

The Wondrous Redemption of an Eleven Year Old

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I. Preparatory Work for Salvation

In November 2011, when Daddy was seeking the Lord in Arlington, we went to a park with Jordan, and on the way back, he preached on the terror of God. The other children were not listening very well. They were laughing in the back of the van. Jordan asked me about keeping the Ten Commandments, and I had to admit that I hadn't. He went through all of them, and told us the consequences of not keeping them. When we got back to the church house, I went to my room, and I wept for a long time. I didn't know Jordan very well, but I went to him later and told him that I wanted him to pray that the Lord would save me. He said I needed to seek the Lord with all my heart. I later asked Daddy how to know when you are saved, and he showed me some of the things that God was showing him. He told me that the Lord will show me, and I would just know when I was saved. I always kept that with me since then.

At that time I did what I knew how, and listened to the preaching, but it never went deep into my heart. I would rather have played, but there were no other children to play with, and not much to do, so I just sought the Lord. That desire went away from me over the next few weeks, but when we went down again for Eric and Miranda's wedding, the Spirit of God was so present at the whole-church prayer meeting that we were all scared. We had never seen anything like it. At the end, we were still fearful, but wanted to go play with the other children. We played with them and forgot the Lord.

When we went home to Wisconsin from the trip, Ryan preached to all of us children while the ladies had a Bible Study. He preached about the wrath of God, and I was in fear until the end when one of the children did something really funny, and we all started laughing. When we got home, Mommy told me the way I had laughed and forgotten the seriousness of the Word had been really disrespectful to God. I went to my room, and felt like I should miss supper and cry out to the Lord. I did eat supper though and that conviction went away, and I forgot it all.

I never took eternity seriously again until we moved down to Wells, Texas. Once we were with all the saints consistently, I felt very convicted of my sin and whenever someone was praying for me and I could hear that person, I felt ashamed and naked in God's eyes. But I would just go back to sin and never remember what the Lord was showing me. I never prayed with the brethren at the prayer meetings or took the sermons seriously. This went on for several months and I was getting more dead in my sin. The devil was reigning in me and my sin was destroying me.

Daddy's boss, Corey, needed him and some of the other brothers to work in Longview for a week and that was a few hours away. Before he left, he told me, like he always did, that I needed to seek the Lord while he was gone. He left then, hoping the best, that I would. I really did not seek the Lord during that week. On Friday we had a big day of cleaning for Daddy when he got home. Daddy came home on Saturday evening, very surprised and happy at the clean house. But he was grieved that we children didn't take any time with the Lord the whole week.

II. Awakening and Conversion

After supper that night, we were singing, “A Shelter in the Time of Storm”, “From Every Stormy Wind That Blows”, and “I am Not Skilled to Understand”. In the last verse, Daddy and Mommy kept making eye contact, and sped up the pace a bit more. Then we children noticed that the sky was getting so dark and green. We saw the wind blowing the treetops and twisting the corn stalks. It was fearful! We begged Mommy and Daddy to tell us if it was a tornado, but in our hearts, we already knew! I was trembling, and feeling like I, at any time, would throw up. At one time, Mommy grasped Daddy's arm and said, “Honey!” But Daddy smiled and only told us it would be good to pray. I was so amazed that he was not afraid. He still never told us if it was a tornado. It seemed like they were telling us by the way they looked. It seemed like no one was praying, since we all were watching out the window, but I knew Daddy was praying. The wind got harder and harder. We started to ask questions again and could tell that Daddy was praying. He answered all our questions by saying, “Let's pray together.” After that prayer, Warren kept asking if we could go into some one's basement, or quickly go to Tanner's. Daddy kept telling him that there was no safe place to go other than to Jesus Christ. Ethan and Warren were stomping and yelling. Ethan was screaming that he was going to throw up. Warren was yelling, “I'm going to die and go to hell!”

We went into the bathroom to be safe, since we don't have a basement. We all started begging God for mercy. Warren and Ethan were asking how to be saved. Mommy told us to confess our sins and ask the Lord for mercy. We confessed all the sin we could find in our wicked hearts. We knew there was nothing good in us, and we definitely deserved hell for all of the times we had scorned God and sinned against our consciences when we knew it was very, very wrong, and that the consequence for sin was hell. I knew that only Jesus can save, but that night, though I was broken over sin, I really didn't see my need for him. I said with my lips that I knew that he died for me but I never felt it in my heart, and I never believed it, although I believed that God himself was in that storm, and I believed my heart to be sinful and wicked. The elders came over to meet with us (Rachel, Warren, Ethan, and I). Sean went through the Law with us. Ryan and Jake were preaching on sorrow over losing our life, compared to sorrow because of how much we had grieved God. At the end of the meeting, I remember Ryan saying that if God was really changing us, then we would have a love for the Word of God, and praying would be a delight. He said that even from this meeting and on, if we meant what we said, we should have a love for the Word of God, and if we don't, then we need to prepare for the next storm. This put me in great fear! I did not want to harden my heart against God and his Word. It was about 1:00 in the morning when they left. I was so tired, and I tried to pray, but I fell asleep without knowing.

Daddy left again on Monday to spend another week in Longview and he got me up early to preach before he left. He told me that I needed to seek the Lord with my whole heart, and that I would surely find him if I did. He reminded me of what I had said on Saturday night during the storm, and that I needed to keep my word to the Lord, that I wanted to be done with my sin for good! He left, and said he would be praying for me.

William and Kevin came to our house to preach to Warren, Rachel, and me the second night that Daddy was gone. They preached some fearful things about the wrath of God that was

hovering over us. Afterward, they wondered if we were going to stay up and seek the Lord. I said that I would, if the Lord gave me grace. They left that night and I stayed up on the couch to seek the Lord. Sister Heidi came to spend the night with Mommy while Daddy was gone. I got the MP3 player and listened to a sermon by Sean on "Drawing Nigh." It was a very powerful sermon - I was amazed at the power in it. I felt very guilty then, with a pressing burden that I felt in my heart. I could not do anything to help this burden go away. I cried out to the Lord with all my heart, and sought his face, because, it says in Psalm 27:8, "*When thou said, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.*"

I told the Lord that I would seek his face, and I did. I stayed up that night until about 3:30am, praying and reading, and meditating on the things I was reading in the Word. That night went well, though not as well as if the Spirit was in me, but I was able to seek the Lord with diligence. The next day went quite the same; seeking the Lord, but the burden was greater.

On Thursday we left for Sean's Bible Study. I took my journal, to copy notes in, and my Bible. Before it started, Ryan told us children that we needed to pay attention because they were the words of life, but the devil will try to distract you, so that nothing will happen. Through the Bible study, Sean was preaching about being defiled by sin, and that sin was disgusting to God, like a room full of dead bodies. I felt that was how God saw my sin. I was trying to take down all the notes to study the scripture references later. I was highlighting all of the verses on corruption with my orange highlighter, and it accidentally flew out of my hand at one point. It seemed like it fell in the couch, or behind it, so I started searching through the couch to find it. Then Holly said that the devil was trying to distract me from what Sean was preaching, so that I wouldn't hear and take it in. I agreed, and stopped looking for it. She gave me another highlighter to use instead. After the Bible study, I asked for preaching, so William and Kevin preached to me. At first, they were talking about counting the cost. My burden was increasing more and more, and I was crying. Kevin mentioned that we all were like sheep going astray, and then William preached about the cross, and the terrible things that God did to Jesus because of my sins. Then he read to me from Isaiah 53. I had been weeping over my sins for a while, and when he preached about Jesus dying for my sins, I felt the burden lifting, and joy and glory and peace began to fill my soul. The brothers left for a while, and then before we went home, William read Romans 9 to me. Romans 9:18-21 says, "*Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?*"

I felt like God could have mercy on whoever he wanted to, and I felt like he had had mercy on me. William said that God could make a beautiful glass, and pitch the rest away. I believed he was making me into something useful, and throwing away all of my flesh. Then I went home, and I said that I would seek the Lord about what was preached in the Bible Study and copy some other things down from the day. Once we got home, Holly and I were going over some of the things that happened last evening (for it was about 2:00 the next morning). We spent several hours talking about the Bible and lessons God was teaching me, and then I stayed up seeking God until the rest of the children started getting up. I felt so much different than before, and I could see the Lord had saved a wretch like me!

III. Post-Conversion Marks of Salvation

That morning, I was able to deal with the children with gentleness and love when they were behaving in an unseemly way, fighting and being rebellious. This was not hard for me like it used to be because the Lord gave me much grace. Since then, I have been having the most blessed times with the Lord and that is a joy to my soul. Two days after my conversion, there was a Charity Feast. I never had loved the brethren so much - in fact, I never wanted to leave them! The whole Charity Feast, I never had a break where someone wasn't preaching to me or the Spirit of God wasn't there! Even when I was in line to get my food, the Lord was there and I never wanted him to leave. Jake was preaching to me about bosom sins, the sins that are the closest to your heart. Everything someone preached, I was able to understand with spiritual eyes. It seemed like I was blinded to it before, but now I could see. I was so bubbling over with joy and love toward the brethren that I felt that I would burst! Whenever I looked at them, I could see the Lord's glory shining on their faces. Now when I go the prayer meetings and to the church services, the Lord is there. When I am helping in the kitchen or sweeping the floor, he is there too. I can never get away from him and I never want to!

Since I was saved, the Lord has opened my eyes to his burdens. I especially have a burden for my unconverted siblings. I know that they are going to hell as long as they don't repent, and this stirs me up to pray for them. Sometimes my siblings ask sincere questions about my salvation, sometimes they scorn my profession, and at other times they have criticized and been angered toward my conversion, but all this has not stopped me from praying for their souls.

There are some of my relatives that do not want to hear the gospel. When I shared my testimony, it reproved them because they have never even sought the Lord with all their heart. They have not forsaken all their sins, but they somehow think that they are going to heaven. The Lord has given me a great burden for their souls as well as my siblings.

Before I was saved, I tried to run away from the brethren. When I was with another child, talking, eating, or playing, and I saw a brother coming to talk to us, I would say that I needed to put my plate at the sink or that I needed to go get something. Because I was walking in darkness and didn't want my sins to be found out, I was scared of the brothers. I was so scared of the Holy Spirit in them. But now I have the same Spirit in me, and I have unity with them.

I can't wait to be with the Lord! I look forward to the time when the Lord chooses to take me from this body of death to go and sing with the saints in glory! Heaven is my home, and I am just passing through this world. I am already very homesick for my wonderful home in heaven! The Lord is all there could be in life, and the only thing I live for is to be his slave! This verse was very scary to me before I was born again. James 4:14, "*Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.*" For sinners, this is scary, but when Christians read it, they rejoice, and so do I. We all long for the day when we shall go meet our King!