

My Testimony

This chapter taken from the book *When Faith Came* by Franklin Whittenburg © 1998-2006

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This then is my testimony:

My “Christian” experience growing up in a Baptist church was probably like most children at that time. I learned about Jesus through stories in the Bible and through pictures on felt boards. The first time I “felt led” to respond to the “gospel message” was at summer camp one day when I was twelve years old. I did not fully understand it, but I didn’t want to miss out on anything that important. The pastor asked everyone that wants to be saved to repeat the sinner’s prayer after him. It is the same prayer that most Protestant denominations use today. I liked the “sinner’s prayer” because I never had to release control of my life. It was really easy also, because all I had to do was say the “sinners prayer” and admit that I was a sinner. Then I had to thank Jesus for dying for me and believe that he was alive because the Bible said so. I then asked Jesus to come into my heart and save me. I thought I was very sincere when I said this. I was told that because of this, the Holy Spirit had come to live inside of me forever and I was now saved and I could go to Heaven when I died. After my public confession that Jesus Christ was my Lord and Savior, I was then baptized by full immersion in water.

Now that I had gotten “saved”, I put my Bible in a drawer and didn’t touch it again for about 12 yrs. I now thought that I just had to stand firm in my faith of my prayer for salvation and he would make up the difference where I came up short. What I experienced from that point though was a life that was nothing like the biblical “Christian” life. In fact what I experienced after I said my “sinner’s prayer” was pretty much the exact opposite of the Christian life. I must be the only person in history that has messed up the sinner’s prayer. My walk through life became a path of damnation and not salvation!

I never experienced the peace with God or the abundant life. I would say to myself that I was saved for years because I said the “sinner’s prayer”, but when I looked at my life it was getting worse and worse. I could always confess Jesus and be happy when someone else would get saved (by saying the sinner’s prayer), which helped me believe I was saved. But I would not see the victory or any spiritual fruit in my life. Through this I learned a very important truth through my Christian walk that I believe to be the main stumbling block to experiencing the Christian victory the Gospel is talking about. The Bible says that if we believe in Jesus, then He will become the Lord and Savior of our lives, along with many gifts and promises. I trusted in the Gospel as it was presented to me and said my sinner’s prayer, but I never actually experienced any of those life-changing things. According to religious doctrine, this is where my faith had to come in. I just had to believe that I had something even though I never felt or experienced it or the Bible would be in error. Since the Bible told me I had all these things for believing in Jesus Christ, then I must have them even though I wasn’t experiencing them. I didn’t find

out till later that I spent my early religious years believing in something that I never had even though the Bible said I did. How is this possible? Of course the Bible was never in error at anytime as I said before, but I was in error.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye THINK ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life (John 5:39,40).

I want to expose this stumbling block here. When I actually did finally totally surrendered all to Jesus, then I actually did experience everything the Bible said should happen. Now every scripture that I considered from my actual life experience to be in error, I now found the same scripture to be completely true in my new life experience with Jesus Christ. Please do not spend your life locked into some religion going through life wondering why you are not experiencing the victory of the Gospel. Stop and examine yourself to see if you actually really believed in the first place. Please read the chapter "How I messed up the sinner's prayer". This is the path I walked in my spiritual journey; maybe what I have learned can help someone else.

My whole Christian experience I only knew Jesus as a "forgiver", but not a "Savior". What I was always seeking first through the Gospel was to get to Heaven when I die and not to experience the peace and joy of a personal relationship with Jesus in this world. If you have to die a physical death to have a relationship with Jesus, then you worship a god of the dead and not the living. I didn't know then, that if I truly surrendered all, Jesus would take over my life and save me from the things that were destroying me. If I would become weak in my life, then Jesus would become strong. Jesus said that he came that I might have life (first) and that more abundantly.

I want to also write briefly about repentance, because that is the starting point. I have found two types of professing "Christians" with two separate ideas of repentance. Those that come to the foot of the cross, they haven't been "crucified with Christ" on the cross, they are still "alive" and "in control" of their lives. So repentance to them is trying to get the sin out of their life to restore fellowship with God. This is self-repentance. This is what Judas done after he betrayed Jesus. He knew he was under condemnation for betraying Jesus, and tried to give the money back to ease his conscience, but this still did not bring peace with God or peace with himself and he hung himself.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5).

But those that are truly crucified with Christ, their idea of repentance was a desperate desire to turn from their sin, but were powerless to get it out of their lives. They needed a Savior, and not just a forgiver, to take over their lives and get the victory over sin that they could not get themselves. Repentance for the Christian is a desire to turn from sin, but the true Christian repentance doesn't come from the Christian! Like belief and faith (Philippians 1:28,29)(Ephesians 2:8), it is a gift from God!

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death (2 Corinthians 7:10).

And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:15-18).

Paul wrestled with this same problem in Romans 7 before crying out “***o wretched man that I am, who can save me from the body of this death”?*** In the next chapter of Romans, Paul turns the whole mess over to the Holy Spirit who wins the battle of sin for him.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live (Romans 8:13)!

Some people have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. As you can see the power to live a godly life comes from God! The drug addict or the alcoholic is not wanting to know that there is someone that will keep forgiving them when they sin, or a church that will hold them accountable or some person or “cell or small group” to cuddle and cry with them. They want to know about a Savior that has the power to destroy the addiction that is destroying them and not just to keep forgiving them as they wallow in it.

The Christian overcomes sin only through the blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit and not through their own determination to quit sinning. That person’s spirit may be willing but their flesh is weak!

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

Preachers are saying, turn from your sin and turn to Christ and then preaching on ten steps on how you can do it through your own self-determination and the power of your flesh. If our flesh had the power to overcome our sin, we wouldn’t need Christ! That’s like telling a drowning man to swim to shore to be saved, if he could swim to shore, He wouldn’t be drowning! The Bible says that it is Jesus that turns us from our sin.

Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities (Acts 3:26).

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had BY HIMSELF purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (Hebrews 1:3).

But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore HE is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:24,25).

The drug addict like the drowning man, needs a Savior to come to them where they are and save them from whatever is destroying them, for they are earning the wages of their sin which is death. They are in bondage and dying in their sin. They are in a process that is called self-destruction. What Jesus actually saves you from is yourself. Remember that death came by man, not by God.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:21).

Let me explain my early Baptist life using a football analogy. At a football game, you may have thousands of fans cheering for the team to scores points, but after the game is over, only the team goes home with the trophy. The fans just go home. I came to realize later I was cheering for a team that I wasn't even on. And at the end of the game, everybody else would have gone home with Jesus; I would have just gone home.

I had also always been taught by the Baptist that if I sinned, then all I had to do was come to the foot of the cross or to the alter to receive forgiveness, which I could, but then I would go right back out into the world and be back in the same shape again. I could always come back to the cross over and over and receive forgiveness though.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:10).

But I never experienced the peace with God or the abundant life. My whole "Christian" experience became one of conviction of sin and then repenting of it, in a never-ending cycle as I tried to get the sin out of my life, with Jesus forgiving me in between. This is not the victory in Jesus that the Bible talks about. I never experienced a "remission of sins" which is one of the true signs of living the Gospel. I didn't understand till later that if you have to choose every day to "do good" or be obedient to God, then your "base state of being" is one of evil. You are simply an evil person, trying to do "good". What Jesus does through the Holy Spirit is change your base state of being from evil to good and the Christian life is simply walking in the Spirit and good works follow as a result.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

The battle of sin is not won by anything you do; it is won by what Jesus did! The sacrifice of Jesus gives us the victory over the sin penalty, and the indwelling Holy Ghost gives us the victory over the sin desires.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Romans 8:13).

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9).

I still held on to my faith that I had called on Jesus and I was saved. The question would still keep popping up though over and over again in my mind, am I really saved or not, but I would fight back the thoughts and try to stand on my faith and deny those thoughts. Since the Holy Spirit was not bearing witness that I was saved, then all I had to cling to was the witness of the Word. I started watching TV programs about end time Bible prophecy. At the end of the program I would find myself praying the “sinners prayer” again and again, with as much conviction that I could muster, each week with the host of the show, just to make sure I hadn’t missed any words. I didn’t understand till later that it wasn’t the sinner’s prayer that saved me. It was His ANSWER to my prayer, yet I hear many pastors saying “repeat after me this prayer” and then declaring that person “saved” whether they actually truly believed in Jesus or not. Just believing in the prayer brought the salvation. This is one reason that I am writing about this. I still see many people in church that are supposed to be “saved”, that keep praying the “sinners prayer” when the pastor makes an altar call. Yes, I confess, I looked around sometimes during the altar call when the pastor said “for every eye to be closed and every head to bow”. But this makes me think that I may not have been the only one that has wrestled with this. Finally I gave in to the thoughts that I might not be saved and after examining myself to see if I was truly in the faith, I ended up at the conclusion that I wasn’t saved and eventually I started thinking that I might have done something and could not be saved. I want to state this very clearly! I don’t believe I had lost my salvation; I never had it to begin with!

I finally got to the point in religion that I told God that I could not quit sinning and I was tired of being constantly under condemnation. If he wanted me to stop sinning then he would have to stop me Himself or send me to hell. I told God that if He could do anything with what was left of the life I messed up, then He could have it, but I was through trying and I gave up.

This was what God had been waiting for all the time! I didn’t fully realize until later that what I actually did was offer myself a total living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). God had drawn me back to the cross with my guilt of sin that I could not escape from no matter how obedient or repentant I was. I had finally come to the end of myself. God then judged my heart and knew that I was finally serious about a total surrender. After I finally surrendered all, suddenly all hell broke loose in my life, but all Heaven grabbed hold! I

was in the bonds of sin, but now I am in the bonds of the Gospel. Jesus took my captivity, captive! Like Paul said, “I am a prisoner of Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:1).

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, THIS DAY is this scripture fulfilled in your ears (Luke 4:17-21).

Paul even said in the book of Philippians that he was trying to apprehend that which had apprehended him (Philippians 3:12).

The Holy Spirit entered in my body between two ribs and God confirmed the covenant with the seal of the Holy Spirit. Immediately the condemnation for sin for not truly believing in Jesus stopped (John 16:9) and the confirming with the seal of righteousness began and I became at peace with God. Jesus said:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; (John 16:7-9).

The Holy Spirit’s job also changed from condemning of my sin to a witness of Jesus’ righteousness that I was now wearing by faith in Jesus Christ.

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable (unconvictable) in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).

And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by ONE offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:11-14).

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (Romans 5:1).

Lets now examine this. By explaining this whole experience to a Baptist pastor, they would say that I was saved at age twelve when I said my “sinners prayer”, but I then went out into the world to wallow with the swine, like the “prodigal son”. I just needed to get back in church, get an “accountability partner”, join a cell / small group and rededicate

my life to the Lord and repent and try to quit sinning. A Church of God pastor would also agree that I was saved at age twelve when I said my “sinners prayer”, but that I lost my salvation. I just needed to get back in church, get an “accountability partner”, join a cell / small group and rededicate my life to the Lord and repent and try to quit sinning. They both would assume that since I prayed the sinner’s prayer, I had truly believed. They never questioned my sincerity. The only one that has ever questioned my sincerity in saying the “sinner’s prayer” was God and me.

Now I will stop at this point to analyze this. What went wrong with my early “Christian” life? The harder I tried to make the Christian life work, the worse life would become. God did not answer any prayers, but when I prayed things usually got worse. If I ever got a step ahead, it would not be but for a moment and something would come along and knock me two steps back. Why did my life not show any fruits of salvation? Why was I not at peace with God? Why no “abundant life”? Where was the victory over sin? What was I missing?

I didn’t find out till after my conversion, God’s purpose behind this. As I said before, you may have the freedom to make choices in your life, but God has the control over whether your choices prosper or not.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Romans 8:28-30).

I believe that He controlled my circumstances to bring me to the point of total surrender to Him. God had done this very thing before! It was His way of separating me from the world and to get me to the point of total surrender to Him and forsaking this world. Let me share a quick story.

God did this same thing to the children of Israel when they were under the bondage of Egypt. In the Bible, Egypt is a representation of the world. When this started out, the children of Israel were getting fed and had a simple life under the protection of Egypt. But they were still in bondage and they didn’t have the freedom to serve God, because they had to serve Egypt. Egypt was their source of life. They prayed for a deliverer to free them from the bondage of Egypt. Now when God finally sent Moses to deliver them from bondage, God knew that they were not ready to truly forsake the life in Egypt to follow Moses across the wilderness to a promise land. In fact, even when they were out of Egypt into the wilderness, they wanted to go back to Egypt when things got tough. So God turned up the heat until they hated their life in Egypt. If you read the story, the more the children of Israel would cry out for salvation, the harder Pharaoh would make life on them. It finally got to the point that Moses questioned the Lord about this.

And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all (Exodus 5:22,23).

Finally after several plagues on Egypt and cruel bondage imposed on the children of Israel by the Egyptians, Pharaoh had enough of the plagues and told Moses to take the people and go. It seemed like their prayers for deliverance were finally answered! The LORD then did a very unique thing. The Bible says that the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart so he would not let the people go. And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart again and again until He knew the children of Israel were in such distress and misery (like you may be in now) that they were finally ready to completely forsake Egypt and follow Moses into the wilderness, to a promise land (Exodus 4:21, 7:13, 9:12, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10, 14:4, 14:8).

By now you must be saying, "what has that story got to do with how I came to the point of total surrender to Jesus" and why is God controlling my circumstances? In the Old Testament, God used Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt toward a promise land (natural)(Canaan). In the New Testament, Jesus delivers the sinner out of the bondage of this world and leads them to the promise land (spiritual)(Beulah - Isaiah 62:4). All the time I was saying the "sinner's prayer", God was judging my heart to see if I was really ready to totally forsake this world to follow Jesus to a better one. Like the children of Israel, God knew that there was still something in my heart that was not ready to leave behind this world even though I was confessing Jesus with my mouth. I think that there is a major flaw in this prayer for salvation. In the "sinner's prayer", I was asking Jesus to become a part of my life instead **of me becoming a part of His life**. I was asking Jesus to come live in my world, while Jesus was asking me to come live in His world. The Bible speaks of more than one world existing on one earth. There is a natural world and a spiritual world. Please read the chapter "The Spiritual World".

Through faith we understand that the worlds (plural) were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Hebrews 11:3).

I had what I call the "tithe mentality". As long as I gave Jesus 10% of my life; maybe Sunday morning and Wednesday night or keeping the Sabbath; the rest of my life was mine. I liked this arrangement with God because I never had to release control.

Religious Trap!!! In religion I didn't have to really be "born again" in the Spirit as a "new creature", because I was always taught that I was not really a "new creature". I just had to pretend that I was "born again" and a "new creature", but in reality as most religions will tell you they are born "in Adam" and stay "in Adam" until the day they die because they are still in a physical body (Adam). I will address this later in this book because this error can be straightened out if you understand the difference between the flesh of the heart and the flesh of the physical body. Please read the chapter "Understanding Circumcision". This is the same place where the Jews missed it with the circumcision ritual of the flesh of the physical body to attain righteousness. Paul even taught that the physical body isn't the source of sin and the physical body has been cleansed also.

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (2 Corinthians 6:18-20).

And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:20-23).

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:19-22).

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith (Acts 15:8,9).

To hear most in religion today describe the Christian as being born in the flesh, live our life in the flesh, and die in the flesh. There is a popular religious phrase used by many, “the only difference between us and the unsaved is we are forgiven”!

This is one reason I think so many religions like to use the “sinner’s prayer”, because it doesn’t require you to forsake this world at all. People like this also because you just add Jesus to what you already have and try to live better. For this reason I would always keep back part of me from a total surrender. Why forsake this world if I didn’t have too to be saved? I thought that I could serve God and the world. What I came to find out is you cannot go and stay at the same time (Luke 9:62). I also had always kept a thought in the back of my mind that a total surrender to Jesus, would mean that He would make me sell everything I owned and buy a bicycle and pedal from door to door handing out Bible tracks, or He would make me shave my head and enter a monastery or stand in the airport or on the street corner witnessing to people.

What God did with the circumstances of my life, like He did to the children of Israel in Egypt, brought me to the point to where the thought of totally forsaking this world and doing those things for Jesus, was better than the life I was “living”. It wasn’t until after a total surrender to Jesus that I found out that all the things I was worrying about wasn’t what He wanted from me at all. I found out the ministry of the Gospel is a gift, not a chore! Although I did lose many worldly things, I gained many spiritual things. The reason why I believe God cursed the work of my hands and never let me prosper in this world, was because if my life in this world was working for me, and I had everything I wanted in this world, then why would I want to forsake this world to follow Jesus anywhere?

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:33)

What did Satan offer Jesus in the temptation in the wilderness? Satan offered success and fortune in this world. Why did Satan through Peter try to stop Jesus from experiencing the suffering of the cross?

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men (Matthew 16:21-23).

I will reveal some snares of Satan later in the chapter “Decision Time”. Satan’s tactics haven’t changed; he still offers man all the pleasures of this world to keep him from forsaking all to follow Jesus. It would be contrary to Satan’s plan for him to curse your life in this world because that would just drive you to Jesus. Satan already tried that with Job. Today, Satan is still trying to stop you from going to the cross like he tried to stop Jesus. Satan’s best course of action, to keep you from a total surrender to Jesus, is to give you material success and pleasures in this world where you would have no need to forsake your life to follow Jesus to a better life. Why should you, if this life is working?

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:34-37).

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve (Matthew 4:8-10).

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward (Hebrews 11:24-26).

I also would like to stop here and briefly address an error that is being taught by many religions today. What I have heard is that worldly prosperity is the abundant life that Jesus promised.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth (Luke 12:15).

Jesus states plainly that man's possessions are not the abundant life. If you are reading this and your life is a mess, and nothing seems to work out right, it may just be that God has chosen you for something very special and is separating you from this world and is drawing you to Him, where He can give you the true riches through Jesus Christ. All God is waiting for is for you to finally come to the point of totally surrendering all.

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? (James 2:5).

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: (I Corinthians 1:26-28).

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living (Mark 12:41-44).

Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, of father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. (Mark 10:28-30)

Notice how Jesus specifically went to the poor and unsuccessful with the Gospel of eternal life and the promise of a better life, and not to the rich and successful who had a great life in this world. Jesus said,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, (Luke 4:18).

Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached (Luke 7:22).