



These testimonies are real stories from people at Sovereign Hope Church, but they written in narrative form rather than communicated verbally. So there will be some differences in how these read when compared to how we share ours verbally. But whether you are writing your testimony out, or sharing it with a friend, these three give you a good portrait of what a Christ proclaiming, God exalting testimony looks like.

TESTIMONY 1:

As a believer today, I see my salvation differently. The most perfect view of God is what He is like in Salvation. The way that God saved me and rescued my dead self and gave me life with Christ (Eph 2:4, 5) will be the greatest miracle that will happen in my life. My biggest problem is being separated from God; not my anxiety, fear, idolizing peace, etc. 1 John 4:19 says that He loved us before us and I will never reach the bottom of His love. His love is another kindness added to the myriad I have already received. Having the right view of God changed everything.

Before my salvation the world defined my behaviors, my motivations and my relationships. My heart was filled with fear, greed, anger and many other permutation of life ruining sin and I was a slave to it (John 8:24). I was corrupt and did no good (Ps 14:2,3) and every thought and intention I had was evil (Gen 6:5). Although I grew up in a Christian home, attending church weekly, served the poor, my heart was so ugly. All the moral facades I put forth were empty. Before Christ I did not have the ability to carry out good (Romans 7:18). I added my works to the truths of Christ, instead of believing that those truths are the best at freeing me from unbelief. I scaled my worth and self to that of others and not to whom God said he is and who we are. My motivations were about me and I sinned in shameful ways to make myself better, known and accepted. There was no hope found and the little false hope that was there was faulty and fickle, at best. I was an enemy of God, I turned away from Him, and I was worthless (Rom 3:10-12). Yet God, being rich in mercy and full of love, predestined a substitutionary death of his perfect Son that paid the price to save my sinful and dead self.

God saved me by His will; not by any means of myself or anyone else (John 1:12,13). Salvation is a free gift from God, which brings such great comfort. I went from being blind to seeing (John 9:25). My dead self being rescued (John 11: 39-44) and being born again to a living hope (1 Pet 1:3,4). My sophomore year in college is when I could not hide or contain all my sin in my heart. God was kind to use my dad as a pivotal influence that challenged, loved and shared nothing less than the Gospel in every interaction we had. It has been a long process because I was so slow to listen and so slow to believe. I only saw the impossibility of life and doubted God's power. All the years of grief, lies and hopelessness, God predestined them to be used to display His glory. Prior to God grabbing hold of my affections, to consider God as compassionate was lofty and made little sense. Yet, It only makes sense to claim God as a compassionate God, when he turns my affliction and permeate it with meaning beyond what I could imagine and have it result in a joy that is hard to convey with words and have it be filled with glory (1 Pet 1:8). God is so compassionate that he wanted to share himself with me.

CS Lewis states "Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling around with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us". My life since conversion has been one that is constantly being reminded that I am still sinful. Yet it is kindness that I can see my sinful behavior and have that lead me to repentance. I am more sinful than I will ever know but God is sufficient to cover my sins and redeem my life.

My testimony is this, God saved me from myself to Him and gave me eternal life with God and it is in his Son (1 John 5: 11).

TESTIMONY 2:

I grew up in a Lutheran family and attended church on most Sundays. I attended youth group, participated in confirmation and was on the church's worship team. Although I did all of these things, I didn't do them to grow closer to Jesus or to know God. I did these things for me. I would have always said, "I am a Christian", and I may have even been able to recite a promising creed, but despite all of this, I know that my motivations were to make myself look good. The desire of my heart was to be seen by others and to make myself look good. I was not concerned about sin being against the God of the universe, but instead, I was moral because of how it made me look. I had exchanged the truth for the lie by putting myself in the place of God in my life (Romans 1). My hope was in me and even though I frequently let myself down; I was blind to any possibility that I was really wrong. I was misplacing my hope by trying to keep the law, or I sought after lesser idols that never produced the joy that I was seeking. It never mattered if I kept a certain law or achieved what I had dreamt up, because nothing could produce the joy that my soul was looking for.

I do not know when I went from unsaved to being saved but I know that I have received salvation from Jesus Christ. Salvation is from the Lord and I know this now, but understanding that I have been saved took me a while to understand. Regardless of when it happened, I know that the Bible tells me about the what, why and how of my salvation. I know that God saved me while I was dead in my sin (Romans 5:6-10, Ephesians 2:5). It was purely by God's grace and mercy that he chose to save me. As demonstrated by the many years prior to my salvation, I could not do this for myself. I know that in salvation, God gave me faith in him so that I could repent of sin and become reconciled to God the Father through his son Jesus Christ. Before salvation, I was enslaved to sin and in salvation I was born again to a living hope through Christ's resurrection that cannot be taken away (1 Peter 1:23)

I was in a painful and sinful relationship that lasted from my senior year of high school until about half-way through my undergraduate degree. In this time, I was actively hiding from my family and friends but mostly from God. I was promiscuous and I felt trapped in my own sin. I signed up for a premarital counseling class at a local church. I was stubborn. I thought that past sin did not need to be addressed. As I went through this class, I was burdened by the weight of the sin that I did not want to bring into the light. It is easy for me now to look back and see that when this relationship eventually crumbled, I was receiving a great blessing even though it did not feel as that way at the time.

I returned back to college and became actively involved in my local church. I got to walk through repentance with another pastor at my home church. I grew close with a group of college aged people at this church and walked through the remainder of my schooling with these friends. I learned what it was like to serve God's church and what it was like to be a part of community. During my time in this church, I was blessed to be in a group of men who would meet with the pastors of the church to discuss books. In this group, I was able to learn some really great theological truths that helped me to temper my ability to think rightly about Jesus and his church and the Christian life. I got a lot of great knowledge out of these books, but I learned a lot also just by being around these other men and thinking through stuff together.

In the summer of 2011, I met the girl who I would eventually marry. I look back on this time because it was incredible. For me, I understand my salvation better because of my wife and I understand the gospel more fully because of my relationship with my wife. I understand my salvation better because of my wife, because I do not deserve the grace that she shows me daily. This grace obviously pales in comparison to the grace that God showed me in salvation but I get a picture of how God loves me through my wife.

What Jesus did on my behalf in dying on the cross freed me from my bondage to sin. He lived the life that I could not live and died the death that I deserved. He paid the penalty that was too great for me or anyone to pay. It is because of these truths that I am able to rely on God because he is my hope and my joy. I have been adopted into God's kingdom. I have repented of my life of sin, turning away from a life of destruction and it is only by God's rich grace that I am able to turn towards him, relying on him for the rest of my life. Even though I still sin, I am able to boldly trust in Christ, who covers all of my sin and frees me from condemnation. As I grow in my faith, I

continually must turn away from sin, repenting and falling on my knees at the cross; at the feet of the one who loves me and saved me.

TESTIMONY 3:

While I was still a sinner and was hostile to God, he purchased me through the purifying blood of Jesus Christ, whom you sent as a sacrifice for my sins. Jesus overcame death so that I may be born again and have eternal life. I believe in Him, and know that I am washed, sanctified, and justified in His name, and by His Spirit. There is nothing I could have done to get to heaven. God chose me through Jesus Christ before the foundation of time and he is my savior and messiah.