

A Modern-Day Joseph: How God Moved on the Front Lines

I was with my family, whom I hadn't seen in 13 weeks, and was soon to graduate from the Marine Corps boot camp in San Diego, California, when a man walked up and thanked me for helping his son return to the Lord.

While in the service, I found myself witnessing in many non-traditional forms. I led a prayer group at boot camp and marched recruits to chapel services, all as a previously burned-out youth pastor with plans to become a chaplain.

Later, while I was training for deployment to Iraq as a field radio operator, a close friend of mine gave me the call sign "Preach," which stuck. The call sign was a term of endearment as well as a fresh reminder of God's call on my life. I was amazed to experience firsthand the fulfillment of the prophecies in Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-19.

Wherever I went, I witnessed God speaking to men and women in uniform. He even spoke in dreams to fellow infantrymen while they were on training operations in the field leading up to deployment.

During my 2007-2008 deployment to Iraq, word spread that I interpreted dreams, so Marines would come to me and tell me their dreams. Like Joseph and Daniel in the Bible, I told them that it is God who interprets dreams and mysteries, wanting to give credit to whom credit is due (Genesis 40:8; Daniel 2:27-30). I offered Scripture to support the interpretation I sensed from the Holy Spirit, encouraged them to spend time with Jesus, and gave them reading material.

I was humbled as I saw God communicate with those literally on the front lines for our nation. During one conversation with a spiritually hungry Marine, I shared personal experiences of

things I had seen God accomplish and then asked him if he wanted more of God. He said yes, so we prayed together and he was marvelously baptized with the Holy Spirit. I cried because I felt that in my spiritually dry state I was unworthy to be part of such an experience.

In 2009, I had the privilege of watching a fellow sergeant in my platoon be baptized in water. He was possibly the first Christian in hundreds of years to be baptized in the Helmand River Valley of Afghanistan. Though we were surrounded by darkness and hatred in a combat environment, God's Spirit was moving on people, bringing His light.

One time we escorted the battalion chaplain to officiate field memorial services for fallen Marines. While returning to base, one of the first remote controlled improvised explosive devices (IEDs) detonated in our area of operation. Thankfully it detonated prematurely, but right in front of my platoon. (Up until this time, the IEDs we encountered were pressure plate detonations.) I looked back at the chaplain and his assistant in my truck and said, "Sir, God is watching out for us."

God is talking to our men and women in uniform in direct and wonderfully supernatural ways. And He has placed incredible chaplains and other Christians in uniform with them to be part of the harvest within our military and to plant seeds of faith (1 Corinthians 3:5-8). Some of my fellow service members committed their lives to Christ even after deployment, during their transition to the civilian world. The seeds had taken root.

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Pray for our sons and daughters in uniform to overcome the challenges they face daily. Pray for the ongoing outpouring of the Spirit upon them, especially as they return from serving

and need support and healing. {eoa}

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The original article was printed in the March/April 2016 issue of The Message magazine.