

Tim Conway's Testimony

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I grew up in an Irish Catholic family, very nominal, I probably went to the Catholic church five times, maybe, in my whole life, but if you had asked me, I carried a cross around wherever I went that said "I'm a Catholic, call a priest." It was a silver cross that my grandfather had given to me. And I'm sure that when I was out here I had it wherever... I actually rode motorcycles out here from Michigan. I worked up in the mountains near Kremmling. You guys probably all know where that is. I planted trees up there in areas that had been forested. Part of the time, actually when a buddy and I were done working up there, we came and we stayed here in Denver for awhile.

I guess I bring that up, that was in 1986, that was pretty typical... I turned 21 that year. That was pretty typical of my life. Basically, the way I tell people, I lived the beer commercial kind of life. Basically, I lived to have fun, I lived for pleasure. So I went down every road, every avenue, every path that led to that. What happened was in high school, I drank pretty heavily, drugs were pretty regular, and I basically told myself, you know what? When I get into college, I'm going to quit this.

And then I got into college and it only got worse. And then I told myself, when I get out of college I'm going to quit this. I went to college and I got a mechanical engineering degree, and once I got out, it all of a sudden hit me, I'm never going to stop. And I was only getting worse and worse. I thought I had everything in control. I thought everything was just where I wanted it. I thought, you know, here I am. I can get an engineering degree. I can get an engineering job, and I can party at the same time. And I can make money, I've got life just where I want it.

And then the year 1990 came and the Lord just started to knock me down, over and over and over and over. And I didn't know what was happening to me. I thought I was losing my mind - I don't know. What happened was, I remember being at work and playing softball... One of the things that happened in a myriad of other things that happened, I was playing softball. I had a collision at second base. My leg was bent backwards. My knee hyper-extended, and I'm limping around at work. I'd been doing so much crystal meth and coke that literally I'd come to work to work as an engineer, I would sit in the stalls in the bathroom with my head against the wall because it hurt so bad from being hungover from these drugs. Typically, it was later in the week before I could even start to perform my job.

It just happened at that time that our company had been bought out by a Japanese company, and Japanese engineers were over there. And I was paired up with one of these guys who was kind of a senior engineer. And he liked to drink and he liked to golf, which I did too, so he and I became pretty good friends. And I think he kind of covered for me. And so I was able to have that kind of poor performance and not really get discovered. But then during this time, I'm limping around. I have a bad leg now. I got hauled into my boss's office, the chief engineer, and he wanted to see my work, and he wanted to bring in the various projects that I had been working on, and it was terrible - it was only the Lord that I didn't lose my job. And it was eventually that job that was going to take me to San Antonio.

It was the Lord that made even getting the job there. When I first interviewed for that place, I had been smoking dope and I had been snorting coke, and I went in for an interview, and they wanted me to go to a physical and be drug tested the next day. I went to the interview on a Thursday, the next day was Friday, and when he asked me to go take the drug test, I don't know why I wasn't thinking that that would happen. I was just stupid. But I said to him, "Oh, could I go do that on Monday?" Because I wanted to try to purge my system. I knew that if I went in the next day I was dust. No, he insisted that I take it the next day. And I rode my motorcycle up there the next day, and the place had burned down overnight and there was yellow tape all the way around it, and so I went home - and even there the Lord got me into that position, preserved me in that position, despite me in all my sin, because eventually, after the Lord saved me, and I really began then to excel as an engineer, the firm I worked for, we got the AlamoDome project down in San Antonio, which led me down there, and to meet Sam's good friend, John Sytsma. You've had him here before? So I met John later on.

But here, I got called into my boss's office, and I got reprimanded for nigh unto the whole day. You know, I'm about losing my job, my mom and my dad were both diagnosed with cancer in the same week, I have this collision playing softball... it's like my life is falling apart. Before, where I felt like I always had everything perfectly in control and if I wanted it, it happened, now it's like everything's falling apart.

Well, and I limp out to the break room out in the plant, and I walk in and there's two guys sitting there, and one of them has a book and he hides it under the table. And my life is so messed up, I didn't care. I went over and I started putting some coins into the machine, and he starts asking me about religion, and I said, "I'm Catholic." And he said, "did you ever think that the Pope is the antichrist?" (laughter) I said, "whatever, I just don't care." So then he actually brought me some tracts on the inquisition. And I read them. He came to my desk and said, "Did you read those tracts I gave you?" And I said, "Yeah, I did." So then he drops a book on my desk: "The Gospel According to Jesus." Anybody know that book? By John MacArthur? "The Gospel According to Jesus."

So here I am, I'm going home from work each night, I'm stopping by the beer store, I'm picking up two 40-ouncers, I'm going to my apartment, and with a beer in one hand and that book in the other hand, I'm trying to drink myself into oblivion, but I could not put that book down. And literally, one night as I'm reading that book, it was like a freight train of conviction rolled over me. The Spirit of God... I came under such conviction, for the first time, you know how it says there in John 16, the Spirit convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment, and I saw my sin, I saw I had no righteousness, and I saw I deserved God's judgment. But I'll tell you this, that book is all about repentance, that book is about the nature of true salvation, it's about following Christ and that it costs you everything. That text, "what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul."

I came under conviction, and somebody might have thought, well I'd be saved right away, but it didn't happen that way. I had about 30 friends and we were tight. We did everything together. We partied together, we played sports together, we hunted together, we gambled together. I mean, I was tight with these guys. And basically my reputation was as a crazy man, crazy on a motorcycle, just crazy in life. And I came under this conviction, but at the same time it's like the devil whispering in this one ear, "this is who you are, this is what your life is all about,

you can't give that up." Because I knew, not only did I know that text there that said what does it profit a man, I knew that text there because MacArthur was bring it out in his book: unless you forsake all that you have, you cannot be My disciple. You guys know where that's found? It comes out of Luke 14:33.

It's like in one ear I'm hearing those: what does it profit a man? Unless you forsake all that you have... But over here, you can't give up this lifestyle, you can't give this up, this is who you are. And for the better part of three months, it was in that misery. I kept trying to drink myself into oblivion, but I could not put that book down. And eventually, seeing that MacArthur had written the book, I got on MacArthur's tape lending library, and so now I'm listening to his tapes, listening to his tapes.

I bought myself a Bible and I'm reading that. I went through the New Testament in about two weeks. And I'll tell you, the New Testament, I saw judgment and condemnation on every single page of that New Testament. So there was that wrestling. I remember I went down to the Indianapolis 500 and I got drunk with my friends, and I'm coming out of that thing, and there's like a 100,000 people walking across this muddy field to get out of that place, and there in the mud, there's a tract. And, you know, my friends, they all went to the bar that night, and I just wandered the streets.

I didn't know what was happening to me. I found myself kind of praying, but then I didn't even know who I was praying to, I didn't know what was happening to me. That was on Memorial Day weekend. By the Fourth of July, I went with my buddies to the beach, and again started drinking. The emptiness inside was so deep. It was just so deep. I was at the end. I drove home about 3 in the afternoon. My friends all stayed there. Forty miles back to Kalamazoo to my apartment, and I went in and I just went over and turned on the stereo. A MacArthur message on Isaiah 6 on the holiness of God was playing, and I just went and I fell on the floor.

Somewhere in the middle of that night, I woke up and I was just trembling from head to foot, and I don't know if it was even audible or something I just said inside, but it was basically three words. I was at the end. And it was just, "Lord, help me." And if you guys sing, "And Can it Be?" Do you guys sing that? Wesley's song? (singing) "And can it be..." Anyway, there's a stanza in there that says that the chains fell off, the dungeon filled with light. I don't know if I physically saw light or if it was just inside, but when I cried to the Lord, right then, something happened to me. I mean, I was born again, that's what happened.

Suddenly, now, as the days went forth from there, my hunger for the Word of God was insatiable. I used to speed everywhere. I had a turbo-charged car, I had a GSXR750 motorcycle, everything had radar detectors on them, and I drove fast. And I ran from police. Now I'm under conviction, and this was back when the speed limit was still 55. It was killing me. I mean I had a reputation, when I went to work, nobody passed me. And now everybody's passing me, but I knew this is what the Lord wanted.

I was suddenly being overwhelmed by joy. I wasn't raised under good teaching. I didn't have anybody mentoring me. It was this book, it was MacArthur's messages, And I knew something had happened to me, but I wasn't totally sure what had happened. I knew Christ did it. And I knew I was experiencing joy unspeakable. I remember coming out of the bathroom in the morning and just falling on my face, and being so overwhelmed by joy.

I had this high school buddy, and it was about six months later, around Christmas time. See I was still drinking, I was still going to the bars with my buddies, but now I'm evangelizing. And there I am and it's Christmas time and my buddy's home from school, he was at that time getting his master's degree in theology. He later went on to get his doctorate and he's now a Jesuit priest at Notre Dame. He may be in Italy now, but he was there at the time. But here he is this guy I went to high school with, he's this master's theology student, up there at Calvin College or Hope College or somewhere there in Michigan. And so here I am, been saved six months, never trained in the Scriptures at all, and here's this Catholic guy who's on his way to becoming a Jesuit. And I'm telling him things about what's happened, and he's getting irate, because he's the theologian! Who am I? In fact, he said that to me. "Conway! Who are you to tell me anything?" He said, "You can't even tell me what Christ's first miracle was." Oh, I hung my head. I said, "You're right, Dave, I can't." I went home that night, and I found out what Christ's first miracle was. I said, "David, all I can tell you is you know how I was, and I am totally different now." I didn't know what had happened, but I knew Christ had done it, and it just sent him into a rage. It was like how do you even answer that, even though you're a theologian.

And it wasn't until one day, everybody there where I worked, they all knew me as a crazy guy. Well, as I was coming out of the drafting department one day, I heard one of the guys whisper across the aisle, "Hey, what happened to him?" And as I'm going out of the drafting department back into the engineering department, I'm just at the door, I hear the other guy say, "I'll tell you what happened to him, God saved him." And it stopped me in my tracks and I thought, "Whoa! That's what happened to me!" That night, it just hit me, you know I'd been reading MacArthur's book and it all came back and that night I can remember standing out under the moonlit sky and just rejoicing. It hit me. Lord, there is rejoicing in heaven over me! And so that happened in 1990. And in a nutshell, that's basically how God saved me.