

Tim Wenger Personal Testimony

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Preacher: Tim Wenger

[0:00] For many years we've prayed for the spread of the gospel and building up of the church in Switzerland. And we've prayed for God to send out new workers into that harvest field.

And today we get to see and meet one of the answers to our prayers. Tim and Marlise Wenger. And they've come to us all the way from Switzerland.

They'll be with us for the next three months. And upon returning, Tim's plan is to take up the pastorate at Neuchatel, the church plant that our brother Olivier Favre has been instrumental in working with.

And we're thankful that Tim has agreed to come in this hour and share with us the work of God in Switzerland.

Good morning. Good morning. We are very happy to be with you, with Marlise. And we thank the Lord that we are together with you now. I'll try to do it in English. The first time I do it in English like this.

[1:07] So I ask you to be patient with me. And I pray the Lord that he can give us a good time to see the glory of his work.

And we've seen the steadfast love manifested to us, especially through Stan and Deb, who welcomed us, we could say, so much that we couldn't imagine before.

And we are so thankful to God, thankful to your prayer too, because you are working too with Stan and Deb and all the other people they pray for us. Thursday evening I talked with a brother, and during the discussion he made a reference to the Psalm 121.

And you know, there are not so much mountains in Bremen. But in Switzerland where we left until we came here, there are a lot of mountains.

And there are some of them just next to where we lived. So we look a lot of time to the mountains. And I sent this Psalm 121 to my colleagues when I left my job at school about two weeks ago.

[2:24] And I want to read it with you now. I put there on the projector then the references, so you can open your Bible and read with me.

A Song of Assents. The Lord is your keeper.

The Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil.

He will keep your life. The Lord will keep you going out and your coming in. From this is time forth and forth and forth and forth more.

Let's pray. O Lord, you the Almighty, the Holy One, the Creator of the heaven and the earth. We will come humbly before you because we are not worthy to come by you, your throne.

[3:41] We come in Christ, our Redeemer. And I ask you to give me strength enough to be able to speak for your glory. We pray that your spirit act in our mind and our intelligence to hear what you want.

My prayer today is that we go out of this room with a heart full of gratitude to you, our God, Father, Son, and Spirit. I pray that we can then testimony that you are an extraordinary God.

In the name of the Lord Jesus, we pray. Amen. Now I'll present to you the menu of this Sunday school. I never was in the Sunday school before, so I hope I'll do it right and that you'll understand me.

So first, I'll take time to tell you a story about an ordinary man and an extraordinary God. To show you how God, how the God of the Psalm 121 acts in a life.

It is a true story, and Marlies and I know this ordinary man, his three as well. After the story, I'll give you some news about the college biblique.

[5:03] It's possible that you hear a little bit about it. About the so-called Sikh Formation Jeunesse. Oh, that's a French word. I'll translate it after then. And about the children camps.

And the third part will be about the church in Neuchâtel. Well, in the first part, we'll use our Bible and have a look on what God says.

And as said before, the references will be projected on the projector so you can easily find in your Bible. And I use the, I don't know if I use the same version of you, I'm sorry.

I use the ESV version to read the text of the Word of God, who is true and preserved until now by the grace of God.

So now start with the story. And we will not follow the life of this ordinary man in the time chronology, but by subjects. We're being, as usual, with the birth.

[6:04] I start with the birth. And this ordinary man was blessed by having Christian parents who feared the Lord. The extraordinary God showed a first time that he's the Almighty when he gave a child to this mother who couldn't have children.

Some year before, she had an operation, and the surgeon made a mistake and affected the reproducing system.

But the extraordinary God thought differently. Let's read with me Genesis 25, verse 21.

And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah, his wife, conceived.

It was the same. The woman became pregnant. And they called the ordinary man the one who honored God, or the one who is honored by God.

[7:13] This name, we could say, is the first step of the calling of God. The ordinary man heard every day his name. And when he heard it, he heard that he had to honor God.

This ordinary man grew up and heard the word about the extraordinary God, as written in Deuteronomy 6, verse 4 to 7.

Deuteronomy 6, verse 4 to 7. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

And these words that I commanded you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

And you know, the parent of this ordinary man, they believed on the promises of the Lord. And there is one promise, I think you know it, and we can find it in the Bible.

[8:30] That's in Proverbs 22, verse 6. That's a beautiful promise for the parents. It is written, train up a child in the way he should go.

Even when he is old, he will not depart from it. And this little boy loved to hear the story of the Bible, and asked a lot to his father to read, for example.

And a lot of time he sent me the parable in Matthew 18, 23 to 38, about the forgiveness. The extraordinary God prepared this man to forgive, sorry, if somebody comes to him.

Like God forgives us. The parent taught him not only to forgive, but to repent as well. And we can see what is written in Ephesians 4, verse 26, or 25, sorry.

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin.

[9:54] Do not let the sun go down on your anger. And you know, this extraordinary God put this in the heart of this child.

And a lot of time, when he was wrong, he couldn't sleep, and he had to stand up and to go to his parent's room to ask forgiveness.

This ordinary man has done a lot of failure, but the extraordinary God washed open him. It is written in Psalm 31, verse 3.

Something very important for this story. 31, verse 3. For you are my rock and my fortress, and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me.

You take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge. Did you remark in verse 3, that's not written in my name's sake, but for your name's sake.

[11:07] That means that the Lord doesn't take care of this ordinary man because of his good acts, but only because of the name's sake of God. This Psalm 31 was realized several times, and I'll show you that God acts even if it's near to death.

This extraordinary God, we are talking about, we are talking about save this ordinary man several times of the death. I'll speak about three of them.

The first was when our ordinary man was about three or four years old. He took two knitting needles and put them into an electrical outlet.

Interesting, that's 2,200 volts, a little bit more than here. And this poor boy couldn't go away. He electrocuted himself.

But the extraordinary God protected him by the reflex he gave to his mother, who was just changing the diaper of another child.

[12 : 20] The Lord wanted not this ordinary man to die. He wanted this ordinary man alive. One or two years later, our boy had an epiglottitis.

Do you know what it is, an epiglottitis? That's a severed throat infection which occurs by children and can cause choking. And the parent went to the hospital.

The child was near to suffocate, and the doctor had to give an injection and said, if he cry, he'll die. But the extraordinary God didn't allow it.

And the kid was still alive. These are several other stories I could show you to show how this extraordinary God took care of this ordinary man.

But I still tell you a third story. 24 years later, after the epiglottitis, this young man, who was now 29 years old, had another adventure.

[13 : 29] As info, he got married a young lady some years before. This happens. Just about the marriage.

He said to me a lot of time, read Proverbs 22, 18, 22. Oh, we can read it. Proverbs 18, 22.

Who is written, He who finds a wife, a wife finds a good thing. He obtains favor from the Lord.

I don't know now to teach about the couple, but that's what God says. So the ordinary man was in the countryside, and he was reading a preaching.

And he told me about a part of the text he was reading just before it happens. And I will now read you this text he read just before it happens.

[14 : 30] In Ephesians 2, 8, the apostle says, You have been saved. And not you will be saved, or you could be saved, but you have been saved.

He don't say you partially saved, or in hope, but you are saved by grace. Let's be clear on this point, as the apostle was.

And don't give us rest before we found the assurance to be saved. At this moment, we are saved. At this moment, today, now, we're saved or lost.

That's clear. To which kind of group do you belong to? I hope that you have inside you the testimony of the Spirit that we are child of God, and so much assurance of salvation that we can sing with the psalmist, The Lord is my strength and my song.

He has become my salvation. This was the text who our ordinary man read just before it happens. Two bees stung him.

[15 : 43] That can happen. Particularly next to bee hives, where he was. Normally, there is no problem, but he didn't know he was highly allergic to bee venom.

His wife saw him and asked him how he goes, because she saw that he was not in a normal state. The ordinary man started to be red and to blow up, and his wife got him as fast as possible to the hospital.

During the way, she remembered the exact number of the hospital, not the emergency number. The extraordinary God was still working. This ordinary man called the hospital, and then he paused because he had a problem to breathe.

He told me that he felt like to go out of his body, and he was happy to meet his God. He had the assurance to be saved, as read just before.

During this time, his wife was driving very fast, the car, as fast as possible, and the extraordinary God didn't allow an accident.

[17 : 06] They arrived to the hospital. The man left the car, and then he fell. But fortunately, a nurse arrived with a wheelchair.

So he fell in the wheelchair. And then they asked this ordinary man to go onto the bed. He ordered his body to go too, but the body doesn't respond.

The doctor put him on the bed. They make him an injection, and he comes up to him slowly. The extraordinary God wanted not that the ordinary man to die.

Ten minutes more, and he would die. He told me that he would be better by God, in his perfect heaven, without diseases, no tears.

But if the extraordinary God wanted to keep him alive, it's because he's got something to do. You know, Paul says once, and we'll show this, we'll have a look on this in the Bible, in Philippians 1, verse 23, where it's written, I'm hard-pressed between the two.

[18 : 23] My desire is to depart and to be with Christ, for that is far better. But to retain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

And the ordinary man understood better that word of Paul. I use still this story to tell to everybody that if you are still alive, that's because one to be glorified in your life.

When your mission will be finished, he will bring you home, but not before. He will give you strength and courage to do your job.

The extraordinary God wanted to keep him alive. He's the rock. He's the fortress in our lives. I'll show you now how God's grace entered into the heart of the so-called ordinary man.

I said before, it's a true story. Melissa and I know him. So we see that the almighty God still works in heart and in Switzerland too.

[19 : 35] We've seen that the parents of this ordinary man were true Christians, and they taught him in the way of God. And when he was four years old, the Holy Spirit worked in him, and this little boy asked his parents how to be saved.

And the parent gave him an answer and explained that he had to repent and believe in Jesus Christ who died on the cross for the sinners.

So then, during two weeks, every day, this little boy asked God to forget him and to become his child.

And then, after these two weeks, he understood that the extraordinary God saved him by grace. It's written in Luke...

Oh, that's written in French. Sorry. Luke 18, verse 16.

[20 : 41] But Jesus called them to him, saying, Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

That's a great encouragement, to teach the word of God to the young children. Because when God opened the minds, he changed their heart, they will enter into a new life.

When he was six years old, he received a picture, and behind this picture, it was a prayer of a boy who was six, two. He prayed this prayer.

Lord Jesus, help me to be as kind and as obedient you were when you were six years old.

The... Oh, sorry. I wrote something wrong. This ordinary man did a lot of mistakes, a lot of sins, but...

[21 : 48] God put in his heart the willing to be like Jesus. And at the same age, it was in year 1982, about, the extraordinary God put the idea in the mind of this ordinary man to become a missionary.

His parents told him a lot of stories of missionaries and were in contact with several of them. And this young boy reflects, so six years old, then, on what kind of training he wanted to learn to be able to be a good missionary.

Of course, logically, to learn more about the Bible. But, before training in theology, he wanted to become a mechanic electrician. So, he could repair his jeep as mechanic when it was in the jungle, and then, when he entered into a village and he built a church, he could install the electricity as electrician.

Isn't it interesting? So, a number of years, he didn't have to reflect about his future job. When he was ten years old, this ordinary man lived a very difficult night.

He was in France during holiday without his parents. And during a night, there was a terrible storm. There was very strong lightness and thunders.

[23 : 14] The young man got afraid and thought about his soul. Yes, he repented and continued to do it, but was he still saved? If this night will be the end, and he prayed a lot this night, more than ever done, this, the extraordinary God used the storm to build the face of this ordinary man.

at 15, he asked for the baptism, baptism, baptism, yes, and at this day, he read the Psalm 100 to say how he was joyful of the salvation of the Lord.

And when he was 16, he understood that missionary doesn't mean to go to Africa, but can be missionary in his own country. the idea of mechanic and electrician was already present in his mind, but when he had to choose his job or his training, and he seen what was, because there is a

mechanic electrician apprenticeship, when he seen that, he said, that's not exactly what I thought. and he said, he was a little bit confused, and he tried to find something, and he started to learn in electronic, and then the master of the learning, at the end of his learning, said, you could continue to study in the engineer school.

Why not? But he didn't know why he had to do that, but he continued to study, and during this time, he served God in his church, and waited on God's direction.

[25 : 05] You know, the extraordinary God knows always what he does. He prepared the ordinary man for his work in directing him in his job as technical trainer, because he became a technical trainer, and then he learned how to make courses, how to teach them, and had contact with people from around the world.

The ordinary man didn't know why God had directed him in the technical ways, because he wanted to serve him in the church. You know, it is written one thing very important in Colossians 3.

We're going to see it together. Colossians 3, verse 23. Whatever you do, work healthily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance and your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. This ordinary man learned me how important it is to work for God. He always prepares us for something and our job prepares to do it.

It can be directly like to learn to teach or indirectly to learn to have mercy, patience, and so on. This extraordinary God had a plan for his life and when he was about 27 years old, the time to study the word of God in full time came.

[26 : 41] But just before to start this study with his wife, they had to find a place to live. Because when you study, you don't own money. You have to pay.

So they prayed the extraordinary God to help them and they looked for a home. In Switzerland, there are more people who rent flat than people who are house owners.

I don't know if you know it, but now you know it. And rent a flat of about three rooms cost about, it depends on the places, but normally \$1,500 a month.

And the ordinary man thought he has to find a flat for less than \$500. That was almost impossible in human seeing.

So they prayed and searched and finally the extraordinary God gave them a flat for the half price, \$250 per month. Only the Lord can do such things.

[27 : 50] Oh, Father, I can say, Oh, Father, help us to not be anxious and trust in your goodness. It is written in Matthew 6, 31. We'll read it together.

Matthew 6, 31. And further. Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear?

For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself, sufficient for the day it is on trouble. And then something happened when the ordinary man was 28 years old.

He was in the church for a practical time, and the pastor there gives him a booklet, about the doctrine of grace. The extraordinary God wanted to teach the Calvinism to this ordinary man.

[29 : 07] The man discovered this theology with a great gratitude and joy and wonder. The extraordinary God worked slowly, and he saw that the Almighty prepared him to receive this teaching years ago.

It was like a second conversion for him and his wife, to understand a little bit, because we can understand all, but to understand the sovereignty of God, the total deprivation, so we need to we need the unconditional election to be saved by the Lord who died for his flock.

No drop of blood pour for nothing. He called the elected by, and they hear him and comes to him. They persevere and as a transformed person, when we are transformed, we are transformed forever.

As early as a caterpillar transformed into a butterfly never becomes back a caterpillar. It was a liberation to know that all is done by God for salvation.

We are active in this process, okay, but all lean on God's grace. What's a beautiful message, no? And this verse of Ephesians 2, 8, I think you know it by heart.

[30 : 26] We read it, I think it's a good verse. This ordinary man told me a lot of times. Ephesians 2, verse 8.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God. I just share you what he received at the end of his practice time.

He showed me this, the pastor wrote it on a paper. He wrote this. In the time where we show any kind of ministry next to the church and new techniques, I want to remember you the beauty of the church and the pastoral ministry.

The church is the only living organism established by God and who it lasts as far as Jesus comes back. The pastoral ministry established by God and defined in the scripture, even if it is not always easy to exercise, is then the privilege means thought which with God spread his kingdom out and take care on his people.

Even if such ministry is not considered exciting, he is, because it goes with special God's blessing, and there is nothing more beautiful and more glorious than to take care of the church as such a master.

[31 : 58] So I have to cut a little bit. I come at the end of the story of this ordinary man. I wanted to show you how God works in a life, and he works now.

God's And this ordinary man, the extraordinary God, takes care until now, is the man of my wife. I just now speak about some news.

I see that the time is going very fastly in America. I just think about the training we started in 2006. There are 10 Saturdays per year to train the elders and the deacons, or the men who will be elders or deacons, or could be. And this is the first class.

You see some people you recognize, I think. You recognize the third from the right, that's Stephan. And then three person later, that's Olivier Favre, you know.

[33 : 10] And then I'm there on the left. And just behind me, you've seen Janber de Moy 2 on a picture a couple of weeks ago. I know it because Olivier showed you that.

Okay. So you can pray for all these men who are trained. Now they are finished the study. I'm there, I was there as student and at the same time the secretary of the association of the College Biblique. And that's the first group for four years. And now we've got a second group who started just one year ago. I'll show you just after. But these different guys are coming from different churches. There is only two, the two on the right who are not coming of Reformed Baptist Churches. But all others are coming from Reformed Baptist Churches. And only to refresh a bit, where is Switzerland, where are the churches?

So you see where is Switzerland. Is it okay in your mind about? It's a very little country. It's a half Indiana about. And in this country you've got different churches.

[34 : 24] The first church is the Reformed Baptist Church of Lausanne. And then you've got the Reformed Baptist Church of Pyern. And you've got the Reformed Baptist Church of Bül.

Bül came to the Reformed Baptist doctrine a couple of years ago. And I was in this church with a pastor and we turned in the church. And Neuchatel is the little church we want to go after the time we are here.

And you've got Grenoble with a little bit under there near to Switzerland. And as said before that's the second group who just started to train with a committee.

That's why I'm here with Janbert and Olivier. Okay. And then there is another training.

We train the youth people to become counselors in camps. and that's why I spoke about the youth training cycle.

[35 : 29] We started with a training for youth and sport. You know in Switzerland we've got a department, a state has got a department called youth and sport. And this department gives us the possibility to train some counselors.

And then if we've got enough counselors and if we follow the rules for the camps, we receive money from the state. And we can share the gospel in the camps. Wonderful.

Okay. And we've seen that the people they came to be a counselor as youth and sport, they had some problems with the Bible knowledge.

So we created the first one, CFB, that's a Bible course. Okay. And then another one that's to train to share the gospel.

You see that Olivier Farve is also their teaching in this training. And you see down there Marlies who is cooking because she's responsible for the cooking for all these training courses.

[36 : 36] And that's the course from this year, July. That's what the biblical training. There is Jan Berdemoy, Olivier Farve, and I are teaching there in this course.

That's not a Reformed Baptist training cycle, but the teachers there are only Reformed Baptists. That's very good.

You know, we had a little bit of some problems. So we can share a little bit of the Calvinistic way in Switzerland because I don't know it so much. But it was a good. We had more than 200 young people who came there through, more than 600 from the beginning.

That's the other course, the transmission training, I called it in English. And there I teach two. And about the kids camp, so we are training the counselors, and we continue to have some camps with the kids.

That was the camp in 211. We started a Reformed Baptist kids camp last year. That was this one. And the kids and the parents asked to one more.

[37 : 44] And we continued. And that's the camp for this year, just before we came. And they asked for one more, so we'll continue next year.

But there is another thing, and we can pray for it too. I'm reflecting about a camp for teenagers, because that's between 8 and 10, and 12, sorry.

And they are asking for something between 12 and 16, because then at 16, they can come in the other cycle courses. So that's a prayer request.

My problem is the time. I'm motivated, but that's the time. Okay. And last but not least, John, do you have five minutes?

More? Two minutes. Okay, okay. there's another chance to share that with us, brother. Yes? We'll have more time. But I'll only show you this one.

[38 : 44] That's the church of Neuchâtel. I think it's important to see it and to pray for this church. This is a church with nine visitors. So this church, we have about 30 there on this picture.

There are about 20 in the church with the children. So that's a very little church now. We can pray for them. They started a couple of years before, but if John gives me another chance to share about it, I will explain you the story in another time.

And I think I will now finish with some greetings from Stephanie and Stephan and Jan-Berdmoy as like as Olivier, but you've seen it just before, for you and to thank to you a lot for your prayers.

That's very important because the work cannot go further without prayer. That's not possible. That's okay.

God works, but God works with us. So thank you for your prayer. Thanks the Lord and amen.