

Testimony of Robert M Weatherholtz

First of all, I would like to start out with the scripture in Colossians 2:13-15, "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

Mine is a story of great brokenness and divine healing – the kind of healing that can only come from God above and His Son Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. No one on this planet could fix my life. Not my father, not my mother, not my wife, not my children, not a doctor, not a judge. I mean no one!

You see, we are all born into this world into a set of circumstances that mold us and shape us into the kind of individuals that we ultimately become. That is, until we meet Christ and that changes everything!

I was born in Dauphin County and raised in Lancaster County as the son of a truck driving father and a hairdresser for a mother. I guess trucking took my father all over the country so he was rarely home. I'm sure that was not by choice but by design.

It also played a big part in the breaking up of our family when I was very young and one of the reasons we never really went to church. All I know for sure is that my parents loved me but they had their own brokenness to deal with and it became a very difficult environment to grow up in.

I was kind of caught between the reality of my circumstances and a yearning to know why my life was different from kids who were raised in families that stayed together.

As I grew up I sought the acceptance from older male figures by trying to fit in. I started drinking at an early age and got in a lot of trouble which carried right on into my adult life, always wanting to feel accepted but most of the time by the wrong crowd.

I was made to think that God was a condemning and wrathful God and since I had a less than perfect background I was not acceptable to Him.

Those feelings of unworthiness bred all sorts of spiritual sickness in my way of thinking. Guilt, shame, insecurity and inadequacy, I felt, was my lot in life. I lived that way for many years.

Everyone around me couldn't understand why I drank and got involved in many an undesirable habit. The truth, my truth was that I was trying to fill a void in my soul with all the wrong things and didn't realize just how wrong I was.

There is an old saying that hurt people hurt people. And I did just that! I truthfully didn't know what I didn't know or hadn't been taught.

Years and years I spent in and out of jail for drinking and driving mainly, and I tried so many ways to quit it was heartbreaking, including rehabs, shrinks, jails, and the lot. The last time I went to jail was in 2006.

My wife had divorced me and my kids didn't know why I couldn't break the drinking and the depression cycle that they saw over and over again as they were growing up.

I spent a year of my life in Lancaster County Prison and I was broken. I had become all the things I swore I'd never be when I grew up and it was then I encountered the "Messiah". I cried out in anguish of my mind and soul and on my hands and knees begged for forgiveness for a life I didn't understand and surely didn't want.

I started to read and study the Bible and gain insight into the God I had spent a lifetime trying to run from. I discovered that He was in no way, shape or form the punishing, condemning God I grew up thinking He was. Quite the contrary, He was a loving, caring, forgiving and redeeming God. He loved me so much that He became flesh in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and gave His very life to purchase me back out of captivity in sin and bondage.

I worked through a lot of my issues and misunderstandings with the chaplains and ministry team at Lancaster County Prison. May God bless them for the painstaking work they do.

I would absolutely say that I underwent an act of Providence where only God could have directly come to me in my state of being and touched my mind and heart and changed me forever.

I wanted more of this relationship with this Redeemer who had the power to transform a lost and broken man into a warm-hearted, loving, caring, compassionate human being. He also has the power to turn a lost man into a good, responsible father to his sons and a good son to his father. It is by the relationship of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ that I gained true perspective on what a father-son relationship is supposed to be.

Upon leaving Lancaster County Prison, I agreed to go to a Christian program called, "The Potter's House." It was there that I was able to water the seeds that had been planted and surrender my will to that of God's will for my life.

I was mentored by Al Huber who is the head chaplain at Lancaster County Prison, Bud Rhoda, who is another chaplain at Lancaster County Prison, and Lloyd Hoover who is the head of The Potter's House Ministry and helps so many people re-enter society with an opportunity to become members of God's redeemed and productive, responsible members of society.

Many of us come out of broken families and don't know what we don't know. Once we enter a right relationship with God through the cleansing power of Christ's shed blood, the desire to continue on in a life of degradation is broken. Without the love and encouragement of such programs, many men are doomed to repeat the same cycle of sadness over and over again.

Galatians 5:1 says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

That means a slave to the ways of this world, all of them: alcohol, drugs, money, sensual desire, possessions, fame and the like. In the end, the only thing that saves and brings life is a daily working relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am not perfect and will never be, but the difference is in me and my attitude towards God and other people. I still make mistakes, but they are not life altering and I go into rehabs and hospitals and share with others what set me free.

Glory to God in the highest and His Son Jesus Christ, my strength and my redeemer. "Taste and see that the Lord is good."

Psalm 34:8 "Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him."

Prelude:

It's been 8 years since I've left the Potter's House. Since then, I haven't had to spend months of my life in jail. My relationship with my kids is great. I have a 21-year-old son in a Christian College and he calls me his "hero." I have overcome a lot of my past and continue by the grace of God to do so.

My mother passed away in 2011 at age 92 and is with the Lord. My relationship with my ex-wife is good. We share the children and our faith.

My father and I have become closer than we ever were. He is 81 and a Korean War veteran. Though he is a tough love kind of father, I am truly blessed to have him. My other two sons and I spend a lot of time together and because of Christ, we have gone on as a family and truly love one another.

I've joined a church (Zion UCC) in Pottstown, PA, the town that my mother took me to as a child. Her last name was Potts and I have come to discover a deep rooted Christian heritage in the town of my forefathers.

All blessings of the Lord and I never planned to discover any of it on my own.

Romans 8:37-39 "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Amen.