

# My Experience of Christ's Power and Grace

## Youthful Questions and Sins

I begin to wonder about the purpose of life before I became aware of my need for God.



My parents went through the horror of the Nazi occupation of Holland and some of my earliest memories as a pre-schooler are hearing the stories of that unspeakable evil they shared with other survivors.

As I grew older, despite a loving protective home, I became aware of a more personal evil when introduced by a friend's older brother to pornography and approached sexually while still in elementary school. The encounter led to inner turmoil, as I realised there was not only sin "out there" but it was also present "in me," and sin was a battle I could not win on my own.

In my teens I begin to seek answers to the purpose of my life and to overcoming evil.

At 13 I was introduced to Jesus who died on the cross as my ransom, voluntarily carrying for me the penalty for my sin. I recognized my need and welcomed Jesus as my Savior, wanting to be saved but from sin. Unfortunately, I did not yet recognize Jesus was also my rightful Lord and Master, calling for my obedience.

I studied automotives at a vocational high-school and worked in a garage where I learned to fix cars and in particular my own fast cars. I drove dangerously including frequent street-racing. God protected pedestrians, other drivers, and me repeatedly, although I pridefully chalked it up to my superior driving skills.

## Recognizing Jesus as Lord

In my teens I had a remarkable experience while eating lunch with a 65 year old mechanic due that week to retire. He and I were playing crib. Suddenly I saw myself in his greasy coveralls at 65, still eating out of a lunch bucket, still playing crib, coming to the end of my life wondering, "What was that all about?"

About that time, a girlfriend ended our relationship for reasons I didn't understand at the time. I drove the 2,000 miles from Edmonton to Michigan to find out. During the journey, I came across a Decision magazine published by Billy Graham.

God spoke to my heart at that moment. I knew the decision I needed to make was not only to turn to Jesus as the God who came to earth to die for me on the cross, but also to surrender my life to Jesus as Lord. He was my Lord and King forever.

I surrendered the battle to be my own lord with a simple prayer like this:

Lord Jesus,

Thank you for giving your perfect life freely on the cross in exchange for my sinful life. Thank you for saving and forgiving me though I deserve nothing.

I return my tarnished life to you. You already own it. I'm only now recognizing that You do. I will follow You as Lord even though I don't know what it means or where it will lead.

Show me the way and I will follow. Thank you. I am yours.  
Amen.

I was flooded with relief and peace. I knew my life had changed and that I was His forever.

The first test of Christ's Lordship was my sense that I should return to school. It was a real test because I disliked school enough to not attend my own graduation. Also, I had made choices in high school which closed the door to the possibility of attending any university in Canada. I determined nevertheless I would follow Christ and see what He would do.

### **The Difference Christ Makes**

Amazingly, despite a failing 33% in the standardized ACT achievement test, a Christian college in Iowa accepted me for one semester under academic probation. I sold my car, took a bus to Iowa, spent many hours in the college library and went on to graduate school.

God gave me a wonderful wife, Carol, and together we accepted an invitation to begin a church in Burnaby, British Columbia. We began other churches, lived overseas, and began church planting organizations. Today we have five married children and eight grandchildren in whom we greatly delight.

Christ has given powerful purpose in life. In my times of weakness God has often filled me with His Holy Spirit giving victory where I would have failed. In Christ, God has given authority over evil spirits. Fear of death is gone because when that time comes we will enter a glorious eternal life with Him in heaven. Till then, life is filled with meaningful work and more friends than I can easily number. The Bible is God's light on my path.

Life has brought, as it does to us all, numerous challenges but God repeatedly strengthens, gives wisdom and is greater than them all. God is my strength, my joy and the song of my heart.

Since age 19 when I first responded to Jesus' call to follow Him as Lord, I've leaned on Christ alone and found Him faithful, powerful against the evil one, and entirely the Way, the Truth and the Life as He revealed in the Scriptures (John 14:6).

My deepest desire is that you would know and follow Christ also, who to know is strength, healing and peace, in this life and eternal life to come (John 17:3).