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

Dewey's Testimony



My Testimony

***Note: The text and numbers that are included in parenthesis are references to verses in The Bible. They are included for support and encouragement to all who read this testimony.**

This is my personal testimony regarding how Jesus Christ has changed my life:

Introduction:

Process. This single word can be used to summarize my relationship with Jesus Christ. Defined as "a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end," the process of which I am referring to is God sculpting me into the "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14) masterpiece that He has created me to be. The "series of actions/steps" involved in the sculpting procedures are never-ending and I will not be a finalized work until until I reside in The Kingdom of Heaven (1 Peter 5:10). However, my journey with Christ during my Earthly life is not one of perfection, but of direction. Although that journey tends to be ever changing and unpredictable, the direction always remains constant- Steadfast pursuit towards "the narrow gate" (Matthew 7:13-14) with the Heavenly Father as my guide (Psalm 32:8). With each passing day, God continues to mold me into the Disciple I was created to be (Isaiah 64:8). Throughout the course of this eternal walk with God, it is only Him that I wish to receive glory, honor and praise; I am merely a vessel at the disposal of my Master (2 Timothy 2:21). The Lord has placed it on my heart to publicly share my

story of being redeemed by His Grace and Love, and it is my prayer that through the sharing of my testimony, God's Love can be witnessed and received by somebody who comes across this text. To all reading this, may The Lord bless you and keep you everyday of your life (Numbers 6:24), and may you come to experience the greatest love this world has ever seen through a relationship with Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:4-5)! Never forget: God loves you more than you could ever fathom no matter who you are, where you come from or what you have done in your life (Romans 5:8)!

Some background information about my life, and the mission that The Lord has placed on my heart to carry out:

My name is Dewey Dovel, and I am a Disciple of Jesus Christ. My mission for my life is to do everything in my power to spread The Gospel to all of creation (Mark 16:15), while sharing God's Love in my words and deeds (1 Corinthians 16:14). I want to be a "fisher of people" (Matthew 4:19), and a bold witness for The Lord (Acts 4:29). I want to live my life as a humble servant of The Kingdom of God consecrated to our Heavenly Father in order to fulfill my life's purpose: Complete devotion to carrying out "The Great Commission" (Matthew 28:18-20). I have been called to preach The Gospel, and I will do so as enthusiastically, eagerly and passionately as I can (Romans 1:15) while being as obedient as possible to the direction and guidance that the Holy Spirit provides me with throughout the course of my ministry/life (John 16:13). I couldn't feel anymore blessed or humbled in regards to where my life is taking me, and in the fact that God would anoint me with a future of proclaiming His Message; As the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:16: "For when I preach The Gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach The Gospel." I truly am compelled to preach The Truth that is Jesus Christ (John 14:6) and the love that He has for the WHOLE world (John 3:16). I believe that there is no greater message to be shared in our world, than the message that is God's Love for humans exhibited through what Christ did for us on The Cross (1 John 4:10). It is His everlasting love that millions in our world today are longing for; They search to fill the void in their lives with anything they can find to satisfy the eternal emptiness that encompasses their hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Millions relish in temporary sin and pleasure to escape from the problems that they are faced with on a daily basis only to be disappointed and further grieved as their efforts to escape prove to be futile (Hebrews 11:25). Many individuals are searching for truth to the seemingly endless questions that are present in our world while longing for a better tomorrow (John 18:38). Our world wants change, revolution and solutions to fix our society and rescue mankind from the pits of our own self-destruction! It is only through Jesus Christ that we can witness a transformation in the hearts of humans (Ezekiel 36:26). Only through Christ can man find the solution to its problems and fill the void that is present at its core (Psalm 16:11). Only through Jesus Christ can we experience the hope and change we long for as a world (1 Peter 1:3)! It is through Christ alone that my life was forever changed! He has brought me a renewed life filled with joy, peace, rest and hope for my future. In placing your trust in Him, He will do the same for you! (Matthew 11:28-30)

Prologue To My Testimony:

Now I know this introduction of who I am might make me appear as if I have had my life together

from day one. Many people that I have shared these aspirations and desires for my life with are blown away by my passion and zeal I have for what God has called me to do; Many are quick to note that the typical 19 year old college student would much rather be intoxicated with the world than intoxicated with the Holy Spirit! Truthfully, I wish I could honestly say that the man described in my introductory paragraphs was the man that I have been since day one. As I alluded to towards the end of the previous paragraph, that man being described couldn't be any farther from the man I was before I met Christ! As a matter of fact, the man described in the previous paragraph does not paint an accurate picture of the man that I was the first 17 years of my life. In actuality, my past paints a clear picture of the two faced, narcissist, porn addicted, insecure, spiritually lost young man that I was until the moment when The Lord rescued me from the clutches of worldliness. It wasn't until I turned to Jesus Christ, repented (turned away from) of my sin and accepted Him as my Lord and Savior by receiving Him into my heart by faith that my life was changed. It wasn't by good works or anything that I ever did to earn my salvation or righteousness in the eyes of The Lord, but it was God's Grace alone that saved me from my hopeless life (Ephesians 2:8-9). It was through God's Power manifested through the Holy Spirit that regenerated my life, and continues to direct the course of my life on a daily basis. Jesus Christ set me free (John 8:36), and gradually pulled me out of the abyss that was Satan's grasp on my life. It was at The Cross where my life was changed forever; As I discovered from personal experience, it is ONLY at The Cross where our lives can be made new, and restored eternally through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-19)!

Testimony:

I grew up in a household with a family strong in their Christian faith. As a child, I constantly sought my parent's approval and did everything I could to make them proud of me. My parents showered me in nothing but love, and I couldn't be anymore blessed or thankful to have them as my parents. I loved nothing more than the feeling of pleasing my parents, and over the course of time I made it my top priority to receive attention and praise from them. However, as I began elementary school it didn't take me long to realize that it would take a different kind of behavior in order to stand out in front of my classmates. From my perspective at the time, the behavior that was necessary to obtain attention from my peers was not the same behavior that my parents had taught me during my childhood. I knew that in order to be "cool" and "fit in," I would have to act in a way that was similar to the people I was surrounded with. Although this behavior would not reflect how my parents raised me, I was willing to do whatever it took to win the approval of my peer group. After all, garnering attention and praise from my parents had always been great, so naturally I assumed that any kind of attention received from my peers would be equally as satisfying. I wanted popularity, I wanted acceptance and I was not going to be labeled as average. My desire for self-gratification and attention was so powerful (even at a young age), that I began to act out in any way possible to be the center of attention. The line that divided right and wrong became a blur to me as I starved for prominence in my social circle; Because I believed it would make me "cool and grown up," I began to swear at the age of 7. In a short amount of time, my flamboyance and ostentatious antics began to gain me the notoriety that I hoped for. In reflection, the publicity I was receiving from my classmates was more negative than positive. Nevertheless, I was satisfied that people were paying attention to me. Like it was with my parents (in my eyes), the actions of Dewey Dovel were the focal point of my

peers. Unfortunately, I got to the point to where I was living two lives: the one my parents saw at home while I was in their presence, and the one I lived when I was around my peers. This was only the beginning of my gradual start down a slippery slope that only led to feelings of emptiness, discontentment and inadequacy. Before long, my growing thirst for social acceptance and conditional happiness would reach such a point that nothing could quench it. Heading into the genesis of my adolescence, I was in trouble.

I was confirmed and baptized at Crossroads United Methodist Church when I was 11 years old. As I previously noted, my family was strong in their faith, and as far as I was concerned I had inherited their faith/religious beliefs. We attended church as regularly as we could, and from conversations with my parents in addition to what I learned at church, I had a decent idea (for an 11 year old) about who Jesus was, and what He did for mankind. I also knew that if one was a Christian, they got to go to Heaven and at the time that was enough for me to want to be a Christian. After all, in my thought process I determined that one would be crazy to not want to go to Heaven! It was also around this time that I discovered that many of my classmates were beginning to be baptized or had already been baptized. I did not want to be left out of something that appeared to be the popular thing to do amongst my peers. So around the beginning of 6th grade, I began to ask my parents if I could be baptized since I was a "Christian." I told them exactly what I knew they wanted to hear: "I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins and I accept Him as my Lord and Savior." Sure enough, my plea for their approval regarding my baptism was good enough to receive their blessing. Following a "Confirmation" process through our church, I was baptized and I couldn't have been any happier! My parents were so proud of me, and now I finally had the justification to brag to my classmates that I was baptized. Looking back, in my heart I know that although I had been baptized and had "accepted" Christ, I had not fully surrendered my life to Him; I had not truly accepted Christ into my heart, but merely said the right things to appease my parents so I could do what I believed to be the popular thing to do at the time. The fruit that was produced (See Matthew 7:15-20) in my life for the next 6 years would prove that I was still as spiritually lost as I was before I was baptized. Honestly, things only got worse for me (spiritually/emotionally/socially) from that day forward for quite some time.

My life was a blur from that day forward. On the surface, things were looking great; I was excelling in school and in baseball. My parents couldn't have been any more proud of the man I was becoming. I was attending church weekly, and proudly proclaimed that I was a Christian to my peers. Life was about as good as it could have been, or so it would appear to be from the outside. Truthfully, reflecting back on my life from 11-17, I couldn't have been anymore miserable. At the age of 13, I became addicted to pornography. My misery was fueled by this powerful addiction and the effects of my newfound obsession would prove to be tumultuous. I was fascinated with the visual and physical temporary pleasure that pornography offered me. I knew from my parent's instruction that premarital sex was wrong, and somehow to this day I have abstained from it. However, my mentality soon became that if I could not have sex, I was going to get all the sexual satisfaction I wanted from what online pornography had to offer me. It did not take me long to become consumed with lust, and buried deep in the trap that is porn. Also, my language and dialect was very inappropriate; It felt as if every other word I said was a curse word, and try as I did, I could not stop cursing by my own

power. What had begun as an attempt to sound cool to impress my peers had now become words that were rooted deep within my vocabulary. Worst of all, as middle school progressed into high school, my efforts to win the approval of my peers were failing. Out of frustration for what I perceived as a lack of my classmate's appreciation of me, I began to treat many of my peers very poorly, and from that moment forward I felt that the only way I could get any acceptance was to act out in negative ways. This would result in me spending more time in the halls exiled from class than actually in the classroom. Because of growing insecurity of my public perception, I began to brag about my ability to play baseball and would lie/exaggerate about anything that could make me appear honorable to my classmates. I was completely enslaved to my desire to be popular, admired and accepted. Seeing my continued failures of gaining social acceptance only compounded my despair. To counter my growing depression, I turned to pornography even more and used it as an outlet to escape my self imposed "problems." Pornographic material provided me with a temporary outlet to satisfy myself and take my mind off of my growing social failures. I began to fall deeper and deeper into worldliness, which only magnified the temptations that were present in my life. Of course, with no Biblical foundation or relationship with God, I had no power of my own to withhold from porn or other forms of sin that I clearly knew were wrong. I trudged through my first two years of high school before I changed schools. The change of schools was the most difficult thing that I had endured at that point of my life. Not only was I separated from the few friends I had at my previous school, but I became a social outcast at my new educational institution. I can't begin to express the depression I felt on a daily basis during my junior year of high school. I had zero true friends and felt lost and alone. Granted, I had completely brought everything on myself. I was difficult to relate to, made little effort in participating in fellowship with my new classmates and distanced myself socially in fear of being rejected. As my senior year of high school rolled around, I was at rock bottom spiritually, emotionally and socially. I was deeply depressed, and I began to feel more alone than I had ever felt in my entire life. I had no desire to live, and thoughts began to cross my mind as to if anybody would even care if I died. In my opinion, my life lacked purpose and I felt as if my future had no direction whatsoever. All of this led up to November 18, 2012 when my life was changed forever; It was on that date that I met the "Prince of Peace" for the first time in my life (Isaiah 9:6). In a matter of minutes following my introduction to Him, my life was never the same.

It was Thanksgiving Break. I was at my Grandmother's house alone, and I was deep in thought on the living room couch. Nothing in my life seemed to bring me any satisfaction. I felt exhausted spiritually from carrying the weight of my sinful baggage that I had accumulated from years of pornography addiction, self imposed social rejection and insecurities surrounding my public image in the eyes of my peers. I didn't know where else to turn, and as far as I was concerned life had lost its appeal. In hindsight, I was so consumed with the negative effects that my sin was having on my life that I was completely oblivious to all of what I had been blessed with. I had a full college baseball scholarship, I was set to graduate high school with honors and my family had provided me with virtually everything that I had ever asked for. Yet in the midst of it all, I could only dwell on my countless failed attempts at obtaining the social clout and attention that I craved. At some point during that emotional "pity party," I took out my cell phone in preparation to watch a pornographic video in order to escape from the onslaught of my despairing thoughts. As I took the phone out of my pocket, I noticed out of the corner of my eye a small book sitting on my Grandmother's coffee table.

For whatever reason, I decided to pick it up and see what it was; It was a daily devotional book! Intrigued, I put my phone back in my pocket and started flipping through the pages and realized that there was a specific devotional for each individual date for every day of the year. I proceeded to turn to the November 18 devotional (the date of that particular day) and began to read the contents of the page. Immediately, my eyes burned from the tears that began to form, and before long I was weeping in the middle of my Grandmother's living room. Everything that I had been going through in my life socially, emotionally and spiritually was written on that page. It was as if I had given an interview of my life to a reporter, and I was reading the notes that were taken over what I had said. After I finished reading the devotional, I did something that I hadn't sincerely done in over 6 years- I prayed! In prayer, I asked God for the forgiveness of my sin, and begged for Jesus to come into my heart. I pleaded to my Heavenly Father that He would help give me the strength to change my life, turn away from my sin and restore it in such a way to remove my pain, insecurities and depression. Following my prayer, I felt a greater peace than I had ever felt in my entire life. Nothing special happened to me physically, but in my heart I knew that something had changed. At that moment, I officially was Born Again (John 3:3)! It was November 18, 2012 that I secured my eternal citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven. From that day forward, God began to transform every facet of my life! (Romans 12:1-2)

Through the power of The Holy Spirit, I put on "the new self," (Ephesians 4:24) or became a new Dewey Dovel! Obviously, the change I was undergoing was a process; I did not overcome my life of habitual sin overnight. However, the more I prayed, and the more frequently I read my Bible, the less attractive my old lifestyle trends became. I actually began to have success in overcoming the temptations in my life that were causing me to stumble and experience the heartache/inadequacy that I had been feeling for so many years. Slowly but surely, my language and dialect became more appropriate (Ephesians 5:4 & James 3:11). Over the course of a year and a half, my battle in overcoming pornography addiction was complete through the Power of Jesus Christ! I discovered that the Power and Authority I had in the Name of Jesus was far more powerful than my lustful urges and sinful nature (Luke 10:19)! Also, The Lord freed me from the domineering insecurities of pleasing all of my peers. I began to solely focus on living out God's Will for my life to the best of my ability, and in time my concern for popularity/social prestige vanquished (Galatians 1:10 & 1 Thessalonians 2:4). To my surprise, the less I focused on being popular and forcing my peers to like me, the more my peers showed me their approval/favor. Nearly a year following me becoming Born Again on that November afternoon at my Grandmother's house, God called me to preach The Gospel. In June 2014, I was baptized again firmly solidifying my full circle in being transformed by The Lord into a New Creation! To make a long story short, God changed my life. It was through my faith in Him, and the encouragement He gave me through what The Bible teaches us about His Love that I could be set free from my life of sin (Romans 6:15-23). Honestly, overcoming my sin was not an easy task. The change was not instantaneous, and it was not always smooth sailing. There were many periods of frustration and confusion. There were occasional instances in which I would suffer a temporary relapse into pornography or cursing. However, the constant factor that gave me the strength to overcome my intoxication with worldliness was God's Love for me! I realized that no matter how many times I stumbled, God's support and love never wavered (Psalm 136:1). When I was at my lowest moments, God was right by my side (Psalm 23:4). He was always with me, even

before I knew Him intimately through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 13:5). It was through Christ that I had the strength to overcome all the inequity in my life that was bogging me down (Philippians 4:13). It was Christ that gave me a new peace, a new hope and a fresh start in my life (Lamentations 5:21). No matter how many times I stumble (I continue to stumble more than I could ever keep track of), God's Love is enough to cover all my wrongs (Proverbs 10:12)! Jesus Christ has paid the price for my sin (1 Corinthians 6:19-20); He has made me righteous before God (1 Corinthians 1:30), given me new life (Galatians 2:19-21) and ONLY Christ deserves all glory, honor and praise (Revelation 5:12)! Not only has Jesus Christ changed my life, but He has the power to revolutionize EVERY life! He was sent by God to be the sacrifice for the sin of the WHOLE world! He is available to ALL people! (1 Timothy 2:4) He is ready to make an eternal impact on your life if you allow Him to do so! (James 4:8) Have you placed your trust and faith in Jesus Christ? Have you personally met the Prince of Peace?

Decision:

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."- John 8:34

Some of you reading this testimony might very well be prisoners to sin. You are prisoners to pride. You are prisoners to jealousy. You are prisoners to lust or insecurities. You are in bondage to some sort of immorality and you long to be set free. You are a prisoner and you have tried time after time to be set free, but you haven't been able to escape through your own strength. I tell you the truth, you can be set free by Jesus Christ! The truth shall set you free!

It is through Jesus Christ that we are set free from the shackles and bondage of all our sin, mistakes and failures. It was only through God's Divine, Perfect Love that our lives can be transformed. It is through the precious blood of Jesus Christ that we can be set free of all our sins! (Romans 3:22) On that cross 2000 years ago, Christ bore all of our sin, guilt and shame; On that cross, Jesus Christ endured the epitome of the most humiliating, torturous way to die for EVERY person that has ever or will ever live! It is through God's Mercy, Forgiveness, Grace and Love that we have forever been set free of our transgressions when we freely receive Jesus Christ into our hearts as our Lord and Savior!

Jesus Christ came to save mankind! He came to set the whole world free from the bondage of sin! That means everybody! That means YOU! He thought about YOU on that Cross! Jesus Christ belongs to the whole world! He belongs to every race, gender, and ethnicity! He belongs to every sinner! He is the atonement for all sins! He lived a perfect, sinless life and willingly died on the cross to wipe away your sins once and for all! You can be cleansed, and you can have a clean slate from all your past, present and future transgressions! Through Jesus Christ, you can be eternally set free and eternally forgiven! All you have to do is ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart by faith, freely receive Him as your Lord and Savior, and turn away from your sin (repent) with the help of God through His Holy Spirit! It's as simple as that!

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."- 2 Corinthians 5:21

Wouldn't it be awesome to go to bed tonight and every night thereafter knowing you're forgiven of your sins? Wouldn't it be refreshing to know everyday that you are going to Heaven, and someday you will get to dwell with God for all of eternity? You can have that peace and assuredness by coming to The Cross, and accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior by FAITH!

"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."- 2 Corinthians 6:2

Have you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? If so, say a similar version of this prayer to yourself, and at the conclusion of it you can know that you are forever saved! (See Romans 10:9-13)

Sinner's Prayer:

Dear God, I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ. I acknowledge to You that I am a sinner, and I am sorry for my sins and the life that I have lived; I need your forgiveness.

I believe that your only Son Jesus Christ shed His precious blood on the cross and died for my sins, and I am now willing to turn from my sin in repentance.

You said in Your Holy Word, Romans 10:9 that if we confess that Jesus is Lord, and believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead, we shall be saved.

Right now God, I have acknowledged to you that I accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior. With my heart, I believe that You raised Jesus from the dead, and I receive Him into my heart by faith. At this very moment I have become Born Again, and accept Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior and according to His Word, right now I am saved.

Thank you Jesus for your unlimited grace which has saved me from my sins. Lord Jesus transform my life so that I may bring glory and honor to you alone and not to myself.

Thank you Jesus for dying for me and giving me eternal life.

In Jesus' Name I Pray,

Amen.

If you just said this prayer and you meant it with all your heart, you are saved and you are Born Again. The Kingdom of Heaven is rejoicing at this very moment as new members of God's Kingdom have been established (Luke 15:10)! Congratulations! You are going to Heaven, and nothing will ever be able to take that away from you! The truth has set you free, and the truth (Jesus Christ) will be with you for the rest of your lives! Moving forward, I encourage you to get involved regularly with

a church or Bible Study program to help you grow in your faith. Once you find a church home, the next step is to become water-baptized. By accepting Christ you are baptized in the spirit (John 20:22), but it is through water baptism that you show your obedience to God (Romans 6:3-8). Water baptism is a symbol of salvation from the dead, and a public profession of our faith in Christ.

This is only the beginning of your walk with The Lord! May our Heavenly Father bless you and keep you everyday of your life, while serving as your guide as you embark on your journey with Him by your side forever!

God Bless!

"…And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."- Matthew 28:20