

Pastor's Testimony for Web Site

Hi! I am Tim Young, pastor of Living Hope Church. God has done wonderful things in the lives of our church family and I would like to briefly tell the story of what he has done in my life. I grew up here in the Lehigh Valley and my childhood was not what you could call normal. Our family owned a hotel and we rented rooms, served meals and also had a barroom. We lived in the hotel so I am not exaggerating when I say I grew up in a barroom and had drunks help me with my homework.

I was shy as a boy and we were given beer at an early age as part of the Slovak culture we shared. I discovered early on that my shyness went away when I drank alcohol. This led to early alcohol abuse since beer was easy for me to get. I would drink before going to a dance or party and eventually every day before going to out, especially where there would be girls to talk with.

This continued through High School and then off I went into the Navy. My ship visited 18 countries during my enlistment and I can truly say I drank my way around the world. When I was discharged I was right back with the old crowd in the bars. I had a good job in the teletype industry and lived for the weekends. Eventually my drinking began to affect my work attendance. I was going to Community College at night and working full time so I limited my drinking to weekends but the weekends were becoming one long drunk.

All my friends were slowly embracing the Hippie culture but I had resisted. As alcohol began to affect my work and schooling, I discovered drugs, particularly marijuana and amphetamines. I could get high without the hangovers and missing work. I began to realize I had a problem with substance abuse and this began a back and forth pattern of trying to stop drugs by resorting to booze and then quitting the booze only to go back to drugs. I knew that I could not have a good time without booze or drugs being in the mix. I was now realizing that I needed drugs or booze just to cope. I came home from work one day depressed and yelling at a friend "I am sick of life. I work to get money to get high and then get high and have to work to get more money. What is it all about? I am sick of living." His response was a turning point in my life. He asked "What about Christ?" An old friend of his had just told him how "Christ changed his life". This began a quest by me to find out if this "Christ" was real and could change my life.

I went to see the film "The Cross and the Switch Blade" and a scene in the movie rocked my life and I realized God is real and can change even the worst life. That led to a friend inviting me to his home for a Bible study where I met the most amazing and loving people I ever met. I had hair down to my waist and had just been refused service at a local bar because I was a dirty hippie. These people hugged me and told me they loved me. I heard of Christ's death for sinners. Nobody had to tell me I was a sinner. I knew that all too well. That night I went home and got down on my knees beside my bed and cried out "Jesus, save me and forgive me and make me new". Guess what... He did! I knew what the Bible meant when it says "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old is gone, the new is come." My life began change as I read the New Testament and God began to take sins out of my life one by one. It was a slow process, but one thing happened immediately. I never did or had a desire to do drugs again.

The end of the story is that God led me to a good church where I met my future wife, the minister's daughter. Then God led me into the ministry and I have been preaching this life-changing Gospel for over 36 years. I was blessed in being used by God to start Living Hope Presbyterian Church in 1990. My family kids that I am the white sheep of the family but actually I am only a sinner saved by grace.