

The Testimony of Lindsay (Middleton) Klingbeil

I desire to share my testimony of conversion with you, and give glory to God for saving my soul. Thanks be to Christ for His incredible mercy! May the Lord open your eyes to the fearful and wonderful realities of eternity that each one of us will face. I do hope you will take the time to read this testimony in full.

As a child I had some awareness of God, as my mom would occasionally take us to church, and some of our family friends were religious. The things of God were never spoken about much in my home, and we didn't own a bible, until a religious family friend gave me one. My concept of God was never deepened, as the things of this world captivated my heart and I saw much hypocrisy in the church-goers around me.

At the age of eighteen I shamefully began to indulge in all the sinful desires of my heart. I threw away my (shallow) belief in God and instead, began reading the Bible just to disprove it and deter others away from Christianity. I began to drink almost every weekend, and do various drugs, along with practicing witchcraft. At first, I truly enjoyed myself... but as I fell deeper and deeper into these sins, my life became a living nightmare. And so, the scripture is true: *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."* (Galatians 6:7).

All of my relationships were vain and selfish. I was pretending to be happy, and only living for the next time I could get high. Joy and peace were nowhere to be found. *"There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked."* (Isaiah 48:22).

My infatuation with witchcraft grew, so much so that the desire of my heart was to become a psychic-medium. Generally, a day wouldn't pass without reading my tarot cards. Very specific and shocking predictions I made would come to pass. I also shamefully preformed many satanic rituals in hopes to gain more wisdom and power.

Through various online resources, my eyes began to open regarding the nature of these evil practices. There was true darkness surrounding me every day because of my lifestyle and fear began gripping my very soul. I could no longer sleep in the dark, and oftentimes I resorted to staying at my mother's house for comfort and some sense of security. I did not understand what was happening, but now I know that I was possessed with demonic spirits because of my sins of witchcraft and sorcery.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12).

"And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us." (Acts 16:16a).

In my overwhelming desperation, I sought for the Bible I was gifted as a child that my mother had in her basement. Upon reading, I found great peace that surpassed anything I had experienced prior. All of my previous witchcraft, rituals, drinking and drugs could not give me this peace. The words of this Holy book were powerful. There was truth among these pages, and truth is what I wanted all my life. This was the drawing presence of the Holy Spirit speaking to me through the word of God (John 6:44). And so, I began to question all my beliefs, as I was a shameless and expressive hater of God prior to that time. Yet now, I could not resist the truth of God's existence. I decided to devote myself wholly to Him all my days. I denounced all of my ties to witchcraft and reformed my life to the Bible the best I knew how.

O the countless hours I spent in prayer every day! O the ways in which I mustered up religious zeal to evangelize to strangers! Days without number I spent my time listening to sermons and reading the Bible. There was a great reformation of my lifestyle, but I had never been born of the Spirit of God (born again), though I didn't know this at the time.

The Spirit of Christ is the only One who can empower a wretched, depraved sinner to walk as a Saint by freeing them from sin and bringing them into the presence of the living God by the blood of Christ!

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." - John 3:3

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." – John 3:5

"And this is life eternal, that they might KNOW thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." – John 17:3

I found myself asking the Lord if I had ever been born again. One fateful night, He gave me my answer.

Upon the discovery of certain street preachers that I found online, I became utterly convicted that I did not have what they had. One of the them said in a video, "Salvation is not the strong belief of the atonement of Christ (factually). Salvation is not the strong belief in the doctrine of imputed righteousness (intellectually). It's the actual person of Jesus Christ with you (in the belief), and you're having communion! That's salvation and nothing less!"

I was heartbroken, for I knew that my "experience of salvation" was nothing like this. The Jesus Christ that these men preached was entirely different from who I thought was Jesus Christ. Religious yet unsaved people create a "Christ" to their own liking. One who is tolerant of sin, one who allows compromise with the world, one who is just like them. *"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."* (Psalm 50:21). It was the "religious" people of Christ's day who crucified their own God without recognizing Him! *"He is despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."* (Isaiah 53:3). The scriptures warn about the very deception that was upon me, *"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."* (2 Corinthians 11:4). I saw the true Christ in these earthen vessels (2 Corinthians 4:7). He was despised of men, though loved all men desperately. He was HOLY!

After listening to many of the videos that night, I found myself praying for the Lord's mercy and salvation. Gradually, the smell of smoke started to enter the room while I was praying. Not understanding where the scent was coming from, I decided to open the back door for air. Still, it would not leave. In my concern, I left the house (that I was house-sitting) and returned to my own. In agony of soul over what I had heard from these men of God, I was praying beside my bed late into the night, when suddenly, I began feeling as though I was falling into hell. The smell of smoke in my nostrils was unavoidable, and the insides of my body began to feel as though they were burning. It truly felt as though I was losing consciousness and teetering between two worlds. I grabbed onto my surroundings with all strength, but

nothing could keep me from the power of death and the terror of hellfire. *"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death."* (Ecclesiastes 8:8a).

All my might, all my wisdom, and all my religious activity could not save me! All I knew to do was call upon the name of the Lord. Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords! After some time the experience ended, but being deeply distraught, I stayed in the same spot until around 7am, all too terrified to fall asleep lest I never woke up again!

The Lord had thoroughly convinced me of the lost state of my soul, and the reality of eternal torment. The days following were some of the most agonizing in my life. With tears, I sought the Lord for His saving grace, but could not find it. I tried repenting of my sins and believing the Gospel. Why wasn't it working? It is because when a person gets saved it's the sheer mercy of a Sovereign God. He chooses who He will bestow the gift upon, and it is never guaranteed to anyone when and if they make a mere decision. *"It is the gift of God"* (Ephesians 2:8b)! *"Salvation belongeth unto the Lord"* (Psalm 3:8)! During this time, the sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards shook my soul to the very core and plunged me into utter desperation to flee from the wrath of God to come!

A false church I attended at this time told me that all I needed to do was believe on Jesus. As I tried to do this, I had a mirage of peace and joy for a time, but still felt uncertain about my standing before a just and holy God. I was greatly leavened by this false church (1 Cor. 5:6), and instead of crying out to God for His mercy, I stopped seeking first His kingdom, and even began to doubt the experience of hell I had. The Lord in His mercy gave me another chance. I had a dream one night, filled with all manner of abominable sins. At the very end of the dream there was a close-up almost cinematic image of a woman lounging on her side. The visual began to focus on her face.

As I was beholding this woman, her very essence disturbed me greatly and gave me an overwhelming feeling of disgust. Suddenly I awoke from my sleep, and upon sitting up, an overwhelming sense that I was dying and going to everlasting destruction fell over me again. As this was happening, I knew that the woman in the dream represented me, and that I was an abomination in God's sight because of my sin (Prov. 15:9, 26, 16:5). Frightened, I got to the ground to pray, and there was tangible darkness around me (Exodus 10:21).

Again, all I could do was cry to Jesus Christ for His saving hand, and eventually everything was back to normal, but I knew that I needed some help. I had been trying to seek the Lord for salvation, and felt I was getting nowhere, and the preacher from the online videos came immediately to my remembrance. *"For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety."* (Proverbs 24:6). In this day and age where true Christians are few and far between, and biblical churches are almost non-existent, all I knew to do was message these men whom I knew to walk with God! I took a flight to Texas, in a last chance effort to find salvation in Christ for my lost and dying soul. I had done everything I knew to do by myself at home, and salvation was still afar off. I cried to God for weeks, listened to the most fearful sermons, fasted from food in hopes that God would turn away His wrath, as He did towards the Ninevites in the Book of Jonah, but it was all to no avail. I believed that these truly converted Christians in Texas could help me, as they had Christ Himself living through them by the Holy Spirit.

Upon arrival, I was welcomed and almost every day someone came to preach the truth of God's Word to me. During my time seeking the Lord in Texas, the Lord gave me a spiritual revelation of my own depravity. Beforehand, I had believed myself to be a great sinner, but it was merely an intellectual understanding. Now, the Lord was revealing my true nature to me by the word of God, on a heart level. I

saw that there was truly no good thing in me; not one ounce of humility, absolutely no selflessness, and no true love.

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift

to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans 3:10-18).

Only when a person sees that THIS is his or her nature, can anyone truly see their need for Christ. *"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick"* (Matthew 9:12). After exactly 4 weeks of seeking God and being humbled by the truth of Scripture, some brothers came to preach to me and the LORD poured His Spirit upon me through the hearing of faith! *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* (Romans 10:17)! By hearing the voice of the living God, I was saved (1 Thess. 1:4-5, 2:13)!

"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." - 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." - 1 Corinthians 1:21

I saw a distant vision of the cross of Christ, and in one moment of time the Lord made me an entirely new creature. I was born again! *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Corinthians 5:17). My heart was filled with joy unspeakable! I walked home that night gazing at the stars, and glorifying God with my whole heart. For the first time in my life, I knew and worshipped the living God in truth. The presence of the Lord was with me. Merciful art thou O God!

The morning after I was saved, I woke up from a dreamed filled with much sin. While this may have tempted me in the past, my heart's new desire was to pray, read the Bible and utterly glorify God. These are things that I never hungered for, on a heart level, when I was a lost false Christian. As a false Christian, I could clean up the outside, but could never escape the sins of the heart. *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thought, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceith, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these things come from within, and defile the man."* (Mark 7:21-23). The Lord has graciously set me free from the inward sins that I was previously enslaved to! He has also put love in my heart, where in times past, I could not love in truth!

This is truly a testimony of God's own glory, in that He can change the vilest soul and wash it white as snow, by the blood of Jesus Christ!