Salvation Testimony – Keith Campbell

Before I placed my faith in Christ, my life was marked by self-righteousness and an effort to be seen as good. My parents came out of Catholicism and came to saving faith in Christ when I was four years old. The church they began attending, however, placed a strong emphasis on rules, outward appearance, and behavior. Early in my life, conformity to an outward form of godliness became my standard.

I understood God primarily as someone to fear and obey because His judgment was severe. My picture of Him was not that of a loving Father, but of an absolute ruler whose commands must be obeyed. It would take years for that understanding to change. When I was fourteen, we moved to the church where I would eventually come to faith in Christ, but a pattern of thinking had already taken root: I was trying to be godly without knowing God. The pastors at this church taught about a loving Father who desired a relationship with me. Even then, it would be years before I began to understand what that meant.

In April 1999, I placed my faith in Christ and His finished work. I was attending youth group on a Wednesday night, and my youth pastor, Sammy Frye, was preaching a message titled “Do You Know for Sure?” Having grown up in church, I thought I was good. During that message, however, it was as though the Holy Spirit was putting His finger on my chest and saying over and over, “That is you.”

For the first time, I understood that my attempts at righteousness fell far short of God’s holiness. I had been relying on my church attendance and good works rather than on Christ. Jason Whitiker took me to a quiet room and walked me through what it meant to believe in Christ and place my faith in Him. I understood how completely I had missed the mark and that I could not make myself right with God. I knelt and prayed, giving voice to my faith in Christ and His finished work.

After coming to Christ, I had a hunger to know Him and grow. My growth, however, was not without struggle. At times, I allowed my flesh to get the better of me, and a lack of discipleship left me struggling with uncertainty and insecurity as a new believer. The patterns of thinking formed during my childhood did not

disappear overnight. It took years of God patiently working on the stubbornness of my heart for me to become willing to listen and follow His direction more fully.

As I have grown in my understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Christ, my life has been truly changed. I have had the privilege of walking with my heavenly Father and helping disciple others so they can grow in their faith without facing the same uncertainty and insecurity I experienced.

As a second-generation Christian, I have also come to understand how important it is to teach my children who the Father is and what His character is like. I want them to know more than the outward behavior expected of a Christian. I want them to know the Savior—to understand that salvation rests in His finished work and that obedience grows out of knowing and loving Him.