

COMPLETELY CLEAN IN GOD'S EYES

Euan Murray is a professional rugby player from Scotland who currently plays for Pau in the French Top 14 league, and he made 66 appearances for Scotland's national team from 2005-15. A tighthead prop, he developed a firm foundation in Christ after a powerful encounter with God.

At the age of 25, all my dreams had come true. A successful rugby player, I had everything I'd ever wanted for my life. I thought I was the man! But deep down inside, my conscience really bothered me about how I was living — the drunkenness, the sex outside of marriage, the parties, the money and everything else that came with a life lived in the spotlight. I slowly became really bothered by it. I also was having a lot of injuries and thought they might be related to my careless lifestyle.

One night I was in the changing room before a big game when it all seemed to come to a head. I thought, "If I get one more bad injury, then I'm going to turn back to God." I went out to play and within five minutes, when I went to tackle someone, I got knocked unconscious and started having a seizure on the field. My teammates and all the fans thought I was dying.

When I regained consciousness, I realized what had happened and what I had said before the game. For the first time in my life, I was terrified of God because I believed He really was in control and that He could see everything. I believed He was angry with me — but I believed. I now believe He gave me another chance, that this was Him being merciful.

After this experience, I tried to change my life, but the harder I fought against temptations, the more I found myself falling into them and giving into them. It was several months later, still unable to play rugby because of my injury, that I realized I didn't really care about my career anymore. I just wanted to know that when I died, I was going to go to Heaven. I was reading the Bible and discovering how powerful, pure, kind



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and compassionate Jesus was. I wanted to know I was forgiven. I believed Jesus died on the cross for sinners, but I didn't believe He had died for me.

One night I went to another church, and walking in I felt like a scumbag — just a complete hypocrite. But I knew that if Jesus was in there, He'd want me to be there and just listen to Him, because He says, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32).

So I went inside and basically heard the preacher teach a sermon about my life, how I'd tried everything but not been satisfied. He said there was something that could change my life and that was to believe Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and that He came to this earth to die for our sins. He said you have to believe it with all your heart and ask Christ into your heart to be the Lord of your life. And I knew that if I did that, there'd be no going back. I knew it would have massive repercussions for the rest of my life, but I thought that if He did die for me, then I owe Him everything. So I went home and dropped to the floor and just prayed and prayed. With tears, I was begging Christ to change me.

The preacher said you need to be born again, so I asked God to make me born again, though I didn't know what it meant. Then after a few weeks, I realized the temptations which were impossible for me to resist before suddenly didn't have the same power over me. It was like I was off the choke chain — the chain was broken and I knew Christ must have done this.

I knew Christ died on the cross for my sins,

leaving me completely clean in the eyes of God. I was the happiest man alive! I wanted to get baptized, so I invited all my teammates to the baptism, and about 10 of them came! Since I was the guy who would lead the charge into the night clubs, strip clubs and other places we shouldn't have gone, this baptism had a great impact on my teammates. Suddenly I was telling my teammates, "Guys, I don't want to go there anymore. I don't want to talk like that. I'm not going to tell the dirty jokes or stories anymore because I don't find them funny now. Christ had to die for those things, so I don't want to laugh at things for which Christ suffered in my place."

This new birth had a massive impact on my life. As for rugby, I thought, "What should I do? Should I still play rugby as a Christ-follower?" I knew that Christ is kind and compassionate, and thought that maybe Christ-followers are supposed to always be really gentle.

But as I read about Christ, I saw that He was passionate, as well as compassionate. When He went into the temple, He made a whip and He drove hundreds of people out of that place single-handedly. He threw tables over and threw chairs over (John 2:15). I don't think He would have done that gently. He's a mighty man — fully God and fully man. If He could do that and be sinless, then I could play rugby and be aggressive, but not sin.

I could use this for His glory. So I can try to hit someone as hard as I can while being careful not to have any hatred in my heart or in my mind, and to be like Christ. And that is my aim. 🏉

Euan's favorite verse:

***"I have not come to
call the righteous, but
sinners to repentance."***

— Luke 5:32

SCOTLAND

