

While We Were Yet Sinners
Sermon Notes
By Elder Doug Abbott
September 16, 2017

Been asked to speak in past; felt God hasn't called me to do this.

Though Pastor knew of my thoughts on giving a message, he signed me up.

Penciled me in. I guess that meant I could ask him to erase my name.

Pastor Dena has been kind to me and our church; has done a lot though retired.

For what he has done for us and his kindness to me, I decided to say yes.

I told him he would just get my testimony, parts of which some of you have heard.

He said ok as long as I talked about what the result has been since my conversion.

I love to hear testimonies of how people accept Jesus.

Recently listened to Lani Parson's testimony.

Learned things about him I never knew.

Understand Suzan gave hers in SS. Would love to hear it.

If we had a newsletter, would be great to put them there.

Prayer meeting is also a place for testimonies.

I was not sure my testimony would suffice for a sermon, but Jesus said

Mark 5:19: Tell them what great things the Lord has done for you and how he has had compassion on you.

So I hope my testimony encourages someone.

I don't know if I have much to say about my journey, but Bible says no problem:

Ecc 5:1,2: When you go to the house of God let your words be few.

We will see how I do.

Let's pray

I am going to tell you my journey to be a SDA Christian from a chief sinner like Paul and how God changed my life.

Many of you may have similar or even more dramatic stories to tell.

As I tell my story, you will see how many times God tried to convert me and I refused or didn't listen.

There was a battle over my soul and salvation.

Born in E. Palo Alto. Not raised in Christian home.

Maternal Grandmother Walter took me to SS as a child, where I learned biblical principles.

Remember: Foot washing at Redwood City church.

Took me to So. Dakota when I was about 8 or 9: Began to see church in a legalistic framework.

Took me to Soquel Camp Meeting, but we usually skipped our classes and played.

Mom sent me to Camp Wawona when I was about 14. Made a decision to be baptized, but my Mom said I didn't need to.

By this time, I knew about prayer.

Prayer for no divorce was not answered. Came to learn that God may answer prayer differently than we want--people have free will.

As I got older, I would drop off Grandma Walter at church and not go in.

She gave me a special edition of Desire of Ages. While I have always been a reader, I never read the book.

As God would have it, my process server SDA. He suggested I attend church and see the beautiful girls there. I didn't.

I had said to myself I would not set foot in an SDA church.

But I didn't like being alone and I was smart enough to pray for a wife. Had some talks with God about.

God answered the prayer of a sinner.

God gave me a wonderful wife. He took me thousands of miles away to Acapulco to find Maggie who would eventually join me on my Christian journey.

But I failed to acknowledge God's answers to prayer and had no interest in spiritual things.

God kept trying to get my attention.

I think God tried to get my attention in Acapulco when I almost drowned.

You would think I would be thankful that I didn't die and know that God had saved me.

I never went to church as an adult, except I went with friends to a Sunday church once. But it didn't feel right, it didn't feel like church.

In August 1991, my Grandma White came to visit me. I took her to the Hayward church for two Sabbaths; and when she left, we continued to attend. I told her I might have problems with the Sabbath, but she said not to worry but to just listen to my heart.

I encountered loving Christians at Hayward:

Sophie Kaiser
Gus Mamoulelis
Devin and Garet Igarashi
Norm and Gail Reitz
Tali Laban

People who had genuine love and interest in me. They were not mere friends, as in the world.

Always felt God's presence in the sanctuary at the Hayward church.

I was excited at what I was learning and told my mom. She was worried about me, but I said, don't worry, I not joining the

church, just attending.

Norm and Gail gave us one year of Daniel and Revelation Bible studies.

From Aug. to Oct. I didn't miss a Sabbath, except for one A's game. I felt bad about going and didn't miss another Sabbath.

By December, I wouldn't purchase a car on Friday after sundown but returned on Sunday to complete the purchase.

Pastor Klatt was with us when our Bible study was on baptism. When we completed the study, he simply said, "When would you like to be baptized?"

Maggie and I were baptized on Nov. 28, 1992.

I sometimes think back, what if my parents had been SDA, how different life would have been. No divorce, a Christian education, attend Mountain View Academy.

Or what if I had accepted God's many invitations earlier.

Life with less stress, problems, heartache.

But God wants us to look forward and to be grateful of what great things he has done.

Blessings of accepting Jesus as Lord:

Heaven and eternal life.

I learned about Jesus and what He did for me:

Forgiveness of my myriad of sins during my lifetime, what a blessing.

I learned that obeying God was good for me, made life better.

Adventism wasn't a church of no's, but a life of yes.

Bible says: The truth shall set you free. And it does.

Accepting Jesus gave me a moral compass; I was thought pretty good person, but knowing Jesus brought about a lot of changes.

Other blessings:

We had no children during 10 years of marriage; only after becoming Christians did we God give us two boys.

Grateful for the SDA doctrine on no alcohol, would not have stopped drinking but for this.

Diet and Adventist health message.

Sabbath rest.

I also thank God gave me a passion for evangelism. It is a real joy to see people accept Jesus.

I enjoyed the evangelistic seminars at Hayward starting in the 90's when we did the satellite Net series.

I got to work with John Bradshaw twice. And Stephen Hicks.

For 2 years we went to Mountain View SDA church to get tuition discount at MVA.

God blessed time there.

Got to participate in 2 series.

1st: 4 clients. 2 baptized

2nd: Patricia, a Google attorney sat next to me at my table and was baptized. Jackie went to both series and was at my table both time, but she didn't make a decision to be baptized until a third series.

Amazing a sinner one who came close to never accepting Jesus was being used by God to bring people in the kingdom.

I take no credit, I'm just a sinner.

I'm just glad God gave me the opportunity to be used.

One scary thought: I am grateful I had SDA relatives. If not, probably never would have known about Adventism.

Before becoming a Christian, I never received an Adventist flyer or tract.

This is why it is important to give tracts and materials to people and I'm passionate about it.

When Grandma White was dying, I went to see her. I said thank you for loving me and for being instrumental in my conversion. She said as much as I love you, remember God loves you more.

You may be far from God, but he is not far from you.

Listen to him and follow him.