

MY ESCAPE from SUICIDE and MY EXPERIENCE of 'TONGUES'

by Andrew Strom

From the age of 13 to the age of 17 my life was filled with terrible depression and a longing to commit suicide. I won't go into all the reasons, but basically I was consumed with hate and bitterness on the inside, and almost every day I desperately wanted to end my life. It went on like this for years. A life filled with misery, hatred, suicidal thoughts and despair.

I lost all confidence and became bullied at school - which only made things worse. My life was in turmoil. I don't know if you can imagine what it's like being filled with a longing to end your life every day. Trudging on for month after month, year after year, wanting to die. For four long years, that's what it was like for me almost every day.

For years I tried saying the "Sinner's Prayer," but seemingly to no avail. I had initially made some kind of commitment to Christ - and apparently meant it - way back when I was just five years old.

I was even baptized a couple of years later - and I believe I truly understood what I was doing. But there was no "power" at all to my faith. No power over sin, no power over the world, no power to walk it out. As I got into my teen years I could tell I was not a true Christian inside. I went to church every week but it was all hollow. And so I would find myself alone at night in my room, filled with utter despair, forlornly repeating the words of the "Sinner's Prayer" just as I'd done a hundred times before - with no result.

I had no backbone to my belief. When other kids smoked, I smoked just to try and fit in. When they swore, I swore. I don't know who I was trying to kid. Nobody was the least bit impressed - least of all me. I was a misfit, an outcast, a walking disaster area.

And then it happened.

We had moved house after I finished High School and I was now attending the local Baptist Youth Group. Some of my Youth Group friends were starting to get very serious about seeking God. A couple of them told me about an experience they'd had in which a man "laid hands" on them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in 'tongues'. I was a little freaked out by this, as I had come across "tongues" when my family attended the Pentecostal church and I didn't like it much. In fact, it frightened me. But I couldn't ignore the amazing changes I noticed in my friends. There was a kind-of "holiness" about them now that I couldn't deny.

They were definitely different, and it started to affect me.

All through my teenage years, whenever there was an altar-call to "completely surrender" myself to God, I had always resisted.

Sometimes I even gripped onto my chair to stop myself going forward. I don't know why I was so reluctant to truly surrender all.

My life was a literal hellhole. I spent half my days longing to die.

Why I would not want to surrender a life like that, I have no idea.

But perhaps even though it was a hellhole, it was "my" hellhole.

I guess that was it. I still wanted to be in charge.

But hanging around my newly Spirit-filled friends was having quite an effect on me. And I knew where it was heading. It was heading toward "total surrender".

I remember the occasion very well. I remember sitting in our family car and literally surrendering every part of my life - all that I was and all that I would ever be - to God. And I remember literally shaking as His presence came over me powerfully at that moment.

And I knew the next thing that had to happen was for me to get filled with the Holy Spirit.

And so, I went to the same man that my friends had been to. He was a sound, Bible-believing man. I asked him to "lay hands" and pray for me. And instantly I was literally filled to overflowing with the love, the power and the presence of a holy God. As simple as that. And the terrible cloud of hatred and depression that had been over me all those years lifted off and dissipated in a moment. I didn't even think about it. I only realized later that it was gone. All I knew was that I had a smile on my face a mile wide. And the very next day I spoke in "tongues" for the first time.

As we see in Scripture, 'tongues' is simply a new language that God gives us to worship and pray to Him with. It is the "holy utterance" of God. And today I find when I'm preaching that the more I pray in tongues before I preach, the more powerful, convicting and anointed it will be. Tongues is an awesome prayer- weapon that God gives us - for free!

So what was the result in my life of this whole experience? Utter transformation! I was literally a new person. The old Andrew was gone. No longer was I a timid, compromising "hollow" believer. I was literally on fire for God. I suddenly found I had a tremendous relationship and close communion with Him.

The love and power of God had filled my life. And His holiness also.

The baptism of the "HOLY" Spirit is a baptism of holiness. And I definitely experienced this - Christ's power and victory over sin.

And the change was permanent. No going back. His Spirit has been with me ever since. I was seventeen years old and my life had been utterly and permanently transformed.

But isn't it a tragedy that a young man on the point of suicide spent all those years praying a "little prayer" that seemingly had no effect at all? I wonder how many thousands of people around the world are in the same tragic situation? Desperately wanting to know and be transformed by God, and yet no truly transforming gospel is ever preached to them. I believe such a tragedy is being played out on a vast scale.

I cannot believe in any conversion experience that is below that of the Bible. I cannot preach any conversion that is not that of the apostles. I am convinced that one of the huge reasons why the church is in the lukewarm state it is in today is because of the gospel we preach (or fail to preach). And we had better get back to the Bible fast, because an entire generation - and an entire world - is at stake. This cannot be something that God will "wink at" forever.

Where are the bold preachers today who will lay their life and reputation on the line, and stand up and declare the truth? Where are the men and women of God who love the people and the truth more than life itself - who will not be silent when a lost

generation is perishing for lack of knowledge? Where are those who will "cry aloud and spare not" in this present age? God is waiting for bold preachers of righteousness to arise. And until they do there is surely little hope for our lukewarm church or our sin-soaked world.

God awaits His "mighty men of valor," His reformers and revivalists, His pioneers and prophets today - as ever.

~from the book 'The Sinner's Prayer - Fact or Fiction?' by A. Strom.

Website : prophetic@revivalschool.com

Date : 14. 09. 2017

MODERATOR:
Andrew Strom,
PO Box 69-091,
Glendene,
Auckland 0645,
New Zealand.