



## General Topics :: Why I Am A Disciple

### Why I Am A Disciple - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/4/19 20:32

In the ten years I have been a Christian, I have heard many different reasons as to why other people believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, there seem to be as many different reasons why people believe as there are people in the world. There are many whose testimony is quiet ordinary and without a lot of drama behind them. Then there are those who have a testimony that is pretty complicated, full of action, drama, visions, miracles, and would be considered extra-ordinary.

Whatever the case, I believe if you were to carefully examine the testimony of every believer, including your own conversion experience, you would find they all have one thing in common: a burning bush event.

Quote:

-----**Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight..."** (Exodus 3:1-3, NASB)  
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Undoubtedly, this event in the life of Moses falls into the extra-ordinary category as far as testimonies are concerned. In the story we read how Moses was simply going about his every day life, doing what probably had been his every day job for nearly forty years. Then suddenly, when he did not expect it, he had an encounter with the Lord. This encounter arrested his attention, to which he turned aside to see "a marvelous sight."

Whatever the unique details surrounding our own conversion experience, I believe if we were to truly reflect on our life, we would find a time in it which we encountered the Lord through a burning bush. Indeed, I believe we would find our life has mirrored that of Moses' in great detail. From the beginning, all Moses knew was death. His birth was marked by a great slaughter of children. He grew up in Egypt saturated by a culture full of dead idols. Around his fortieth year, he killed a man with his own hands, and then fled into a desert for forty years. But with one foot in the grave, in his eightieth year Moses had an encounter with the Lord, and when he responded to the Lord by turning aside to see the living God, Moses passed from death to life.

Is this story not like yours? Prior to knowing the Lord, was your life not marked by continual death? Yet the moment you turned aside to see, like Moses, did you not also pass from death to life? No matter what precious encounters we may have with the Lord after that time, it is that first moment that will always stand out in our minds as the most as the moment that made the ultimate difference in our lives. Indeed, I think such can be likened to a couple who has been married for many years. Although they have shared many intimate moments together in their life, all of various degrees of intensity, the one they will always remember the most and will forever stand as a moment of radical transformation will be the moment they first encountered one another on their wedding night.

Indeed, I have grown more and more convinced over the years that our original encounter with the Lord, in whatever form that took, should be the basis by which we, "give an account for the hope that is in you," (1 Peter 3:15) and it should help steer us through the choppy waters of life. It should be that pivotal moment that serves as the very foundation of our faith in Christ. When we are assailed by doubts from the devil, we should tell him of our burning bush experience. When the world demands to know why it is we believe what we do, instead of turning to the clever answers Christian apologists, we should simply share with them how we first came to know the Lord.

Leonard Ravenhill often said that a man armed with an experience is no match for a man armed with an argument. I have personally found this to be true. This is all the devil and the world can do to assail our faith: offer arguments. I have found that while counter arguments have their place, ultimately the thing that the devil and the world will not be able to argue about is our encounter. Such is a precious and historical moment in time by which we first met the risen Lord Jesus Christ. It was an event like no other that transformed us like no other.

For a moment, I would like to talk in a less theoretical and abstract way about this issue, and simply recall my burning bush

sh experience. When I was about fourteen years old, I found myself attending a Passion Play at my aunt's Church. It was there I saw the gospel story unfold before my very eyes for the first time. I saw a man named Jesus pushed down the aisle, being beaten to a bloody pulp by Roman soldiers. I saw them mock and taunt Him. Eventually, they crucified Him, and after He was killed, they placed Him in a tomb where He remained for three days. But after three days, the stone on the tomb was rolled away, and Jesus emerged from death victoriously.

Shortly after this, the pastor of the Church came on stage and made a simple appeal to all who wanted to receive the Lord that night. Many came forward, including members of my own family. As they made their way forward to the front, I found myself sitting alone. I wanted to respond to the message, but sat frozen. Suddenly, I became very aware of God's presence. Overwhelmed by Him, I heard the Lord speak to my heart for the very first time that night. He simply said to me that He loved me and wanted me to respond to the invitation of the preacher. He said that I did not have to go up front if I did not want to, but, if all I wanted to do was simply kneel at my pew, that I was surrounded by people who loved me, and would help pray with me.

I wanted to respond to the Lord so much. But something in me just would not budge to His prompting. Time went by, and eventually the sense I had of God's presence left. I was not raised in the Church, nor did I receive any meaningful religious instruction growing up as a child. Indeed, I doubted whether there even was a God, and thought science had proven God was simply a thing for people going through a mid-life crisis. But that night, I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that there was a God.

I did not come to put my trust in the Lord that night. Indeed, I can still recall laying on my aunt's sofa as I fell asleep, staring off into the darkness of her living room. After having such a brilliant encounter with the Lord that night, I recall the darkness I looked off into seemed darker than it ever had before. Indeed, for the next couple of years things would get all the darker for me. But through that time, though I did not know it, the Lord continued to pursue me. I would receive exposure after exposure to the gospel message thanks to the inroads it made into the life of my family. And finally, when I could run no more, as I lay upon my bed one night, I uttered a simple prayer to the Lord, and gave my heart over to Him.

It wasn't long after this that I began to truly wrestle with my newly found faith. Indeed, the intellectual arguments of our secular society greatly assaulted my faith, and I began to have continual doubts running through my mind. Though I was growing in the Lord, I couldn't overcome the nagging doubts I had about some of the claims the Scriptures made that science assured me were wrong. Indeed, these doubts assaulted me so greatly that as I was preparing a sermon that I was to preach the next day, I wondered if I would even be a Christian when I woke up in the morning!

But as I wrestled with my thoughts for and against the gospel message, the Lord suddenly filled me with the grace to overcome these doubts. Instantly, my mind was flooded with thoughts about my first encounter with the risen Lord, and how He spoke to me. Whatever my doubts were, and no matter how air-tight the world's arguments were, I knew that I knew that I knew that there was a God, and that He had brought His Son Jesus Christ back to life. From that moment on, though I have encountered many things that could cause me to doubt my faith, these things no longer shake me.

This is ultimately why I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. For no matter what the world or devil may say, they are no match for a man who has had an experience. The reality of my burning bush experience, and my personal encounter with the risen Lord when I first heard the gospel, has ultimately become the foundation of my faith. All the arguments for and against, as great as they might be, are nothing to be compared to the reality I've experienced in Christ.

It is my hope that with this essay you will recall the first time you encountered the risen Lord Jesus Christ, and make absolutely sure that event serves as the foundation of your faith. I would love to read the testimony of whoever might be so bold as to share it.

**Re: Why I Am A Disciple - posted by sojourner7 (), on: 2009/4/19 21:47**

Interesting; but my experience was somewhat like the two on the road to Emmaus. Jesus revealed Himself to me in a living, personal way through the scriptures then HE called me to follow HIM!!

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/4/19 21:58**

That was your burning bush just the same :-)

**Re: - posted by Totality (), on: 2009/4/19 23:45**

I would love to share that day! I have already posted this once on here, but not in this depth before, so I'll share as much as I can remember:

I remember one day in the third grade when my friends were sharing their churches with each other. I had never even heard of a church before and wanted them to explain it but all they knew was that Jesus was God and we go there to say "Amen", like a 10 year old would :P

So that night I asked my dad what he thought of the church and he told me its a place to go and worship God. \*A little note, my dad has been to almost every denomination's church service, but has yet to be saved. Please pray for him\*. I wanted to go, more because I wanted to be "the kool kid at school". So he knew someone who ran the bus ministry for Central Baptist Church here in town, Brother Ken, and they talked and decided to have me go that Sunday morning.

Weeks pass with no considerable events taking place. Then one Sunday night, the speaker for the kids ministry ask if there was any child who didn't know Jesus to raise their hand and go to the back of the room. So I went back there and I talked to someone who knew very little of the Gospel, or at least told little of it. The only thing I remember from it was that he said, "If you pray this prayer and ask Jesus into your heart you will be saved." So I repeated the prayer.

Years had past and I found myself in my teen years in the 7th grade. My friend Paul Watson invited me to a Wednesday service at the church for youth group for the sole reason of playing the games and eating their food. I loved food. So naturally I went :) This was the same Central Baptist Church. I ate up their foods and played down their games and I enjoyed myself and said "Man, church is great! You eat free food!!"

Again, weeks past and I went swimming in my apartment's pool. I was on my way home with a towel over my back and a towel over my brothers. On our way home, we heard a voice out from behind us calling "Max! Miguel!" We didn't recognize the voice, and, our dad being an officer, thought it was someone out to get us! So we picked up our speed and ran home. I forgot my keys at the pool so we were stuck outside of the apartment talking to a church member named Jerome. He walked us through a "Romans Road" and lead us through a prayer and declared us saved and to be baptized. At this point my earlier confession had meant nothing to me. And this one too meant nothing.

After a year of total rebellion against God, I continued going to His church and soon attended a youth rally called "Real Encounter". Here, the focus was not on Christ, instead it was on pizza, games, fun, party, and these two guys who were riding bikes everywhere. One of them got up and shared his testimony and it seemed to crush me that after he prayed the prayer that he changed and I didn't so maybe I didn't say it right. When he gave the invitation he said to repeat the prayer, and I did... for me. I wanted to change for the glory of my name. To show others that I could change by saying a magic formula. Again, God was not there.

And a fourth time God suffered me to be subject to this superstition: I had just committed sin in the night just 6 months after my commitment. I turned on the TV to a televangelist. He said that if I was still living in rebellion against God to repeat this prayer and be saved forever. I repeated it, but again for my own selfish reasons. I wanted to change, not for God, but for me. I was tired of being who I was and wanted something different.

After this, I began to carry my Bible everywhere I went. I read publicly and prayed out loud for people and to show off to people. I preached in my church and taught and counseled many who needed help. And I gave them Scripture, but I twisted it to support what I meant by it and used logic to prove that to them. In short, I had become a Pharisee.

God let me go through nearly two years of that before he sent Paul Washer my way. I began to search for something more, I felt that the "peace" I had wasn't enough. So I thought I just needed a powerful sermon, so I Googled it: "Powerful Sermon". I came across a video titled "Paul Washer Project". I watched it, fell in love with it and watched it over and over again. I kept watching him for almost 5 months before I even considered his teachings. I would take his words and, like his wife used to do, think of people that would need it and think of ways to get it to them.

It was in the worst relationship I had ever been in that God totally revealed Himself to me. I was dating a girl who declared herself to be saved, though has no recollection of God actually saving her, has had no growth and separation from the

world for years, and was totally focused on her and her needs. I dated her for her body and I admit that now. And I got it. .. I left my virginity in the bathroom... along with many of my morals that I had built up over the years. We spent almost a year together and most of our time doing perverse things that I will now have to explain to my future wife... Near the end of our relationship, she confessed to bisexuality and wanted me to join... She turned my thoughts of her, to her+some...

And it was at this point where I realized that there was no way that I could profess salvation and continue in this garbage ... I was then at the point where I either looked God in the face and told Him that I quit His work, His walk, His church, and abandon His word, His call, His love and walk my way in sin... or turn to God in grace and find that peace I had been missing.

That night I had listened to a sermon by Paul Washer titled "Examine Yourself" along with a short video about a passage in Ezekiel. And I realized that there was never a moment in all of my life that God had taken me up out of my sins and saved me totally by grace...

I went to sleep in distress...

I went to school the next morning completely lost. I didn't know what to do, or think, or say to anybody. I went through that day blank, and yet in my sins. I continued in sexuality... I went home that night and told her that I would talk to her tomorrow. I fell asleep again in total agony...

The next day I had been planning to get my permit, so I called my dad and we planned to get the thing. But that afternoon, before I even ate lunch, God grabbed me and seemed to throw me against the wall with the truth "You are not saved!" I was in such fear that I didn't know what to do, I turned on the computer and listened to Paul Washer... I listened to Charo... and yet that truth echoed! "You are not saved!"

I had to see if it were true! I ran to my Bible, ignoring totally what my brother had said to me, and closed the door behind me. I was alone in my father's room. I remember the book of 1 John being for those who had not known if they were saved \*1 John 5:13\* I began to read through this book and at every thought it returned "You are not saved!" I couldn't stand it anymore... I called a family I could trust, the Carters. They told me that if I had repeated the prayer that I should be fine... and yet the truth echoed out "You are not saved!" I hung up...

I called Heartcry missions, thinking that maybe they could help me... Holden Barry answered the phone. We talked for a moment and he told me his testimony of thinking he was saved for years until reading through 1 John and understanding that he had never known God at all. And that God saved him in December of 2006.

SO I told him I needed to search the Scripture... So I began to read through the book a second time... but He stopped me at 1 John 2:11 crying out to me "You are not saved!!" I fell on my back weeping and sobbing... God had truly shown me that I was unsaved and I began to answer His call, "I am not saved! I am not saved! I am not saved!!" The most bitter tears I had ever wept were those of that moment... I began to cry out to God all of my offenses... I didn't want them anymore! I cried out to God "Save me! Save me!" and yet He hadn't come yet... as though to teach me a lesson first... and I had learned it well.

I whispered to Him, "Though if you don't save me, if You send me to hell, You would still be just."

And it was in that moment that the Spirit of God had come in that place! I was overwhelmed! I was overjoyed! The tears of bitterness I once cried were now tears of joy! And God whispered back "I have saved you."

God gloriously saved me in my father's room, on his floor, on a Friday, May 2, 2008. And it gives me great joy to say that in 13 days I will be one year old. =)

Thank you for this thread. I needed that reminder

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/4/20 6:34**

I wish you an early happy birthday then :-) Thank you for sharing.