

Megachurch Pastor Remembers Attack That Left Him Bleeding to Death

"When I came in, he put his hand on my throat and said, 'Get the district attorney, this boy has been stabbed to death, and he'll be dead before the DA gets here.'"

Pastor Bill Purvis' Southern accent swirls around the details of his miraculous life.

"I fell in love with Jesus that day, and He changed my life," Purvis says. But what ended with the life-saving miracle began under less-than-savory circumstances.

Forty-two years ago, Purvis was a 17-year-old rebel who picked up a prostitute and brought her back to a house. But the whole situation was a setup for murder.

"This guy came out of a room, I was fully undressed, and this guy came in the room with a butcher knife," Purvis recalls. "He stabbed me in my chest, and the knife came out my back. Second time, he stabbed me in the throat, cut my jugular in half. I'm one of four in the world to live (from this). ... I had a friend waiting in the car. He saw me covered in blood, and I hit the hood of the car and screamed to get out of here, ran 50 more feet, fell in a parking lot and grabbed a light pole."

While clinging to that light pole, Purvis remembered a young man who knocked on his door two weeks before the incident. The man told him, "Everything you're looking for can be found in Jesus."

So holding on to that light pole, bleeding to death, Purvis cried out to God for forgiveness for his life and asked Jesus

to transform his life. During his prayer, Purvis' friend who had been in the car found him and rushed him to the hospital, where a cardiovascular surgeon happened to be on call. Eleven and a half hours of surgery later, Purvis thought it was all a bad dream, but the district attorney's documents prove otherwise.

Fast forward more than four decades, and Purvis leads a megachurch in Georgia. He hopes his story will bring hope to anyone who encounters it.

"God just changed my life, radically changed me," he says. "I was the aimless boy. If God can do what he did for me, He can do it for anybody. The story I wrote about making a break for it means to break free from an old life. Anybody can do it if God's doing something in their life; they have to make a break." *—Jessilyn Justice*