

The Journey from Fear to Faith to Blessing

I would like to share a small portion of my Journey with you this morning. Over the course of the next few minutes I will highlight three things that God has revealed to me personally in my life. It is not easy airing ones dirty laundry. I hope that you may find something to take away this morning and I pray that the Lord will bless you on your journey with him.

The three aspects to note in todays message are:

- 1) Perseverance on the Journey
- 2) Gods Amazing Grace
- 3) The Blessings of Faith

Youth:

Mom and Dad in professional music - Moving every 6 months - very successful - had every toy made

Life was good, it was easy and I wanted for nothing...

Mom and Dad got saved - gave up fame / success and a huge pay check

Saved at 5 and spoke in tongues - baptized at 12

Received prophecy at Revival Tabernacle and then again at Bible Fellowship that one day I would be a pastor and a pastor to pastors.

Mom and Dad struggled because all they knew was country music

At the time there was a perception in our church that only wealthy successful people could be

used in Gods service. Now well rounded churches know that everyone matters

They were essentially held back for financial reasons - came out years later

Nevertheless they itinerated and did music for the church.

Several people in the church rejected me due to my clothes. out of style shoes, cordoroy pants and snap shirts. so far out of style that five years later, the look might be back in style. On sunday certain people would say things to me like. "arent you embarrassed to come into Gods house wearing that?". Which was nothing compared to the things they would say to my mother in front of me..

God planted the seed that in order to persevere, I needed to keep my eyes on him

and not measure my relationship with him on others perceptions.

My parents administered hard Discipline

No Sunday school only church and bible school

Discouraged in music - because of past - felt rejected by parents - felt they didnt want me in their music.

In short - if it wasn't for actually being touched by the Holy Spirit and really finding Jesus in my early years, headging me in and teaching me his grace through the years, I probably would not be in church today.

Moving on average every 6 months until grade 11 - no roots - no friends

Bullying by others in school - beat up frequently - did not fight back, I believed that if I didn't turn the other cheek, I would go to hell.

Picked last for every team

- I felt rejection by people - I learned forgiveness and unconditional love. God taught me to love the people and hate their sin

in the moment we often miss the whole point. With the right perspective we grow.

Regardless of hurt and rejection by others Jesus through his church gives us an honouring community in which to belong.

Many people ask what God's grace looks like... Here is a perfect example of his compassion and Love for a young man.. He hedges us in and leads us back to relationship with him.

Deuteronomy 31:6 tells us:

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

Now remember that from 5, my I had witnessed my parents struggle with acceptance in ministry. They itinerated here, there and everywhere.

They sang and preached and faithfully delivered the word, but everywhere they went their was no permanent resting place.

My parents were a good example to me and showed me the sacrificial life - but I wanted a lot more. I could not understand why they would go from place to place and would continually choose to serve the Lords work regardless of the struggle or the financial implications.

I asked my Dad once why he did ministry and he told me that he helped put so many people into bar stools that his desire from The Lord was to reach take them back off the bar stools and bring them to Christ.

People - I loved Jesus but... quite honestly that life frightened me, I thought that to be a servant of Christ would mean I would have to give up success.

Thus began my 40 year walk in the valley of dry bones. In short – just like Israel who wandered the desert for 40 years, There was a desert of my own making to walk in. Not being in the will of the Lord and feeling his presence is just like being in the desert. It gives you a thirst that is never satisfied. I find it interesting that Israel spent 40 years on a journey that could have been done in 18 days... Israel wasn't ready and neither was I... p

Desert Time:

I did not want to live in fear, I rejected turning the other cheek so instead of turning to Jesus. I

studied Tae Kwon Do / Karate for 16 years and became a master of the martial arts. I became very effective at stopping cold any violence that came my way. I spent 16 years to learn how not to fight. Something I was doing to begin with. All I had achieved was the development of self-confidence and fighting skills. I was not at peace.

being in a very lonely state I met a pregnant young woman. She told me she had been raped and I took compassion on her, fell in love with her and I began to live in sin.

I raised her son as my own for a year.

I was in Sin, but Gods amazing grace still allowed the Holy Spirit to call to my heart.

I was convicted and wanted to get my life right. I started to seek his face again...

... The next thing I knew my fiancé started cheating on me with my Karate instructor.

I tried to instill some Godly principles in the house and I wound up having to retrieve her from the local park drunk and taking off her clothes several times. Those of you who have had excessive alcohol mixed up in your relationships can attest to the fact that I was literally in my own personal hell on earth.

I was afraid and could have backed off but pressed more into God and...

Soon afterward she left me and went back to the man whom she had said raped her stating that he simply couldn't afford to pay for her and

their son. She told me that he had never loved me.

I felt that The Lord had abandoned me, I was so alone and empty inside, I asked God over and over, why when I love him he would allow these things to happen to me...

People – it wasn't him at all, it was me. How could God honor my life when I was not walking according to his will?

One day, I was hurting over the loss of my adopted son and the Holy Spirit revealed to me John 3:16 wherein God sent his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life. (The very scripture that lead me to the Lord) I gave up an adopted son and it devastated me. For the first time in my life, I truly understood God's sacrifice. He

gave up his son for me and I understood the depth of his love.

His revelation to me of his Love was miraculous. more of Gods amazing grace.

I started my own chain of martial arts schools
(3)

I removed the Buddhist philosophy and replaced it with Christian doctrine. I taught kids fighting techniques but with the concept of self-confidence instead of violence. I established a black belt club that any kid who wanted to get their black belt had to achieve a B average in school. I established programs for kids to help other kids with school tutoring etc.

In short - I helped many kids but... It was not my calling.

How many people today are not happy because they are doing things for God that he never called them to do?

Ever desire God, but want to retain control over your life? come to him on your terms instead of asking him what to do or how to do it?

Still lonely, I married my first wife. She became pregnant after which Ariana and Athena were born.

I thought that I could bring her to the Lord and that everything would be great. She even said once that she accepted Jesus.

There were several problems due to strongholds that came into our relationship from her past. Mine too but that's a subject for another day.

She cheated on me several times, told me the only reason she married me was too try to get close to my brother. Became bi-sexual and pursued shamanic magic.

I tried for 4 years to make it work, I sought counsel; my self-worth was in ruins, my life in tatters.

A host of men and women were paraded by my wife in front of my daughters and it got unimaginably worse.

I fought long and diligently for custody of my kids

2 Corinthians 6:14 tells us what Gods will was:

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

Hear me... I was running from my calling, I was running from following the precepts of God. I was doing it all my way. I was crashing and burning.

Do you notice all the "I 's" I am using?

Who did I want in control of my life? me

Who's way did I want to do thing? mine

Who was responsible for the mess? me

living in fear of what The Lord has in mind? feel all alone?

The enemy tries to destroy

self-worth becomes non-existent

The enemy even tries to get people to define themselves by their success in their careers.

The enemy does not want us to do what we have been called to do...

Salvation:

regardless of struggle or problems we must be determined to follow Jesus, he calls us to persevere.

1 Peter 1:6-7

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

James 1:2-4

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

The enemy tries condemnation... Jesus gives forgiveness

Jesus never gave up on me Jesus never left me. Jesus was and is and always shall be my salvation

In error and sin he hedges us up and shows his amazing grace.

In the Grace of Christ do we still have to walk out the consequences of our actions?

ABSOLUTELY – willingly take responsibility for mistakes. Repent– Which means not simply saying sorry. It means a turning away from the way we define our lives. It means to fully lean heavily upon Jesus. walk it out.

Have you ever been at a point where you were broken and had no more strength except through him?

Here was my most eloquent prayer – Lord Jesus Please Help!

Jesus brought my wife Julie into my life, a brilliant woman with a Bachelor's degree in finance and a post grad diploma in computer systems

She is and always has been beautiful, loving, kind and faithful. Christ's love through her has healed my heart. Gods blessing for my faith was a faithful and loving wife.

God granted favor and i started making great money. I working at jobs for \$50 / hr. and was billing out at about \$150.00 per hour consulting. My take home was well over 6 figures a year.

I was finally comfortable financially. I was no longer insecure over the fear of my youth. I felt that I had escaped being poor. No one would ever want me to leave the church again because, I had used corduroy pants and out of style shoes.

I was healing from the insecurities of my failed relationships. I was walking out the consequences of my actions.

I developed a burning passion for a relationship with God. I started to press in to his word. I started to diligently pray. I told him not my will but his be done... and meant it!

Shortly afterward ...

I was driving home from my day Job when, I heard God ask me if I would be willing to give it all up for him. God told me that he was with me and would bless me and my family. He reminded me that I was bought and paid for with the price of his son and God is not a man that he should lie. So...

I went home to tell my wife, you remember the one with the finance degree... that God asked me to give it up and follow my calling. I felt an unquenchable burning desire in my heart and a burden on my heart for the Kootenays; a heart for each of you because this community matters and each of you matter.

well... I immediately felt sick to my stomach. I was afraid – not of God, not of the future – Just Julie – hell hath no fury and all that...

Well I got home and told her about my call and what the Lord had asked of me and she asked me if I truly believe it was the Lord. I said yes and she said then let's go to Trail.

I was blown away by the faith of my wife and vowed never to under-estimate her again.

I called pastor Shane and told him about my call to ministry and he asked me: "What are you doing for God today?" to which I replied "what has he got for me?"

Soon after, I started meeting some of you.

Our trip to Redding re-confirmed the calling God had established in my life.

My point is this... It wasn't until giving up personal baggage, personal fears and personal

ambitions that God was able to reach me.
There is no more I, only him.

I had money and success, but without Christ it
meant nothing.

When we actively pursued God, he actively
pursues us and learning this simple fact has
brought nothing but blessing into my life and i
hope by sharing it you will actively pursue his
will on your life and that as you seek him His
blessings will pour out to each of you.

Convergence of factors. (Homoleptic example.)

I had to die to myself to truly be saved. I am
happy, I am blessed and I am loved but most
important of all, I have worth and purpose
because my saviour has called me to service. I

am no more and no less than that which he wants me to be. If you want to really know what God has for you. Dig into his Word and Pray.

Persevere and let God's amazing grace bring all the goodness of his blessings into your life.