

My Wife the Mulberry Tree: Saved After Praying for 19 Years

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Craig:

Luke 17, verse 5. Jesus in the midst of teaching here, the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree," that no doubt was present, He was pointing to "be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you." Let's ask the Lord to bless our time.

Father, You are so incredibly good to Your people. Lord, I've been saying it, You're wonderful, You're magnificent. You're glorious. Lord, You're merciful and kind. Lord, You're marvelous, and we thank You for Your goodness to us. We thank You for giving us life. We thank You for Your son. We thank You Lord. That as Lord You are long suffering. You enable us to be so by Your grace. Lord I thank You this morning, I can stand before my brothers and sisters, and say my wife was dead and is alive. Lord miracle of miracles, I praise You for it. And, Lord I pray You'd bless this text, You'd bring it to life to us. You'd help me by Your Spirit to bring forth the things You've taught me and shown me. Lord, they be living realities in our hearts and the life of this church, Lord. And we indeed would have our faith increased and strengthened for the race that's before us. Father, bless our time now. We pray You'd remember our pastor, and his wife, and his children, Lord, as they get away in the mountains Lord. And may it be like the mountain of God. May they meet with You. May You bless them. May You refresh their souls. Lord, give them what they need in this time away. Father, bless us as we open up Your word today. Bless the teaching and preaching of it. We pray that You would bless our fellowship. May Your people indeed be strengthened. May sinners be brought to repentance in faith. We ask in Jesus name, and for His sake. Amen.

You know I seek to be careful when I stand in this pulpit. Not to bring attention to myself, or my personal life, or anything that I feel would detour us away from the centrality of the person of Jesus Christ. Even so, there are times when God works in the preacher, and it becomes so real and so impactful he feels compelled by a providence to share what God has so done. God has so wonderfully worked. And, that part of that providence, is not just for his own sake, but for the brethren he seeks to minister the word of God to. A personal testimony of how God wonderfully brought this text, out of my devotional reading into real life application, that has resulted in incredible testimony of the power of God. That is in the very least strengthened and encouraged my own faith in Christ. And now, I have the privilege of having my bride seated in my presence while I seek to proclaim God's truth. Who's not only my bride, but now my sister in Christ. And, despite all my praying, and all my waiting, I honestly never thought I'd see the day.

You know, I'm blown away by it still. And, I'm just truly enjoying watching her discover, realize, express, all the things that God has done for her, and is continuing to do for her. It's just glorious. And I contrast this last week to the previous one, and it's like night and day. Ruby sent out that email, telling that they had just arrived, and their current status and so forth, and she made a statement in there, something to the effect that, "God is so good." and there was a dash

that said "massive" all caps "MASSIVE UNDERSTATEMENT." I could so identify with that statement.

Well, before I get too carried away here let's get to our text. The apostle said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea.' and it would obey you." Lord, increase our faith. Now let me see a show of hands this morning of brothers and sisters who would like their faith to be increased. I think everyone of us, no doubt, have expressed this very same thing we find the disciples expressing in this text. Every believer desires that. To be more trusting and dependent upon the one who's plucked them out of darkness, and placed them into the kingdom of His dear Son.

So let's imagine, let's imagine, you come to me and say, "Brother, I really feel like my faith is waning. It is. And I desperately feel a need for it to be increased." O.K., brother, what is the root of the matter? Because, I'm not making the connection here between increased faith and a little mustard seed. I'm not getting it. I mean a mustard seed is very very small. It's the smallest of seeds, from what I understand. And, that's the problem, that's where I feel like my faith is. It's like the smallest of faith, that could be. The size of a mustard seed, and, I'd like it to be big. As big as Pete's truck in comparison. How do I get there? Well, Jesus immediately deals with the problem of their thinking. And, what was the problem of their thinking? They were fixated on their faith, rather than being fixated on what they ought to be fixated on, the object of their faith: Jesus Christ Himself.

And, brethren, so much of our walk as Christians hinges upon how we think as Christians. We need to think right. And the only way we can think right, is if we know what's right. And, the only way we know what's right, is if we're rightfully informed and taught. And, that only comes by way of the Holy Spirit, applying God's Word to our hearts and lives, And, that's why we need God's Word daily. It's necessary, to inform us, and teach us, and rebuke us, and mold us and remind us, and correct us, and equip us. That's why we sit under preaching and teaching, week after week. So, our minds will be renewed, our thinking will be in line with the thinking of Jesus Christ, our Savior. We can't think right, if our mind is not upon what's right. We can't. Philippians 4, we read it Wednesday, and oh how it spoke to my heart. "Finally, brethren," I'm thinking in the King James, "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, If there's any excellence, if there's anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you've learned, and received, and heard and seen in me practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." You will never walk in victory, if you do not think in victorious ways, ways that are righteous. Ways that God has shown us in His word.

This is what Jesus is addressing here, and His answer is two fold. First, if you would ever know the increasing of your faith, you must first know the object of it. Jesus said "It's me." Faith in and of itself is worthless. I mean the world talks about faith, they speak about faith today. Many people are exercising faith in this, that, and the other, but they don't know Christ. They don't possess a saving faith that knows and loves Jesus Christ. It's a worthless faith. It's a dead faith. So faith in and of itself is meaningless, without being connected to Christ.

And, so I come upon this verse again in my devotional reading, a few weeks back. And, maybe this is too strong a statement, but I felt like the text was mocking me. I've felt similar

ways about John 14:14. "Whatever you ask in My name this I will do." Jesus says. "That the Father may be glorified in the Son" "If you ask anything in my name I will do it." So what You're saying is if in the smallest measure of faith possible, I can call out to my crape myrtle tree right there and command it to be ripped out of the ground and thrown in the middle of the road there, it'll happen right? Surely that's not what You're teaching, Lord. Lord you don't want me going down the street plucking out trees out of my neighbor's yard and casting them into the road. "Hey neighbor, watch this! Watch what my mustard seed faith will do!"

That's not what God wants. That makes no sense. First of all, it's completely outrageous. Secondly, it does nothing whatsoever to advance Your kingdom, Lord. Thirdly, it does nothing whatsoever to point people to Jesus Christ, or the Gospel. And thirdly, it's just impossible. It's impossible! Who in their right minds even heard of such things happening. And it struck me, that's it, that's exactly why Jesus says what He says. You see Jesus' response is not a rebuke on the absence of the disciples' faith, but rather instruction informing them that: First of all, I must be the object of your faith, not your faith. Although Christ being the object of the faith is not directly referred to here, it's most certainly implied. You disciples, you're coming at this thing all wrong. You spent some time with Me, you witnessed some powerful workings, some wonderful workings of God. I've given you a taste of glory. You want more of it. You want to know more of Me. You want to live your lives out for My glory. You want to advance the kingdom of God, and see great and many mighty things. But you must... you must... you must know this, My kingdom does not advance according to the quantity of men's faith, but according to the power of God.

And, the realization of that power does not lie in how great your faith is, but rather in the simplest of faith. Be it mustard seed size, such faith laying hold of the power of God. And by pointing the disciples to a little mustard seed. Jesus gives a very vivid display, an illustration that this thing is not about the quantity of faith here, but all about faith's object. God uproots mulberry trees, not men. God does. You see this thing doesn't depend on you. Oh you're vitally connected to it, you're involved, because guess what, without faith, that tree's not moving. It's not. But, Jesus wants His disciples to know, and He wants us to know, that whatever circumstances in life require your faith, and really it's everything, but there are times that we feel that need more, whatever circumstances, the demonstration of God's power is not rooted in you you mustering up some certain level of faith. Not even rooted in you worrying about the measure of faith that you have, but Jesus would divert all such thinking to Himself. He wants us to be trusting in His power, His might, His ability, His power, Him. Him alone. And when faith, whatever size it be be it Pete's truck size, or a little tiny pebble, such faith will witness, and know, and demonstrate the power of God. Such faith will see mulberry trees plucked up and cast into the sea.

Well, I mentioned His answer is two fold. Secondly, I'm persuaded that Jesus uses this ridiculous illustration not only because pictorially the imagery is clear. You can see it. You can imagine it. But the nature of its impossibility communicates to us some very important spiritual truth. Whatever measure of faith you esteem yourself to have, do not under any circumstances whatsoever limit God to the realm of what only you seem to think possible. In other words, Jesus wants His people to gaze so confidently upon Him, to lean so heavily upon Him, to rest so securely in His arm, to bank so much upon His power, that things which seem so impossible, so necessary for divine intervention, miraculous intervention, in order to be accomplished, those

things not only become possible, they become a living experience. They become actual realities. Jesus wants you to know brother, sister, I move mulberry trees. I do. I'm in the business of transplanting immovable, rooted objects. It doesn't matter how long they've been anchored in place. It doesn't matter how big they are, how deep the roots have gone down, I move mulberry trees. And I do it to my delight. I rip them right out of the ground where they're bound and I set them free by planting them in a new location altogether.

Oh brethren, He presses this truth over and over. Without Me you can do nothing. With men this thing it's impossible! With men it is, but not so with God. With God, all things are possible. If you but trust in Him, in His power, His wisdom, His time, you'll see mountains turn to valleys, you'll see trees being tossed into seas, you'll see much more than that brethren. Because, He says in fact, "Truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do, and greater works than these will he do." Works of impossibility in the eyes of men. Works of miracle. Jaw dropping works that leave one standing in awe thinking almost as if they were seeing a tree ripped up out of the ground flying over the house and cast into the sea. Just unbelievable!

And brethren I've seen it. I've seen it with my own two eyes. A lifeless dead barren mulberry tree rotting away, full of corruption, and suddenly, plucked up by its roots and thrown into the sea of life where it's already bearing fruits of righteousness to the glory of God. And she's sitting right there. Lord, what is the mulberry tree? I was asking Him in my yard that night. What's the impossible thing, Lord, You want me to ask You for? Because You're going to do it. All things are possible to the one who believes. God doesn't mock His people. God doesn't lie. "Whatever you ask in My name this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it." And so I asked for over nineteen years. Through many trials, and many disappointments and many sorrows, and professions of faith, I kept asking.

And honestly, it must have been mustard seed, maybe even half of a mustard seed because the unbelief of my request was only growing stronger and stronger as each year passed. My own bride had become the greatest trial of my life and yet strangely, she was significantly used of God as a means of drawing me closer to my Savior. Things had become so bad in expressions against God and His people so strong I was beginning to fear for my wife there was no hope whatsoever. She'd crossed the line. This person is that person we see in Hebrews 6 and 10. And yet I kept praying. Continued to pray.

Shortly after joining Grace here, the Lord burdened me to start setting aside one lunch hour a week to fast for my family, my wife and my children. I was determined I'm not going to just sit by and chalk up the damnation of my family to sovereign purposes. I'm not doing it. If hell swallows them up, it better not be due to the lack of my intercession for them. And during that time I just learned to wait upon the Lord. And there were some seasons where I felt a little bit of assurance that God was going to do something, but I have to say there were more seasons, where I felt like it was hopeless. No hope.

Then something happened, brethren. When Carlos, Tim, and I went over to Indonesia, we met these unsuspecting ladies, and you know really, they embody that text in Isaiah 53, that depicts our Lord where it says, "He had no form or Majesty that we should look at Him." That was these ladies. No beauty that we should desire them. "He was despised and rejected of men. He was despised and we esteemed Him not." That was these ladies. And the Scriptures in

I Corinthians say, "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are. so that no human being might boast in His presence." If you've never seen (name redacted) she stands maybe four, four and a half feet tall. She has some form of dwarfism. She hobbles as she walks. She looks so frail and feeble, and yet, I'm telling you the power of Christ rests upon this woman. There's something about it. Ernie as well. And Trevor calls them "the secret weapons" in the spiritual warfare taking place on that island. And we had the privilege of meeting them, and hearing their testimony, and I think many of you have read Ernie's. Trevor having already heard it, was weeping as he heard it again. Just incredible story of the power and grace of God.

And (name redacted) comes up next and she shares her miraculous conversion and then afterward while we're sitting there talking, I don't even remember what we were talking about, specifically. But she just sort of nonchalantly throws out there, "Oh yeah, God answers all my prayers." This is not a boastful woman. This is a very humble woman. This is a woman where the Spirit of God's upon. These women were prayer warriors. And so when she made that comment you better believe it perked up Tim and I's ears. And I asked her, I said, "Sister, will you please pray for my wife? Her name is Shirley." And then Tim said, "I would like you to pray for my daughter, Grace." So then [name redacted] closes us in prayer, and as she's praying I felt this woman to some degree bring me into the presence of God. And as she was praying for my wife I was in tears, and I was certain God heard that woman. Certain of it.

And yet, knowing all the history and evidence, and life of my wife, I struggled with believing it. It's odd how that could be two things at once. Yet, all that changed, in May of 2009. When my brother-in-law suddenly died in shocking fashion, I was grieved for my wife, knowing how difficult it was for her. At the same time I was hoping that somehow, some way, God would use this event to break my wife. To draw Him to her. Or draw her to Him.

Well, the exact opposite happened. What was already a rocky relationship became so volatile I was preparing my heart for the worst. I remember sharing with Kenny, right behind that pillar right there sharing with them I was hoping this event would break my wife, bring her to repentance, and instead it's made a hard heart even harder. I remember Kenny saying this, and it seemed prophetic at the time, and even much more so now. He said, "perhaps things will get much worse before God saves Shirley."

He was right. Last fall my father-in-law had a stroke. Knowing how much my wife loved her father, I knew. I knew this thing was either going to make matters much worse, or this would be the time that God was going to do it. This was going to be the time He'd break her. Unfortunately, it was the former. Things had become so strained, trying to love a wife who's spiraling down at rapid pace. Lead a family working full time and now into overtime. Preparing messages, I got to the place, I couldn't take it anymore.

When Shirley took the kids up to Michigan to visit relatives I was left all alone at home and I needed it. All alone with the Lord. Me and the Lord, and I took that time. I was desperate. I was in desperation. I needed God to do something so I prayed, and fasted, alone in my closet. I remember that night God met with my soul. In tears of grief, in exasperation, I pleaded with Him to stop my wife, because she's going to end up destroying herself. And we weren't going to make it. I knew it. The writing was on the wall. And, so I desperately pleaded with Him. Save

her, Lord. My great desire was, Lord, I can't do this anymore. I've been doing this for nineteen years, Lord. I just want a wife that loves You and worships You. Lord, give me a Christian wife. Please. One that I can serve the Lord with. One that I can grow in grace with. One that... I remember asking the Lord specifically, "Lord, please give me a Christian wife." "If somehow you could save Shirley, Lord, do it. Stop this. Stop this run of rebellion. Lord, do it somehow.

But I had great doubts that He would. Lord, I can't stop her, I've tried. But Lord, if not, if it please you to let her go her way, then Lord, please work things out in such a way somehow that I can have a Christian wife, and I even had the boldness to say, Lord, by next Christmas please. Please.

And brethren, I don't know how to explain it. And this has only happened a handful of times in my life. But I felt such a breaking through with the throne of God. I was certain as God heard my prayer. It was just like the [name redacted] thing. Somehow God was going to bring this to pass. And somehow God was going to give me a Christian wife this Christmas. I knew it. I was certain of it. I didn't know how it was all going to play out. But I knew it was going to be.

Well, then the following week, our beginning of the year, a week of prayer and fasting, Tim challenged us to ask God for impossible things. That really stayed with our sister and impacted her. So she acted upon that and asked the Lord, "Lord, please burden my heart and give me faith to ask for things that You are going to be pleased to do. Impossible things." And as she prayed and asked the Lord, the Lord laid two people on her heart. My wife and Grace Conway. And so she's asking the Lord. The Lord gives her these names. She tells me that later that week. "And I've been seeking the Lord, and I got a burden for your wife, and I've been praying for your wife." And I thought, "Well that's nice. I appreciate that." Consider it, you know, thoughtful of my wife. And I didn't really think a whole lot of it. Little did I know that burden was real. And it was God wrought.

And a couple weeks later she'd tell me, "I'm praying for your wife daily." And I kind of thought, "Really? Wow." It was kind of like, oh man, I'm not going to be able to explain it in my mind, it's kind of like Mary. When the scripture says she pondered these things. Because I'm looking at this, thinking, "Lord, what? This seems to be real. It seems to be of You. Why would you have her praying for my wife? She didn't even know my wife!" She didn't even know Shirley's name! She didn't. God gave her this burden to pray for her. And so I'm thinking, "This is really peculiar." "Lord what's going (on)?"

Then all of a sudden these letters are coming in the mail. Unmarked, unnamed. Just encouraging my wife. Pointing her toward the Lord. I was still largely swimming in disbelief, but at the same time I'm looking at this and I'm thinking, "What is going on here?" These letters start showing up and Shirley wasn't exactly jumping for joy to receive them. In fact, she got to the point where she wouldn't even read them. She saw it. She could identify what it was. She ripped it up and threw it on my desk. You know there was one time she told me, she thought she knew who it was. She goes, "You better tell them to stop sending them or I'm going to do it and it's not going to be pretty." I didn't know. I told her, "I honestly don't know who it is." It's the Lord.

I was loving it really. She wasn't. But I was. So here I am thinking about these things and pondering them and I thought, "Lord, if Shirley is Yours and You're going to save her and she hasn't bowed the knee in light of what's happened to her brother or her dad, her dad's stroke, Lord, what's it going to take? Lord, what's next? Me?" And I started thinking it might be me. If

God's going to save her. Yet I had a hard time even believing it was going to happen. By the way the sender of that card was [name redacted].

Well, when things blew up a couple of weeks ago. I just had to get away and seek the Lord. I had to be alone. You know, I shared the things I shared with you on that Wednesday night. I had to know this, I had to know, "Lord, This must be You working out the details of Your promise to me. Of that request back in December. I just don't know how You're purposing to work it out. I need to know." I told you I was having a hard time reconciling some things in my mind. And in my quest to get alone with God, I started getting some feedback that appeared that the Lord might have saved my wife. I was wanting no communication. That 's hard to do in this church. But I was trying to get totally alone. And I did for the most part. And when I heard that I was quite resistant to it at first. In fact, Tim comes over and visits and said, "You know Ruby had gone over to pick up the girls, or dropped them off, and she had a discussion with Shirley. Craig, she said she believed God saved her." And I remember my response was like, "Oh Ruby, come on!" And Tim's just kind of silent. Not really certain what to think. And I gave all my reasons why that seemed so convenient, and I wasn't buying it. You know wanting to be believe it but very leery of it.

So there I am alone again. I'm down on Kenny's floor. And it hits me. My wife is the mulberry tree. When I was watering those crape myrtles, I asked the Lord, "What is the mulberry tree?" What's this impossible thing You would have me trust You for? And actually it was something different that the Lord gave me at that time. What seems so impossible, it would unquestionably require the power of God to do it? God showed me right then. He plucked my wife out of the bondage of her darkness and completely transformed her heart and placed her in the Kingdom of His Son.

As I've watched the Lord work over the years I'm greatly encouraged when God's people are laden with burdens, brethren. Don't take burdens lately. Because burdens cast upon the Lord will see their fruit in due season. In God's time. So be encouraged. Don't give up. I just want to tell you. The burden God gave me, I just want to share this, cause I want you to enter into it, because I believe it's from the Lord. When I was out watering my crape myrtles. There's not just one Mulberry tree. In this time God what He did, is He gave me the fullness, the fruition of a Mulberry tree and showed me the next one. Lord what would be impossible? I want to pray for something that's just impossible. This is before Shirley was saved. And the thought came to my mind. Five thousand souls. Specifically five thousand Quechuan souls. That's when Ryan and Nicole were still here. And the Flaspolders were gearing up to go. It just, I mean it came to me. And I thought, "That's it, Lord. I'm praying it. I believe it's from You." Five thousand ... Lord won't it be glorious we get in glory and there's the Lord, He says, "Here they are all five thousand of them." And what glory He'll get from that. Because we trusted in Him for it. The power of God. To me that seems absolutely impossible, brethren. In fact, I thought, "Can I share this with a brother? That's ridiculous." But so is plucking mulberry trees and throwing them into the sea! And that's exactly why the Lord uses the illustration. "I'm the God of the impossible, if you'll but believe Me for the impossible you'll see it happen." You'll see it happen. And it might be 19 years. Or 19 months. Or 19 days. I don't know. But I'm trusting God for five thousand Quechuan souls and brethren, I ask you to enter into it with me. I'm not letting go until the day I die. 'Til the day I see it. It might not be until Glory. But I'm expecting to see five thousand souls,

saved by Jesus Christ for His Glory. I trust it to be so. Brethren, let's lay hold of God for impossible things. He's worthy of our trust. He's worthy of our praise. Hallelujah what a Savior!

Shirley:

Okay, speaking in front of people is like one of my biggest fears. I'm not going to go into a lot of detail when I was little, but when I was younger my parents didn't go to church. We kind of went with my grandma sometimes. And then I went to a Vacation Bible School when I was five. And raised my hand, you know, so I thought I was saved. When I was like eleven, my great grandma was getting baptized and I wanted to be baptized too. So I'm like, yeah I'm saved, I said the prayer.

And then when Craig and I were dating and engaged to be married, I had a profession. I said the prayer, you know, again. So I was baptized and I thought that I was saved. We moved to Texas in 1994. I can see now that God moved us here. Whereas for sixteen years that I've been here, I've always hated it, and I'm like how do you know God wants us here? God is everywhere. We can be anywhere. We can be back in Michigan. You know.

But anyway we moved down here to Community. You know people were giving their testimonies and stuff, and I'm thinking well, "I don't know what to say. What if they ask me? You know I'm really scared." And so you know I came to the realization I wasn't saved then. And I thought God had saved me a couple of weeks later.

Well, I went through this profession for I don't know how long. I don't remember the time line, but that's not important. Nine years? Okay nine years. Anyway I've had three, I've had a lot of professions, but my last one, Craig and I were supposed to meet with our pastor at the time, Kyle. I guess they wanted to talk to me because they didn't see any fruit in my life. And I knew I wasn't saved at that time. Because I asked myself the question, "Can I say that I love Jesus Christ?" This was going in my mind like every day. And I thought, "I can not say that." So when we met with our pastor I think I kind of shocked Craig and Kyle cause I was like, "I'm not even saved." And they're like, "Oh. Okay." And I felt such a freedom, being free from having to go to church every week. Being free from having to put on a show. And I didn't have to force myself to read the Bible everyday. Which I wasn't doing anyway, so who was I fooling.

But I really wasn't free, you know. I was just bound in my own bondage and the sin. My thought life, I mean I went from being very religious you know, to where I just had these long, long dresses. I mean that's okay if you're wearing one. I went from being very, very religious and in these past years, was it 2005? When that happened? When we met with Kyle? Well, anyway... all these years Craig came to this church. And I had visited a little bit. I wouldn't go to church every week with the family because you know I enjoyed my alone time, quiet time, whatever. Whatever I was doing, shopping you know.

But I didn't realize it at the time but I was spiraling deeper and deeper into my sin. My thoughts were evil. I hated God. I hated everyone here. I would delete my Facebook friends who put Scripture verses up. I didn't want to see them, so I would delete these people. Not all of you guys, but most of you. Anyway, my brother passed away last year as you guys know, from a massive heart attack. You would think that God would use that to open my eyes, it just made me more and more bitter and hardened. And I took all this bitterness toward God out on Craig. So, I look back now at the years of just being cruel to my husband. I was so cruel to him.

And I was going through emails, just last week after God saved me. I was going through all our emails from all the way back to 2003, 2004. And in every email, well not every email, but even in the emails where I'm really mean to him, he just points me to Christ and he shows me love, you know, Christ's love. Well last week, you know, all this stuff that happened. Not, last week. Was it last week or two weeks ago? Okay. Well, Craig left for the week and you know it was good that he was gone and we were both alone. And I met with Tim and Ruby on Tuesday, because I pretty much was down, I'd say that I was at the bottom of the pit. I couldn't go any lower. I was pretty humbled, what was I going to do? The only thing I can do is cry out to Christ.

So I met with Tim and Ruby on Tuesday. And I told Tim, "Okay, I'm crying out to God but how do I know if He's going to save me? How do I know?" And he says, "You'll know." And you know when I had my professions, I always struggled with, "Am I saved, am I not?" You know the doubt was always there. And then Ruby had told me, because I had told her I had just hit rock bottom, and she says, "You know Corrie Tenboom's sister Betsy had said on her deathbed there's no pit deep enough that God is not deeper still." And so that really encouraged me. You know, I had counseled with Tim and Ruby. And I had talked to a couple of people on the phone. And I was leaving Craig alone. I didn't want to call and talk to a lot of people. I didn't feel like that was right. I felt like I really just needed to be alone. Just me reading the Bible and praying. Which is really weird. I know that I can look back now and see that God had planned this whole entire thing. So I just cried out to Him. I didn't feel like watching TV. I didn't want to be on the computer. Which is, if you knew me, that's really weird. But I just cried out to Him everyday. My poor kids, I don't even know what they were thinking. But I told Hope and Luke one morning, I said, "Mommy's crying a lot because I'm trying to find Jesus."

But anyway, I don't know if it was Tuesday or Wednesday... Let me back up a little bit. I had sent these two emails to these two ladies on Facebook, who were members of the church here. And told them never to talk to my husband because I wanted to just be mean. Because I couldn't stand God so I wanted Craig to pay for that. And I told these ladies, "Don't talk to him. Don't email him. I don't want you anywhere near him." I mean that's so evil. But immediately, on Tuesday or Wednesday I felt like I needed to apologize to these people. I didn't realize then, but I felt a love for these ladies. And so I emailed them and told them, "I'm sorry, I'm trying to seek out Christ. Please pray for me if you can. You know, because I was so rude to you."

Well, one of them emailed me back pretty quick and she said, "I'm praying for you. I forgive you. Don't worry about it." And she sent me a John Piper message which, you know, I just had to watch it. And it was on 1 Peter 1:22 and he's saying, John Piper even said, "One of your first fruits is love for the brethren." And I was like, "That's it!" I knew God had saved me at that point, because all a sudden I felt a love for you people. And I hated you. I did. I didn't want anything to do with this church. This is why I say I went from being super religious all the way to the other end of the spectrum. To where I was listening to some heavy metal rock music. I loved it. Just thinking evil, like super duper evil thoughts. I would cuss. In my mind. I wouldn't do it, hardly at all at home in front of my kids, but in the car. I have serious road rage and I would just like, you know, greet people that cut me off on the road. Just you know, it was bad.

But instantly instead of the music in my mind, it was scripture songs, scripture, hymns that I had not heard in years. Or sung in years, was in my mind. I did not feel a bitterness anymore towards anybody. My heart just felt softened. I felt a compassion. I was watching like

Christian music on YouTube and people put like pictures to this music and I would see pictures of different people and my heart just went out to them you know like little starving children in Africa with distended bellies.

Let me back up a little now. I've also been a racist. To the point where I wanted to join the K.K.K. But my husband, I knew he would never do that. And I didn't want the government to track me. That kind of thing. I would be like on a white supremacist sites and stuff. And I would be like, "yeah!" you know, "go, go!" Just thinking I was so much better than people, you know. Self-righteous, big time. God took that from me. Because I saw that in a video, these little black kids, and I thought, "You know what God if you wanted me to adopt a Haitian orphan, I would do it." And Craig had asked me that a few months back. "You want to adopt a Haitian orphan?" I'm like, "no way." "I don't want a baby. I don't want a black baby." But now if God wanted me to do that, I would.

Anyway, the songs and stuff, He just took all that stuff from my mind, my heart, my thought life is just clean. It just feels so much better. I have a hunger for God's Word. I love to read the Bible and I like to watch the testimonies on YouTube. I watched yours. I like to watch sermons and listen. You know but these scripture songs and stuff were going through my mind, that I had not thought of in years. And then there's one hymn, it's, "I sought the Lord and afterward I knew that He sought my soul to seek Him seeking me, it was not I that found thou Savior true but I was found on thee."

So, I'm so thankful to God for saving me. Because I was just going down and down. I mean, I almost destroyed my family and my marriage. You know. I just was so blind. So blind, you know. Thinking that the world has so much to offer me. More than Christ but Christ is everything. You know I told the Lord, I said, "You know what," I said, "I'm not going to bargain with You I just, I know I need You. I need Christ. I need you in my life. You need to run my life. I'm not going to bargain with You. If You took my husband and my kids or just my husband, whatever, I would be okay. Because if I had You, I would be okay." So I thank God and I'm praying for my children now. I'm praying for my parents, and my brother's friend Paul. I'm praying for all of them that God would reach down and pluck them out like He did me. So, I'm just very thankful and all the glory goes to God. If you have any questions you can ask me later. I love you guys.