

From Death unto Life

“If GOD is real, then why do people die and innocent little children starve or suffer from diseases. If GOD loves me, then why is my life like this?...” Not only are these questions frequently asked by people in regards to the existence of GOD and HIS involvement with the activities of this world, but these were also the words of a teenage boy who had accidentally shot and killed his mother.

The life style we lived leading up to that moment was the reason for the tragic accident; homeless and living in the streets of Pontiac, Michigan with my mother Deanna and my ten year old brother JoJo. My brother and I had no home structure or rules and guidelines. We drank alcohol and used drugs. We became disrespectful and very irresponsible; we were pretty much raised to lie when necessary and steal when needed. We quickly became a product of our environment.

I remember coming home from school one day and all our belongings were being carried out to the side of the street. Because of my mother’s alcoholism and her addiction to crack, she hadn’t paid the rent, and we were evicted from our home. Wandering from place to place, sleeping in cars, crack houses, cheap motel rooms and wherever else. There were many days and nights we went cold and hungry (although there were times we received food, clothing and shelter from “Soup Kitchens” and “Salvation Armies” through out the city).

We witnessed our mother get in vehicles and ride off. I’m not quite sure if my brother knew what was happening, for he was only around 8 years old at the time, but I knew what was going on. Sometimes my mother was picked up and didn’t return. There were other times when she would be gone for days. Somehow we were used to it. But I remember this one particular time she was missing for a long time. I didn’t know if she was dead or alive, for all I knew she was lying in ditch some where. Three months later I saw her walking down the street, after doing 90 days in the county jail. While incarcerated, she contacted a friend who promised her that if she were to get herself cleaned up, he would help her get on her feet. He kept his word, after a while she had a part-time job, and we had a little efficiency apartment. Even though I refused, my brother was now going back to school. Things were actually going good for a change. We had a home again!!!

That is until she came across some old friends of hers and started drinking and partying. Next thing you know she was smoking crack and prostituting again. I also was smoking weed and selling crack. Living in that lifestyle I thought it was both necessary and cool to have a gun. Well, I ended up buying one.

I had just come home from buying the gun. While I was showing it off, a round discharged from the pistol and while looking over towards my mother, sitting on the toilet, she just fell over on her head. My little Brother and I ran over towards her lying on the floor. She had been shot in the head! There we stood helplessly as she passed away on the bathroom floor. I remember hearing her try to breath.

I was taken down to the Pontiac Police Department and placed in a holding cell, surrounded by graffiti written and carved on the walls. As I laid on the cold steal slab, all by myself, I cried and cried. Wishing that just somehow the doctors could save her life. However, I was informed later on that she was deceased. The doctors say the bullet entered her right temple and traveled all around the inside of her skull and lodged in her left eye.

Although I heard of “a” GOD, I never heard of the “Gospel”. No one ever witnessed to me before. I never heard of this “PRINCE OF PEACE”! Where was He? I never seen Him. I only heard of Him through the songs I knew or as a curse word. Therefore, I started to question His very existence. Whatever the case may be concerning His existence, I didn’t understand. “If GOD is real, then why do people die and little children starve and suffer from diseases? Why did my 3 month old sister pass away? If GOD really does love me then why is my life like this?” I wanted nothing to do with a GOD who would let this happen. Therefore, I cursed GOD in my heart.

Well, I continued to live my life in confusion and disbelief. I think about the fact that I will never be able to call my mother when I need someone to talk to, or receive a hug on those days when I am feeling down and out, letting me know everything will be ok. I will never be

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able to take my children to their Grandma's house. A couple years later after my mother's death, living a life of sex, drugs and alcohol, I got in some trouble and found myself in the county jail. While sitting there in the "bull-pin", a guy handed me a little brown Gideon New Testament with Psalms & Proverbs.

There in the county jail, for the first time, I heard about this guy; "JESUS CHRIST". I didn't experience any dramatic conversion, no bright lights. No one preached to me, nor was there any evangelist, just a depressed and weary soul crying out for peace and comfort and the moving of the Holy Spirit. I didn't become some overnight T. D. Jakes or Rod Parsley, but from there on I believed and deepened my faith and built a relationship with this "PRINCE OF PEACE"! I remember the first Christian book I ever read, "Battlefield of the Mind" by Joyce Meyer.

To make a long story short, here I was on my way to prison serving 9-20 years, a babe in Christ. Talk about trials and tribulations and the trying of your faith (that which I just received)! Thinking about all those Sunday mornings when people just passed us by on the side of the street, cold and hungry, as they were on their way to church. What if they would have just pulled over and offered help? Probably nothing... But "what if?" It was hard for me to embrace this Christian faith, I struggled with that, but GOD kept me!. And because He lives I can face tomorrow!!

Years later, I now stand as a young man 25 years of age, and sure of my salvation. No, I'm not better than anyone. Nor am I perfect. Yes, I make mistakes but I do forget that which is behind me and strive for the goal ahead. I know I have a lot of growing up to do, however, I have come a long way. I found the missing "Element" in my life, and I wouldn't be here if wasn't for "PRISON MINISTRY"!!! To those who are in this line of work, keep on "Keeping On"! Don't give up or give in. Know that it's not the number of people in your congregation. It's the soul that is saved, the one sinner who repents that Heaven rejoices over. Remember, to the world you maybe 'one person', but to one person "YOU" may be the "WORLD!"

I now understand Rev. 12:11 'they overcame him. [first] by the "Blood of the Lamb," [secondly] by the word of their testimony...' At first I questioned and cursed GOD, now I Praise Him! My GOD is not a GOD of "perhaps"... ("perhaps I'll use Mathew today, oops he just experienced a tragic accident, he's damage goods.") No, my GOD is the "GOD Of Purpose"!! What better way to celebrate the 10th anniversary of my mother's death than by spreading the "Gospel of Peace", using this testimony to reach out to people and comfort others with the comfort I myself have received; II Cor. 1:3-4.

I would like to take the time to thank the "Prison Ministries" who have had a great deal in my present standing, Adullam Ministries, Forgotten Man Ministries, Grace Covenant Fellowship and Partners, and Keryx Outside Team, T.B.N. Family & Partners just to name a few among so many. Also I'll like to give a special "Thanks" to "BALDWIN AVENUE 'HUMMAN SERVICES CENTER'" (The Soup Kitchen that fed us many of meals while living in the streets, Thank You Very Much, may GOD continue to bless you!!!). And not to mention the countless number of Brothers who have helped deepen my walk with Christ, love you Brothers (you know who you are, Stay Strong and in the Faith! "SHALOM").

Now may the LORD bless you and keep you in all your ways. May His face shine upon you and be gracious towards you. May He remember all your sacrifices and grant you support from Zion. Through the victories you have gained, He receives glory, keep on "Keeping On." In the name of JESUS CHRIST, Amen and Amen!

Love always, Your Brother in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mathew Lee Sizemore II". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'S'. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Mathew Lee Sizemore II