

The Greatest Event of My Life

by Oswald J. Smith

Oswald J. Smith shares his personal testimony of conversion and the impact of Dr. Torrey's evangelistic campaign on his life.

Duration: 10:36

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 11:28, John 3:3, Romans 10:9, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:8-9, Revelation 21:5

Topics: "Testimony"

Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker recounts their experience attending a series of meetings where they witnessed the power of God. They were amazed by the large crowds and the enthusiasm of the people. The speaker describes a moment of personal transformation when they felt the presence of Christ and realized they had been born again. They also mention the impact of the song leader, Charles M. Alexander, and the pianist, Robert Hartness. The speaker concludes by mentioning a special service for boys and the overwhelming attendance at Massey Hall.

Transcript

This is Oswald J. Smith of the People's Church, Toronto, Canada. I'm speaking today on the greatest event of my life. Three times in the New Testament, the Spirit of God relates the story of Paul's conversion.

For oftentimes, personal testimony makes a greater appeal than preaching. I offer no apologies, therefore, for telling a story of what God has done for me. When I was 16 years of age, in the year 1906, the greatest event of my life took place.

The newspapers were brought on the train from Toronto. The section men would open them up quickly and sit on the benches reading the news of the day. At this time, the papers contained startling news.

We commenced to read of a great evangelistic campaign that was being conducted by Dr. R. A. Torrey and Mr. Charles M. Alexander, preacher and singer, and we read about the whole city of Toronto being stirred. We were told that some were coming in from 200 miles around, that the meetings were attended by 3,400 people, that the hall was packed in a few minutes, and that multiplied hundreds were unable to gain admission. I had never before heard of an evangelist.

I had never been to an evangelistic campaign in my life. I was an ignorant country boy, but something in my heart led me to read those newspaper reports. Dr. Torrey's addresses were published word for word, column after column, day by day, and Mr. Alexander's hymns, especially the Glory Song, were reproduced, both words and music.

From time to time, Mother would say, so-and-so is under conviction, as the section men and farmers read the accounts. As for me, I did not know the meaning of the word conviction or the word conversion. But day by day, my interest grew as the papers continued to bring news of the campaign.

At last, strangely moved, my brother Ernie and I asked Mother if we might go to Toronto to attend the meetings, and she wisely gave her permission. I often wonder what would have happened had she refused. Toronto was 94 miles away.

It was a great day when we left the old Ambrose Station and boarded the train for the distant city. We went to the home of our Aunt Phoebe, Mrs. Thomas Finlay. Immediately, we were disembarking the way to Massey Hall.

We got on a Yonge Street car, and when we got off at Shooter Street and went around behind the car, we saw something that arrested our attention at once. A large crowd of people. Hurrying forward, we saw that they were standing before the great doors of Massey Hall, waiting for them to open.

Being boys, we elbowed our way to the front. Half an hour later, the doors opened, and we were almost lifted up in the press and carried into the hall. I looked around in amazement, for I had only been accustomed to a little country schoolhouse before.

I gazed at the immense hall, at the first and second galleries right around the building, in a sort of dazed condition. It was all so new to me, but people were pouring in, and so we hurried to get a seat. In ten minutes, the auditorium was packed, and hundreds were turned away.

We had arrived in time for the last eight meetings, and never missed one. Why others did not go who lived right in the city, I could not understand, for we had traveled nearly 100 miles to be present. Never will I forget those meetings.

Everything was new and strange. I was fascinated. My eyes were filled with wonder and amazement.

Never had I beheld such a scene before. I did not miss a single service. Moreover, I was never shut out, for I always got there on time and always got a seat.

I sat for a while gazing around. Presently, I saw a man with a smiling face step out on the platform. He commenced to wave his arms.

I had never seen a man do that before. The audience was singing the Glory Song, and I was carried up into the realms of heaven. Oh, what singing! I am used to it now, but how it thrilled me then.

I soon realized, of course, that for the first time in my life, I was looking at the world's greatest song-leader, Charles M. Alexander. So filled with curiosity was I, that I sat with my ears, mouth, and eyes wide open. Robert Harkness of Australia was the pianist.

The second-to-last meeting came. We had made up our minds to accept Christ that afternoon. It was a special service for boys.

There were 3,400 present. We did not know then that our mother had written to Dr. Torrey, asking him to pray that her sons might be converted. We arrived early, and the hall was crowded.

What Dr. Torrey said, I do not remember, but I will never forget the way he repeated his text, Isaiah 53, 5. But he was wounded for my transgressions. He was bruised for my iniquities. The chastisement of my peace was upon him, and with his stripes I am healed.

At the close of his message, he asked those 25 and over who wanted to accept Christ to come forward. Some responded. Little by little, he lowered the ages until I was included.

But to my amazement, I was turned into a chunk of lead. I could not move. I did not know then about the power of Satan, but I have found out since.

Presently, my brother quietly nudged me, and that broke the spell. I sprang out of my seat. With a sober face, I took the momentous step.

For a moment, I found myself alone at the front. Then I grasped Dr. Torrey's hand and went down into the inquiry room in the basement, where I sat on a chair. A man came and spoke to me and then left, but I saw no light and got nowhere, though he thought I was through.

Then suddenly it happened. I cannot explain it even today. I just bowed my head, put my face between my hands, and in a moment the tears gushed through my fingers and fell on the chair, and they are stolen into my boy's heart, a realization of the fact that the great change had taken place.

Christ had entered, and I was a new creature. I had been born again. There was no excitement, no unusual feeling, but I knew that something had taken place and that ever after all life would be different.

That was on January the 28th, 1906, when I was 16 years of age, and it has lasted to this day. Yes, and it is going to last, praise God, throughout the countless ages of eternity. If I could go back to 1906, after having experienced the ups and downs of the Christian life, I would do again exactly what I did then.

My friend, have you ever received the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior? Is your heart's door closed against him at this moment? He says, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in. All you have to do is to open the door.

He'll never force his way in, but he'll come in the moment you invite him. As many as received him, to them gave he power, authority to become the sons, the children of God. Will you open your heart at this moment and receive him as your own personal Savior, just as I did more than 50 years ago now? And may I say that now is the accepted time? Now is the day of salvation.

There's no tomorrow with God. You must accept him and accept him now. Will you do it? Will you do it now before it's forever too late? Will you make Jesus Christ your own personal Savior? He has been a wonderful Savior to me.

I wouldn't exchange him for all the wealth of the world. Jesus Christ has meant more to me than anything else in life. He has never failed me.

He has never forsaken me. I'm so glad that I accepted him when I was a boy only 16 years of age. You too will be glad.

If you open your heart now and accept him, he'll save you for time and for eternity. Do it and do it now.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27580.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/oswald-j-smith/the-greatest-event-of-my-life/>

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