

This is the transcript of Keith's story, that was part of Susannah's sermon. Listen to the sermon and then it will make sense.

It was time for me to go to Evensong in my local church. During that service there was a time of intercessory prayer and in the time of silence and praying and talking with the Lord, a voice suddenly came. It was an audible voice and it was for me, saying,

'Keith, I want you to sell your printing business'.

Well, I sat up with a start and looked around me. Next to me was an elderly gentleman and he was in prayer and he hadn't said anything. I didn't hear any more. The service finished and I walked out of the church with excitement wondering what he wanted me to do that for. I walked home and I told my wife, Pauline, what had happened. We prayed about it and thought, well, we'll put it to the test.

So Monday came, and that evening we were sitting down and there was a knock on the door. There was a gentleman standing there and he said, 'Are you Keith?' I said, 'Yes I am.'

And he said, 'I believe that you have a printing business.'

I said, 'Yes I do.'

'Well,' he said, 'I'm looking for some photographic equipment because I want to purchase some for my own business, to expand.'

So I said, 'Well I can show you what my photographic equipment is like. It's in my garage.'

So, we stepped into the garage and he looked at it, a printing down frame, process camera, developing equipment and photographic materials.

He said, 'This is just what I'm looking for.'

'Well,' I said, 'strangely enough I'm going to sell it. I want about £1100.'

So he said, 'Would £1000 be alright?'

I said, 'Yes,' and in his pocket he had an envelope with £1000!

He said, 'I've got the van outside. I can take it right now.'

So he took the equipment out of the garage and placed it into his large van and drove off.

I came in and sat down and I said, 'Well, God certainly wants me to sell the business. I wonder where this is going to lead to?'

The days passed and it came to do the weekend, and I was going to work on Saturday morning. I went up to the premises about to start work and there was a man standing at the door.

He said, 'I've got a problem and I believe that you work on printing presses. One of mine is not working too well.'

I said, 'Yes I've got two presses, would you like to look at my mine and tell me if they are similar?'

He said, 'Yes, they're the same, but mine is so old and it's not working too well. I wondered if you could come and look at it and maybe repair it for me?'

So I said to him, 'Well, would you like a new press? It is fairly new and I want to sell it.'

So we worked out a price he said, 'If you can deliver me that press by Saturday week I'll pay you the money.'

So I sold the press. I went back to my works but I had nothing to do the printing with, so I had to go round to tell my customers that no longer could I do the work for them. I had no idea what God wanted me to do. The following weekend a friend of mine came round. We hadn't told anybody, by the way, not a soul, not even the children, nobody in the family. My friend said, 'Keith, I've been reading the church of England newspaper and I've seen this advert, and it's you, Keith, it's you! They want evangelists in the Church Army to come forward for training and I believe God is calling you to that training as an evangelist and a worker for him.'

So I looked at the advert and looked at the requirements and thought, oh well that lets me off the hook, the maximum age is 40 and I'm nearly 40 so they won't want me. But we thought, nothing lost, so I picked the phone up and spoke to them and they said,

'Would you like to come forward for selection?'

But I said, 'I'm nearly 40!'

'That's okay, you can still come forward for selection Keith. It's next week for the whole weekend, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday and you must bring your wife.'

So that's what God wanted me to do, to go forward for full-time training in ministry as an evangelist with the Church Army. So we went forward for selection. It was very interesting, very challenging and very thought-provoking. The weekend came to a conclusion and we all sat in the lecture room and the the chief secretary said that we would be hearing next week whether we are to go forward or not for three years and they are very fussy who they choose. There was not much sleep that week until the postman came and there was a brown envelope on the mat. We opened the envelope and to our astonishment and amazement and disbelief Pauline and I had been asked to go forward for training in the Church Army.