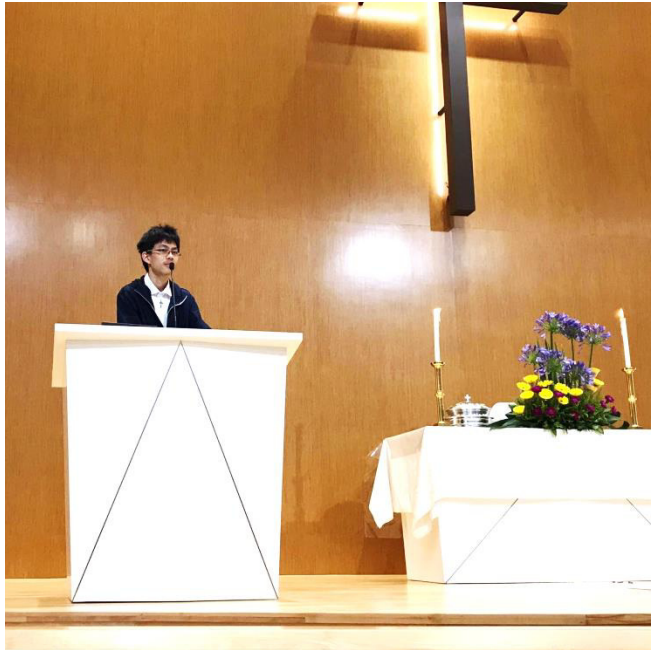


My Testimony

My father is a Buddhist and my mother a Christian. Nevertheless, I did not have a religious upbringing. Growing up, I would follow my father to pray at temples on special occasions or attend Kids' Church whenever my mother brought me there, which would usually be Christmas or Easter events. I could grasp neither worldview and understood little. As a result, I had this idea that religion was simply about choosing your own flavour of truth. Since Kids' Church had catchy music I naturally preferred Christianity and thought of myself as Christian. However, I did not know Jesus or what the gospel was.



In primary school, my friend introduced me to Wicca and New Age Mysticism. I would try various 'healing meditations' on the internet. I did not really think much about it and my worldview took a secular turn when I entered secondary school.

I began to hold to the belief that the human race was a product of macroevolution, an accident that happened out of mere chance. I was influenced mostly by existentialism and humanist thinking. Somehow, I still thought of myself as 'Christian' even though I was an existentialist in practice.

The implications of a meaningless reality that my worldview demanded did not sink in until I was faced with despair.

The Bad News

When I was 14, I had strong feelings for a girl in my class. She eventually became everything to me and it turned into an obsession. When she rejected me

after I confessed to her, it brought me great sorrow and my world began to crumble. I began to look at myself in a negative light.

My season of depression actually helped me to see myself as I truly am. I am a horrible person. I would always get in trouble for the things I said, and it was during these dark times of contemplation that I realised this was because of a problem with my very nature. I am by nature, evil; sinful and unclean. If I was judged by the ultimate standard of justice, I knew that I truly deserved to be tormented for eternity. No good dwells within me.

This then led me to question, does this even matter to begin with? Is there a God who will judge me for my deeds? Is life in this world truly all there is? Am I a product of chance, or was I created for a purpose? If I had a purpose, what was it?

To find the answers to these questions, as well as to find a solution to the problem with myself, I started going to church. I went to a church that talked about becoming a better person. I tried following whatever that would be preached in the sermons, hoping that it could maybe solve my problems and make me a better person, but whatever I did would always fall short. I could not find much meaning in anything that I did. I soon learnt that no matter what I do, I could never make myself right with God.

The Good News

That was until I heard the good news for the first time in another church. I soon learnt that while I was completely helpless to change my own plight, God Himself (Jesus Christ), out of His great love for me, broke into His own creation, took on the form of a man, lived the perfect life that I should have lived, and paid the punishment that I deserved by hanging on a cross, abandoned by His own disciples.

The Small Catechism describes this perfectly. By His blood, He has purchased and won me from all sins, from death and the power of the devil that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

The thing that changed everything for me was knowing that being right with God did not rest on my own works. This one truth: that I have sinned, and nothing good is in me but I am made right with God freely by His grace as a gift, through Jesus Christ who paid the price for me.

As the days passed, Jesus healed the pain that had been lingering in my heart. It was His great love for me that led me out of that dark season.

While I am unable to recall a specific time when I believed, my life gradually transformed from a life in great darkness to one filled with hope. Back then, my mind would be filled with suicidal thoughts. Thanks be to God that He gave me a purpose for living and that He has delivered me from those thoughts by His grace.

On September 9, 2017, I was buried with Christ through my baptism into death and raised to live a new life in Christ Jesus.

I thank God that He has called me out of darkness into His marvellous light. As the Small Catechism on Third Article of the Creed puts it, I could not by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit had called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith. May this glorious gospel continue to be proclaimed and His name, glorified.

