

General Topics :: How I Became Rich ~ Ken Miller & Mr. Anonymous**How I Became Rich ~ Ken Miller & Mr. Anonymous - posted by SHMILY, on: 2018/2/28 17:19**

How I Became Rich

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This story is about the grace of God. About a poor boy in Ethiopia who grew up to live the American Dream--- but saw it turn into a nightmare. Who hit rock bottom and then discovered True Riches. Who would now rather be poor with Christ than have the world's riches without Him.

My friend calls himself "The Anonymous Prodigal." About 75% of this story is in his own words.

"My story began in a small Ethiopian town called Kewisa, which is located about 450 km from the capital city, Addis Ababa. This area is known for its poverty and illiteracy. Not many parents sent their kids to school and college because we didn't know where our next meal would come from. If we didn't work, we literally didn't eat.

Survival was a priority. In order to survive, children in my community must work around the house and help out with daily chores. Life was tough, very tough! On a GOOD day we would eat twice a day. Many times I only had one meal a day. We drank coffee when there was nothing to eat in order to suppress our growling stomachs.

As a child, my main obligation was to honor and be completely obedient to my parents. Whatever Mom and Dad said, "their will be done." To disobey is to bring disgrace to oneself and to the family. To go to college to earn any kind of academic credentials is a luxury only for the rich people. After all, life itself is a school, at least that's what we were told.

So, growing up as a young boy, life was tough, but that was normal. You looked around, and all you saw was poverty-- poor neighbors, poor kids, poor parents, poor merchants, poor priests, poor teachers. The only thing that wasn't poor was the land. I believe God blessed the land to be fertile, and it was.

As a six year old boy, I remember having this wild dream--- a dream to leave our poverty behind and come to the most civilized country in the world---AMERICA. I fantasized and day-dreamed about it. No matter how bad life treated us, I knew one day I would be coming to America---the Land Of The Free---and live the abundant life. I didn't know how or when, but the dream never left my mind.

I even went to my cousin's house and asked them to lend me some money so I could buy me a pair of rubber boots. (A luxury you could only imagine.) And they would crack up laughing and ask me how in the world I would pay them back. My response was very brief, "I would pay you back double when I go to America!" Well I never saw that pair of rubber boots until seven years later.

Through it all, I was very fortunate to have both my parents. Even though dad didn't really care about religion and the spiritual aspect of life, he did the best he could and gave us what he had. Sadly, he drank a lot and that is one reason we didn't have more money. He would beat my mom, my sister and I. I used to hate him. But I have forgiven him for everything because of what Jesus did for me. Now all I'd like to do is hug him and tell him that I love him and thank him for all the lessons he taught me.

My mother was an elementary school teacher and very spiritual. She truly fears and believes in the existence of God and the importance of an education. Since I was a child, she instilled in me and my sister to revere our spiritual leaders who serve the body of Christ. She taught me to strive to excel in school. I thank God for both my parents, especially my mom.

So as a six year old young boy, my responsibility was to go to school, help around the house, shepherd the flocks and submit to my parents in every way. At the same time, the dream of coming to America never left my mind---not for a single day.

After fourteen years of poverty, hard labor and grumbling, by God's grace my wildest imagination and prayer finally came

e to pass. I will never, ever forget the feeling of joy I felt the first day I sat foot on U.S. soil at JFK airport in New York. I put down all my luggage on the ground at the parking lot and raised my hands toward the sky and said, "Yes! Yes! Yes! I am here at the Land of the Free! The most civilized nation! No more poverty! No more hunger!" Tears of joy were rolling down both my cheeks.

As soon as I arrived in America, my priority was to continue my education, but due to circumstances, I couldn't. In order to survive, I had to get a job. I got a job at a 7-11 within 30 days of my arrival. I was 20 years old, and this was my first paid job ever! Thirty days later, I got a second job at Starbucks. A few months later, I was able to squeeze in a part time job at a restaurant. Some days I didn't sleep at all, I just drank coffee and went from job to job.

Back in Ethiopia, I was used to hard labor from sunrise to sunset without getting paid. So coming to America and occupying myself with three jobs and getting paid---to me, that was big deal. Simply put, I was living THE DREAM. I kept those jobs for two years. My mom and I were able to get our own place. We also saved up enough money to buy a car. What a big difference from riding a donkey to driving a 1995 Pontiac Grand Am! It was much better and faster and more comfortable as well.

Then as I learned to move around the city, make some new friends and communicate a little better, I summoned the courage to obtain my commercial drivers license. (CDL) I got a job as a Coca Cola truck driver. The new job provided me with enough finances. I decided to quit my other three jobs and stick with truck driving. Who would have thought that a shepherd boy coming all the way from Ethiopia, East Africa to the most civilized nation in the world would be making \$55,000 in a year, just 7 years after coming to America? To me, that was miraculous.

As days turned into months, and months into years, the more I thought I was living the abundant life, and enjoying the enormous freedom America has to offer, the more I was forgetting where I came from. I felt distant from my innocence. I neglected most of the moral values I had been taught as a teenager, such as living a pure life without defiling myself, earning an honest living, always telling the truth, and respecting myself and others. Little did I know that freedom comes with responsibility---the more freedom, the more responsibility. I thought freedom meant to say and do as I wish, with no regard for others. So that is exactly what I did.

But ironically, the more I indulged in this so-called freedom, the more I felt shameful, unsatisfied, empty within and lonely. And what is more, I started developing both physical and psychological sicknesses.

I came to the point where I asked myself why I wasn't satisfied. I was generating more income than I ever dreamed of. I indulged in all kinds of sensual pleasures, ate as much as I wanted--like there was no tomorrow.

I was living my dream. But why wasn't I happy?

By God's grace, when I found out what it was that caused dissatisfaction, fear, low self-esteem, and depression, I was already behind bars. I was serving a 14 year sentence in a Federal Institution, for armed robbery and the use of a fire arm.

After 16 years of living in America, 9 of them in prison, I finally began to realize that the freedom people in this civilized nation cherish IS NOT TRUE FREEDOM AT ALL. True freedom can only be found through the redeeming blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I also began to realize that the so-called freedom people cherish is the "freedom" of sin!

I know I can't redo my past. I know that the God I serve understands what it means to be human--He made this clear by becoming flesh through His only Begotten Son, Jesus. I also believe that He understands that "to err is human," and I am foolish, hard-headed, and the king of mistakes!

But I also know that all my guilt and regrets are being washed away by the Redeeming Blood and I have now become a New Creation! As a new creation, my prayers and supplications are that I might have the strength and the courage NOT to make the same mistakes again. And also to "Not lead me into temptation, but deliver me from all evil."

I have found through all my mistakes and failures that the True Riches are found in Jesus Christ. I lost all my earthly riches, but the riches I have in Jesus are secure and lasting! I lived the American Dream but it turned into a nightmare. I tried many sensual pleasures, but they did not satisfy my craving for God. I ate all the food I wanted, but was still "hungry." I had more money than I ever dreamed of having, but I was still poor.

And when I look in other people's eyes who are chasing the same things I did, I see the same emptiness and loneliness that was in me. I am not judging them! I only wish for them what I have found.

By His grace, I will never trade my peace for any earthly dreams. I would much rather go back to Ethiopia and be a poor shepherd boy again---with Jesus--- than live the American Dream without Him.

So here I am, sitting behind these walls, hoping and planning to go back to Ethiopia to my old profession as a shepherd boy. I no longer desire the American Dream. I just want to live a simple, faithful life for Christ. He must increase but I must decrease. I want to do the best I can to live an innocent and pure life---without defilement. Of course there is nothing I can do without my Redeemer and Savior---Jesus, but I'm very confident that I can do all things through Him.

I encourage everyone who is reading this, if you've not yet found this blessed assurance and healing in Jesus, seek Him with all your heart. If you do, you will find Him. Read John 3:16.

May all the glory and honor be to God."
The Prodigal Son, Mr. Anonymous

Re: How I Became Rich ~ Ken Miller & Mr. Anonymous - posted by Heydave (), on: 2018/3/1 11:25

Thanks SHMILEY for posting this.

This two quotes stood out to me to sum up the article.

"After 16 years of living in America, 9 of them in prison, I finally began to realize that the freedom people in this civilized nation cherish IS NOT TRUE FREEDOM AT ALL. True freedom can only be found through the redeeming blood of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"I would much rather go back to Ethiopia and be a poor shepherd boy again---with Jesus--- than live the American Dream without Him."

I was recently pondering about some stories I was reading about how God is moving in saving power among the suffering churches in the poorer nations, with many ethnic Muslims turning to Christ. They are still persecuted, but have and see what we don't in the so called 'free world'.

It's a truth we don't want hear, as we enjoy our comfort.