

Steve Clarke Testimony

Early Life

I was raised in a family in poor circumstances. During my early childhood my father was an alcoholic. My mother wasn't an alcoholic in the early stages but later became one. During that time my father was often "missing". As a little toddler I didn't realise he was missing but there was a gap in my life. Then, when he came home, there was violence. One day I walked into my mother's bedroom and there was a hank of her hair on the dressing table and sometimes there were radiators flying through darkened rooms and all that sort of stuff. Finally, at an AA meeting when I was about 4 years old, my father had an encounter with God, and he didn't drink after that.

My parents were very devout and committed people, particularly in areas of social justice. They had a love of oppressed and broken people even though they were somewhat broken themselves. I went through a Christian education system and church attendance. I knew about God but no one told me that God loved me and that He would help me. To me it was just about keeping the rules. I had no idea that you could ever have any relationship with Him. You sat down when you were told, you kneeled when you were told and God was scary! After all He killed His own son. What was He going to do to me! So I felt I had to appease God by keeping the rules ... but of course you can't keep them.

At that time I didn't understand the Fatherhood of God, which I believe is really the revelation that God is pouring out upon the world right now. It's about His own Father-heart. If you research the effects of fatherlessness you will see it in people - in drug addiction, crime rates and a whole range of other stuff.

When I was 8 years old I was sitting on the lounge and thinking of death and dying and all of a sudden something happened to me. I flipped out and began to run around the house screaming. It wasn't a fear of death, it was eternity. I was thinking *"I'm going to live forever.... where am I going to be? What's it going to be?maybe I'll lead the second rebellion against Godmaybe I'll be the new Lucifer"* all that sort of stuff. I ran around screaming and my mother grabbed me and said *"it'll be alright"*. But it wasn't alright.

Emotional suffering as a young boy

So began decades of emotional suffering. I kept it at bay by trying to avoid every situation that would cause panic or stress. I began to see professional people when I was a small child but nearly every person that was supposed to represent God was brutal. My experiences were brutal. I went to see psychologists that didn't believe that I could be demonised or that I could be cursed. So I began to have problems that I avoided by just closing that part of my life and never looking at it unless I really had to - like at someone's funeral. The school system didn't really model to me what God was like. There was no mentoring of me as a young man into a growing man of God. Again, it was keeping the rules, and if I didn't keep them when I was in High School they'd belt them into me.

Rebellious Youth

When I was sixteen, I ran away from home. I was living on the streets of Kings Cross smoking dope and doing everything else you think I would be doing - living an immoral debauched life. I was wearing a T-shirt called "Help Stamp Out Reality", which didn't really help me, it just made a statement about how crazy I was.

Meeting Tania and the early years of marriage

Around that time I was just running and got severely beaten and I had to leave town. So I went to Wahroonga and rented a room in an attic of someone's house. I went to a dance. I wouldn't wear my glasses because I didn't think I looked attractive, so I never knew what was happening around me when I went to the darkened disco. But I met my wife there. She was 15 and I was 17. They said it would never last but it has. My wife Tania and I have been married over 40 years. Our marriage has been forged in the furnace of affliction, as iron sharpens iron. Tania came from a dysfunctional family too. She comes from a family where, two weeks after we were married, her father shoots himself in the head in the church where we were married and doesn't kill himself. So she's got some issues..... but then we got married and we created our own dysfunctional family.

In the early years of my relationship I transferred all my neediness to Tania. I was suffering from chronic anxiety and neurosis so, regardless of her issues, mine were more important than hers. Her issues were never heard. She just suffered in silence. She didn't have a voice because my neediness stole it. (It hasn't now!)

Tania became pregnant and we got married. Do you think I was a good catch, ready for marriage? I'm smoking dope rockin' my kids to sleep and just running from life. All my father's failings I actually surpassed.

I was however able to get some really good jobs. At one stage I was managing Miranda Fair shopping centre but I had so much "stuff" going on and I couldn't really cope. I had enough emotional energy to go to work, wear the masks, come home and then go to my bedroom and have no interaction with my family. It wasn't that I was unkind to my children by what I did, it was the omission - it's what I didn't do. The sins of omissions by many people's fathers' form barriers between them and God and barriers between them and their families. I used to come home every night and think "*well I'm the bread winner, that's my job - I win the bread and you [Tania] do everything else.*"

Callan Park

In 1978 I was an outpatient at Callan Park for a couple of years. I had had eight days without sleep and in the end I was walking around peeing myself in public. I fell apart. It happened after weeks and weeks of just really strange things happening to me that I didn't understand - like panic attacks at levels that I had never experienced before. Rather than just being every few weeks they just began to melt together into one huge panic attack. Every day I thought things couldn't get any worse and then they would just get worse. I had no solace in God. When I went to the doctor they discovered that I had had hepatitis for months. It's notorious for causing nervous breakdowns and things like that. I'd had it before when I was a child but no one ever diagnosed it.

I was put in the psychiatric hospital and they said to me *"you'll never work again"* and they called my wife and they told her. They said I would never leave the hospital. So I began to look for a God that I didn't even know existed. I knelt by my bed and said *"Jesus if you're real, you can have what's left of me."* And I had an encounter with God. Something happened. Hope entered me. I said to Tania, *"I'm going to work again"*, and four days later I was back at work.

He Loves Me!!

Soon after, even though I was still broken, I began having some religious experiences. One day I was down at Miranda Fair shopping centre. I was weeping and broken and I said to God *"how can I work, I cant even get up these stairs"*. And God spoke to me audibly and said *"I've loved you. I've loved you, you know. And you're tender, you're a son to me."* He was speaking those words to me and then peace flooded me. I would go up to the office and think *"I can't tell anyone this I'll get put into hospital and I'll never get out."* They'll say *"now God's talking to you!"*

Later, I ended up losing my job. It wasn't my fault either. It was somebody who was dishonest, who used my brokenness and blamed me for budget overruns and other decisions. So I found myself out of work.

Deeper discovery of God and the Church

I was still in a terrible state but I began, over time, to really experience Gods supernatural presence. At one stage someone gave me a CD and it talked about God believing in me - God having faith in me. It also said that if you didn't have any faith you could ask God for faith. That was a very revolutionary concept for me because I just felt I had to just work up feelings of faith. So I asked God for faith. I began to pray for faith. And then I began to devour the bible. I had a living bible, (self help edition) that someone gave me. At the front it had verses in categories (for anxiety, insecurity, feelings of hopelessness etc). I had lots of verses and I would underline them, (although I couldn't even underline them properly because I couldn't even draw a straight line at the time), but somehow they got into me. As they got into me I began to feel better. Initially I only felt better for an hour or so and then I would feel better for half a day. When I realized that a lot of my problems were caused by the powers of darkness, I began (in a very halting sort of way) to stand against them. And as I did that my family and I had greater periods of light.

My mate Billy came around one day and he was schizophrenic. And he said to me, *"what you need is to be charismatic"*. I said *"well I'll have whatever's going Billy. It'll be a day out."* So he took me to the Catholic church at Edgecliff, where they were all Franciscan Monks. I sat up the front and there was an altar rail in front of me. Mass started and the priest danced out (his name was father Jumping Jack Salsby) and then he said mass. I was still a bit "out of it" mentally and I was on medication. I would regularly pinch myself to see if I was alive and I would go to the doctor for daily cardiographs so I could see the needle moving. I would wash my hands until I had no skin on them. I would take my medication after washing it under the tap to make sure it didn't have germs on it. But in the midst of that something was happening inside me. There was something subterranean happening. It was like a journey of tears. It was extremely painful. I can laugh about it now but I couldn't laugh about it then.

At various time of the mass they'd say let's share with each other a sign of peace. Normally in Catholic circles people just say "peace" – that's it! But one day, I was in the front seat, and a wild-eyed charismatic woman in the back seat grabs my hands to sing the sign of peace – she sang *"I love you with the love of the Lord, yes I love you with the love of the Lord."* And then, at another time, in a Catholic mass they held up the communion bread and started singing in tongues. My mate Billy said to me *"whaddyathink of the tongues?"* I said *"I thought it was Latin"*. I hadn't been for a while! Anyway, he took me to this Marsellin college in Randwick where they had a life in the spirit seminar. It was very ordered and structured and on the seventh week they prayed for me to receive the baptism in the spirit (I went at week seven and had not been at the earlier classes). When I came into the prayer meeting that night a monk lay prostrate on the ground in the doorway. I stepped over him to get in and I was thinking *"this is like a freak show"*. I thought *"these people are believing in something, and something's happening to them"*. Later, when he said does anyone want to be baptised in the spirit? I said *"well that'll do me. I'll have that too."* So I walked up the front and he lay his hands on me and I got one word in tongues... *"Tushkihona!"* One word I got in tongues - that was it! So he said *"now you're a soldier in the army of Christ."* I walked away and said *"nothing much happenedwhat happened?"* But then I went home and prayed this one word for months... *"Tushkihona, Tushkihona, Tush-ki-hona"* I was singing it. I know that I was praying it because I belonged to the devil for years and I never used that one word once. One day I was in the bath and I said to God *"you know you must so bored with this word cause I am."* And the power of God hit me in the bath! (I started flowing in tongues). And 40 minutes later I was still going! I thought *"what if you can't stop? What if this is permanent?" What if you cant stop it?"* I was like a prune - putting the hot in letting the cold out. Tania was already nervous, because I had lead her into some funny places. I told her I had the gift of tongues and she said *"you don't lie to me so I know you've got it"*.

Someone gave me a little book by Kenneth Hagan called in Him. It's still available - a little paperback book. It has 143 scriptures of it of who I am in Christ - In Him, in whom, in Christ. I wrote them all out on cards and then I confessed them three times a day for six months, until, all of a sudden, I realised that many of the words had leapt off the page and into my heart. They had been burnt there with a branding on them. Faith is a gift you ask God for. If you haven't got any you can build it up, feeding on the word of God. I also used to pray for hours a day in tongues, hours (and still do). Why? Because it built me up in my most holy faith - praying in the Holy Spirit.

In the middle of this God is dealing with some very deep issues of my life. I went to a meeting and I was running late. I sat right up the back (in charismatic circles they send all the kids up the back to tear the joint apart while they're all praising the Lord up the front - it's called charismatic deafness and blindness). When I was sitting there a voice said to me *"there's a women here with breast cancer in her left breast and I want to heal her"* and I thought *"oh no!"*. I thought *"God if that's you I won't be talking about woman's breasts here tonight"*. Maybe I should start with a toe. But it was like a gentle insistence - like the voice of the Spirit is. You can always say no to God. You can always say no. He will not war with your spirit forever. So I snuck up the front and I said to the guys leading *"I don't know.... I'm very new but....."* (and he knew I was just out of the nut house) and I just gave him that word and the first woman to prayer for had cancer of the left breast. I ran all the way home and I didn't even wait to hear what happened because I thought *"boy what an awesome responsibility that God would speak to people like this."*

Love for the brokenhearted

I began to experience groups like GROW (a support group for mentally ill people) and I discovered that those who are suffering deeply, have often, in their brokenness, some sort of workable spirituality. I started to really see God's love for the broken and his love for me - that I wasn't an accident or a mistake but He had actually chosen me and He knew me and cared about me. More importantly that God could really help me. When I prayed I knew He was answering my prayers. He was hearing them and answering them, often in ways that were very direct. My life was, and is, scattered with miracles like diamonds in the dust. And the hope just grew stronger and stronger and stronger as did my love and understanding for suffering people. I have always been able to relate well to those who are suffering in all ways because when I say I know how they feel I do know how they feel. And it's not just empathy or sympathy. Empathy and sympathy don't change anything – God changes things, and I know that God wants to change peoples lives.

Spiritual odyssey that has lead to the birth of the Fathers House

So began, this spiritual odyssey that brings us to The Fathers House now, with a great love for those who are suffering, the broken of the world. To train healers of which we need thousands and thousands of healers for the end of time harvest.

By the time it was about 1980 I was in ministry. It doesn't mean that every day has been like a bowl of cherries. And even now I can have tough times because the enemy will try and come and present me with old fears. Frankly, I have lived my life needing God 24/7. And that's what I think has made my life relevant. My life has been relevant because I am a warrior and my wife is a warrior. I thank God that I didn't put her into the hospital bed next to me because I was a tough buy to live with when this was happening.

When I look back at my life I thank God that I was arrested by His presence. I know where I could have ended up, I know where I was going. If I project forward I could have gone crazy (for life) or I could have become a recluse that was no good to his wife or children at all. So I'm grateful to God every day of my life for what he does for me, and what he has done for me and what he will do for me. God doesn't ask me to repay. God gives these things to me freely, but there is like a debt of honor. It's a very deep thing. Its like I can't do enough because of the gratitude... and he's not even asking that I would do anything. But I have fallen hopelessly in love with God. I wasn't planning to do that. I just wanted to know that He loved me but I have fallen hopelessly in love with Him and the course of my life has been set forever.

Jesus came to heal your broken heart

We as human beings have four basic needs. One is that we need to experience expressed love. Jesus said *"I've come to heal the broken hearted"*. There's His mandate! When He announces his ministry he says *"I've come to set the captives free"*. You don't have to beg God to be kind. He's kind by His nature his intentions towards you are honourable and beautiful and wonderful. That's how He is and what He is. He can't be any other way. Yet our experiences are modelled through our Father. Imagine that a little boy is in bed and he has a nightmare. He runs in and jumps into bed with his parents. His father says *"don't worry Jesus is in your room, there's angels there, you can just relax"*. He puts him back into bed but it happens a second time, and then a third time.

The little boy says to his father *"I need God with skin on"*. And the father, in that moment, is God with skin on for him. It's a frightening responsibility for fathers because, inevitably, when we look at our earthly father, we look at God through a flawed lense.

So we have these strongholds built (a collection of thoughts in our mind). A stronghold is built by you - it's like you've thought about it and you've built it into a fortress. And then a demon will live in the centre of it to empower it. He will be the mortar and the bricks there. But a stronghold is built by you, and it has to be demolished by you. You have to demolish it, brick at a time, by the word of God and by receiving truth for the lies by which you believe. It says in Psalm 27 that when our mother and father abandon us, the Lord Himself will take us up. There's a promise of re-parenting.

Jesus is saying *"I am a door, I am a door, I am the way the truth and the life, to bring you to the fullness of the Father and then He says as the father sends me, I send you"*. So do you want to be a sent one?

A prayer for you

I pray now for you for the release of visions and dreams. I pray for you now where you have shut your dream life down because of nightmares and childhood dreams that scared you, I pray that you would open yourself up. I pray for visitations in the night seasons, I pray that you would have a book by the side of your bed as God speaks to you about the intimacy and tenderness. Many are too busy in their mind to hear from God. They never still themselves. In your sleep let Him come and speak to you.

Put your hands on your heart now. As an apostolic father I speak words of blessing over you.

In the times when you've needed to hear your father tell you he loves you, receive it now through me. I speak now the words "I love you". You are a son, you are a daughter in whom I am well pleased. In the places of brokenness now in your heart let the oil of the spirit of God come in the deep places, in the hurting places in the places where at times you've not even known if you could go on or face another day. In the places where you have longed for intimacy, in the places where you have experienced deep abandonment, let the Lord himself take you up now. In the places where words have wounded you where you have been called a failure, a loser, hopeless, let those demonic barbs fall to the ground. Let the power be taken out of them in the name of Jesus. I release the oil now in the name of Jesus. Silver and gold I don't have but what I have, I give you. Be healed now in the very deep places. Be healed now in the places where you have believed you are beyond God's touch. I break the power of all blocking spirits in the name of Jesus. Everything that would block now, everything that would try to turn you off from being turned on to what God would do in your life, right now I break that off you in Jesus name. In the deep places now receive the favour and blessing of God, the favour of healing in relationships now.

I speak to the men. I speak blessing upon you. I speak a fathers blessing upon you. From a failed father whom God has repaired, I speak a blessing. I speak a blessing of new levels of intimacy with your children if you have them, or if you're going to have them, blessings of intimacy. I pray for a real breakthrough with your wife now, a real breakthrough, that you would be able to speak the words that are on your heart without fear or shame or embarrassment. I release that now in Jesus name.

I speak to all women who, as they came to puberty, had fathers who didn't know how to relate to them because they did not come to terms with their own sexuality, and therefore did not call out that part of your life into a safe place. I pray for healing now in that depth where your father was either absent, had no models or just didn't know what to do. I call that out of you now. I pray for any wrong sexual imprinting now, that the Lord will come now with the divine brush of His presence and give you a clean slate. Be healed in His name. Be made whole. In His name be made whole. I release healing now in Jesus name. Thank you Lord.

May the Lord seal it in your heart may you walk in a season of revelation about the awesome furious love of God. May the blessings of God overtake you like the ploughman overtakes the reaper, may you be amazed by the outrageous love of God. May your defences fall before His mighty love and His tender mercy and intimacy. May you surrender. May you not hold out. May you, like the prophet Jeremiah say *"Lord you have seduced me, you have overcome me, because you are stronger than me"*.