



A MESSAGE OF COURAGE MINISTRY



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My Life Changing Testimony:

Before I knew the Lord I had gone to church all my life. My Mom and Dad were church goers all of their life. So, I was like many teenagers brought up in the church copying my parents and grandparents life style. I joined the church and was baptized about the age of 12- yrs. old. Being baptized and taking communion with my church buddies was a unique or (Wow) experience.

We were all church buddies and cousins that had grown up in the church. Our parents were related and our dads worked together at the local military base and played golf together on Saturdays. My church buddies and I sang in the junior choir and played football almost every Sunday afternoon at one of our friends house. Their mom would serve refreshments after the game. I though we were the all American, Father Knows Best, dysfunctional family. I did not realize that as a family we were all having different experiences with the Lord in our life. We did not know how each other felt about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We thought we were saved because we were baptized and took communion.

Then, about the age of 15 yrs. old, while attending our Annual Summer Church Retreat in Jackson, MS. My life was about to change forever. God made His presence know to me in a way I had never seen in anyone else life. Many churches from the Miss. Gulf Coast were represented at this summer church retreat. Over one hundred and fifty adults and teenagers are having a wonderful time playing games, bible discussions, and swimming in the big beautiful natural lake. We are all enjoying this year summer retreat.

Then it happen, while playing in the lake, one of my friends gave about 6 of us a "dair", to swim to the floating pier about 25 yards away. Three quarters of the way, I became tired. The muscles in my body began to cramp severely. Just before I went underwater, I shouted, "Help!" very loud. Six young swimmers hit the water and tried to pull me up, but were not strong enough to get me to the floating pier. I became tired and tried to rest underwater. Then I started to panic and was sinking deeper. The struggle to reaching the top of the water was futile. I stopped and gave up all hope of getting out of the water. Then my life flashed before my eyes on a white movie screen. Like and open confession to God, Jesus showed me everything I had done good or bad in my life. It made me ready to accept drowning. Breathing water was the only thing left. Just as I had given up all hope of getting out of this alive, someone touched me under my arms and began to raise

me to the surface. Something in me said, "Lord, are you going to give me another chance?" and He answered, "Yes." I finally reached the surface and gasped for air with all the strength in me. The Lord had used John Roger Pittman to save my life. I could not believe I was alive and seeing light again. It was dark down there, every bit as dark as hell. This made me realize I was not ready to die. I was not ready to stand before God and be judged. That same day, I received eternal life - I got saved. All the pastors, teenagers and friends were glad to see me alive, and so was I. God used the "fear of death" to make His presence known in my life. But a question hunted me while I sat in the swings on the playground with a friend girl I had known for a while; "What had God saved me for?" I could not do anything special for this great God who saved me from my watery grave. I wish I could say that I went on to serve God in a mighty way (like Paul), but the answers came a little bit at a time. It was not until some years later that I realized what God wanted me to do in His service.

It was after getting honorably discharged from the U.S. Air Force in Wichita Falls, TX. I was readjusting to civilian life. Then, the Lord laid on my heart that He wanted me to do something in His service. Even at the age of 15 years old I didn't surrender completely to His will, but I discovered that He was always there letting me know He was still waiting to put me to work for Him. Then, I became convicted to "be still" and listen to God's will for my life.

When I asked the Lord what would it take to follow Him, in no uncertain term, he said, "If any man come after me and hate not his mother, father, sister, brother, wife, and children and yes, even himself also, he can not be my disciple." (Luke 15:26) So now I knew what Jesus expected of me and that the Lord would have to come first in all I do.

Then I prayed for the Holy Spirit to give me the knowledge of the scriptures and just as Jesus said, "Knock and the door shall open, seek and you shall find, ask and it shall be given unto you." The fire in my heart is burning for God's Word like I have never seen. This joy of really getting to know my Savior and all of His goodness is wonderful.

There came a need to know how the Lord wanted me to preach His Mighty, Powerful Word. I was afraid of how some people look at the preacher when they think he is preaching about them. But a preacher preaches about sin and offers comfort to Christians and Hope to the lost. All that week after praying for the Lord's guidance, I was very busy in college with several tests, but God said, "Go to Ezekiel." So, that Saturday night we were singing at Rev. McGruddy's church in Ft. Worth, Tx. No sooner had we sat down when it dawned on me to open the Bible to Ezekiel 21: 1-3 says; "And the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of Man set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word toward the Holy Places, and prophecy against the Land of Israel. And say to the Land of Israel thus saith the Lord; Behold, I am against thee the righteous and the wicked." In no uncertain terms, God said "Set thy face towards Jerusalem" the Holy City and say, Thus saith the Lord. Do not compromise the Word. Preach it just like I said it and your ministry will be one of unity and love with Christ as Head. (Eph. 1; 3-10) God left no doubt in my heart that he will bless this ministry and pour out His Spirit upon all men, and they will know Him to be God. This is the answer to the question, "Why Jesus Christ came to me while I was drowning to death in my dark watery grave in Jackson,

Ms., and saved my life. What a God, What a Savior, "What a friend we have in Jesus Christ."

I am sure that many Christian struggles with giving God half-hearted service and not completely surrendering to His will for their life.

As a member of First Baptist Church Wichita Falls, Tx. I began to take a 21 week class in Evangelism Explosion by Dr. D. James Kennedy. That was the first time I realized my "near-death" experience was my first real encounter with Jesus Christ. I publicly announced God called me into the ministry and followed Christ example of sanctification by baptism. I also, realized that my first baptism (before salvation) was little more than just getting wet.

Many years ago Jesus Christ sanctified (Anointed) my salvation and call me into the ministry with one baptism. A few months later I went to a 1-wk. seminar in Dallas, TX. on The Institute of Basic Life Principles by Dr. Bill Gothard. The heavens rejoiced and I have been "Praising God" every since He poured out His Grace (Holy Spirit) on me.

May I ask you a Question? If you were to die today do you know for certain you would go to heaven? Secondly, If you were to stand before Jesus Christ in Heaven, and He asked you "Why should I let you into my Heaven? "What would be your answer to Him"?