

Articles and Sermons :: a testimony

a testimony, on: 2010/5/6 0:50

Personal Testimony George G. Delo

Meeting with the Lord

“For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power” (1 Corinthians 4:20).

By 1984, I had been a Christian for six years, and not just any average, lukewarm Christian. The fires of salvation were still burning in my soul. If I was going to be a Christian, I was going to give it one hundred per cent. I attended church every time the doors were open. I tithed and gave offerings religiously. I read and studied the Bible with the fervor of a true disciple. I prayed continuously. And I put my hand to whatever the Lord set before me whether it was cleaning the church, greeting visitors, teaching Sunday School, or visiting the sick. I also knew early on that the Lord had called me to ministry. I received a number of vivid prophecies during those early years and experienced the gifts and anointing of God in prophecy, healing, preaching, teaching, word of knowledge, and in tongues and interpretation. But all was not well.

It was in 1984 that I came face to face with the truth of God’s word, “But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct” (1 Peter 1:15). The Lord was dealing with me. I soon discovered that God was more interested in who I was rather than what I did. Like most ‘on fire’ Christians of that day, I had gotten caught up in ‘doing’ Christianity rather than ‘being’ a Christian. And why not? It was exciting to minister and see people get saved or healed. It was self gratifying to receive compliments for giving a prophecy or a word of knowledge. It was heartwarming to get together with a group of Christian brothers and sisters to pray and minister to one another. But in my heart of hearts I knew something was missing. Something just wasn’t right yet I couldn’t see what it was, for I was looking in the wrong mirror. I had been judging myself based on others in the body of Christ. I was measuring my righteousness based on the acceptable norms of the day. I thought I was doing well based on those standards, but God had other ideas. “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing; and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked’” (Revelation 3:17).

Early that year the Lord brought me face to face with this truth in a strange way: He dropped me into a spiritual desert. Seemingly for no reason at all, I suddenly realized that God had left me to myself, or so I thought. I was still ‘doing’ all the right things such as reading, praying, tithing and going to church. It was as if God wasn’t in it any longer, for I couldn’t sense His presence nor hear His voice. There was no sense of life in my devotion, the anointing was gone. I felt like Moses forced to flee into the wilderness, ‘sacrificing’ himself to deliver God’s people from the Egyptians. Wasn’t he ‘doing’ God’s work? Where did we go wrong? I immediately began repenting of everything, questioning God and ultimately my faith. As I prayed harder and read the word more, it was to no avail. God was not to be found. My frustration began to grow.

I had a lesson to learn and it could only be taught in the Lord’s spiritual desert. He was waiting for something I had never really given Him. That something was myself, my total surrender to Him and His righteousness. You see, although I was an on-fire, super spiritual Christian in the eyes of men, it was all on my terms. I had the final say in everything, as to when and what I would do and with whom I would be willing to do it. Sadly, as all appeared good from the outside, I knew that within I was still no better than the Pharisees. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Matthew 23:25,28). There were areas of my life I withheld from the Lord, attitudes and secret thoughts that I knew would not please Him. Though locked in the darkness within, they suddenly appeared. They would surface when my wife or children were doing something I didn’t like, when having a bad day at work, or during a moment of weakness when no one was looking. Meaning to do well, I felt that I had a heart for God unlike most. Yet there was something in me I could not control. It took advantage of every weak moment, of every distraction caused by some unforeseen circumstance. It kept getting the upper hand the more I tried to do what was right. Everybody I knew was the same way. No one was perfect. No one had his act together. And I was under grace. God understood, or so I thought. “I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me” (Hosea 5:15).

This continued for several months as nothing I did seemed to make a difference. I couldn’t find God’s presence. The heavens were like brass for within my heart I felt barren and rejected. My growing frustration eventually made me start

questioning my faith. I digressed from anger to self pity to giving it all up. In my blindness, I couldn't see the forest for the trees. What was God after? Not recognizing the truth of my own sinful condition, my heart was deceitful. Conditioned to the acceptance of sin as the normal Christian life, I was blinded to the real problem. I had no doubt I was saved, yet there was something in me that was contrary to the very character and nature of God. I neither understood it, nor recognized it, as the root of my separation from God. When we ignore sin, we end up in a state of self deception as our hearts harden. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). The sin in my life had hardened my heart, seared my conscience, and left me in self deception. In my mind, everything was okay. I was saved, had the Holy Spirit, and was being used in ministry. Like most Christians, I believed I would continue to have a sinful life to some degree. That was okay in the eyes of God for I was forgiven. I believed that as long as I was doing my best, while avoiding the 'major' sins of the world, it wasn't really sin at all. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

The Lord kept me in this wilderness desert through the rest of 1984 allowing me to grow ever more frustrated and bringing me to my wit's end. I didn't know what to do any more. I was going through the motions of Christianity. On the inside I was slowly dying, not knowing why. Then our church announced that they were to host a men's retreat at one of our member's vacation homes in Lake Gaston, North Carolina. A special speaker was invited from Georgia to minister. At first, I couldn't even consider going due to the distance I felt from God. Then something stirred as I prayed to the Lord in one last desperate attempt. Lord, if You would just meet me at this retreat and show me what is going on, I will go. Instantly I felt an inner peace in my spirit for I knew the Lord had answered my prayer.

January came and everyone was gearing up for the retreat. We planned to meet at the church Friday evening and car pool to Lake Gaston for a Friday night meeting and a Saturday morning session. Then we were scheduled for a lunch and fellowship, to return for a Saturday night meeting. We planned to arise early Sunday morning for a meeting and return to church in time for the Sunday service. Everything was set.

That Friday everything started going wrong at work. I ended up having to stay late and missed the car pool. I stewed all the way home and then took it out on my wife. Finally, I just threw up my hands and determined that I was going to go anyway. So I drove down by myself and had a pity party the entire way. When I arrived I came to a huge house overlooking Lake Gaston. The main room had a large picture window looking out onto the lake. It was night, but the moon was shining on the lake revealing tossing waves of turmoil as if a storm were coming. The first meeting was about to begin. I sat there frustrated, unable to get my mind off of the events of the day. Not hearing a word that was said, I struggled with my thoughts and emotions.

The next morning I got up and felt somewhat rested and in a better frame of mind. We had breakfast and then started our next meeting. As the speaker gave his message, I found myself looking deep within my heart. It was as if a dark, secret room was suddenly thrown open to the light of day exposing everything within. For the first time I could see clearly, not as man sees, but as the Lord sees. He ripped open the veil of self righteousness and deception and showed me the throne of self and sin that had been ruling my life. The eyes of my understanding were opened. The light of the Lord shined on my inner man, allowing me to see the gross darkness of my heart. "You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance" (Psalm 90:8).

By the time the meeting was over, I was so overwhelmed by the darkness of my soul, that I rushed out of the room. I feared I would burst out crying before everyone. There wasn't much room for privacy so I ended up in the bathroom and wept, quivering before the Lord. I felt so ashamed for the facade of righteousness I had lived. I had never felt so helpless and unworthy, not just of the Lord but of life itself. Like Isaiah, I knew in His sight I was unclean. "So I said: 'Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts'" (Isaiah 6:5).

The rest of the group was getting ready to go out for lunch and fellowship, but I knew that I couldn't leave. So I went to my pastor and simply told him that I wanted to stay behind and spend some time alone. After they left, I fell on my knees before the Lord. Suddenly, the overwhelming presence of the Lord filled that room. I had never before experienced such a real and tangible visitation of God. All I could do was lay before Him and weep uncontrollably as my whole body trembled with waves of guilt and shame. For the next several hours the Lord began to reveal the depths of darkness within me. Like peeling an onion, He slowly removed layer after layer of ungodly attitudes of rebellion, selfishness, pride, deception, self seeking, anger, covetousness, materialism, and on and on. From one area to another, the Lord revealed the true self within me and showed me how far I had fallen short of His righteousness. Relationships, ministry, and my life itself, were all tainted by selfishness. All I could do was lay there and weep and tell Him how sorry I was. He brought me to the very end of myself and I cried out to the Lord, "I give up! Be the Lord of my life. I'll do whatever you want

me to do. Have Your way with me, Lord. Forgive me and be my Lord. I had finally surrendered completely to Him and I knew I was forgiven. My life belonged to God now. Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God (1 Peter 4:1,2).

The men returned early that Saturday evening and we gathered for the next meeting. The night before several of the men had stayed up late goofing off and just being guys. At the outset of the meeting, our pastor chided us to get to bed as soon as the meeting was finished in order to get an early start on Sunday to return in time for the church service. As the speaker was bringing his message to a close, I sensed the Lord prompting me to share with the others what had happened that afternoon. At first I balked thinking to myself, "These are my peers, what will they think about the truth of my sinfulness?" But like an audible voice, I heard it again. This time it was even more emphatic, "I want you to share what I did with you today!" Consenting meekly, I waited for an opportunity. As the speaker finished, the pastor instructed us to head straight to bed without any fooling around. Almost hoping he wouldn't respond, I raised my hand and asked if I could share with the group before we dismissed. With a sudden change of attitude, the pastor consented and gave me the floor. I didn't realize I was being set up by the Lord to bring about His plan for that weekend.

As I shared what had happened and how the Lord had shown me my heart, the Holy Spirit began to move on others. One by one others began weeping and repenting of the same sins and attitudes. What I thought were only problems and attitudes I had to deal with, were now being confessed by all these others. We prayed and ministered to one another, as the Lord ministered restoration and reconciliation in our midst.

Somewhere in that time, the guest speaker gathered everyone around to pray over me. I sat down in a chair and lifted my hands to the Lord. As they prayed I felt someone tugging on my shoes. I opened my eyes to see my pastor kneeling at my feet with a basin of water and a towel. As I closed my eyes again, he began to wash my feet. Tears ran down my cheeks as I saw in the Spirit a huge washcloth coming down from heaven cleansing my whole being from the inside out. I felt clean and refreshed like a newborn babe. For the first time in my Christian walk, I had totally surrendered my life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He instantly cleansed me and set me free from myself to serve Him. I didn't understand it at the time, but I had finally embraced the cross of Christ. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

The next morning, I awakened with a new joy and love in my heart. As I entered the meeting room, the Lord directed my gaze to the lake. The sun was shining brightly on water that was smooth as glass. I was immediately reminded of the Psalm: "For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). I knew this was the beginning of a new life in Him. Although outwardly everything was still the same, something had changed within me. This was the beginning of something new and wonderful. From that moment on I discovered just how great a change had taken place. With the Lord ruling my life, I began an adventure that is still unfolding even today.

Since that experience in 1984-85, I have been on a quest to find the deeper truths of God's word concerning our salvation. I am deeply disturbed by the experiential divide existing between the modern day church of America and the church portrayed in the New Testament. We have become but a faint shadow of that which is pictured in the scriptures. We have become as a brightly colored shirt with a distinct design, washed over and over again, until the colors are faded. The design is no longer distinguishable. We have lost the true marks of Christianity. Our lives have not manifested the Lord to those around us. As the Israelites, we have failed to become a light to the nations. We are not the glorious church through which God has planned to reveal His shekinah glory.

As I have pored over the scriptures I have discovered the reason for our failure. We have shied away from the cross of Jesus Christ. In doing so, we have denied the efficacy (effectiveness) of His blood to deliver us from the power of sin and self. We have relegated His resurrection life to an unattainable realm of the Spirit. We have settled for a positional relationship with Christ rather than an intimate reality. And we have frustrated His grace in the guise of freedom from legalism. To cover our nakedness we have woven a form of godliness which denies His power.

Jesus Christ gave Himself on the cross of Calvary to redeem us from sin and self to make us a bride unto Himself, a glorious and holy church without spot or wrinkle. His sacrificial work is all sufficient to save us to the uttermost, not just on a spiritual level, but on an experiential level as well. My own experience has shown me that there is power in the blood of Christ to cleanse us from the defilement of sin and self. The scriptures bear it out. The Lord is the first fruits of many brethren, a people of the cross, the crucified ones of God. And so, like Abraham, I am looking for a church whose

builder and maker is God. (See Hebrews 11:10). He has sent His Son for this purpose, "Who shall build the temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the honor and glory and shall sit and rule upon His throne" (Zechariah 6:13 Amplified).

Re: a testimony, on: 2010/5/8 1:33

Thanks for this testimony bible4life, it has been my own too - to be delivered from sin in this life not the next. Do you know George G. Delo?

Brenda

Re: , on: 2010/5/8 18:35

no i don't, but i fell upon it, was very interested and edified.

Re: a testimony, on: 2010/5/8 22:23

"We have settled for a positional relationship with Christ rather than an intimate reality."

There it is, right there.....brother Frank

Re: a testimony, on: 2010/5/25 15:44

Oh how I appreciated that testimony.
It is refreshing, and encouraging.
Thank you,
ebeth