

My Testimony of Coming to Christ Jesus

This is not the first time I have endeavored to tell the story of my becoming a Christian. I was raised in a Catholic background as a young boy, but to be honest, I didn't get much out of it, other than the belief that God was real. It seemed like a lot of sitting, kneeling and standing, all of which I found boring as a child who wanted to play outside. My parents eventually divorced, and my father won custody of myself and my three brothers. The church going stopped at the point since my father much preferred to watch football on a Sunday.

As I became an adult, I joined the Air force and got stationed at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas. After I got out, I stayed in Vegas and began work in retail. It was in Vegas, where I would meet my future wife. After several years, I was offered a promotion, but I would have to move to a small town in Arizona, of which I had never heard of prior. This was Sedona. I agreed to the move and my future wife moved with me. We got married while living in Sedona, but the marriage was held in Las Vegas, since I had more friends there.

Eventually as most married couples do, we had the first of our children, a daughter. At this point, I started thinking that maybe we should start going to church, as it seemed the thing that families did. To be honest, I was not getting anything of value from the church we had chosen to attend, but we did have some neighbors who we had become friends with. They were devout Christians, and I remember discussing/debating with the husband on various topics related to faith.

When I think of it today, I realize it must have been a joke for me to have tried fencing with him on matters of faith, when I had nothing to fence with. I was completely unarmed with nothing more than an opinion. He on the other

hand was equipped with the sword of the Spirit, as he knew the bible well. They invited us to check out their church and since I was not getting anything of value from the one, I had been attending, I thought, "Sure, why not?"

What a difference a church can make. The very first sermon challenged me greatly and I found myself enjoying my time at church. The people at the church all seemed strong in their faith and had love in their hearts. Eventually the pastor announced they were looking for someone to host a bible study. I was hungry enough at this point that I offered up my home.

There were about ten of us in attendance and it was led by a gentleman named Paul. There was something about Paul that just stood out. I had met him as the owner of a video rental store in Sedona, and you could just tell there was a joy about him, that set him apart. When I first met him, I did not know he was a Christian. Perhaps I might have guessed, if I had thought about it earlier since in his store, he had a Christian video section which was free to rent, but to be honest, I was not particularly interested in that section prior to attending church.

At this study, we read and studied different topics led by Paul. We also sang songs, also led by Paul on his guitar, and of course we prayed. What I also appreciated about this study was, I could ask questions on any biblical topic. Through the course of time I must have asked at least a thousand questions, all of which we looked to the bible for the answers to. In other words, the answers were not rooted in opinion, but instead the word of God.

During this time, I also began to read a number of other books relating to the subject. Included among these were "Mere Christianity" by C.S. Lewis and "A Ready Defense" by Josh McDowell. I did not know at this time, that God was not only taking me on a journey to Himself, but he was also shaping me to be a Christian Apologist, which if you do not know what that is, it is someone who defends the Christian faith, by the use of facts, logic and reason.

After about a year and a half, I had read through the entire bible, and nearly a dozen other Christian works including the two I mentioned. I had my questions about God answered satisfactorily and I think you would have been hard pressed to find someone who had become as hungry for the word of God as I had become. I also began to feel a weighing on my soul. It was not brought on by any pressure from the church or bible study. It was coming from God as he began to speak to my soul. He was telling me; “now that I have given you so much information about me, what are you going to do with it?”

I did not tell anyone of what I was feeling, not even my wife. It was personal. Then finally on December 24th when I was thirty-three years old, I decided to write a letter to God. I do not know why I decided to do this, but this is what I did. I will share with you the contents of this letter now.

“Dear Lord God,

For the last year and a half, I have been reaching out trying to learn more about you. I believe this was your reason for bringing me to Sedona in the first place. Among the things I learned is that you have many names, not all of which I can even remember at this time. My favorite though is “I AM”. It to me tells me the most about you and all that you are.

I have come to learn that what you desire for us is what is best for us. We as people may think we know what is best, but it always ends in folly.

With this knowledge I ask you to be my Father, to teach me to be worthy to be called your son. I want to walk in the path that is straight and narrow, going neither left or right of it, but only on it. My life is yours to do with as you will, if you will have me."

Love Herb

I had no thoughts on what I should expect from God when I wrote the letter, but I did think my commitment to him was going to bring some changes to my life. Because of this, I also wrote my wife a letter and enclosed it in her Christmas card.

If you want to know if God reads his mail, let me assure you right now. He does! I went to bed as normal. I would estimate the time as being 3:10 am on Christmas morning while I was sleeping, when suddenly a light appeared through the ceiling of my bedroom. It was intensely bright and was so bright that it seemed opaque. Yet the room itself was not flooded with light, though it did illuminate the room somewhat.

The light came to hover right over my body for a moment and I felt a question being asked; "Are you sure this is what you want?" I welcomed it, and as I did so, the light entered my body causing it to feel as though I was being jolted with electricity. I cried out from the experience and hearing my cries, my wife woke me up. The light was gone. I had experienced a vision, and I had been baptized with the Holy Spirit.

I remember my wife asking me what was going on, but I could not answer her. I could not speak, nor could I move. That feeling of electricity I had experienced in the vision was still coursing through my body and it would be about five to ten minutes before it dissipated and I could finally speak. When

my wife did not get an answer from me, she decided to go to the bathroom. Upon her return she went back to sleep. When I could speak, I woke her up and explained what had just happened. She was curious as to why it happened, and I then shared with her the letter I had written to God. I also gave her the letter; I had written for her.

I did not get any more sleep that night, and I had to work a half shift that Christmas morning at the store. I can assure you, though I was never more charged and energetic than I was that morning. As I was heading into work, I felt so perfected that I envisioned me typing on the computer keyboard at some fantastic speed with no errors. I quickly learned I had not gained a single extra stroke of speed on the keyboard, and I was just as prone to making errors as I ever was. However, none of that mattered, God had given me the greatest Christmas present anyone could ever receive. He had given me his Holy Spirit and had taken me as his son. While at work, I started sharing with everyone, my experience. I simply could not contain it; it had to be shared.

Later, I called my pastor and told him of the experience, and he agreed with me, I had been baptized by the Holy Spirit. He asked me if I would agree to share my experience with the congregation. I was all too happy to do so, and I read the letter I had written to God as well.

I have had many ups and downs as a Christian since, some of which I hope to share with you at some future points, but this is my story of coming to Christ Jesus. I hope, you will one day be able to tell others of your story of how you came to Jesus.

Love Herb

