THE TRUTH ABOUT TATOOS



MIKE CONNELL

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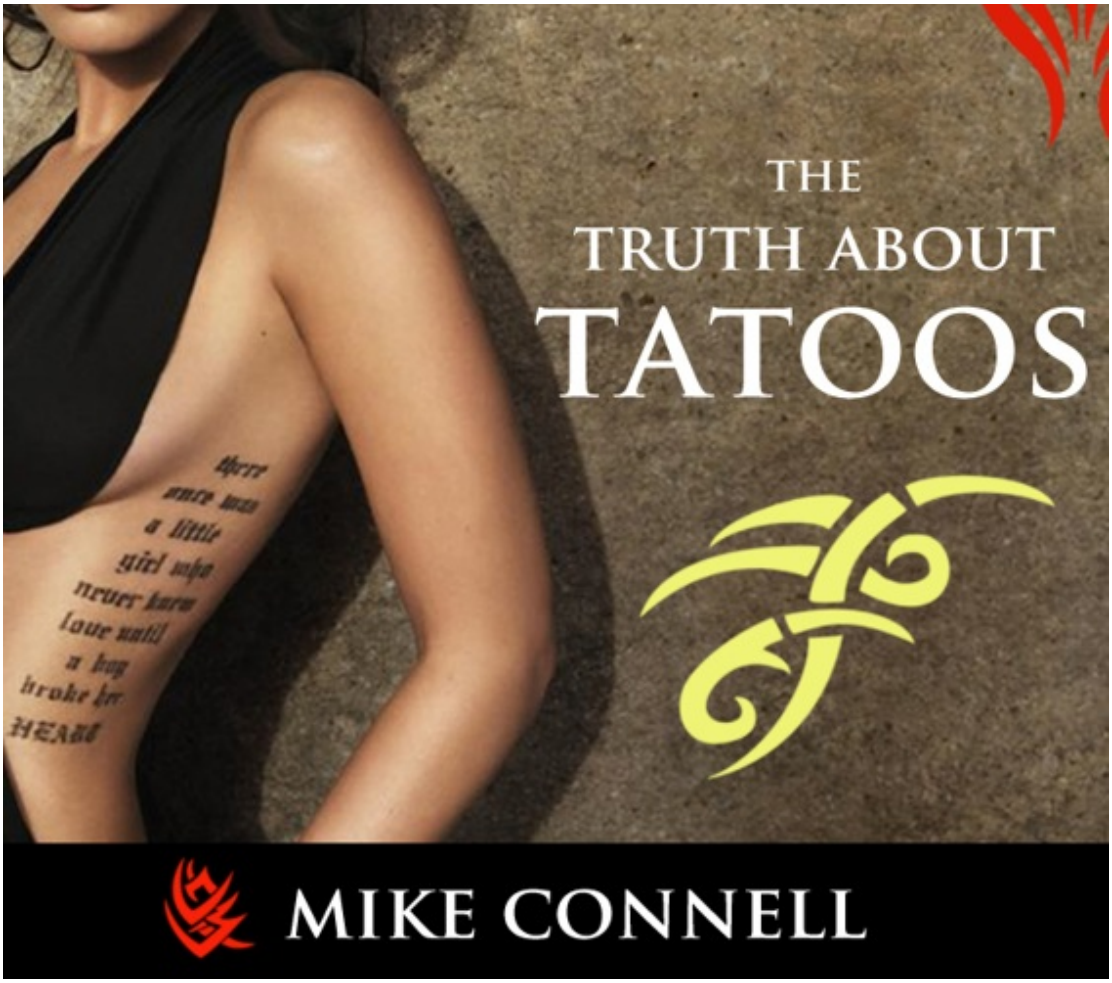
Sermon Transcript for Sunday, 14 November 2010 pm

Mike Connell

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Smashwords Edition

Summary: How many know someone who's had a tattoo or got one? It's a growing phenomena now people getting tattoos, tremendous increase in that has taken place since the '70s and just a huge increase. You see it everywhere and so you think well is there anything to it, you know? God looks on the inside, man looks on the outside, let's not worry or sweat about it? But I believe we need to understand what lies behind these things and I'm going to show you why this is so important.


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How many know someone who's had a tattoo or got one? How many know someone? Oh look at that, hands up everywhere. There's almost no one that doesn't know someone with a tattoo. It's a growing phenomena now people getting tattoos, tremendous increase in that has taken place since the '70s and just a huge increase. Actually the increase in getting tattoos is paralleled by the latest increase and that is trying to get rid of them. People try - there's a huge business developing in America, people trying to get rid of tattoos so we look around, you see celebrities have them, sports stars have them, athletes have them and it's just like it's making a great comeback.

You see it everywhere and so you think well is there anything to it, you know? Is there anything about it? Well, God looks on the inside, man looks on the outside, let's not worry or sweat about it. But I believe we need to understand what lies behind these things and I'm going to show you why this is so important. I want to just share with you something that will help you, just give you a little bit of insight. There's not many Bible verses about tattoos but there are some references around in the Bible, so we'll just start with looking at the word of God, want to look in Leviticus, Chapter 19, Verse 28. What you need to understand is the context of this. When we look in the Bible in the Old Testament, in these sections of the Old Testament, God had taken a people out of Egypt. His people Israel were in bondage in Egypt and they were in bondage not just in slavery to Egyptians. They were actually in slavery to occult powers. If you remember the story of how Moses confronted the Pharaoh, it would have been real easy for God to just get him out on the first confrontation. Actually there were 10 confrontations and each of the confrontations was with a different God that was one of the Gods of Egypt. Every time that Moses told the Pharaoh let my people go and the Pharaoh refused a plague would come into the nation and it was an attack on the foreign Gods.

After the 10 plagues, by the time it got to the end, the people in the nation were aware that the power of God was greater than the power of the Gods that the Egyptians served. Notice this; the final miracle that got the people of God released was the shedding of blood. In Exodus 12 everyone had to slay a lamb, they had to apply the blood of the lamb to

their house, to their building and only there would they be protected from a destroying angel. So we find that Israel was delivered out of a land full of idolatry, witchcraft and spiritism. Occult powers were immensely strong in Egypt. If you read the story of Moses' confrontation with the wizards of Egypt you find that some of the first miracles he did they were able to duplicate. He threw a stick down on the ground that turned into a snake - they threw their sticks down and they also turned into snakes. That is some occultic power.

The first three miracles that Moses did the wizards of Egypt, operating in sorcery and occult powers, were able to duplicate them. Perhaps what isn't know so much is that the Egyptians were worshippers of Baal the Sun God and part of the Baal worship involved both men and women being tattooed as a sign of ownership and allegiance to that God. Now when this verse comes up here in Leviticus, God is about to bring His people into the Promised Land, Canaan and He said I'm not bringing you in there because you're better than them. I'm bringing you in there because I love you, you're my people and it says because of what they have done.

When you look into the Bible about what they were doing in this land there was strong and huge occultic involvement. The nations worshipped Baal. They worshipped Ashtoreth, so they worshipped the Gods of the Sun, they worshipped the Gods of the Storm and the Winds and the Weather, they worshipped the Gods of Fertility and they had tremendous perverse acts went with it - and they got themselves tattooed. It was part of the allegiance to their Gods that they had the tattoos. A tattoo's just a mark in ink, but actually it's what it opens your life to is what's important.

When God gives this command He's talking in the context of making sure you don't get defiled by demonic powers, see? Notice what He says here. If you read in Verse 4, do not turn to idols, nor make yourself moulded Gods, for I am the Lord your God. Now you notice in Verse 28 He says you shall not make any cuttings in your flesh. Don't mark, cut or destroy or blemish your flesh for the dead, nor any tattoo marks on you, for I am the Lord. You go down a little further and then He begins to talk more in Chapter 20 and Verse 1; He talks about then the practices in the land, so

this scripture on tattooing is set in the context of occult involvement that went on in Egypt and went on in Canaan. God was quite strong and very forceful in His directions about being involved in the occult. He said do not be defiled by them. Do not do any of these abominations. In other words do not open your life to occult practices in any way; you will give room for demonic powers to enter your life.

The reason that God set this principle in place was because He knew the connection between tattooing and the occult realm. We'll explain what that connection is in a moment. He wanted to keep His people free from occult involvement so that they could walk in the blessings and inherit their land - and we'll see how significant that is for us just shortly.

The only other places that there are references to this kind of thing, of the cutting of the flesh, are found in 1 Kings 18. You remember the story when Elijah had a confrontation with the prophets of Baal and when he had a confrontation with them he called on them to demonstrate the power, the supernatural power of their Gods. What they did was they began to cut their flesh. They made themselves bleed and he just mocked them and belittled them and then demonstrated the true power of a covenant keeping God. In the New Testament there's a story of a man called the Gadarene in Mark, Chapter 5. When we look at that man he was heavily demonised. He had a legion of demons in him - that's 6,000 demons. Here's the interesting thing it said, that when he came near Jesus the demons began to manifest and the guy used to cut himself. So you notice the cutting, the marking of the flesh, in the Bible is continually associated with the occult realm and with bondage or slavery or servitude to that.

In a number of places in the Bible it talks about the issue of blood and bloodshed. When God began a walk with Abraham one of the things He required Abraham to do was to cut a covenant with Him. A covenant is the most strong or the most binding agreement that could be made between two people or between a person and God. Covenant is what God - God is a covenant keeping God, so covenants in the Bible, God instructed him how to make a covenant and it involved these things. He had a sacrifice. There was a sacrifice, there was a loss of an animal, an

animal shed its life, so he killed the animal and cut it in two and the blood was sprinkled there. Then the two people making covenant would walk between the two parts of the animal and various promises were made or commitments were made, but a blood covenant or a covenant, one of the things that characterise covenants in the Bible always there was the shedding of blood.

When you see any practice that involves the shedding of blood you are looking at covenant formation. Anything that deliberately involves the shedding of blood involves the forming of a covenant. A covenant is a binding agreement between two people that gives legal rights and entitlements. Okay then, now let me give you one other example that's an interesting one and that's found in the area of marriage.

Now the first time when a couple come together and they make a marriage covenant - notice this, they come up - wedding, wedding. It's not something people thought up - wedding is a covenantal commitment to one another. It's not just like living together. It's a covenantal commitment, so when two people become married what they do is they meet together and they make covenant with one another. They speak to one another declaring their relationship, declaring their commitment. They do it publicly so people hear it and see it and then you sign the book. They sign the register and they are married - except for one thing. If they do not have sexual intercourse it's considered legally that they're not married and the marriage can be annulled immediately.

The first time that a woman has sexual intercourse with a man, God has designed the woman and created a woman so that in the first act of intercourse there is the breaking of the hymen and the shedding of blood - shedding of blood. Shedding of blood in the first act of intercourse is an evidence that covenant has been formed, so every time in the Bible you see references to the shedding of blood it is about covenant, two people being bonded together. In fact it was so important in the Bible in Deuteronomy 22:15 that if there was ever doubt that a woman had been a virgin before she was married, if a husband became cranky and got complaining about his wife and said she wasn't a virgin, she'd had other men, the parents would bring the bedclothes from the first night they had

sexual intercourse and they had blood marks on them and they would call them the Tokens of Virginity. They would this as proof that she was a virgin the night she was married.

Consistently through the Bible the shedding of blood is connected to covenant formation and a tattoo - so what happens in a tattoo? On a tattoo you use a needle or some kind of cutting instrument. It can be a chisel or it can be a needle that's moving very, very fast and what it does is it penetrates the flesh, blood is shed. If you notice you'll see when a tattoo's being done they're continually wiping away the blood that comes. The skin is being pierced. What is happening is now there is pain, there's sacrifice, there is blood shed. You can't escape it that when blood is shed there is some kind of covenant form.

Among the North American Indians if you wanted to enter into covenant with a person you cut the hand and you touch the blood, one against another and and you became blood brothers. Getting the idea? Okay then, so we can understand that. Now this is a worldwide phenomenon. This is not just something that's really cool and in to do. This whole issue of tattoos goes back to as far as they can find data and information and so I did a little bit of research on it to find out some information about it. So if you want to find out the root of something, go and have a look at where it came from and what it's been used like and follow and track it's record. See, the issue is not whether it's right or wrong. That's eating from the wrong tree, tree of life and knowledge, good and evil. We're called to eat of the tree of life. We're called to live a life that brings honour and glory to God.

Now just follow through and track through the history of tattoos. A little while ago - somebody may have seen this - in 1991 some hikers in Europe found an alpine ice man. He was well preserved. He'd been there about 5,000 years, so that man's about 3000BC when he lived. The interesting thing was he was tattooed. When they investigated his body they found that it was quite a lot of bone damage and quite a lot of decay in his body. He would have been in a lot of pain. It's quite likely that the tattoos were part of invoking Gods to bring healing on his life.

In 1891 there was 4,000 year old mummy from Egypt found heavily tattooed. In fact as we looked through the various cultures you'll find all over the place, right through every culture in the world, tattoos appear. There's almost no culture that tattoos don't appear and always it's associated with the occult and engagement with spirit powers, or with slavery. There's never an exception to it. Slavery or occult powers, or both - so I'll just read for you a few examples.

South American head hunters used tattoos, so they would go hunting. They would get a head and once they've captured the person, killed them, taken off their head, they would generally eat the body and tattoo themselves as a sign of their victory and what they'd done. It's also done up in Borneo. I was up there among the Borneo people and they would tattoo themselves after they had got one of the heads, chopped someone's head off and shrunk it and hung it up.

I was able to go into some of the villages and you could see the shrunken heads of various people including Japanese soldiers and they would put a tattoo on themselves. In fact if you were a young man you could not become fully a man unless you took a head, took someone's head off and then got tattooed. The tattoo was the indication you had passed.

In Hawaiians they have tattoo Gods so they consult the tattoo Gods about when to get tattooed and what kind of tattoo and they look to the Gods to guide them, even in the pictures of the tattoos that they take. The Chinese use the tattoos to ward off evil spirits. So did the Japanese. They appeased different Gods. The Romans used tattoos to brand their slaves, so when Romans would take anyone prisoner or they'd take someone as a slave they would tattoo on them Tax Paid and that tattoo was an indication they belonged to the Roman government.

Many of the Christians, when the Romans captured them, they tattooed them on the head, Tax Paid, that they belonged to the Roman government. So Native Americans, they tattooed themselves heavily. Wherever you went in America with the Native Indians, they tattooed themselves; many of them the tattoos were required in their belief system to ward off evil spirits and to gain them access into the spirit world. They

believed that if they didn't have a tattoo they could never get recognised by the spirit Gods and they could never get access to the spirit world.

In Alaska the Eskimos tattooed themselves to appease the Gods so they'd be able to survive, so the tattooing for them was about a covenant with a spirit being so they would survive. Now no matter where you go in the world you find the same thing. In the Babylonian and Canaanite and the prostitutes that worshipped there all tattooed themselves with fertility tattoos. The male prostitutes also tattooed themselves and it was all part of the temple worship. It was part of their allegiance and loyalty to their Gods. In the primitive areas of India when people get tattoos often the person who does the tattoo is a shaman or a witch doctor or a sorcerer, so everywhere you look in the world and I'm only giving you a summary of it, but in Africa they don't necessarily because of the dark skin do tattoos, but what they do is they do extreme forms of body piercing with the lips and ears and whatever.

What it is about is about allegiance to their Gods. It's about calling on their Gods to protect them so they don't have trouble with evil spirits. It's all over the world, so think about that. That's where it all came from.

Now we look at it and we think I wonder why this is such a big deal. We look in the western world, seamen would get tattoos. People were criminals, they'd get tattooed. The Nazis tattooed all the Jews, see so tattoos are part of a slave culture and part of an occult culture. So what's the big deal anyway if you get a nice little picture, you get something - the picture of the dove or something like that or a cross or Jesus Loves Me - what is the deal about all of this stuff? I sort of ask the question I wonder why this is such a big issue today and this is what I believe is the reason it's such a big issue - and this may surprise you. [Laughs]

This is what I believe is the issue and why it's such a big issue. How many believe that we're living in a time of unprecedented supernatural outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Okay, we all agree on that, and if you were to look into the world right now and look at the world at the age or the age of the populations, you would find that more than 50 percent of the population of the world, much more than 50%, I heard it's a lot higher

than that - is under 30 and it's in this age group that tattooing is very, very prominent.

Now here's why I believe it's such an issue. I believe we're living in a day of outpouring of the Holy Spirit, when God is raising a generation for whom the supernatural and miracles will be normal. I have longed all my life for such a day. I've longed to be a young person today - how glorious. How wonderful to be in a day and an hour when there are miracles happening, where the power of the Holy Ghost is coming, where ordinary people moving in the gifts of the spirit, young people and older people being called up and having visions of heaven. We're living in a day of unprecedented openness of the heavens, unprecedented miracles.

When I was involved in the church in the early days, it was rare to find anyone had any supernatural ministry at all, rare. It was rare! It was something that used to happen, didn't happen any more and now 30 years later we have a generation and you're that generation that God is raising up. He has in mind that you would learn how to reach into the realm of the spirit, how to discover the ways of the spirit, how to move into the heavens and begin to experience the glory of God, engage God. One of my children at the age of nine had an encounter, took her up to heaven. This is a great hour to be alive!

This is an hour for the supernatural. Now isn't it interesting that in a time and a season in history when God is pouring out His spirit making supernatural experiences available for a generation that the devil is trying to make inroad after inroad into the young generation, to try and find ways to hold them, restrain them, hold them back, compromise them, destroy their lives.

Let me share with you something I found when I was in Singapore. I was in a Bible school. We had 700, 800 students there and the Lord just began to speak to me about video games opening a door through sorcery through role playing games and opening the imagination through playing those games for extended times, that the Lord told me that there's a door open to the occult realm, people get involved with sorcery. Had a word of knowledge on someone who was struggling with addiction to a particular

game and it was tormenting them and they couldn't get this thing out of their life. This young man came up on an altar call. I asked him what the game was and he told me. I asked him what role he had and he said I play the part of a wizard and what I do in the game is I cast spells on people and I walk through the game and the goal of it is to destroy people using magic power to gain their powers and to begin to grow in power and go from level to level and level.

If you go up enough levels you begin to gain swords and all kinds of things and you can actually sell them on the internet. I said well would you be willing to renounce the game and renounce the role you played? He said yes and I led him through a simple prayer to renounce his agreement, his covenant, his trading with a demonic spirit operating as a sorcerer in the game. He took on the identity of that spirit. Now as he began to renounce the game this is what he was saying; in the name of the Lord Jesus - he began to declare I belong to Jesus Christ, I confess Jesus Christ is my Lord and saviour. I'm redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ from every curse, every demonic power. He said in Jesus' name I renounce this game - World of Warcraft. I renounce my role in this place - and as he began to speak his renouncing of the game and the particular role he played, his face contorted. It was caught on camera, it was caught - everyone saw it. Eight hundred students were stunned as they watched this guy who's in Bible school, a committed Christian wanting to serve the Lord, given up a year of his life to train so he can become knowledgeable in the word of God and walking with God. There he is manifesting a demonic power, the spirit of sorcery, manifested on his body. He fell on the ground, writhed around, shouted and screamed and finally the demon came out of him - he was free. I had an altar call and we had between 200 and 300 students come up and there was a massive move of deliverance from those young people playing that game.

When you say what's that got to do with tattoos - very simply this. These people were fully committed Christians, a young generation rising up to serve God, yet without even knowing it they'd opened a gateway to an occult power. A spirit of sorcery was operating in their life, eroding,

undermining, continually resisting them, causing them problems consistently in their Christian walk. That day they were set free.

There is a whole realm of ways that demons seek to come into people. They do not announce they're coming in. They find a deceptive way and what more appropriate way to get into people than games, see? But another way they get in is through pre-marital sex. When you're involved in a sexual relationship with someone you become involved in a soul tie, in a bond. It's an ungodly tie. You become connected to that person and a gateway is opened to demons to come through to enter your life. You are connected literally to every person that that person has had involvement sexually with.

When you are involved with drugs you open your life to the realm of sorcerer. I remember one guy and he's a good Christian, been serving in the church and his wife rang me up one day and she said my husband's in real trouble. I said why is that? She said well, he's seeing spiders coming out of the walls. I said spiders out of the walls - whoa, that's drugs. Is he on drugs? She said yes, he's got shingles all around his belly. He's in immense pain and the doctors have put him on drugs to try and calm him or to sedate him or to comfort and to deal with the pain, but he's in his bed hallucinating, seeing spiders come out of the walls.

I said was he involved in drugs in his life? She said yes, he was heavily into drugs before he become a Christian - said he'd never been set free. The gate is still open, so I went around there. We went to his bedroom - one of the funniest deliverances I've ever had - and I thought oh my, I hope the doctor doesn't come in and see what the Pastor's up to. Anyway the guys there and he's lying in his bed and he's wild. His eyes are sort of wild [laughs] like that, looking out like that and he's looking - they're coming out of the walls.. spiders - you know and so he's got these spiders coming out of the walls. So I said well I know what we need to do, so we just walked through a simple prayer and then I laid hands on him and began to break the agreements he'd made with the spirit of sorcery that had come into his life as he'd taken drugs.

Taking drugs altered his mind, altered his state of consciousness and created a doorway, a gateway for the demon to come in so we broke the power of his agreement with that demon, began to command the spirits to come out. Well did he manifest! Now he's wild. He's on this bed and he's manifesting - I'm thinking flip, he's going crazy here and so I've got to try and restrain him a little bit and there's only me and his wife there. So I sort of thought if I just get the bedclothes and just sort of hold them over him I can pin his arms and I can sort of hold him there and restrain him. That was years and years ago now - so anyway I put my hand on his head and I held him down like this, sort of in this uncomfortable position trying to restrain him and he just bucks more - so in the end I thought if I sit on top I'll be able to hold him down ... [Laughter] ... be able to pray. I really was just learning. I was very new. It's my first year really doing deliverance so got to hold him down. So I just sat on him and I sat - his wife's eyes are just like saucers watching - so I'm sitting on top of him and I've got the bedclothes held down so he can't get his arms out and punch and fight.

I'm commanding these demons to come out and he begins to buck like a horse. I'm just ridin' that fella! It was like a rodeo you know? We'd just come out of the cage and it was all on! I'm yaah! Well we're going like this half an hour. His wife just stands - she's whoa! She can't believe it. I'm commanding the spirit of sorcery to go - didn't know anything better than to do that. I'd know more now but didn't know anything much in those days - and in the middle of it the thought crossed my mind I wonder if his doctor paid a visit right now and saw the Pastor ministering to his client. ... [Laughter] ... Anyway the guy got freed up, got totally freed, no more spiders in the walls, no more things coming out of the walls. He was totally set free.

What had happened was that he'd opened his life through the drug taking and when he got onto the painkillers it just put him back in that zone and the demons started to manifest. They had never gone. The drugs opened the door. Sorcery was able to come into him. Now think about this. When you get involved with tattooing you're entering into blood covenant with the person who did the tattoo, you open your life to whatever spirits he's engaged with, you allow them to come in. You get an image of something

associated with death, a spirit of death can enter your life. You say well how will I know that? Well I'll tell you - you wouldn't know. That's the whole point. That's why I'm sharing the word of God with you tonight. You wouldn't know.

But this is what would happen. If a spirit of death came into you you would find emotional numbness. You would find disconnectedness. You would find it difficult to form relationships. You'd find it difficult to flow from your heart in an intimate relationship. Why? Because the spirit of death had wrapped itself around you and now had a grip on your heart.

Sometimes the Indians used to tattoo themselves with pictures of animals. Then they'd call on the spirit of that animal to enter them and to give them the abilities that the animal had. See tattooing is directly connected with the spirit realm. It opens a gateway through bloodletting for you to allow demons to come in. That's what the problem is with it.

If you've opened yourself up, you've got sexual pictures on there, opened yourself up to a tormenting unclean spirit and so when people get tattooed very often it's in rebellion or pain and they do it to try and find an expression somehow and in doing so open the gateway for the demonic. So what do we do about that if you've got tattoos? Well some people want to get them all taken off. I just said well Tim, why bother about it? It's a great testimony of God's grace in your life.

Here's the thing. God wants to tattoo you. ... [Laughter] ... In 1 Corinthians 1, in Verse 22 it says now God has marked us, stamped us like stamping with a signet ring. Now the way they used to have an ownership of things in the New Testament days and Roman days is they'd have some wax on something and they'd take a ring that's got an engraving on it and they'd stamp it on there and you had a mark of a signet ring on you. It was a sign of ownership. It was a seal of governments or whatever it was and the Bible says now God has sealed you - now not putting marks on your body, He's not wanting to do that. God has sealed you with the Holy Spirit of promise so God has got a mark to put on you! He wants to put His spirit on you! He wants to fill you

with His spirit! He wants you empowered with the Holy Ghost, marked by this person's mark, the spirit of God is with them!

The Bible says in Acts 1:8, He said you shall receive power of the Holy Ghost coming on you! God's desire is you be stamped, you belong to Him just like you have been purchased out of a marketplace. His stamp is the stamp of His spirit in your heart. Now you should be glad you don't live in Old Testament times you know, because in the Old Testament times they had a different way of stamping that you belong to Jesus. One or two know that. You would have to be circumcised, have to have your flesh cut away and blood shed - very, very painful process. Today the circumcision's one of the heart, putting our heart right with God, receiving the stamp of His spirit. Whatever we've been involved in we can be set free. Listen, if you've opened your life up through tattoos, opened your life up through drugs, opened your life up through sexual sin, opened your life up through these kinds of things, through video games or whatever, it's very, very simple. You just need to come and repent before the Lord and renounce the covenantal agreement you made. You say well I didn't know I was doing that. Hey, the devil doesn't matter whether you know or not. He knows if you do it he's got right to be there and that right has to be cancelled. It is cancelled by the blood of Jesus Christ, the blood of a greater covenant. It's the blood of the king of kings who came to earth! Oh, He shed His blood. You know why He shed His blood? So whatever you got into with the devil, He has got something stronger than it! When Jesus shed His blood He broke the power of the devil, broke the list of ordinances against you! He broke the power of tattoos, witchcraft, sorcery, all those kinds of things. All that remains is for you to repent, rise up and believe and engage with Him. Be a great thing to do tonight wouldn't it, a great thing to do tonight. Why don't we close our eyes right now?

[Opening Testimony, by Tim Cashmore]

[Mike Connell] Fantastic, great to have you here tonight, and we're going to get Tim Cashmore to come up in a moment. Where's Tim? Tattoo Tim, come on Tattoo Tim, come on up here. ... [Applause.] ... Come on, and he's going to share a testimony just in a moment. It'll be fantastic

testimony. How many know Tim or have met Tim before? ... [Applause.] ... You know Tim? Fantastic, he's a great guy. Come on, up on the stage here. Come on, I want you up here where everyone can see you, that's right, amen. Now I'm going to speaking tonight on tattoos, so I needed to get someone who's tattooed to come along and share a testimony.

Before we do that I've got a video clip, and I'd like you'd to have a look at this little video clip. It lasts about 15 seconds, and it's for all of you who have a tattoo, or would like to get a tattoo. They look beautiful when you're 23, but they're something else when you get older. Have a look at this. [Plays video clip: ...lower back tattoo. Look, there's a really cool lower back tattoo on an attractive 20 year old girl. Now watch what happens to that tattoo... [Laughter, applause] - End of video clip.] So for those of you who have a back tattoo welcome to what it'll look like in the future. [Laughs]

Okay, let's give Tim a welcome as he comes up, going to share a testimony. Tim, come on now, come and share with us.

[Tim Cashmore] Good evening church. Oh wow. I sort of got a surprise on this one because I was just talking to Pastor Mike yesterday and he said oh, we'll have to get you up and give a testimony one day - well today's the day! [Laughs] So first thing I want to do really is give the honour to God because without God I wouldn't have a testimony and the testimony is hugely important in my life, the transformation He's made.

Now I suppose I'd better give you a bit of background of where I came from. I came from a broken family, split up family. My father left when I was five then I had an abusive stepfather that came in and I pretty much got beaten up from the age of about seven all the way to about 13 when he kicked me out of home. I was full of hatred of anybody in authority, so that's where my first tattoo came from. I was 14 years old, I was half way through high school and I decided I want a tattoo! So I went and saw my mate... The other thing I was getting into was drugs and I was actually make it a God in my life, so I wanted a picture of my God. You can't see it, it's under this one. Yeah, it's under this one. This is a cover up. It's actually a big dope leaf. That was my first tattoo and it was done with a

matchstick and a needle and some ink and it's just like donk, donk, donk, donk, donk.

Over the years the funny thing about the tattoos, they're a story of my life and what I was doing at certain parts of my life. Each tattoo's got a different reason and a different story behind it. Sort of fast-forwarding through life I was getting more and more tattoos and more and more and heavily into what I was doing, heavily into drugs and even worse than what I started. Life was really not good and then, fast-forwarding through it, I become a Christian, started learning about God and God started doing a transformation in my life. But it was only earlier this year - must be about eight months ago, nine months ago - I asked our elder at that stage in our church, Ian, about tattoos and what they meant.

He went away and he fasted and prayed and then came back and seen me. After church we were sitting just in the row over there, everybody else had left so there was nobody else here and he started sharing with me about what I'd actually done. Now when you get ink as they call it you bleed and you're actually making a blood covenant with the person giving you the tattoo, but it's more than that. Just like when you have sex with a woman outside of wedlock and you are [spiritually-tied, soul-tied] tied to her and you are tied to everybody that she's tied to and the same thing is of tattoos. With every person that those people had tattooed - because I've got one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight - eight different tattooists tattooed on my body and so I was tied to each of those eight people, but I was also tied to every single person that they had tattooed, then it keeps on going and you're tied to those people, tied to those people, tied to those people.

Ian and I started praying. Now I've seen deliverance before and I've always thought oh well, I wonder if they're actually putting on a little bit of an act? Well there was only me and Ian there so I had nobody to put an act on in front of and hello! You guys may just think oh, the spirit realm's you know, you see it in the movies and all that stuff - it can't be that real. It's real! It's real - because this demon decided to come out and man, it's not fun. It is not fun! Apparently some come out really easy. This didn't want to come out. There was a bit of coughing - there was quite a lot of

coughing. There was a bit of pain. It was actually a lot of pain - but I just thank God because as I shared when I first got up the testimony is about God and God loves us so much. He didn't want me tied to those people and He did not want me tied to those spirits, so when Ian delivered me from them, a radical transformation in my life, in my walk; praying was so much easier, engaging God was so much easier. It broke off a few nasty spirits and I have to give testimony to God.

I've dealt with some more stuff since then and so I've just got to - if you've got the chance not to start don't start. If you've already started or if you've got tattoos see somebody who's an elder or a Pastor or something and actually ask them about it. Get more information about it because they don't tell you back in those days what you're actually getting yourself in to. It's like drugs, nobody tells you what drugs are going to get you into. It's the same sort of thing. Before you even start get some really good information.

I've had young Christian people come up to me and say oh, I've heard about Christian tattooists tattooing. I should get them - you know, I could get good Christian tattoos and stuff like that, but it doesn't make any difference. They are deluded in their own minds because they are tying themselves to the people that they tattoo and everything that goes with each person they're actually tying themselves to that and if you get tied to that person you're getting tied to every single person in that line. Unfortunately the curses come and the demons come and ride upon that. So that's about all I can say about tattoos - and thank you God.

[Mike Connell] Wow, fantastic. What a great story. Hey come on, show them all before you get down, come on. You'll get to see them all - you might as well see them all. Look at that aye?

[Tim Cashmore] So that's when I was getting heavily into dragons. I now know what dragons are and what they mean. There's a star sign there because I was getting into astrology and everything that means; dragons all over there. As I said that was a cover up. I was actually a Christian when I got that. [Laughs] I'd only been a Christian for a few months and my wife turned around and said to me we can't have you walking around

with a dope leaf on your arm ... [Laughter] ... and so we got that covered up. This one's all about the Chinese year sign. I was under the year sign of the rat so as I said it's funny what you get yourself tied up to.

I've got a raven because I was really into death at one stage, which is really not a good place to go I tell you. And you get tied to them. Because I had a tattoo of death I was actually tied to death...

[Mike Connell] The spirit of death.

[Tim Cashmore] ...and I'm really, really glad that I'm free of that one because man, it's not a nice one. My nickname when I was a druggy was Mutant. People are like what?! Well I used to get so wasted I couldn't even stand. People would look at me and I'd go aaahhh because I was just away in the fairies, away in the thing. Once again this was the demon that I saw when I was stoned and I actually got this guy called Ugg - I know, nice name - who was a punk from Auckland and I was describing what I saw and he actually tattooed what I saw. So the spirit realm is definitely true and it's definitely real.

[Mike Connell] Wow, isn't that an interesting testimony? Come on, let's give Tim a clap and let's give the Lord a clap, thank Him for what He's done. ... [Applause] ... There's a lot of stuff people don't tell you isn't there?