

PETER GREEN'S TESTIMONY

Thanks for this opportunity to tell you how grateful I am for the love and acceptance you have given me over the last 2 years or so. I don't feel deserving of it because of the guilt of my unfaithfulness and backsliding. It's only through the grace that is in the Lord Jesus that I have been blessed to return to Northside Baptist Church. All praise to him who called me to repentance from the world and sin, which sin weighs heavily on my conscience.

I am ashamed to say that many years ago I abandoned my brethren here at Northside, who cared and prayed for me, and let down those who may have looked up to me. Although I have already made things right with God, and know that He has forgiven me, my desire is for full reconciliation with the church. So I trust that you can extend your forgiveness to me as well.

James 5:16 "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed."

This is my testimony: The Lord saved this lost sinner on 8 April 1983, who was before a fornicator, adulterer, was covetous, selfish, unthankful. At that time I was divorced, confused by lust for strange flesh, and felt pretty desperate but the Holy Spirit, knowing my need, brought a Christian book about thankfulness, as in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, for me to read. On finishing the book I kneeled and prayed, probably my first-ever prayer "Thank you God for the mess of my life". Perhaps that was a prayer of repentance, because the next morning I had a pressing thought that I must visit a certain lady, a customer; and when I arrived, yet unclear about why I was there, she graciously phoned to summon her pastor who was Ian Western. He led me to the Lord. That's how I first came to Northside Baptist Church.

1Thessalonians 5:18 "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

The years at Northside grounded me in the Word of God and I never doubted my salvation or my security in Christ. I thought myself a serious Christian. But in hindsight there wasn't any depth to my walk, a lack of victory against sin, a mediocre prayer life, and distractions because of family and business.

I wish I had paid more attention to my Salvation verse which the Lord gave me. Because in 1990 I met with the new pastor, and apparently concerned that I had mentioned a feeling of loneliness in our conversation, he sent me some biblical counsel by letter, which to my shame, I resented. I was angry to be told that loneliness and self-pity was due to the sin of un-thankfulness, and directed that anger toward the pastor. Of course, bitterness took hold, quenching the Holy Spirit, and within months I stopped attending church.

Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

(For many years pride in me refused to accept that I had been bitter, but recently the Lord convicted me that I was, and gave me the grace to confess and repent of the sin of bitterness. I sincerely regret being unthankful for a pastor who prayerfully gave me Bible-based counsel, and am ashamed at how easily my sinful heart deceived me).

Proverbs 14:14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways

It grieves me to speak aloud the things on my conscience, and to name my sins as a Christian, though I have repented. I don't wish to make any excuses, only ask your forgiveness for bringing shame upon the testimony of the church, and ultimately, the Name of Christ.

Now, having turned away from God and my spiritual family, the flesh, and probably the devil, kept my thoughts on loneliness, and on ways to relieve it, all the while reinforcing the lie that God had failed me. Again I confess how ashamed I am to think how such a little issue had brought me to that place.

Following failed attempts with female companions in the first years of my backsliding, I was given over to old thoughts of strange flesh, even though it had caused much anguish before my salvation. But lust conceived and soon I found someone of like mind to myself, and we became friends, then housemates together for the next 18 years. This friendship included activities the Bible describes in Romans 1:24 & 26 as "uncleanness" and "vile affections".

Ephesians 4:19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Then in 2013 when my unsaved friend died from a brain tumour, I suffered prolonged grief and guilt, but in early 2015 I began to think of spiritual things. I retrieved my Bibles and books from storage, and about that time I recognised a spiritual prompting that was the same as I had known at salvation. The Holy Spirit brought me to my knees in tears and in thankful worship of the Lord, and like the Prodigal Son, I came to myself, and prayed with his words "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son". Please forgive me. And my Father in Heaven had compassion and gave me the grace to repent from sin and backsliding and turn back to His waiting arms; "For this my son was dead, and is alive again". Luke 15:21 & 24

As part of the process of confession of my sins I made a list, and itemised all the occasions of many backsliding sins, and of sodomy and adultery, and asked forgiveness.

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Though forgiven, I am ashamed that my sins have brought reproach to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and have given occasion to the enemies of Christ to blaspheme His name. I confess to not taking sin seriously, probably since salvation, and repented of that sin, seeking the Lord's help to hate and forsake all sin.

About a year passed, during which I separated from certain worldly acquaintances. I studied my Bible more and prayed, and felt that I examined my life from before and after salvation in greater detail than before. It brought me to Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God

With the renewing of God's Word in devotions, the Lord convicted me to seek fellowship with believers, so I prayed that He would lead me. To my surprise I received a clear direction to Northside. The answer was so strong I had no doubt it was the Lord's will, so I phoned the church, and with stammering lips confessed my backsliding and sin to Pastor Simeon and asked if he thought I could return. After a little while we met with the deacons and agreed to some counselling, and I was excited and nervous to attend church on 5.6.2016.

Since coming under Pastor Simeon's preaching, and having the time to spend in God's Word, and in reading, and lately Faith Bible Institute, I think I am growing spiritually thanks to the blessing of the Lord and your prayers. In the 2 years there has been opportunity to revisit all the doctrines of salvation, as we have studied through Colossians, 1 Timothy and Titus, Nehemiah, most of Romans, and had conferences on Tribulation prophecy, The Cross and more.

As best I can, I'm trusting the Lord to help me walk in the Spirit, fully armed and watchful, from now on, always thankful in everything. It has been my privilege and joy to pray with and for you all, and witness the Lord's goodness.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ

To finish, may I say that I have agonised over this testimony, have confessed in shame with many tears before the Lord, but give all praise and honour to Him for his mercy and forgiveness, in that He is willing and able to save sinners and restore to fellowship backsliding children like me.

Post Script to self; There are always consequences to sin

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Thank you.

Presentation before the church 22 July 2018