Study Notes for the Sunday Mass Published by Christians for Christ Ministries. We are a non-denominational Christian ministry that seeks to encourage and facilitate Christians in studying the Holy Scriptures. **"For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus."** 1 Timothy 2:5

Welcome to Christians for Christ



This site is dedicated to tell the story of the gigantic changes that came rushing into my life after faithfully attending the Roman Catholic Church from birth to adulthood over 35 years. I implore you to read about what happened and how God worked in such amazing ways to bring about this turn of events.

What about you. Do you consider yourself a good person? Do you go to mass every Sunday and holy day? Maybe it's what you have always done. Very likely it's what your parents did. And your grandparents. Perhaps you got married there. Had your babies baptized there. Maybe you were even an altar boy, like I was? And maybe you are struggling to live up to the high standards for how you feel you need to behave in order to make it to heaven?

Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). He set a pretty high standard, perfection. Jesus was perfect, but are we able to obey his command and achieve perfection ourselves? If we can't be perfect, then how good do we have to be to make it to heaven? What if we missed mass a few times this year because we just didn't feel like going that Sunday, are we condemned?

Sit. Kneel. Stand. I knew the routine by heart. I didn't even need a missal any more, I could recite all the prayers without even looking. I prayed the Rosary and prayed to Mary for her intercession. But as I got older, life began to get much more complicated. I started a job with Ford Motor Company as a design engineer in Dearborn, Michigan. Even though I continued attending mass, I began to lose interest in it. To reduce boredom during mass I started reading a small Gideon's Bible that some

whacko handed me on a sidewalk while I was going to school at Western Michigan University. One day a friend came up to me one day and asked me, "Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus?" I did not know what to tell him, I just wanted him to go away. I'm not sure what I said but it was something like, "I think I do." He knew that I was a devout Roman Catholic but unlike other Protestants he was not judgmental of me. Instead, he was kind and treated me as his equal, as his friend. This was quite different than many of the Bible thumpers that I had encountered in the past. My friend's question to me way back in 1996 started me thinking. Read what happened next.

Read More

John's Testimony – From Roman Catholic to the Truth



For the first twenty seven years of my life I lived ina perpetual state of rebellion, emnity, and warfare against God. My taskmaster sin dictated my standards, ethics, morals and goals. Enslaved to the lusts of hardened heart my life was cloaked in darkness and evil. Lost and ignorant, I loved my nation more than God. I loved my family more than God. I loved my life more than God. Apart from God's intercession my temporal state would one day become my eternal state.

On March 13, 2005 my eternal state was secured not by my depravity but by the blood of Jesus Christ. Though the miracle of grace God revealed Himself to me in truth through His Word. I repented of my sins, accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior and sealed with the Holy Spirit, received everlasting life and forgiveness of sins.

Divine truth replaced satanic lies and through the renewing of my mind, heart, and will I knew, loved and obeyed God for the first time in my life. I have been crucified with Christ so that He may live through me to bring Glory to the Father. For the remainder of my time in this world I strive to be blameless and upright, fearing God and turned away from evil. I pray that my life will be unexplainable apart from God. That I recognize anything the Holy Spirit accomplishes in and through me is unto the praise of His glory. At the judgment seat of Christ I pray the record stands that I did not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, that I faithfully finished my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Note from Jim Hill: John spent four years as an aircraft mechanic in the Air Force, then attended college and got his bachelors degree. He began attending Grace Theological Seminary located in Winona Lake, Indiana in January of 2011 to earn a masters of divinity. He can be reached through his page on this ministry.

Deborah's Testimony



This is my testimony of the true Lord Jesus Christ in a shorter version in hopes that when reading many will not be overwhelm with so information at once. As a Christian believer, I was actively involved in many well known Christian churches from 1990-2007 believing was saved and serving God. During that time experience many manifestations of the spirit believing this was a confirmation of my salvation. Then I started witnessing through those years many Christian believers get sick and die even though they were prayed by pastoral staff and other believers.

Then one time I went to a revival meeting and met a well known evangelist, who prayed over me and had same power in him as I did and it felt like someone was going to punch the whole world. I said to myself that's not the holy Spirit, but that spirit said your blasphemy God. At that time did not know or understand what was happening so I didn't talk to anyone about it. Then after a few more years in ministries still kept witnessing many believers from Christian churches, ministries get sick, die, have bad things happen to them and their families, even church leaders and staff. Couldn't understand why many believers repeatedly coming to the altar for prayer for their problems but never resolved. They just kept coming back for prayer over and over again, if they didn't get deliverance they went to another Christian church. I also was having problems in my own life and it would come and go.

Then in 2008 couldn't take it anymore sought God in prayer for the truth about the Christian churches, her leaders, believers, and myself. I took one day one hour out of every week to pray to God. In 2009 of December (two years later), he answered me and said, My child what do you want to know? And within myself (my soul)I said to him, I want to know the truth. Then later that day believed God would show me in his perfect time the truth. Well a couple days later he revealed to me there are two identical Jesus. I saw them. They look exactly alike and the one in my chest came to

the one outside of my body and they were going to fight, because the one outside of my body wanted in me, but the one in me wanted to stay. Immediately I said while looking down at the scene, wait a minute there is only one Jesus. Will the real Jesus please stand up. I said this because they were each identical of a small figured man in brilliant heavenly light. Then my body woke up. To make a long story short I was not truly saved and had the mark-death, hell and the grave. I did not have the true Jesus in me. It was the devil. Remind you I have been in Christian churches, study the word of truth , nothing else. I've always believed there is one true God, the creator and Jesus Christ.

So when I found out the bad news, I tried going to my local church to get help but no relief and it was getting worse because my body was hurting all over. I couldn't go back to work, sleep, sit still, or talk. Then I black out after that holiday eve and went missing for three days. There was a police report filed about me. On the third day when I came to, I was somewhere in Mexico. I was driving and had no idea what I was doing and then all of sudden like scales came off my face then I realize where I was and what was happening. I went home and my family was surprised to see me alive for they thought I was dead. It was the mercy and grace of God. During January 2010 I was a wreck.

So from February -June 2010, I went thru hundreds and hundreds of Christian churches and ministries around the world to get deliverance from that devil. Many of these Christian churches are well known around the world so I either put my prayer requests via email or went in person for counseling, prayer, deliverance. But God in his rich mercies granted the true Holy Spirit near me so that when I slept which was very little, he would show me the Christian people if they had him or not (true Holy Spirit, running flow of clear water). He also lit up before me and showed that devil holding me and what was happening when I asked these Christian churches and ministries to pray for my deliverance. I saw him-the false Jesus and many Christian people were praying to him but he wouldn't let me go and the darkness was surrounding me. I thought why are they praying to him? I saw hundreds of Christian faces and heard their voices praying to him. Why?

I was receiving hundreds and hundreds of emails from Christian believers praying for me in the US and other parts of the world. Even went to a famous Christian minister that all he does is cast out devils around the world for people that are oppressed. Even some ministers by phone that did the same, etc. None of them nor the Christian churches or ministries were able to cast that devil out of my body. At the end of June 2010, I was down to searching on the internet two deliverance ministries. Remind you and to all that read or hear this testimony I never got any sleep night or day… I was on the internet trying to find Christian church, prayer ministry, all the above of Christian ministries that had true power of God. I completely exhausted my search on the internet by the end of June 2010.
So two deliverance ministries left that I was able to find. If they did not have the power of God I would be force to go online and contact every Christian Church corner in America.
That's how bad it was for me.

By the mercies and grace of God out of the last two remaining I found one deliverance Christian ministry, but the Holy Spirit did not show their activity in the spirit realm. So by faith gave my

prayer request to this Christian minister and he forward to his prayer team. Well I still didn't get any rest and still went online searching for deliverance and prayer. Three days later, in my bedroom my body was asleep and my spirit woke up and I'm sitting up in bed and I didn't see anything around me but sense the presence of the Holy Spirit, the father came and embrace me and we went up and up, then stopped. I heard a baby cry and I said that 's the spiritual birth according to John 3 Jesus is teaching Nicodimus about you must be born again of the water and of the Spirit of God in order to enter the kingdom. Then he lowered me down and few things happen. It was the first time to get some rest. I was really happy that God came to me. Then the next day when I went to sleep my body slept my spirit was alive and the Holy Spirit was binding that devil. I kept requesting the same minister to keep praying for me, because I knew it was them that prayed me thru to God. Then after a few more days, one night I was so tired and just before falling asleep the Holy Spirit came upon my head (oil). I immediately went into spirit realm and that devil went out of my body. Then I woke up and felt so light as if a huge fat elephant came off my body. I was very happy and thankful for God removing that devil from me and the ministry that prayed for me. They were the only Christian ministry that had true power of God, holy Spirit of truth.

There are two identical Jesus Christ. The one is the true messiah, the other is the devil (god of this world) coming as an angel of light looking like Jesus appearing to men and woman Christian believers with all power, lying signs and wonders. The Catholic and Christian churches are following and representing a false Jesus. If any church teaches believers the antichrist is coming and the mark is anything but death hell and the grave, which Jesus conquered ALL POWERS of Satan and man (sinful flesh)at the cross and resurrection, they are under the control of the antichrist spirit (the devil, man of sin, son of perdition)and the mark of man- death, hell and the grave is present among the believers. In Revelation 9:20-21, during the plagues, it tells that men still did not repent from their ways. So it clearly says that God wants men to turn from their dependency on the things of this world and turn to his son (the way the truth and the life) and believe the gospel.
By the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit of truth, I am witness to seeing the antichrist-the man of sin, the son of perdition coming as an angel of light speaking God's words to many men and woman believers, who are spiritually deceived by deceptive bright dreams that promote false teachings of God's words, lying signs and wonders, promises of prosperity which keep believers in bondage to sin and the ways of the world. These churches teach believers that the antichrist is coming and we are not in Revelation yet. This a the biggest LIE of Satan 1 John 4:3.The real Jesus Christ is coming, the son of man, and it will happen very quickly because according to my testimony of the true Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thesssalonians 2:3, 4 it is fulfilled.

The Holy Spirit of truth revealed the scriptures below for believers to know the truth. Again the mark of man is death, hell and the grave. Any church to teach believers that they can not have the mark removed is the antichrist spirit. The true Jesus Christ came in sinful flesh like us and conquered ALL powers of Satan and man. Christ suffered in the flesh, died in the flesh at the cross and was resurrected destroying the body (flesh) of sin forever. Romans 8, for what the law could not do, in that is was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who

walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

This is why believers are getting sick, dying, bad things happening to them and still in bondage to sin, etc. in the churches around the world. This is not a joke. What I'm telling you is all true. The true living God is real and showing me what is happening in these churches around the USA and other parts of the world.
God sent his son and raised him from the dead on the third day destroying the body of sin forever. Therefore the antichrist-the old serpent and the mark of man are defeated forever to those that have faith and believe in God sending his son in sinful flesh, who knew NO SIN to take our place. This is the true gospel.

I believe in the true living God sent his son and raised him from the dead on the third day. I am alive by Christ's sufferings, death and resurrection of the dead destroying the body of sin forever 1John 2:26-28.
Please read Luke 24:44-47, Luke 9:56, Galatians 3:9, 14,16,22. The disciples and Apostle Paul preached the same doctrine nothing added nothing taken away to all people for salvation as many has the Lord God shall call.

Every Christian believer wants to know who is the antichrist, the beast, the man of sin, son of perdition, what is the mark and when is he arriving, but in real truth the antichrist has been around since the beginning. The scriptures tells us Jesus conquered him at the mount of temptation, the cross, and the resurrection of the dead, Christ being the first fruit.
In Mark 8:33 Satan knew once Jesus died on the cross reconciliation for man with God took action immediately and Satan and all the fallen angels were defeated and judged.

I gave my testimony and what I tell is from the true living God and his son. John 6:63,65,68-69.

Angel's Testimony



THIS IS MY TRUE STORY

I gave my life to JESUS at the tender age of 14 years of age, and about two weeks later this is what happened to me. On one morning in late 1986, I was getting up and I was on my way to use the restroom and saw that everybody was sound asleep. Right across my room was the restroom, and as I begin to walk toward the restroom, I heard the spirit of GOD say to me, "Look in your hand". I began to say back to the spirit of GOD, "Why would I look in my hand?" Then the spirit of GOD spoke for the second time, "I said look in your hand". By now I am still talking back to the spirit of GOD and looking up at the ceiling because I didn't know what was going on. I was only 14 years old when this happened to me, so as you can imagine, I was frightened. So for the third and final time the spirit of GOD's voice got really loud and louder! HE said to me, "I said to look in your hand!!!" This time I looked at my right hand and I saw what looked like a puddle of blood, but here's the thing: it was not bleeding.(EXODUS 3:2-3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.3. And Mo'ses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.) Then, right in the center of my hand I noticed that GOD had put a beautiful cross in my right hand.

By now I had gone to my mother's room and knocked as hard as I could on her door and when she opened the door and saw my hand, the only thing she was saying was Oh my God! Oh my God ! we did not know what to do, so we just decided to pick up the phone book and

call up some of our local pastor's to tell them what had happened to me. My mother and I came across a particular pastor in Newnan, Georgia, and we decided to call him. My mother started to tell this pastor about all that had happened to me, and this is what the pastor told my mom: "Tell your daughter to show as many people as she can. The pastor also told my mother that GOD had 'Marked your daughter'. It was so amazing and so touching that GOD had chosen me and put a cross in my right hand, and yes this is a true story. To this day that same cross is still in my hand. (I'm now 40 year old)-MATTHEW 19:26: But Je'sus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with GOD all things are possible.

-God Bless You!:-)
-Angel

Pierre's Testimony



Pierre's Testimony (July 2012)

Born & raised in Compton, California (in August, 1989), life didn't begin so easy for me. I was surrounded by gangs, drugs, fornication & violence my entire life – not knowing the relevancy of my

being, I dabbled in all of it.

I got Saved as an early teen. Not knowing the importance of being Saved, I inevitably backslid (went back into a life of sin). In the year 2008, I was still living in poverty. Because I didn't know God to be my Jehovah-Jireh (my provider), I began to "do me" – attempting to make things happen on my own. I was a musician (alias: Too Much On The Beat)… rapping, singing & producing songs that glorified sin – the very thing that my God hates.

In 2009, I produced a song for music group The Vixenz called "I Need That" (later remixed by rap artist Snoop Dogg & aired on Power 106). The song ushered in the "Jerk Movement" – beginning in Los Angeles, California, then spreading to neighboring states and eventually the East Coast. In my mind, I was on top of the world, unaware that I was wretched, miserable, poor, blind & naked (Revelation 3:17).

After a random night out with friends (drinking alcohol accompanied by foolishness), I decided to stand inside the car (hanging out of the car with the door still open). The driver pulls off & begins to speed down the street, that's when I fell off the car – scraping my entire face, arms & legs… busting my skull in 2 places & fracturing my collar bone & index finger. I should have died in my sins, but my God was merciful!

Near-death STILL wasn't enough to cause me to forsake sin & before I was done healing, I was back composing secular music, smoking weed, abusing drugs & drinking alcohol. I was a slave to sin (John 8:34).

One night, during a deep conversation with my sister, Vixen Monai, the Lord had removed the scales from my eyes – revealing that I was heading down a path already marked for destruction. I had quit doing music many times in the past, but I felt the Lord telling me "This is your LAST chance". My career ended that night.

I went on a 2-year hiatus, chasing after the lusts of the flesh (decided to "do me"). Within this 2 year span, I tried to define my being with success – pursuing a career in acting, dancing, singing, modeling, marketing & advertisement, graphic design, phone application development & a few other job titles. Trying to "find yourself" outside the will of God is impossible, but that's a lesson I learned later in life.

In 2011, I hit rock-bottom (again), but I STILL didn't acknowledge God in my ways (Proverbs 3:6). To help pay rent, I began a career in Photography (alias: Pierre Gerard aka Pierre G Visions).

Although this career began as "innocent", I later allowed myself to be used by devil. I took sensual photographs of women, promoting & causing men to lust (Matthew 5:28). I photographed many celebrities & a reputation was made, but it was all vanity (Mark 8:36).

I met a guy who, rather persuasively, inducted me into the "party life". 4 nights a week, I was partying in some of Hollywood & Long Beach's "hottest" Hip-Hop & Techno clubs… for FREE!

Romans 13:13 – "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness…". The Bible describes this sort of reveling as "orgies", which is exactly what nightclubs have become – sex with clothes on. "Dance" originated as a form of worshiping God, & in no way, form or fashion was I pleasing the Lord by
gratifying my own flesh (1 Peter 1:16).

I was engulfed by sin! It took for EVERYTHING to come crashing down on me before I realized how much I needed God's help. I recall 2 days where I literally cried out to God, saying "Lord, why am I here?" …… *No answer* …… I had this blameful attitude that if God will just tell me why He create me, I would straighten up (not the best attitude to have toward God). The very week I completely surrendered to His will, He revealed to me the calling on my life – that I was predestined to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I wasn't waiting on God, He was waiting on me!

I rededicated my life back to Christ in February, 2012, & have been enjoying my walk with Him more & more each day. I used to hear about the peace of God which surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7) and now I have it! I now preach the Gospel, sing in the Praise Team & Choir, dance as a member of the Greater Shiloh "Alpha & Omega" Mime Team, & oversee the Homeless Ministry at my church – all to the glory of God!

God is still allowing me to fulfill all of my dreams – not for self-gratification, but I'm using my talents to glorify His name. So be on the lookout for Christian Rap artist named "Just Pierre", and many other avenues in which the Lord leads me!

A lot of pain & anguish could have been avoided in my life had I given it to Christ much sooner. My God waited 22 LONG years for me, and to show my gratitude, I will live out the rest of my days serving Him. Forever grateful.

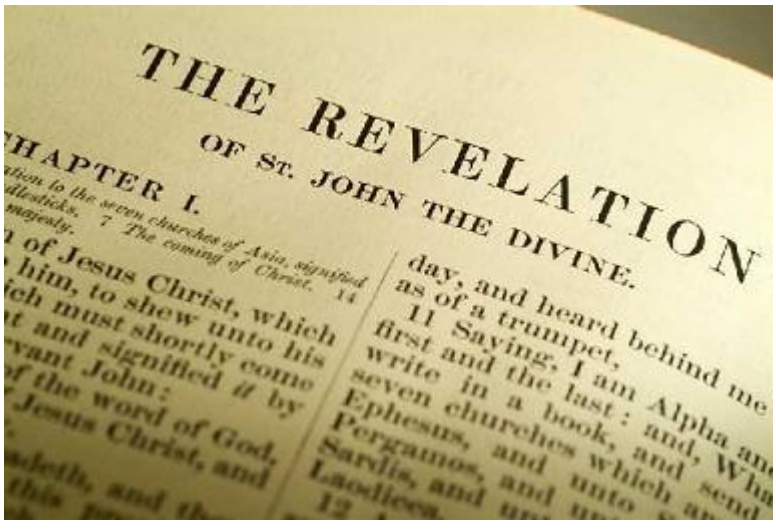
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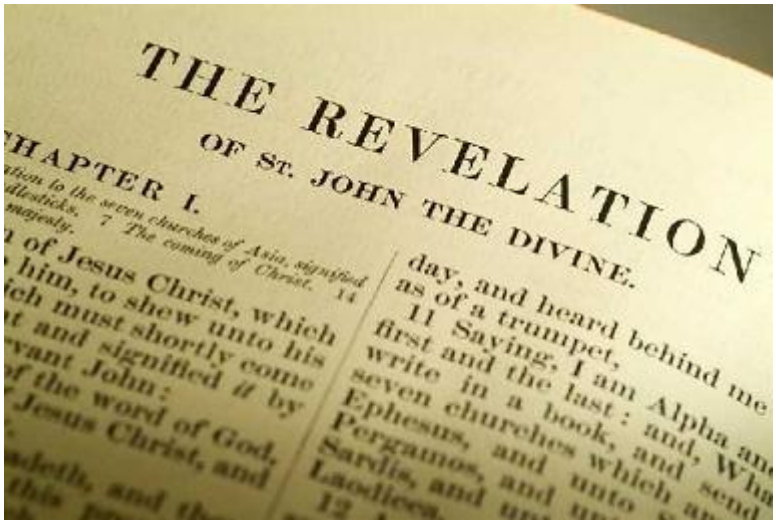


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Christy Hill, PhD

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The Role of Weakness in Spiritual Formation



The Role of Weakness in Spiritual Formation

Reflections by Christy Hill, Ph.D.

Who wants to feel weak? Who enjoys bumping up against one's own inadequacies? Why would I desire to get in touch with the many times (a day) I don't live up to my own standards, let alone God's? Isn't the Christian life supposed to make me feel better?

The Apostle Paul may have resisted feeling weak, at first, too. He was a very successful Jew—even of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee, a zealous persecutor of heresy. If you go by strict religious standards, his resume was impressive. But after his conversion to Christ, those things no longer mattered. In fact, he considered them rubbish.[i] But I wonder how long it took him to gain this perspective.

He gives us a glimpse of his journey toward recognizing the value of weakness in his life, modeling a mature Christian perspective of the ongoing struggle we have with the flesh and its falleness. He wrestled with God over this topic. Three times he prayed for God to relieve him of a thorn in his flesh, a messenger of Satan. We don't know what this messenger of Satan was, but we

do know it "tormented" him and made him feel weak.[ii] But God, who has infinite power and wisdom, ordained that weakness could actually be something good for His children. He said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."[iii]

So what is the value of weakness for spiritual formation? Could it be that we, like Paul, have a tendency to put confidence in ourselves to live the Christian life? Could it be that I have a deeply ingrained success mentality that desires to use Christianity and the spiritual disciplines to help me feel better about myself, without deepening my relationship and dependence on my Savior? So instead of allowing us to live in the delusion that we are better off on our own (autonomy) and that we really need to get our act together in order to be loved by God (work's righteousness), God breaks us of these ingrained beliefs by giving us the gift of weakness and inadequacy. So then when I bump up against my weakness, I can be reminded of my need for a Savior, even as a mature Christian. I can continue to fall in love with my Rescuer, when I realize that His blood covers my sin. I can turn to Him in dependence, not as a last resort, but as a welcomed reminder of my true state of dependence. It would be cruel of God to allow us to live in the lies of autonomy and work's righteousness, which is our natural tendency.

Maturity starts to look a little bit different than the "victorious Christian living" model that feeds our success mentality. Growth in sanctification means recognizing and internalizing the truth of who I am in Christ and relating to God in deeper, more intimate ways. If a thorn in the flesh helps me to recognize my continual need for a Savior and to turn often to God throughout my day, then it accomplishes a noble purpose. And we can say with Paul, "I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."[iv]

I have to admit, I'm not there yet. But I do have to ask the question: Does our doctrine of sanctification address and have room for the daily experience of weakness, inadequacy and failure? Do we teach those we disciple and have influence over the value of recognizing our moments of

weakness that come to us throughout the day and allowing it to remind us to turn to God and not depend on self? Do I model a life that is comfortable with my own messiness, so that others may see that God's love is not based on our performance, but on His desire to love us? It is going to take a lot of weakness, failure and inadequacy to undo the false beliefs that we are better off on our own (autonomy) and we have to work hard to gain God's favor (work's righteousness). The message of the Gospel still speaks to us in the ongoing journey of spiritual formation as we embrace weakness and let it do God's noble purposes.

End Notes

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[i] Philippians 3:4b-11 (all Scripture quotations from NIV).

[ii] 2 Corinthians 12:7, 10.

[iii] 2 Corinthians 12:9a.

[iv] 2 Corinthians 12:9b-10.

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Thanks again and may God bless your journey.

Jim Hill

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My First Visit to a Non-Catholic Church



Have you heard the term "Catholic guilt?" Do you feel guilty? How guilty would you feel if after attending mass for your whole life you decided on your own to attend a non-Catholic church service? Can you imagine what it was like the first time? Were there really monsters inside the Protestant church? Would God condemn you for doing this?

My First Visit to a Non-Catholic Church

By Jim Hill

The thought of ever stepping foot into a non-Catholic church scared me to death. Let me give you some background. I was born into a loving Roman Catholic family is southwestern Michigan. My mother, father, and grandparents on both sides were Roman Catholics. My great grandfather and grandmother, who I knew until their passing when I was thirteen, were Catholic. Most of my aunts and uncles were Catholic. My neighbors on both sides of our farm were Catholic and all of us attended Holy Family Catholic Church in Decatur, Michigan. As a faithful member of the Catholic Church I attended mass every week and on holy days. I worked as an altar "boy," as they used to call this, throughout my growing up years and continued in this all the way through high school. As you can see I was a faithful Catholic in a Catholic environment and would never consider going to a non-Catholic church. That was at least when things began to change as I joined the dot com boom in the

late 1990's.

All I can say now is that God was working on my heart and this led me to consider things which Roman Catholics would consider heresy. First among those things was attending any other church than the one of my upbringing. As a child and teenager when we traveled during the summer on vacation and sometimes down to Florida over Christmas break we would attend whatever Catholic Church was in the area. And when we got there the service was very predictable. Entering the church we would dab ourselves with holy water and make the sign of the cross. Then as we entered the pew we would genuflect towards the altar and sit down. Then the service would play out in front of me as it had hundreds of times before. Sit, kneel, stand; I had it memorized. Nothing new here! But looking back to the end of the nineteenth century I can see that God was working on my heart.

Before I explain about what led me to consider attending another church let me explain how I felt about going to mass. Church was boring to me and to make things fun my twin brother Joe and I would often play some secret games with each other. When we stood he would often begin to press against me with an increasing amount of pressure. I would try and not lean over and balance this pressure by pressing back against him with equal pressure, but in an increasing amount. A game of strength began. As I was stronger than Joe I knew what the outcome would be but I had to stop pressing against him when I was certain that he would tumble over into one of the other members of our large Catholic family. There were six of us kids in total. Another game that we played was to switch the first parts of certain words around and then recite these variations loudly next to each other. For example, instead of saying "grant us peace" we would say, "pant us greace." Another thing we did was to take things literally in the saying of the mass. Specifically, at part of the service went as follows:

> Priest: The Lord be with you. All: And also with you.
>
> Priest: Lift up your hearts. All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Just prior to this Joe and I would ensure that the kneeler was extended because we know what we going to do. Once the congregation said "We lift them up to the Lord," we would then stand up on the kneeler. We were raising our hearts to the Lord. This gave us great joy through the hilarity of it all. To this day whenever Joe and I attend a Catholic mass we chuckle when we get this part of the service. And yes, we still say "pant us greace."

The games that Joe and I played helped us to pass the time in an otherwise boring service. Perhaps one of the funniest things I did was right after receiving communion. At unexpected times instead of returning to my seat I would just continue right on walking out the door and leave. My brother being the more compliant child would never consider doing something as bad as this. But being rebellious gave me an immense sense of joy and control in an otherwise miserable situation. I haven't even mentioned what I did to get out of going to the mandatory catechism classes. We will leave that for another chapter. The games that we played helped us to maintain our sanity in an otherwise insane

situation.

Back to what was going on in my heart in the late 1990's. I began to have an increasing sense that things were not right in the Catholic Church as God continued to work. By this time I was living in Royal Oak, Michigan and attended Saint Mary's on 730 South Lafayette street (if you are interested). At this particular church they began to have a time of fellowship after the service at which coffee and donuts were served. Being a fairly outgoing person I hoped to meet some people and make a diligent effort to socialize after the service. Despite my best efforts all ever got from anyone there was a shy hello and possibly a passing mention about the weather. Needless to say this wasn't very encouraging to me. As God continued to work I began to realize that the vast majority of us were completely disconnected from each other in the church. I would come to mass faithfully every week hoping to connect with others and every week I would experience the same coldness that I had grown used to at my hometown church in Decatur, Michigan. One day I attended Saint James Catholic Church in Ferndale and I made a realization. I could be an ax murderer, child rapist, or psycho killer and even if I attended the same Catholic Church year after year nobody would ever know anything about me. In fact I had attended Saint Mary's in Royal Oak for five full years! Even though I wasn't any of those things, look out people, do you realize who is sitting next to you? Yes I had an increasing sense that things were not right in the Catholic Church.

"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Radio played a big part in the work that God was doing in my heart. One day I was at home in my condo in Main Street Square on the south end of Royal Oak where all the other yuppies lived. I had a fancy shortwave radio that I had bought from one of my employees since I had always had a fascination with such things. As I was scanning through the dial I came across a wacko radio preacher named Brother Stair. What he said didn't really interest my but what did happen was that it made me be able to listen to other radio preachers. On some subsequent night I came across a radio station on the AM dial, AM 560. At some point when listening to this station and most likely in my SUV on the way to work I heard a lady teaching the Bible. She was from a church called Five Points Community Church in Auburn Hills, Michigan. The program was entitled something like "Ladies Radio Bible Class" and honestly the lady on there didn't have the best radio voice. But I remember that she was teaching about King David and even though this was geared towards women I was interested in listening to it. It was through this radio program that God really began working in my heart.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

As God continued to work in my life there wasn't really a culminating event that led me out of the Roman Catholic Church, but there was one particular incident which marked my last trip into the Church. It was a Saturday and I had made plans with my friends to go to dinner in Royal Oak and hang out was our habit in those days. We were going to meet up town just shortly after five o'clock

and I figured that I would be able to make the Saturday afternoon mass as Saint James on Woodward Avenue in Ferndale since this started at 4:00. I drove down there and as I crossed the Pleasant Ridge speed trap I began looking for Saint James on the right. I found a parking spot and went inside. As I began to go through the motions of the service I began to look around to my right and to my left. I looked and saw people standing there who were just as dead inside as I felt. They were just going through the motions of the senseless religion and did not have even the slightest concern for me or anyone else for that matter. I began to wonder if I began to have some sort of psychic breakdown if anyone would even care. At some point just after the ridiculous message by the father called a "homily" I just got up and walked out. I didn't care who saw me or what anyone said to me, which of course no one did. And that was it, this was the last time I attended a Catholic mass under the compulsive teachings of the Church.

Sunday came quickly after spending many hours in Royal Oak. I liked to frequent a place called Woody's and as I remember that was where we spent the night. One thing we used to enjoy was watching for rats in the alley. We were frequently not disappointed. But as Sunday dawned I began to think about driving up to the church that hosted the woman on the radio program that I had heard on AM560. During every show she always mentioned the time and location of the Sunday service. So why not drive up there as give it a shot? I hopped in my Ford Explorer, shot up to Auburn Hills, quickly located the church and pulled into the parking lot. That's as far as I got. As the time for the service approached I just couldn't bring myself to go into the church. I was quite sad about this, but after sitting in the lot for about half an hour I decided to go on home.

On the following Sunday I was set that I was going to go to church today. I got in my truck once again and found Five Points Community Church in Auburn Hills once again. This time I was resolved to go inside. I waited outside for about five minutes but then just threw the door open and kind of like jumping out of an airplane for the first time I went inside. There were lots of people waiting there to greet me as I walked inside and they made me feel quite welcome right away, something I wasn't used to in the dead Catholic church. As I made my way to my seat and the pastor came up to the podium I couldn't find that lady radio minister anywhere. As I looked around wondering why she wasn't appearing or coming on stage the minister made a signal and the music started. So off to the races we went.

"In reply Jesus declared, 'I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.' (John 3:3).

My experience that first week at Five Point Community Church was quite typical of what I experienced at other non-Catholic churches in later months as I began a search for a church a bit closer to my home in "partyville," Royal Oak. There were friendly people at strategic places to greet those entering the church. A certain leeway was allowed first time visitors but after the second or third visit someone would approach you with a welcome packet and you would receive a personal letter from the pastor. Beyond this you could expect a phone call or email from the pastor asking you to a meal or a coffee at Starbucks. From there you would begin to meet more of the church

community and even begin to minister to other newcomers such as yourself.

Frankly, years ago I thought that the first time I stepped into a Protestant church that God would strike me down. Far from it, the love and acceptance that I experienced even upon my very first visit to a Bible believing church exceeded that of all of the years I wasted away in the Catholic Church.

Here is a challenge for those caught in the cycle of frustration in the Catholic Church. First, pray a simple prayer to God: "God, reveal Yourself to me and show me the truth." Second, go to a Bible believing church for a Sunday service. If you can get someone to go with you that would be so much better. Third, send me an email through the Contact Us section on this web site. If you would prefer to discuss this by phone I am available once you fill out the initial contact request and leave me your number. I would be glad to pray with you, help you locate a church, or in provide whatever assistance that I can. Whatever you do, don't just keep going through the motions. And finally, tell others about what you have experienced. Post your testimony on this site and others dedicated to telling their story. Reach out and you will be surprised at the number of former Catholics you will find attending Bible teaching churches throughout the world.

May God bless your journey to find the truth.

Jim Hill

Winona Lake, Indiana

My-First-Time-to-Visit-a-Non-Catholic-Church.pdfDownload