

Christ Satisfies Chronicles

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"Jesus answered them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'"

Luke 5:31-32

WARNING!

The contents of this story are disturbing and not recommended for children. Parents & guardians please screen this material first.

AXE MURDER EVANGELIST

How do you begin to write a story about a murderer? One that has been to your home, joined you for dinner, and played with your children?

How do you write about a life changed by One who was murdered? Jesus saved the man I'm going to tell you about and his story is incredible.

His earliest memories are of his mother and his aunt playing with him on the hardwood floor, watching TV together and eating. He had four siblings — 2 half-brothers and 2 half-sisters. They all had the same mom. He was the baby of the family; his brothers and sisters were 10+ years older.

Strangely enough Dad was on the scene, but he wasn't part of J's earliest memories. Instead Dad was absent either physically because he was working, working, working or emotionally because he was drunk and abusive.

The family moved from St. Paul, MN, after an apartment fire burned their place. They got a house in the country. Dad worked with horses — he was a farrier and a blacksmith. Things were going along well. J. has fond memories of mom cooking big holiday meals and the family gathered around, fishing with dad and his brothers. Mom made everyone go to church on Sunday mornings including dad. She encouraged them all to believe. Soon, however, his older siblings left the home desiring to get away from the alcohol and abuse. Once they left things began to take a turn for the worse. J remembers being fearful, hopeless and angry as he would hear his dad slap and hit his beloved mom and throw things around in their kitchen. Dad was a strong and solid man who would abuse not only with his hands and fists, but also with his tongue. He wanted to protect her just like she protected him from his dad, but he couldn't.

When J was just 14 his mom developed ovarian cancer. He spent much of his time cutting out of school to take

care of her. She battled for a year and was then moved into hospice care. In February of 1984 she died with the whole family around her. Well, most of the family. J and his dad left for a short time to pick up one of his sisters. Though J begged to stay by his mom's side, dad made him leave. When they returned mom was gone. J's dad physically forced him to go into the room where his mom's body was still lying on the bed. He didn't want to enter. J was caught off guard — he just kept waiting for his mom to get better thinking she would one day come home.

After his mother's death, J's dad stopped attending church, his drinking increased, there were no more holiday gatherings. Life had turned particularly bleak and cold. Over and over J would try to run away. He would stay with one of his brothers or sisters, but his dad would always find him and drag him back to the house. J was angry. He was awaiting the day he would turn 16 and could quit school. He did not have many friends there, played no sports, hated the classroom and was a loner. When school was out of the picture, he continued to try to run away or live with other family members, but Dad always found him. He didn't like work and couldn't keep a job.

After his mom's death he began to hang around with a bad crowd. He started to cut himself, vandalize and steal. At 15 he was placed in a locked psychiatric ward. There a counselor found out about his abusive situation at home and helped him to get placed into foster care. At that home he began smoking pot with the family's son and soon was taken out of the home. He returned to his father's house where things continued to get worse. Soon he turned 16 and was able to quit school but unable to keep a job. Life with his father became more and more difficult. There was great tension between them. The house was falling apart. J was following the drinking path.

Soon he met a new friend, M, at a job. The two of them

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were caught drinking at work and fired. They began to spend a lot of time together taking road trips, stealing and partying. M did not like to be around J's dad. He became a frequent source of complaint and conversation. One day M offered a solution, "You could just get rid of him. Kill your dad. You could have everything — his truck, the house."

Finally, the physical violence and abuse, the scathing words and excoriating tirades, the inability to successfully flee his father's home worked together with a darkened heart to foment an evil solution. On the night of April 22, 1987, one week after his 19th birthday, J murdered his father.

J left out the ATV three wheeler, which he had ridden earlier in the day, leaving grooves in the lawn. His father did not allow him to ride it there and when he came home after a night of drinking, he laid into J for the deed. J gave him some time to fall into a sleepy stupor and then entered his room with a wooden baseball bat. He began to bludgeon his father's head. After two blows the bat cracked and snapped in two. Terrified of what would happen if his father rose up and pursued him, J retrieved the larger piece and continued the beating. Convinced that his father was dead after 8-10 successive blows with the bat, J left the room and called M with the news, "I did it." M offered up the services of an uncle who he said could get them work out in Orange County, CA. He came to meet J at the house. Upon arriving he crept to the room to survey the scene. Believing he heard J's dad sputtering for breath, he fled. The two grabbed clothes and beer, jumped in the truck and headed west. At the North Dakota border, M got scared. He offered another idea, "Let's go back, make it look like a burglary and call 911." The two turned around and headed back to the house. When they were close, M took off and went home. He did not want to return to the crime scene.

Petrified, confused, guilt-ridden and alone, J returned to the gruesome site. He wanted to retrieve his weapon. He found the bat and began to wash off the blood. In a chaotic attempt to cover his patricide, he threw some belongings around the house, but he also threw the bat — full of his finger prints — back into the scene. Then he called 911.

The questioning began. J gave the police investigators conflicting accounts of the night's events. After 6 hours in the police department interrogation room with the sheriff and other police officials, J confessed to the killing. He was booked for second degree murder. At first M's story meshed with J's, then at the encouragement of his mother, he recanted and said the whole thing was J's idea and it was premeditated. J was already in jail when the charges against him were upgraded to first degree murder. J was 19 years old at the time though the officials surrounding his case noted that emotionally he seemed like a 14 year old — the age he was when his mother first

got sick. The sheriff on the case was compassionate as was the judge. J was sentenced to life in prison; the judge told him he could probably get out in 14 or 15 years. That day began his prison journey and his journey to the Lord.

J went to prison in St. Cloud, MN. It is the facility where many of the younger prisoners (25 & under) are first incarcerated. J told us it is where you "learn to fight." Built in 1889, the facility is known among the inmates as "gladiator school." Quickly this emotionally immature loner was indoctrinated into the ways of prison life. Each group had their own self-designated area. Life on the inside was segregated by choice. In the lunch room the white inmates sat in one corner of the room, the black inmates on the other side, the Native American prisoners across from them and the Mexican convicts in the fourth corner. In the center sat the sex offenders. Not knowing his proper place on day one of his sentence there, J almost crossed over into wrong racial territory. A fellow prisoner of his own group rescued him, and he was spared a pummeling. He quickly learned the hierarchy of life in prison. He was at the top on the respect meter, a lifer. The only people who garnered more respect among the inmates were cop killers. Respect is everything in the inmate world and many battles are fought to establish and hold onto one's position. The thought is that those in on a life sentence have nothing to lose, so they will demand their status and respect at all costs.

Needless to say this was an extremely difficult environment for J. Now he was surrounded by violent individuals, himself included, deriding, mocking and flaying one another with their actions and speech. He quickly found a "dope man" and coped with his circumstances by getting and staying high. J's status as a lifer granted him a reprieve from fighting. He was spared from the "hallway of blood," the corridor between the cells and the lunch room, which, at times, resembled a UFC ring. Once he was threatened by an inmate, and he made a shank — a homemade prison knife — to potentially retaliate. Other inmates snitched, the guards searched his cell, discovered it, and J was sent to seg (solitary).

When he was returned to the general population he had a new neighbor in the cell next to his. According to J this man had a "brightness to his eyes," and he had "peace." His new neighbor was a Christian, he had gotten saved in the county jail before being transferred to St. Cloud. DB was his name. He was also a lifer, an infamous axe murderer. He had killed four members of his family in 1988. On the other side of his cell was another Christian who was also a convicted murder named ED. The Lord had surrounded J with believers 24/7. Right away DB told to him that he needed to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. At that time in the prison the inmates could have up to three prisoners in a cell during the day. J, DB and ED spent their days together playing scrabble and talking about Jesus. The two brothers in the Lord encouraged J to read his Bible and watch TBN to hear some truth.

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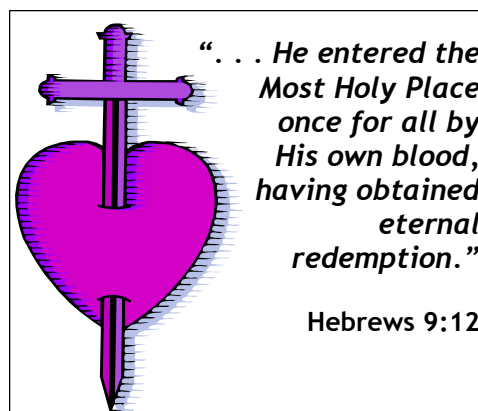
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During the same time the Lord began working on J and drawing him to Himself in other ways. He had a dear friend, Sherry, whom he had met in the hospital when he was 15. She was a believer and had spent years talking to him about the Lord. By this point in J's life, he thought she was crazy, told her to stop talking about God and stopped having contact with her. However, the Lord still kept J on Sherry's heart, and she continued to plead for his soul. One day he received a letter from a woman named Mary. She had been his 4th & 5th grade teacher. She read about his case and wrote to him sending him a photo. She and her husband would visit him and bring him forty pounds of food each holiday. They became his adopted family. His two aunts, Marsha and Sybil, his father's sisters, made an eight-hour drive to St. Cloud to visit him. A guard came to get him. He didn't know who would be visiting. He'd only had regular visits from his old childhood pastor and his wife, and his former school-teacher and her husband. When he found out who was waiting for him, he was scared thinking that they wanted to scream at him. With tears sliding down his cheeks he entered the room not able to lift his head to look at his relatives. Aunt Sybil took J's hand, "We forgive you. We love you," she said. Prior to their visit they had sent him his old Bible, the one he received on his confirmation. "Are you reading your Bible?" they asked. They continued to send him Bible verses and also encouraged him to watch TBN.

The Lord used these events in a great way to begin to soften J's heart to the saving truth of the gospel. He believes that if his aunts had come to condemn him he would have used that to validate killing himself — he was already heading down that path of despair. But the Lord used the love of people and the encouragement of believers along with the truth of His word to take J on a different trajectory. One day while watching TBN he heard an evangelist who reflected the brightness and love of Christ give an

invitation to the gospel. J turned off the TV, dropped to the floor of his cell and repented of his sins to a holy God. He cried out to Jesus for forgiveness and mercy and was saved by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Right away J had a great desire for the Word. He would sleep with his Bible under his pillow. He read through Matthew, and the Scriptures came to life for him. At this point, J had served 5 years of his life sentence. He was 24 years old. He began to go to church in the prison. He fellowshipped during his days with DB and ED learning from them and the TV preachers. He discarded his pornographic magazines and heavy metal music. He also heard from Sherry again. She wrote him after a few years of no contact. He called her at the phone number she sent and told her, "I got saved!"



Life was progressing for J, he was growing in the Lord. He spent five more years at St. Cloud and was then transferred to Stillwater. There he met more "academic" believers who encouraged him to continue his schooling. He had received his GED at St. Cloud where he worked in the library as an A/V tech. At Stillwater, he studied for a computer degree by day and took his AA general education credits by night. J discovered that he loved to write. He began to plan his future — he would finish these degrees, get transferred to a medium security prison, pursue a certain job. Then everything changed. He got sick, real sick. In 2000, J was diagnosed with late

stage leukemia. He was hospitalized and given massive doses of chemotherapy to begin treating his cancer. He needed to have a bone marrow transplant. His body was blasted with massive doses of radiation to prepare for the transplant by depleting his immune system and bringing him close to death's door. During this process, there were two guards with him in his hospital room at all times. He could not have any visitors. It was a very difficult time. However, the Lord used this experience to soften J's heart to the guards/police and give him grace to see them as people rather than enemy. The men who guarded his room were loving toward him. They brought him videos, food and other comfort items. They would pray for him. Once he awoke to find a Native American guard, hands raised high above his head, praying for his recovery.

The transplant was successful and J spent about a year in the medical facility at Oak Park Heights prison. He was released back to Stillwater and soon was sick with pneumonia and back at Oak Park. Eventually, he recovered, by God's grace, and was released from the medical facility back to Stillwater.

By now J had served 14 years of his life sentence. That is when lifers first see the parole board. They sent him to a secular chemical dependency program for 6 months. There he had a Christian counselor, Dennis, who encouraged and exhorted him in the Lord. During this time J continued to receive medical treatments once or twice each week. He saw the parole board for a second time and was allowed to go to the medium security facility, Lino Lakes. He met Judy Hawkins from GAP prison ministries, and she encouraged him to participate in the InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI) program. IFI provides prisoners with Bible teaching and Christian discipleship on a voluntary basis. It's goal is growth for the believer and mentorship and support for the inmates upon reentry to society. To participate in the program, prison-

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Contact the Mullen Family at
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"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

Do you know someone
who would like to read
about and pray for the
work God is doing in
north Minneapolis?

Pass along our contact
info so that we may add
them to our mailing list.

Praise & Prayer Requests

Praise the Lord

- ✠ for His faithfulness in providing for the needs of CSM & our family
- ✠ for opening doors to reach people for Christ in N. Minneapolis
- ✠ for grace to minister to men in the jail & prison ministry and recovery

Pray for

- ✠ Grace as we move to a home on the Mpls/Columbia Heights, MN, border
- ✠ **Lazarus Radio** (KKMS 980 AM each Sat. 2-3pm or at www.kkms.com)
- ✠ An increase in our monthly support which is now at 77%
- ✠ Fruitfulness in the ministry
- ✠ More opportunities to minister to the lost and hurting in our community and to develop deeper relationships as the Lord leads
- ✠ Our family's growth in the grace and knowledge of the Lord
- ✠ Our children's salvation: Trace (19), Titus (8), Phoebe (6) & Hadassah (5)

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ers had to make a 19 month commitment, and they must give up their TV privileges during that time. J went back and forth in trying to make a decision about whether or not to participate in IFI. His final kite (note) on the topic was to decline attending. Yet one day he was called to the Q building at Lino Lakes. John Burns, one of the program leaders met him. "We have you set for IFI," he stated. "No, didn't you get my last kite?" J asked. "Yeah, I did, but you're going. The Lord wants you to go," Burns exhorted him. J submitted and participated in the program. The IFI inmates are housed together, and the Lord used this time to help J work on his relationships with other people. His roommate was an infamous rapist. After IFI, J saw the parole board 2 or 3 more times. Eventually they sent him to a minimum security facility where he was sent out on STS crews building houses in north Minneapolis during the day. That work helped to acclimate J to the outside world again. After two more years he saw the parole board again, and they chose to release him. Both of his father's sisters and the sheriff involved with his conviction recommended release.

He spent time at two different Christian transitional housing facilities, Damascus Way and Freedom Works. There he met a man there who worked at Lazarus Auto Detail, a non-profit ministry that hires felons and others who are hard to employ. James is the chaplain of Lazarus. J was hired and has been faithfully working at Lazarus for the past year and a half. "I am amazed that God is always

putting me where I need to go. I need to be with other believers." His first day on the job he relates, "We sat around a long table. James was sitting there with a Bible passing out study guides and taking prayer requests." He thought, "Wow! This is work! You actually have a pastor that comes to work!" He says that the studies have been a blessing and have pushed him in a way he might not have sustained on his own. James is greatly encouraged by J and has a special affection for him. The Lord has graciously granted them a special connection with one another. J has found kindness and favor from his boss, Steve Farrell, Lazarus' Executive Director. He says, "I have a boss that cares about my spirit. There is non-stop grace and mercy at Lazarus. It's helping me to grow, giving me work experience and history." J believes that the Lord has greatly used Lazarus to help him make it on the outside. "Without it, I would have been back in prison," he revealed.

J spent 22 years in prison for murder. The Lord used the testimony of an axe wielding mass murderer, the love of a teacher, the forgiveness of his victim's sisters and the faithful preaching of the gospel to draw him to repentance. Through trials, disease, and relationships Jesus has made the truth more clear to J and is changing him into His image. J and Sherry are now engaged. He is working hard and is gainfully employed. All of this is by the mercy and grace of our Savior who loved us while we were His enemies. Please pray for J, Sherry and all the men at Lazarus who are being restored.