



Anthony Maher's TESTIMONY

.... told by his mother, at Grace Bible Baptist Church on Sunday 19th April, 2015.

I was born in 1973 at Canterbury in Sydney, and my mum, nanny & grandpa were Christians who taught me about God and the Lord Jesus and took me to Sunday school and church. Mum says that my first year was wonderful... I grew and developed really well even doing some things earlier than my big sister!! However, after my 13 month immunization I was constantly sick and my progress was very slow. In my early years much of our time was spent between trips to Camperdown Children's Hospital, Drs, Specialists, getting assessments, and then surgical bio-opsys ... which finally gave an educated guess at what had happened to me and what I could expect from life in the future. At age 8, the Westmead Hospital Neurologist told mum that my brain damage was unexplained and that the Axonal Peripheral Neuropathy which was already affecting my mobility was quite rapid and he thought I would not live past my twenties.

In the early years of my life we moved a lot and so we went to different churches... but the happiest times for me were at Cabramatta Baptist where I first joined the Boys Brigade. I loved wearing a uniform, marching, going to church parades, and learning about God and Jesus. At this time mum, Kelly and I were always singing choruses and hymns around the house – in the car- walking down the street ... it was so nice, because there were lots of scary times at home with my step father.

When I was 7 yrs old, I remember one time after church asking mum if I could be baptized ... but she said I was very young and perhaps I should wait a few more years till I understood more fully about salvation and following Jesus. I was very sad and decided I couldn't wait ... so when

mum was busy, I turned the bath taps on and got in fully dressed - trying to get myself under the water as it filled up. Well I made such a noise that mum came running and with a big towel and lots of laughs and cuddles all was cleaned up and I was satisfied.

In 1985 after we moved to Cooranbong in Newcastle my faith in Jesus grew and although I couldn't read at all, I drank in every sermon, Sunday school lesson, Boys Brigade lesson and had talks with mum about my sins and how Jesus died to take away all my sins. It was at this time that I asked Jesus to forgive my sins and come into my heart to be my Saviour and Lord. My sister Kelly was preparing for baptism because she had repented and believed a few months earlier. Mum asked the Elder at church if I could be baptized also and he came around to our house to interview me. I was so thrilled that he liked my answers to his questions, and he said to mum that he believed I had faith to salvation and that I could certainly be baptized with Kelly in a few weeks time.

I'm now 42 years old... and I thank the Lord that I have lived double what the Dr thought. I'm blessed in so many ways – To know the Lord!! To have eternal life!! To have sure hope when life is hard!! To be able to live at home with mum!! To have a loving sister and uncle who care about me and a beautiful little niece who loves me and isn't afraid of my wheelchair!! To have church family and friends that talk to me!!

I always thank God and Jesus because although I'm different to others because of my brain damage, and can't read the Bible or explain things very well - He has given me an understanding heart of who He is – Gods own Son who came from heaven to die for my sins so I could be forgiven and made His child. His Words are so precious to me and that's why I keep my Bible open on my tray everyday. Mum reads the Scriptures to me and we pray and give thanks together about everything. I listen to the Bible

on DVD also every day, and listen to wonderful Christian music that sometimes makes me cry. Our home is the best place on earth, but in recent years by God's grace through teaching I've heard and from the Scriptures I'm starting to understand more about the future things that God has promised. Because my imagination doesn't work, Its really hard for me to grasp some things ... but I believe when Jesus comes to get us, He will change my brain and body to "glorious" just like HIS and set me free from the battle I have with my flesh thoughts and attitudes. Ooh I can hardly wait!!!

The other week mum was reading to me from Psalm 119: at verses 47-50 she stopped and said "that's you Tony... that is your testimony!!" "Yes, yes !!" I said nearly crying with happiness that there was a Scripture describing what I felt

"AND I WILL DELIGHT MYSELF IN THY COMMANDMENTS, WHICH I HAVE LOVED. MY HANDS ALSO WILL I LIFT UP UNTO THY COMMANDMENTS, WHICH I HAVE LOVED; AND WILL MEDITATE IN THY STATUTES. REMEMBER THE WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE. THIS IS MY COMFORT IN MY AFFLICTION: FOR THY WORD HATH QUICKENED ME" Amen