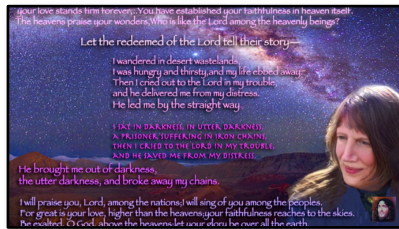


Conversion to Christ Testimony, 2 of 2

October 6, 2014



Clare: ...and he loved the creation, he loved the Lord with all his heart and...

Ezekiel: So, Francis of Assisi, yeah! A lot of people look toward him as an example. Yeah, okay.

Clare: Yeah. So, I ended up getting involved in that and we moved to Maryland and lived on – we were living in Maryland with – he was going to school. But we were in this three-story, historic building, beautiful house, you know, with all the right furnishings: the antiques, five different woods in the kitchen, you know, a fireplace in the kitchen and the original floors from your turn-of-the-century and it didn't feel right. My life was just taken up with clothing and cooking and how I looked and how he looked. We were going to a stylish church in Washington, D.C. and the pastor and his wife were calling us into the inner circle. We were very popular but something just didn't feel right inside and I was looking for something more radical. My husband picked up a book at the library by John Michael Talbot about his conversion to the Catholic faith and I thought, 'Well, those people are all idol worshippers,' you know?

Ezekiel: John Michael Talbot is a singer/songwriter right?

Clare: Right, and I listened to his music and it really spoke to my heart. The "roughness of that" calling and "the primitive church" calling and I got quite involved in that and cultivated a much deeper relationship with the Lord - and really did give up my social idols, you know: clothing and food and impressing people, society and all of that.

Ezekiel: You showed me a picture of a lady in a bathroom. It had something to do with a toilet.

Clare: Oh yeah!

Ezekiel: (Laughs) The swirly deal, you know?

Clare: Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Ezekiel: What was that about?

Clare: It was a magazine cover. When we were in Annapolis, Maryland in this historic house, it was a magazine cover – Keith Green, it was one of his magazines.

Ezekiel: Oh!

Clare: It was yellow, and it had this woman in the kitchen and she was being sucked down in a vortex. Sucked down in her kitchen. There was so many things going on in her life that she was just being devoured by it.

Ezekiel: Yeah.

Clare: All these activities in her life, you know? And I can't remember what the issue of the magazine was like but I saw that picture and I thought, 'That's me! That's who I am! And who I've become, who I've allowed myself to become.' It was right after that, that that book came in the door and I read it and I thought, 'I want something deeper and more primitive and this – he seems to have what I want.'

Ezekiel: Well, Keith Green – another singer/songwriter who’s gone on to be with the Lord. I remember their discipleship community there in East Texas – it started in California and a phenomenal life story if you ever get a chance to take a look at it on Youtube or whatever. Keith Green’s story. Really, really moving, yeah. A neat guy and they did put out a magazine, a community newsletter kind of...

Clare: Um-hum.

Ezekiel: ...but quite a man, quite a life. So...somewhere down the line, you go from this historic three-story house in Annapolis to a very different situation, living wise.

Clare: His parents were supporting us, because he was going to the University of Maryland.

Ezekiel: They must have really come from some money.

Clare: Oh yeah. The school of public affairs. And he wanted to do something good in the world, too, and this was his choice but he wasn’t able to keep up with the class. He had one professor somehow that he clashed with and he got a bad mark and that caused him to be put on probation or to be turned out of the school, really. At that time I was longing for a much simpler life. I thought, gee, a farmhouse, a place where we can live a simple life with our children and, you know, have a prayer life, you know... something more organic.

Ezekiel: Um-hum.

Clare: What happened when I read John Michael’s story is, we ended up going to a community in Pennsylvania not that far away from where we were, and for a short time, became a part of that community. I sold everything. We sold everything. All the antiques. All the things that I had embroidered and quilted and, I mean, the house was really done almost to museum quality.

Ezekiel: Wow.

Clare: And I just had a huge sale, we sold everything. We took off for the Poconos. We found a place, a tarpaper shack on the side of a mountain and I’d just had my fourth child.

Ezekiel: A tarpaper shack?

Clare: Tarpaper shack. Just like a summer cabin.

Ezekiel: (Laughs) Wow. How many kids at this point?

Clare: Four.

Ezekiel: Just had another...

Clare: Yeah, he was three months old when we moved there.

Ezekiel: That was a radical move, huh?

Clare: Very radical.

Ezekiel: I bet the family just was jumping up and down about that! (Laughs)

Clare: My mother was livid. His parents were disgusted...

Ezekiel: Oh boy! First the station wagon, now this. (Laughs)

Clare: Oh, we still had the station wagon.

Ezekiel: That's right, that's right. You made their rough decision there but, the Lord called again, didn't He?

Clare: He did.

Ezekiel: Called you up there in the Poconos.

Clare: I mean, it was a complete renunciation of a superficial life that I wrote about in - I can't remember - I wrote about it and I said I was a "sorter of rags and a taster of brews" - brews, you know, like cooking.

Ezekiel: Wow.

Clare: Because I spent so much time on my appearance and the children's appearance and his appearance and the food and that's where my time went! It wasn't in prayer. It wasn't in helping people. It wasn't in serving. It wasn't in witnessing. It was in feathering my own nest and measuring up to the middle-class standard in the Washington chic church I went to.

Ezekiel: Boy if we'd only admit it. In the Christian community and the church, there are a lot of us that are kind of going along like... that feel like, well, we're blessed. The Lord's blessing us and prospering us and whatever. But you know, it constantly is a challenge to me that... "What part of me is going out. What am I doing? Am I bearing fruit for the Lord?"

Clare: Right.

Ezekiel: If He comes to my tree looking for fruit...

Clare: Right.

Ezekiel: ...what's He going to find, you know?

Clare: Right.

Ezekiel: And what am I doing for others like, I gotta tell you: Mother Theresa was a real powerful, powerful example for me in my life.

Clare: Ouch! (Laughs)

Ezekiel: Yeah! Yeah, just her - the way she and her sisters gave everything, lived with the poorest of the poor in Calcutta and went on that way for - it's still going on, I guess. You know, and other people who worked at inner-city ministries and doing things like that. Thank God for some examples out there that challenge us that there's more to it than just prosperity. I mean, is that really the - should we really be pushing on the prosperity thing so much?

Clare: Well, that's a good question. That's a good question and in fact I did a five-part series on worldliness and the church, because this experience that I had on the side of the mountain in the Pocono Mountains with my family - everything was so tight and intimate and so sweet. And the Lord was 100% of my life in directing me in how to raise my children and take care of my husband. My life was wrapped around the Lord's agenda and I could feel it. I could feel the purity...

Ezekiel: Wow.

Clare: ...and the cleanliness of it.

Ezekiel: And he took care of all your needs, too. Something about being in a hurricane and a couple of electrical wires...

Clare: (Laughs) "Yeah, there was hurricane Gloria hit New York City and I happened to be alone that night. And my friend was watching the children and I was having prayer time. My husband was at work at a nursing home and I was having my prayer time. The hurricane hit and I was beseeching the Lord to please show us how He wanted us to serve Him. With all my heart and soul I was begging Him and you know, hurricane Gloria, that was just the perfect title for what I was going through. You know, I was really reaching into the Lord's glory and asking Him, you know, to transform our lives.

Ezekiel: Yeah.

Clare: Right around that time the electricity goes off, but then it went back on again. About two hours later, these workers from the electric company show up out there and they said, "You have electricity! Do you know that the electricity is out for miles around? You are the only person with electricity".

Ezekiel: (Laughs) How'd that happen?

Clare: Well, apparently the Lord had allowed the wires to be severed, but they fell into a puddle of water so they maintained their connection.

Ezekiel: (Laughs) "So, what do I do with my life, Lord? What should we do?" And one of the first things He says is, "*Well, you take care of my business; I'll take care of yours.*" Right? "*I will provide, I will provide.*"

Clare: Beautiful. But you know, I discovered that there are, in every denomination, there are holy people and people that love the Lord and that know the Lord, intimately. Because I, you know, I checked out a few other denominations when we were in Annapolis and went to church there. But anyway, I went to a couple different churches there and I discovered that there are beautiful, committed people, in love with the Lord, giving their lives to the Lord, in every church that I went to and the Catholic Church was not the only church. But what I discovered was really clarified in that situation. You know, the simplicity of that lifestyle made so much more room for the Lord. I'd never trade that. I would never trade that or go back to it.

Ezekiel: Now you find a few earthy Christians here and there, home schoolers and others that are just that. You know, not that everyone needs or can or should get off the grid. But it's kind of neat when the Lord gives you an opportunity to just kind of really and truly take nothing for the journey. And we'll probably talk a little more about that tomorrow. But you know, I'd asked the question earlier: Should we be pushing the prosperity thing? I know that is and can be controversial but it just, you know, the Lord didn't mince words when He talked about You can't serve two masters Matthew 6:24 ...

Clare: Right. I mean, I sought the answers to that and my experience really clarified a lot because my relationship with the Lord was so much more intimate. Much more intimate than it had ever been. And you know, you can't out give the Lord.

Ezekiel: I was just going to say, can you out give Him? (Laughs)

Clare: You give Him everything...

Ezekiel: Yeah.

Clare: ...that supposedly means something to you, but actually you're entrapped by those things.

Ezekiel: Yeah.

Clare: You give him all those things that are trapping you... and He turns around and gives you Himself.

Ezekiel: He takes the things of us that we could never keep, to give to us things that we could never lose, right?

Clare: That's right.

Ezekiel: Wow. So, you did some mountain time there and when you and I met - actually it was in a mountain range, the Ozark Mountains, right?

Clare: Right.

Ezekiel: Northern Arkansas, Southern Missouri.

Clare: Well, yeah, one of my early experiences, even as an Evangelical in my first church, was going around on Christmas morning and taking two hundred sandwiches and coffee to the homeless people. And the spirit about doing that was so sweet, I really saw the Lord was in that. And so, I dedicated my life to serving the poor.

Ezekiel: Two hundred sandwiches! You make them yourself?

Clare: No, no. McDonald's...

Ezekiel: You bought two hundred sandwiches from McDonald's?

Clare: No, no, they donated them.

Ezekiel: Oh wow! You asked?!

Clare: Yeah, I asked.

Ezekiel: Man, that's gutsy! (Laughs)

Clare: They donated them and...

Ezekiel: Wow! That's awesome!

Clare: ...I distributed them.

Ezekiel: That is so cool!

Clare: ...with coffee and everything. But that was the direction that I was headed. We came back to Phoenix and my husband left me. He didn't want that kind of a journey. He wanted to be an artist in the world have an art gallery and was just a whole other agenda and...we were immature when we met and we got married you know, like so many other people.

Ezekiel: I think of the wedding bells so many times, being a pastor myself. You know, ordained minister. And over the time thinking, gosh, you know, 'what God has joined together let no man put asunder...'

Clare: Right.

Ezekiel: ...and yet I meet so many couples in so many situations that God did not join together.

Clare: Right.

Ezekiel: Now this is not a carte blanche thing to say, okay - you can use this as an excuse and you can get a divorce. God hates divorce. But, a lot of us didn't have a clue. Not only about marriage. We didn't know the Lord. We didn't know anything.

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: Or, one party knows the Lord, and I tell young people all the time, especially young girls you know, "I'm gonna change him." This, that and the other and they make theirselves up to look like the girls on TV. You know, if the guy's after that, then when somebody else comes along that looks like the girl on TV, too, what's he gonna...

Clare: And you're fat and pregnant.

Ezekiel: Yeah. Yeah. You know, when you got the uglies or whatever, but I try to tell these young men and young women alike, if you find someone who loves God, they will always love you. If they're faithful to God, they'll always be faithful to you. Wouldn't you agree?

Clare: Oh, absolutely!

Ezekiel: Yeah.

Clare: And that's what happened after he left. I didn't date. I didn't do anything for five years. All I did was seek the Lord's will and obey him. And I felt this unction to move to the Ozark Mountains where John Michael's community was, but not to be a part of their community. I already had an inner witness that that wasn't right for me and for the children, but to move to the Ozarks and to serve the poor, the hill people. And that's what I did.

Ezekiel: Ozark hillbillies. (Laughs)

Clare: And then I met you in church.

Ezekiel: Yeah, yeah! I remember that. I thought, golly, who's this Earth Mother looking lady with these four little kids, little stair step buggers. We knew each other for about a year and a half as friends.

Clare: Right.

Ezekiel: I figured I'd be an old muck on a mountain. I'd lived in some monasteries, worked in some missions, but you'll hear a little more of my story later. It's really sweet...

Clare: Oh, it is.

Ezekiel: ...even though I'm a guy, you know, real men get mushy, too. But you continued on – or we continued on afterwards.

Clare: Well, I would like to say one thing and that's that I had several beautiful experiences with the Lord where I was His bride.

Ezekiel: Wow. Yeah, that impressed me. I wanted more of that in my life.

Clare: You know, I wore a wedding ring on my finger, because I was His bride. I belonged totally to Him. And I would not have anything to do with anyone, as far as even considering them for marriage, unless they were also the Lord's Bride and I knew the Lord brought us together. So, the beautiful experiences and the intimacy with Him, seeing Him, having Him talk to me. I remember just before we left the Poconos and came back to Arizona where his parents were, I was lying on my side with my elbow up and my hand on my chin on the floor and I saw the Lord clearly, in the spirit, directly across from me doing the exact same thing and He said, "How much are you willing to give for Me? What are you willing to give up for Me?"

Ezekiel: Really? Huh.

Clare: Yeah, He said that and I said, "Please, please don't take my children."

Ezekiel: Wow.

Clare: And right after that He separated... He separated my former husband and I. He did it. It was His act.

Ezekiel: He knew that was coming.

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: Golly, that's...

Clare: But my relationship with Him continued to deepen and I've known that I was His Bride... I have not been faithful to that calling.

Ezekiel: You know, I was going to say, you talk about this intimacy with the Lord and hearing from Him, seeing Him and that. Can't you do that just living in – couldn't you have done that in Annapolis and going – you could go to conferences, right, and church activities, be parts of groups and get all that?

Clare: Every once in a while I'd go to a big gathering like that and I might have a fleeting experience with the Lord but the profound connection comes in seclusion. "I'll speak to her in the desert. I'll lead her into the desert and I'll speak to her heart."

Ezekiel: Yeah, quiet and alone.

Clare: It's that time totally dedicated to Him and cutting away – circumcising my heart from the frills of the world which took up so much of my attention and my time and my children, you know, simplifying things down to only what was necessary.

Ezekiel: I'm sure that we'll talk about, you know, prayer and things like that more in future programs. But I gotta tell you, one of the biggest challenges to me, even when I also sold everything I had – we didn't even know each other for years before. I had very much the same type of calling experience – I could not get quiet. I could shut my mouth and I could almost turn my heart off sometimes - but I couldn't turn my mind off.

Clare: Yeah.

Ezekiel: You know, tick – tick – tick – tick, or I'd get distracted...or I'd yawn or I'd fall asleep. And I thought, 'Wow, Lord, have I spent time with you?' But it seemed like the more – maybe it would have been twenty minutes one day. There are times when I'll sit in with the Lord now and the sun will come up the next morning and it just seems like I've been there a couple hours. But I'm fifty five years old now you know, I was younger...

Clare: I use music a great deal and that would transport – holy music, you know, and worship. I would get into worship and the Lord would just step into the worship and take over and...

Ezekiel: Wow.

Clare: ...I'm going to be sharing on that in the future because that kind of intimacy – the Lord is no respecter of persons. Anyone who is willing to give up their time and their attention and their lives to the Lord is open to that kind of relationship with Him. I'd like to share some of the ways that He led me into that intimacy."

Ezekiel: Sure! Sure!

Clare: ...and how He confirms out of the mouth of two or three, a certain direction because we don't always make the right choices with our lives.

Ezekiel: Right.

Clare: So, another time.

Ezekiel: Yeah, that's a subject for – thank you for being so open and transparent tonight and I'm sure there'll be more.

Clare: I look forward to hearing your testimony.

Ezekiel: Yeah, yeah, I've got a little list to make, don't I?

Clare: You have a wonderful story. Just wonderful.

Ezekiel: Well, God willing, we'll see you next time. Hear from you and speak to you and hope to hear from you here on Heaven Talk: dreams, visions, comments, and discussion on all things Heaven.