Salvation Testimony – Hutch Crawford

I grew up in a Christian home, faithfully attended church, my family was at church on Sundays and Wednesday evenings, and we participated in every major event throughout the year. From a young age, I was aware of my sin, and through my parents' discipline and studying the Word through sermons and books I was given to read, I sought to become a better Christian. I was raised in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and became a full member of the church after going through a membership class at around 12-14 years old. I also attended a non-denominational Christian school K-12. In high school, I was a dedicated member of my church's youth group and led the Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter at my school, even speaking in front of 1000s of students at an FCA rally at a local football stadium. I got great grades, stayed out of trouble, and was always trying to be better.

But there was a dark side to my life. Ever since my early adolescence, I struggled with secret sexual sin, particularly a hidden addiction to pornography. I knew what I was doing was wrong, but no matter what I tried, I could not stop myself because I loved my sin. Beyond that, I struggled with anger growing up and also a constant need to perform and show out for others. I wrestled deeply with theology and often sought help from mentors and pastors in my church, but all of it was just putting band-aids on a gaping wound.

My hypocrisy was exposed when I went off to college. Christianity had always been a part of my life, so I attended church for the first few weeks, but being unable to connect with people at the church for fear of exposing who I was deep inside, I chose to run away from the accountability. Over the next four years, my life was characterized by a gradual descent into alcohol abuse and partying. I continued to be successful in my endeavors, performing well in school and competing with others in ROTC, but spiritually the pressures of life and performance drove me deeper into slavery to pornography and drinking and partying to cope.

As I got to my senior year in college, I knew that I had to change. It was seeing the life of believers around me, that God used to convict me. My college roommate and best friend, Jack Ward, wasn't perfect, but he truly loved other people and

continued to reach out to me. In the summer following my senior year, before I left to go to China for a year of study, I reached my rock bottom. Jack and his father-in-law Marty were there to encourage me. They gave me some “Table Talk” magazines and sent me to China.

I thought I was a Christian who just needed to try again. I had done that once on a previous study abroad to China, using the new environment to turn back to the high school me and to lead a Bible study. But all that had collapsed when I came back to university in the States. Why would this time be any different?

I was committed to trying. I knew that Christians needed to go to church so I committed, no matter what, to go to an international church while I was in Beijing. While still going to parties on Saturdays, I would force myself out of bed and onto the Subway, knowing that church was where I needed to be. It was just more work all over again.

About a month in, a man named Elkana Roveglia, who I had just seen baptized in a bathtub at a church member’s apartment two weeks prior, invited me to lunch. I recounted my whole story up to that point. He looked me straight in the eyes and said, “brother, you are not a Christian.” I didn’t protest. It was the most true statement anyone had ever said about me. I knew so much about the Bible that the Spirit hit me like a load of bricks. I had always just assumed I was good. I had been Baptized, I was in a church, I was a good person. How could I not be a Christian?

God used that encounter to work a miracle of rebirth in my heart. It wasn’t like lust left me forever, but I got a powerful sense of overwhelming peace and freedom. I spent the next few months reading Philippians every day and listening through John MacArthur’s entire sermon series on the book. I couldn’t get enough of God’s word. I started to love being with God’s people. I went to every event and Bible study that I could. I poured my heart out in worship to the God who saved me just walking down the streets. The words on the page had finally become real to me.

My life has never been the same since then. We have ups and downs and all kinds of challenges. I fall flat on my face some times, but nothing will ever take me back to that place of darkness and despair.

God has brought me through many different seasons and challenges that can't possibly be laid out sufficiently here. But if you are curious, I would love to share more about the testimony of His work in my marriage to Regan, my career (and utter failures) in the military, as a father to my sons, as a friend and brother to other believers, and so many other ways that I have seen God move.

My faith has only grown as my knowledge of the hope of the resurrection has grown. I love God's Word and believe it with all my heart. I am daily working to put my sin to death and to grow in actually walking out the truth of the Gospel, and to make disciples. I am so thankful for a New and Better Covenant, for the work of the Spirit in this world, and to be a part of a Holy Nation that will live with God forever in the New Heavens and the New Earth.

All glory be to Christ our King!