



General Topics :: A Story About a Man

A Story About a Man, on: 2006/12/28 11:18

Here is a story about someone who is very, very close to me.

This is a story about someone I love and respect very much. He is, by nature, a go-getter, and an entrepreneur. In many of his ways you could compare him to Peter in the bible.

In fact, when he was just 19 years of age, he started his own business and has been running it ever since. He is now 38.

He first heard about the real Jesus at around age 20 or 21. (He grew up in a strong catholic family) This was the first time he heard that he would be eternally punished for his own sins. (Fornication, drunkenness, disrespect to parents, etc.)

From the moment he heard these truths he pursued them just like he did everything else...with all that he is.

In fact, I first heard that I was on my way to hell from him.

If you wanted to describe him in today's terms, you would have to say he was "completely sold out".

He lived in Lancaster County, PA, and one weekend, by the providence of God and while he was in NYC, he came across Times Square Church. The ministry of this church transformed his life. He would travel every single weekend, with his wife and 6 kids, from Lancaster County to NYC, just to go to church for the entire day. (TSC has 3 different services) One of his friends that he made there began to let him and his family stay in their brownstone in Brooklyn for the weekend.

So every single Friday night, he would pack up his family and travel to NYC to spend the weekend. This gave him the opportunity to go out into the streets and preach. He would go to Brooklyn, Manhattan, into the subways, to the homeless. I used to go with him sometimes, it was very exciting and very challenging.

During the week, back in PA, he started a home bible study primarily to reach out to his family. But this bible study grew and many people started to come.

He was a very good preacher/ teacher. Some of his favorite preachers (other than his pastors David Wilkerson and Carter Conlon) were Leonard Ravenhill, Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, etc. He would say that he owes much of his discipleship to Mr. Ravenhill. In many of his messages he would quote him verbatim. Many times it was almost like he was quoting an entire Ravenhill message.

He was very zealous for the things of God. He had a tape ministry. (Of course this was before the internet) He would hand out tapes (David Wilkerson, Carter Conlon, Leonard Ravenhill, Keith Green, Walter Martin, etc.) to everyone and anyone.

He did not own a television. He would really only listen to Keith Green music. He never bought a Christmas tree.

He would bring homeless people from NYC to his house in PA for the holidays. He had a very large house, and for many years he would have all sorts of different people living with him and his family. He gave money to whoever needed it.

He prayed a lot. He had many a sleepless night just praying. He fasted. When he preached he would tell us that we need to sacrifice something and if sleep was the only thing we could sacrifice then we needed to sleep less and pray more.

He would tell us that we need to redeem the time because the days were evil!

He would tell us that we need to surrender everything to God. We needed to give God everything...we did not want to be "Luke Warm".

It was up to us to make sure that we are in full obedience to God in all that we do; our thought life, our witnessing, our prayer life. He would quote from Mr. Ravenhill, "If you are not sanctified now, what will sanctify you when you die...the worms that eat you?"

At the age of 29 he was made an elder at Times Square Church. Shortly after, he was asked to teach, part-time, at Mt. Zion School of Ministry. He taught and preached in the TSC pulpit. He was head over all the men's ministry. He taught at the TSC Friday night bible school. He went on missions trips to Africa and Jamaica. All the while living in PA with his wife and 6 kids (one of whom he adopted from NYC) He still had his business. He still had the PA home bible study. He still went into the streets and preached. He was very zealous for the things of God!

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There is a lot more I could write, but I will just say that many, many people came to Jesus through his life. I am one of them!

Move ahead 7 years. He is now divorced. His children are not serving the Lord. His adopted son is in jail. His other son tried to kill him. His daughters are bitter and extremely disrespectful. His wife is remarried and so is he. He is angry.

I am not criticizing this man. I love this man dearly. He is my brother.

I have the utmost respect for him; I wish that I could accomplish just half of what he has accomplished in his short life.

My point is that his Christianity was marked by what he did for God, not by who he was in Christ. He could never do enough. He could never be holy enough. He had to be like Leonard Ravenhill. He had to be like Charles Finney.

Ironically, right before his divorce, he started to get a little free because he was starting to read men like, Charles Spurgeon and other reformed writers.

None of what my brother did was bad. He was entirely sincere, and God did use his life, but he never had any rest in his relationship with God. That is one of the reasons why he still remains far from God to this day. His relationship with God was based on what he did for God, not what God did for him.

Yes, we are to walk in obedience to Jesus. But, that obedience is defined by Jesus as Love, and I love (obey) Him because HE FIRST LOVED ME!

Re: A Story About a Man - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2006/12/28 12:14

Thank you for this sober reminder that it's not about right doing but it is about right being.

Carter Conlon went through this very thing, he preached a powerful message on it, you can download it at the following link...

(<http://www.timeforrenewal.com/mp3/2060418T1.mp3>) Chopping Wood for Father

In Christ,

Ron

Re: - posted by death2self (), on: 2006/12/28 13:01

I went through a very similar experience when I was younger. I was a "go-getter" and was out to do something great for God. In college I spent a summer as a missionary and began to preach revivals in my denomination during the same time and would have been considered "sold-out", although I'm not so sure that was true.

I also took a stand with a dear brother of mine and invited Jed Smock to our campus ministry and boy did we take some heat for that. That was 25 years ago and Jed had just gotten married. It was a precious time.

After Keith Green died, it seemed that my faith went with him and I told the Lord in 1983 that I couldn't take this lukewarm heart any more and would rather be cold and I knew I wasn't hot. Then I simply left...

I would very much like to spend some time in prayer over this man. If you feel led to send more info via a PM, that would be fine. If not, I'll still pray.

There's nothing more precious to me than a convicting sermon delivered through the unction of the spirit because if I simply heed his voice and repent and do what He tells, He will cut this thing (whatever it may be that has been exposed) out of my heart. I've had such joy, that's been pungent that only comes from Jesus.

I've discovered it's not about me. Jesus is the one who sent the Holy Spirit to convict me of my sin and He is the one that

at calls after me. I'm glad that Jesus specializes in reclamation jobs or I would have never come back to Him. I'm not saying this about your friend but I had a hidden agenda to be "somebody" and God is calling me to be a nobody, simply his servant. What joy it is to be a servant of the king.

I would like to stand in agreement with you that Jesus will fully restore this man. Will you do that for me?

I thought of this Keith Green song when I thought of your dear friend.

My son, My son, why are you striving
You can't add one thing to what's been done for you
I did it all while I was dying
Rest in your faith, my peace will come to you

For when I hear the praises start
I want to rain upon you
Blessings that will fill your heart
I see no stain upon you
Because you are my child and you know me
To Me you're only holy
Nothing that you've done remains
Only what you do for Me

My child, My child, why are you weeping
You will not have to wait forever
That day and that hour is in My keeping
The day I'll bring you into Heaven

For when I hear the praises start
My child, I want to rain upon you
Blessing that will fill your heart
I see no stain upon you
Because you are My child and you know me
To me you're only holy
Nothing that you've done remains
Only what you do in Me

My precious bride, the day is nearing
When I'll take you in My arms and hold you
I know there are so many things that you've been hearing
But you just hold on to what I have told you

For when I hear the praises start
My bride, I want to rain upon you
Blessings that will fill your heart
I see no stain upon you
Because you are My child, and you know Me
To me you're only holy
Nothing that you've done will remain
Only what you do for me

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Re: A Story About a Man, on: 2006/12/28 13:17

Thank you dear brother Mahoney for sharing that story, it is at moments like this, that I bless and thank for Lord for giving us this dear website.

I will pray for this brother, may God plant him next to a Spring of Living Water, In Jesus Name amen.

neil

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/12/28 13:40

I agree Bartle,

Thanks Mahoney.

Some of us might be in spiritually fruitful seasons right now, overcoming and growing in many wonderful ways. Just a few years ago we were struggling, or confused, or angry or defeated...but now we are strong in our faith.

Then along comes another brother or sister who is struggling, or confused, or angry, or defeated and for some reason we struggle to understand...we are tempted to believe we have outgrown our own weaknesses once and for all. We finally figured something out and spiritual defeat is a thing of the past. Our memories are so short.

Everything that can be shaken...shakes pretty hard.

Those who are strong today are just a few disappointments, or wounds from being made weak again...it just takes the right disappointments and wounds.

Let's learn how to love the weakest among us all the more, instead of abandoning or despising them. (edit: something I'm still learning...)

MC

Re: - posted by Lor_E (), on: 2006/12/28 16:49

Watchman Nee speaks about the arm of flesh, it may seem very strong, but if I hold a book out at the end of my hand I may have the strength to hold it up for quite a while, but sooner or later my hand will grow heavy and it will fall.