

SEVEN YOUNG ADULTS SHARE THEIR FAITH

Preface

One of the joys of producing the Sound Words radio programme is that it has led me to meet many people from all kinds of backgrounds, but who have all come to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. In this booklet are the stories of seven of these. They are all young adults but quite different from each other, yet they have all come to the assurance that God has forgiven their sins and made them his children.

As you read their stories you may find similarities with your own life or may find their experiences totally different to your own. Whichever it may be, recognise this that the great God of heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour he has sent to rescue us from sin, has been at work in each of their lives, and ask yourself the question, 'Has he been at work in my life?'

May their stories help you to trust in the Saviour they have come to know and to serve him throughout the whole of your life.

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Chapter 1: Mark Jenner

A false assumption

Some people might think that being a pastor's son or living in a Christian family automatically makes you a Christian or at least a very good person. After all, a pastor's son must have been taught to live well and would not commit terrible crimes, and the conclusion is that they must be good as far as God is concerned. This in fact is not the case for Romans 3:23 teaches us that

"...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

This is something we will see as we consider the testimony of Mark Jenner in this chapter and others later in this book.

Mark Jenner is the son of a pastor and was brought up in a Christian environment from a very early age. He was soaked in Christian teaching and Bible knowledge. At home, mealtimes were family prayer times, which were a very important part of his family's life. Mark accepted the teaching of the Bible to be true and could never remember wanting to reject it, but this still did not make him a Christian believer.

Conviction and faith

The Lord worked in Mark's life over a period of months. When he was about eleven, in the summer of 1996, he heard a series of sermons that led him to a conviction of his sin and the feeling that he was accountable to God for it. These sermons were preached by his father and other men too and Mark found that they spoke to him. They were not

part of a family lecture but rather, something from God. He remembers one particular sermon on Ezekiel chapter 18; the main theme being that the soul that sins is the one who will die. This had a powerful effect on his conscience and made him realise he was culpable for his own sin and needed to get right with God. Mark realised that there was nothing in his background that made him a better person than others. Instead, he knew he was a sinner, guilty before God. He felt afraid and was faced with the reality of hell and punishment which would be his destiny if nothing changed in his life. It was a most solemn time.

Mark had been brought up to know about God. He knew that God existed but it was God's holiness and awesome purity that frightened him. There is an awesome purity to God which means he has to judge sin and Mark realised that he would be judged. Although that made him fearful, he also felt he wanted to come to God and ask for help. He fell on his knees and pleaded with God to forgive him for his sin. He had been too afraid to open himself up to God before, trying to protect himself from God rather than let him in, but the shock that he had been given destroyed all of those barriers. That day he trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. The Lord was very much at work in Mark's heart but it had been painful. We read that the Word of God is likened to a sword, which can be quite painful when that sword is working in our hearts, but it has to be there to cut out all that is bad in us.

Assurance

As happens to many believers, assurance of salvation does not always come immediately when they first turn to Christ. One Sunday evening, Mark Jenner remembers being in his back garden and praying; then when he got up from his knees he was hit with a wave of relief. There was a change that he could detect in his own heart and mind. As his Christian life has continued, the knowledge that God had dealt with his underlying and fundamental problem gave him a confidence to come back to God, even when it was to say sorry again. So now Mark found himself loving God; he was changed from being fearful of judgement and hell to being sure of heaven. There was no longer that awful turmoil within his heart and he was now at peace with God.

Mark had a real assurance that the Lord had died for him, and that he continues to forgive, seventy times seven and more than that as well. The nature of God is personal. He is not an abstract being, he knows us individually and Mark knows that since he has become a Christian he has a growing sense that God knows him intimately. God knows his particular circumstances, his needs and his own ways, giving a real assurance that the Lord had actually died for Mark Jenner! The Lord had taken all his sins on his body on the tree, on the cross, which was a great comfort to know. God is so gracious to his children.

Early days as a believer

Mark was still only a young teenager when he came to Christ, so he joined his local church as a junior member.

His family was a really important support structure for him in those teenage years - years which can be quite difficult. He is the youngest of four boys and he found his three brothers useful to have as some kind of model to follow. They were all converted at around about the same time. Two of his brothers had a similar conversion to Mark, one was more gradual and the other was converted after hearing a former terrorist give his testimony of how Jesus had forgiven his past and transformed his life. His parents and brothers were a real example to him and they continued to have family prayer times and study God's word together. This helped him to keep in close contact with the Lord continuously.

School can be a difficult place for a Christian but Mark didn't find that too bad, but he did find witnessing at school difficult. On looking back he feels that he should not have been so hesitant. In fact his friends at school were not antagonistic to his new faith and he trusts that God would still be able to use the hesitating way he did witness.

Life at university

Mark went on to study for a politics and economics degree at university. Many discover that life on a university campus can be quite lonely even though there are so many people. Mark quickly learnt that he needed to look to the Lord for strength and support in that situation. He also found the Christian Union very helpful and found other believers to fellowship with. There were small Bible study groups and during his last year they were studying quite a

political book in the Bible which was Daniel. Daniel, you may remember, served in the royal house at Babylon.

University is also an opportunity to share the gospel with other students and Mark was able to be involved in some evangelism with the church he attended. He was able to go on the streets with another one of the members and give out tracts, stopping people to talk with them about the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was the first time he had really done that and he was quite nervous but the Lord gave him strength with the encouragement of the other believer with whom he did this work. It is, after all the most natural thing to share the faith we have in such a wonderful Lord.

The future

Mark is now seeking the Lord's guidance about his future. He would love to serve the Lord in supporting people who are in the 'front line' of gospel work. He feels that God would have him use the talents he has where he can be of service. He wants to be useful in whatever way the Lord directs.

And concerning the end of his life he said, *"I would like to know what I can do now, but I'm thankful that I can rest assured that should I be knocked down by a car tomorrow, God has me in his everlasting arms already. It's something that I've thought about and it was instrumental in my conversion."*

Heaven is a wonderful topic for a Christian to meditate upon and it is also a great topic to approach people with

when we are trying to speak to them about Jesus Christ as Mark has discovered. It has helped Mark confront people with their own mortality, for everyone is to meet God one day. Because Mark Jenner has trusted in Jesus to forgive him his sins, he has a wonderful assurance that when his life ends he will be brought safely to heaven by God's grace.

Chapter 2: Irene Lubbe

An important question

Is it possible for someone who's angry with God and not wanting anything to do with him, to experience his forgiveness and begin to love him instead? We might want to protest about such an individual and say what right does anyone have to argue with God? God is good and great and holy and majestic. He is the creator of the world and we are only his creatures, so what right does anyone have to be angry with God and then expect him to forgive them? You might even think this is the wrong question to ask and it should be something like, 'How long will God put up with someone who is angry with him before he destroys them?'

Well, whether we like it or not there are lots of people in our world who do feel anger against God and some of them think they have every reason to feel that way! It is usually because they have been through a very hard experience; perhaps some extreme suffering, a painful illness or the death of someone they have loved very much. For others it is simply because they are atheists, although it does seem a strange contradiction to be angry with someone you do not

believe in! But there is anger against God, however sad that may make us feel.

Well, is it ever possible for such a person to change? What we are asking here is really something quite outside mere human ability. If you are a Christian believer you know that it was impossible for you to change yourself, so the thought of being able to change someone who is actually furious with God is clearly beyond your ability and mine. So is it possible for that change to take place?

An important example

Let us begin by reminding ourselves of what Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 19:23 *"I tell you the truth, it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God."* The disciples exclaimed, *"Who then can be saved?"* It seemed to them that if someone who was rich found it hard to turn to God then it must be impossible for anyone to do so. And we could put into that category someone who is angry with God. But then Jesus looked at them and said, *"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."* Indeed, if you read through the New Testament part of the Bible you will eventually read of one man who was so angry with Jesus that he did all in his power to arrest and kill anyone who followed him. When one of Jesus' followers was being stoned to death, this man was so glad, he actually looked after the clothes of the people who were throwing the stones, he hated him that much! This man's name was Saul of Tarsus, and he thought he was so right, when in fact he was so wrong. The amazing thing is that it was not very long after this that he was completely

changed. He was on his way to the city of Damascus to arrest and imprison some more followers of Jesus, when the Lord met him and stopped him in his tracks. You can read about it in the book of Acts and chapter 9. Right there and then, Jesus forgave Saul who was later named Paul. He became a follower of the very one he had been angry with. In fact he even started preaching the good news about Jesus. Initially even the true followers of Jesus found it hard to believe this and were suspicious of him, until one of their number, a man named Barnabas, recognised that God had worked in Saul's heart and he supported and helped him. Who would have thought it? Saul of Tarsus, the hater of everything to do with Jesus not only became a believer in him but one of the greatest preachers of the gospel the world has ever known.

So is it possible for someone who is angry with God to be changed and forgiven by him? The answer is most certainly, yes! But you may be thinking that Saul lived a very long time ago and I'm not so sure that someone like that could be changed today. Well, Irene Lubbe was one such person.

Angry with God!

Irene Lubbe was born and brought up in South Africa and on finishing her studies she decided to go overseas to England. At university she had studied teaching and education and when she settled in the United Kingdom she became a primary school teacher. At the time of writing this book she is teaching in a fairly small school and is responsible for English and Maths groups across the school

as well as covering classes when teachers have their planning time or when they are absent.

In South Africa Irene was brought up to go to church, encouraged to read the Bible and went to Sunday school, but then sadly her mother died. Losing her mum was understandably a very difficult time and afterwards she had many questions. Interestingly, although she feels she never really believed, she still attended church but only for a little while. Sadly before very long she stopped going at all. The reason was that she was angry with God over the death of her mother. Why had he allowed it? Why was she left alone? In her anger she thought that there was no truth in the Bible and that it did not make sense to her at all. The result was that she stopped studying God's Word.

A transformation

Things began to change when she met a lady named Ruth. Ruth was her deputy head at the school where Irene was teaching in London. Ruth invited her to go with her to church and she agreed. This was the first time she had attended church since feeling so angry. Interestingly, even before Irene met Ruth she had started reading the Bible again. This came about because she realised that in being angry with God she was angry at someone who did exist. You cannot be angry with someone who does not exist, so she started reading her Bible again from time to time. As time passed she also discovered she was not so angry any more. The immediate effect of that was that she found she was more open to listen when Ruth invited her to church. She went and from the first time she attended she could see

that it was different from what she had experienced before. The sermons were really speaking to her and the people of the church were not only very nice to her but they were different from what she was used to previously. They were more open about what they believed in and loved to talk openly about trusting in the Lord and the way he helped them and answered prayer. She realised that people who believe like that are still normal, nice people. She then shared with her friend Ruth how she had stopped going to church back home, so she and Ruth started doing Bible studies. It was within a few weeks of that as Ruth explained the meaning of the Bible, things seemed to begin to make sense. Irene saw that believing in the Lord is so important; otherwise your destiny is hell. The actual moment when Irene trusted Christ was when she was on her own, praying and reading the Bible and she asked the Lord to forgive her.

The difference in her life since she has made this step of personal faith is enormous. There were a lot of things that she had learned as a child that she rediscovered, and also her life began to change. Things she had been doing which were not right, she stopped doing. She also started to think differently about her behaviour and desired to live so as to please God. The Lord's mercy and pardon gave her a sense of release and of joy in serving him. Before, everything had been so meaningless but now life has purpose to it.

When Irene prayed to the Lord a number of things happened. First, she had a deep sense that the Lord had

forgiven her, and instead of being angry with him she has come to love him. Then all the questions she had were answered, either through her own reading in the Bible or with the help of somebody at the church. Having been brought up not to talk about what you believe in, this was all a bit strange at first, but the help she had from people in the church was invaluable and a real encouragement.

A lesson learned

Irene has learned that whatever happens in life, happens for a reason, even the heartaches and difficulties. It is all part of God's plan even if the reason why things happen is not clear to us. For Irene, it took her mum's death to help her become a Christian which is one good thing that came from a tragedy. Above all she urges those reading this to pray like she did and trust the Lord.

Chapter 3: David Marchant

God uses the ordinary and the extraordinary

It is quite amazing the way the Lord uses different things to influence us spiritually. Sometimes it can be something quite extraordinary that becomes the turning point in a person's life that sets them on the road of following Jesus and being sure of heaven. In the case of my own father-in-law it was a painful heart attack that made him realise how vulnerable he was and how much he needed the Lord. It brought him to trust in the Lord Jesus and to know peace with God.

Now a problem that can arise from this is for some to think that because they did not have such a dramatic turning

point that somehow their own experience of God is less real or deficient in some way. In actual fact it is not like that at all, but this is how they feel. Well, it should not surprise us to know that more often than not the Lord uses the ordinary things of life to bring people into his kingdom. This was certainly true for the subject of this chapter. The young man in question is David Marchant, and we will discover how God used his family to bring him to trust in Christ.

Background

David was born in London, in Bromley. When he was aged five he moved to Austria with his parents. His parents had attended a missionary meeting and heard a lady who worked in Austria. They had been thinking about working in Italy but then having heard this lady speak about the need for missionaries in Austria, David's parents felt that the Lord was calling them to work there too. David obviously did not have a choice but to move with them. He enjoyed the move even if the experiences were quite different from anything he had grown up doing. He had to return to kindergarten after having started at school in England, and he had to learn a completely new language as well which at first was a little tough, but it went well.

David's parents were of course believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We saw in chapter 1 that some people might mistakenly think that if your parents are believers, therefore their children must be as well. In David's case they were missionaries as well so surely David must be have been a Christian too. That however, as we have seen,

is not true and was certainly not true for David Marchant. Having said that, we must also say that his parents did have a great deal to play in why David became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fact that they were missionaries certainly made him think. For example, 'Why were his parents doing this?' 'Why were they moving to a completely new country?' 'What motivated them to do that?' He probably did not express it exactly in that way at the age of five or six but these kind of questions certainly went through his mind. The teaching he had from them and the understanding of why they were Christians and why they were doing what they did in moving to Austria certainly had a great impact on why David became a Christian.

Coming to Christ

David became a Christian believer very early in his life at the age of six, which was within the first year of moving to Austria. The whole impact of the way his parents lived, what they believed and taught was profound. He had the Bible read to him by his parents each day. He very soon grasped what Jesus Christ had done on the cross. He also grew up in a home which was strict, so he certainly knew that there were plenty of things wrong in his life as his parents lovingly disciplined him. All those things put together made him understand that he did need somebody who could save him from his sinfulness and he knew that Jesus Christ certainly could do that, and did do that by dying on the cross in his place.

Age no barrier to faith

Someone might say that David could not have been that sinful at only age six, so why did he come to faith in Christ? After all, a child has not lived long enough to do much that was wrong. However, as far as David was concerned he knew he was sinful. No matter how young a person is, everyone is sinful (see Psalms 51:5 and Romans 3:23), and David came to that understanding very quickly. We learn from this that a child can understand the basics of the gospel and age is not a hindrance in coming to faith in the Lord.

What helped him the most was certainly growing up in a Christian family with the support of parents and grandparents. David knew that they were praying for him and that they continued to pray for him. Being a missionary family, they were in a certain sense alienated from many around them who opposed the gospel of Jesus. The result was that David developed a very close-knit family unit with his sister and parents. They held together very strongly and supported each other which is still the case today.

Teenage pressures

So what about the often 'rebellious' period in a teenager's life? Growing up and learning to stand on your own two feet is sometimes hard. Was that a struggle for David? Yes it was, but David did not go completely 'off the rails'. There were certainly times between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, which were the last four years of his time at high school, when he was very conscious about being a

missionary kid and was very pleased if nobody asked him what his parents did for a living. He was more embarrassed about what his parents did than rebellious against God and did not stick up for what he believed as he should. Looking back on that now, David feels quite embarrassed and knows that the way he acted and what he did, or what he did not do, was certainly not right in God's sight. But God understands us and forgives us for that as well. David knows that there were plenty of opportunities to talk about the Lord that were wasted, specifically with his friends that he has no contact with now. That is painful for him to think about, but as we said earlier, the Lord is very wonderful. He does not excuse our sinfulness but he is gracious and he forgives.

Illness in the family

David's mother was taken quite ill a number of years ago and that made David wonder why she should be going through that illness. She had cancer and had to have several operations. At the time she was diagnosed with cancer David had actually graduated from school and was not in Austria which made it harder going back and seeing how both his father and mother were struggling with this illness. This certainly raised questions in his mind. For example, what have they done to deserve this? He was not rebelling against God but questioning as to why, if they were doing God's work in Austria? This only made life so much more difficult for them, so why was it necessary? But God helped the family through this and they held together closely. David witnessed his mother coping with the illness, not asking God why, but continuing in her faith

and in her witness, which was a great example to David and also a great help to him to come to terms with his mother not being well. As a family God blessed them even during that hard time.

We do not always know why the Lord permits such experiences yet the Lord does have a reason for that in a bigger plan, which we will never understand, and it is probably a good thing not to be able to understand God's plans.

That difficult experience was several years ago and David's mum is well for which we thank the Lord.

Change of location and finding a church

David graduated from university, left Austria and came back to England. This was the first time he left home really because throughout his university years he actually lived at home and studied in the town where they lived. Because this was all new he had to grapple with various issues that he had never had to think about before like paying your first rent, having your first job and so on. It is understandably hard to leave a very close-knit family situation and the church that your father pastors. Suddenly you have to start looking at churches that you could attend and begin to make your own mind up about which the best church would be and where to serve the Lord in the best way. Initially David moved to Chester and became a member of a Baptist church there. He fellowshiped with them for eighteen months and then after that, moved to London for his work. Arriving in London, he found it

more difficult to actually settle in a church. There is quite a range of churches and he did not really feel very settled. He attended the church that he belongs to now for the first three months or so and then decided he was not too sure whether he really wanted to be there and so tried a couple of other churches as well. So the early months in London were quite unsettled with regards to the church that he was looking for, but he was very settled in his job.

After six months he made up his mind that he would go to the church that was closest to where he lived, which was about ten minutes walk away and it was in fact the first church he had attended in London. He is now a member there and has settled very quickly and has got involved with some of the ministry as well. Once David settled in the church things at work became much more difficult and it was great to be able to share these difficulties with brothers and sisters in Christ in the church who prayed with and for him. He realised also that the Lord had given him challenges to deal with, but not too much at one single time. David is really thankful for God's care. The prayers of fellow Christians were and are such an encouragement and obviously the prayers of his family too.

To belong to a loving, caring family is a very precious thing which not everyone enjoys, but we have seen how David Marchant has been really blessed by God through his family. God used something as ordinary as that to bring David to trust in Christ and to know his mercy in his own life. The one question left to ask is, have you trusted him yet yourself? If not, then why not do so today, and

you will discover the love of Christ working in your own life, just as David did.

Chapter 4: Steve Kneale

Background

Steve Kneale is studying history and politics at the University of Liverpool in North West England and at the time of writing is in his final year. Steve's parents, Graham and Beth are Christian believers and this had a big influence on him as a child. He can remember being brought up to read the Bible, to say his prayers, to go to church and to do all the general things that a Christian would do, so he knew about the Lord Jesus Christ from his earliest days. In fact, he cannot remember a time that he did not believe in God or in the things that he was taught as a child.

Coming to personal faith in Christ

So how did the change take place from believing in a general way, to having a personal faith for himself? We have noted several times already in this book that being brought up in a Christian home and having that background does not make you a Christian, so how did he come to trust in Jesus Christ? For Steve this change happened while the family were living near Liverpool. In the evenings they would read a Bible story or a Christian book. At that time Steve's parents were reading John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress to him. The significant part was where Christian, the main character in the book, came to the cross and the great burden that he had been carrying round on his back suddenly became loose, fell off and rolled down the hill.

Steve can remember wondering why Christian would ever carry this thing around on his back when he did not want it, and why it suddenly fell off there at the cross when he had been trying to get rid of it for a long time.

He was only aged six at the time but he can remember asking his father why that happened. He explained that the burden that Christian had been carrying on his back represented his sin and the things he had done against God. He explained that there was only one way that Christian could get rid of that and that was by coming to the cross where Christ died for him and by accepting the gift that Christ was offering there on the cross. Steve realised even at that young age, he too had done wrong things. For example, he knew that when his parents had told him to tidy his room, he had not always done it or he had not answered them politely. So he knew he had done wrong things and that this was not what God wanted. Steve realised at that time that he was a sinner, and it had been by reading the story of Pilgrim's Progress that he understood there was only one way he could get right with God and that was by coming to God through Jesus. Steve's dad explained that in order to be right with God and to have that sin, that burden taken away, he just needed to pray and ask God for forgiveness and to truly say 'I'm sorry'. Steve can remember that night when he was lying in bed saying a very simple prayer, asking God to forgive him and saying that he was sorry for the wrong he had done against God.

The next morning when he woke up, he felt a real urge not to do the wrong things that he had been doing before, like

disobeying his parents when he was asked to do something, and his sin started to bother him. He cannot remember a great sense of forgiveness but his conscience really began to prick him and he felt a willingness to change his behaviour. That was a very significant thing for such a young child to be concerned about, wanting to please God, but it was the first evidence that he truly had become a Christian believer.

Early spiritual growth

Steve is now in his early twenties but he testifies to the fact that it was his parents that helped him and encouraged him to grow as a young Christian. They encouraged him to have his own quiet time every day, to pray and read the Bible and try to understand the things that he was reading. They gave him Bible reading notes which explained the passage he was reading and this he found very helpful.

Making a public stand for Christ

It took some years for Steve to witness about his faith in the Lord by being baptised and he was not baptised in fact until he was fifteen, some nine years after his conversion. As he had become a believer at such a young age, baptism was not something that had occurred to him. He had understood the basic message of forgiveness, but there were lots of things that he did not understand and still needed to learn. However, during his early teens, he had been reading in his daily Bible readings about baptism and at about the same time attended the baptism of a friend. He went with his family and began to think on the way home why he had not been baptised. In fact, he thought that

perhaps there must be an age when you are either too young or too old to be baptised, but his Bible readings had not shown there was an age limit. He also discovered that in the Bible the Lord commanded his people to be baptised. Having read this and also knowing what baptism meant he obeyed the Lord's command.

Handling temptation

Temptation is something that affects every true follower of Christ. Behind it is Satan, the devil, attacking the believer in an attempt to stop us following the Lord, as we should. Steve did not find that temptation was any greater after having been baptised than before, but temptation has been a problem he has had to battle with. He has discovered that different temptations need to be handled in different ways. For example, when he has had struggles with prayer he finds that sitting down and reading the Bible is a real help to stimulate him to pray. Indeed, although there are a variety of things which can help us when temptation comes our way he has discovered the most effective of these is using the Bible.

Significantly this is exactly what Jesus did when he was tempted by the devil. Matthew, Mark and Luke record the onslaught he received from Satan while he was in the wilderness. While in that desert place (Matthew 4:1) food was in short supply, so the devil tempted him to turn stones into bread. Then he took him to the highest point of the temple and told him to jump off, quoting a Psalm in the process to give credence to his evil suggestion; it was a temptation to be presumptuous. Then the devil suggested if Jesus bowed down and worshipped him, he would give

him all the nations of the world, not that they were Satan's to give in the first place. His Father had already promised the nations of the world to Jesus and the way he would become their Saviour was to die on the cross. The devil was tempting Jesus to take the easy way out. What is important to note with all of these temptations is that Jesus answered them by quoting Bible passages to Satan. It just so happens that they were all from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. He said,

“It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Then, *“It is also written, do not put the Lord your God to the test.”* And finally, *“Away from me, Satan! For it is written: worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”*

Learning an important lesson

Lessons are learned in all sorts of ways. We benefit immensely from those who can teach us the Bible and this is the reason why the Lord has given us pastors and elders who will faithfully teach us the Word of God. They help to explain the teaching clearly and guide us in applying it to our lives. Then we also find we learn so much as we apply ourselves to studying the Bible, and really this is something we should be doing throughout the whole of our lives, for we never stop learning from God's Word. But there are other times when the Lord has to teach us lessons by bringing us through different experiences. These can be joyful times, but more often than not they can be difficult or even painful experiences. For example, one believer

who was very, very ill a number of years ago feared he was going to die. As he went through that trial he testified how precious the Lord became to him at that time, and how he learned that to know Christ as his Saviour was more important than absolutely anything else. He knew that even if he lost everything, including his own life, he would still have the Lord and the Lord would still have him. Mercifully the Lord restored his health again, but it is a lesson he will never forget. He had always believed that God was more important than anything or anyone else, but that illness made it particularly real to him and it has never left him.

Steve Kneale has also been through different experiences that the Lord has used to teach him spiritual lessons. One of these showed him how important it is to tell others about the Lord Jesus Christ. At the time of Steve's baptism, he was still in secondary education. He was not very outspoken about being a Christian in school when perhaps he should have been. However, there was one incident during this time which had a big effect on him and has given him a real concern to tell others about Christ.

One morning, while travelling on the bus going to school, he got into conversation with a boy in the year below him. They had not been talking about anything of any great consequence, just chatting together. The next day when Steve came to school he saw people outside and they were crying. Those on the bus were wondering what was going on. Subsequently they found out that the previous day when this boy had gone home his father came and killed

his mother, the boy and then himself. The parents were divorced and the father had not taken the situation well so killed his family. This really influenced Steve in a big way because whilst he did not know this boy very well, he felt very guilty that he had been speaking to him the day before and he had never mentioned anything about God and his need to trust in Christ. God had given him an opportunity to tell someone else about his Saviour and he had wasted it. He knew there would never be another opportunity with that lad any more. This whole sad incident had a powerful effect on Steve and the Lord used it to teach him about his need to share the good news about Jesus with others. He realised he needed to have a real willingness to go out and share the gospel. He knew every opportunity that we are given should be taken, and we should not waste these. Although this boy was somebody that he did not really know well, he had been speaking to him just hours before his death. Even though Steve could not have known that at the time, he knew he should have told him about Jesus. Indeed, none of us knows when the Lord will call us home and what the circumstances will be and therefore there is a great urgency to share the gospel with others. Although Steve was not unwilling to share the gospel before, he did find that difficult. He found it hard to take the first step and talk to people about the Lord, but what happened to this boy at his school has changed him.

That was a very solemn way in which to learn a spiritual lesson, but it was a most important one. If we are Christian believers then the Lord expects us to share the good news about him with others. All around us, men and women

young people, boys and girls are dying without any knowledge of Christ who is the only way to God (see John 14:6; Acts 4:12). The onus on each believer to take the news of his saving and loving power to our world is considerable and the Lord has written this lesson very deeply on Steve's heart.

Opportunities to serve the Lord

Having taught him this important lesson the Lord has given Steve further opportunities to share the gospel. He takes part in missions organised by United Beach Missions, which is a Christian organisation whose aim is to share the gospel with as many people as possible. They go on to the beaches around the coast of England, and elsewhere where people of all ages are on holiday and contact them with the gospel of God's grace. It is an ideal opportunity as people on holiday have more time to sit and talk and think about spiritual matters than at any other time of the year.

In addition Steve has gospel opportunities through the University Christian Union. He has also become involved in open-air preaching in a small village just north of Liverpool and is planning to do similar work for Christ in Liverpool itself. He really feels the Lord's leading towards open-air work which he finds is a very effective way of spreading the gospel and of reaching people for the Saviour.

Steve would want to encourage those believers who have not been really keen to share the gospel with others. They may be nervous and timid and slow to push themselves forward. These are issues he has learned to overcome

following the death of his friend and he has proved the Lord's help each time. Steve feels that there is absolutely no easy answer but he has found that it is best to just get on and do it. There is no easy way. It is a very difficult thing to do, but if we trust in the Lord he will be with us and as we step out in faith depending on the Lord he will help us to speak for him.

Steve has also found sharing the gospel with others a great help when he has been finding it difficult to pray, because he finds on these occasions he is compelled to pray. He prays before going to do something like open-air work. He finds himself shooting up short prayers just as he is approaching somebody to try and speak with them, and he prays afterwards because only the Lord can save anyone. The death of his friend at school has made him realise in a very powerful way that there is a real urgency for everyone to have faith in Christ before they die. Reader, are you able to say that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? If not, then it is urgent for you to get right with God now, to ask for forgiveness while it is possible and not to leave it too late.

Chapter 5: James Stead

Coming to Faith in Christ

James Stead is a physicist and is currently studying in order to become a teacher of this subject. James came to know the Lord Jesus as his Saviour when he was thirteen. He was attending a Christian house party, which was a weeklong holiday, and all through the week he had been challenged by what people were saying about the message

of the Bible. He tried to ignore it and put it off, but at the final meeting it really hit home as so many people were talking about their trust in Christ and their relationship with him. James noted this was very personal to them and even though he had all the knowledge about what the Bible said he did not have anything real like they did. He wisely talked to a few people about this and then prayed to God that he would forgive him and be his Saviour. James is positive that God heard him. It was like a weight being lifted from him as in the story of Pilgrim's Progress where the burden was lifted off Christian, just like Steve Kneale in our previous chapter. James knew the burden of his sin had been forgiven.

James was the last member of his immediate family to come to know God and it was suddenly so real to him. James had a lot of Bible knowledge but had not known God before. He had grown up going to church, and his father had become a pastor when he was quite young so there was always Bible teaching in his life which he accepted. The one thing that was missing was that he could not understand how it could be real for him, but when God decided that it was time, he made it perfectly clear what James needed to do.

A changed life

Most Christian believers will say that when they were converted they became more aware of their sinfulness than before, and that was James' experience. In fact, for a while it was quite overwhelming. At first, as a typical teenager, he tried to forget it, but very quickly he realised he could

not ignore what the Lord was saying to him. The Holy Spirit was working and he knew he had to live in obedience to the Lord and the teaching of his Word, the Bible.

It was quite a challenge immediately after he had been converted not to sink straight back into old ways. His conversion had been during the summer holidays. It was hard to find the courage to say to others that he had changed and become a Christian, but he knew that his attitudes were different and so he tried to show people by the way he lived. He discovered that most people appreciated that he was different and that gave him an opportunity to say why. The reactions were varied. His fellow students whom he had been friends with all through school became quite inquisitive and asked him questions which gave some opportunities to share what God had done. He did find some opposition but not too much. Some simply did not want to hear the gospel so he never got the opportunity to speak with them, but there was no outright hostility.

Good support

James found that having a good church gave him a solid base and spiritual nourishment, and also fellowship with other young people from different churches. Talking to people, especially some Christians slightly older than himself in the church, and being able to ask them about the Christian life when he felt he needed to, was a kind of a support network. James had read the Bible before becoming a Christian but it was a bit like reading a school

textbook, it was head knowledge. He had quite a lot of Bible knowledge but now he found that he would pray to God and say, *“Please help me to understand what this really means to me and what I should do if I’m challenged. Please Lord help me to use it properly and direct me to the way I could do whatever I’m being challenged about.”* He heard an analogy once that we are like a dog on a lead and always straining to pull away. We need the constant pulling back which is what the Lord does through the Scriptures.

A physicist and a Christian

James went on to study physics at university and had to grapple with science and creation which also led to the subject of evolution which is often presented as fact. As Christians, James feels that we should get to know what other people are thinking and acquaint ourselves with the theories without accepting them. He does admit that when evolution is being taught as fact, it does irritate him. He has also found it quite difficult to try and argue against it with people who study science, because for them it is their foundation and they will cling to that no matter what you say. He is convinced the Lord did create the universe. For James, our universe is too elaborate to have happened by chance. To say that the humans are a fluke just seems completely nonsensical to him. We are amazing beings. We have a soul and a conscience and for someone to say that that happened by some kind of mutation is a bit hard to accept. Having studied these issues he feels that the scale of the universe is indeed an incredibly complex thing and actually more complex than as humans we could

understand. When James thinks about the origin of the universe he is compelled to believe there must have been someone greater and outside of the universe who brought it into being. Whenever he considers the whole concept of infinite space he is amazed and knows that there is no way that it can have occurred by accident, only God could have created it. Then when he considers how wonderful and complex each one of us is, his heart and mind come back to God who brought us all into being and he is compelled to worship and praise him.

Chapter 6: Jonathan Stead

A scientist

It's not at all unusual to find in families that children often follow their parents as far as their occupation is concerned. It may be working on the land or in a trade or office and sometimes carrying on the family business. Well, Jonathan Stead did not do that at all, just like his brother James in the last testimony. Their father is a pastor but Jonathan's own field of work is actually in science. Jonathan has recently completed a PhD and has been at university for six years. First of all he studied Bio Medical Sciences, which was a three-year course and his PhD is in Bio Chemistry. His field of study is genetics and he is hopeful his research will be a positive influence to medicine in coming years. It is ground base research and he explained it like this: *"If somebody is ill, that is generally the result of a gene malfunctioning or a protein that is expressed in the body that malfunctions. So this research is looking at the mechanisms by which this can actually go wrong."* Potentially, in a number of years, it might be possible to

develop mechanisms to try and combat these diseases that occur.

Trusting in Christ

Although Jonathan was brought up in a Christian family and his father was a pastor he never believed that made him a Christian. However, one Sunday when he was aged sixteen his father was preaching from the Bible and God spoke to Jonathan's heart. Suddenly the Lord challenged him about his sinfulness and that he could do nothing to save himself. He had much Bible knowledge but it had meant nothing to him up to that moment of time and would do him no good if he had died that instant because he had never trusted in Christ to save him. He was compelled to ask the Lord immediately to forgive him for his sins and he knew the Lord had granted his request. From that point on he knew he was the Lord's and whenever the time came for him to die he had nothing to fear for the Lord would take him straight to heaven. It was an assurance that he never possessed before seeking the Lord's mercy, but which now is very precious to him. He realised that previously if he had died (perhaps knocked down by a truck or suffered some similar accident) even though he had all this Bible knowledge, his state before God was hopeless. Nothing he could do, even his good work, would have ever been able to save him and prevent him from going to hell and spending eternity in punishment.

New life

Jonathan's life was changed in a second of time, his whole future on earth was different and his eternal future was

secure. In obedience to the Lord's command he was baptised to show his commitment to Christ. While many new believers find they are so thirsty for the Word of God, Jonathan, who already knew the Bible very well, discovered he had a new desire to put God's Word into practice. He also desired to serve the Lord and this began with him helping in the youth work and also attending the Church meetings that he had not attended before. He discovered the Bible challenged in many ways, in particular the Great Commission where the Lord commands us to go and tell the whole world the good news of Christ, and this he sought to do with the older youth groups he was involved in.

But there were also difficulties, especially being the pastor's son and living in a small village where everybody knew who he was and who his father was and he found that quite difficult, particularly at school. His Dad would come into his secondary school occasionally and take an assembly which Jonathan found quite embarrassing because he knew he could not keep his faith in Christ to himself. Sometimes in that kind of situation Christians are tempted to back down slightly, so having to own up to being a Christian in school was not a bad thing but difficult to get used to at first. The response of his friends at school was quite good, partly because Jonathan was baptised with two people his own age who had been converted at about the same time and they were in his tutor group, so there were three young men in quite a close friendship.

His second year at University was particularly hard. He was the only believer on his course and his accommodation was with unbelievers. The temptation to live as they did was very real, but he was able to share this with his church who prayed much for him, and through it all God kept and strengthened him

Lessons for us

Jonathan has highlighted a number of matters that are really very important and they are all things that are emphasised in the Bible.

First, he has told us how he came to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even though he was brought up in a Christian family and his own father was a pastor, that did not mean he was himself a true child of God. The Bible is very clear at this point; every person has to come to Christ for themselves. Romans 10 tells us "*Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved*", and if we fail to call on him ourselves then we cannot be one of his disciples.

Second, Jonathan has shown us that once we have trusted in Jesus to forgive us our sins, then we have been saved to serve the Lord. When Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonian believers he described them in this way in chapter 1 and verse 9. "*...you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.*" If we are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ then God expects us to devote our lives to serving him.

Third, Jonathan has shown us the importance of having Christian fellowship. In his case this was through his own church and also the Christian friends he had at school where he was encouraged and prayed for and taught the Word of God. It is interesting that right at the beginning of the Christian church which is recorded for us in the book of Acts in the Bible, among the many things those believers did to help each other was to have fellowship. In the Acts of the Apostles we read this in chapter 2, verse 42. *“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”* This is achieved at its best when we become members of a Church near to where we live, where we can really be committed to one another in the love of Christ. (See also Hebrew 10:19-25.)

Since first trusting Christ Jonathan Stead has proved the truth of the words God spoke to the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9, *“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”* By God’s grace he was brought to trust in Christ for the forgiveness of his sins. By God’s grace he has benefited from the fellowship and encouragement of his fellow believers. By God’s grace he has been kept faithful to the teaching of the Bible concerning God’s great work of creation, and by God’s grace he has learned the value of committing everything to God in prayer. And through all of this we see that those whom God saves, he keeps. They are not immune from

difficulties and problems, but they experience his help in each of them. To belong to God by trusting in his Son, Jesus Christ, is the most precious blessing anyone can experience on earth.

Chapter 7: Martin Gamston

A danger to avoid

A term that is not often used these days, but which is found a number of times in the Bible is the word ‘backsliding’. It is an unusual word but it is very descriptive, none-the-less. To ‘backslide’ is something that takes place when a believer in Christ literally slides back from following him and begins to return to sinful ways. It is a very destructive thing that can happen to any genuine believer who fails to watch and guard over their spiritual life. It is because of this real danger that Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:12, *“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall.”* Every true child of God needs to guard against the possibility of backsliding.

One of the problems with backsliding is that it starts so often in a slow and gradual way so that it can catch a believer out without them even realising what has happened. Sadly, there are times when such a person can remain in that backslidden state for years. Indeed, it can appear that they are not true believers at all. What is needed is a deep work of God in their hearts to bring them to repentance again and restore them into fellowship with the Lord and with his people. Mercifully such restoration is possible with God. We read these words of the Lord in

Jeremiah 3:22, *“Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding.”*

Background

This chapter is about a man who knew this experience in his own life, and it has been a most painful one for him, as you will read. His name is Martin Gamston. He lives in the west of England and is married with two children. Martin is in his mid thirties and his story is spread over a long period. Martin’s parents are believers and he attended the Bible studies and junior fellowship groups and other meetings that were organised for children in his local church, so he had a good Bible knowledge as a youngster.

Commitment to Christ

Martin traces his first commitment to the Lord when he was ten years old. He used to go away on holiday to Llandudno in Wales with his parents every year. On the beach there was a United Beach Mission meeting. United Beach Mission is an organisation we referred to in Chapter 4. They do outreach during the summer on the beaches around England and elsewhere, sharing the gospel with people on holiday. The Bible talk on this occasion pointed out how necessary it was to ask for forgiveness from God and to trust in Jesus. Martin prayed then and asked the Lord to forgive him, which he was sure he did. He knew in his heart that he had become a Christian, and he had an early desire to read the Bible and to pray, and he loved attending church. It was a promising start.

Sliding away

Sadly a change came about when Martin was a teenager because he went away from the Lord and stopped attending his church. He was distracted by the pleasures of the world, something that is always a danger for the believer because we cannot avoid living in the world. He had a good job which gave him money. This meant he could and did buy cars and have friends outside of church, and all this seemed a far more attractive proposition to him. Then he met a girl and found himself in a long-term relationship. They were engaged to be married but she ended the relationship, and his world fell apart and he needed to do some re-evaluation. He then met the lady who is now his wife and she told him that he needed to get himself sorted out. He could not have continued living much longer leading the life style he had fallen into. He was out every night of the week, drinking heavily, taking minor drugs, smoking and partying. He wasted a huge amount of money on these things over a good number of years. He admits these things did not satisfy him but he could not stop. He went on extreme sporting holidays trying to fill the void in his life which only God could fill but he left God out of it all. It was hard for his wife who repeatedly said to him that he could not possibly carry on leading such a life. He needed to change.

Realising the truth

It was then that he went to Israel, not on a religious visit at all but just as a holiday. He visited Joppa where Jonah was, and then Jerusalem and Nazareth. He walked down through the Mount of Olives into the Garden of

Gethsemane. Even though he was not going to church at the time, it suddenly occurred to him that these places which he had read of in the Bible years previously were real, and Jesus actually was born in Bethlehem and he did walk those streets. It impressed itself on his mind that the Bible is not just a book it is the Word of God and he must believe it. This was a monumental change in his thinking which was to have profound effects on his life.

On returning home things did not actually change much at first. He knew that he should do something about it but still the temptation was there not to get involved. He basically felt that he was not good enough to return to the Lord and to meet with his people. There were too many things going wrong in his life and many things he was ashamed of, and he was embarrassed and thought that there was no way that he could possibly go to church and call himself a Christian when he was living as he was. He felt that he had to change but could not help himself, he could not change. In fact, God had to change him.

Help arrived

Martin did begin to attend church again occasionally. It was then that some American believers came over from a church in North Carolina. His father was organising the event and Martin drove the minibus showing them the sites and different parts of the country like Windsor Castle and London. As he did this he realised he had never met people like them before. They were on fire for Jesus. They really preached and meant it. It was not big words and fancy sermons it was from the heart. They really believed

what they were saying, and Martin found he wanted to be like them. He really understood what it was to be a real Christian. He knew there was nothing in the life he had been leading. One day the American pastor was preaching and he warned people that there was only one of two places they would go to at the end of life, to heaven or hell. He added that those going to hell would not be alone because it will be full of all the rapists and murderers and all kinds of vile individuals, and those who go there will spend eternity in that company. He urged his hearers to make sure they were right with God so as to be sure of heaven. He simply said they needed to say 'sorry' to God, say 'no' to sin and say 'yes' to Jesus. The Lord drove this home to Martin's heart, and that is what Martin did. He prayed that prayer and meant it. He realised that God had given a second opportunity that he did not deserve, and the Lord forgave him and restored him fully. He healed his backsliding.

How gracious the Lord is! He could so easily have cast Martin off completely, but he did not. From that time on Martin's life changed from going out drinking with his friends and spending his money to true repentance and faith in Christ. His behaviour changed completely. He stopped drinking and has not had a drink since. He is still friendly with the same group and they have noticed the change in him. His prayer is that some of them will come to know God as their Saviour too. Interestingly they do not make fun of Martin because of his faith, but they are inquisitive and they like to ask questions. This gives him good opportunities to witness to his friends about the Lord.

The past and the present

Not a day passes when Martin does not regret those wasted years, and he really wants to do as much as possible to share the gospel with others. He knows he can never repay that debt, but he wants to spend all his days serving the Lord. He has a passion to get young people to realise what the dangers of the outside world are. It may seem all right but it says in the Bible that we need to be in the world but not part of the world.

It is lovely to see Martin's commitment to the Lord, and a commitment that has come as a result of a very deep work of God's grace in his life. He is aware that there have been so many wasted years, but the Lord has undoubtedly given him a renewed love for Christ and desire to serve him that is lovely to witness. He has helped us to see that we live in a world that is constantly trying to pressurise the believer to fit into its mould rather than to follow the ways of the Lord. This has happened to Martin while he is still quite young, and undoubtedly there are fierce temptations that face many young Christian believers. This is why Paul taught young Timothy to flee youthful lusts. We need to get as far away from them as we possibly can, and not allow them any room in our lives. We need to walk close with Jesus wherever we go. But what do we do if we realise we are backslidden? The answer is to repent again and to seek the Lord's forgiveness afresh, just as Martin Gamston has done and then to stay close to the Lord all of our days.

Why does backsliding happen?

Backsliding is described as sliding away from the Lord and going back into sinful ways of living, and we have seen it is something that every Christian believer needs to be aware of. It is a danger that presents itself to even the godliest of the Lord's people. None is immune from this temptation as it is something the devil repeatedly tries to make the follower of Jesus do. We saw earlier how Paul warns everyone who thinks he or she is standing well spiritually to be careful that they do not fall into sin. So, how does it happen? What makes a genuine follower of Christ, who has enjoyed his forgiveness and walked with him, to even begin sliding away?

This is a huge question and we have to say that there are many things that can cause this to happen which is why it is so important that we constantly guard ourselves from such a course of action. Having said that, we know the problem is a spiritual one and it is usually in the area of the believer's personal walk with God that the difficulties begin, particularly the area of prayer. You see it is possible to put on a good outward show that all is well with us spiritually. We can still attend the meetings of the church and appear eager to be at the Bible study and convince others that we are doing well spiritually, while our personal prayer life can be in tatters or even non-existent. No one else sees our personal prayer life; we can even hold family prayer times but in our own hearts be prayer less.

This is an area that the devil targets with particular regularity and subtlety. It can start simply by being tired

one day, so that we get up late or go to bed late and find time for prayer has been overlooked. This can happen just occasionally to start with, but slowly and steadily it increases until over a period of weeks or months it gets less and less until it virtually disappears from the backsliding believer's daily life. Because we are out of touch with the Lord in this personal way, things begin to go wrong in a wider way. We find we lose our appetite for the daily study of the Scriptures. We can find missing the occasional meeting of the Church does not trouble our consciences because we are losing our spiritual sensitivity. The attractions of the world seem to increase and appear to be less harmful than we once considered them. Witnessing to unconverted friends becomes non-existent and slowly but surely our lives begin to look just like theirs, whereas previously we had been so different. Old temptations we stood against resolutely because we knew giving in to them would dishonour our heavenly Father and grieve our Saviour, now become enjoyable and pleasurable. Indeed, if things continue without any abating the backslider can cease to attend the times of fellowship with other believers altogether and even cut themselves off from the rest of the people of God on a permanent basis.

Now this is a serious condition indeed and yet it can come so gradually that the backslider is unaware what he or she is doing until they are so far from the Lord they do not realise it and worse, do not even care. We might be tempted to think here of this happening to young and inexperienced believers, and indeed that can and sadly does happen to some new Christians. But we would be quite

wrong to assume that backsliding is only something which is a problem for the young. It can strike any believer at any age. Indeed, one of the great dangers that those who have followed the Lord for many, many years face is feeling that they are somehow immune from such a problem. We need to remember that at our strongest we are weak and frail, and we have an enemy in Satan who is relentless in his attacks on us. Remember the devil even had the audacity to attack the Lord Jesus Christ himself. "*He goes about like a roaring lion*", we read in 1 Peter 5 "*seeking who he can devour*", but also more subtly he appears as an angel of light to deceive and lead astray. The challenge of this is that we take heed of this warning and guard our lives constantly lest we be overtaken by that 'lukewarmness' which the Laodicean Church had fallen into in Revelation 3.

How is backsliding overcome?

The answer to backsliding is a thorough work of repentance and a wholehearted turning back again to the Lord. We need to come afresh to Calvary and the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and seek his forgiveness and mercy anew. Those who do turn back to the Lord will discover he is more willing to forgive than they either perhaps expected and certainly more than they deserve.

Life since being restored

So how has it been for Martin since he recommitted his life to God again? Has life been easy? Have there been particular difficulties to overcome? Were there things that he found a real help?

Since coming back to the Lord he has attended several Bible study courses which have helped immensely. Martin has such a desire to learn the Bible, to read the Scriptures and to understand them. Both Martin and his wife Vicky have been baptised. They are endeavouring to remember that they must be an example to their children and to try and consider what God would have them do in their lives. Then there is the command to go out and preach the gospel to the nations which you cannot do if you do not know the Scriptures yourself. He can see every day situations and can refer them back to things that happened to people in the Bible, like Job, for example, who is an inspiration with everything he went through in his life.

The hardest thing that Martin finds is trying every day to change his ways. He had such a long time between his teens until he came back to the Lord at the age of thirty-one, during which he got very worldly opinions and was not very patient with people. Society had moulded him in a certain way, so he is now trying to be more compassionate to people, to listen more and to be more loving which is quite hard at times. To change that way of thinking and to consider others more than yourself is not easy.

Sometimes, at the end of a day when Martin realises he has been really hard with somebody and unloving, even if it was unintentional, he does feel that he has failed the Lord but the first thing he does is to take it to God in prayer. He finds that not many days go by when he does not apologise

for one thing or another. Sometimes he goes to that person and apologises. He tries not to leave it to the end of the day. His conscience tells him if he is doing things that he should not be doing, and the Lord has really helped him and he has found that he is never alone.

For the future Martin has a real passion to get involved in helping others to follow the Lord, especially young people.

Martin's testimony is a real encouragement to us all. If you have wandered from the Lord yourself, then he challenges you to come back to the Saviour you once loved and served so eagerly. If you have loved ones and dear friends who are backslidden, then Martin's story helps us to pray fervently for them, for the Lord is able to restore our souls. If you are not a believer at all yet, then you need to become one, because outside of Christ there is no forgiveness from God and no hope of heaven. Then seek the Lord Jesus Christ to save you today.

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