



A Testimony By Way of Love-Letter

Dear Jesus,

No one told me about you when I was young. Certainly none of the varied people I grew up around in the bars my mother owned. I was allowed and even encouraged to do as I wanted and to make up my own mind as what to believe. I fashioned together a monster made up of an eclectic of philosophies. By the time my grandparents tried to introduce me to you, I was already seduced into a hedonistic pursuit of any vice I could explore. The cost of that self indulgence was great. It was a cost shared by the people I loved most. As they struggled with their own lives, they were forced to suffer mine as well, and the deaths that followed came with a guilt that manifested itself in addictions and depravity that lasted decades. As the years passed, Lord, you tried to reach out to me and multiple times I destroyed homes and vows and hearts leaving tears and sorrow and broken people behind me. Many times I heard the clink of iron slam shut on freedoms I misused at every turn. Even then, Lord, as you protected me, but I ignored your gentle yet persistent voice. Then two years ago at age 45 in a cell on enough narcotics charges to put me away till I was 60, I found true freedom. A cell that ended up being a grace not a punishment. I crumbled in defeat, in terror and without hope on a filthy floor groaning on the threshold of sanity, I begged for you to be real. With tears flowing and spittle flying, I yelled at you to exist for me. Several days into that breakdown, something happened in that cell 50 newsletters couldn't hold the words used to try and explain it. You came with a peace that surpasses all understanding and for the next 15 months, alone in that cell, you revealed yourself to me. Amazingly my charges were dropped, charges I was guilty of and I know that was your mercy extended yet again even beyond the cross and I swore my life to you. Then I was released and found Men's Challenge of the Smokies, where I'm being shown how to use my pain to lessen someone else's. Someone told me I was supposed to love you, I had no idea I'd fall in love with you. When men say you aren't splitting Red Seas anymore, I laugh to myself. I am a Red Sea parted and I see you splitting them daily in the faces of my brothers here. Thank you for being real, thank you for being exactly who you said you were. I will never stop loving you.



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Love, yours for eternity,
Guion

MEN'S CHALLENGE

HAPPENINGS



Congratulations to David on his graduation in May. We are grateful that he is staying on as an intern.

Thankful for the recent opportunities to share testimonies and worship with these wonderful congregations.



PRENTISS CHURCH



BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH



FIRST PENTECOST CHURCH

From the desk of the Program Director

Oftentimes in our lives, we find ourselves easily blown around by the winds of uncertainty and frustration. If we want to remain steadfast and have the peace of Christ during these storms, we must be anchored in Him.

Isaiah tells us how to do that in chapter 26:3-4: "You will keep the mind that is dependent on you in perfect peace, for it is trusting in you. Trust in the Lord forever, because in the Lord, the Lord himself, is an everlasting rock!"

Our Mind: To have perfect peace, we need to make sure our mind is on the Lord; not on our circumstances or how others may respond. Remember, there is nothing taking place that has not first gone through the Lord's hands. Once we acknowledge these truths and shift our focus off the situation and onto Him, we begin to truly recognize His sovereignty (power & authority). This shift helps us to realize we can't fix our problem on our own, we need God's intervention, which leads us into the second part, trust.

Trust in God: When we try to fix things ourselves, we are choosing to leave God out of the equation; usually at this point, bad has now gone to worse. However, if we are focusing our mind on the Lord and believing everything goes through His hands, then we also now must choose to trust Him. We have to trust that He knows what is best for us. Isaiah 26:4 says we can trust Him because He is an everlasting rock! What a great anchor to chain ourselves to during the winds and storms of life.

Perfect peace in this passage describes a peace that is complete, a double portion, more than we need and then some. If you need peace today, I encourage you to take your focus off your circumstance, put your mind on the Lord and who He is (sovereign), and finally, put your trust in Him and know He will work all things out for your good (Romans 8:28). He wants you to experience the perfect peace He has for you! (John 10:10).



SAVE THE DATE

OUR NEXT GRADUATION WILL BE SATURDAY, AUGUST 17TH @10AM

TO MAKE A DONATION:

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