

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19-20



CHRIST SATISFIES

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"Do you no know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

THE PRODIGAL (DAUGHTER) RETURNS

God is the Creator, the Designer, the Artist. He rescues men at all stages of life and various degrees of sin and welcomes them into His Kingdom as adopted sons and daughters. All this is done through the person and work of His Beloved Son, Jesus. In the future, those of us who belong to Him will see the end result: a vivid tapestry of redeemed lives singing praises to the King and knit together as the radiant Bride of the Lamb, spotless and pure.

If all the threads of this tapestry were of the same hue, we would not see the depth and breadth of God's love, mercy and grace. However, in His infinite wisdom He has called to Himself a rich blend of people and lives that together glorify Him to the utmost.

One special thread in this great painting of the King we'll call Stephanie*. Stephanie is a great lover of King Jesus and seeks to honor Him with a life that is reflective of His love and obedient to His Word. As with all of us who have been saved from the miry pit, this has not always been the case.

Growing up in the Pacific Northwest with her parents and three siblings, life dealt difficult blows early on. The death of a new baby sister when she was 9 years old was a defining moment for her family. Her mother devastated by this loss slipped into the world of spiritual/emotional despondency. This inclined the already hardworking, yet often absent father to retreat even more from the family. The eldest daughter began to runaway from home, and Stephanie soon followed her example seeking solace in the streets. The time was the mid 1960s, but the story is as familiar as the tale of runaways today.

At twelve years old she began the cycle of running, spending some time on the streets, getting picked up by the police and being sent home. After a couple of weeks she would be off again. By the time Stephanie was 13, with several stints of running away to the streets already behind her, the juvenile court system removed her from her parents' home and placed her into the foster care system in an effort to solve the problem. It only worsened. She continued to run hanging out with street thugs who were involved in drugs, prostitution and crime. After two foster homes, which introduced her to the world of physical and sexual abuse, and being the victim of a brutal gang-rape by some on the streets she was remanded to the "state school for girls" better known as the Hillcrest

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* The names in this story have been changed.

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Juvenile Correctional Facility. In two short years, Stephanie had gone from a youngster running away from a difficult home life to a teenager involved in drugs and prostitution whose trust had been violated repeatedly and who threw off any authority. Despite attempts to “reform” her even to the drastic measure of medicating her with the antipsychotic drugs thiorazine and prolixin, she continued to runaway this time from the school. At 16, a school staffer took Stephanie into her home as a foster child. However, after about a year she got into great legal trouble within the community. Back at Hillcrest while the courts decided her fate she learned that even they didn’t want her. Deemed incorrigible, she was emancipated from the state prior to her eighteenth birthday. Housed at a YWCA she worked at a job that was provided for her during her recent foster care stint, went to school at night to get a high school equivalency diploma and partied on the weekends.

Settling into a routine, Stephanie lived what she’d call a “square life” for the next several years. This life included working, partying with her crowd and hustling at “nice” hotel bars for some extra cash. At 23 Stephanie gave birth to a son. Though she didn’t live with the child’s father they did have an ongoing relationship. After awhile it turned violent and she opted out. That is how she ended up in Minnesota. With some friends here from a six-month visit in the early seventies, Stephanie and her son relocated to the Midwest in 1980. She continued in the same vein: work, party, hustle. Cocaine was introduced into the picture and in two short years she was regularly using coke and turning tricks fulltime involved even to the degree of operating her pimp’s escort service while he was doing time in prison. Throughout this period babysitters, daycare workers and schoolteachers were raising her son.

In 1984, Stephanie found herself pregnant, prostituting and nursing a heavy coke habit. Her friends from the street kept telling her she needed to quit because of the baby, some of her regular dealers stopped selling to her for the same reason. Even her physical health was in decline; a doctor’s report of her lung capacity indicated that it was 30% lower than it should be. As one of the Puritan’s once said, “The Lord breaketh all men’s hearts differently.” God was about to begin tugging on Stephanie’s heartstrings in a more overt way for the first time in her life. A middle of the night cry, “God, if you let this baby inside of me be born OK; I’ll stop doing everything I’m doing,” was her first reach out to Him. Of course, it wasn’t the cry of a repentant sinner seeking forgiveness, but it was an acknowledgement of the Creator and an implicit understanding to some degree that how she had been living her life was wrong. The following day by God’s great grace she dumped her cigarettes, stopped using and told the escort services to “stop paging me because I’m leaving the business.” Shortly thereafter she got a job, went through a transition program and delivered a healthy baby girl at the end of the year.

As the new year, 1985, began she was home on leave from work for the new baby. The Lord sent a Pastor and his wife who were former missionaries to Japan, now living and ministering in North Minneapolis, to Stephanie’s door. They had met her son while he was playing outside a few days earlier and came back to meet and talk with his mom. The pastor would come to her home and read with her through the gospel of John. Through this time of reading the Word and asking questions about it, the Holy Spirit revealed the truth of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to Stephanie. She began to see clearly her sin and her need for a Savior. One of these visits she prayed with the pastor confessing a litany of past sins and asking God for forgiveness through Jesus. The angels rejoiced as a daughter of the King came home!

So what now??? Was everything “happily ever after” for Stephanie, her son and daughter? Has she been having a 22-year upward, smooth sailing walk with the Lord? Well, in this fallen world influenced by Satan, marred by sin and our flesh which wants its own sinful propensities to be fed, the answer is no. It has been a hard, spotty, road for Stephanie. For the first five years of this new life in Christ, she walked the walk. She worked hard at her job, raised her kids, and went to church. Feeling like she didn’t fit in with the typical congregant, she struggled. Soon attending college seemed like it would be the answer to her outcast status. Very involved with ministry and successful in her studies, she began to get puffed up with knowledge and her own abilities. The pressure from all these self-created expectations and those of others coupled with overextending herself and leaning on her own understanding and strength conspired with the repetitive nightmares she was suffering, which brought vivid, mocking images from her past life into her thoughts, needed an outlet. The choice would be either to lay them all at the feet of the One who could help her overcome or be tempted, dragged away and enticed by her own evil desires (James 1:14). Succumbing to the temptations of her former lifestyle, Stephanie fell and began a new, 16-year battle with her flesh.

During this period she battled drugs, crack this time, selling herself again on the streets to support her growing habit. Her children went in and out of the foster care system often in the custody of brothers and sisters from the church. As her teenage years were filled with the repetitive cycle of running away, so her baby Christian years were mirroring that with the relapse/recovery cycle of this lifestyle. The longest period of clean time she had during this season was 18 months. In 1994, four years into this backslide, Stephanie had a brief stay at Teen Challenge Minnesota. Though she didn't remain in the program at that time, she met a friend who Stephanie's friend encouraged help. She did and by God's side of this trial. This past May Teen Challenge program, which Christian-based program of Stephanie grew in her love and through study of His Word to teach her how to overcome the associated with her former

Let us rejoice and be
glad and give him glory!
For the wedding of the
Lamb has come, and his
bride has made herself
ready.

Blessed are those
who are invited to the
wedding supper of the
Lamb!

Revelation 19:7,9

"I knew I was redeemed, but always go backwards," Stephanie she began to learn about both for her (in the blood of the blood of Jesus). For the first who abused and violated her, and she learned about the choices make choices that are in deep root of bitterness that had and die. The Truth became more real to her and she sought the Lord for refuge, not people or things. She put others in the proper perspective as sinners and learned to put her hope in Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith. Stephanie learned not to create her own expectations whether of herself or other people, but to trust what the Lord has promised to us as His children.

did. Years later in March of 2006, her to return to Teen Challenge for grace has emerged on the other Stephanie graduated from the is a 12-month, residential, recovery and discipleship. knowledge of the Lord Jesus coupled with education designed life-controlling problems lifestyle in a biblical manner.

wanted to know why I would recalled. After seeking the Lord forgiveness and what it looks like Jesus) and from her (because of time she forgave those in her past she took her cares to the Lord. she made and how she could now alignment with God's truth. The entangled her began to shrivel up

Today, Stephanie is on the brink of a new chapter in this life the Lord has redeemed for Himself. She has her place as a thread in the tapestry of the Bride and is eager to honor her Savior with this life he has given her. Now a grandma with two grown children and three grandkids, Stephanie is eager to serve the Lord and minister His love and grace to her family and to hurting souls who are still lost and traveling down the broad road. Please join us in praying for Stephanie and her family. Pray that the Lord would provide for her needs as she transitions out of the Teen Challenge environment back into the community. Pray that we in our relations with her would be a means of encouragement, growth and blessing.



Heavenly Treasures

In late October, we held our final yard giveaway of 2007. Nine college students from the Master's Commission

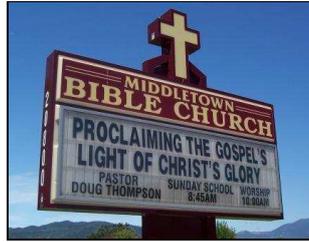
Bible program in Fergus Falls, MN joined us for the weekend to participate in our Friday night Bible Study and minister with us to our community on Saturday at the giveaway. We were greatly blessed by their love for Jesus and their zealous desire to serve both our family and our neighbors. Our garage, full to the brim from two previously rained-out giveaways, was overflowing with clothes, furniture and all sorts of household items waiting for new homes. Though the temperature

was a bit cooler than usual for a giveaway, the Lord provided a steady stream of "shoppers." Between our guests and volunteers from our church family, everyone who came by was greeted and helped by someone. Each visitor received a tract sharing the saving message of Jesus. There were many opportunities to share the gospel at length with some and invite people to come and visit our church. Please pray for the salvation of our neighbors and continued ministry opportunities.



THE BLESSED (HAPPY) MAN

Earlier this month James traveled to Middletown, California, which is situated in the northern part of the state. He was invited to preach on Sunday, November 4th at Middletown Bible Church opening their month long focus on missions. One of the pastors at Middletown Bible Church, Jim Doyle, is a friend from our days at Grace Community Church in the San Fernando Valley. He was instrumental in bringing James out to preach to the body and share with them about our ministry here in North Minneapolis.



believers and the lost as an overflow of their love and affection for the Lord Jesus.

This little, northern California hamlet, which is about a 2 ½ hour drive from the nearest large city with a profile like North Minneapolis (Oakland, CA), is very different from where we reside.

James was greatly blessed by the opportunity to meet with the MBC Missions Impact Team to answer their questions and give details about our lives and ministry. We trust the Lord will use that time to inspire the people of MBC to have a deeper affection for both those in urban ministry and the people who dwell in the urban environment.

James is grateful to the Lord for this opportunity to minister to brothers and sisters as well as share with them the ministry the Lord has given us here in Minneapolis. Praise the Lord for the unity of believers in Christ and for the opportunity to build eternal friendships.

Bringing forth a message on Psalm 1:1-3, James encouraged and exhorted the people to commit to memorizing God's Word thus taking the first step toward being the blessed man who meditates day and night. He challenged the group not only to memorize the Word but to use the internalized Scripture as a catalyst to grow in knowledge and depth of insight as Paul prays in Philippians and also as a means of developing a greater love and compassion for both fellow

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe . . .”

Hebrews 12:28



BLESSINGS ABOUND IN 2007

We are grateful for the abundant favor the Lord has granted us in recent months. Our local church, Family Baptist, has been a source of refreshment and

encouragement. Pastor Lee repeatedly brings forth strong biblical truths and challenges us to apply the principles we learn to our lives as we seek to grow and reach out to those we minister to in our community. We are grateful for godly leaders who desire to exhort the body on toward love and good deeds.

Pastor Lee has joined the CSM Advisory Council, and we are grateful to have such a man of integrity with a proven track record both in urban ministry and the secular business world from which the Lord called him for His service.

As the year comes to a close, we praise the Lord for sustaining Christ Satisfies Ministries during 2007. He has brought in a number of new ministry partners and has *always* provided for our needs despite support goal shortfalls. We are thankful for the grace He gives for us to trust him and His sovereign rule in all circumstances. We appreciate His mercies, which are new each day and which have protected our family in a dangerous environment. He is our refuge and fortress.

We are encouraged by the continued opportunities He brings for us to minister to many, many individuals both within the church and our community.

Please join us in a prayer of thanksgiving for God's great blessings upon CSM and consider partnering with us financially to continue the Lord's work among the urban poor in North Minneapolis.

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