

His Totally Finished Work

Personal testimony
of Morghan Smith

For most of my life, I've been in church. I don't remember much about going to Lighthouse Baptist Church as a kid, mainly because my family had stopped coming to church for a while. During the time we didn't go to Lighthouse, my grandmother would take us kids to her easy-believism church, where I spent my Sundays and Wednesdays in children's church. The only real church I got around during this period of my life was when my mom brought us to Camp Liberty in Pontotoc, Mississippi for Camp Meeting. I remember the One Another service that she asked Bro. Greg Moffitt and Lighthouse if we could come back to church, and I remember being excited, but it was mostly because I could be closer to the friends I only saw twice a year. After this, I started to take church for granted. As I grew older, church became something I just went to every Sunday and Wednesday because that's what we did; it didn't hold any real importance to me.

When I moved up into the youth group, church still wasn't a priority for me, but rather something I just half-heartedly listened to because I knew I should. Thankfully though, God still worked, and there were times I would be affected by the preaching. A cycle began where I would listen to church, maybe get affected, occasionally maybe talk to Bro. Greg, but would then slack off again and give my attention back to whatever I wanted or was more interested in at the time. This went on for several years.

Around the beginning of 2018, God started to work in me more and more, but I still didn't give Him my full attention. I don't remember exactly when it was, but sometime earlier in the year Bro. Greg had preached a sermon on the pearl of great price and the treasure in the field, and how once that man had found the pearl or the treasure, he sold all he had to gain it. I wanted to do that, but I didn't know how or what to do. I talked to Bro. Greg and he told me that my pearl and treasure wasn't God, and that if I really wanted to find Him I would lose my life and seek the kingdom first. I dwelt on this for a while, and tried to make some changes, but ultimately didn't give my heart to it fully at that time.

That March, Bro. Caleb Owen from Grace Baptist Church came to the service before our youth trip and preached out of Isaiah 42:16, about God leading the blind by a way they know not. That sermon gave me hope, and for the first time I felt like I had been given a promise. Despite that, I again went back into my habit of not giving full attention until May, when Bro. Greg told us that God said it was harvest time, and that we would be having several meetings back to back. I got excited for this, and had hope because of what Bro. Greg had preached.

One of the first sermons preached during this was by Bro. Greg, and it was about the hell in your heart. I don't remember being told anything specifically, only having a feeling that something was wrong, I just didn't know what it was.

There were several preachers that came and had meetings with us, but the one that affected me the most was the meeting Bro. Caleb Owen preached. One of his first sermons was on God coming in and sweeping the room, causing the dust to stir and you to choke on what's inside your heart. I remember wanting God to sweep, but I didn't really feel like that was happening. His next sermon was on pride, and how we weren't letting God come in and sweep the room. That whole sermon I argued in myself, saying, "but I want God to come sweep the room," and, "I'm not prideful; I have all these reasons I'm not." At some point Bro. Caleb said that if you're arguing, you aren't believing, so I tried just switching sides and agreeing, but it didn't get me anywhere. After that service, my aunt came to me and said she understands how it's hard for a person who is quiet and shy to admit that they're prideful, but that can

make them even more prideful. I talked to Bro. Greg after, and he stopped me as soon as I said I'd been arguing. He told me that if I was arguing, I wasn't believing what God was saying about me.

The next day I listened to the service over again, and this time I saw my pride. I felt like everything about me was prideful. I remember telling God I was sorry for being so prideful and asking Him to help me with it. The sermon that night was about how much God loves us. At one point Bro. Caleb said, "God loves you, and He's done all of this for you. All He wants you to do is love Him back." I remember feeling terrible about that. I wanted to love Him back so bad, and I was trying really hard to, but it didn't feel right. I talked to Bro. Greg after and he said that I couldn't love God back because I didn't really believe He loved me.

After a few more meetings, Camp came around and I went through it unaffected. I just wasn't paying attention like I should have been. During and after Camp, I started to get more frivolous with church again. I still paid more attention than I had before, but it wasn't as much as I had during the meetings. That August, Bro. Greg told us that Bro. Charlie from Beulah Baptist Church in Maryland would be coming to preach a meeting at Lighthouse. I got excited, because at this point God still hadn't told Bro. Greg that the harvest time was over, and I felt like this was another chance to find God. In the weeks leading up to the meeting, Bro. Greg preached about the goodness of God, and had us all examine our lives and write down the ways God has been good to us. This really helped prepare my heart for the upcoming meeting. The service before the meeting started, Bro. Greg preached that God just wanted to be good to us that next week, and from what had been preached and shown to me before, I had no reason to believe otherwise. I went into the meeting pretty hopeful after that.

The Sunday morning that the meeting started, Bro. Charlie preached on Zacchaeus, and how he just wanted to see Jesus for who He was. Bro. Charlie said that God was looking for a Zacchaeus this week, and immediately I wanted to be one. I wanted to get to the point where I just wanted to see Jesus. I left that sermon feeling, again, hopeful, and like I had a lot more motivation to pay attention than normal.

That Sunday night, Bro. Charlie preached about the hidden room in Ezekiel 8. Every single thing Bro. Charlie preached about, I could see in myself. I saw myself dismissing thoughts and saying that that wasn't really me, and that God didn't see them. I saw myself making God my servant by asking Him to give me what I want instead of His will. I saw how I'd put other things before God and the other gods I had made for myself- one of the biggest ones being my boyfriend, Ethan. I saw how dirty and vile I was. All of this made me feel terrible; especially how I had used God for my own wants and thrown Him and His will to the wayside. In this sermon, unlike others in the past, I didn't argue with what God was saying about me. I agreed with it all and I saw how horrible I had been to Him. There was one example Bro. Charlie used that I didn't fully understand- the men with their backs to the door and their faces to the sun. I took that to mean that they were ready to leave, and had one foot already out the door. I had never wanted to leave church, and I couldn't see how that applied to me. Bro. Greg was talking to someone so I talked to my youth pastor Stephen Moffitt. He said that the example about the men, and what God was trying to show throughout the whole sermon, was the potential in you to commit any and all sins. They had the potential to leave, just like they had the potential to do any and every sin in them. He told me that I may not have ever wanted to leave, but that that was the grace of God holding me back, and that at any moment, that grace could be lifted and I would be gone.

I stayed home from work Monday and listened to the sermon again. I still saw everything in me, and I understood the potential in me that made it all even worse. When the sermon was over I broke down and started praying, telling God I was sorry for all that I had been doing and that I could do, and that if I needed to lose Ethan for Him that I would, because I wanted Him more. At this point, I had a nagging thought that I still wasn't seeing everything like I should or that I wasn't seeing enough, so I prayed that God would show me what else I needed to see because I just wanted to see Him. That night before heading to church, I texted Bro. Greg and told him what had happened earlier, and that I was so scared of not seeing everything I needed to that I was worried I would miss God in church that night. He told me it was fine, and just not to resist anything God would say to me. The sermon that night was about how God had raised up an army against His people, and how that army was terrifying and was going to fulfill the wrath of God. The entire time the army was heading towards His people though, God was saying that if they would just repent, He would have mercy on them. I felt like I had seen and felt the wrath of God for the first time in my whole life. I had always known it was there, but it became so real, and I was so scared it was coming for me. I believed that God would have mercy if only I repented, so I tried to, but it was like I didn't really know what to do. Bro. Greg was busy again that night, so I talked to Stephen again. He told me that even though I may know the doctrine of repentance, it was more than I was thinking it was. He told me that repentance could just be me asking for help, because I see what and who I am, but I can't change it myself, and I don't know how to be anything other than what I am.

I spent that Tuesday feeling like I was in a weird spot. I felt like I still wasn't seeing myself as I ought to, and that I wasn't really feeling God. The sermon that night was about Jesus seeking to save that which was lost, and Bro. Charlie preached that Jesus wouldn't seek you out so diligently if there wasn't a value on you. After that service, I felt the same as I did before, but more hopeful. I knew that God would save me because He kept saying that He would.

Wednesday went the same as Tuesday, with me still worrying that I wasn't doing enough or wasn't doing something right. I spent my whole day just thinking about the meeting that week and what God had been showing me. I called Ethan on my way home from work, just so I could talk to someone about what was going on in me. I told him I was nervous for church that night, and when he asked why, I told him that I was scared I wouldn't find God. He asked me why I thought that and I said, "I'm scared I won't find Him because I haven't done what He's asked me to the right way." Ethan then told me I can't worry about that. He told me that God obviously wanted me to find him, or He wouldn't have been working in me like He had or even put me in a place where I could find Him. He also told me that I can't be the one to decide what or how much I needed to see, that was up to God. That put me in a better place before the service that night, which was again, about Jesus seeking to save that which was lost, but Bro. Charlie went a bit more in depth on it. Before he started preaching his sermon, he explained Jesus as the Son of Man in a way I had never seen before. After what he had said, I really understood how Jesus had come fully man, and how He was tempted and tried just like us, but He stayed completely sinless the entire time. And though He was also fully God while being fully man, it was not Him being God that kept Him sinless. He lived my life as me, just without any mistakes and sin. After the sermon, I talked to Bro. Greg again and he said it seemed like God was working in me, and if I just kept following the preaching, and didn't try to run ahead or anything, God would save me when I was fully persuaded. I left church that night full of hope.

Thursday night, August 30, 2018, I went into church honestly not really feeling ready for it. I had focused on work all day and had hardly thought about church, so I almost expected to get nothing out of the sermon that night. It was a totally different story when Bro. Charlie started to preach, though. The entire sermon felt like Bro. Charlie was just preaching to me, like God had given this sermon to Bro. Charlie with a little author's note attached that said, "For Morghan." Every single thing that Bro. Charlie said helped me in a place I was struggling. He would say things throughout the sermon like, "stop thinking that you have to see everything before. God has shown you what you need to see," or, "God knows where you're at, and He wants to save you there." He also said something about how we can't look at all of the ingredients of salvation and figure it out ourselves. We don't know what we need or how much of something we need. He said that we just needed to look at God's servant, so I spent the whole sermon trying to do that with him. And everything Bro. Charlie said, I had no problem agreeing with. When he said that Jesus was God's servant in whom He delighted and trusted in, I believed that's who He was. When he said that God commissioned Jesus to save us in righteousness, I believed that to be true. When he talked about the Father and Son being together throughout the entire process, I believed they were. When Bro. Charlie started to talk about how Jesus had come and given the blind light enough to see their chains, and not only that, but their chains were already broken, I broke. I could see where He had done that for me just that week. When Bro. Charlie started to say that your chains have already been broken, and the door to your cell is opened, and Christ was waiting there for you, you just have to come to Him- I tried to do that. I started trying to figure out what I needed to do to get to Him, asking God over and over to help me get to Him, and I did that until the sermon was over. When Bro. Charlie stopped preaching, I kind of panicked, thinking I had missed God, so I started trying even harder. Bro. Greg got up to pray, and while he was praying, he said, "If you're trying, you aren't believing," and it was like something clicked. As soon as he said that I thought, "Wait, that's right. I'm trying to work for it and do something myself, but it's already done. Everything's already been done." And right during that, I rested in the already finished work of Christ.

Looking back, I see all throughout my life where God has kept me, and shown me so much grace and mercy that led me straight to Him. It was in nothing that I did or figured out myself that saved me, but in Him and His completely, totally finished work. Thank you God!