

Depth of Mercy

**Personal testimony
of Will Biddinger**

Saved May 27, 2012

Acts 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth,
and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.

My testimony starts long before I was born, no doubt God has determined the bounds of my habitations. He hedged me up and kept me from running head long into destruction, wow God has been so good and long-suffering to such a wicked man. My parents have had me in church from the first Sunday after I was born and to the best of their ability at the time, followed God. My parents moved from Los Angeles CA to Memphis TN, and then to Desoto County Mississippi and attended a small church named Victory Baptist Church. I did not see it as a young child, but my parents had to endure some very tough things while we were here. One of them being after a house fire which left my parents with nothing but the clothes they had on their backs, the pastor of this church would not even let my mom come in his house because she was wearing pants and not a dress or skirt.

Thank you, God, from delivering me from this hateful and legalistic way.

One day when I was 5 years old my kindergarten teacher talked about hell and asked if anyone wanted to not go to hell. Of course, I raised my hand, and she led me through the sinners' prayer. I vaguely even remember this experience but thank God for parents who never let me believe that was true salvation. It was such a mindless and shallow experience, they did not have to convince me that it wasn't true salvation, I just went on about my life and forgot about it for the most part. Around this time my parents started attending the Festival of Joy in Pontotoc Mississippi at Grace Baptist Church. I can remember thinking as a kid "man why in the world is everyone jumping around, crying and shouting??" I asked my mom one day while watching Brother Tim Rutherford

sing and worship why he was crying, and she answered “he is meeting with God” I was so amazed at what I saw that I didn’t even touch my drawing paper (big deal for a kid!)

Not long after this the pastor of Victory Baptist Church resigned to become a chaplain in the military. And Brother Jim Grapp from Grace Baptist Church became our pastor. My dad nominated him to become pastor because they had a long relationship where he helped him tremendously in Michigan. The church became Old Paths Baptist Church, and we started coming to Festival of Joy and Camp Liberty as a church. In 2005 Brother Jim butted heads with Brother Terry Owen (pastor of Grace Baptist Church) over some issues and in the end Bro Jim broke ties with Bro Terry. This was a huge blow to my parents because this meant, no more Camp Liberty. In March of 2006 we attended a meeting preached by Brother Terry at Lighthouse Baptist Church in Arlington Tennessee. We had attended here several times before for their birthday celebration, and I loved going. This is when my dad talked to Brother Terry and told him that he felt like we were a part of Camp Liberty but with the situation going on at our church, it would be too much conflict. Brother Terry simply told my dad “Well you know what you have to do.” That night my parents talked and felt like we were supposed to be at Lighthouse. So, in May of 2006 we joined Lighthouse Baptist Church where Brother Greg Moffitt was pastor.

Coming to Lighthouse was huge for me. I couldn’t believe that every church service was just like camp meeting. I had felt God’s presence in services at camp before but never at church like this.

June camp of 06 was the first time I ever really heard God speak directly to me. Lighthouse and Camp Liberty just loved all over my family and me. During a one-another that Bro Robert Hunt did

for my dad, I heard God tell me very plainly “I love you” wow! I had never experienced that before. Over the next few years God gave me the great grace of having Bro Scott Smith as a youth leader. He poured his heart out on us, prayed for us, preached to us, and rebuked us when we needed it. He preached many sermons throughout my teenage years that were key to my salvation. I'll never forget the day he looked at me in the middle of preaching and told me “You are playing a game, Will!” He was definitely right, I wasn't there to seek God or worship Him, the only reason I was there was to put on a show and make everyone think that I was a good church kid. But, on the inside there was complete darkness and dead, dry bones. Another sermon he preached that really made me realize the severity of playing with God, Bro Scott likened our life to a highway, a highway that ended in destruction and hell. He told us that God gives us opportunities to repent and get off our way and get into His way these are exit ramps off of our highway. He said that we do not know how many exits are left and when will be the last. So, you better get off while you still can. Man, this was so real to me, but just like the Bible says, walk in the light while you have it, or darkness will overtake you. Sadly, as I got older, I cared less and less about my soul.

I started attending Arlington High School in the 10th grade. I was homeschooled mostly until this point, but my mom was struggling with her ulcerative colitis so bad that she didn't have the means to teach me some of the more advanced things you learn in Highschool. Like a starved dog after some food, I went after the things of the world. I absolutely ate it up. I longed to do the things all my “friends” were doing, and I even tried time after time to sneak behind my parents back and go to parties and girls' houses with no parents at home. But thankfully God protected me from myself, and my evil desires. Truly I am my own worst enemy, I would have utterly destroyed my life if it were not for God hedging me up during these times. Through my 10th to the end of 11th grade, I

couldn't tell you any sermons that were preached. I came to church by my heart was so far from what was going on. Words cannot even describe how little I cared about my life and how ungrateful

I was for it.

June camp of 2011, I was going into my senior year. When I got to camp, I was the same hypocritical

teenager I always was. After Monday night services we had a young men's prayer meeting. This

night I watched Caleb Owen, Stephen Moffitt, and Josh Moffitt worship and thank God for what He

had done in their lives. They all shared pieces of their testimony and it made me see that all of this

can be for me if I wanted it. This wasn't just something God called my parents to and let me go. I

remembered the times when I was a younger teenager, when God talked to me and told me He

loved me. I talked with Caleb, Stephen, and Josh some throughout the meeting and asked them to

pray for me that I would seek God. Sunday when we got back to church Bro Greg said he felt led to

pray for the lost. As we all bowed our heads Bro Greg said "actually, I think the lost should pray for

themselves" I instantly felt burdened with where I was, and I went to the altar and broke. I talked

with Bro Greg afterwards and he told me that God had not convinced me of sin and worked

conviction in me, he explained that without the Spirit's work of convincing man of his sinfulness,

then there was nothing to be saved from. So, I asked God to show me so that I would repent. That

evening he preached Matthew 3:3 "Prepare Ye the way of the Lord" I was stirred up and ready to

prepare my way to be saved, or so I thought.

A few weeks later a girl that worked at the restaurant where I worked caught my attention and without any counsel from Bro Greg or my dad, I started dating her. I became totally consumed with

her and just like before slipped back into neutral and didn't go anywhere. Meanwhile during this time Bro Greg preached hard on sin and unbelief. I never even realized it until I went back through my notes after November camp... November camp 2011 came and being away from my girlfriend for a few days got my mind back over to spiritual matters a little bit. Bro Greg preached a sermon on going outside of the camp if you want to be saved. I had absolutely no idea what this meant but I went down to the altar and tried. After some counseling with Bro Greg, he told me again "William, you still don't see your sin how God sees it. Haven't you been listening to what's being preached?" I knew I had not given attention to it, and he told me "That's your problem. You won't get anywhere without doing something with what is being preached."

March 2012, my dad came to me one Sunday morning and told me that he was concerned that I was letting my girlfriend consume my thoughts and not giving attention to my soul. He told me that he didn't want me to worry about going and getting her for Sunday night services, which meant we couldn't hang out. I immediately got angry, and argued with what he was saying. But the whole time I knew he was right. That morning Bro Scott went to sing "Thank You" the chorus goes like this: just a little while longer I want to pray, can't get you off my mind so I came to say thank you Lord, just for loving me" Bro Greg encouraged everyone to thank God for something. He told us young people that we had MUCH to be thankful for like parents who told us no, not to be mean, but because they loved us. I saw what my dad was trying to do, and I went over to him and broke on him telling him I was sorry and telling God thank you. This was the first time I had ever felt real thankfulness for Godly parents. I told both my dad and God that they were right, my girlfriend was keeping me from finding God. I talked with Bro Greg after and told him everything that was going on and he told me that I needed to talk to Josh Moffitt and ask him to tell me his testimony,

because he also struggled with this. So, I did, and he told me his testimony. I knew what I had to do, it was time to end this relationship and go after God. It was also good to see if my girlfriend truly wanted God, if she did, she would keep coming. So, the next week I broke up with her. When I did, I felt so much relief knowing I had obeyed God, I felt as if a burden was lifted off my shoulders, however that feeling didn't last long.

Soon after this occurred, I started to pay attention to what God was preaching and to my best ability, walking in the light I was given. Bro Greg preached out of Matthew 21 on the man with 2 sons, 1 who said he would go and work in the field and did not, and another who said he would not but did. God showed me that I had been the first son. Kept saying I would seek God, and would not, given chance after chance to repent but would not. I went to God and broke and told Him I was sorry and that I did not want to be that son anymore. Soon after this Bro Greg preached another sermon about Jacob and Esau and how Esau was so focused on his hunger, he sold his birthright for a bowl of beans. God showed me that this is what I was trying to do, but through his long-suffering

He kept me. Again, I broke and told God I was sorry for trying to give up my birthright for destruction and vanity; and told Him thank you for not letting me do it. Esau didn't get any second chances or someone telling him not to do what he was doing. God has been merciful to me. It was the beginning of May, and we had a good birthday celebration at Lighthouse, but through all the preaching I felt like I was not going anywhere so I went and talked with Bro Greg, he told me that I still did not see my sin the way God saw it, and that this was only a work done in me by the Holy Spirit, and if He didn't help me, I never would see it. That next night I was at home by myself and ordered a pizza. When I sat down to eat, that crossed my mind again, I don't see my sin the way that God sees it, I felt the need that if God didn't show me, I would never see. So, I prayed and

asked God to show me my sin, that I didn't want to be stuck here any longer. Wednesday night God answered my prayer, Bro Greg preached out of Luke 12. He preached the story of the man who built bigger barns and took ease, God called him a fool and required his soul from him that night. God showed me that I had always thought that I had plenty of time, lived my life how I wanted to (or tried to) never putting God first, all while being at ease in my soul. He was right, death was not a reality to me still even after all this time. I was under such heavy conviction, for the next 3 days, it was all I could think about. Every night I struggled sleeping, I thought God was going to kill me. I graduated high school that Friday. I remember thinking that I would be so excited, but I could've cared less, all I could think about was how much grace I had wasted, how many exits had I passed, will I get another??,

Sunday morning May 27th, 2012, I was so focused on my sin still that I totally missed what God preached. I told Bro Greg afterwards and he told me to focus on what God wants to say to me tonight, to come expecting to hear from God. That night walking over to church, I realized that my soul was totally dependent on God showing up. I felt a need for God that I have never felt before, but I had no idea what was about to happen, I just knew I needed a God to be merciful to me! Bro Greg got up to preach and started preaching out of Romans 2 on how the goodness of God leads a man to true repentance. God showed me how even though I had wasted His grace, even though I hated his ways and tried to run from them, even though my sin killed His only Son, He still loved me. I went to the altar and began to thank God for His long-suffering with me. I just broke and could not stop telling God thank you for being so good to me, I was considering all the ways that God had been good to me, and He showed me that He hasn't been this good to me for me just to tell Him "Thank you" He had been so good to me because He wanted to save me! So, I told God "I know I

don't deserve it, but would you please let Bro Greg preach the gospel to me one more time" as soon as I asked this, I listened to what Bro Greg was preaching in the moment, he was explaining why God could be so good to those who have hated Him and despised His ways. It is because He poured out all of my wrath that I deserved on His Son who gladly drank every last drop of my wrath so that the law would be satisfied. I broke and started telling God thank you for pouring my wrath out on your Son, thank you Jesus for taking every bit of it. I started telling Him thank you for doing this so I could be saved, then all of the sudden, He was gone, I thought "Great, I just grieved the spirit" so I got up and went back to my seat, but something was different, I felt true peace for the first time. Bro Greg had stopped preaching by now and felt led to sing Depth of Mercy. As we sang all I could feel in me was a "YES!" To every time the song asked, "Can there be?" Mercy still reserved for me? YES! Could my God, His wrath forbear, me THE CHIEF of sinners spare? YES!! At the end of the song, I just sat down and broke. Wow, I had never felt that welling up in me before. Did I really just get saved? Was it that easy? Bro Greg came over to me and I began to weep and tell him that I think God saved me, I asked him "Do you really think God saved me brother?" He answered "I don't think you have to ask me" the spirit of God welled up again inside of me and said YES! What peace! What joy! God saved the one who hated Him, THANK YOU GOD!