



Andrew's Testimony

Lost sheep

Hi my name is Andrew Panov. I don't know where to start – I grew up and had a very abusive childhood. My father was a alcoholic and I can still remember the days when I used to see my mother get violently beaten, this is hard to say because they are memories that I have not spoken about to many people.

My mother did the best that she could, but it was everything but a normal childhood. My parents separated and I didn't have a father figure.

Growing up I didn't have anybody guiding me, to keep me from making mistakes. I did what I wanted, during this time God was something that I would get around to later. I didn't think about him at all. If anything it was only a thought in my mind at Easter and Christmas (presents, Easter eggs) I didn't know the true meaning of the two occasions and to be really honest most of the time I didn't even attend the church service.

A lot of people would mention at this point that they felt something missing in their life, but I was just existing in this world and just going with the flow – death or eternity had never really crossed my mind. God was always some one that I would turn to in time of crisis. I was a very blazay person. I didn't care about responsibility. I was under the impression that I would live forever and was indestructible, LITTLE DID I KNOW.

When I got married I thought that I would go to church confess all my sins and it will all go away. Remembering the day before I got married I was standing in an Orthodox church for about two hrs crying to the lord and no one had approached me to see if I was ok. Having children I tried even harder to be a good father and husband – not knowing at the time I was still a slave to my sin.

Hearing the word of life

My sister in law Angela got married to Robert Ayoub and I vividly remember thinking that Rob has got Angie to join a cult. Brother Rob had been witnessing to me for a while nothing really seemed to be sinking in. Now looking back it was the word of the Bible that is sharper than a two edge sword, because when I came to a point in my life that I felt hopeless I turned to Rob (because we was using the word of God).

It seemed like yesterday I drove to his house sitting outside in the car crying to the Lord and saying the sinners prayer. I was all excited at first and even started to go to Church at Croyden. But I realised nothing changed inside of me and that I really didn't like going to Church as a matter of fact I disliked to go, I didn't like singing or the fact that it took time away from me. Thinking back, I came to the Lord on that day and coming away with what can I get out of this. It was not long before I fell into my old ways. During this time one impression really got to me after the service Pastor Nabil came up to me introduced himself and asked genuine questions about how I was doing. This was hard at first because the Priest that I know wasn't someone that just talk to you, so my first impression was what does he want out of me – how wrong was I. Knowing now that all he wanted was to help save my soul. In **Mathew 13:4** Jesus speaks in a parable “**And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up**”. And in **Mathew 13:19** it is explained as “**When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart**”. I had convinced myself that why would God send me to hell I am not a bad bloke really – never killed anybody, or committed a serious crime. I am a good person compared to them. Again little did I know that a sin is a sin and we all fall short of perfection to be sinless, Jesus was the only man that never sinned.

A few years passed and Brother Rob was still witnessing to me and I remember that sometimes he didn't talk about it he just wore that shirt. “Where will you spend eternity” said it all. I came to a point in my life that I started having questions about life. So I used to ask Brother Rob and he use to answer them Biblically.

It interested me so I started to attend Church and do the disciple ship course. The Holy Spirit started to tug at my heart, and when I used to go to church I use to sit in the back row because I felt protected at the back that no one could see me. But at the end of every sermon when the question was asked, it was like a war – I wanted to put my hand up but something was always holding me back. Knowing now it was the devil and it was a spiritual war that was happening within me.

Starting to realise the truth I thought I will fix myself up first and then I will come to him. The more I tried the more desponded I felt. I missed out on the big picture that Jesus had already paid for all our sins. I was fighting the devil on a unfair battle field and as disciplined as I am, I had no chance against him. He was much too powerful and had all the advantage.

One day I arrived at Church and there was no seats at the back, so I was sitting in the first row in the second section. This was bad because I was exposed , could not hide and felt very uncomfortable through the whole sermon.

The question came and did not know what to do, I could not believe my luck a major distraction happened at that moment and it was the perfect excuse for my hand not to go up. Knowing what I know now I believe that the devil did that distraction for me not to put up my hand.

Finally I could not take it any more and on one occasion when Pastor was preaching I raise my hand so that he could pray for me. My sin had been exposed. **Romans 3:10 As it is written. There is none righteous, no, not one.**

The time came when I started to believe the discipleship course gave me enough information to believe in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit but I was not saved. I learned that eternal life was a gift and all I have to do is accept it **Titus 3:5 “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy**

Ghost". It is for free but it was one of the hardest time in my life the devil didn't want to give up my soul with out a fight.

On two occasions I really questioned my salvation from that day in the car with Brother Rob. I knew that nothing changed within. One was Brother Charlie selling me a phone and at the end asking me where will I spend eternity. The second , I was witnessing to a Muslim student and I told him that eternal life is a gift from God and he does not want for us to go Hell. He also wants us to have assurance today **1 John 5:13 states "These things have I written unto you that believe on the Son of God; that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God"**. Then he asked me so where are you going. I could not lie and told him that I was going to Hell. It really hit me hard that day I knew that I was going to hell if I was to die now. My spiritual battle was intensified and at Church one Sunday when brother Charlie was preaching and it felt like the Lord was talking straight to me, I could not control my emotions and had to leave as soon as I got a chance.

On the 5/10/08 I mentioned to the Lord that wouldn't it be great if Manly win the Grand Final and I come to you on the same day. Well it is history now Manly beat the number one team all year 40 – 0 and in 100years of the game this had never been done. The Lord had shown me that not only did Manly win they smashed the Storm. During the game the Holy Sprit kept coming to me to remind me what I said. It kept coming for me and would not let me rest and I kept telling him just let me enjoy the game. But the Holy Sprit kept coming for me and reminding me what I said. After the game I felt like I had no choice except the gift now or never.

I was broken and got on my knees and spoke to God for the first time from the heart. At that point I felt that a great weight was lifted off my shoulders and I was forgiven for my sins. If I was to die tonight to meet God , Jesus will step in and say Andrews sins are on me and that is how I felt.

Now I will be on the battle field with an unfair advantage Jesus is on my side. I know that I still will sin again but I am no longer a slave to it. I also view life completely differently now my sin was exposed . I see myself for who I really am but I also have the assurance that God loves me and he loves you.

Saved and got it made

Understanding that Jesus died for all mankind, believing in the gospel, convicted by the Holy Sprit and having faith that God keeps all his promises I know he is in my life now and forever. **John 14:6 Jesus said "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"**. I know that all I can do is glorify him thru my actions. I am a personal trainer so when ever I get a chance to share the Gospel I do.

I have witnessed to many different people I open the doors for the people I train to come to my house and here the word. I enjoy talking about the Word giving out the Done book, many people have asked questions and I know that the Holy Spirit is answering.

Some of the people that I trained after one track never saw again, some have turned against me and others I think are genuinely taking it all in. I use to get upset but now I realise that its all in Gods timing.

Another very important part of my life is my wife and best friend, who had her struggles with the lord for some time. She like my self came to the lord the first time but was not saved, it was in her mind but not in her heart.

So I witnessed to her on a daily basis and she was saved on 17/03/09 and what a glorious day it was having a such a small part in leading her to the lord. She will tell u the details. But I can say that if the lord was not in our life today our marriage would be a very unhappy one, that's if we were still together. Being Baptised once before I realise now after reading the Bible that – one needs to understand the word , repent and be saved then get Baptised. So it is a conscience decision that you make after you are saved, not mans traditions. I would now like to get baptised knowing that it does not save me but God wants it like this and that settles it for me.