

## Tom Kiser - My Testimony



*"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12-14;*

I was born February 25, 1959 to Tom and Kay Kiser in Lafayette, Indiana. I grew up on an Indiana farm. At the age of 10 I joined the local 4-H club and on July 22, 1969 brought a lamb to the Reynolds 4-H fair grounds to show her in the competition. That Tuesday, after leaving my lamb in her new pen I wandered around the tents looking at the farm equipment and other displays. In the largest tent an incident took place that forever changed my life.

A local man had set up a table with a sign that said "If you died tonight do you know that you would go to heaven?" As I read this I knew in my heart that I wasn't ready to die and I wanted to know that I was ready. This kind gentleman noticed me standing there and told me if I would like he would sit down with me in a little curtained off area he had there and show me what God tells us in the Bible about how we could know if we died we would go to heaven. We sat down together and he began taking me through the Bible to scriptures which showed me my lost condition and God's provision of salvation through Jesus Christ. He showed me the sin of Adam and Eve. He showed me that we have "all sinned and come short of the glory of God." He showed me that God was holy and could not ignore our sin. That "the wages of sin was death." I read from his Bible that "God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." I saw for the first time in my life that if I would "confess my sins" he would forgive my sins and cleanse me from all unrighteousness." As we read together each passage of scripture he asked me if I believed what God said in the passage. The convicting presence of God's Holy Spirit so clearly let me know that what I was reading was the truth and I nodded my head yes. This was the first time in my life that I had heard the wonderful message of God's redemption. I knew I was not ready to die and now God was opening my eyes to my spiritual condition. I saw that God was reaching out to me, offering me forgiveness and a special relationship with Him. That if Christ came into my life all my past sins would be forgiven and everything would be new.

Then he showed me Revelations 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Here I saw that Christ was standing at the door of my heart, waiting for me to confess my sins to Him, ask his forgiveness and invite him into my life. The man asked me if I would like to ask the Savior to come into my life. I knew I wanted to pray and so, not knowing how to pray he told me he would pray words that I should tell God and that I should repeat them and if I really meant them Jesus would forgive me and come into my heart. I told God I was a sinner. I asked God to forgive me of all my sins. I told him I knew that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and wanted to come into my life. I asked Christ to come into my life and make me a new person. As I prayed these words a great peace and love come into me and I knew that Christ had forgiven me and come into me. The sweet assurance of God filled me.

When we finished praying the gentleman asked "Did Christ come into you heart when you prayed?" God's Spirit was witnessing to my spirit that I was forgiven and adopted into his family and my heart was filled with a peace and love that I had never experienced. There was absolutely no question to me that Christ had come into me and changed me. I replied "Yes." Then that dear man of God did something else that has been a source of great blessing to me. He had me read Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." He pointed out to me that not only are we to place our trust in Christ's atonement but we are also to "confess" him with our mouth. He asked me "when you go home tonight will you tell you parents that Christ came into your heart?" At this my heart was struck with the thought "what will they think?" In the next moment I realized that since Christ had suffered on the Cross it would be wrong for me to be afraid to risk the rejection or misunderstanding of my parents and be silent about what Christ had done for me. I thought "no matter what happens I must share what he has done for me." I then answered the man "I will."

As I left that man my heart was overwhelmed with a love and joy like nothing I had ever known. I felt so light and happy and I went running between the tents jumping over the tent pegs. That night riding along in the dark cab of the pickup my heart was pounding in my chest as I prepared for what I knew I must do. No one was talking and I said: "Mom, Dad... I met a man at the Fair today and he told me about Jesus and I asked Him to come into my heart and He did." The pickup was silent as we went on home to the farm but upon confessing what Christ had done for me, God poured in peace and love that filled me. I thought "if it feels this good to tell others what Christ has done for me I will do this the rest of my life."

As far as I know I have not seen the man who lead me to Christ since that day, I don't know his name or anything about him, but the Savior he introduced me to that day put such a love and desire for his will in my life that I have continued walking with him these 31 years since. The divine love that God shed abroad in my heart has never left me since that hour and I can tell you that when I get to heaven after seeing Jesus the second person I want to see is that man so I can thank him for the time he took to share the message of Christ with me. I will so gladly tell him that every person God has touched through my life since that day is a result of his reaching out to a little 10 year old farm boy. When I

think of what this man means to my life and the lives of those I touch it causes me to never underestimate the power of my testimony to a stranger who I will probably never see again. This is one of the things I love the most about New York City, I get opportunities to tell others of Christ's love continually.

There is so much that God has done in my life down through the years but one thing has particular importance in the context of this web site.

When Christ came into my heart that July day in 1969 he put a great love in me to understand and do his will. I soon got a Bible and began reading it. I also tried to get my hands on any literature I could find that could help me understand God's word. Whatever I ran across I read and compared to the Bible, if it stood with Scripture I was blessed with how it helped my understanding. If it wasn't true to Scripture I set it aside and went on.

When I was Thirteen years old I saw a used book at an auction entitled: "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes" by Glenn Clark. I bought it and began reading it. It was a book on prayer and steps to holiness. The book challenged me to pray the following:

- 1) I pray for Thy spirit to enter me and fill me completely.
- 2) I pray for Thy kingdom to come, in earth as it is in heaven.
- 3) I pray for my will to become completely and utterly Thy will.
- 4) I pray for my actual needs to be met by the right supply, in the right way and at the right time.
- 5) I pray for the right persons to come into my life, at the right time and in the right way.
- 6) I pray for the right ideas to come to me in perfect sequence and in perfect order, in the right time and in the right way.
- 7) I pray for my deepest soul's sincere desire to be fulfilled in the right time and in the right way.

When I finished praying this way I knew that God's Spirit had filled me completely and my will was completely enveloped and one with God's will. Few things stand out to me in those early years so long ago but this special time of prayer and the grace God lovingly gave me is still fresh and clear in my memory. I can testify that from that very day my heart has continually sought to please God and I have continually received from God: Love, Joy, Peace, Purpose, Provision, Direction and so much more that time doesn't allow me to describe it. My actual needs have been met like clockwork. At important crossroads just the right persons, wisdom and counsel has come into my life in answer to trusting, yielded prayer. It has been a wonderful adventure to walk with the risen Lord these many years and my present day experience is full of Faith, Hope, Love, and Amazement as I see God's hand at work in my life, in the family He has blessed me with and in our ministry.

Around this time as a 13 year old boy I knew that God had called me to be a preacher. When I was 15 I was given a paper that said that every preacher should study the

Sermons of John Wesley. I thought "well God has called me to be a preacher so I should purchase them and study them." I enrolled in the Schmul Wesleyan Book club and ordered John Wesley's 52 Standard Sermons. When they arrived and I began reading I was amazed. The window of Godly influence that was opened to me in their writings was beyond what I had ever imagined. I had never meet or heard of any people that lived such a scripturally sound life. Nearly every sentence contained a quote from Scripture and all their writings breathed with a holy love and Godly focus on practical heart holiness.

Because these writings were such a blessing to me I took them over to a friends home and shared them with him. The truth of God's perfect salvation amazed him and we began getting together in his home studying together. We would read a paragraph, marvel at the greatness of God's salvation and exhort each other. Many times I would not return home until 2 or 3 am. The truth contained in these writings was so edifying. We discovered Wesley's method of holding accountability discipleship classes (they called them "class meetings," and we soon had a group of zealous young men from 3 different local churches meeting with us. We experienced the great help it was to mutually focus together on pleasing God and helping each other advance spiritually.

I went on to study for the ministry for 5 years at God's Bible School and College in Cincinnati, Ohio. I have over 24 years of pastoral experience and a wonderful library filled with fine Christian references and books. After all these years of study and Christian service I can tell you that after the Bible, I have received more spiritual help from the writings of John Wesley and his Methodist contemporary John Fletcher than everything else that has benefited me spiritually put together. I have found no other writings that are so rich with insight into the ways of God, so practical in promoting holy living and so helpful in my walk with Christ. Because of the rich blessing these writings have been I have made many of them available on this web site. I am confident that they will benefit all who carefully examine their life in light of the scriptural truths they present, humbly pray for the holiness they describe and wholeheartedly depend on Christ for the perfect love they detail. I have also included a section on Accountability Discipleship so that anyone who wishes may use these materials in a small group to help each other live in a closer moment by moment relationship with Christ.

I am not perfect, but God's amazing grace is perfect and the marvelous grace he has bestowed upon my life stirs me to tell you that all he has done in me, he will do in you!

Yours for Christ,

Tom S. Kiser