

CSPC Mission Conference 2014
Mark 5:18-20
(Psalm 116:1-2; 1 Timothy 1:15-17)
“Tell Them How Much the Lord Has Done for You”

We all have a story, a story of our self, our understanding of who we are and how we became who we are, a story of things done by us and to us. It is that story that brings meaning to our lives and either crushes us with disappointment, guilt and shame, with anger and resentment, or fills us with pride and selfishness, or with humble gratitude and praise.

Each one of us who claims the name of Christ is given the high calling of making Christ known in word and deed, so to live that others will believe that the gospel just might be true. That happens most naturally and powerfully when, at appropriate times and places, we tell our stories, stories that declare God's grace and display his glory, and that help others to know his love for them.

So, this morning, my son, David, and I have been asked to tell a bit of our stories to the honor and glory of our great Redeemer, and hopefully as a word of encouragement to you.

David wrote this poem many years ago, when he was sixteen and turning away from the Lord. John prayed the poem for many years, pleading with the Lord to fulfill its ending, and now both rejoice at how graciously the Lord has fulfilled the poem's hope and intention.

When deep inside I feel alone
And life's false beauty loses light
Death's dark journey seems to near
And paints its answers seeming clear
While in my soul is such a fight
Wrong seeming true and nothing right
It's at such times through love you've shown
That you're always watching from your throne
Loving always from your throne

At times I know I play the fool
At times I know I go my way
Yet all through this I hear your voice
Because you hear my parents pray
I know in time I will grow up
Leave immaturity in the field
And cross the plain to love your rule

Body

1. [John asks David] You and I are both pastors' sons and grew up in homes where the Bible was believed and taught, and where we learned to pray, worship and observe the means of grace. We were raised in the church and yet, when we reached adolescence, we both ran from the Lord and from his people. What went wrong? Why did you run?
2. [John asks David] If we run because we think that our joy is to be found apart from Christ, apart from the people of God, if we run because we want to be free to rule ourselves, then what are the actual consequences of running from the Lord? What did this world's idea of freedom actually bring you?
3. [John asks David] What was the turning point for you? How did God's Spirit begin to turn you back to him, back to the gospel of grace?
4. [John asks David] What kind of changes has Christ worked in your heart and mind as you face the future? What are now your passions and desires?
5. [John asks David] If you could put a title on your life's story, what would it be and what would you want the last page of your story to say?
6. [David asks John] Dad, through it all, why didn't you give up on me? Why did you keep loving me?

Conclusion

This past week, on rereading the poem he had written at sixteen, deeply grateful to the Lord for hearing the cry and reflecting on how the Lord has brought him safely through so many storms safely to this day, David wrote these words that now testify to a heart set free from bondage to fear and futility. He reads these in obedience to Jesus' command, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you" (Mark 5:19).

VICTOR

My darkest hour
From deaths deep grasp
From Satan's lies
My twisted path

From ashes to glory
You've made me whole
From ashes my story
Holy and whole

Without you void
The blackness feeds
With you I'm filled
My every need

So death can come
And have my flesh
You have my soul
My every breath

Thanks be to God and to his Son for hearing the cry of the broken-hearted, for rescuing us, wiping away our tears, and bringing us home at last to the feast that awaits us in our Father's house!

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