

# Nicky Cruz Testimony

by Nicky Cruz

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*Nicky Cruz's testimony is a powerful example of the transformative power of God's love to change lives and bring redemption.*

**Duration:** 58:19

**Scripture:** John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:8

**Topics:** "Testimony"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story of his involvement in a violent gang. He describes being brutally attacked and seeking revenge with his own gang. They engage in fights, carrying weapons and causing chaos in the neighborhood. The speaker takes pleasure in the violence, even going as far as rubbing the blood of a beaten person on his shirt. The sermon serves as a cautionary tale about the destructive power of violence and the need for redemption and transformation.

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## Transcript

...on me, slapped me and said, go to hell. I remember this. I remember stretching forth a finger to Nicky Cruz.

Said, Nicky, God loves you and he's going to get you. This is one young man, has the touch of God, picked out of the gutter to come to Pittsburgh. Tell you of the grace of Jesus Christ.

And every time I hear Nicky tell what God has done for him, I have to sit and weep. Because I remember when he stood with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth. And a pistol in his pocket.

And hating the whole world. And Jesus manifested his grace. Nicky and Jeff Morales, his interpreter.

Nicky Cruz, my co-worker in the Lord. Tonight, the Lord is as big as you may think. I don't know what's going to happen tonight.

I will only wait upon the Holy Spirit. I trust in the Holy Spirit tonight. All of the glory is going to belong to God.

God is jealous of this glory. No one else can take this glory. About six months ago, I went to New York University.

And there they asked me to speak about my salvation. There were psychiatrists. And they had gathered together to see what had happened to me.

And as the meeting was progressing, I had a short while with them. Then one of them stood up and asked me this. Let us take the power of God and put it aside for a while.

Let's take Brother David Wilkerson and put him aside for a while. And let us think about ourselves. They began to analyze the problem that I had.

And then a psychiatrist asked me. Now that we have put God aside, we have put religion aside, we have put Reverend Wilkerson aside, What if I went by that place where you were at? And let's pretend that you were with the gang again. If I went to you and said to you, Nikki, I love you.

What would have been your reaction and what would you have thought about me? And before that assembly I said to him, My first reaction at the time would have been that you would be a homosexual. Because the only thing that can change a man is the love of God. The love of God is positive.

That is why I say that this is not something that belongs to man. This rests only upon the baptism of the love of God that changes and transforms takes hate and baptizes it and turns it into love. And that's why that man had no other alternative but to sit down and be quiet.

Many years ago, I come from a Spanish family. A home which was completely destroyed. Where there was only the power of the enemy.

A home where my father, as the head of that home, was living at the time as a director in spiritualism. My father was the director of different assemblies. My mother was a medium.

And could also read the fortune in the cards. She would say the person's good or bad fortune. And this was her philosophy.

That she would never read the fortune for any one of her children. And at that time I had seventeen brothers and one sister. This was my gang.

I can remember at the age of eight, I received my first shock when I walked into my home playing with a small ball in my hand. And there were guests in my home. And the lady, as I walked in, pointed her finger.

And because I looked so much like my mother, she said, your son looks just like you. And my mother right there said, this is not my son. He has never been my son.

And I have never loved him as such. I ran at that time and ran into my room. I laid down on my bed.

And there I began to weep. I cried. And it was so that I could not contain myself.

Hours passed by. And then I got up. Then I was not the same Nicky.

I was not the son of my mother. I was a completely different person. I got up from there with hate.

I looked at my mother and what I saw was hell. There instantly I said to myself, I hate her. I hate her.

And there I repeated to myself, I hate her. And even after she beat me, I continued to yell, I hate you. And there was the first time.

And the last time that I wept. Until I met the Lord Jesus Christ. And there I continued on my road being unable to contain myself.

Darkness covered that home. My brothers were afraid. Then when I grew older, I decided to come to New York.

Even though I was a minor, I came to New York by myself, by plane. When I arrived to New York, I was completely alone. I just stood there by myself.

But one brother of mine was the only one who came for me. But I was not able to be with my brother. So I began to wander again.

I began to sleep in parks, in subways. Anywhere where I was able to lay down. Many times I would just wander around the city.

I would be walking day and night. And it was such a condition that I couldn't be alone or still. I had to go into restaurants.

And while I was sitting there, I would order a meal and leave quickly. And then as soon as I saw everybody busy, I would run out the door without paying. This was happening every day.

I had visited almost every restaurant in New York. And it was so, that I was completely confused. But one night I was standing on a street corner.

A fellow came to me and said, Tonight the Mamo Chaplin, the whole gang, is going to gather and we're going to have a big dance. And in this dance there's going to be a lot of girls and guys. And I would like for you to go and meet the boy.

And I want you to meet the leader. I accepted the invitation. Then at about 7.30, I began to walk.

And he took me into a dark place. And as we walked, I noticed that there were no lights. Then we went into a hallway.

He opened the door. And I thought I would see light dance. But then it happened that all I could hear was a phonograph and footsteps.

And as I walked in, I began to stumble. And it was that boys and girls were laying on the floor drunk and high. They were petting heavily on the floor.

They were smoking marijuana, yelling. All of them were completely disordered. And because I was in darkness, this did not bother me at all.

And I gathered, I went into their gathering. They invited me to join the gang. The leader said, we need one more fellow.

Would you like to be in the gang? I said, give me three days to think about it. In those three days, I will be able to tell you if I'm going to be in the gang or not. So I began to think.

Three days later, I remember I walked into this place. When I walked in, the leader said to me, welcome. Then he said to me, if you're going to join, you're going to have to go through one of two initiations.

You're going to have to accept one of these two initiations. The first one he said, the leader himself said these words, I'm going to take a switchblade into my hand, and you're going to have to stand up against the wall. You can't move in any direction.

So I would have to stand there with my hands at my side, stiffly awaiting. He would face me directly, and walk away from me 20 paces. As he counted from 19 to 20, he would throw the knife at me.

The knife pierced my body. Automatically, I would be a member of the gang. If not, I would still be a member of the gang.

But the idea was to go through this terrible ordeal. The second initiation, five of the strongest fellows once again put me up against the wall, and there they would beat me until I fell to the floor unconscious. I decided to accept the second initiation.

They put me up against the wall. They began to beat me left and right. The impact of the fists on my face was hard.

I could feel the impact upon my chest. I was on my feet only for about five minutes. I wasn't able to take it anymore.

I was bleeding from my nose and my mouth. I was weak. I lost my breath.

I fell to the floor, and there I lay unconscious. They picked me up, put me into a car, and dropped me off in a dark alley. The next morning, I awoke.

My body was aching, black and blue all over. Then a committee came and said to me, now you're a member of the gang. They gave me a welcome, a reception.

So, because I was a beginner, I thought that this would be something that I would have to give everything to. The first time I went for a holdup, we got all mixed up. It was a detective.

We surrounded him. He fell to the floor unconscious. We began to search his pocket.

We stumbled upon his bag. It was a detective. The gun which he had was a .38 caliber. This was the weapon that I kept.

I thought that this was something very easy. Many times we would run into other gangs. Sometimes 200, sometimes 150.

We would begin to do everything. You could see Nicky running around shooting his revolver left and right. I thought I was a cowboy.

And I began to get into all of these acts completely. I began to see a lot of violence. I began to join into the violence.

I began to join into torture. Already my heart had become completely filled with evil, filled with hate. I hated the police.

In the year 1957, we declared war against the police department. We began to shoot at them with our weapons from rooftops. We began to throw garbage cans at them.

We would wait for them to be alone. We would throw stones at them. We did all of these things because we hated the police.

And I can remember one. Two months later, I became the vice president of this gang. My name was becoming popular.

I began to go in and out of jail. In jail, I would say to myself, I want to change. But this is something that when Satan introduces himself in such a profound way into a person's heart, there is no human mind, no medicine upon this earth that can heal the sickness of the heart because the heart is the most foolish of all things.

And I can remember that this began to bring about repercussions. I saw blood. Many times I joined in that.

Many times, very sadly, I have to say tonight, we would take boys and put them up against the wall. Someone would hold his head. About five of us, we would hold just the end of the blade.

And we would slowly drive it into the bar. Pull it in and out very slowly. The eyes of that boy were wide and big.

He was completely horrified. And this was so that we would do this as if it was a necessity. It seemed to be a satisfaction.

It seemed to be a thrill. And then as we were doing this, we would take him. We would take him into a dark spot, in the cellar maybe.

There we would tie him. We would start smoking. We would take the lit cigarettes in our hand.

We would burn the eyebrows. So we would begin to burn the body. And all these things, and many more, began to have an effect in me so that it was a horrible conflict going on.

It seemed like I was in a shut world. A world which I hated. And in which there was no way out for me.

I remember one night with five other boys. We went and got drunk. I hardly ever drank.

It was so that whenever I went to a fight, I was completely sober and conscious. Because this was not my philosophy. Getting drunk so that later I would get beat.

I went there to fight. And I lived every minute that passed. So I wasn't able to walk New York in peace.

I was always on guard looking everywhere. I was afraid that someone would stab me in my back. I was afraid that someone would shoot at me.

I can remember that as we were walking, we met this gang. So it turned out that I was already too drunk. And it was hard for me to see.

And one boy began to fight. Then the whole gang joined in. And there was only five of us.

There was a pipe beside me. So I grabbed it and I began to beat left and right. Everyone I could see and hit.

I would grab garbage cans to protect myself. And there I was in the midst of the battle. But then I decided that I wanted to get up.

I began to walk towards the boy that was coming to me with a knife in his hand. But then I fell to the floor. When I fell to the floor, well, why should I continue to tell you? I had a lot of hair then.

So that's why you see I have such little bit hair. It doesn't look the same. They grabbed me by my hair.

They dragged me for about a block distance. They kicked me so badly that my face was completely swollen. They beat me with sticks and did everything they could to me.

And only one fellow got into the scene with a pistol. So they ran and he picked me up from the floor. And this boy's name was Israel.

There he took me. And unconscious as I was, they took me to my house. I want to tell you that when I awoke I was not able to walk.

I took a stick and I used it as a cane. I got to the project. I said to the gang, tonight we are going to fight.

Tonight we are going to take vengeance. They all accepted. Another gang joined us.

The Hellburns. This gang got together and I said to one of their fellows, you take me on a bicycle. I can't run.

I'm going to go into the block. When I get into the block the first one we see we're going to beat. We began to walk into the neighborhood two by two.

About 150 boys were there with me. We began to walk in two by two. We surrounded the whole block completely.

I had my pistol in my possession. I said to one of the boys, you walk with me. I began to walk.

I was looking up through the rooftop. I was afraid that someone might shoot at me. Then a fellow began to walk towards me.

He walked towards me. I want to say that when he got real close to me I struck him. He fell to the floor.

Then all of the gangs began to yell out their names. They began to strike everyone in that area. Boys and girls, everybody.

A policeman was standing in a corner and he began to run. So the fight was on. They began to fire their revolvers.

This fellow that I had struck and was laying on the floor about 20 or 25 gathered around him and began to kick him. He was already unconscious. But still they continued to beat him.

His eyes were bulging out of his head. He was in a puddle of blood. Do you know what was my satisfaction? It was a diabolical satisfaction.

I took blood from the puddle and began to rub it upon my shirt. I began to laugh strongly. I think that I was possessed by demons.

This is how the story began. Fight here. Fight there.

We would break into cars and steal them. We would drive with them into the area that we were going to fight in. There, as soon as we walked out of the car we began to shoot our revolvers.

And as we went past the shots that we fired no one knew what was the effect that they caused. Later in the newspapers you could see it in the headlines. I remember one night I was away from my home.

It wasn't my home. It was a furnished room. And the gang was looking for me.

Then two cars came with members of this other gang. They sat waiting for me at 8 o'clock in the morning with three rifles in the car. They were waiting for me to walk out of that building or to stick my head out of the window because I wasn't there that night.

But I wasn't home that night. And that's why I believe that God protected me because I always left there at the same time. I want to say that as all these things were going on the problem kept on getting bigger and bigger.

The suffering was much greater. I thought that the word love did not exist. I thought that love was my hurting other.

This was my satisfaction. And even my own brother I tried to kill him three times. One time I stole a car.

My brother accused me before the police. They put me in jail. There in jail I began to plan.

These plans were how I was going to come home and take care of my brother. I wanted to kill him. I can remember they set me free.

I had everything planned for my brother. As I started to walk in the door I took my shoes off. I tripped out into the kitchen.

I took a knife and I came close to where my brother was at. I pulled the sheet off of his body. I put my hands over his mouth.

As I raised up the knife my brother awoke. He grabbed me. I thought he was going to fight me.

He was hugging me. He said, what's the matter to you? Then I began to beat my head against the wall. I began to yell horribly.

It was so menacing that I almost destroyed myself. And there I lay unconscious in peace. A peace which was only temporary and I wasn't able to call peace.

It dawned and then I was again back in the same old place. I couldn't even sleep in peace because I would have nightmares. All of these things kept on adding up and creating a tremendous conflict within me.

When brother David Wilkerson came from the country he didn't know my language. He didn't know the way we conducted ourselves. I don't know but I think he came from a very small place in the country.

He wasn't like David the psalmist but he came from the country. But the first impression was when he went to court and he was thrown out. No one knew the mystery behind this and what it caused except the

gangs themselves because the gangs hated the police.

And I remember when I looked at the paper and I saw him on the first page he was there weeping but I never in my life imagined that the same man would come to me personally and present to me the love of God. When he walked into the police station there he asked for permission. They told him you can't go into that territory.

No one can control that gang. They're going to kill you. We can't be responsible for anything.

You go, you're going to go at your own risk. Whatever happens you look for it. Let me tell you everything had been planned by the power of God because when he came and stood on that corner there was only another man with him.

He played the trumpet and David sang. David forgive me but he couldn't sing too good. But still they gathered in the beginning I stood there for about five minutes I said this is not for me.

I don't believe in this kind of stuff. So I went someplace else and there I was with the rest of the boys and we were talking and carrying on but then David walked and when he walked in he wanted to meet Israel and me. Israel was very polite.

He's always believed that you have to use diplomacy. And so when David approached me to shake my hand I struck him. I spit at him.

I said I don't want to know anything about God. Go to hell. And there angry I began to walk away from him.

And there he pointed at me and yelled Jesus loves you and it ended. Then as I walked out of the door angry was when the Holy Spirit took over. Then those words began to spin around in my mind.

Jesus loves you. Jesus loves you. I wasn't able to sleep.

I couldn't even taste around still. I was like one cigarette after the other. Time passed by it was gone already and here comes David with Israel in a car.

And the first thing I think Jesus loves you. I couldn't conceive in my heart how can God love me? How can these things change me? There was a conflict in my mind and this was how can this man expect that I change in a minute? Then I would look at myself in my own imagination Nikki changed into an angel. Nikki is very stiff.

Nikki doesn't do anything. Nikki is a nice boy. I couldn't conceive this.

I remember the many problems I had and the psychiatrist that took care of me. The court assigned the psychiatrist he was going to take care of me and examine me before sentencing because I had been to the judge three times prior to this he ordered the psychiatrist to examine me. This psychiatrist was driving me nuts.

It was so that I couldn't even understand him. Eight o'clock in the morning he took me to Bear Mountain. There he said I'm going to psychoanalyze you and I'm going to know what's your problem.

This problem we're going to take to court to see if you're sane or not and he gave me a piece of paper he gave me a pencil then he said to me draw what I'm going to tell you to draw. He said draw a tree. So I

drew a tree.

So he'd be happy I even drew a bird on it. Then he said draw a house. So I drew a house.

Then he said draw a woman. I just sat there and looked at her. What do you think? I don't like women? So I'm going to draw a woman for you.

And I drew the woman. Then he took the paper and the pencil from me and he just looked at me and said something has to be going on here. Either you're crazy or I'm crazy.

I don't think there's anything wrong with you. This man had me tired already. Maybe because of my records in jail he was able to know my life.

Maybe he knew all I was. Maybe he knew everything about me but he couldn't give me an answer. And that answer was for the biggest illness in me that I was a sinner that I needed something more powerful that my need was spiritual.

Then he took me back to his office and he said I'm going to see if you love your country or it is that there is a racial conflict that you have there's something wrong with you and you have a racial conflict. I'm going to take you out to sea. And pretend that I'm with you.

And there begins to sink. And for this ship not to sink and all these nationalities within the ship not to drown one has to jump into the water. He said I'm going to do this for Mexico.

Let me take over and say it. So the Peruvian says I'm going to die for Peru. He jumped into the water.

He said well what about you? Everybody's jumping off but you. I said you that are so beautiful for the rock that you are scientists who got me sick really had an effect in my mind. The first invitation he gave me for the St. Nicholas Arena I accepted and I took the boys with me.

And I want to tell you that as soon as we walked in I felt nothing. During the service I felt nothing. So I said to him very clearly I don't feel anything.

I can't believe in this. This is too fast for me. But I want to tell you that days passed by.

I didn't go back to the service. To the rally that he was holding was going to end on a Saturday. That Saturday we were supposed to go for a fight.

We were going to fight the strongest gang in Brooklyn. We had been fighting this gang already for about 15 years. What we were thinking of was either destroying them or they would destroy us.

That Saturday we were going to go there at 7 o'clock. Everything was ready and the gang was going to wait for us there. And then when we would get to this place the fight would begin.

We had all kinds of weapons. We had rifles. We had shotguns.

We had handmade zip guns. We had switchblades. We had clubs with snails procruting.

We had garrison belts We had all kinds of weapons. Bayonets. Kerosene bombs.

Everything. I want to tell you that at about 6.30 I got all nervous. I was so nervous that I wasn't able to resist this nervousness.

Then in my mind came the thought Tonight I'll die. Tonight someone's going to kill you. Tonight is your last night.

My soul shook Then I was restless. I said to a fellow Tonight is going to be the last night for me. Tonight something is going to happen to me.

I'm afraid that tonight someone's going to kill me. Then the fellow said to me I feel the same way. So then I said why don't we go and listen to this new skinny preacher.

See what's going to happen. So he had sent some buses. We went.

This is the night that I want to describe to your heart. I'm praying that the Lord will inspire me at this time. To see if I can make this as realistically as possible how it was this night.

When we walked into this place we were smoking. The girls were already cursing blasphemy and they began to mess around. They were wearing their shorts and they began to bother everybody.

We walked in and they sat us right up in front. When they sat us down the songs I noticed were tremendous. Something was moving me.

I want to tell you that when this began it was so precious. Then they told me to collect the offering. Then they said take five of the boys.

Then I got up and went right up to the front. There was an exit to the side. The people were coming up to bring their money.

The temptation was great. I saw that door and it looked beautiful and all I had to do was run right out of it. I want to say that while they were bringing up the money we had to go around the back so that we could give David the offering.

Then one of the boys while he was alone stuck his hand into the basket and took some of the money before he was able to put it into his pocket. He didn't know that I was right behind him. I grabbed his hand and put that money back in there.

This is going to be your cemetery right here. Then he put the money right back into the basket. I said let me see how much you've got in your pocket.

I remember he had about \$43 in his pocket and a few cents. I said put that money in there too. Give it for the offering.

It began to have an impact within me. That battle was strong and great. In my mind the devil was putting thoughts.

Don't go up there. Don't go up there. You've got a lot of enemies.

Don't go up anymore. You're real good in with them. Then the Holy Spirit was there also.

Jesus loves you. Jesus loves you. I wasn't able to resist it so I walked up to the altar.

While I was kneeling there at the altar I didn't know how to pray. I didn't even know how to talk. There while I was kneeling I was looking up towards the ceiling.

I said there is no hope. I don't think I can change. I can't believe that a miracle is going to happen.

Wilkerson came downstairs and he began to pray with me. Then I saw a picture I could see my life from the age of about eight. The condition in my home the things that happened to me in the garden.

The problems that had happened my friends dying in my own arms. I want to tell you that right there the boys were around me and they came for me to weep and I couldn't resist myself. My chest was wide and pained.

I wasn't able to breathe. I knew something was happening. I wanted to control myself.

I didn't want to shed tears. I didn't want to weep. But I want to say that the burden was so and sin was so heavy that I wasn't able to do anything else but to weep and cry out for God and say God if you are the truth that what this creature is saying that even within my belly I could feel as hard as rock.

The heart that had no son the Holy Spirit took it from me. And they're still there. Hallelujah.

You need the same cleansing power.

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