

Living Proof of the Awe-Inspiring Power of Jesus

Regardless of how morally and spiritually dark the culture gets around us, Jesus can step into the picture and change every shade of darkness into His glorious light—no matter how bad the situation may be.

We've seen the power of Christ in lives across the country, and we've seen His hand in our own family, too. So here's a little of our story to encourage you today.

We were born in the mid '70s when the butterfly collar and bell-bottoms were at the height of fashion. Our dad owned a bar in Kissimmee, Florida, and drank as much as he sold. When he found out Mom was pregnant with us, he wanted to abort, but thankfully, she put her foot down.

This is one of the reasons why we're so passionately pro-life today.

Then a coffee salesman visited Dad in his saloon and invited him to church. Within a few months, Dad gave his life to Jesus. That day, he said, he cried so hard he couldn't drive home, so he walked all the way, stumbling like he was drunk again—but he was never more sober.

He quit drinking cold turkey and started loving Mom again. And for the next several months, he stacked beer coolers at the saloon, singing "Amazing Grace" and witnessing to everyone who bellied up to the bar.

In short time, he felt called to preach. So he sold the saloon, packed up the family (the two of us and our older sister, Tracy) and headed to Wilmore, Kentucky, to attend Asbury Theological Seminary.

Our saloon-owner-turned-preacher dad graduated seminary in 1980 and moved the family to Garland, Texas, to start a church. We still remember that first Sunday as 5-year-olds—the service was in our house, and we were the ushers. There were six people in attendance—our family and a neighbor.

Dad wasn't as concerned with the breadth of the institution of church as he was the depth of the individual in the church. He taught us that *being* the church, not *going to* church, was what pleased God. Having been so radically saved from his sins—especially alcoholism—he wanted people to experience the inward power of a relationship, not simply the outward packaging of a religion.

We both accepted Christ at the age of 6, but it wasn't until we were 12 that we decided to make Jesus Lord of our lives. I (Jason) rededicated my life to Jesus in a chapel service at Garland Christian Academy, while David committed his heart fully to Christ at a youth camp in Bastrop, Texas, that same year.

It was at the age of 12 that we both chose to read through the New Testament every year. This single act of devotion began to transform our lives tremendously. By the time we graduated from high school, we had decided to read through the entire Bible every year.

Instead of idolizing athletes and movie stars, our heroes growing up were David, Gideon, Joshua and Elijah. Reading their stories and knowing we served the same God ignited a passion in us to live boldly for Jesus, even at a young age. We didn't realize how important to us that would be later in life.

After graduating in 1994, we received scholarships to play baseball at Liberty University. It was there that Dr. Jerry Falwell instilled in us the value of excellence in the Christian life. He used to always say, "If it's Christian, it

ought to be better.”

We didn’t realize it then, but that statement would later inspire us to build and grow one of the fastest-growing private companies in America.

We graduated from Liberty in 1998 and were both drafted by Major League Baseball. I (Jason) went to the Orioles, and David to the dreaded Red Sox. Each of us started Bible studies in the minors and shared our story of how Jesus transformed our lives. The fruit of those clubhouse conversations continues to this day in the lives of many men.

After a few seasons of pro ball, though, we found ourselves out of the game. It was tough to swallow, yet Job 2:10 encouraged us, saying, “... Will we indeed accept the good from God but not accept the adversity?”

So we accepted the fact we’d never make it to the Big Leagues and decided to move our families to Charlotte, North Carolina. Because we didn’t make much money in baseball, we worked every odd job imaginable just to put food on the table. And we got our real-estate licenses in our spare time (which wasn’t much). The only problem was we had no business training. All we had we were the principles of God’s Word.

Seven years later, we had 100 offices in 35 states.

We tell everyone that for us to take credit for building a successful business would be like a shovel taking credit for digging a hole—we were just the tools God chose to get the job done. All we had to do was stay sharp.

But God wasn’t done yet. In early 2013, HGTV hired us to host a show called “Flip It Forward.” Yet four weeks into filming, we found ourselves in the crosshairs of the media thought mafia (those who seek to silence the voices of principled Christians when it comes to hot-button moral issues).

We refused to back off our belief that God's boundaries lead to His blessings—and when His boundaries are removed, the blessings are replaced with burdens. We specifically applied this to the unborn and marriage, which proved to be a costly mistake.

But it was no mistake at all. The faith of our heroes in the early church cost them their lives—so the least we could give was a reality show.

Today, we continue to travel the country encouraging believers to live out their faith whatever the cost, because we've seen the power of Jesus in our dad—going from drunken bum to delivered man—and we've experienced God's transformational power in our own lives, too.

So if you're discouraged today, seeing spiritual darkness in your life, home and/or culture around you, look to Jesus—because “weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes with the morning” (Ps. 30:5).

Read more at #