

Jonathan Klimek's Salvation Testimony & the Fourways Church Plant

I. Salvation Testimony

In the gracious providence of God, I grew up in a Christian home, attending a solid Bible teaching church—Midrand Chapel. And I had the privilege of having many godly people build into my life.

False Profession

Despite making a profession of faith at a young age, I ended my teenage years in a drug rehabilitation center. I had just left home to go off to University, and within a short period of time I was enslaved to drugs and the sinful lifestyle that went along with it.¹ But God graciously intervened. He afflicted me with a psychosis, partly due to the drugs that I was taking, but largely due to the guilt and the worldly sorrow for the situation I found myself in... This is what the Lord used to lead me back home, almost like the prodigal son.² My parents immediately booked me into a Drug Rehabilitation Centre.

Regenerated

It was there that the Lord regenerated me. I was so overwhelmed and convicted by my utter sinfulness; I knew that I deserved the just God's wrath!³ But at the same, I was also overwhelmed by the amazing grace and mercy of God in forgiving me and saving me, through His sacrificial death and resurrection. It was indeed the kindness of the Lord that led me to repentance and faith.⁴

I turned from my sin; I turned from the wretched good works that I was trusting in—understanding that they could never save; and that they were an offense to God.⁵ And by

¹ Cf. Rom 6:15–16; Eph 2:1–3; Titus 3:3.

² Cf. Luke 15

³ Cf. Eph 2:1–3.

⁴ Cf. Rom 2:4.

⁵ Cf. Isa 64:6.

faith, I turned toward the Lord, trusting in the Person and finished work of Christ as being the only way that I be saved. I understood that the only way that I could be saved is if God extended mercy to me—a wretched undeserving sinner. God, who abounds in steadfast love and grace, saved me.⁶ And as a result of His redeeming grace, I am forgiven.⁷

Second Corinthians 5:17 says: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

God changed me. I wanted to know Him, and so within a short period of time I had read the entire New Testament and significant portions of the OT. I wanted to obey Him and so as a public declaration of my faith, I was baptized (Acts 2:38).

Discipled

When I returned to Midrand Chapel, I began a protracted period of counselling with the new pastor, Chris Woolley—a Graduate of TMS, The Master’s Seminary. And what began as a regular counseling appointment, became a discipleship, a mentorship, and a friendship. I met with Chris every week for several years—during which he poured his life into mine.

In order to resist temptation and sin, I memorize Scripture which I meditate upon throughout the day, preaching it to myself... I remember in the early years when struggling with temptation to return to my former way of life, God used Second Corinthians 10:5 to strengthen me, it says that “we destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.”⁸

Even though drugs and that lifestyle no longer hold any appeal to me; I still fight the battle for the mind—and thus need to constantly saturate my mind with Scripture, in order to be equipped to resist sin, and serve God and His church.⁹ The battle against the flesh is real. And thus, I eagerly await the day when Christ will gather all who have repented of their sin and placed their faith in Him; the day when we will meet Him “in the air and be with Him forever.”¹⁰ But praise be to God that because of His Spirit’s redeeming and sanctifying work, we who are saved are no longer slaves of sin, but slaves of righteousness.¹¹ And we are

⁶ Cf. Eph 2:4–10; Titus 3:4–8.

⁷ Cf. 1 John 1:9.

⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 10:13.

⁹ Cf. Ps 1:1–3; 2 Tim 3:16.

¹⁰ Cf. 1 Thess 4:13–18.

¹¹ Cf. Rom 6:18.

blessed with the immense privilege of using the spiritual gifts that He graciously gives us, to serve and build up the Body, His church

Called to Pastoral Ministry

After several years of testing and training, I was appointed as an elder, to oversee and care for the church together with Chris and three other godly men.¹² Midrand Chapel's DNA is Church planting; and after a few years my fellow elders encouraged me to leave my job and plant a church in Sandton. I had been working in the Property Industry for 10-years; seven of those years as Commercial Property Broker based in Sandton; and I was co-leading a Bible study in the Fourways area.

As my wife, Clare and I prayed about this opportunity, we came to the conviction that I needed further theological training; and having seen the fruit of the TMS Grads throughout South Africa, I knew that TMS is where I wanted to go...

The Master's Seminary

In July 2016, my wife and two sons, both under the age of two arrived in Sunny California. Our time at Seminary was certainly not without trial, but my only regret is that we did not go there sooner. The trials that we faced drove us to our knees over and over again. The Lord used our trials to make us more aware of our weakness and utter dependence upon Him. And He was so faithful to provide exactly what we needed, whether it was grace to endure a trial, wisdom and strength to get through our responsibilities, finances, scholarships, or other material needs—He provided exactly what we needed when we needed it... And honestly, He blessed us with far more... The Lord took such good care of us. At the end of each semester, I would look back with amazement—in awe of all that the Lord has done. Thus, to Him alone belongs all praise for His great power, wisdom and grace.

Grace Community Church

I thought my time at TMS was going to be heavily academic with very few ministry opportunities, which was one of the reasons why I had some hesitation in coming. I didn't

¹² Cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9.

want to leave Midrand Chapel and the ministries that I was involved in. Shortly after we arrived at Seminary, my wife and I became members of Grace Community Church; and we were so blessed by the people and ministries of Grace. The Lord lavished His grace and love upon us; He surrounded us with so many godly men and women who ministered to us both practically and spiritually.

I also had the privilege of being on staff at Grace—working alongside and learning from the elders and their families who invested so much into our lives. It also gave me the opportunity to put all that we were learning into practice, to serve the Lord and His church together with them.

We are immensely grateful to the Lord for blessing us with this wonderful opportunity. We have grown in our knowledge and love for Him, through the teaching and example of many godly leaders that we have been under during our time at TMS and Grace Church.

It is now our desire to use all that we have received to serve the Lord and His church in the Fourways area. Clare and I recognize that our lives do not belong to us—they were purchased by the blood of Jesus.¹³ We are His; He is our Master; we are His slaves.¹⁴ And it is our prayer and desire that God would be glorified and pleased, in and through our lives.¹⁵ And that is why, I want to be used by Him for the furtherance of the gospel;¹⁶ the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry;¹⁷ and the training of future men, who will be able to teach others also...¹⁸

II. The Fourways Church Plant

It is my great privilege to be involved in planting and pastoring the Lord's church in the Fourways area, because as we all know there isn't FOUR ways, there is only ONE way to the Father, and that is through Jesus Christ....¹⁹

The church plant will be in partnership with Antioch Bible Church, which is pastored by Tim Cantrell; Midrand Chapel, which is pastored by Chris Woolley; and Grace Advance,

¹³ Cf. 1 Cor 6:19b–20; 2 Cor 5:14–15.

¹⁴ Cf. Matt 6:24–32; Rom 6:15–23; 12:11.

¹⁵ Cf. 1 Cor 10:13; 2 Cor 5:9

¹⁶ Cf. Luke 9:23–24; Mark 8:34–35.

¹⁷ Cf. Eph 4:12–14.

¹⁸ Cf. 2 Tim 2:2.

¹⁹ Cf. John 14:6.

which is the church planting ministry of Grace Community Church, which is pastored by John MacArthur, and is specifically led by Carl Hargrove. We couldn't be more thankful!

Why South Africa?

As we were preparing to return to South Africa we have regularly been asked: why we wanted to go back to a country which is riddled with crime and violence, with gross corruption, and a declining economy and infrastructure etc. And to be honest, we have not been untouched by these sentiments, but as we have prayed, seeking God's heart, we have come to the overwhelming conclusion that it is within this context where we as Christians can be used most.

If one looks back in the history of the church, there are countless examples of godly men and women who were willing to sacrifice all, including their very lives, if the Lord willed, in order to take the gospel where it was most needed.

Why Fourways?

The need is great! I have done some research, and based upon the latest Urban Studies Report, Fourways is the fastest growing residential and commercial area in South Africa. If one were to draw a circle with a 10km radius around Fourways Mall, one would count 200,000 households, which is a population of about 500 000 people. That is a lot of people; and that is within a 10km radius. Due to our unique safety and other concerns in South Africa, people don't like to drive very far to church. And that's a good thing, because I do believe the New Testament presents a model for a local church being in the same community in which we live.

I remember when I was working in the Property Industry, I was marketing the vacant offices in the Fourways Office Park. And one of the mediums we would use is Editorials, which would make it into the various print and digital newspapers. And I remember, the key phrase, the key mindset behind Fourways is: Live, Work, Play Fourways. The whole aim is to create a community where you can live, play, shop, gym, work without having to leave Fourways. And having a close church community is even more important!

Living in South Africa poses many trials, for both the believer and the unbeliever. The Fourways area is no exception. But we know that God uses these trials to sanctify us²⁰ and to purify His Church. We learn from Job that when we are faced with suffering, the only appropriate response is not to seek from God the reasons for our suffering, but to fear and trust Him implicitly and to faithfully work out His good purposes in our country and in our lives.²¹

COVID19 Pandemic

We also know that the Lord sends trials to test the genuineness of our faith.²² And God uses trials to lead non-Christians to salvation. This recent pandemic has only served to further confirm the need for a church in this area.

I remember when President Ramaphosa announced that SA will enter a period of lockdown, one of the administrators of the “I Love Fourways” Facebook Group uploaded a post at 3 a.m. stating that she could not sleep because she was so stressed out, so worried; so afraid. And within two and a half hours, from 3 through to 5:30 a.m., there were just less than 300 comments from people stating that they felt the exact same way—they too could not sleep because of, worry, depression, fear, stress, to name only a few of the reasons mentioned... And yet, we as Christians know, that one can only find true peace in Jesus.²³ For many people living within this community, their hope and security has been dashed.

Many who would never have entered a church or taken the time to consider their spiritual destiny, are now for the first time being placed in a position where they are of necessity being forced to admit that they are not in control of their destiny. The Fourways area needs a church which has a high view of God and His Word so that God may be glorified in this relatively “self-sufficient” community—of course this “sufficiency” is probably changing for many...

²⁰ Cf. Jas 1:2–4; 1 Pet 1:6–9; 4:12–19.

²¹ Cf. Job 1–2, 38–42; also see Prov 1:7.

²² Cf. 1 Pet 1:7, 9.

²³ Cf. Phil 4:4–8.

Why Plant a Church?

The Great Commission commands us to make disciples of all nations, which is primarily accomplished through the local church.²⁴

Matthew 28:18–20 “Jesus came and said to His disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

This is the mission of the church. God’s plan of redemption is being worked out through His church. Christ founded the church²⁵ and died for the church.²⁶ The church is His Body²⁷ and He intimately identifies Himself with her.²⁸ The church is the dwelling place of His Spirit,²⁹ and is the chief instrument for glorifying God in the world,³⁰ for bringing the gospel to the nations and the redeemed to Himself.³¹

The reason why we have local churches today is because other churches planted them. Christ is building His church and will continue to do so until He returns.³² And there is no other Institution in all the world, that is more necessary; more essential; and more exciting to be a part of than the church.

Precious Treasure in Jars of Clay

As Christians we have received the precious gospel of Jesus Christ,³³ which we have the privilege of proclaiming to those who have no hope, those who are like sheep without a shepherd.³⁴

We know the One who provides hope, peace with God, comfort, love and grace. The One who enables us to endure whatever trial He may take us through. How can we not proclaim Him in this community?

²⁴ Cf. Matt 28:18–20

²⁵ Cf. Matt 16:18.

²⁶ Cf. Eph 5; Acts 20:28.

²⁷ Cf. 1 Cor 12: 12, 27; Eph 1:22– 23; 4:12; 5: 20–30; Col 1:18, 24.

²⁸ Cf. Acts 9:4.

²⁹ Cf. 1 Cor 3:16–17; Eph 2:18, 22; 4:4.

³⁰ Cf. Ezek 36:22–38; Eph 3:10.

³¹ Cf. Luke 24:46–48; Rev 5:9.

³² Cf. Matt 16:18.

³³ Cf. 2 Cor 4:7.

³⁴ Cf. Matt 9:35–38, esp. 36.

The Role of the Church

The church has a critical role to play in South Africa, especially at a time such as this... We need to faithfully proclaim the gospel to those who have no hope and are consumed with fear and anxiety. The church in South Africa is generally weak and compromising and distracted with the things of this world rather than things of eternal significance. There is a scarcity of churches in this area which are solidly based on God's mandate. There is a desperate need for more churches with a High view of God and His Word, that strive to 1) Exalt Christ; 2) Edify and equip the saints for the work of the ministry;³⁵ and 3) Evangelize the lost—the fields are ripe unto harvest.³⁶

Paul says in Colossians 1:28 “Him [Christ] we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” We know from Acts 1:8 that Jesus said to His disciples that “they will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon” them, and He will send them out as His “witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Conclusion

The slogan needs to be: Live, Play, Work, Worship in Fourways. This is our mission—the mission of the church, to make disciples of all nations. Starting with those in the Fourways area; and then taking the gospel out to “the ends of the earth.” Planting likeminded churches which will be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating.

There is no greater calling. No greater joy. And no greater challenge. And therefore, it will require our all. And it will require much prayer. But I know, that Jesus will build His church.³⁷ Through the faithful ministry of His Word, God will do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to His power at work within us, thus, to Him and Him alone be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations, forever and ever. Amen.³⁸

The task ahead is a challenging one, but because we serve an extraordinary God who can do extraordinary things, the task is also very exciting.³⁹ I am personally very excited to be

³⁵ Cf. Eph 4:11–16; Col 1:28; Matt 28:19–20.

³⁶ Cf. Matt 28:29–20; Rom 10:8–17.

³⁷ Cf. Matt 16:18.

³⁸ Cf. Eph 3:20–21.

³⁹ Cf. Eph 1:19–23.

involved in this much needed ministry, and I look forward with appreciation to your involvement.

Please pray. Our ultimate confidence and hope is the Lord, thus we rely upon Him throughout this process. We know that unless the Lord builds this church we labour in vain.⁴⁰ Please join us! We need faithful believers to commit to being part of the core group to get this church off the ground. Please support the plant financially. With all the challenges ahead, we are excited to see all that the Lord is going to do;⁴¹ and we are comforted by Christ's promise to build His church.⁴² Thank you for prayerfully considering this opportunity to partner together with us in this gospel ministry.

⁴⁰ Cf. Ps 127.

⁴¹ Cf. Eph 3:20–21.

⁴² Cf. Matt 16:18.