



## **EDDIE HADDAD'S TESTIMONY**

By the Grace of God I was saved in the month of May in the year 2003. This is my story. I was brought up in an Orthodox, Catholic family, and raised up in Lebanese culture and traditions. I went to a Catholic School, and we would go to a Catholic church every Sunday. We were taught to pray to Mary as she was the mediator between us and God; if we sinned, we would go to confession where the priest would intervene and forgive us of our sins. My life was pretty much, "Do this" and "Don't do that."

In primary and high school, I was a bully; I went around the school fighting not only with school mates but also with teachers. You would think that being raised as a Catholic I would have grown with good morals and a better attitude. My parents raised me up as well as they could and gave me practically everything I wanted - a house, food on the table, education, clothes and much more.

I finished high school and enrolled in commercial cookery technical college where I studied to become a chef. At 21, I went on a 6 months holiday and met my wife. Together we ran a little café takeaway shop. So far you might be reading and saying to yourself, "This man has it made! He grew up in a good family, had a good education, a good marriage and then a stable income." It might seem all good for the natural person but there was something missing in my life that I was seeking for, but I didn't know what it was. Was it money? Was it marriage? Was it a career? It was much more, something bigger than I could ever understand. It wasn't religion or tradition, it was a personal relationship with my Creator that made me and put me on this earth for Himself and not just for myself.

It began when my brother Charlie started to change from a rebel to a kind and helpful person. What made him change? Was it that he came to his senses? Was it the new career? Or did he just grow up? It was none of the above.

I visited my parents and my brother Charlie began talking to me about Jesus and what He had done in his life and what He could do in my life. To that stage I was a very bitter man; angry at everyone and anyone. I was an alcoholic, addicted to

drugs and cigarettes, filthy mouthed and didn't have time for Jesus or any other religion. Charlie was showing me from the Bible what God had planned for me and anyone else that believed in Jesus Christ. I wasn't interested in the whole thing, but in a sarcastic way I asked Charlie to take me to this church that he was attending.

I didn't want to go to church; I just wanted to cause trouble for him and anyone that came my way. Charlie paused a little, and then said, "Ok, let's be on our way." Charlie took me in his car and as we were driving he said to me, "Don't be alarmed if you don't see any pictures or statues in the church because there are none." I nodded and off we went. We arrived at the Faith Baptist Church and Charlie was introducing me to some of the people of the church. Everyone was coming up to me and shaking my hand with a smile and talking to me. I was saying to myself, "What do they want from me"? We sat down and the church commenced. The preacher was reading from the Bible and interpreting what it was saying. In 5 minutes I lost interest in it all. During this time I looked around the church was amazed at the people around me. Everyone was focused and looking upfront at the preacher like they were interested in the preaching. "Wow," I said to myself, "this must be the real deal."

In the Catholic Church everyone seemed to be bored and didn't want to be there – well that's how I was anyway. When the church service finished, I quickly rushed to the car and sat down. Charlie then followed and as we were about to leave someone tapped on the window. Even though it was pouring down with rain, I opened the window and a man handed me a pamphlet and said, "God bless." I took this pamphlet, creased it up, and put it in my pocket as I sat down in the car with nothing to say.

I got home and after my family went to bed, I sat down to read the pamphlet that was given to me. It said "WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?" I was shocked at this question because I knew the life I was living would send me to hell. I read that God could forgive my sins, which puzzled me. Forgive me? A lying thief, alcoholic and so forth? I knelt down in the TV room, looked up, and not knowing how to pray I said something like this, "Lord, I don't know how to pray, but I want what they have," (talking about the church people). "I know I am a sinner; I know that I have been living a terrible life, treating others and my family very badly. Can you forgive me? I believe that you died for me and were buried

and rose again. I need you, Lord Jesus. Come into my life, be my Lord and Saviour, forgive me, and take me to heaven when I die.”

At this time I was very emotional and went straight to bed but couldn't sleep all night. In the morning it was like something heavy on my shoulders was taken off. I was a changed man who just wanted to get right. I can't explain what was going on in me. All I knew was that I had to get right with God. At that time I worked at the Casino in Sydney. I arrived at work hugging people, shaking their hands and just being joyful. I had never felt like this before. Everyone at work was puzzled and said, “What's wrong with the Chef? Chef never acts this way”? I was a very hard man to work with, but this hard man was a new man; saved, forgiven and redeemed.

I have been saved now for over 8 years, God has changed my heart. I no longer curse, drink, smoke, gamble, everything that my old self had done. Not only has God changed me but He has given me eternal life in heaven with Him. I have reconciled with everyone that I had made enemies with; all my relatives that I had never spoken to, friends that I had not seen for a long time, work colleagues that I had upset. I love my children and my wife very much. God comes first, then anything in my life for He has died for me on the cross and has given me life eternal. It is my reasonable service to go out into the world to tell people about the Saviour that has saved a man that no man on this earth could change or save. I am indebted to Jesus Christ for giving me life again. The Bible teaches that we should be born again, born from above.

The Eddie from the past is no longer this Eddie, but a changed soul that now has a home in heaven instead of a place in hell. God has given me a heart for others and not for self. The Eddie that was in bondage to religion, the bottle, drugs, and whatever this world could offer can now take off the chains and be free - free from the big lie which says, “Follow your heart” and “Live your life to the full.”

Friend, life without Jesus is death. There is no turning back, for God has bought me with His blood that was shed on the cross. I will serve Him and mankind not because I want gain, but because of what He has done for me. My family and I are indebted to Jesus Christ and loving it, because it was by my free will that we accepted Him and not by the force of our religion. Dear friend, this is my testimony that I was lost and now I am found, blind and now I can see. Trust in Jesus and He will set you free.

*Some verses that my testimony can rely on:*

**Romans 3:23** “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

**Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

**Acts 3:19** “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;”

**Romans 5:8** “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

**Ephesians 2:8-9** “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

**John 14:1-3** “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

*IT'S NOT THE END BUT THE BEGINNING*