

## Testimony of Dr. J. Allen Blair

I was reared in a home where we didn't have a Bible. We didn't have anything other than the Lord's name used in profanity. My father was an alcoholic and he was very abusive. I was an only child. I was reared on fear; it got worse and worse. We never knew when he would come home – a week, two weeks maybe. He would get the money from the job, when he finished spending it, he would come home. That could be anytime in the morning - two, three, four o'clock. We had a front door knob that used to squeak when you turned it. When I heard that squeak, it just seemed like my whole stomach turned inside out because I'd know all hell would break loose, and it often did, because when he was drunk, he was a terror.

I was reared on this, and for 21 years that was my life. It was a very depressing life. In fact, these fears grew so that when I went to school I was afraid of people, afraid to recite, afraid to get up before anybody. If I did know the answer, and that wasn't too frequent, I would say, "I don't know." I was just afraid to answer.

That continued, and it got worse and worse. When I got into high school, I got a little more liberty and began playing sports. But Satan knows how to trip up young people, and that was my case. All I got out of high school was having a good time and playing sports. I didn't get much in the way of study, and I have suffered for it ever since. That was tragic because there in Atlantic City High School I had a tremendous opportunity, but I failed to take hold of the opportunity I had.

In the midst of it all, I met a young lady. This changed the picture somewhat. She was a believer, I was an unbeliever. I wasn't any great help to her, but she was a help to me. She wouldn't date me unless I would go to church with her. Of course, that wasn't too strenuous, one hour a week, so I went through that little procedure. We usually went on Sunday night.

I remember one particular night; we went to a church in Atlantic City. A man, an evangelist, I don't know his name and I don't know what he said, but he had fire, and it was beginning to burn me. In fact, when we got there, we were late and there were only about two or three chairs vacant down in the front, on the front row. Of course, I was pretty embarrassed to walk down and have to sit down there. And this fellow would wind up before he'd press a point, like a pitcher and, all of a sudden, he'd come - Zoom! And that finger would always point right at me. I was so uncomfortable. I was perspiring and just so out of place down there and in the church. When he finished preaching, he walked down from the pulpit and walked over to me as he gave the invitation. He said, "Young man, wouldn't you like to come to Christ tonight?" I thought, "Well, of all of these people here, he is picking me out. What am I, some old bum or something? When you are not saved, you have a lot of pride. You really

think you are somebody, and I thought I was. I pulled my arm away. I had been lifting weights and had gained a lot of weight and, boy, I was so mad.

But that was the hand of God taking hold of me that night. I pulled my arm away, and for five years God didn't touch me anymore. I continued on the downward way, getting farther and farther away from the Lord. As we were going home that night, I said to my girlfriend, "Boy, if I could meet that guy outside, I'd let him have it,"- because I didn't appreciate him picking me out. That was because of my resistance to God – my hard, sinful heart.

I went home that night after taking my girlfriend home. It was a very stormy night, one of those northeast storms that come into the new Jersey area. My mother said, "I have some news for you." I said, "What?" She said, "Our neighbor was drowned." Our neighbor was a young fellow and buddy of mine. He had gone into the Coast Guard right after high school. They had a call to go out and rescue a craft off the coast of New Jersey. The little craft in which he, the captain, and another guard were riding overturned. They had to swim about five miles to the coast in the icy waters, and Bill didn't make it.

I didn't sleep all that night. I felt this man, touching my arm, facing death, Bill my neighbor gone. Where would I be; what would I be doing if I were where Bill is wherever he is. You see, I was all mixed up, confused. I didn't have any standard for life.

Well, I got over that, continued on my way, and continued to go with this girlfriend. Her mother was a believer and loved the Lord. She never pressured me. One day she took me aside. She said, "Allen, I have a little book I'd like to give you, if you will read it." I said, "What's the book?" She said, "Never mind, what's the book. Will you read it?" Of course, you know, you like to make a good impression on your possible mother-in-law, so I said, "Sure, I'll read it." She handed me a New Testament. I had second thoughts on that. But she said, "Just read a chapter a day if you can't read anything else, and let me know how you're doing." Well, I started reading it and I must confess I didn't get very much out of it. I got into the "begats" and so forth in Matthew, but I read. I was always afraid she would ask me, when I went around, if I am reading it, so I had to keep reading it whether I wanted to read it or not.

I kept reading it. We were coming up to Christmas and my girlfriend and I had a little disagreement, and we started to break it off. Good time to break it off...just before Christmas; cheaper that way, you know!

So, we broke it off and she was going out with other boys, I was going out with other girls. I finished high school by the skin of my teeth and got a job right away, working for a utility company in Atlantic City where I worked for 5 years. She went her way; I went my way.

Then It was New Years Eve. I was to have a blind date with a football buddy of mine. He arranged it. He phoned me about 7:30 and said, "It's all off. Can't make it. These girls aren't going with us. Here I was, stuck at home. New Years Eve, no place to go, and you almost think the world has come to an end, when you are 21 years of age. I thought, "Well, at least I'll get a good night's rest."

So I went up to my bedroom. I was still reading the little book - a chapter a day. God had everything in order. I was reading the third chapter of the Gospel of John and was kind of depressed that night. *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with Him. Jesus answered and said unto Him...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And then the seventh verse says Ye must be born again.* And here it was, three times; ye must be born again, ye must be born again. I didn't know what that was.

But I read that chapter and I did something I never did before. I went back and I read it a second time. I read it slowly. And God brought conviction on me for the way I was living, the things I was doing. I got down on my knees and said, "Lord, I don't know what this is, being born again, but you are telling me I must be born again and I want to be born again, and I give myself to you." I didn't know anything about theology or Scripture, but God knew my heart. He met me that night and I became a new creature in Jesus Christ. And I had a burden to serve the Lord, and a desire to do His will.

You know, I think that comes with it. When a person really is saved, he has a burden to tell other people. And I can't understand why so many people, so many young people, in our churches today, have no desire to share their faith with other people. You wonder, really if they have any faith. God says in Matthew 12:34 *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* If you have Christ in your heart, you have the love of God, you've had a real experience with Him, you want to tell other people about Him. You don't want to keep it to yourself.

Just like a bee will fly into honey and doesn't stop there. He goes and gets the word to other bees. Then they all flock in. And that's the way it works. I think if a person really gets saved, he will share this wonderful faith with others.

Time went on. We were back in the depression years and it was rather difficult. We whipped up a little gospel team. We didn't know anything, but we had a lot of zeal for the Lord, and we were going here and there and telling out the Word. We had street meetings in Atlantic City and we were reaching other young people for Christ. All we knew was the Gospel, the simple Gospel message. We didn't know

anything about the Bible. But we knew that Jesus could save anybody and we were going about sharing this wonderful message.

The Christian businessmen in Atlantic City had a platform down on the boardwalk where thousands and thousands of people would mill up and down every evening with nothing to do and no place to go. The businessmen were witnessing there from 9 p.m. till 12. They asked us to give our testimonies, and God was really blessing. I had a burden to share Jesus Christ. But I knew I had to learn something before I could tell people about Him. So, I wrote to the Moody Bible Institute.

My girlfriend and I had gotten back together. We had talked this over and we just felt we had to put the Lord first. We couldn't put our plans first. We had anticipated getting married, and we put those plans aside and said, I'll go to Moody for three years, and we'll get a little pastorate someplace and get married, and maybe go on further and get some more schooling. So, I wrote to Moody, and they accepted me. We didn't tell anybody, we prayed about this. And when we got the word, the first people we told was our pastor in the little church where we were worshipping. He was excited because they hadn't seen anybody go out into the Lord's service for years. He told the people that I was going to Moody and I was going to serve the Lord, and they were all thrilled. But then, the first blow came after I offered my life to serve the Lord. Money was hard to get during the depression years. I was going out on faith; I didn't know how I was going to make it. You could work your way through, and that is what I was planning on doing. I was pretty used to work because my father never worked and I had to get out and earn money from a little kid up, so work was no problem. I knew I could work in Chicago. I remember people coming up that night, and what a discouragement. From whom? - From Christians. Some of the old saints came around and said, "You're going to Moody, huh?" "Yeah." "Where are you going to get the money?" I thought, "Well these people have been saved years and years. They ought to know the answer - I am going out on faith. They are asking me? I'm a young Christian." I'll tell you, some of the old saints can certainly pour cold water on a vision. That night, I came home thinking, "Well, boy, where am I going to get the money? I never thought of that. I was just going to trust God for it." And I was really believing that. These people had me all upset. They didn't give me any great encouragement. They just kept asking that question. "How are you going to do it? I mean, it's difficult. You got a job." And somebody else asked me, "What are you going to do about your job?" Well, there was only one thing I could do about my job - I couldn't take it to Chicago. I had to leave it. And then I remember the day I went into my boss and I said, "Mr. Goebel, I'm going to leave the company in two weeks. I'm going into the ministry. I can still see him! He leaned back in his big, old chair and put his hands behind his head. He said, "Blair, you're a fool. You're a fool! With all the young people walking the streets trying to get a job, you're throwing up a good job to go into the ministry and waist your time." He said, "That's my word to you - You're a

fool!” He said, “You won’t make it.” He said, “You’ll be back here in another month trying to get your old job back.” I said, “I’ll tell you one thing, Mr. Goebel. God saved me, God has moved upon my heart to serve Him. If I don’t make it, I’ll never come back here again. I won’t come back.” And I never did.

When I first went into that company there was a young fellow working there. He told me he was a Christian. I wasn’t a Christian yet. He didn’t witness to me. He just said he was a Christian and he was going into the ministry. And I thought, “Poor guy.” He was a nice looking fellow too. But he was always talking about ‘going’ into the ministry. Five years later, when the Lord brought me to this decision, he was still ‘going’ into the ministry. He never got there.

You know, there are different kinds of missionary volunteers. You have the active and the passive. The active does something about it. He gets going; he gets moving for God. The passive is always waiting on the Lord. Well, God gave us two feet; God gave us hands; God gave us a brain; and God, I believe, will bless those who move for Him. 1 Corinthians 15:58 says *be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

So, I got over that hurdle. We tried to get the cheapest way to get out to Chicago. There was an excursion running. My girlfriend and I went down to the railroad station and I bought a ticket to take that train out. She went to Philly with me and left me there. I went on to Chicago on that excursion. It took two days to get out there; I went way up into Canada and down, and so forth. But, I made it. What a thrilling thing to walk into the Moody Bible Institute. They were old buildings back then, but they looked like castles to me - that I had this opportunity to go to Bible school and study for the Lord. It was three long years.

My girlfriend had to take care of her mother and she couldn’t come. But two years later, she was able to come up for my last year. We used to write a letter a day; a letter a day – never failed. I’ll tell you; God is good. After those three years, we didn’t lose anytime getting married.

But the biggest blow of all, before I left for Moody, was after I bought that ticket. I took my girlfriend home, and I came home and went up to my room. My mother was in the front room, and she was sobbing. I walked in and I said, “Whats wrong, Mom.” She said, “Son, if you leave me tomorrow and go out to Chicago, don’t you ever come home again.” That was the biggest blow at all. I didn’t have any trouble when the boss called me a fool. I didn’t have too much trouble with Christians coming up questioning my decision and saying, “Where are you going to get the money?” But this hit hard. I didn’t know what to do.

So, I went to my room. I flipped open my Bible. I have only done this twice in fifty years. I don’t recommend it. But it just seemed like the Lord moved me to open the Word of God. I was confused.

And I didn't even have to look for it. It just fell open to the first chapter of Galatians, and here's what I read. As I was on my knees with the open Bible, with the door shut, and I didn't know how to answer my mother, didn't know what to do; here's what I read. Chapter 1 verse 15, *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.*

What could be clearer than that? I had a three-year course coming up. I said, "Look, in this instance, my mother is not really my mother. God is my God. And God has directed me to go to the Moody Bible Institute." So, I thanked Him, closed my Bible; and went in to my mother. I said, "Mother, I know God wants me to do this and I hate to disobey you." I had learned long ago that you pay a price when you disobey your parents. I remembered the day I almost drowned because I disobeyed my mother. And so I said, "I know God's going to take care of you and God's going to take care of everything, and God will provide." She didn't change her mind. She didn't change her attitude. She was very indifferent when I left home the next morning, but I went anyway. I had that burden on my heart that I could never go home again. That's the way I enrolled in the Moody Bible Institute to prepare for God's work.

And so, I plunged into the studies and tried to get the best I could out of the them. It was a thrilling thing. I felt that the Moody Bible Institute was the closest place to heaven I had seen, thus far. It was a thrilling thing to be there, and I will never forget this great opportunity God gave me.

About two or three months later when I went to the post office one day, there was a letter from home. I hadn't gotten mail from home. It was a letter from my mother. She apologized for what she had said. Satan is so clever. This was his one last attempt to trip me up and to keep me from serving God. And I find that he works in our lives constantly, trying to keep us from telling others about Christ. He doesn't care if we read the Bible. He doesn't care if we pray. But when we tell other people about Christ, then that disturbs Him because it is going into his domain.

We read in 2 Corinthians 4:3,4 *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel... should shine unto them.* Satan is disturbed when we tell other people about Christ. And our God has said in Psalm 107:2, *Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.* We have too many silent Christians these days. They are enjoying their faith; they are receiving all that God has, but they are on the receiving end of salvation only; always taking in, never giving out. God has called us to be His ambassadors. 2 Corinthians 5:20 says *Now then we are ambassadors for (Jesus) Christ.*

I finished those three years of Moody. My girlfriend, Elva, and I got married, God gave us a pastorate in Peoria, Illinois. I hadn't expected to get much more by way of education, but Bradley University was nearby. I started working my way through Bradley in this pastorate, and spent four years there, five years. And then we felt the need for more and went on to seminary, worked through there. What a blessing it has been to serve God.

But I look back over the years and, again, I see those high school years and how I failed myself and how I failed God, and that is why I say to young people, get the very best you can while you have the opportunity in school. I don't think you'll ever have a greater opportunity. Though some of you don't realize it now, I am sure you will in days to come. Be a witness and a testimony for Jesus Christ. Satan will strike from every angle, and he will try to draw you away from God. But keep your eyes on Him.

I read in Matthew 9: 35-38, how *Jesus went about all the cities and villages, visiting the synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion.* And that's what we need to pray for every day, that God will give us compassion.

We are in a materialistic world, where money seems to be the God. It's so easy to be swept along in this current of making money and getting things. But so few seem to have the compassion that God longs to give us for those who need Jesus Christ. Your friends and my friends need the Lord because they are on the way to hell. If they are not on the way to heaven, they're on the way to hell. And just think, someday we who are in Christ will be heaven, some of our dear friends will be in hell, and we never did anything about it. We just took it for granted, we just kept quiet, and consequently, they pay the price and we miss the blessing because we do not share Jesus Christ. We need this compassion.

And then, not only do we need the compassion; we need to confess Christ at every time – every opportunity and time. Jesus said in Matthew 10:32&33 *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.* Don't be afraid to confess Jesus Christ. Don't be ashamed of Him. He wasn't ashamed of you when He went to the cross. When He died for your sins, He gave His best.

Be a witness. Talking about being ashamed of Christ, I had a meeting in Florence, South Carolina. Because the mayor of the town was a Christian and a dear friend, he got me everywhere and anywhere in the city of Florence to preach the Gospel. He got me into one of the high school's where there were two thousand students. They had chapel, and I had the privilege of speaking for thirty minutes to these two thousand students in the chapel in the high school.

The young man who took charge of the opening and introduced me before I spoke, was a Christian. He had just been elected as the senior class president. I will never forget this young fellow. I hadn't met him until that day. He got up and introduced me; but he didn't make any indication that he was a Christian. I gave the Gospel just as simply and clearly as I possibly could. And when I finished, this young man came to the microphone. He said, "Fellow students, I want you to know I believe everything Dr. Blair said this morning, that I have committed my life to Jesus Christ." Now, this was secular high school with two thousand students, and he had just been elected senior class president. "I have committed my life to Jesus Christ and I want to be a testimony for Him; and I hope you want to be a testimony too. If you haven't responded to the invitation that was given this morning, I hope you will after this service."

I tell you, it took guts to do that. As that young fellow stood up there and spoke, I saw his hands trembling, and I was praying, "God, give Him the grace, give Him the grace." It is not easy to stand up before your peers when most of them are unbelievers and bear a testimony for Christ. But that is what we are here for, is it not? We are not here to be comfortable; we are not here to be satisfied. We find so many satisfied Christians today. Thomas Edison said if he finds a satisfied person, he has found a failure, because if we are satisfied with ourselves, we shall definitely fail. We need to stand up and be counted for Jesus Christ these days. I urge you to be a witness for the Lord.

You have friends. We talk about going to Africa; we talk about going to Japan; for you, this may be five, ten, or more years down the road. But you are a missionary right now. I firmly believe with all my heart that every born again believer is a missionary. You are just as much a missionary as those who have been trained, and have been out on the field and worked on the field. We are missionaries. If we are in Jesus Christ, the obligation is to tell. Matthew 28 tells us, *Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* God gave us the assurance that He is with us when we are doing this – *I will be with you until the end of the age* – and certainly He will.

We are God's missionaries. Isaiah 43:12 says, *Ye are my witnesses.* Not "will you be my witness?" Will you become a witness? God says, *You are a witness.* You are His witness right now. So this should be our desire to share Christ wherever we are.

Some ought to be looking ahead - making plans for the future. What are you going to do with your life? "Well, I'm going into medicine, going to be a lawyer, going to be a homemaker. Did you ever consider serving Jesus Christ? Keep it at the top of the list. You say, "Well, I haven't received the call." Well, as I said, I haven't either; I just have this burden to tell others about Jesus. I haven't received a call yet over these years. I don't believe in a call, I believe in a command to go and tell others about the Savior. You don't need a call. You just need to get on your two feet and say, "Jesus,



I'll go; I'll do anything you want me to do. Anything, anywhere, anytime." That's the response you ought to be giving God - the three A's - anything, anywhere, anytime. And I tell you; God will use us when we come to Him with that attitude. I hope He is using you, and I hope He'll continue to use you. God bless you, each one.