



Mitri's Testimony

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Mitri Kouzi. I come from an Orthodox background. From the beginning I lived a hard, troubled life. I began to realise that my upbringing and childhood was not very normal in comparison to friends around me, relatives and the general public. I grew up in violent surroundings, both physical and verbal. Violence became an everyday thing for me. This resulted in a mental scar. Growing up I was known to be an angry person and quick to violence. Due to this type of childhood I was not able to feel almost any emotions. I subconsciously trained myself to be numb to all emotions.

I had a hole in my heart, and I tried to fill this hole with many things. I entered the world, but not just entered it as a normal male teen, I entered it to the extreme. I began to experiment with drugs, smoking and alcohol at a very young age, and this life-style lasted for a very long time. For a few hours while under the influence I would smile, fooling myself into believing that hole was now filled. I was so wrong. I was not happy on the inside. My anger was overflowing. I would take substances to make myself forget the reality I was living and try to be in another world. I wanted to feel some sort of emotion, some kind of happiness. This was artificial, it never lasted and, even worse, it led to much worse things.

The world deceived me into thinking that living your life to the fullest was how to be happy. I began to be associated with gangs from an early age. I began to witness and to be involved in shootings, fights and other gang related activity. I was so lost that I didn't know what the normal way to act was, or what emotions I was supposed to feel at the right times. I would have to put on a front to pretend I was feeling an emotion because I never felt anything. I did not know right from wrong. The devil had hold of me.

This was the next level I went to in order to fill the hole in my heart. I wanted to make a name for myself on the streets and to build a

reputation for myself. In the boys eyes I was seen as a hero and was respected; in God's eyes I was seen as a follower of the enemy, and I disappointed Him. All this while the devil rejoiced at every breath I took. I began to unleash my anger on innocent people. I was so lost in the world that I actually began to feel some sort of satisfaction from hurting people. I felt an emotional high when people were afraid of me. I thought I was fulfilling this emptiness through this kind of lifestyle. How wrong I was.

I began to make quick money. It was spent on drugs, drinking, gambling, hotels and partying. Almost every step of the way we would try to involve some sort of violence in our night. The end result was always negative. I have had many gang-related, near-death experiences and have also been charged many times for the foolish things I did.

I thought I was happy, but I would wake up every morning feeling miserable no matter how much money, or how many people were afraid, or how many people we hurt, it would not satisfy. I was still a lost soul. The anger kept growing, the worldly desires were in my palm, the list of things I did to fill that hole and to quench the thirst I had inside me was enormous, but it never worked. It was making me a lot angrier which was making me more of a lunatic.

I lived a double life. I would come home as a zombie and barely speak. I began to give up on life; I had tried almost everything the world around me had to offer. I did exactly what the world told me to do, reputation, gangs, money etc. But where was this happiness the world promised me? I saw the happiness in movies and film clips, but not in my life. This world is a deceiver; we are always shown smiles and happiness if we pursue the worldly dream, but they never seem to show you the negative. It was all a trick to keep me away from Christ. I was still lost. I would wake up every morning and say "Why am I alive?" I hated my life and wanted to die although killing myself was not an option. I would put myself in the face of death hoping it would happen, but it didn't for some

reason. I didn't know it at the time, but someone was watching over me. I thought I was living life... I was living death.

I always thought I believed in God, well not really. I always had doubts. Sometimes I thought that if I died it would just go black, lights turned off and life is over. I probably went to church once a year. I got a tattoo on my body of a religious picture and did the sign of the cross once or twice. That's the closest I came to being a Christian. If there was a God, he would want nothing to do with me. There was no way I could do enough good things to outweigh my sins. I felt not worthy of anything. But I still thought I was a Christian, when the reality is that I was far from it. My heart felt so heavy from guilt so I would hide that feeling by drinking and taking other things to forget.

One day my mum started talking about Jesus and the Bible. I saw happiness in her for the first time. I noticed a change in her and I was happy for her. I wanted her to be happy. Although I could not stand hearing the subject of God. It made me angrier than I already was. Every time she would mention it I would fill up with rage and drink even harder that night and become more of a lunatic. My sisters and brother-in-law then followed after my mum. They were all happy and their lives changed immediately. I was happy for them once again but did not care for God nor did I want to join them. They were saved, but I had no idea what that meant at the time. They told me what their new beliefs were, and I did not agree. I had no knowledge of God, the gospel or why he died for us. But I still thought they were brainwashed because they didn't want to pray to Mary. I became angry at this whole idea. I wanted nothing to do with it. I would not let them teach me as I didn't want God in my life. He wouldn't want me. My sister gave me a book called Done. I spat on it and threw it around my room for weeks. They kept telling me to speak to some guy from the church in Regents Park, Brother Robert; all I kept hearing was Robert Ayoub's name, until the point where I couldn't stand the bloke anymore! I hated him but I didn't even know him. I told my family that if I heard this bloke's name one more time I was going to go break his legs.

I was so convinced that the terrible things I had done in my life had made me invisible to God. Then God began to work on my conscience and I started to see the true evil in me. I did something really wrong that my sister knew about, but I didn't want to live a double life so I sent a message to my sister saying "See, I told you I'm filth. Look at what I did. This is me, just accept it because I already have." She replied saying, "God loves you, only God can help you." I replied saying, "Are you stupid? What does he want from a scum like me! He wants nothing to do with me." I wondered how God could love me? Why would He want to know me? I don't exist in His eyes. I thought I was too dirty to come to God. I was too ashamed of my life. I was taught that I had to clean myself before I turned to God. In my mind that was impossible.

Shortly after, in that same day I was feeling normal, which consisted of anger, hatred and depression. I was about to enter the next level of evil. I didn't care anymore, this would have most likely been the beginning of the end. I was about to escalate and do something worse than anything I have ever done.

I then for some unknown reason picked up that little torn, creased, dirty book. The Done book. I had no plan to turn to God, or to seek the truth, I never prayed for help. I didn't want help; I didn't want my sins to be forgiven. I didn't deserve happiness. I wanted punishment.

I began to read, started to feel interested and had the need to finish the book. Keep in mind I have never finished a book in my life. I had a possibility of a job that day in about 30 minutes, I was still trying to fill that hole and getting a job was on the cards. Halfway through reading, I kept getting phone calls from the guy seeking to hire me, but I felt compelled to keep reading even though I also was very interested in this job thinking that it would improve my life. But for some reason I put my phone on silent; God wanted me to continue reading. Towards the end, the life of Jesus Christ began to make sense. I started to believe. I felt that maybe there is a chance for me. Maybe God really does want to know me. Could this all be true? I started to get goose bumps and then I felt so down. The weight on my chest grew as I felt like I could not

hide the guilt any more. My throat felt swollen and heavy, my eyes teared up. I started to break down.

My heart began to speak to God, and it asked for forgiveness while my tears dropped on that last page, I asked God to help me; I asked Him to forgive me, and I begged Him to come into my life. I put the book down, and I felt a rush through my body while I was praying, an indescribable feeling through my whole body. The tears kept dropping. I felt so ugly and guilty. I had so much remorse; I just came clean with myself and with God about how evil my life really was. I stopped hiding and let it all out.

After a few minutes the tears just stopped. I felt a complete change in emotion. I looked up, and I smiled. I smiled with all my heart. It was the most amazing feeling I had ever felt. All the guilt, remorse, and down, ugly feeling just disappeared. The biggest weight was taken of my chest. I felt like I was floating, it was so surreal. This time it was finally a natural smile, not under the influence of anything, but only through God's Spirit. I couldn't stop laughing. I understood what God's message was. I understood why Jesus died for us. I realised that there was a point to life. He forgave me, He gave me the second chance, He gave me eternal life, and He gave me happiness. He permanently filled that hole in my heart. To this day I still find it hard to get rid of that smile. That day I felt the Lord Jesus Christ.

From that instant the law that he printed on my heart became effective immediately. From that second I could not swear, I never felt bad about it before but now all of the sudden I couldn't finish a sentence as swearing took up 70% of my vocabulary. I had no more desire to drink which was an everyday thing for me without fail, nor the desire to think or do anything evil. I have not associated with anyone corrupted of my past, nor gone out to the world since. I feel like a monk, all I can do now is read and study about the Almighty King of kings, our Lord Jesus Christ. This was truly a miracle. No church, no human, no men of science, medicine or psychologists could have ever helped me change

my whole life in an instant. Only through the power of Jesus Christ was this possible, for we are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ and not of ourselves. It wasn't me, it was Jesus. I Love him with all my heart, how could I ever repay him? Only through Christ was I able to stay away from the drugs, alcohol, partying, crime and every other evil part of my life without even trying to stay away. He has given me a new spirit that does not thirst for these worldly desires. It does not thirst for anything. "If any man thirst let him Come unto me and drink, and he shall never thirst again." It was not a process of rehabilitation, it was instantaneous! It was faith, it was believing that Jesus Christ accomplished His mission, He achieved his purpose for coming to earth. That his death was sufficient and the only sacrifice needed to forgive all of our sins. " So Christ was once, offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time with out sin unto salvation" Hebrews 9:28 All I had to do was believe. A sinless man, full of love, established a way of life for us, then he willingly walked to his crucifixion. He walked to a death that we all deserved, but because He loved us so much He took our place, and then gave us the most incomprehensible gift we could never imagine, eternal life and true happiness on earth. He achieved his mission. Some people think that we are brain washed, even though I had no influence from any church denomination or anybody else. I actually rejected this whole idea and everybody my family tried to get me to speak to. It was not my plan at all to be where I am today, it was God's plan. He guided me and opened doors so I would take this path in life. It was no influence of man. Some people also think this is like a spell; say a prayer and you're guaranteed heaven with smooth sailing from here on and no more sins. I believe you cannot just speak the prayer. I believe your heart must do the talking. It isn't smooth sailing for me. I have not become sinless, but the best thing is that I no longer have the desire to sin and through the power and words of God I will strengthen my spirit to always over power my flesh. It is no magic spell, rather it is a gift from God. It is not easy but I thank God so much that I am happy to go through the hard times. I felt the Lord and I believe His promises; He will not forsake me.

I used to think that it was due to my upbringing and bad life experiences which caused this hole in my heart and that only I could repair it. Once God took off my blindfold, I realised that we are all sinners, we are all filth and God knows this, but He also gives us a way out. He prepared a gift for us, but also created us with a free will. Everybody is born with a hole in their heart, not just me; only Jesus Christ can fill that hole. He will not force you, you just have to reach out, grab his hand and take that leap of faith.

I have never been happier in my life, I do not want any worldly desires that we are taught to love. My priorities in an instant totally changed, I grew up my whole life thinking that all I want is money, houses, cars and other things along those lines. Well not any more. I only want one thing, I want to give my life to God so that He can do as He pleases with it. I have gladly given my life to The Lord, although I can't only give Him 100% of it, but I will give Him 500% of it. I want no rewards in this life or the next. I feel like I have already been given more than I deserve. I have learnt that being a Christian is not about me anymore, it is about others. The Lord didn't love me because of anything I did, He didn't love me because I tried to obey his commandments, He didn't love me because I loved him. He loved me because His love is supernatural. A love that we all should strive to have, a love that is not based on conditions. Everything that happens from this day onwards is a blessing and I will be happy the whole way no matter how painful or bad the persecution is, to me it is beautiful. I have complete faith in The Lord, it is God's plan, and His plan is perfect. What better captain to have than the Lord Jesus Christ. I can never repay him, who am I to God? The Almighty, Eternal, Great God does not need me. I did nothing that ever pleased Him, but He knocked on my heart, and waited for me to open the door. He forgave me and loved me the same as He loves you, even after all the wrong I have done. How great is His love! That is why, Lord Jesus Christ, I give you my life. Put me through any path you like no matter if it consists of torture, pain, or death and I will do it with the biggest smile on my face, and I will keep singing this new song you

have put in my mouth. I can truly say that my Saviour, My God and my best friend has filled that hole in my heart, and I can't wait to meet Him. Thank you.