

This is the salvation testimony of Pastor Sean Harris, Berean Baptist Church

Before I came to saving faith in Christ, my life revolved around me. God was not part of my life. I was baptized at St. Theresa-Avila Catholic Church in West Roxbury, MA, as an infant, but there was nothing religious in my life. We didn't go to church, not even on Christmas or Easter. Around age 8, my dad and stepmom moved our family to a 40-acre farm in a small holler in Bozoo, WV. Our mail was general delivery, Bozoo, WV. We had a two-seater outhouse and no running water. It was quite primitive. We collected rainwater in trash cans and got water from a small creek. But this is where God would bring me to saving faith in Jesus.

My dad, Jim, worked as a carpenter's helper for a man who was crazy about Jesus. He was relentless in witnessing to my dad. Finally, Dad relented, and we began attending a tiny church now called Coulters Chapel in Lindside, WV. In that church, we heard the Word of God—the gospel—and under the ministry of Roy Keebler, our family was changed. Nearly overnight, we became a Christian family. Everything was different.

For my salvation, I have vivid memories of hearing the gospel at what is now called Rock Camp Missionary Baptist Church. I am not sure whether the church had the same name then as it does now. I remember hearing about hell and knowing I did not want to go there. As an elementary-aged child, I trusted in Christ as my Savior. I don't know if I walked an aisle or prayed a sinner's prayer. I know we were there for a revival; I know it was winter and cold. That is my first and oldest memory of trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin and the hope of eternal life. That Tuesday night, I knew I was born again; I was saved.

Since then, God, the Word of God, and the church have been part of my life and my fight against the flesh and sin. I was baptized in the creek that ran alongside the road where Coulters Chapel is. My dad's conversion had a profound impact on me. He believed he was called to preach and pursued that calling. As the firstborn, I was old enough to witness and remember everything that went into attending Bible college and pastoring churches. During my formative years, he was a conservative evangelical follower of Christ, though he would never have used those labels.

I tried to live as a Christian in school. I went to college as a follower of Christ and nearly lost my way at Lynchburg College, except for the ministry of Thomas Road Baptist Church. When I sinned, I knew it. When I was out of church, I knew I needed to reconnect. When I moved back to Boston to be with my mom's side of the family, I connected with a Methodist church through my aunt. I knew when my choices and behavior were not pleasing to Christ. In 1987, when I was first stationed at Fort Bragg, I was again confronted with my need for a church. God used Eric Gentry to bring me to Berean. The ever-convicting power of the Holy Spirit has given me much assurance of my salvation. The Spirit still convicts me of sin today, keeping me aware of my need for Christ, my Savior. Each day I strive to surrender to the Lordship of Christ and to follow the Holy Spirit's leading.

One area of my life where I can see a Christlike transformation is in my striving to be a people person, loving people the way Christ loves them. By default, I am not a gracious person. But each day I am striving to be more like Jesus in this area and in many others as the Spirit convicts me.