

I was saved before I was saved. What I mean by this is that throughout my whole life, I have always had encounters with Christ. I didn't grow up in a religious home growing up and God certainly wasn't something we talked about in our homes; we'd even try to avoid missionaries that would knock at our door from time to time. However, as a young boy, somehow I was always aware that there was one God.

In various instances, I remember being a very young boy and looking at the window and seeing the way rain fell and I remember asking my mom, "Is it raining so hard because God is crying?" and my mom answered "Yes, he's sad because we have sinned" and part of me was trying to understand the magnitude of God because those were some big tears.

Another instance, being, I remember flipping the pages of a bible very fast, and accidentally tearing a page and though not knowing who I was praying to, I said "Sorry for tearing the Bible, I promise I didn't mean to" part of me was trying to grasp the holiness and glory of our Lord and then lastly, I once prayed for an I-Pod touch in middle school and that was probably my last, quote on quote encounter with God (God answered that prayer too) and throughout my teen years, I was always trying to fit in with groups of people that just weren't for me and no matter how hard I tried, I never fit in and that was a blessing that I did not see then because I don't know where that would have led me.

Flash forward to 2019, My dad got diagnosed with severe alcoholic cirrhosis, which at his stage, his liver was beyond repair and we were told that his health would only worsen as time passed and his only chance would be a liver transplant. For that whole year, we were in and out of the hospital. One week it may have been because of liquid retention in his belly and feet, another would be because he needed to get the liquid removed from his tummy, another because he was losing his memory. His skin started to yellow and he started discharging blood. Until Christmas, his health worsened so much that he was near death.

I remember being confused because the hospital at the time had called down a priest to recite prayers over him and well it was during then that I went to a quiet room that had a view of all the trees surrounding Portland and I got on my knees and I said “God, if you save my dad. I will give my life to you. I will go to church every Sunday”. Well 2 days before New Years, we are called and are told that there was a liver that matched with my dad, and well he got the transplant and by God’s grace is living a healthy life now.

I did follow through on my promise of going to church, right after the transplant I found the nearest church near me, it was a Catholic church and just went there every Sunday. But God wasn’t done yet. Post the transplant, I think God wanted to show me that living and giving my life to Him was more than just going to church because right after, in light of all the trauma of my dads health, I went through anxiety, fear and depression.

Fear of something always bad happening; fear of getting sick to the point that I would submit myself to random health tests just to help my anxiety that I was okay. Well I got to a breaking point and I remember walking in the room crying and just saying I can’t do it anymore, I don’t like being scared. Around that time, I went through therapy to process everything that had happened and that helped, but I didn’t have hope. One day, my aunt shared Psalm 28 and it read:

“The Lord is my light and my salvation— so why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble? ... Though a mighty army surrounds me, my heart will not be afraid. Even if I am attacked, I will remain confident. The one thing I ask of the Lord— the thing I seek most— is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord’s perfections and meditating in his Temple. For he will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock....”

and if you read the rest of Psalm, there's both a cry and submission from David to God; to be led and heard by God. To be protected by God. David is aware that he himself is helpless. He is aware that hope, protection, salvation is all found in God. He finishes the Psalm with "Yes, wait patiently in the Lord" and that is the invitation that I accepted. I learned that following Christ is more than just a Sunday thing, but an active trust and submission to believe that He is who He said He is, especially when fear presents itself.

To believe that when He calls us to not be afraid, that He truly means it and actually has the power to do something about it, because He beat fear at the cross. A submission to allow him in my life and allowing Him to transform everything in me. I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior in 2020. But I am starting to think that this is just the commencement of my testimony.

God continues to show himself in my life and yet, I don't always wait on Him. Every day I call on God to reveal more of himself to me, to teach me to trust Him every day and those are the best decisions I take each day.