

Defeated

**Personal testimony
of Kevin Canard**

Saved April 12, 2016

I started coming to Lighthouse Baptist Church in Oct 2015, a few weeks after meeting my now wife, Elizabeth. I wish I could say met at a coffee shop or something “innocent” like that, but we met on a dating app. I was on it looking for flesh, and she was on it out of curiosity. Little did I know God was going to use this sinful lust to bring me to Him.

She had told me upfront that her church and God were her life, so if I wanted her it had to be my life as well. I didn't really understand what that meant. I thought I did, as I went to churches before in my life, not faithfully or anything, but I decided to at least give it a try since I was falling for her quick. I remember being greeted by just about everyone there. I remember the friendliness of everyone. I remember the crying during prayer. I remember listening to people speaking out during the sermon. I remember the jumping up and down and the waving of the arms. I remember the yelling, not only from those in the chairs, but from Bro Greg. In fact, I left my first service being critical and making light of what I had just seen. "Was it really necessary to yell like that?"

But after I stopped being judgmental of the pastor and people, I started to listen. I began to hear a message about being dead, dead in your sins. Let the dead bury their dead, and to follow Jesus no matter what. I remember hearing that even if a family member, friend, or even a spouse chooses not to follow in God, that you must continue. God above all else. I remember feeling overwhelmed and not sure what I had seen or heard, but I really liked this girl, so I continued to come.

I was able to come on Sunday mornings at first. I worked almost every night. I waited tables and had done so for most of my 20s. A few weeks after coming I started to experience things I haven't in what seemed like forever. During songs and sermons, I felt my eyes well up. I would quickly dry my eyes. I didn't cry. I didn't let things get to me. I spent years hardening myself to not show when things got to me – good or bad. I think maybe the very next sermon bro Greg mentioned that God doesn't like or want the prideful. That it isn't emotion when someone cries in church or for God. It's the Spirit moving in them.

I got a random Wednesday night off (nothing is random with God) in November. I decided to come to church. Up until this point, I simply closed my eyes during church when others were praying. I wasn't really agreeing with the prayer. It wasn't that I was disagreeing, just not being a participant. That night Stephen Moffitt prayed before the service. His prayer sounded so different than what I thought prayer was and had heard growing up. I caught Stephen and told him how special his prayers sounded, because it sounded like he was talking to a friend. He explained that God is a friend. The very best. When I got home, I kept thinking of what Stephen had said, about just talking to God, just Him and me. I laid in bed, staring at the ceiling. I began to pray. I started talking to God, and I started to weep. I hadn't cried in ages. I remember having to tell Bro Greg the next day what had happened because I was overjoyed.

I had struggled for a long time with money, specifically how to manage it, and also worrying about it. I hadn't had proper instruction on how to live modestly or within my means. I wasn't very responsible and lived for myself. I was in a lot of credit card debt and continued adding to

it. God had been working on me at this point, telling me that Sunday mornings and the occasional Sunday night or Wednesday night wasn't enough. I remember thinking I didn't know how to make that work, because I relied on working nights which didn't work well with the kingdom of God. By the time Lighthouse was having a revival in December, I had already stopped working Sundays. I decided that I was supposed to be involved in this revival and I took off the whole week. I remember being scared to death. I had been misusing and overspending, so I needed the money, but I took off the week anyway. It was my first taste of trust and faith in God. At some point in the week, someone caught wind of this and gave me some money to help with gas etc. I remember being shocked, not only because someone thought to me to do that, but because I knew I didn't deserve it.

At the first of the year, I dropped my Wednesday night. "Oh boy, how am I going to do this?" The Lord heard my heart and Bro Greg spoke about tithing one service. He said how all money is God's money, that He allows us to wake up with the strength to work, and that ten percent isn't really much. I had never thought of it like that. He went on to say how we are to be better stewards, if we can't be trusted with little, how can we be trusted with much. That was eye opening. Over the course of coming, I learned what a pastor's role really is. He is to be the shepherd to his sheep. I was to go to him with problems I was having, not to try to figure them out on my own. I figured it couldn't hurt. I went to him with my financial troubles and laid it out. I assumed that he wouldn't understand or be able to help. That was not the case. We formed a game plan and I slowly started to trust this man and this church with more and more.

Because of how I had been in my teens and 20s, I couldn't seem to fully accept love given to me. I didn't I felt like I didn't deserve people's time. I didn't love, and I didn't allow others to love me. This is not a result of a bad childhood or because my parents didn't love me. I didn't have much discipline and was babied, and got everything I wanted. It made me very selfish, materialistic, and to be blunt –a jerk. I thought little of saying what I thought. I would lie for any reason, and did things I never thought myself of doing. Drinking, drugs, etc. I burned a lot of bridges, and said and did a lot of things I wish I could take back.

Brother Greg had left to go do work in India with Brother Terry, and other men in our church stepped up to preach. I remember Stephen said that God could have left us where we were, but He didn't. Wow that hit me straight in the heart. I think this is when I really started to listen to God and his messages. Before I had heard them, but the next day I would find myself in a mess or not able to recall the sermon. Brother Greg said to not think of a preacher preaching his own words, but rather preaching God's words. The Lord talks through a preacher. He puts His word on a preacher's heart. I could feel myself absorbing more knowledge, yet I continued to worry and not really trust God. I prayed for God to help me, to hear my pleas, to show himself to me.

There were a few men that I began to trust and open up to. Richard Allen was one. He told me a verse that has stuck in my head to this very day. 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 Christ Jesus. That was so encouraging. I had become afraid that even though I hadn't been on this journey long, that there were others in the church who were lost longer and who I felt more worthy of

God's grace and salvation. But in hearing that verse and thinking about it from time to time, I started to think just maybe there was room for me at God's table too.

A couple months had passed. During this time I decided to move back with my mom as I could not continue sharing an apartment with a friend and walk with God. I could see changes in my personality. I was happy to see people at church. I was starting to let my guard down more and more. Despite that, I was still struggling to maintain the word I received past the first day or so, and to trust God. Because of my personal issues, I was fighting with Elizabeth all the time. Because I wasn't working as much I had lost favor with my boss, and I was worried about work. My relationship with my mom was difficult due to us both not willing to let go of things from the past. I felt like everything was a crisis, any small speed bump in life would cause me to worry and be fearful. I had lived years like this. The constant worry was so much.

One night I was invited to dinner at Ronnie Fondren's house. He and I had become pretty close. Elizabeth and I had a really bad fight earlier the night we were to go, but we went anyway. I'm sure he could tell something was wrong. After dinner He and I went to another room and talked. He told me a little more about him. After talking for a while, he said something that caught me off guard. He said I looked defeated. I didn't know how to respond to it. In the following days, I couldn't stop thinking about what Ronnie had said to me. Defeated. I had so much on me. All I ever think about was money. I really hated who I had become. I hated who others outside Lighthouse knew me as. It was crushing me. My black hole was suffocating me. I

did feel defeated. I was running out of plans for myself. I no longer knew what to do. I spent years relying on myself, to harden myself, and I had driven myself into the ground. I realized that I had spent years making this hole, and now I couldn't get out.

I wanted so desperately for God's help. I kept coming to church, listening to His word. I kept asking questions. Philippians 4:6 says "Not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." I would try to turn it over to Him, but then I would catch myself trying to put my hands back in it. I kept hearing God say that it would be His way or my way, not both. My finances were in shambles and I needed to work, and I wanted to come to church as a faithful man of God, but I felt like I couldn't do both. I was so scared. I'd have a couple of days where I'd be like "okay I won't worry or obsess over this" and then I'd find myself back at it. I kept thinking of what Ronnie said to me. Defeated. I knew I was. This was too much for me anymore.

The week before Lighthouse was to have Faith Baptist church come down to honor them Brother Greg preached on what we expected from God. I realized that I wasn't really expecting anything. I would pray and ask, but I wasn't really having a great divine expectation from God. If I did, I would ask and drop my weight and burdens at His feet and walk away from them. That was eye opening. We were told to pray and ask God to deliver great things from Faith's visit. The week leading to the visit, I prayed to God asking for a great work in our church. I told God that I loved Him, and my new family, and His church. I started to think of all of the gifts He has

given me. A family, a church who loves me and accepts me. A man who preaches the truth and honors Him.

Faith visited us for five days. I took off those days because I wanted to be a part, and witness God's work. I was so amazed that first night. The amount of love in one place. It was overwhelming. I've never witnessed it or even dreamed it was possible. It was nothing but God all around. Everywhere. The most beautiful thing I'd ever witnessed. I was so moved.

Brother Claude preached on the will of God. To surrender yourself to Him, to be faithful. To honor Him, to love what He loves. To put Him first. I sat there and thought to myself. I began to cry. My life isn't what I want anymore. I wanted His way. I had spent the whole 30 years of my life doing it my way. I had nothing to show for it. I knew I had to choose. My will or His. I wanted to tell God how much I was sorry, how much I loved Him, how thankful I was. I was sorry that I hadn't given my life to Him, that when I ask for His help I try to put my hands on it. I was sorry for every time I had lied to Him, to others, I was sorry that I lived so wrong for so long.

Brother Sandy preached during the meeting and I preached on something I knew a great deal about: blaming others for our problems and feeling that no one loved us. He asked if all that we chose to do in life, working before church, holding onto past things, not doing God's will, is that all worth more than our soul? I knew that it wasn't. He said we had to have our heart ready for

when God called. Rahab was ready for the walls to come down. Brother Sandy asked if we wanted to be right with God. I did. More than anything. I was so tired of hurting.

Brother Claude preached about Rahab and of Jericho. As I listened to him, instead of hearing bro Claude, I heard God. During this, I kept having thoughts of "you aren't ready, you don't know enough, you haven't been here long enough, there are others more worthy of salvation, you've done too much." Brother Claude screamed out asking for Rahab. Was there any Rahab's in the building. RAHAB!!! I heard God asking for Kevin. And I answered I'm here. I started to sob. Sob like I had never sobbed in my life. Brother Claude said that God would tear down the walls for Rahab. He screamed WAKE UP. I heard God. He asked again "Choose." I knew I had to trust Him. Christ died for me. Me. As Brother Claude spoke of the walls coming down, God showed me myself. I finally saw who I was, and I knew I didn't want to be him anymore. The things I had done, the person I was, the thoughts I have had, I put him on the cross. And yet God loved me, He gave His son for me. His blood was enough. I cried out and wept uncontrollably. I finally dropped all of the heaviness I've been carrying for so long, I was Rahab. I felt God put His hand on me. I felt a warmth engulf me, and instantly calm my heart. I cried like I've never cried before. I was Rahab! I could feel all the pain, all the darkness, who I was, all fall away in an instant. I felt God invite me into His arms. God picked me up and carried me out of my darkness. I could rest in Jesus, because He finished it. On Tuesday night, God defeated my demons. My old life was gone. I knew what it meant to be a new creature. I am forgiven. My heart and will belongs to God. I am in His light. I look unto Him. My trust is in Him. God defeated my greatest enemy – me. I was defeated.

