

# *The Gospel Herald*

---

“As the truth is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21)

For The LORD’S PILGRIMS, STRANGERS & SOJOURNERS

by  
Donald E. Martin, Sr.

## *The Personal Testimony of Donald E. Martin, Sr.*

---

*I was born in 1944 in Anderson, Indiana, which was our hometown. I was brought up a young boy as a Methodist, along with my family. My religious experience as a Methodist was short-lived, as my parents divorced when I was about 9 years old. From that time, my exposure to Christianity was sporadic as I lived with my Aunt Joan and Uncle Jim Troutman for a couple years in Lapel, Indiana (1953-56).*

*After reuniting with my mother in 1956, and moving to St. Petersburg, Florida, I was not exposed to any further religious upbringing, as my dear mother labored daily, barely able to support my brother and me. So, I was a rebel in heart and was often on my own as a young teenager, in trouble often with the law for thievery and alcohol indulgence.*

*I was bitter toward my father for deserting my brother and me, never attempting to contact us, nor assisting in any way financially toward our upbringing. I had even said, “My father might as well be dead as far as I am concerned.”*

*It was after I was married in 1964, working as an electrician, and raising a family, that my life began to have some meaning and stability. In 1971, by the testimony of a fellow whom I respected, as he shared with me a Bible after he had been severely injured in an incident at a machine shop, God began to work in my heart. I was heavily involved in high performance car building and this individual was building race engines for my hobby interest. On one occasion, in my home, I was driven to look at that Bible a week or so after I was given it and was strongly convinced of my past sinful and rebellious life. While reading the scriptural verses regarding man’s sinful state by nature (Romans 3:23, 6:23), and the only means by which a person in my state could be justified before a Holy God was to be “born again” by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I was convinced that Christ is the only one who can redeem man from the curse of his depraved condition.*

*I was overwhelmed by such spiritual truth being revealed to me on this particular evening and was granted repentance for all my past sinful life and called up God for the first time as, "my father," asking him to make Christ become my Saviour, my Redeemer, and grant me forgiveness of sin and a future home in heaven.*

*I wept as a child as I fell to my knees in my home, alone, this particular evening and prayed for the first time a prayer which I was convinced that God heard as I called upon him. It was as if God had lifted a great burden off of my heart and peace came over my soul.*

*I was CHANGED that evening and, as the scriptures record, "made a new creature in Christ Jesus"*

*(II Corin. 5:21). This was in May of 1971.*

*I was immediately seeking a church to learn more of what had happened to me. I began to meet at Clearview Baptist Church in St. Petersburg and was graciously received into the fellowship of other believers. I was baptized in obedience with my Lord's command and began a journey as newborn Christian, a child of God.*

*(NOTE: One of the great spiritual miracles in my conversion experience was the fact that my hatred and bitterness toward my father was taken away. And the next Father's Day, I called my father and said, "This is your son, Donnie," at which time the phone was momentarily quiet. I said, "Dad, I want to wish you a Happy Father's Day, for as a Christian I am commanded to respect my mother and my father unconditionally." He was stunned by my comments and stammered for words. This was wondrous evidence that God had worked divine grace and forgiveness in my heart).*

*I was licensed to the gospel ministry by Liberty Baptist Church of St. Petersburg, Florida August 6, 1975, then ordained to the full capacity of the gospel ministry by Lealman Old Order of Baptists January 11, 1981. I served as Pastor / Elder of Lealman Church for 19 years with the assistance of Brother James Bowman, who was ordained as an Elder by the assembly, and continues to minister there currently.*

*My Christian journey continued even after an undesirable divorce from my one and only wife in 1999. I stepped down from pastoral care of Lealman Church following the divorce, and soon relocated to Lake Panasoffkee, Florida in 2001, while working on a large federal prison project as architectural/ engineering contract administrator.*

*After seeking a fellowship of believers with whom to assemble in Sumter County Florida, I began re-established communication with Brother Michael McInnis of O'Brien, Florida, whom I had known since the late 1970's. I would travel to visit with Bro. Michael on various Lord's Days as he was pastor of Grace Chapel in O'Brien, Florida and I was used to minister with him as I would visit.*

*We began to travel and visited among the Primitive Baptists into Georgia on the fourth weekend of the month, and to Empire Primitive Baptist Church for their Saturday*

*before the fourth Sunday meeting. Both Bro. Michael and I were called upon to speak upon our visits. I was officially received into the membership of Empire Church in 2006.*

*It was in 2007 that Elder/ Pastor J.Y. McCormick passed away, and Fellowship Primitive Baptist Church of Wimauma, Florida which he served for over 30 years, was without a Pastor. I was asked to minister among them, became their called pastor shortly after, and met with them for worship meetings from 2007 until December 2015, when health issues caused my travels and ministering to cease. I was diagnosed with lymphoma in May 2016. After six months of chemotherapy for this dreadful disease, I was in remission as of September 2016, and have remained in remission as of this date; May 7, 2017.*

*I rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ for His abundance of sovereign mercy, causing me to endure such chemotherapy and to place this cancer in remission. May this composition of my Christian journey to this date in time be of some consolation to those in the future who may be interested in its reading.*

*Respectfully submitted by Christ's loving mercy and sovereign grace,*

***Donald E. Martin, Sr.***