

DEVOTIONAL 5 – TESTIMONY

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This year, we explored the theme of “Going back to the basics”. First 4 Devotionals covered the Gospel, a Christ Centered life, prayer and loving your neighbour. We decided that the best way to end the series off would be with a personal testimony.

I was born into a Christian family and have attended church every since I was just a baby. You know as a kid you don't really know what's going on. I remember every Sunday was fun because my friends were at service and we could hang out and have fun after service. I had a general idea about what the Gospel was about, but I never really cared or bothered to look further into it. So at this time I entered high school, developed the wrong kind of friends and I found that church really conflicted with my free time. I found Church was a big waste of time, there was always someone's party going on or something that conflicted with service.

What was funny was that even though I thought church was a waste of time, I was always reminded of the God of the bible. Just by looking around even now, the complexity and design of the world and of each other is all around, there's no way at least in my perspective that this all happened by chance. Deep down I knew that had to be a God, but I suppressed Him. I had the motto “there's always later, or on my deathbed”. So around grade 10-11, I guess you can call it my downfall; I started skipping class, partying, drinking and smoking during class hours... I thought this was it; I'm a cool kid now - living life as a rebel. It wasn't until a bunch of my friends got arrested that I really questioned my actions and my life. Was this really it? Where would I be in 5 years if I kept going down this road?

I got away from this group of friends, got involved with a different group of people and started taking my studies seriously – well I can't lie, more seriously than before. My new friends, knowing that I attended church started to question my faith. Questions like... Why is there suffering if God is all good? I guess this was the breaking point for me. I really didn't have the answers. I was interested in finding the answers but I didn't have the effort.

It wasn't until I graduated from high school, that I seriously started to consider Christianity. It was a weird time for me. My mom was diagnosed with breast cancer, and was going to start chemo-therapy. My parents are both very strong Christians and they never once blamed God. My mom was sick, and I mean sick with all the chemicals running through her body, and yet she continued to work for the Church, putting in countless amounts of hours. I couldn't believe it; I honestly thought she would work herself to death. I blamed God, how could He do this to her, she served Him with her whole life and this was the payment? Then one night I was talking to my mom, she told me the story of my birth. I was an emergency c-section, the original doctor who was planning to deliver me was on vacation at the time and a replacement had filled in. It turns out that the original doctor couldn't have been able to perform the c-section. It had been God's grace that I was born, and am standing in front of you all today.

I resolved to learn about the God that I knew so little about. I switched churches to this one at CGC, and immediately I noticed a difference. As a stranger coming into a new church I was welcomed, I was encouraged by others and I started to get my questions answered. I saw the way people behaved; they put others before themselves and were always eager to help.

The Gospel, the word of God, it is about Jesus Christ and forgiveness. I saw how corrupted people were, how corrupted I was, I realized that God an all good and powerful being was left with no choice but to punish us. *For all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God (Romans 3:23)*. No matter what I did, a 1000 good acts, 2000 good acts, I would still be a sinner. The only way to be rectified or made clean again is through a perfect being - Christ dying on the cross for us - for me. We have been corrupted, and we deserve death, yet God in his mercy bore his wrath on Christ for our sakes. Through this sacrifice, forgiveness makes its way into the picture which leads to salvation... Salvation is not something that can be earned; I always hear well if I do good I'll be saved. The bible makes it quite clear that it's only through faith that we are saved. Ephesians 2:8 *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God"*.

Months went by, and I came to my own conclusion that Jesus Christ is who he claimed to be. I became a follower of Christ almost 3 years ago. Just about the same time I went to a conference hosted by InterVarsity called Urbana. I really got to experience how God was working in the lives of thousands of people. These people came from over a hundred different countries yet we all had one thing in common - Jesus Christ.

I remember coming back from Urbana renewed, and excited. *Ephesians 2:1* puts it best "[God]...made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions". I was alive, pumped for Christ. What I call alive, all my friends called brainwashed; to them I was a completely different person. I would no longer do or say things that I had done. It really opened up the door for me to share my faith with them, which I continue to do up to this date. Now of course, after giving my life to Christ, my life doesn't all of a sudden become a breeze. In fact it becomes harder. I'm still a sinner; my life is far from perfect. It's something that I will continue to work on for the rest of my life. Christ didn't die for me to waste my life; he died so I could live it. And how do I live it? I put Christ at the center of it and live as He did. By centering our lives on Christ, we lose what the world has to offer, but we gain everything in Him

This is just the beginning for my walk with God. It's been a quick 3 years and I really look forward to what God has planned for me in the next 3 years and more... God willing.

For those who have committed their lives to Christ, continue to live as salt and light of the world, and I hope you have been encouraged by what I have shared today with you today.

For those who don't know Christ. If you are interested about learning more and have any questions, even the simplest one, please talk to your governors, or coaches and I'm sure that they would be more than willing to answer you or find someone who can!