

"Show & Tell"

2017 Lenten Devotionals



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Dear Friends,

Do you remember having “Show and Tell” in grade school, where you got to bring something from home, which you could show and explain to your classmates? I remember once I brought the box in which my sister’s engagement ring came. I was so excited to show off the empty box and talk about the beautiful ring that was now on my sister’s hand!

Our writers also reminisced about their experiences with Show and Tell. Some remembered bringing treasured toys and some even brought pets – a choice, which was met with varying degrees of enthusiasm from their teachers!

We invited the writers to consider the ways in which God has shown and told God’s people precious lessons, how God has shown and told us lessons, and how God is still showing and telling. What resulted was the rich collection of writings in this booklet. We know you will be touched by the open, honest and heartfelt thoughts and remembrances shared by the writers. They know you will read this and they trust you with their words, as they trust God that their efforts might be a blessing to you.

As always, you may copy this book or download it from our website. Just please give the writers and PCA credit for the work.

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Daily Meditation



Ash Wednesday, March 1, 2017

1 Corinthians 15:54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: Death has been swallowed up in victory.

In the year 2000, I moved here to Iowa from California to get out of the meth game. I was 33 years old. After a couple of years it caught up to me and I gave in to temptation. I met a lady at work and began dating. Almost immediately she got pregnant. We made a commitment to stay together to raise our son. I came into a large sum of money and the doping got worse and worse again. She moved out and I kept the kids and the apartment. After 3 years of daily use, 20 hours a day, my family turned me in for child endangerment. While in county jail my bones were so brittle from the daily drug use, I fell and broke my back. I was convicted on more severe charges, as was my girlfriend. We both got 20 years in prison. I pray that she gets God, because I know without God I would be dead right now. Now I am almost 50 years old. My sister has our children and I know now that God has more in store for me, for my life. I have been baptized this year and try to always walk with the Holy Spirit, even though it is hard here in prison. God never leaves us.

I thank you Lord for never leaving me, even in my darkest days. You always tend to your flock. Thank you for your forgiveness, mercy, and blessings every day, for without you we are nothing. May we always follow your laws. Amen

Thursday March 2, 2017

1 Kings 19:11-13 Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave...

There are different ways to recognize God's voice. It may not be loud...in fact in my own experience one of the things that sets apart the voice of God from all the other voices is that it is often inconspicuous. You have to listen for it! The story about the prophet Elijah takes place at a time when he is on the run and desperate to encounter God. After he takes refuge in a cave on the side of the mountain, he is told to go outside because the presence of the Lord is about to pass by. A mighty story of "show and tell".

This is my prayer for you, brothers and sisters in Christ: It is my hope that as you read this, regardless of where you are and what your situation may be, I want more than anything that you will hear the gentle whisper of God's voice. I ask this in Christ's name, believing we are sons and daughters of a most high God. Amen

Friday, March 3, 2017

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Philippians 1:6 " ...being confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ."

I am eager to share the story of the last 24 hours. Really, it is the story of my life. I was baptized into God's free gift through Jesus when I was 15. I am now 38 and these many years I have still had a fear of man. I am not sure why. I always knew in my head that God would protect me and even if he didn't, I was in his hands. In my heart, though, I guess I feared that God would fail me. It kept me from opening up in public. There have been more times than I can count in which I knew I was supposed to open up and share God's love with others. I knew it, but I chose silence. This hurt my spirit and I truly wanted to have God change me. Last night I told a trusted individual my fears and desires. I did my nightly prayers and went to sleep. Early in the morning I had a vivid dream of me sitting on a busy sidewalk with friends when a couple ladies walked by. I asked, "Do you know God?" A conversation took place as I opened up about my faith in God. The ladies didn't receive Jesus in that dream but I woke up rejuvenated and inspired. I knew that people had been praying for me and God had come to show me that God wasn't done with me yet. God knew my motivations were right and God showed me I could be used. I praised God this morning and through my time today, wherever I was and whoever I was with I didn't allow myself to shy away from sharing God's word with others. God is great and truly desires to raise up God's children and see us tell God's story!

Lord God, lead us today in your spirit of truth. Fill us with your passion and strengthen us with your joy. Bring us to a place where we recognize you mean more than anything this world can throw at us. If you call us to it you will bring us through it. We thank you that we are equipped to everything boldly and we give you praise in Jesus' holy name. Amen

Saturday March 4, 2017

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

In 2012, I was at the end of my rope. I had suffered so much pain, so much loss and so much hurt and I thought the only way out was to die so once again I prayed but not like before. My prayer did not go unanswered. This time God told me to stop and think before I act. Because of Jesus I am still alive to tell the story and now I tell my story through the songs I write. Now that my life has changed, my kids have come back into my life. I'm going to be a grandfather because Christ told me to live and every time I get down I read this verse because it is no longer I who lives but Christ lives in me.

Dear Father in heaven, thank you for the blessings you have given me and my kids and the grandchild that will be in my life soon. I thank you for all the friends I've met and most of all; I thank you for my life. Amen

Monday March 6, 2017

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

I can remember when I first was sent to Anamosa on January 6, 2006. When they drive through the walls and the door shuts behind you it feels so much like being put into the dungeon. It's eerie. Through that experience I was finally brought to church and God showed me, even in an environment where you are completely on your own, God is here for me. The inmates all look like they're WWF wrestlers, but slowly I came to get along pretty well in there. God's grace was sufficient to carry me through. God's grace has gotten me to realize no matter the circumstances, God is there for you always, in all the dark places of life.

Father, no matter our situations or our circumstances in life you are faithful. We thank you. Bless our walk, whether it is down Main Street or in a dungeon, and use us to carry out your will. Do with us what you will. Amen

Tuesday March 7, 2017

2 Corinthians 6:18 "I will be a father to you and you shall be my sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty.

When God says, "I will be a father..." he is not talking about a drunken, abusive father. He is talking about a father that shows he loves you no matter what. If you have children, they are very precious to you. No matter what they do you are willing to forgive them. I am in prison but the last thing I heard out of my youngest daughter's mouth [before I went into prison] was, "Dad I forgive you and I love you." She was nine when she said this to me. Our father in heaven is the same, saying, "I forgive you and I love you." We are loved no matter what we've done. I love you, Destiny, and thank God for you.

Thank you, Jesus, for your love and forgiveness. I am sorry [for my sins] and blessed that my child showed me your love and understanding in my time of need. Amen

Wednesday March 8, 2017

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

The lowest part of my life was in county jail facing the humiliation of my crime and a 25-year sentence. When I was booked, I was asked if I felt like hurting myself. I made a joke of it and found myself stripped down to my underwear alone in a padded cell. The December cold reached my cell. There was a hole in the floor that was the closest thing I had to a toilet. The cell smelled of urine and was infested with fleas. In that terrible place, I finally prayed my heart out to God. God showed me that this [prison sentence] was the result of living my life my way. I wrestled all night long with the guilt and despair I felt. Finally, I truly committed my life to Christ because I saw that only God could redeem me from the desolation I'd created in my life.

Lord, even as I contemplate my past failures, your truth of salvation and redeeming power flows over me. Please continue to lift all of your lost lambs out of the shadows, out of the pain. May we all find the hope, love and purpose you have for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Thursday March 9, 2017

1 Timothy 4:14-16 “Do not neglect the gift that is in you...”

My God is a merciful God, a God who forgives those who truly repent from their heart. The story that I am about to tell is a story that truly changed my life. I met a gentleman in Ft. Madison, IA, in the penitentiary there. One time we were discussing how much God had changed our lives and he gave me his testimony of how much trouble he had gotten into as soon as he entered prison. I also shared with him that I was only 20 years old when I went into prison and that I used to get into a lot of trouble. He told me that he tries to give good advice to others. Then I told him that I was a Christian and believe in Jesus Christ. He told me to be strong and to share my story with others so they can turn their lives around. Today I go and I share what I have learned in the Gospel.

Dear Heavenly Father, today provide for me an opportunity so I can share the work of your Holy Spirit. Protect me and use me to proclaim your kingdom. You are the maker of all things, seen and unseen. I will continue to glorify your name. This I pray in the name of your son Jesus Christ. Amen

Friday March 10, 2017

Luke 15:21-24 “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”

I had been in prison about three years. I had not let it break me. I was still angry and bitter about being put in a cage. “I’m not going to let it change me,” I thought to myself. I had already started doing the same things I had been doing on the streets: selling drugs, prostitution, gambling, you name it. After years of this and being caught and thrown in the hole for long periods of time, I began to get tired of this lifestyle. I wanted something more, that didn’t involve the headaches and getting caught up with the police. I had this hole inside of me. I was completely empty and I couldn’t fill the hole no matter how hard I tried. One day I was sweeping the hall of the prison and I met this little old lady coming in on a Sunday. She asked me how I was doing. I told her I felt empty. She asked me if I knew Jesus. I said, “No, but I’ve heard of him.” She told me I needed Jesus to fill that hole. She prayed for me and I began to feel better and not so empty anymore. I started reading God’s word and the next Sunday I was in service with her. I stood up and confessed my sins to all there and started praising the Lord from that day forward and thanking the Lord for what he has done for me.

Lord, thank you for all you’ve done for me today! Thank you for protecting me in the past. Lord I know every day you have a plan for me and that it is the best for me. I want to thank you and give you praise for all the wonderful things you have given me. In your holy name, Amen.

Saturday March 11, 2017

John 11:43-44 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

When I was five years old I was in the hospital with pneumonia. My mother's best friend was a nurse and she stayed the night in my room, giving me shots and medication. I died. I had an out of body experience. I was above the hospital with a bright light shining back at the window of the room I was in. Then I realized it shining through me, from heaven, back to the bed I was laying in. To me, this meant God was not through with me yet. So I feel I was put back on the earth to help other people wherever I am.

Lord God, may we use our time to help and mentor others here where we are in prison. Help me to pray for and with others. Amen

Monday March 13, 2017

Matthew 18:21-22 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

Have you ever played the "what if" game? I sure have. What if my parents weren't drug addicts who beat me? What if I didn't choose to use drugs and drink when I was a teenager? What if I didn't kill my girlfriend drunk driving? What if I would have asked for help dealing with the guilt and shame I felt, instead of blaming God and being an alcoholic? Would I not be in prison right now? What if this is exactly how God needed me so I could be of service to my Father?

God shows me an infinite amount of love and grace no matter what I have done in the past! God helps me through my past of hurting people and self-centeredness into a future where I do God's will. Just like Paul, I can say God showed me a better way.

Thank you, God, for your love and grace. I offer myself to you as a living sacrifice. May I do your will always, and please help me to remember that you're the boss and I just work here! Amen

Tuesday March 14, 2017

Psalm 40:1-3 “I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.”

“Show and Tell.” I thought this would be easy, but it turns out to be harder than I thought. On the outside God “showed” me many things but I didn’t recognize them. God showed me warning signs – I ignored them. God tried to get my attention and God had it for short periods of time. God finally pulled out the last stop and showed me I was wrong. I had been living for myself and not for God. When God showed me how my life had all tied together I finally understood what I had not understood before. I gave my life to Christ and God gave me forgiveness and a peace, which surpasses all understanding. I try to put God first in all I do, but as a man with a sinful nature I too stumble. And so I “tell” you all right now, when we stumble, the Lord Jesus is there to catch us and set us upon the solid rock which is Christ our Lord. Be patient and trust in the Lord.

Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus, and Holy Spirit, hear our cry. With all of the troubles that we face daily, and the stumbles that we take, please lift us up and wash us clean that we may stand upon the firm rock that you are. From this rock we will sing praises to you, Lord, for all you do. Thank you, Father, for hearing our prayer and granting us enough peace for each day. In Jesus’ holy and precious name we pray, Amen.

Wednesday March 15, 2017

Isaiah 43:2 **When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.**

I come from a life of poverty. I never felt loved. Much of the time I felt neglected. I didn’t grow up going to church so I never knew about God. I just heard things here and there. I thought that my loyalty was to my mother and the biker way of life. When I first came to prison in 2000, I was reborn. This is when I learned about God and studied the Bible. I didn’t feel worthy to change my life and live for God at that time. It has taken 16 years, but now I know God and have a relationship with God every day. I have been reborn. I’m in prison but have never felt so free.

Thank you, God, for your love and mercy. Thank you for always being with me. Amen

Thursday March 16, 2017

Revelation 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

I have wavered from my faith. Things go well. I stray. Things go bad. I stray. I always come back because Jesus is always there. Revelation 3:20 is a verse that says Jesus is at the door waiting to come in to you. To me, this means that at any time in life, no matter how bad or good, you can let him into your life. I've often felt alone in my life, not having anyone I know or love with me. My friend who is preacher on the inside said to me, "Jesus won't leave you. You can't be lonely with Jesus. No matter what, we have Jesus. When everyone else leaves you, Jesus still remains."

May God be with us all. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday March 17, 2017

Psalms 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

On the day I was to be incarcerated, I was at home with my wife reading a book. When the police knocked on the door and arrested me, I was scared to death because I didn't know what was going on. It was something I had done a long time ago and thought nothing would come of it. I was wrong. I didn't think to ask God for help until I got to the jail. I was such a hypocrite, appearing to be Christian and still doing things on my own, leaving God out of my life. When I got to where they were going to keep me in jail, I cried for over an hour. Just before they were to put me in with other inmates, God told me to stop crying, that God would be with me during my time of incarceration. God has been with me ever since. I read and study my Bible every day and pray for my family, friends and the other inmates.

Father God, thank you for all that you have provided for my loved ones and friends, for brothers and sisters in Christ and for myself. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Saturday March 18, 2017

Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

When I got locked up, I knew it was time. When the judge said 25 years, I knew right then God was going to change me and use me.

Dear God, give me the strength and will to exemplify your loving spirit, no matter how I am received. Let my light shine all day so my fellow prisoners and the prison staff may see your mighty work in changing my life. Amen

Monday March 20, 2017

Ephesians 4:25-29 So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.

Having a relationship with God our Father and Jesus the Son of God is an everyday thing we Christians do. The transformation I have gone through since I turned my life over to Christ has made me realize that I must work on specific things in my life. Some of those include letting go of my old habits and behaviors and doing the things of the Holy Spirit. As a young child I was corrupted by the world and I used to do as the world told me to. Today I have removed falsehood from my life and have become a soldier for Christ, speaking the truth and acknowledging that Christ is my savior and my redeemer. I believe God is with me every day of my life.

Dear Heavenly Father, take this heart of stone and replace it with a heart of love and compassion for others. Amen

Tuesday March 21, 2017

John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

I am 28 years old and am serving a 2-year sentence for violating my parole. I want to share with you the story of the day I met my foster parents. I was 16 years old and I was in a youth shelter. My foster mother called me on the phone and she asked if I wanted to live at her home. I said yes. The fact that she took me into her home, I think, was God showing me that I could learn to trust people with my health and safety. The good Lord also showed me that I could learn to love again. So many people had betrayed my trust in the past, but by the power of the Holy Spirit I have forgiven those who have hurt me.

Lord I would like to pray for those who have been hurt by the power of Satan. I pray that they find the courage to overcome the hurt. Amen

Wednesday March 22, 2017

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

When I first came to prison, the very first year was rough. I was very bitter. I felt someone had lied about me and had sent me to prison. Then just as clear as day the Holy Spirit spoke to me, making me aware of my own fault in my circumstances. I will continue to seek God's will for me and a real relationship with God.

Heavenly Father, thank you for showing me my sin. I give you praise because you still love me. I am forever grateful for your discipline and I accept my mission to share love with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Thursday March 23, 2017

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

I once had to confess some stuff to my priest and before God. This was the first time I had ever done a confession as a member of the church. The priest took me on the hardest walk of my life. We walked probably 50 feet down the hall and every step was a struggle. With each step, I felt an unseen burden grow heavier on my shoulders. When we reached the end of the hall, it felt as if I carried Mt. Everest on my shoulders. I confessed a lifetime of sins that day and walked away for the first time in my life free from my past and my sins.

Loving Father, I ask that you give me rest and forgive me my sins. Through Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with us and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever, Amen.

Friday March 24, 2017

Psalms 23:1-3 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.

I have had a hard road to get to where I am in prison but I have found God in here. I started to believe in God because I started to pray and God answered my prayers. I asked God to have my mom write to me in prison and she did. Three weeks later, I started to go to church every Sunday and to go to Bible study on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Lord Jesus, please keep everyone safe in your name. Amen

Saturday March 25, 2017

John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

His son He had loved to
Then put on the cross
For the sins of the whole world.
This much the cost.

Please excuse me for leaving
I've have so much to learn
Without God and God's word
I surely would burn.

Lord please forgive me
For all that I've done.
I know love will follow
As light comes with your son.

Truths that are God's Word
Bring hope to my life
Thank you for your Son
Our Savior, Jesus Christ.

I know I can do all things through you, O Lord. I have been cancer free for 2 years this November. Thank you, Lord Jesus; my savior, my friend. Amen

Monday March 27, 2017

Philippians 4:13 I can do all this through God who gives me strength.

Through our history in class, race, rich or poor, I have lost so many through death by gun violence. Those before me and after lived in vain, with no true victory. Then God showed me I am here to tell you God is real, for God turns the darkness to light. Through all things God strengthens me.

God is great. God makes us into new persons even being given the cross to bear. We were born from God's grace and were given death to gain life. Thank you, Jesus, Amen.

Tuesday March 28, 2017

Isaiah 40:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

I got into a fight and got more time. It led me to God because I never really knew God. I went to church one day and I loved it. Now I am surrounded by an amazing second family.

Lord, thank you for your love and care through my brothers in prison. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Wednesday March 29, 2017

Psalm 37:4 Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

If you give it all to God, God will make your innermost dreams reality. You can be satisfied.

Holy God, help me to give everything to you. Help me to accept your will as my desire. In Jesus' name Amen.

Thursday March 30, 2017

Psalm 19:1-6 I love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies. The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called to the Lord; cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.

I've battled a drug addiction for many years. I felt lost. I felt alone. My family left me because of the mistakes I've made. I grew up in the church knowing God. I stopped going – that's when I felt empty. Getting my faith back, I feel alive. I feel the power of the Holy Spirit.

Dear God, I pray for restored relationships, and for health and healing for those addicted. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday March 31, 2017

Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

God has been in my life since I was born. I like to look at my grandparents who have been married 60 years and Christ has kept them together all those years. I hope in the future that I can have a relationship like that.

Dear God, help me to take it one day at a time. Help me to make the most of each day and to love others. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Saturday April 1, 2017

Philippians 3:7-11 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

My current incarceration has brought me back to the Lord. I have lost everything that I hold dear, my wife, children, friends and family, except for my mom and dad. I don't know if I even have a job or will be able to get a job in my career field. What I have found in getting to know Jesus again was worth losing everything. While I regret all the pain and suffering that I caused and the shame I caused my family, I am happy that Jesus used the situation to bring me back to him and he took that burden from me. In fact, Jesus uses me daily to share my faith and witness to those who hurt and are lost. I am so thankful to be of use to the Lord and that God has chosen me to be God's instrument.

Dear heavenly father, thank you for loving me and forgiving me daily. Thank you for the guidance and peace you have given me. Thank you for using me according to your purpose. Thank you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Monday April 3, 2017

Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

It was just a normal day in Clarinda's Correctional Facility. A fellow inmate had a dispute with my 'cellie'. Three other inmates came into our cell. I got up and stepped between my cellie and the others because I didn't want them to hurt my cellie because he is my best friend. The CO was notified and came to check out what had happened. I told the truth. The inmate returned after the CO left. I again stepped between him and my cellie. I ended up with a bloody nose, a cut above my right eye and a bruised lip. Everything healed within two days.

Lord Jesus, I forgive the one who harmed me and ask that you forgive him too. I pray that he might find you. Amen

Tuesday April 4, 2017

Psalms 46:10 [God] says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

I remember when I was two years old or so, I was playing on the floor in a ray of sunshine through the bedroom window. I remember soft, peaceful music playing. A calm, warm, peaceful feeling came over me and it was as if I were in a daze or something – almost frozen in time but awake to the present. It felt like I was somewhere very beautiful and could never be harmed, like I had arms wrapped around me, being held. I believe I was touched by the Holy Spirit. I believe I was given the gift of inner peace and the ability to be heartfelt and out of this I developed a talent for music. I give thanks to the Lord, and I give glory to God for giving me the intuition to perform from my soft heart. In glorifying the gift of inner peace, I meditate today, in his name!

Lord Father, I couldn't ask for a better life than living in your will. Thank you for all of the gifts, life lessons and struggles. You bring me through the darkness and back into your light. Amen.

Wednesday April 5, 2017

John 17:20-21, 25-26 *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you... Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."*

Hebrews 13:6 *So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"*

When I was a young boy attending a Catholic school I feared that some classmates were going to beat me up. So I ran into the church next to the school, knelt down and prayed and asked God to protect me from my enemies. When I opened the door to leave the church, all the boys that were chasing me were standing there. As I began walking toward them, they parted like the Red Sea and let me pass. From that moment on, I knew that God was always with me, and that God would never leave me or forsake me. I am now 63 years old and God has never let me down, though there have been 1 times I let God down. God's always got my back.

Thank you, Father, for your grace, your mercy, and your love, and for always watching over me. Even in the midst of disaster, you are always there. Amen

Thursday April 6, 2017

John 11:41-44 *Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."*

I had surgery on my back. I can only remember them putting the anesthesia mask on, taking a huge breath in and seeing stars. Before I woke up I saw the face of Jesus with the thorns and blood coming down his face. When I woke up, my parents asked if I had seen a light. I wondered why they had asked that. Later on I called my sister and she was angry at me because she was afraid of me dying. When I asked my parents what had happened, they said I had needed some extra air. Then I told my brother what had happened to me and to get back to reading "the Good Book"! Now I can say my prayers have been answered and anyone's prayers can be answered.

God, I pray that you will look out for the victims of violence. I also pray that I will be given the chance to get out of prison. Amen

Friday April 7, 2017

2 Timothy 2:23 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

I would have to say that God has opened my eyes and helped me to see that people like to push the limits and see how far they can get before I react with violence. When this happens, I lose everything I hold dear. God tells me I am better than that.

Father, help me find the right words to say to all my friends who come my way. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Saturday April 8, 2017

1 Timothy 6:11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

On a June morning I got on my hand cycle in Glacier National Park. I was climbing 17 miles uphill to the summit Going to the Sun Road. I was riding for charity. Many times I was asked if I wanted a ride, and I said "No thanks." I was met with a head wind and I kept on. It took me 6 hours 22 minutes to summit. Along the way I was tired, but a sense of catharsis took over. Drivers were rude. I was stopped by park officials who gave me orange reflective tape, for which I was grateful. At the summit I was in a snowstorm and I was in solitude going the last two miles. There was a family taking some pictures and they took my picture and emailed it to my family. I persevered through the temptation to give up or take the easy way out. I am glad I earned that reward.

God, I pray for cyclists who are out there on the roads, for their safety and for them to persevere. I also pray for the inmates in prison to persevere like a cyclist on a mountain. Amen.

Monday April 10, 2017

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

There was a time in my life when I felt unloved. I was alone. I picked up the Bible and I came to a new understanding that I am loved by someone more than just family or a lover. I am loved by God. When I think about this I don't worry about being loved by other human beings. I know God loves me. This is all I need to know.

Father God, thank you for loving your creation. Amen

Tuesday April 11, 2017

2 Corinthians 12:10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

When I was first sentenced to prison I felt weak. The time spent behind bars has been difficult. My family and I have suffered and endured extreme hardship. This experience has brought me closer to God and I now understand this passage from the Bible. For Christ's sake, I delight in this time for it has made me strong!

God in heaven, thank you for all your blessings, even those that are hard to bear. Watch over my family and me while we are apart and help us to appreciate each other and love each other when we are together. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Wednesday April 12, 2017

Ecclesiastes 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens...

As a little girl I remember going to my "thinking tree". I would sit and look down at the water below me. Watching it run so peacefully, God, I knew you were there. You've shown me this all these years later; innocence in your presence, tender heart of the Father reaching out for me. Little legs dangling high above the water – perched in my tree; my dreams just beginning to come into view. As I trusted the world around me the dreams became distorted. I thought I was silly to think that they were reachable. They were farther away than the stars in the sky and I could never touch them. I wanted to taste the moon and capture the wind, take it home with me and manifest the invisible kingdom within. I was longing for another world, waiting for this love to awaken inside of me. All these years later I still wait before you, God. I walk to my "thinking tree" today and I pull myself up into the branches and I remember all those dreams. The wind comes rushing to greet me. We are both so happy. You are here and you are within. Jesus hung from that tree on Calvary so now his spirit is resurrecting those dreams inside of me.

Abba Father, thank you for the precious moments when you sat with me in that tree. I go there often in the spirit, just to feel your breath on me...to see the waters turn...to see the dreamers still dream. You are showing me all my dreams come true inside of you. Amen.

Maundy Thursday, April 13, 2017

1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

I had been baptized on June 11, 2016 at the prison. It wasn't until nearly 2 months later that the Lord really spoke to me. I knew I had to give my life to God completely, but there was something I had to do first. I wrote my mother a letter. I came clean about the very first time I used to the last. It wasn't only for her but also for me. I believe that was the Lord's way of telling me that I could only fully be God's by admitting my sins. I could only pray she wouldn't shun me or judge me. I got a return letter from my mom a couple weeks later saying she already knew and she just did the only thing she could, she prayed.

I come to you, Lord, and thank you for taking such good care of me. I come as one of your humble children. I pray you continue to bless my life and everyone in it. Amen.

Good Friday, April 14, 2017

2 Corinthians 2:5-11 If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

I have been in and out of prison eight times. The grip of addiction has had its hold on me. I've done a lot in my life I'm not proud of. Anyone can change with God. I'm no longer alone. Jesus is the lover of my soul. I thought when my son had almost died I was mad at God. But God transformed my heart, my faith, and has blessed me immensely.

Awesome Father, thank you so very much for giving me your love and for never leaving or forsaking me. I will always give all the glory to you. I love you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Easter Vigil, Saturday April 15, 2017

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

During Holy Week 2010, while on a water-focused mission trip in Tanzania East Africa, God showed me how to trust in God and to be filled with confidence in God's promises. Through the locals that I went to help, God showed me how to trust God and accept God's son, Jesus Christ. I knew that I had to have the joy in my life that these people were showing me. I had many earthly treasures in life but I didn't share in the freedom that I was seeing in them. These children of God had hope in every situation because they trusted God to provide for them. Today, I am in prison, yet I am living free in God's love and grace. We can show others from inside these walls that our heavenly Father is waiting to share God's love and forgiveness with them. We can all run to God's open arms and have freedom and be filled with love, joy and hope in every situation. Brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to show and tell others around you what our God had done for you. Use this time in prison as a mission and not an intermission in your life.

All knowing God, I pray that I would have a deep reliance on you every day. During trials and tribulations help me grow closer to you and not rely on my own understanding. God, may I whole-heartedly follow your mission for my life and bring glory to your kingdom. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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