

The Testimony of Pastor David Rosales

Pastor David Rosales was born in Whittier, California in 1950 and grew up in Norwalk, California during the hippie movement of the 1960s. Raised a Roman Catholic, he received his first communion at age eight and was confirmed at age 12. Despite his religious training, by age 15 David began to experiment with alcohol, then marijuana, and finally began using hallucinogens over the next five years. In his late teen years he was invited several times to attend church with friends, but because he was raised a Roman Catholic he did not feel the need to go.

By age 19, David had gone through deep hurt. "I messed up a relationship with a girl and it tore my heart. I felt so bad about how things had gone, and I realized that my life was going nowhere. It seemed that every person I truly cared about was eventually hurt by something I did, and I just got tired of being such an unkind person. I was invited to go to a small church in Costa Mesa, but I didn't want to go. I reasoned that if I was going to attend church services it would be in a church like the one I was raised in. I was invited to attend several times and always refused."

Finally during the summer of 1970, at age 19 he accepted an invitation to attend church, but tried to be as offensive as possible. He went barefooted, wore a t-shirt, drank some beer, and smoked marijuana before climbing into his friend's van and heading to church. He thought the people at the church would be hypocrites and would reject him, and that he could use this against his friends so they would never bother him again. He was shocked when he walked inside the small church building filled with about 300 young people that looked like him. The speaker was Lonnie Frisbee, and this was his first encounter with Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa.

"That was the summer of 1970 and the church, led by Pastor Chuck Smith, was averaging more than 2,000 people each weekend. Lonnie Frisbee came out to speak and I was amazed at how I related to him. When the invitation to receive Christ was given, I honestly didn't consider it. I thought I was already a Christian even though I was drinking, doing drugs, lying, and stealing. I was so lost. I didn't go forward at the invitation, but I did think about it."

By this time, David began to see his friends die tragically. One was under the influence and drove his motorcycle into the back of a parked truck, killing him instantly. Another friend died of a drug overdose, and another was stabbed to death. What hit him the hardest was the death of a childhood friend he had from age five. His dear friend, Ray, was shot to death in a backyard across the street from where David lived. Suddenly, he began thinking that he too might end up dead if he didn't change the way he was living.

It was during the same year at the age of 19 that David nearly overdosed on a combination of wine and barbiturates. He drank nearly a half-gallon of wine, took five reds (hallucinogenic) and almost died. He was lying in his station wagon on a mattress; a place he frequented when he was too drunk or drugged to drive. As he lie on his back he felt the urge to vomit, but was

paralyzed and not able to turn his head. He knew that if he did begin to vomit, he would suffocate and die. For the first time in many years he began to cry out to God. He cried out within himself, "God, please don't let me die. I'm only 19, please don't let me die." He thought about how terrible it would be for his mother and father to discover his body, and asked God for help. God spared his life, but sadly, it did not cause him to turn to the Lord.

It was a short time later that David went to Calvary Chapel, and though he was impressed by what was happening in the church, his way of living only worsened. "My life continued to sink further after I left the meeting at the church. That September I planned to go up north to the Monterey Pop Festival held annually in Monterey, California. I dropped some magic mushroom and hallucinated myself into 3 days of rock and roll. By that time I began thinking that I needed help and began praying. I remember vividly that I would pray and tell God that there was something wrong with me, and I needed help because I just couldn't take it anymore."

"About three months later after my birthday had passed, a friend invited me to attend what was called a *Maranatha!* concert at the Hollywood Palladium on December 27, 1970. I didn't want to go, so I drove to his house to tell him that I would go another time. When I told him that I didn't want to go he said, 'No, you're supposed to go,' and began to argue with me in a nice way. I insisted no because I had a friend with a kilo of marijuana and we were going to smoke some pot that day. So I climbed into my car, started it, and waited to exit his driveway. His Volkswagen van was parked behind my car and was filled with Jesus Freaks. As I looked through my rear-view mirror, I saw their heads disappear and then come back up. He got out of the van, came to my door, and said, 'We just prayed and God said you're supposed to go with us. So turn your car off and come.' I thought to myself that if God said I had to go, then I should go. So I turned my car off and climbed into the van and drove off to the Palladium."

"There were about 4,000 young people there sitting on the carpet. This was an all-day concert mixed with evangelistic messages, so I heard the Gospel presented throughout the day. The final speaker was a street preacher named Arthur Blessitt. He stood to give an evangelistic message and gave an invitation. Earlier that day I finally realized that I didn't know Jesus, and the Lord spoke to my heart in a very personal way."

"I still remember sitting on the ground looking around and feeling very uncomfortable as a voice began to speak to my heart. The voice said,

'You're uncomfortable aren't you?'

'Yes, I am.'

Again the voice asked, 'Why are you uncomfortable?'

I replied, 'Because I'm not like these people.'

Then I heard the question, 'What makes you different?'

I answered, 'I am not a Christian.'

That was the first time I realized, and admitted, that I was not a Christian. I realized that I had not hungered for the Lord, His Word, or His people. I was extremely convicted as God's voice

spoke to me. I knew I was not a believer, then suddenly at one point everyone stood up and began to sing. The words were: *Love, love, love, love, Christian this is your call; love your neighbor as yourself for God loves all.*”

“All the young people were putting their arms around the people next to them. As far as I could see, I was the only person with my hands in my pockets while everyone else had their arms around one another. I felt alone - even though I was surrounded by people.”

“A friend named George opened up a space between him and a girl and invited me to join them. We put our arms around one another and I realized that this was what I needed and where I needed to be. Arthur Blessitt gave an invitation and I remember him saying, ‘If you want to give your heart to Jesus right now, stand to your feet.’ I closed my eyes and said, ‘God I can’t. I’m shy and I can’t stand in front of these people. If somebody were to stand with me, I would stand.’ At that moment Arthur said, ‘Perhaps you are afraid, but if someone were to stand with you, would you stand?’ My friend George was seated next to me. He had become a Christian, and the change that took place in his life had really impressed me. Before he got saved we had taken LSD together, and many times had smoked marijuana and drank. I had seen God change him from a selfish young man into a caring Christian, and it impressed me greatly. When Arthur gave the invitation, George tapped my shoulder and said, ‘If you want to stand, I’ll stand with you.’ I stood up with George and gave my heart to the Lord. There were 12 people who gave their hearts to God that day, and I was one of them.”

David surrendered his life to Jesus Christ during that Maranatha concert at the Hollywood Palladium at age 20. “From there I went home and crossed the street to my friend’s house, who was supposed to share his Marijuana with me that night. This was the same home that my friend Ray had been the night he was shot to death. My friend wasn’t there, so I talked to his family and shared that I had given my heart to Christ and was born again, then crossed the street and went home.”

“I walked into the den to see that my family was together watching T.V. I had been a distant son to my parents for five years. I never told them that I loved them, I showed no care for them, and I had been arrested three times for alcohol-related events. My father had sent me to a psychiatrist to see if he could help me solve my problems. I had been a totally rebellious and angry kid, showing no love and having no conscience. As I walked into the den I said, ‘Mom, Dad, Madelyn, Rebecca, I love you! Praise the Lord!’ I left the room to go wash my hair and get ready for bed, when my sisters came into the bathroom and asked what had happened to me. I gave my testimony about what God had done in my life that day. My mom was concerned for me and went into her room to say a rosary, because she was afraid I had lost my mind. So I shared what Jesus did – He forgave me of my sins.”

“That night my sister, Madelyn, went to bed and received Christ. Three weeks later I was

reading my Bible (as I had been encouraged to do) and read in Revelation 9 something about men with iron teeth, women's hair and scorpion stings, and people wanting to die for five months but could not. I didn't understand a word, but was afraid by what I read. I went into the kitchen where my mom and dad were as I held my Bible in my hand and said, 'Mom and Dad, I need you to hear me.' I held up the Bible and said, 'This is the Word of God and this is what it says.' I read Revelation 9 to them. I looked at my dad, who was a very good man and said, 'I don't understand all that this is saying, but I know that it isn't speaking to me, it's speaking to you. Dad, you're a good man – you're the best man that I will ever know - but you'll be the best man in hell if you don't give your heart to Jesus.' I added, 'Daddy, I love you and I don't want to go to heaven without you. Bow your head, you're going to receive the Lord right now.' Both my mom and dad bowed their heads in that little kitchen and gave their hearts to Jesus."

David's life had changed. He went on to volunteer for the draft and serve in the Army (82nd Airborne Division), attended Biola College in La Mirada, California, lead a home Bible study, and met his wife Marie. David was later ordained as a Pastor in 1979 while serving at Calvary Chapel Claremont, and in 1981 began the fellowship that would later be known as Calvary Chapel Chino Valley.