

The Dream

In April of 1999 a tragedy struck the students and staff of Marion High School. A young man, an exceptional athlete and person, died while running in track practice. It struck the community with grief and disbelief. At this time, I, Daniel, was a sophomore in high school and had just turned 16. I had slowly began to drift in my walk with Jesus from the time that I first enrolled in public school as a freshman. Now here I was shocked that someone I knew could be taken from the earth so suddenly.

For three nights I cried myself to sleep questioning God and wrestling with Him for understanding. How could He let this young man die? Why would he let him perish and never give him a chance to hear about salvation in Jesus Christ? How could He let him go to hell?! Every question and frustration I expressed was met without a response. But on the third night after I had fallen asleep I had this dream:

I was walking the halls of Marion high school but there was no one around. The halls were extremely dark save for one door at the end of the hall. Light was breaking into the darkness from around the cracks of the door of the Biology Room. As I approached, the door opened, and the light penetrated the darkness with power and glory. I could not see into the room but then a figure appeared, stepping into the hall. It was Todd! "What are you doing here?!" I asked. "What do you mean?" was his reply. "Your Dead!" "No, Daniel, I'm not. I am more alive than ever and I am in Heaven with Jesus!" Todd went on to describe how wonderful Heaven was and how excited he was to be there, but then his demeanor changed. He looked into me with penetrating eyes and said, "Daniel, you need to tell all the students about Jesus. They need to know."

We then began to walk toward the cafeteria and suddenly, there were students everywhere. We continued to talk and he explained how they needed to hear the Gospel, but as he did, he showed me why kids so often reject the message of the Truth. We were looking into their souls and around their hearts were all sorts of crud and things that blocked the message from penetrating into their soul. Pains, frustrations, being misunderstood, sin and the like all hardened their hearts to where the Message would not reach deep enough. Then he said, "Daniel, you need to speak through the hardness and reach their hearts."

Daniel then began frantically running through the school telling everyone, "Go the the gym, go to the gym". After everyone had arrived and the gym was packed, I stepped up to the podium to begin speaking and suddenly awoke from my dream.

Jonah

Now I had purpose and a calling. I still did not understand how Todd made it to Heaven*, but I was convinced that he had indeed heard the Gospel and received it. But what now? I talked with a teacher and formed a before school bible study, but had no idea what to share. Meanwhile at night I began to be struck with incredible anxiety. I would lay awake at night wondering how I was going to share the Gospel. I would worry about my grades. I worried about losing all my friends that I had made partying. Restlessness would overtake me and

before I knew it, it would be morning and I would have to go to school with a few broken hours of sleep and exhaustion. I quit going to the bible study within a few weeks of starting it. I didn't go to church on the weekend because I was so exhausted from the week of sleeplessness that I would sleep all weekend. Before I knew it, I was defeated and ready to give up. After approximately 5-6 months of attempting to be a "good Christian kid", I gave up and said "enough of this, I'm going back to the world". Immediately I could sleep again, wasn't worried about grades, and got all my friends back because I decided to party again. It was my first bout with spiritual warfare and I was so juvenile in my faith I didn't even know it was demonic. I ran as Jonah did from the voice of God, and lived as a prodigal son for the next 7 years.

The Lost Sheep is Found

Fast forward 7 years to August of 2004. I was getting kicked out of the Air Force (with an Honorable Discharge by the grace of God) My mom was on her deathbed, and I was sitting in a jail cell in Utah for reckless driving the day I got discharged from the military. It would seem I had hit rock bottom, but that would come soon after. In the previous 7 years I had gotten caught up in the drug scene, met Dawn, joined the military, and got kicked out. There were momentary times of repentance mixed into the time but that was only because I kept getting into trouble and would turn to God for help.

But in August everything began changing rapidly. My mom passed away on September 4th just a few weeks after I got home from the military. She got to see me one last time and it was truly God's mercy that allowed for it because she had no strength left from her battle with breast cancer. I began to drink and party heavier with friends. This went on until April of 2005. Over those few months I began to notice a few things about my situation. I had lost a taste for women and all that is involved with that, as well as for drinking. I was still doing it but was completely miserable. I felt that death was beginning to stalk me at this point and that scared me, but I was not ready to return to Jesus and it was going to be on my terms, or so I thought...

The Mute Man Speaks

On Dawn's 21st birthday, we went out with a couple of other friends for a night of drinking. As I said earlier I wasn't really in the mood to drink, but I did a little. For the rest of the details and how Dawn's testimony ties in read it [here](#). Some things happened that night to Dawn that basically left her suicidal. I comforted her at first, but then got angry at her as more of the story unfolded to where I told her I didn't want to talk to her and that the only one who could help her was God and she needed to talk to him. She called me later on and said she didn't know how to and asked if she could come over. I relented and she showed up. Four of us sat down that night and I began to share the Gospel and all that I knew about Jesus for the next couple hours. After I was all done I told Dawn that if she just prayed to Jesus and

accepted His forgiveness all her sins would be forgiven. I asked if she wanted to do that and she said yes.

Here is where I began to get a little nervous! I had heard the sinners prayer repeated 1001 times in my life as well as seen countless people led to Christ, but I had never done it myself. "Well, this can't be too hard" I thought to myself. So I said, "Let's pray." We all closed our eyes and I thought for a few moments about what I would say. I then opened my mouth to speak, but no words came out! I knew what I wanted to say but was unable! I tried again and still nothing. It was as if my tongue were frozen to my mouth and I couldn't speak in this moment. I discerned that the Holy Spirit was not allowing me to speak and so I questioned Him in my mind and asked "why will you not let me lead her to Jesus?" The response was astounding... "I will not let you make a mockery of My Son! You cannot lead her to me when you are not even following me. You repent and she will follow!" At this moment the conviction of the Holy Spirit began to pour over me and He showed me all my sin from the time I had ran away from Him at 16. I began to weep quietly and then began praying aloud and confessing my sins to the Lord. After I was done I turned to Dawn and said, "Just pray something like that." I later found out that she didn't even realize that I was repenting and thought I was just telling her what to pray, haha!

In the Last Days

That night after Dawn went home, I lay stunned on my bed wondering over everything that happened. I was on cloud nine. I also could sense the presence of the Holy Spirit in the room and I didn't want Him to leave. He brought to my remembrance a sermon I heard on the radio when I was 19. In it the pastor talked about this time in prayer he had with the Lord. Jesus was telling him he wanted all the keys to his heart and the pastor was arguing that he had given them all to him. Jesus replied that he had given him every area but one. He wanted access to that area as well. I began to pray a prayer to Him offering him the keys of my heart. the more I offered, the more he began to pour out His Spirit.

This giving of His Spirit was an equipping for ministry that I lacked before as a youth*. It was truly as Peter preached in Acts where young men will "Dream dreams and see visions, and your sons and daughters will prophesy". The most blessed promise of Scripture is that this outpouring is for all saints, not a select few. As Jesus testified in Luke 11:9-13, God desires to give the Holy Spirit to His children. They are already part of His family and have been adopted as sons, but he desires to give more of His Holy Spirit to those who ask, seek, and knock. And as Peter testified, "this promise is for you, and your children, and all who are afar off."

Wings to Soar

Dawn and I began attending church at my parent's former church Harvest Life Fellowship that week. My dad moved to Florida shortly after my mom had passed. We began to grow quickly in our new church home and were feeling excited about serving God. Even though there were many trials over the next nine months, we knew that God was directing us toward

ministry. Of course, being a naive youth I assumed that when God called you to ministry, you became either a missionary or pastor. I didn't really want to do either in the traditional sense, but felt that that was what I was SUPPOSED to do... TO BE CONTINUED