

Out of Darkness into Light



The story of Tim Williams

Tim Williams pastors the Heritage Baptist Church in Woodstock, Illinois, a work he planted several years ago. A graduate of Bob Jones University and faithful worshipper at Faith Free Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina, when he was a college student, Tim is a friend of the Free Church. He preaches occasionally at the Indianapolis Free church and has attended the Ministers' Week of Prayer. His life's story testifies to the wonderful grace of the Saviour in a life once bound in darkness. Tim tells it in his own words.

I grew up in a Roman Catholic home in Fairbanks, Alaska. Though my father had been raised a Welsh Covenant Methodist, his family eventually had rejected that and become Catholic. My mother was a staunch Catholic. My parents wanted me to become a priest, so when the other children played in the summer, I went to school. When I got to be about sixteen, I didn't like this, so I rebelled. I was wicked and got into some trouble, eventually being arrested for having automatic weapons and such. I went to jail and then escaped and came down to the lower forty-eight states.

Tim soon realized that he had to face what he had done, because he couldn't get a job, so he returned to Fairbanks and placed himself under the law. The court tried him under the juvenile system and he received a short jail sentence. After incarceration, he began to study for the Jesuit priesthood, but found himself once again dissatisfied.

My conscience bothered me. I went to church to find peace and couldn't. I became so tormented that I wanted to kill myself, so I walked over twenty-five miles to the Chena River outside the city, intending

to throw myself into the river and drown. As I approached the river, I looked down to see a gospel tract. Immediately, my mind went back to a neighborhood Bible meeting I had attended as a child. My parents hadn't known I was there. It was

one and said, "Something has happened to me. I met the Lord." They were not happy. I couldn't go to sleep. I kept saying to myself, "Jesus, Lord." I finally fell asleep, but awakened a short time later and tried again to tell my family

to whom he was referring was a Jesuit and an unbeliever—an educated man, but still an unbeliever.

I thought, "This is a waste of my time. This priest doesn't even believe that Jesus is the Son of God, a position that even the Catholic church would not agree with." So I told the bishop that it would be ridiculous for me to go to the priest.

He said, "You are beginning to talk like a Protestant!"

Well, I knew nothing of Protestants. I figured they were evil, but I thought I needed to go see what this was all about. The only thing I knew besides their being evil was that Martin Luther caused the great heresy. Determined to learn the truth, I walked to the University of Alaska library and began to read Luther's works. He dealt with the sacraments and how the church was in bondage. This was what I needed to know. It began to open my eyes and I said, "This man was great!"

I went back to the bishop and told him that Martin Luther was right. He was incredulous! I was put on probation.

I began to read my Bible and grow in the Lord. Nothing could deter me from sharing my new-found faith in Christ. About this time I put some gospel tracts in the church and threw the Catholic tracts out. That didn't go well, and I was told I could no longer come to the church.

Being a young Christian, I still wrestled with many theological questions. I thought, "They limit me and ostracize me from the church to keep me from Christ and the sacraments. If I am kept from these, I am damned." I told them that. They told me that if I didn't change my tune, I wasn't allowed back. They said I was being disruptive. Still determined to give other church members the gospel, I sat outside the door of the church and handed gospel tracts to people coming in. Well, that was it. They said I was no longer allowed in any church in the diocese.



The Chena River where Tim thought of ending his life

the first time I had ever heard anything about the gospel. I had even been given a Bible. I can remember to this day the story; it was about Lazarus being raised. It had really affected me.

At first, I didn't want to read the tract, but the Lord reminded me of the story of Lazarus, so I sat down on the bank and read it. It was what I needed. My eyes were opened. I saw that Christ died for me and that He was offering Himself to me. Everything became clear. I felt an urging, a compelling, and a drawing to come to the Lord, and I did. I knew I was saved.

The burden that was on my heart went away and joy flooded my soul. I walked home that night, some twenty-seven miles in the cold and arrived at about two or three in the morning. Wanting to share the good news with my family, I woke every-

how the Lord had saved me. They were even more unhappy!

The next day, I remembered that I had taken something from the church when I was younger—a communion wafer. I took the wafer and asked to see the bishop of the diocese. I told him that I had taken this, was sorry, and was willing to pay for it. He told me that I was forgiven, but that I needed to go to confession to receive the sacrament of repentance.

I said, "No, no, the Lord has forgiven me."

He said, "No, you need the sacrament."

I said, "No, you don't understand. The Lord has forgiven me."

The bishop continued to press me, saying that I needed to "talk to the man who is your head." I knew that the priest