

The Second Coming 07 How I Came to Know Him

by Stan Ford

Stan Ford shares his testimony of how he came to know Jesus through his encounter with the Salvation Army and Victor Carroll, and how it transformed his life.

Duration: 55:49

Scripture: Genesis 3:8, Genesis 37:28, Matthew 22:37, Romans 3:23, 1 Timothy 1:12, 1 Timothy 1:15, 2 Timothy 3:16

Topics: "Personal Testimony", "Salvation Experience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares his personal experience of encountering Jesus and the impact it had on his life. He describes how he initially had a religious mindset but was confronted with the truth about his own sinfulness through the Word of God. This realization led him to understand the love of God and the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for his sins. As he continued to attend the preaching sessions, he found joy and peace in the presence of God and became more engaged with the message. The preacher emphasizes the importance of focusing on Jesus and His love rather than just following a set of rules or regulations.

Transcript

See, my favorite verses in the Bible. The first chapter of 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy chapter 1. We will commence reading in verse 12.

Most of you are aware that this evening the Lord will help me and you will commit me. I would like to share with you how I came to know Jesus Christ. Speak a little of one's own feelings with the Lord.

And what better words could I find than these words? 1 Timothy chapter 1. We will commence reading in verse 12. I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he tended me faithful, putting me into the ministry. There was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief.

And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundance with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance. That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am Jesus.

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy. Letting me first, Jesus Christ my shout forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. And now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, the honor and glory forever and ever.

Amen. The Lord will bless the public reading of his own precious words. Just a word of prayer, would you join me please? God and Father, we realize very much, indeed, how much we need these.

We pray that in a very real way, the Spirit of God may take that which is on our hearts, and use it that Christ might be exalted, that men and women may see in him the wonder of his salvation. Would thou then speak to our hearts? For Jesus' sake, Amen. I have a confession to make, that I'm giving my testimony this evening because so many of you have been pressing me so to do.

I don't find a great joy in giving my testimony. If you don't know what's going to happen, I'm going to go home tonight where I'm staying, and I'm going to remember things that I thought I'd forgot, and that's not going to be ever true. For if tonight I can speak of the wonders of the Lord Jesus, then I do it, and I do it willingly.

I do it cheerfully, joyfully, to try and tell you how Jesus Christ, in his wondrous grace, met us in faith. The story of the flood was read to us in the morning service this morning, at least a portion of it. We were reminded that Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord.

But one of the things that always strikes me about the story of Noah and the ark is the very simple fact that from the forest, from the field, from the mountain, from the valley, from every strata indeed that surrounded that place, there poured toward the ark those animals that God had bidden come. The road they took was different. The road that the lion trod was not the road that, indeed, other animals took.

But, although they came many roads, they all went through the same door. There were not two doors, there was one door. And your coming to Christ may be different than mine.

My coming to Christ will be very different to most of you here tonight, I'm sure. But of this never let us get away, that if you will enter God's salvation, then the door is Jesus Christ, and to him, and to him alone must you come tonight. I wasn't caught up in a Christian hole.

Now, please, please, I don't want any one of you to misunderstand. I was caught up in a good hole. I was caught up in a hole where my mother loved my father, and my father loved my mother.

We were caught up in a good hole, but it wasn't a Christian hole. It wasn't a hole where the name of the Lord Jesus is spoken of with love. It wasn't a hole where the Bible was read.

It wasn't a hole where the things of God were revered. I never went to Sunday school, or chapel, or church in the light. I was a man before ever I'd darkened the door of a place where the name of God was revered.

It won't mean very much to you here in America, but I was caught up in a home where my father was one of the co-founders of the old ILC, the Independent Labor Party, the militant socialist movement of my country. Not quite communist, but almost there. And if we sang anything when I was a boy at home, it would be international.

It was the Red Flag. It was songs that told us, indeed, of the march of workers. That's the surrounding that I had.

My father was gassed in the First World War, so I just remember him as a boy. I was born in 1916, so if you're good at some of the higher mathematics, you could work that out, can't you? But nevertheless, I was born in 1916, and I was just a boy at the end of the war when my dad, I remember him. I only know this, that when I started school at the Jackson Audley English Elementary School, I never had any higher education.

I left school when I was thirteen and a half. But I went to a school where every day it opened with prayer, and every day the Bible was read, as it always used to be read. Not now, but it always used to be read in an English school.

And so I suppose there was something in the back of my mind. I did, I suppose, as a child, learn something about God and about his word, although what I learned I can't remember. I only know this, that when my father died, we'd had poverty before we had it then.

My little mother, she didn't stand any higher than this. She was just a wee little don of a woman. I often used to say to her, Mum, you used to nerve me.

There she was, but nevertheless, that little mother of ours had to work harder to keep her boy. The school I went to was a school that one of the masters, anyway, was extremely interested in fighting. And he had on a boxing team, and entered from our school the British Federation Boy Boxing Championships.

And at my weight, I won the British Federation title, and they told me that I was the boy champion of Great Britain at my weight. I was not allowed. But this coincided with my father dying.

And as I say that, I knew that we had poverty before we had it then. And so one day, I packed my bag, and I left home. I didn't leave home because I didn't have someone to care for me.

I didn't leave home because there wasn't someone who watched over me. I left home because Mother had to keep me. And I knew that that was real hard work for her.

I packed and left part of the way, and I walked part of the way to the city of Salisbury. It was paying for a fare, a great cheap fare. And I knew at that cheap fare, there would be what you call over here the carnival, the Pair Ground.

And I knew that on the Pair Ground, there would be a boxing booth. And as I packed my way there, I sort of said to myself, maybe I can get a pipe, maybe I can earn a shilling at this. And I eventually arrived at that Pair Ground.

I don't know whether you have boxing booths today here in your country. I know you used to years ago. But in our country, of course, years ago, we always had a booth in almost every Pair.

There were mostly poor or white fighters, and they'd offer them to the crowd, and if someone could stand three rounds with one of the boys from the Pair, then indeed he earned himself five pounds. And away I went, and I think, well, maybe I can have a go at one of these boys. I looked at them as they were presented to the crowd.

I didn't shout for the gloves, but as soon as the show was over, I went to the owner of the booth, Sammy McCowen, and I said, Sammy, is there any chance of a fight? And he looked at me. Did you fight? Well, I'll have a go at you if you like, and you can see. And I jumped up into the ring.

I said, just as a lad, I'd held the Federation Championship, so I could handle myself, although I was only a lad. He looked at me and said, well, what do you want, a fight, or do you want a job? I said, I want a job. I'll do any work that has to be done about the booth.

I'll help you shift, and I'll do anything at all if you give me a job, sir. How old are you? I'm sixteen. I wasn't, I was thirteen and a half, but I can fire up to sixteen.

What he said, do your parents know where you are? I haven't got a dad, and my mum knows where I am. She didn't, but that was all. What he said, look, I'll give you a job, and if ever a boy wants to fight, you'll have to fight him, and make sure you head him, you rat.

I started my first job, just as a boy, at thirteen and a half, working about in a boxing booth, doing any jobs in a carnival, earning myself just a little money. For at the end of the week, and it was a Sunday, it was a good job it was, I'd have bought a heavy shop in Salisbury. And on the Sunday they gave me five shillings, which would be the equivalent of a dollar there, and I started doing lots.

Ten years I travelled around during the summer months, in the boxing booths of the fairgrounds. Please, I wouldn't cross the road, are you listening now? I wouldn't cross the road to listen to a man tell you how bad he's been. When God forgave my sin, he forgot it.

The Bible says, let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus. And I want to forget it. I only know this, that I didn't live the years I lived, travelling as I travelled, when I was falling into sin.

It seemed to get worse, and worse, and worse, as the years slipped by. When I was about twenty-one or twenty-two years of age, Don't tie me down to the exact date, please. One Saturday night, I went down to a pub where I used to drink.

I was leaning against the bar, drinking a pint of beer, when suddenly the door opened, and a little Salvation Army lassie came in. Oh, God bless the Salvation Army. Just a wee bit of a girl, with a postcard and a uniform.

She had under her arm a bundle of war prize, the Salvation Army newspaper. They were a penny a time then, so you can tell it's a few years ago. And she went from one to another, and she said, will you buy a war prize? And half drunk, I looked at her and I said, I'll buy a war prize, Missy, if you'll sing us a song.

I never thought she would do that. I thought if she did, she would have sung Daisy Bell, or something like that. That was part of the plot then.

But she about put me on the spot, and she said, I'll be very happy to sing a hymn. Will you ask the men to be quiet? Oh, I didn't like that. I mean, I didn't mind her singing a hymn, but I didn't want to be the chairman of a religious meeting in the pub where I used to drink.

But she put me on the spot. And I thought, well, there it is, in for a penny, in for a pound. So I turned to the fellas and said, fellas, will you shut up? The girl's going to see.

And I pulled hold of her, and I lifted her up and stood on the bar. And there she stood, unruffled, uncomplaining. She looked to the crowd of drinking men who just a moment before had been casting and telling smutty stories.

And she sang, On a hill far away Stood an old rugged cross The emblem of suffering and shame I loved that old cross with a dearest and best For a world of lobsters. I can remember it as though 40 years and more had passed. I can remember it as though it was yesterday.

I stood and looked at her. I don't know what your reaction was, and you will appreciate that I wasn't by any means a Christian. I was the absolute opposite.

But I looked at that girl, and I said to myself, That girl's got more guts than I've got. I'd have caught anyone in the bar. I don't say I'd have beaten them, but I'd have caught them and enjoyed every minute of it.

But I wouldn't have stood there and sung at him, not me. But here was a girl standing there singing about Jesus. I left my pint on the bar, and I walked back.

I didn't even lift her down from the bar. I've never seen her from that day to this. I walked out of that bar, and I walked up over the hill, and I said to myself, Man, what a fool we are.

But do you know what it's like when you hear a song that you enjoy, a melody that stays with you? It keeps coming back. You can't remember it all. You remember a bit of it.

That's how it was with me. I'd never heard the hymn before, but I couldn't get away from this, that wherever I went, I used to hear these words, For a world of lost sinners was slain. For a world of lost sinners was slain.

Not even the beginning of the hymn. For a world of lost sinners was slain. And it followed me wherever I went.

I couldn't get away from it. There came a time when I realized that if I was going to make any money fighting, I'd have to do a little bit more than boot fighting. I was unified in an open air show in Crystal Palace in London.

I was sparring with a sparring partner who gave me rather a nasty knot on the jaw. Knocked a two-pack. He could do that because he became the light heavyweight champion of the world, Freddie Mills, my great friend.

He gave me a knot that was a pretty hard one. I went along to see the dentist to have the suck pulled out, and I said, Listen, at the beginning of July, I've got a fight on August 9th holiday. Will I be all right? Oh, you'll be all right, he said, but you better not have a blow.

You better just lay off in a bit. And I was like a fish out of water. I'd done the ground work and the road work and the usual things that you did, but when it came to getting up between the ropes, I couldn't do it.

And so I'd go for a walk, mostly down towards the pub where I used to drink. I walked over the hill one day, and as I came towards the five-grade hotel where I'd heard this girl sing, right opposite the hotel, right opposite, there was a great marquee being erected, a great tent. I looked.

There were no caravans. It wasn't quite large enough for the caravans, and I knew where all the travelling boys were, and I knew they weren't few in our land. So I went across to the fence, and I said, hey, what's going on? All said the young fella, we're going out on a gospel mission.

We've got Victor Sorel from Cardiff coming here to preach. Will you come? What, me? I went. But you know, they put this tent right opposite the pub where I used to drink, and I'd walk down over at the hill, and I'd hear them singing.

It was a tent, so you could hear it all outside, and I'd listen as I'd lean against the fence, because it was good, bright singing, and there were big crowds there. But I never went in. One evening, I walked down towards the five-grades, and as I did, I noticed that the service hadn't started.

I was a bit early. So I walked up over the other hill, Tarnhamshire Road Hill, and as I was going up the other hill, coming down the hill was a young lady. Every person she saw, she stopped and gave them something.

I didn't know what it was. Might have been five-pound notes. I thought I'd go and get one of those, and I crossed the road.

And eventually my turn came, and this young lady stood in front of me, and she said, We're just going to start some gospel services in the big tent. Will you come down? No, I don't want to go down there. But this young lady could keep on.

Now, I know what I'm talking about, because I've been married to her for nearly 40 years. But nevertheless, she could keep on. And eventually you'll see her.

She's coming over on Thursday. Eventually, she got me into the tent services, took me to the door, and in I went. I spent a most enjoyable evening.

I did. I sat down in the tent, and I spent the whole evening looking around to see who was there. You know, I knew everyone almost in the district.

Oh, he's here. Oh, should be, too. Her.

Oh, I said something about her. Well, there it was. Oh, you're not the sort of remark you know I make.

Well, I spent the evening. A most enjoyable evening. The singing was good.

There were no collections. And no one asked for a penny. And out I went.

Do you know, the next evening, nothing else to do. I went down again. And the next evening, and the next evening.

And it wasn't long before I was sitting right at the front. And all the while, something was happening. I didn't know what it was happening.

I'm hoping it's happening in your life. All the while, I was listening to the word of God being preached. And although I didn't know, and although I tried not to listen, it was making an effect.

Somehow or the other, I got as miserable as this. I began to realize that there was something wrong with me. I didn't know what it was, but there was something wrong with me.

Till one evening, I went down to that tent. I was determined when I went down there, I was going to have a lay for the preacher. When the service was over, I went straight up to him, and I looked at him, and I said, Mr. Carroll, you don't believe all that nonsense you've been preaching, do you? And he looked at me and

said, well, young man, it's not nonsense, and I do believe it.

Go on, said I. You've got a jolly good job, what do you get, five pound a week? That was good wages before the war, you know. What do you get, five pound a week? He looked at me, and I had the wings completely taken out of my chest. Completely taken out of my chest.

For he looked at me, and he said, well, young man, I don't know what it's to do with you, it's really none of your business, but as a matter of fact, I don't have anything for weeks. If you're talking about a wage, I don't get it. Years ago, I stepped out believing that the Lord who sent his disciples without scripture, without curse, was still alive.

And the Lord who, when they came back, asked them, did you lack anything? They said, we lacked not a thing. And I believe that God's alive, and I've been looking to Him to supply my needs, and no one's ever asked you for a penny, have they? So my heart went down in my boots. I didn't know what to say.

For this was the strange thing, no one had asked anyone for anything. You see, I'd always been taught that Christianity, and especially the church, their one purpose was to take from people. They never gave anything, they just brought.

I was taught, indeed, that Christianity was just an opium for the workers. First text of our teacher, my dad used to say, first text of our teacher is, be content with much things as you have. Then if the boss takes your money from you and doesn't pay any wages, you mustn't strike, because you've got to be content with much things as you have.

And that's what I was taught, and that's what I believed. Suddenly I find a man who wasn't interested in the financial side of the thing at all. He said, you know, they tell me that you don't believe the Bible's true.

What, me? Of course, I knew they told him that, you know. The first night I walked into the tent they gave me a handbook. And then the man that gave me the handbook almost ran right up the front of the tent and got hold of the preacher.

Well, I know what he was saying. I know what he was saying. He said, they tell me you don't believe the Bible's true.

What? It's not true at all. Full of contradictions. Oh, he said, can you show me one? I'll show you a hundred and one.

Oh, that's interesting. Come on over. We went and sat down.

Now he said, yes, where's the first one? Well, you know what I did. I did what every ignorant man has done. I looked at him and I said, well, in the beginning there was Adam and Eve.

Now I've got him, haven't I? Oh, he's finished forever. Like just before I've given in. Oh, howling.

He said, in the beginning, I said, there was Adam and Eve. They had two sons. One of them killed the other.

And then the Bible says he went off and married someone. Who did he marry if he only had two sons? Boo. Got it.

Might as well pull the tent down. Do you know what that rascal of a creature did? Do you know what he did? He looked at me and he said, now, just a moment. You said you'd show me.

And he handed me his Bible. Well, I didn't know where the story of Adam and Eve was. I mean, I don't know, but I expect I looked in Revelation to Genesis.

I don't know. Oh, he said, is this what you mean? And he opened his Bible, and he read it as a parable of Satan. You know, I'd never heard of him.

Well, he said, here's Adam's son, Satan. I said, that's not his name. It was Cain and Abel.

Well, no, he said, here it is, Setho. Oh, by the way, what do you do with it? He said, he protects sons and daughters. What do you mean, he only had two sons? Well, what sort of Bible have you got there, he asked.

Well, he said, a Bible, Bible. But that's not... Well, there it is, look. Well, he said, that's one.

We've got a hundred more to go. What's the next one? Well, you know the next one. The next one, every ignoramus throws up.

Well, I said, I don't know about that business of Adam and Eve. I'll have to think about that. That's always a good way to answer a question.

Take it up. I said, brother, there was a fellow by the name of Joseph, and Joseph was told by his brothers, and he was told by his brothers, one part of the Bible says he was told to the Ishmaelites, and another part says he was told to the Midianites. If that's not a contradiction, what is one? Who was he told to, the Midianites or the Ishmaelites? You know what he did, don't you? He said, you'd show me.

You'd show me. Well, if I didn't know where the story of Adam and Eve was, I didn't know where the story of Joseph was. But I want to say something to you young Christians here tonight.

Will you listen, please? On Pentecost that day, I not only met a man who knew his God, but I met a man who knew his Bible. And he took his Bible, and he opened it, and he said to me, what do you mean? And he read it to me. I said, here we are, look, Ishmaelites, Midianites.

Now I've got it all the text down. And he looked at me and he said, could I ask you something? What nationality are you? Oh, I said, you know what I am, an Englishman. Well, he said, that's funny, I thought you were British.

Well, I know I am. But he said, you're not hoping you're English. Yeah, but I'm British.

You're a Welshman, but you're British. Suddenly it dawned on me what he was getting at. And he just looked at me and said, rightly you could say you're English, rightly you could say you're British.

No contradiction, absolute truth. Rightly they could say they were Ishmaelites. Rightly they could say they were Midianites.

For one was but a tribe of the nation. You've got 99 more to go. And off I went.

Oh, please, I'd learnt them like a parrot from the father. Please, I'd picked them up as I'd moved around in the carnival. I'd listened to every smutty story and every smutty joke that could be told against the Bible.

And I'd learned them all and I'd threw them all at him. Every time he'd look at me and say, he'd say, you'd show me, you'd show me, you'd show me, until I could hit him. And as we went along, suddenly it dawned on me that while I wouldn't accept every answer that he gave, it dawned on me that it was an answer.

If I thought it was the correct one or not, that's a different matter. It was an answer. Suddenly I became silent and I didn't get anywhere near a hundred.

And then he looked at me and said, now that I've listened to you, I want you to listen to me. He started to tell me that I was a sinner. He started to remind me of the wickedness of my own heart.

He showed me what the Bible said about me. And the strange thing was this, that as he opened the Word of God and showed me what the Bible said about me, my heart said, yes, that's true. That's true.

I was speaking to a young man this morning who trusted the Lord Jesus. We opened that Bible to the third chapter of Romans and we read, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That's the first verse I read with him.

And I said this to him, and here tonight I said this to him, And I said this to him, and here tonight I said this to him, I only know that as I sat there in that room, I knew there was a God. I couldn't have given you one good answer for why I knew. I could now, but I couldn't then.

But I knew there was a God. I knew that I wasn't petrified, that unless God did something, I was helpless. I sunk on my knees, and I cried, God, I'm a sinner, save me.

I didn't know what it meant. But I knew this, that God had to do something, if something's what it doesn't, with my life. You know, I hear folk tell you when they get saved, that they should jump over the moon.

You know, everything in the garden would be lovely. I was more miserable and wretched after I asked God to save me than I'd ever been in my life. As a matter of fact, I nearly knocked a pallet on his back the moment I was saved.

That's the way to get saved, isn't it? You see, unknown to me, in the tent, at the back where they had a little canvas curtain, there'd been two pallets on their knees praying, all the while Mr. Cyril was talking to me. And then they heard me being in a tent, they heard me say, God, I'm a sinner, save me. And one of them jumped to his feet.

Hallelujah! I didn't even know what it meant. I thought someone had broken into the tent. They were trying to rob the tent.

I jumped to my feet, I was going to knock him down. The preacher put his arm on the children and said, it's all right, it's all right, it's all right. That's the way to get saved.

I rose from the knees, and after a while, speaking with me and counselling me, I said, well, sir, I'd better get home. I'll see you tomorrow. I woke up with him.

And up on the Tramlinster Avenue hill, he came with me, all the while talking to me about the Lord Jesus. He didn't spend one minute telling me how you ought to do this, and you ought to do that, and you ought to do the other. He didn't spend one minute saying you shouldn't do this, and you shouldn't do that, and you shouldn't do the other.

He spent the whole time speaking about Jesus, telling me how he found the Lord Jesus with a very present heart in trouble. I got to my home, and I said, well, good night, sir. Oh, he said, I'm coming in.

Never asked why you're leaving. He didn't knock the door. I opened the door and walked in.

And there was my little mother waiting for me. He never gave me a chance. He looked at my mother, and he said, Mrs. Fordstrand's got something to tell you.

Well, I didn't know what to tell her. I looked at her, and I said, I don't know. I got myself a bit religious tonight.

The only way I knew how to put it was something strange happened. Something strange happened. Suddenly, that little mother of mine burst into tears.

She started to cry. That wasn't my mother. You know, I was 21 years of age when she broke the last cigarette bottle in the back.

That was my mother. Twenty-one years of age, and now I was standing in the attic waiting for her. I'll show you who's ahead of this house.

I just stood and grinned at her. At this height, I stood there and looked at her as she cried with me. And I'll tell you why she cried.

She cried because she'd known where I'd been going. And in her way, she'd been longing for something that happened to her at home. She cried over me many a time when I rolled home from work.

Cried over me many a time when I'd come in, having been fighting, and I was black and blue and wondered whether I could even walk for that day. Wept over me many a time then. Now I came in, and she wept because she knew if it was true there was going to be a change in our house.

And hallelujah, it was true. Praise God it wasn't. As a matter of fact, my mother was the first person I led to the Lord Jesus.

It wasn't long after, before she was aged, that Emma Butler got back. Oh, God did wonderful things. But that was just now.

I trusted Christ. That's 40 years ago. Friends, did I say this to you? I look back over these 40 years.

I'm 54 years of age now. I'm no longer a boy. And I look back over this last 40 years.

And I want to say this, and God is my judge. I am answerable to every word before Him, and I'm very aware of that. But never once have I ever regretted taking Jesus Christ in the face.

Never once. I've regretted not serving Him well enough. I've regretted not doing all I should do.

I've regretted not being the sort of Christian that I ought to have been. And I've never regretted that. I went along to a little gospel, a little company of Christians, similar to those Christians that are responsible here.

It was maybe a slightly different meeting. Lord's Day morning, when we gathered around the table to remember the Lord, there was a table there at the back, and a board on it, and the board said, those in politics sit in front. I had to sit behind.

They wouldn't receive me into the fellowship. They wouldn't baptize me. They wouldn't do it for a very obvious reason.

And please, I want to say, I thank God and will be eternally thankful they didn't. They didn't because I still carried on fighting. I still earned a living fighting.

And they couldn't understand how any Christian could do that. There was a line of separation between those who loved the Lord and those who didn't. We had a dear brother in our meeting, he was a dentist, you know, like my friend Mr. Love here.

And oh dear, every time I went to the chapel and I was there whenever it was open, he'd take me on one side, you know, give me a lecture. And dear Christian, I, do you think that's right? Do you think the Lord would have done it? Do you think, until I got cut up, I said, how do you get your living? He said, I get teeth out, I'm a dentist. Well, I'd try and get them out another way, thank you.

That's all there was. But all the time, I was facing this. It wasn't that I saw anything wrong with it, but there came a time a little while after.

In our own fellowship, we always had a crowd of young men. And we used to go away to the New Forest, near where we live, camping, right through the winter. We'll camp, you know, camp in one of these wooden huts you have over here, and say you go camping.

But we went in the tent. One evening, along the meeting, they said, Sam, Mr. Searle, the man that led me to the Lord, he's coming up for a young men's Bible camp. Just for a weekend, can you come? When is it? They told me the date.

I said, sorry, I've got to fight a fellow by the name of George Markham in Patterson's Isles. Can't fight him. I can't come.

Well, when you're fighting, Sunday night, well, it'll be over by then. Try and come. So I spoke to my brother, who managed me, and I said, I'd like to go to this camp if I could.

What do you say? You'll be all right. Just one day. Well, on the Saturday and the Sunday, and then Monday you go for lunch.

And be sure you're there on time. I'll be on the certain train. You'll pick it up at St. Hector's.

So off I went. Now, you'll appreciate that it was a, it was a Bible camp. It was a Bible class camp.

There were a crowd of young fellows. When I say a crowd, don't misunderstand me. Maybe thirty-five, thirty-eight of them.

Young fellows, late teens, up to their thirties. We had a wonderful time. Monday came, and I had to go up to Strathampton to catch the train.

Just as I was leaving the camp, I said to Mr. Sewell, the man that led me to the Lord, I said, Walter, I'm on the way. He looked at me and said, well, we've got to have a word of prayer, haven't we? Well, I'd prayed about lots of things, but I hadn't prayed about fighting. He said, come on.

We went into a bell tent, an old army bell tent, and he knelt down on the train, and he started to pray. Now, I've heard people pray all over the world. I've never heard such a bloodthirsty prayer in my life.

Do you know this man of God, I mean, he was a man of God. He's home to the Lord now, for he's more a man of God. But this man, crunk on his knees, and he said, Lord, this young fellow's going up London, fighting.

You give him all the power in his conscience. You let him hit the other fellow about so he won't be recognized. You give him such... I opened my eyes and looked at him, and he was trailing like an angel.

When he finished, I said, Amen. I mean, what else could you say? And up I got. I walked out of the tent, and he came after me, and I looked at him, and he was a dead concern.

I couldn't stand him any longer. I stopped, put my hand on his shoulder, and said, Mr. Stone, do you think you were right praying like that? Boy, that's just why he prayed like that. He looked right at me and said, Son, if you're doing something you can't pray about, it's about time you gave it up.

My heart went right down in the boot. I got on the train, we went up for the rain, and that evening in the pub, we got a few cards. I was waiting to go up, and we were popping a pill, and I was waiting to go up to the pub.

Now, I've been to a religious boy's camp, you understand. I don't know how many of you have done anything like this. But sometimes the hardest part of a fight, you know, is while you're waiting to get up there, just wondering how good the other fellow is, trying to remember what you learned about him, how he punched, how you had to react, so on and so forth.

And so generally, I would look at a paper, a magazine, or a book. But I'd been to a religious boy's camp, and the only books they had were Bibles. And I had a little New Testament.

And I took it out of my bag, and I was looking at it, when suddenly, a doctor who'd just examined some of the lads who hadn't been up for the weigh-in, came along. Now, he was a very good fellow, but he was a Jew, and an Orthodox Jew, a very good doctor, but an Orthodox Jew. And he stood by my side, and he spoke to me, asked me how I was, and hoped that I'd do well, and then suddenly, he looked and saw the Testament.

And he picked it up, and he looked at it, and he looked at me. And he said, why, these two things don't go together very well, do they? I make them go together very well, mister, don't you? And I took it, and I'll tell you something, my heart went down in my boots for the second time. I suddenly realized he was a man who wouldn't even claim to be a Christian, and yet he didn't expect these two things to go together.

I found out that even the world had a higher standard for Christians than I had for myself. I pulled this fellow, George Markham, and I knocked him down in a couple of rounds, and I was coming out of the ring, and as I did, the man put his hand on my brother's shoulder, and said, I want to see it. He was a matchmaker.

He had a boy that he wanted me to fight, and so after we drank, and so on, we went into the office to see it. Now, he didn't mean anything by it, please, he didn't mean anything by it, but he was talking to try and get my brother to sign a contract. My brother wanted a bit more money, wanted to fight in a different place, and this fellow started to swear.

Now, I want to tell you this, when God saved me, he saved my tongue. To my utter, utter shame, I want to tell you, I couldn't have put a sentence together without swearing. I had the filthiest tongue that ever a man could have, but when God saved my soul, he saved my tongue.

And the proof I had when I was first converted that I was saved, is that I'd never sworn from that day to this. And this fellow started to swear. And I looked at him and I said, hey, you don't want to swear at me, you want to get some coffee, soda, wash your filthy mouth out.

And he looked, and I looked, and I lost my temper, and I whacked him in the fist and knocked him dead. And I came out of the office, and please, I was a Christian, some of you young folk don't know you're living. I walked out of that office, I got on the train going back to my hometown, and the wheels of the train said, call your Papa Christian.

I started the day by a man that I loved in spite, telling me if I was doing something I couldn't care about, give it up. I continued the day by a Jewish doctor saying, these two things don't go together. And I finished the day by knocking a fellow down, and it looked as though I'd be in court for assault.

And I was trying to be a Christian. Some time after, I knew I had to do something about this. I went along to a recreation track.

I said, Anne, I had a testament with me, and I said, God, show me what to do. Please, show me what to do. I'd been taught in the gospel hall where I'd been going every time it was open for six months I'd been going.

I'd been taught that Timothy was a young man, and that Paul wrote to young Timothy and Paul said, I know what I'll do. I'll see if there's something in the epistle of Timothy. I don't think I even knew the word epistle.

I might have by then figured that out. But I opened the Bible into the chapters that I'd read tonight. And as I read through, I came indeed into chapter three.

And I read the qualifications of a bishop. And I read this. A bishop must not be a striker.

Now, I was no bishop. I didn't even know what a bishop was. And since then, I've had to learn a little Greek, which you will appreciate.

And I'm pretty aware of the fact that that word striker has nothing to do with boxing. But I looked at it. A bishop must not be a striker.

And I said, man, that's how I get my living. If it's wrong for a bishop, it's wrong for me. And I didn't care who was there.

I sank down on the tarmac in that recreation ground. I don't know if there was anyone else in the recreation ground. It might have been crowded and there might have been no one there.

But I took on the means and I said, God, if you want me to give up fighting, you'll find me another job today. And I didn't want him to ask for my prayers. Didn't want him to.

I got up on my knees. I walked down over Fitzharris Avenue into Tarminster Road Hill, almost opposite where I saw the girl that's now my wife who talked me into the tent where I was staying. And as I walked

down the road, a fellow went by in his light, put on his great fight, said, what's the matter? Nothing anyway. What are you doing? Why, not much why. He said, I've got an acre of potatoes. The cost is going to ruin them.

Will you come and dig them up for me? Have you ever dug potatoes? Within minutes. Please, minutes. And I'm not exaggerating.

Within minutes of saying, Lord, if you want me to give it up, find me another job. I didn't want that. Did you dig potatoes? I looked at him and I said, well, how much will you pay us? What shall I give you, the rate? And the rate for digging potatoes in our country that day was 37 trillions a week.

Not very much more than what? Four dollars. And I said, well, if that's the only job you can find me, Lord, I'll take it. I worked digging potatoes.

I worked harder in five minutes than I'd worked in a drama. And they gave me 13 setment sixpence at the end of the week. It was a wonder my hand didn't shake to take it.

But I said, God, if you will, I will. Oh, please, I didn't stay there. We had something better than that that you'll appreciate.

I got a bit of money fighting and I was able to buy myself a little farm. But that was the start. That was the start.

I said, Lord, if you will, I will. I broke a contract. It cost me a lot of money to break.

But apart from two or three occasions, when first I was converted, I wouldn't do it now. Of course, at my age, I couldn't. But then I fought two or three times so that I could have the privilege of preaching to the Pope before him.

I fought. But apart from that, I've never fought since. But I started to live for the Lord.

The fellowship that I'm still in fellowship with, I applied to join the fellowship. I had to appear before the brethren. Oh, you young fellows don't know what you do.

I had to stand before the brethren. They said, yes, we're baptized here. Bit of a difficulty, though.

We don't have a proper baptistry. Only got a tank with a pair of sects in it. You'll have to go down the sects.

We'll pull them up. The man that led me to Christ came over from Cardiff. He went down in the tank first and I followed him.

And he said, I'll put you under. You better get up the best way you can. And I went.

And a joy came into my heart, sir. A joy came into my heart that I wouldn't trade with anyone of you. I know Jesus Christ.

He's done this to me. My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious oath. My sin, not in part, but the whole was nailed to the cross.

And I'll bear it no more. I can stand before God today as one who's been forgiven because Jesus paid the price for my sins. And I said, God, if you did that for me, there's only one thing I can do.

That's give back to thee whatever life I have. I told you I was thirteen and a half when I left war. You know, I look at some of you young fellows and girls here today.

You've been to college. Some of you have been on to university. What are you doing for God? With all the knowledge you've got, most of you are just sitting there and just sitting in that hall.

I realized that God had something better for me. I'd start my education all over again. Went and sat in a class with a crowd of little tackers.

Had almost, not quite, but almost to learn my alphabet over again. I was twenty-six years of age when I got the matriculation. And it was hard, hard work.

But I got it. And the Lord, in His mercy, called me into His service. From that day to this, in this and thirty more other countries, it's been my joy to have told men and women of Jesus.

I've never asked a soul for a penny, and I've never taken a collection in any meeting, and I've never sent out a prayer letter, which was just a hidden begging letter. I trusted the Lord. And I want to tell you this.

He never fails. He never fails. I want to tell you a young man here tonight.

On the broad road that leads to hell, there's a Christ that will put you on the narrow road that leads to heaven. I want to tell you girls, that if you'll trust Jesus Christ, you'll have in your life such a purpose for living, that you'll wonder however you manage without Jesus Christ. I want to look into the face of you Christians here tonight, and I want to ask you something.

I want to ask you, what have you done for God? What are you doing for God? With all the opportunities you have in this lovely country, what are you doing for God? Thank God many of you are doing things. Some of you are not. Tonight, Jesus Christ challenges your heart.

To you who've never taken Him as your Savior, who find yourselves tonight spilling your things, He says, come unto Me. Him that cometh unto Me shall in no wise be cast out. He's willing to receive you as He receives Me.

You Christians who've been playing the fool, He still says to you in the words of the 14th chapter of Hosea, I will heal thy backsliding, I will not be free thee, for mine anger is turned away. Those of us that are seeking to pledge to Jesus Christ, He says to us tonight, Oh, will you taste My pain? Will you seek to live for Me wholeheartedly, friendly and worthy of it all? May I ask as I serve, what will you do with Jesus Christ? Oh please, I know this, I've spent a long time tonight talking about myself. I only did it because you asked me, you asked me to do it.

I would much rather have talked about the Lord Jesus. I hope you'll come back tomorrow night and give me a chance to talk about the Word of God, as we speak of the rise and the fall of the empire. But tonight, this is the question.

What will you do with Jesus Christ? Will you attack Him, or will you reject Him? The choice is yours. I thank God that as a young fellow of 24 years of age, I bowed my knee and said, God, I'm a sinner, save me. Will you say that tonight? God help you do that.

Pray with me. Amen. Just two verses of 414.

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