

How Political Operative Roger Stone Was Saved by Jesus and Pardoned by Trump

Controversy has swarmed around Roger Stone since the time of Nixon's presidency. Google "Roger Stone," and not one positive story appears in the results. In 2016, as a Democratic Congress tried to find impeachable offenses against President Trump, he claims federal prosecutors pressured him and courts violated his constitutional rights in order to get him to lie about his phone conversations with Trump.

Stone appeared on my podcast *The Strang Report* to share his story. "My lawyer was called down to Washington with only days to go before the release of Special Counsel Mueller's final report," he says. "When it came to [evidence of] Russian collusion, they were completely empty."

"They wanted me to be the ham in their ham sandwich," he continues. "They went to my lawyer and said, 'Here's a list of 26 cell phone conversations between candidate Trump and you in 2016. All you've got to do is remember, and if you'll testify that all of these conversations pertained to the Russians and WikiLeaks, we'll urge the judge to give you no jail time, to give you leniency.'"

Stone refused. Then he was prosecuted. "The reason for my prosecution was to pressure me to bear false witness against President Trump, who's been a friend of mine literally for 40 years," he says.

Stone felt depressed and angry because he was under a gag order and couldn't even defend himself publicly against accusations that included lying to Congress, tampering with a witness and obstructing a House investigation into whether the

Trump campaign colluded with Russia in the 2016 presidential election.

"I couldn't even defend myself on social media or in an interview like this," Stone says. "I literally couldn't comment on anything in public. I believe it was unconstitutional, but the judge didn't see it that way."

"I reached a point where I was angry, depressed, frustrated and despondent," he adds. "Many pastors, clerics and all of these holy men were urging me to take refuge in the Lord, to take this heavy burden and turn it over to Christ."

Those pastoral influences urged him to get right with Christ, confess his sins and to pledge to follow Jesus. "I was trying," Stone says. "I would be reading the Psalms. I would be reading Proverbs, but I wasn't feeling it. I wasn't getting what I was seeking. Then a very young pastor by the name of Randy Coggins, whom I had met years before at a book signing, was just on me three times a week saying, 'You need to turn to Christ. You have the answer in your hands. You need to just turn your life over to Christ.'"

He continues, "I was trying, but I still wasn't feeling it."

Stone was then invited to meet the famous evangelist Franklin Graham before Graham preached in Boca Raton, Florida. That's when Stone remembered two of the experiences he had with Billy Graham, Franklin's father. When he was a 12-year-old boy, his Aunt Ida, who was actually just a close friend of Stone's grandmother, took Stone to a Billy Graham crusade in Bridgeport, Connecticut. And in 1969, he met Billy Graham while working for President Nixon.

"When I was working for Nixon, I was assigned to take the golf cart over to the old Hilton on Key West and pick up Rev. Graham to drive him over to the Nixon compound," Stone explains. "He gave me a Bible on that occasion, which he signed and which I of course still have."

All this meant Stone gladly accepted the invitation to meet the famed evangelist's son. "We met on his tour bus," says Stone. "He gave me about 20 minutes, and he gave me a signed Bible. I gave him a copy of my book, *The Making of the President 2016*."

Then the younger Graham asked Stone, "How can I help you?"

"And, of course, still thinking like the political operative that I am, I knew he had a close, personal relationship with Donald Trump," Stone says. "And I said, 'Well, you could put in a good word with your friend, the president, in terms of clemency.'"

"I'll see what I can do, but let me give you a piece of advice," Graham said. "If you will turn to Christ, if you will reaffirm your faith in Christ—I know other men who were in a very similar situation. And when they put their faith in the Lord, they were saved."

"Mr. Stone, are you a religious man?" Graham asked. Stone told him he used to be a practicing Catholic but had lost faith in the Catholic Church.

"I've been trying to read the Bible, but I'm not finding the solace that I'm looking for," Stone told Graham.

At the end of their time in the bus, Graham challenged Stone. "And he said, 'Well, I want you to think about this,'" Stone says. "I really think that the solution to your problems is the reaffirmation of your belief in Christ. If you will receive Christ as your personal Savior, Mr. Stone, I guarantee you He will deliver you from your persecutors. God will never abandon you."

After their time together, Stone watched Graham preach in an outdoor amphitheater.

"Reverend Graham had reserved some seats for us up front," he

says. "He spoke exactly 30 minutes, and he came to the part of his oration where he said, 'I don't care what your problem is, whether it is alcoholism or drug addiction or health problems, or relationship problems or family problems, or financial problems. The answer lies in God. The answer lies in your faith in Jesus Christ.'"

Graham invited those who wanted to live forever with their heavenly Father to stand up, confess their sins and follow Jesus. Graham's final words to him replayed in Stone's mind: "If you will receive Christ as your personal Savior, Mr. Stone, I guarantee you He will deliver you from your persecutors. God will never abandon you."

"At that moment, I felt a calling, and I stood up," Stone says. "I can't even tell you the feeling that came over me. It was like having cement blocks lifted from your shoulders. I wasn't worried anymore. I wasn't scared. I wasn't concerned. I left that field with a bounce in my step."

His friend Coggins, who drove Stone to the event, saw the change come over Stone. "You've turned the corner. You've done the right thing," Coggins told him.

When Stone arrived home, his wife said, "What's come over you? You left here despondent, almost suicidal, and now you seem very happy."

"You know what? It's all going to be fine," Stone replied. "It's all going to work out."

Although Stone felt more peace, his lawyers were looking at the worst-case scenario. "We had a trial in which my First-, Fourth- and Sixth- amendment rights had been completely violated," he says. "The government, as we would later learn, was hiding exculpatory evidence from my lawyers. And my own lawyers were shamed, intimidated, and they never put up much of a fight. It was an ordeal."

He continues, "And then on the day of sentencing, when I brought a Bible to church with me, I was mocked everywhere in the news media." Stone was sentenced to 40 months in prison, but days before he was to be sent to a Georgia prison, Trump commuted Stone's sentence, which set him free.

"In the end, I was saved by the Lord, and I was saved for a purpose," Stone explains. "After I got pardoned, my family said, 'Look, maybe it's time to just hang it up. Maybe it's time to retire. Write some historical books, but maybe you should leave the fray.'"

"I said, 'No. That's not why the Lord saved me," he continues. "'The Lord didn't save me to climb into a hole and disappear.'"

Despite being mocked by old friends and colleagues, who described Stone's conversion as a head fake, Stone remains resolute. "This Saturday with many others in the Love Life Organization, I'll be demonstrating outside an abortion clinic," he says. "That's what God compels me to do. And to the extent that I have celebrity or credibility, I'm putting it all on the line."

Besides his public activism, he is also privately seeking out more answers from God. "I have not started a day without a morning Bible reading since the time of my pardon," he says. "I'm still using the Bible to inform me, and it interests me that some of those guys lived to be 800 years old. I'd like to figure [that] out."

Stone may not have figured out everything about Christ, the Bible or Christianity, but here's what he does know, in his own words: "I'm living proof that Christ can do anything."

Some may find his conversion dubious, but in our short conversation, he repeated that sentence three times.

Listen to my entire conversation with Roger Stone on this

episode of the *Strang Report* podcast, and share it with friends and others who may want to hear Stone's conversion story in his own words. Subscribe to the *Strang Report* on Apple Podcasts or your favorite podcast platform.

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