

Girl Who Was Stabbed 30 Times Shares Miracle Of Survival

Sharon Bryson's testimony steers her peers away from drug abuse and violence

Sharon Bryson's bright smile gives no clue that the attractive teen-ager once stared death in the face. But it can't hide the faint scars that bear witness to the shocking story of survival that she shares to steer other youngsters away from danger and despair.

A young prodigal stabbed 30 times and left for dead, Bryson regularly recounts her miraculous escape to turn other young rebels back to God and their families—visiting churches and high schools to show her scars and scare her young audiences to their senses.

On the run from her Christian family after falling in with the wrong crowd, 18-year-old Bryson was left in a pool of her own blood after a savage attack in her Atlanta apartment in September 1998. She was bound, strangled, stabbed repeatedly, beaten with a waffle iron and had a glass jar smashed into her face by a young couple who stole her money and tried to kill her.

Having cried out to God during the brutal assault, Bryson somehow managed to drag herself outside, where she was seen by a neighbor. She was rushed to the hospital and underwent eight hours of emergency surgery for her injuries, which included a

severed artery, ruptured bowel and slashed eyelid.

Bryson says her survival and her miraculous, swift recovery—physically and emotionally—amazed doctors. Within months of the attack she was speaking at the church she had grown up in, telling of her fall from faith and God's faithfulness in continuing to watch over her.

A devout Christian as a young teen, Bryson started to go astray at 16.

"I bit into sin. I got my eyes off Jesus and onto the world. I was such a disgrace to my family and felt like there was no way back for me because I had shamed the name of Jesus," she said.

She decided to leave home in Vancouver, British Columbia, and headed for Atlanta where she found an apartment and a job. But just three months later she was savagely attacked by a young woman, who had lived in the same complex, and her boyfriend. When Bryson let them in to use her phone, they forced a gun into her mouth and robbed her—and then decided they needed to kill her so that she could not identify them.

Back home and reconciled with her parents, Bryson is now studying music but also travels often to share her testimony. She has spoken in churches and schools in Canada, at youth events in New York, Florida, Washington and Oklahoma, and on missionary trips to India and Romania.

"I tell them that the wages of sin is death, and I show them my scars and really shake them up. I tell them that this path that looks good to men is wrong. It ends up in destruction,

but the Lord in His loving mercy can totally redeem your life. Don't believe that you can't be forgiven. See my scars and be scared of that, be scared of sin."

Bryson returned to Atlanta for the trial of the woman who attacked her, telling her that she forgave her. She recounts her harrowing story on a new CD, on which she also sings. "I can see [young people] going down the wrong path like I did. I tell them: 'Don't do it—I'm enough. I drank that cup for you.'"

Bryson told her harrowing story at churches, a school and an orphanage in Romania during a missions trip organized by Dwayne Jacobsen, president of International Help Ministries in Vancouver. Jacobsen said her story connects with young people "because they can relate to her, I guess, because they have all played with sin to some degree, and here it is loud and right in your face, the consequences of it."

Teens who have heard Bryson speak have come to the altar in tears, said Vancouver evangelist Luigi Di Paolo. "She has an unbelievable impact. A lot of young people need to hear this. A lot have taken the gospel too lightly. They are playing in the world, and they are saying to themselves, 'How close can we get to the world and not get bitten?'"

Bryson also travels in ministry with her father, Ron Bryson, who is based in Canada as head of Christ for India. The elder Bryson said his daughter's testimony is also an encouragement to parents, spurring them to continue to pray for their wayward children.

"I used to pray every day for her to come back," he said. "I

am just so thankful to the Lord.”