom and suddenly I'm seeing this is no normal man.

This Jesus, listen to what He said. And I remember writing all these things down. I cannot believe the words I'm reading.

And I mean, I had read philosophy, poetry, classical writings. I wasn't an unlearned man. But I'm seeing in this, this is something beyond normal reason.

And this in a whole different way. And I remember I told Sean, I'm really starting to like this Jesus. And he's like, yeah, he's pretty cool, huh? And I could tell it's like, no, I'm seeing something in Jesus that's not normal.

I don't know really what it is. And I just kept reading and I keep writing and I'm looking at Him and suddenly I'm realizing I'm seeing something more beautiful than I've ever seen before in my life. A wisdom that it was beyond me.

My pride is kind of sinking a little bit. I'm seeing what He's saying. And as I was hearing things like, love your enemies.

If somebody hits you on the right side of the face, can't he instead of blowing up and going crazy, why don't you just calm down and turn the other cheek? And even though that would have gone against every grain in my being, I was holding up a white flag and saying, I wish I could. You know, as I'm seeing He's saying, if you look on a woman to lust after her, you're in danger of hell fire. And even though that went against every grain of my flesh, I was holding up a white flag and saying, that has made a mess of my life.

I have had no pleasure in this flesh. I have had no pleasure in it. And Jesus is telling me to turn some things off that I had been running with for a long time.

And I did start seeing something in that suddenly it's a perception of a new life. Well, from the book of Matthew, I move on, I'm in the book of Romans. And my brother at the time, he gave me a little lawn mower and a block on a street in Oklahoma City mowing these lawns.

And if you can picture, it's mainly an elderly neighborhood. And you got this guy with dreadlocks and rings in his nose and his lip and, you know, nasty clothes. Again, I hadn't bathed, you know, I'm still proud of the fact that I'm dirty and filthy and, you know, mowing these yards.

These people I'm sure were scared to death of me. Well, one morning I went out there and the grass is too wet. So I go to the lake and I sit down.

I started reading the book of Romans that day and grass was kind of too wet. It was clogging up in the mower. So I went and sat beside a lake and was continuing in the book of Romans.

And I mean, I remember that day inside of me was just a stirring. Ah, it was turning. Paul was breaking open this logic or this making, taking the gospel of Jesus Christ and laying it out in this manner that he's explaining to me, you know, what was the purpose of the death of this man? What was the purpose of the resurrection of this man? How does God view humanity? And as I'm seeing Paul saying, look, you were not thankful and you didn't glorify God and God turned you loose to your understanding.

You've done things that are so shameful and abominable. The judgment's already visible in your life through what you do in your life. You're a wretch.

I'm reading Paul. I'm just having to say, you're right. You're right.

You know, I'm wanting to plow through. I'm getting answers. I'm on to something here.

And I knew it. And inside, you know, even though it's kind of this sense of conviction, but this sense of thrill, I'm getting a hold of something solid here. I keep reading.

He starts talking about Jesus and starts talking about Adam. And I kind of knew who Adam was. And he's comparing the two.

And he's saying, well, you all know that through Adam, death came into the world. You inherited that, Kenny. You got that from your daddy.

He got that from his daddy. And it all goes back. It started with Adam.

And everybody knows how through Adam, Adam gave something to mankind. And that's sin and death. And you've got it.

All right. I know I've got it. I've got Adam.

Well, just like that, Kenny. In fact, much more so, Jesus came into the world to give something to you and to give something to mankind. And it's not sin and death.

It's eternal life and grace and a gift that he's willing to give to you, even though you are in wretched state. And God in His justice would tear you to pieces. In His justice, He would tear you to pieces.

But God is saying right now, He tore His Son, Jesus Christ, to pieces on the cross. And He did it for you so that He could give you a gift. And while you have spoken evil of me, I've reached out in love to you, Kenny.

I'm reaching out right now, Kenny. Can you see? Jesus came into the world to give you life and a gift. And just like you got it through Adam, it's even much more so through Jesus.

Much more than the death and the sin. There's more life I'm willing to give you through Jesus than the death you apprehended in Adam. And Kenny, will you believe this? By then, I had to give it up.

Heaven cut loose on the bank of that lake that day. And in faith, I apprehended a throne and a majesty of Almighty God that surpassed anything I had ever experienced. And even inside of me, such a stirring happened as I believe right then demons were fleeing from me.

I believe God in triumphant power was making a humiliating show of them as He's coming in in triumphant power. And He's saying, this is My child who has received Me and I have received Him. And you must leave sin.

You must go. Death, you must die. Life is coming to this house today.

And I got set free. Wholly, completely, and utterly set free. God gave me life.

Even in that neighborhood where those people, I was mowing their lawns. The next week, they were all coming out in front of their house looking at each other and looking at me and they're walking out. What happened to you? Suddenly, everybody's seeing what happened inside of me.

The whole community and everybody knew about this dying freak of the decent child is suddenly this new Jesus freak, you know, and maybe my reputation didn't get any better for all marks, but everybody was and wondered what happened to this guy? This is your justice, Kenny. And He is laying down His life for you. God has humbled Himself, you proud young man.

He's bleeding. And Jesus Christ's blood spilt on the cross at Calvary kept flowing down. They raised Him up on top of that cross.

They took a sword and they cut Him in His side as people still like me began scoffing and laughing at Him. Jesus Christ, God had humbled Himself. You proud men, all of you who are still in your heart scoffing and

laughing at Jesus, He is being ripped apart for you.

God ripped Him apart so that we could have life. And that's what Paul was asking me to look at and not just to believe, but to understand Jesus Christ was ripped apart in His humility in behalf of our pride. And when I believed and understood that on that day, an inheritance came to me and a whole new life.

It wasn't just, you know, have you ever just offended somebody and you thought, well, I'll just walk away and do things different. It's not like that with God. You don't just walk away from scoffing and laughing at a living God who is a consuming fire.

He is a consuming fire. And you don't just walk away and kind of clean up a couple things and make some changes like I had tried to do so many times. That's not the way you come to God.

That mountain, His holy hill, He won't even let a man touch it. You can't come near God. You cannot come near Him.

There is one gate to the heart of God and there's only one way and one means. And until you look at Jesus Christ bleeding and crucified and you understand that is for the justice of your own iniquity, until you see that and you understand Jesus Christ and His agony died for you, you cannot come to that mountain where God dwells. I'm telling you, His hand is held out at you in His fury.

And there's nothing holding Him back from utterly destroying you, but His mercy that's being expressed on that cross. And if you will look to Jesus as the Scripture says, look to Me, all the ends of the earth, and you will be saved. And if you look at Him, He will save you.

He saved me. And at that point in time, that high and holy mountain where such a God lives and dwells, I can now go there. I began running up that mountain to God.

It's Zion, His holy city, His holy place. I began running there and not alone, I'm running there with other redeemed saints, people set free, alive in His Spirit. I'm now able to come to this place and worship Him, to look at Him, and now I see a glory in God.

It's amazing. It's amazing what happened in my eyes when I first understood and believed what Jesus Christ did on the cross. It's amazing what happened in my eyes that a God really, and it was nothing fictitious if I deemed Him somebody that I didn't like, I was absolutely right.

I probably shouldn't have. He didn't like me. But not based on anything He had done, but who I was.

And it's amazing what the cross of Jesus Christ and that work alone can do inside the heart of a man to make you acceptable to stand before a living God. And He does not care where you've been. He does not care.

I'm telling you, some of y'all probably think I did worse things than you. I haven't even put a drop in the bucket on what was going on behind the life of that proud young man. And there is nothing that you have done that's beyond Jesus Christ's willingness for that agony and that blood to have been shed for you.

And I really do, I want to right now open up. If God has stirred, and I believe it could happen that right now today through the word spoken, God could have stirred your heart today for the first time to see Jesus Christ crucified and to understand that He was ripped apart in His humility on behalf of your pride. And if that's a reality, I really do stand up.

Stand up. There's men, Christians in this prison, me, others that are here. I mean, really, there is no reason why if faith has been stirred up in your heart that the same inheritance and the same life that was given to me cannot be given to you.

And I do want to say that if there's something that's standing between you and God in that, whether it's your sin, whether that's your shame, whether that is your pride, I wouldn't encourage you to come. I wouldn't. I would encourage you to look and to look at Jesus Christ and to look at the bruises, the blood and the agony that He did for you and let that do a work in your heart.

And if you don't believe me, I've got other witnesses right here and I would, first of all, like you all to stand up. Who knows what I'm talking about? Stand up. Amen.

Look at this. Every single one of us, can everyone say, I understand what this kid's talking about today. I know what he's talking about.

I know what it means to look at Jesus Christ on the cross and to be given a new life. Look at these witnesses. And we are just a drop in the bucket.

We are. There is a train, a train of captive slaves being set free. Picture it.

The emancipation of mankind behind Jesus Christ. A train for over 2,000 years who even picked up the rubble from the beginning of creation of the saints who are glorifying God in heaven. Now all y'all can sit down.

Look at these witnesses. Okay, I've got two minutes. This doesn't have to stop here though.

I'll be running out the door. No offense, but thank God. I could be here with every one of y'all, couldn't I? I'm not different than any one of y'all.

But I would encourage you, hit your face to the floor. Look at Jesus in that. If that's a missing element in your life and many of you knew it, you can't say, I don't have that.

Well, that's how you get it. You look to Jesus and Jesus alone. It doesn't get any more simple than that.

Well, God, I do love you, Lord. All of your saints here, we praise you. God, we exalt you.

Lord, I pray that the words spoken today, the testimony of your work in one man's life, Lord, I pray that it would, Lord, draw men to look at your soul and to be saved. God, glorify yourself. Lord, glorify yourself in bringing the pride of mankind to his knees to worship you.

Make your name known. Lord, let them see your strength now through your love. I love you.

In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

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