

# Converted from Romanism

By Kate Brown

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**Bible Text:** Acts 26:18

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## **Mourne Free Presbyterian Church**

3 Carrigenagh Road

Kilkeel, Co. Down, N. Ireland

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Well, we are very glad tonight to welcome to our church in Mourne our sister Mrs. Kate Brown from Lisburn. I have asked her to come along tonight to give a word of testimony. It hardly seems a year or so since I first spoke to her and we arranged this meeting it seems around October time of last year and we are very delighted to welcome tonight in the Savior's name and we will ask her to come now and to speak to us please.

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Well, to start off with I would like to say that I am not a preacher. I am not very good at this sort of thing. I am actually a bundle of nerves.

So I stand here tonight only a sinner saved by grace. I have an awful lot to be thankful for and I am very mindful tonight that I give God all the praise and all the glory. As I was coming down in the car tonight and actually I think this is the first time I have been this far beyond New Castle. I didn't know where I was going. I thought I was never going to get here. But coming along in the car I was thinking, "You know, God saved me. I gave my heart and my life completely to God away back in 1963, 44 years ago."

It hasn't been an easy road. But, you know, God hasn't promised a bed of roses. But praise God he has promised a mansion.

And I always like when I give my testimony...I have given a testimony umpteen times. And I always like to tell a wee bit of how this all started. I was brought up in Roman Catholic home, a good home, a home where our religion was honored. I was the only girl and there was four boys. There was five of us all together. And I was brought along to the Sacred Heart of Mary convent in Lisburn and that is where I was educated.

Needless to say I didn't learn very much. I wasn't very good academically, but I can remember that first day that I started school. And the school, the convent was just at the end of the town of Lisburn and there was a long lane down to the school. And at the bottom of the lane was this big green door. And I'll never forget it when that door opened and I got my first sight of a nun, this big black and white figure stood in the middle of the doorway. And nuns today are not the same as what they were way back then. They all wore their black and white habits away back then and when I stood, this wee girl, and my mother had me by the hand and looked up and I can remember I didn't even get to say, "Cheerio," to my mom. I was...the nun put her hand on the back of my head and gave me

a slight push and pushed me in in front of her, slammed the door behind her and that was me.

And, you know, time went on and I began to love the nuns and the things that they that they taught. I made my first holy communion at the age of seven and was confirmed at the age of 13. I left school at 15, as I have told you already, not a very bright person. I started working in a Lisburn weaving factory. I was only a weaver. But that is where I met my husband Joe.

Joe was serving his time as a temper and I was a weaver and we started to keep company. Of course, being a Protestant and I was a Roman Catholic and, you know, away back then things were just the same as what they are now. He wasn't allowed to keep company with the opposite religion. And Joe and I used to meet in secret. Nobody knew that we were keeping company and we used to hide. No matter where we planned to meet, it was always in secret.

But things don't stay secret for long. The lady that worked in the next machines to me found out that we were keeping company. She never said anything to me, but it was one afternoon Joe was called to fix her machines and that afternoon she took the opportunity...this woman who was a Christian and knew and loved the Lord as her own personal Savior, but, you know, there was something different about this woman. This woman lived the life. She took the opportunity that afternoon and witnessed to Joe about his need of a Savior and, you know, this was nothing new to Joe because from a very early age Joe knew the way of salvation. He was brought up in a partly Christian home where his mother knew and loved the Lord.

She took the opportunity that afternoon again and warned him about keeping company with a Roman Catholic. But she dared him that afternoon to give me a tract called "The Gift." And this tract was about a Roman Catholic Bishop who had come to know and love the Lord and she asked him if he would give me this tract.

Now, she told him that afternoon that she wanted the tract back again. And he came in to my stand, my next machine though we called them stands. They were all in rows. I don't know if you have ever been in a weaving shop before, but I had my set of machines and Joe came in to this stand and he put his hand in his pocket and produced this tract.

You know, we were taught...the day I left school, I left school at 15, and it was always a custom the day you left school that you got a wee pep talk from the head nun and there was about six of us that afternoon and we were all brought in to where the head nun was and it was just a wee cloak room where we all hung our coats and there was two wee benches and we lined up on these benches in front of the nun. And she told us, first and foremost, always remember that we were Catholics. "Hold your head up and be proud of it." And she also told us that we were never to take literature that would damage our souls.

And that afternoon, you know, I left school that day determined that I would hold my head up and be proud of who I was. But, you know, that afternoon when Joe produced this tract, I knew that I shouldn't even have touched it. I took the tract off him. I don't know why I took it, no intentions of reading it. But, you know, it is when you are sweet on somebody you would do anything for them. And I took the tract off Joe anyway, no intentions of reading it and at the end of machines I had what we called a waste bag. And this was a bag that we took the waste from the end of the bobbin, when your bobbin run out there was always a wee bit left and you pulled it off and put it into this waste bag. At the end of the day there was someone came round and collected the waste from your wee bag. Now this wee bag held a whole lot of things, wee things that you didn't want anybody to see or anybody to know about. It was like a wee secret bag that you had in work.

I took the tract and put it into this waste bag, no intentions of reading it. That evening when the shift was almost finished the wee man came around for the wastes and I put my hand into the waste back to take it out and the tract came out. Now I took the tract and put it into my own bag. Don't know why I done it because I still had no intentions of reading it.

And on my way home—I always rode a bicycle to work—and on my way home I couldn't get home quick enough because I knew I would have to get the tract out of my bag and get it hid somewhere in the house so that my mother didn't find it because she always made our lunches up at night and when she would put your lunch into your bag, well, she always had a wee plunder in the bag. You know, she was just like any other mother. And I knew that as soon as I went in I would have to get the tract out of my bag and get it hid.

I was, as I have told you already, the only girl. And I had a room of my own. And I went up stairs and took the tract out of my bag and had already planned on the way home where I would hide it. You know, we weren't very well off. We didn't have very much. But, you know, nobody had in those days and you didn't think anything of it because everybody was the same. We didn't have wall to wall carpet. It was wall to wall lino. Now, I don't know if you know if what lino is, but sometimes it was called loicloth, but it was a patterned floor covering that went from wall to wall. And I can remember trying to get the loicloth lifted and it was tucked in under the skirting board. And I can remember having to pick and pick and break it off at the ends, pretty good at lift it and put the tract in and under it.

Still had no intentions of reading it. That night I went to bed and I just could not sleep. I don't know if it was guilt because I had done this, because I knew it was wrong what I had done. But I couldn't sleep at all. I was tossing and turning. And all I could think of this tract under the lino. And I decided I would get up and read it. Nobody would know I read it. Nobody ever...nobody knew it was there. Nobody knew I had it.

And I took the tract from under lino and got into bed and it was pretty late and we weren't allowed to burn electricity any longer than what was necessary and if the light was seen on in your bedroom you shouted at for to get it out or else my mother would

have come in to see what you were doing with the light burning. And the only way I could read the tract was because I had a bicycle I had a bicycle lamp.

And I told you already we didn't have much, but I always wanted a bedside lamp. And I had...we had...the house was full of candlesticks, by the way. And I can remember having this wooden candlestick in the bedroom and I always put the bicycle lamp on top of it and put an old lampshade on top of that and that was my bedside lamp and I thought I was just the bees knees because I had a bedside lamp.

I took the bedside lamp and under the blankets and that is how I first read the gospel tract.

And, you know, I can honestly say tonight that the first time I read that tract I just couldn't understand one word of it because I never once heard, not once, that I needed to be born again, that I needed to be washed in the precious blood of the Lamb.

I got up out of bed, put the tract back in under the lino and I can remember saying to myself, "I don't know what that was all about," because I didn't know what that was that I was supposed to be not allowed to read because I couldn't understand it. This piece of heart that this bishop had talked about that he had found in Jesus Christ through the blood. I don't know. I know everybody comes to the Lord in different ways. Some people go through really deep conviction and others it just seems to happen. But everybody's salvation is different. But I don't know if you know what conviction is. But I can tell you tonight it is not very nice especially when you don't know what was wrong with you, when you have never heard of conviction before. This was a new word to me.

Weeks had went past and nearly every night I took it, the tract from under the lino and read it.

I went to the lady that had passed on the tract. I knew in a very simple way she told me how she found Christ as her own personal Savior. I started to ask questions. Every time Joe and I would meet that is all we would talk about. It was...

After going though weeks of torture—because that is what it felt like—I was afraid to sleep because I didn't know. I had no assurance of heaven.

It was one Sunday night. The lady that had passed on the tract had persuaded Joe to go to a gospel meeting in the CWU in Lisburn. And I had to meet him coming out of that meeting. But that night when opened my eyes that Sunday morning, I was determined no matter what that I would put things right with God.

When I met Joe that night I asked him what I would have to do to get saved. Joe gave me the bare right line what I had to do. I didn't know that I could have done it there and then. You see, I thought I had to be at home on my knees beside my bed before anything could happen. I ran home that night and it was in my own bedroom on my knees. I asked Jesus to come in to my life, to forgive me my sins and to be Lord of my life.

No...there was no big flash or no sign from heaven. But something happened to me. Over 44 year ago and I have never been the same since. I gave my life to Jesus that night. I have never once regretted it.

You know, it wasn't through a word of Scripture because I didn't know the Scriptures. You see, I didn't have a Bible.

The very first Scripture I memorized, "For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."<sup>1</sup>

You know, Joe went home that same night. He knew he was in on state to tell me how to come to know Christ. For, see, he hadn't taken that step himself. And that night he went home and it was in his own bedroom that he asked Christ to come into his life and to save him. We were both saved on the same night although we didn't know it at the time.

You know, God is always one step ahead of us. It was three months past when my parents had found out that I had got saved. It was on a Friday night. I came home from work went round the back to park the bicycle as I usually did under the window. I came in through the kitchen door and I could hardly get in through the door. I got pushed, shoved, thumped, hit against the wall. I didn't know what was going on.

And my mother was screaming at the top of her voice, "Have you got saved?"

When I finally stood to my feet...you know, I'm sure there is not one here from the oldest to the youngest who can say they don't or didn't love their mother. That night standing in the middle of the kitchen I realized how much I loved my mother. And I never forget looking into her face and the tears rolling down her cheeks. I thank God tonight that I got the courage to say, "Yes," I had got saved. You know, I got another round of the kitchen. I got hit with everything that was sitting about.

I pushed my way out of the kitchen on up the stairs. I went up the stairs. I ran up the stairs and my mother ran up behind me and she had a bottle of holy water. It was always a custom in a Catholic home to keep a bottle of holy water and my mother always kept the lemonade bottles. And I can remember she took the top off it and emptied it all around me. She told me it would chase the devil out of me.

You know what? I thank God tonight I don't have the devil. I have Jesus.

There was also a statue of what we called our lady of lords sitting and she took it, hit me over the head with it and broke it in two. It was only made of chalk. But I can remember. I came down the stairs because the bathroom was on the ground floor. It was the only door that had a lock on it and I thought I would get into the bathroom and lock myself into the bathroom. And because it was on the ground floor I had decided that I

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy 1:12

would get through the window and I knew I wouldn't have far to jump and I would get out because it was obvious that I wasn't going to get out that night.

When I got to the bottom of the stairs my father and my eldest brother were standing and my mother was standing as well. And my father and my eldest brother held mom with each arm and my mother hit me. She had something in her hand and I don't know what it was. It just happened that quick. And when I came to there was blood everywhere and my mother was panicking and she had torn up bits of towels and was trying to clean it off my face. And, you know, there was that much blood. I didn't know where it was coming from myself. And because the bathroom was right at the bottom of the stairs I pushed in and slammed the door behind me. And my mother pushed and thumped at the door and I got up onto the bath and on to the windowsill ready to jump and my eldest brother had knew what I was going to do and he was standing in the garden waiting on my jumping.

I got back in again and closed the window.

I can remember sitting on the end of the bath. I prayed. I asked God to help me. My mother was still thumping at the door and she shouted if I didn't open it she would put it through. And at the same time I was opening it my mother was pushing and when I opened it she had been pushing and the force of her pushing when the door opened she pushed me into the bath and my head hit the water tap of the bath.

There was a razor blade sitting on the bathroom windowsill. In those days it was a two-edged razor blade. It wasn't one of these fancy razors that you get today. And because I got that big a bang on the water tap of the bath I didn't even have the strength for to push my mother away. And the only thing I think that stopped my mother from cutting my throat that night was a knocking at the front door.

And when this all had started my youngest brother was sent round to the telephone. We didn't have a telephone in the house in those days. You had to go to a call box. And he was told to phone the doctor. And when the door was opened that was who was at the door. It was the doctor. It didn't take him long to come.

I was pushed into the front sitting room where he was. He had been told all about what had happened and what I had done. And he told my father to roll up my sleeve.

Now by this time I was in a state. The whole house was. Everybody was shouting and my mother was screaming and crying and I was standing beside a cabinet with a bowl sitting on it. Again, it was made of chalk. I can remember lifting it because, see, when the doctor was told what was going on my father had already signed papers to have me certified insane.

So I had to find [?]. The only thing that made him take a step back because I had lifted the bowls and told him if he come near me I would split him with it. And he looked over at my father and he said, "I am sorry, Johnny. I can't do it because she is too bad a state.

And if anything happened here and this needle broke I would get into trouble if they found out what was in this needle.”

I left home that night. You know, when I got saved, when I went back into work I told my best friend in work that I got saved. And I can remember coming in the next day and she said, “I told my mother that you had got saved. And she told me for to tell you that if ever you need anywhere to stay you are to come out to us.”

And I just couldn’t understand why I would ever need to have to go out just because I have got saved. But, you know, God is always one step ahead.

Now I had never been in her home before and she lived about 11 miles away. She told me if it happened I was to phone. Now they didn’t have a phone, but the farmer across the road did and everybody used the farmer’s phone. And I had the number. I had...in those days you were able to memorize. Nowadays you don’t. I don’t memorize anything. But I had memorized this phone number and I can remember asking the farmer if he would go and get my friend.

And he said, “I don’t know. I have...I am awful busy. I haven’t time to run around looking for them.” He says, “If I see them I’ll tell them.” And that’s what happened. It was just by chance that he saw one of the family and told them. And that is how I got the phone call through.

She said, “Just get on the bus and ask the conductor,” it was conductors on it in those days, “Ask the conductor to let you off at Second Crossroads and we will be sitting waiting,” because I didn’t have any money for to pay for the bus. She says, “We’ll be waiting on you and we’ll bring the money to the conductor when you get off the bus.”

I can remember getting on the bus and telling this story to the conductor. Now nowadays they would think...they would look at you and throw you off the bus. But he just took one look at me and he says, “Ok.”

So when I came to the Second Crossroads I didn’t know where I was going. I didn’t know where the Second Crossroads was. But when I came to the...when the bus came to the Second Crossroads, the conductor says, “This is your stop.” And my friends were standing waiting and paid the conductor.

It was two years after that that Joe and I got married. We had two beautiful children, not children any longer. And, you know, I can remember the day that they got saved, two small children. It was after just a meeting like this. And there was an appeal made at the end and I can remember they were sitting beside me and my husband. I didn’t know that it was him that responded to the appeal until the meeting was over when the preacher came down and he asked me if I would come into the prayer room with the two children. What a privilege to see and hear your two children come to know Christ as their own personal Savior.

My daughter is serving the Lord full time in Canada and my son is just about to go into the Whitefield College of the Bible. I thank God for his faithfulness.

You know, they were just babies. One afternoon my door knocked and when I opened the door it was an old neighbor of my mother's. She said, "I have just come to tell you that your mother is in hospital. She is very ill and she has had the last rites."

I went to the hospital to see her. Because she was so ill she was in a wee room of her own. And I can remember sitting on the end of the bed. There was nobody there and I held her hand. You know, she didn't have much breath. She propped herself up in the bed and pulled her hand away.

You know all my mother could say was, "If I had a gun I would shoot you."

You know, every time I give my testimony when I look down into the congregation...do you know you are so privileged, so, so privileged? Because, you see, there is absolutely no difference between an unsaved Roman Catholic and an unsaved Protestant.

You know if you are here tonight you have never taken that step, you have maybe even sat under the sound of the gospel for years. You have hardened your heart. You know, I pray tonight that tonight you will have a broken heart, before you go that you put things right with God.

You know, we don't have any guarantee that we see tomorrow, none of us, no guarantee at all. But I pray tonight that before you go through those doors that you will put things right with God and may you do so for his name's sake.

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We do thank our sister for testifying tonight, telling how the Lord gracious saved her and kept her and has blessed her down through these years.

I am not going to preach tonight. I did read Acts chapter 26. It is a remarkable chapter. It is a chapter of testimony where Paul, standing before the king, gives a word of testimony regarding his own salvation. He gives there a declaration of what it is to be a true Christian, one who has been turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, one who has repented of sin and trusted Christ.

My friend, that is what a true Christian is, someone who knows personally Jesus Christ as their Savior, who has turned from their sin and received the Lord Jesus Christ for themselves.

There is a definition in the chapter of true Christianity. There is a confession in the chapter regarding true Christianity. Because when Agrippa hears the testimony he says to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."<sup>2</sup> In other words, he confesses he is not a Christian. Perhaps that is your state tonight. You are not saved. You have heard

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<sup>2</sup> Acts 26:28

the gospel preached. You have heard testimony after testimony. You have listened tonight, but you are not saved. And you have got to make that same confession, "I am not a Christian."

In Agrippa's story there is the rejection of true Christianity. There is no record at all that he was ever persuaded altogether to be a child of God. And maybe that is your state tonight. You have heard so often the message of salvation. But up until this point you are still not saved.

It is not by accident that you are here in this meeting. It is not by accident you have heard this word of testimony. And tonight the question comes to you: Will you accept Christ as your Savior? Or will you go on to reject him another night.

It is my prayer tonight that you would come to Christ. He not only saves, he keeps. And as he keeps he blesses. And if I can be of any help to you or if brother Noel can be of any help to you, some other Christian that you know of that you have come into the meeting with tonight, if we can help you in any way then don't rush away after this meeting. We would be glad to show from God's Word how you can be saved and know that peace of heart, that peace with God that passeth all understanding.

I trust that God will bless our sister. We appreciate her coming. And I trust tonight that in this meeting those who are not saved that God will speak to your heart and save you by his grace.

We don't often sing a closing hymn. We are going to sing three verses of hymn number 289, 289.

Just as I am, without one plea  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come.

I trust as we sing these three verses, the first three verses of the hymn—it is on page 293 of the book, it is hymn number 289—that as we stand and sing these verses prayerfully tonight that if you are not saved this will be the desire and the prayer of your soul, that you will come to Christ.

Just as I am, without one plea  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come.

Verses one, two and three only and then remain standing for prayer.

Just as I am, without one plea  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, tho' tossed about  
With many many a conflict, many a doubt,  
Fightings and fears within, without,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

And I say when our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed that if we can be of any help to you tonight spiritually, if God is speaking to your heart and you are not saved and you know that and you would love to talk with someone, then we are your servants for Christ's sake and if we can help you in any way, then let us know.

And as you go out of this service tonight or stay where you are and we will come back in again and be glad to open up God's Word to you again and show you how you can receive.

*Heavenly Father, we thank thee for thy presence tonight. We thank thee for thy mercy, for our sister and the saving of her soul and Lord, for how thou hast blessed her and kept her. And, our God, we thank thee tonight that salvation is a real thing. Bless her we pray. Lord remember those in this meeting who are not saved. We have been singing about the Lamb whose blood can cleanse each spot and we thank thee for Jesus Christ.*

*Oh God, I pray tonight that sinners will have the Son in grace and come to know Christ whom to know is life eternal. Answer prayer. Part us with thy blessing we ask of thee in Jesus' name. Amen.*