



FAITH TESTIMONY

Scott Hamilton

Shared at Pilgrim Lutheran Church
and School
At 10:30 a.m. Service,
March 1, 2015

Hello my name is Scott Hamilton. The last time I stood up here was March 24th, 25 years ago at my wedding. My brother had to hold me up to keep me from fainting.

HOW PEOPLE FIND JESUS

I was asked to share my testimony today. Some people share stories of finding Jesus because they hit rock bottom due to abuse, addiction, poverty, imprisonment or just bad choices they had made. Some people share stories about finding Jesus who never had Jesus to begin with. Some people just received Jesus early on and had a clear understanding of what that meant and they never let him go. I wish I could say I was that person.

MY BLESSINGS

Well, I was really none of the above. I have an amazing family. I have a great job. I was raised in this amazing church and school. I had the best teachers, pastors, extended family and friends anyone could have. I turned out an overall good person. I considered myself a Christian, yet over time I knew something was missing.

TAKING YOUR FATHER FOR GRANTED

As most kids do, they take their parents for granted. We are taught good things but at some point we get out into the world and think we can do what we want, think what we want, act and react the way we want. And no matter what, our father will be there to forgive us and except us for who we are. As Christians, I think a lot of us go through life on our own will and we take our heavenly Father for granted the same way we take our earthly parents for granted. I know I did.

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEELING EMPTY

On Ash Wednesday 2013, I woke up and I was compelled to go to church that morning. Maybe it was because the clock radio said it was Ash Wednesday and Pastors were giving ashes at the train stations. Maybe because my daughter was getting married and I saw her husband taking her to church, maybe I was just getting old, maybe it was guilt, maybe it was God saying it's time. All I know is I wound up here at 9:00 AM that Ash Wednesday morning sitting in my

truck wondering if they still had a Wednesday mornings kids service. I saw some people enter the church side door. So I attempted to do the same thing. It was locked. Maybe that was a sign. I went back to my truck and thought to myself, do I drive away or do I ring the school bell? I am glad I chose to ring the bell.

JUDY, PASTOR AND COMING BACK HOME

So here I was sitting in the last pew and tucked in the corner of that pew when Judy Kiehm tapped me on my shoulder. Judy asked, "What are you doing here?" I replied, "I said I was just in the neighborhood." I think I got that teacher look like, who are you kidding. Or maybe it was just guilt surfacing again. Well, we sat through the service, which brought back so many good memories as a child here. Judy asked me to sit in on a Bible/small group study. I did and I decided to continue going to the Bible study. I needed to purchase the book for the class and that's when Pastor Kristian approached me and politely asked me, "What are you doing here?" Here we go again. This time I replied, "Pastor, there is not enough time in the day for all the little reasons why I am here." Truthfully, I had no idea why I was here. I asked Pastor if he had a Bible I could buy with my book for the class. Pastor said well, "Why don't I just give you this one." He handed the Bible to me and asked me to pray with him. I could not remember the last time someone prayed just for me. I was overwhelmed with emotion yet I had this sense of clarity and weight being lifted off my shoulders. At this point I still didn't know exactly why I was supposed to be here. I did realized that I was internally lost for so many years. I clearly understood what it meant to accept Jesus as my savior. Everything I learned here came rushing back to me. So I decided to give my life back to Christ, and stop taking my Father for granted. I started living by the will of God rather than living by my own will or the will of this world. I was determined to figure out what I needed to do to make a change in myself. I had no idea that not only was God going to change me but there was going to be a ripple effect.

GOD'S LOVE AT WORK

I left the church and returned to my truck. I had 5 missed calls from a friend who just recently moved to Florida he said he was so unhappy with life that he would go to sleep at night and wish God would take his life. I told him where I was and what happened. After a very long conversation I asked him to find a church in his neighborhood, go there and start with that. He did and gave his life back to Christ that same week.

Later that night, I realized that God, through me, immediately used me to help someone else find their way home. I had gone home and told my family about what happened. I wrote in my Bible this promise to God....A little time later God used me again to help another friend, who hit rock bottom, find his way back home.

RIPPLE EFFECT TURNED TIDAL WAVE.

As a family we are now very much involved with our new church. My daughter and I will be baptized again on July 18th. I have since been involved in 4 different men's Bible studies, one I started in my neighborhood and another one I am leading now through our church. It is a combination of men from my church and friends from different denominations. By the grace of God I see lives changing right in front of me. I have seen many grown men open up, tear down their walls, let God in and reset their internal compass. I have never had more clarity of who I

am and what I need to do as a Christian. Over time I simplified my life. I filled the holes in my life with God's love by spending more time with Him. I learned how to put God first, then my wife, then my kids, family and friends. I have learned how to lead my family the way God expects me too. That ripple effect has slowly turned into a tidal wave.

CHRISTIANS ARE PRESENTS FROM GOD

As Christians we are like presents on Christmas. We may be wrapped in different wrapping paper but inside we are all the same gift. A gift from God that we should not only share with non Christians but with other Christians too.

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

In the news we see Christians being persecuted. This is not new but it is for real. As Christians we need to stick together to fight the fight.

1 Thessalonianse 4 & 5 are parts of a letter from Paul to the Thessalonians less than 60 years after Jesus died for us. It speaks of how we should live a life pleasing to God, how we should control ourselves, how we should love one another, that Jesus died and will come back for the dead and the living, how those who follow Jesus will need to be strong and go to war against the enemy with faith and love as a breast plate and hope and salvation as our helmet.

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.

I love that, encourage one another and build each other up.

I heard a saying, sitting in church doesn't make you a Christian any more than sitting in your car makes you a mechanic.

MY JUDGEMENT DAY

I am sure I will have some explaining to do on my judgment day but I do not want to have to explain why I didn't strive to be more Christ like, why I didn't share God's love with others.

Why I didn't encourage and build others up.

GOD IS GOOD! ALL OF THE TIME!

With love,
Scott Hamilton

Let love be genuine;
hate what is evil, hold fast to what
is good; love one another with mutual
affection; out do one another in
showing honor.

Romans 12:9



