

Life to Last!

Hope, Faith & Worth.

Two Journeys. One Destiny.

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Contains Adult Content

Preface

Honest love is difficult to find for those who may have been abused? Today many of us may not even like ourselves.

Abuse affects so many people. Unless you have known abuse yourself, it is difficult to understand the pain and struggles.

Is it possible to live a normal life with worth?

Is love possible and to feel valued?

Is there opportunity for change?

Can the pain be taken away?

"To life's broken people, we say there is hope."

Thank you for taking the time to read this short version of our stories. Sharing personal stories is a big deal. This is an honest albeit a shortened account of the calamity and chaos which over shadowed our lives from time to time. Yet **there was one who remained faithful and merciful** throughout. We find joy from sharing our stories and lives with people. Over the years many have been encouraged and helped as we share our journeys. **We are so thankful** to our wives, children and families for their support. Also for our friends who have walked with us and know how difficult all this has been. We hope to be given the privilege & opportunity to share more fully our stories to encourage people like you, young or old. **Giving up is not an option. Life is for the living.** There are a thousand chances to start again. We found this truth; you can to.

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Nige Burr



Hi, this is Me.

When we meet, you will see me as I am today. My yesterday was very different. My first two and a half years I lived in a mobile home, then on council and factory estates; starting in Kent, ending my youthful

years in North Derbyshire.

I had a father whose womanising, temper and work-shy life wrecked my chances of a 'normal' upbringing. But mum was amazing, working all the hours to look after us kids taking several jobs at a time to make ends meet. **What a woman!** On top of this an uncle who viewed sexual abuse as being acceptable affected my young mind. So unless someone had stepped in to help me in 1985, it would have ended badly!

Together with my deaf, handicapped brother and much younger sister, things were not what you'd call '*happy families*'. How did mum put up with dad? And it would be over 30 years before she would be told about the sexual abuse.

Consequence of Abuse (1970's & 80's)

At the heart of every abuser a coward is revealed. Behind each fist, kick and brutal word hides a revolting creature. No wild animal treats their young in such a fashion. **Only human beings justify their sick actions,** blaming their victims. Every punch I received, every kick my brother endured, each slap or grabbing of the throat, moulded me.



This combined with the years of the sexual abuse and secret, callous bullying from the uncle pushed me closer to the edge.

It was a happy-sad day when dad left. He later destroyed his brother's family too. Even the GP called him a '*snivelling waste of space*'! The last time we saw him he was carrying his boxes out of our home. Mum stood with her back to us boys with her arms spread sideways, preventing us from exacting revenge. I swore I would never shed a tear for anyone again. And I didn't for years. As a replacement my martial arts training stepped up a gear; **rage and pain curdled inside me**. Together my brother and I made a pact; to kill our dad. I'm not proud of it. That's just how it was.



"You're going to live in Bristol". (1982)

Most people move home at least once. I had had 12 moves by the time I got to Bristol! I came to Bristol in 1993, 26 years old with a young family. I came to look after a small church; after selling our house and seeing two years of miracles keeping me at Bible College. How did I get here?

This '*move*' started when I was 14 years old. I was sitting in a geography lesson with my mates, learning that Bristol was the wettest city in Britain (how rubbish that sounded) when **an audible voice from nowhere freaked me out**, "*You will live in that city.*" Looking around me I asked my mates why they had said it. They hadn't! I asked the teacher too, Mr Thomson. He just looked at me as though I was strange!

I could never shake that voice. Perhaps **there was something to supernatural** happenings? But this led me to explore aspects of witchcraft and the occult which would later leave me fearful and trapped.

Teacher Abuse (1983)

Secondary school was not a good time for me. It had its perks; truancy here, cigarettes there, swapping certain magazines, my share of fights, crazy chemistry teachers who blew stuff up, and selling 'contraband' in the school yard. I was a council estate lad; most students were the sons of business men. I arrived with my free school uniform and free school meal tickets; they arrived in Mercedes and Jaguars. I couldn't stand the place. So nipping out to Andy's house with Jon to watch Smokey and the Bandit some afternoons whilst trying his mum's Brandy was better than cross-country any day. (They owned a Ferguson Video player with a remote on a wire. Happy days!) Perhaps it was a cry for help.



The more my father yelled, **the less I cared about life**. That spilled over into school. More fights; I didn't win them all, I didn't care. Hitting and being hit seemed to dull my inner ache. Plus my parents had arranged for me to take extra English lessons at the apartment of my English teacher; unwittingly accelerating my life towards pushing that self-destruct button.

That didn't last long! On the occasions I did go, he acted weird. The last time, he crawled across to where I sat and made an advance which ended with my knee in his face and me getting out sharpish. Too scared to tell my dad, I just kept quiet. Instead I tried to ignore it by training harder in my Ju-Jitsu lessons. **The rot was setting in.**



Alcohol, My Friend. (1980's)

With the fists, sexual abuse, bullying, fights, bruises and occult influences, I was a lost soul. I had no identity. **I drifted through life.** I even fantasised about being

adopted, or that one day it would all come to a final end, **peace at last**; somewhere, anywhere.

Some good did happen. Mum got free of dad, and years later a new bloke brought a smile to her face. Peter was alright. He was brave enough to be our step-dad. With two kids of his own, he would take on my young sister, my handicapped brother, and their eldest brother who was getting more out of control. Peter: **What a bloke!**

I was a mess, existing for the day, without much thought for tomorrow. Alcohol played its part from 14 years old. By 18 I would go out with the lads to get hammered. Temporary relief from my inner pain I guess; it gave me a pseudo-confidence at times. (I was never nasty when drunk, just annoyed people around me with my incessant talking followed by falling asleep!) This was a welcome break from reality. It was to be my weapon of choice when I finally decided to end it all in my eighteenth year; 1985.

Nans: They're Amazing! (1984)

Never leave school when you have little to show for it. Failing Maths and English, employers don't want to know you. Mum had other ideas. She dragged me to the local College. Sitting me down in front of the Motor Trade Department Principle she exclaimed, *"You do something with him, 'cos I don't know what to do with him!"* As my best mate Jon had already joined to train as a mechanic, she figured I would join him. We had done everything together through school, Jon and I. Including taking each other's detentions if the other had a 'date' after school. And there were a few!

In a side room I was given an engineer's test paper. It was marked and I had aced it! 98%! How did I do that? I had never achieved anything before. September came and I started the top course;



Motor Trade Engineering, Management and Law! However I had still been a huge idiot and managed to get thrown out of home, and taken in by my Nan. My dad had left me, my mum couldn't deal with me (I treated her badly), and no-one's advice, even Jon's, could stop me. (Once Jon had confronted me and told me to punch him in the face and get the anger out. Wow! **What a friend!** I didn't do it.)

Nan lived in a flat behind a pub. Convenient, as my foul mouth and attitude moved in as well. I was six foot, Nan was around five foot. I treated her disgracefully at times. Yet **she never got mad**. This was wrong. If I shouted, others always shouted back; they were the rules! Not her. There was either something wrong with her or **something very different about her**. This unsettled me.

Each Sunday I knew she went to a Christian Church where a man in a black 'dress' carried a smoking handbag, and the few old people sat there looking either bored or that they were each chewing a wasp. Yet **Nan smiled; a lot!** And she had so many friends who loved her. **That was very different!**



Sheffield United Football Ground (1985)

"What are you still doing here?" Nan was very surprised to see me. Quickly searching the small flat, she found no friends hiding or empty beer cans. *"Nan, it's alright. There's no one else here. I stayed in tonight that's all. That bloke you went to see tonight in Sheffield? How can I get to see him?"*

Nan dropped her handbag, and her jaw! Speechless, she closed the front door. She was curious as to why I wanted to see him. I described how I had seen a huge billboard about him. That in itself had not attracted me to going. The overwhelming sense of peace that rested on me each time I read the billboard, that had hit me like a wrecking ball!

Instead of going to the pub that Sunday evening, I had stayed home to **think about what that peace could mean**. My conclusion was to **go and find out for myself**. Never trust anyone's word for it. You see I had been making plans to end my life; such was the pain and turmoil, the guilt, shame, fear of the occult and my hopeless future. I had a date in mind when my Nan would be away and a whole lot of pills and my friend Mr Scotch would bid everything farewell. So **going to see Billy Graham could not hurt**.

Yet something was nagging at me. **Peace was there** each day I saw that billboard. Billy Graham would be at Sheffield United Football Ground, Bramall Lane. With huge reservations the next evening, I took my Nan's advice and went and stood for a free twelve mile coach ride to Sheffield.

I stood outside Staveley Methodist Church. Not one person even acknowledged me. Mind you it was the eighties, so I looked different from them. I turned to leave these 'hypocrites' to cross the road back to my flat; except events now seemed to turn against me.

As I stepped from the curb a coach pulled up, the door in front of me jerked open with a hiss. I sat at the front, deciding that once all the others were on I would jump off, happy to see that coach leave. Instead, a young lady sat next to me whilst introducing herself, chatting me up. But panic soon gripped me as the doors jerked closed and the coach pulled away. Plus, my ego burst as the young lady was not chatting me up, but was welcoming me as the organiser! Which sucked!

That night, Monday June 10th 1985, I was **completely transformed**. The inner **pain disappeared**; turmoil was switched off, my **guilt lifted** away, and the evil fear gone. I felt unnervingly light, **free** from anguish; I was given **purpose**. The desire to kill my dad was permanently transformed into wanting to hug him! Where did *that* come from? I was **forgiven**. God had ripped up my old life and had passed me a blank sheet of the paper representing my new life

on which I could start to write a whole new book! I was happy; damn it *I was crying!* **What was the deal?**

I did not fully understand what had happened, but I cannot deny its genuine, deep and permanent effect. I was loved. I had worth. I could start again! My shame from the abuse, dissolved.

Billy Graham had described clearly about God becoming a man called Jesus. That Jesus died on a cross in our place, rose from the dead and was still alive today transforming men and women. Against the battles going on within me, I knew, standing there on the pitch I had to repent (decide to leave my old ways). He gave me a new life in exchange for my old life. Life to last! I actually started to love life and the people around me. I couldn't stop smiling for months. My face ached. What a Saviour!

Graduated Top 10 in the UK (1986)

So much in me had changed. Yet around me everything stayed the same. The impact of my faith in Jesus Christ was a puzzle for many. I knew I was changed. I knew I could not be that old me again. I knew there was a lot of change to come. I knew times ahead would be an adventure. Today over 30 years later, I am still unable to deny this adventure called Christ.



Peace? Yes. Love? Yes. Forgiven? Yes. I had the impossible! My life in God's hands had a re-start button, not a rewind button. Life was worth living. Friends and family saw the change. I started to have confidence in myself and that I had a future. This lad, who left school with no good qualifications, exited the Motor Trade Engineering Management and Law course with scores that catapulted him into the top 10 graduates in the UK. I re-started work at the largest Nissan Dealership Network in Europe, at their Head

Office in South Yorkshire. This Christian lifestyle was worth taking a gamble on. **God was with me, and He was not leaving.**

Yet life was to throw unexpected rocks at me. If I had not been a Christian, I know that I would not have had the strength to face the onslaught.



The Promise Fulfilled: Court Battles Start! (2000's)

I had been pastoring a church for over 9 years, battling against the tide of politics and opinions. Nine years of leading horses to water, with few drinking! In fact those who

found the power of the Holy Spirit left to join churches that also welcomed the Holy Spirit. The youth, children, schools, radio broadcasts and outreach were very good. Dealing with yet-to-be Christians was easier than trying to move a stubborn generation into the “promised land”. It’s sad how many shades of excuses to the love and power of God’s Holy Spirit there can be.

I was in a **spiritual battle** which was to have casualties! My marriage was one of them. After many months of trying to keep it together, we split. I was left stunned and shaken to the core and in my faith; left sitting in an empty house. This was when I hit my rewind button. One bender later, I awoke with an almost empty bottle of “Jack’s” on my chest, unshaven, not eating and barely wanting to carry on. I yelled out in anger at God whom I now thought had deserted me; if he had ever existed in the first place.

With a mouth like a meerkat’s door mat and a head performing a rock concert, my eyes dropped to my dog-eared bible on the floor. I went to hurl it across the room, but halted instead to read it. Opening at the Book of Job I spent the next three days studying it. **My shouting at God mellowed into talking with God.** It was a simple

promise. **Keep trusting God in the hard times** and you will receive more than twice as much as you lost.

The court battles were needless and expensive with only solicitors winning. I travelled 1000 miles every month for years to be with my son and daughter. At 14, my son came back home. My daughter was happy to be with her mum. She was a good mum to her. **Trust in God and the power of the cross** in my life got me out of bed each day. God's promise to Job was coming together even for me.

Years later I remarried. I wanted someone I could trust. She had to be a Godly woman who would be my best friend. (I could easily look after myself; that had been instilled into me years ago by my Super-mum.) That is when Claire joined our lives. She would be marrying not only me, but my two children too. **What a blessing!** We were married by our churches in 2005. We both celebrated, punching the air in victory. **What a team!**

Regrettably, court cases were not over! I knew the spectre of the sexual abuse had to be tackled as I was now part of the Child Protection Team in a Bristol school, trained in paedophile mind-sets and tactics. There was to be over three more years of soul-churning counselling, police interviews and the Crown Prosecution Service. It would take three Police Constabularies manpower, time and resources, to get the perpetrator to admit his crimes!



After being at court my Super-mum with Mr Incredible, (my stepdad) and I sat alongside the Kent Police officer, Bret, in a Croydon coffee shop. The four of us were stunned & dumbfounded. The uncle's solicitor had convinced the Judge to put a 'stay' on proceedings; so...he...walked...free! I am reminded here that the Bible explains **Hell is still hot**; but God's loving grace, means for repentant souls, **Heaven is still open**.

Death Bed Confession (2008?)

Some years earlier, summing up the case for custody of our two children another Judge was undecided. Ignoring four CAFCAS statements from my children, he used one final piece of “evidence” to sway his decision. A letter from a retired hospital Matron, who although she had had no children of her own, or even married, had worked as a Community Health Nurse for a while. This being so he read her description of me and how I had “treated” my children. Peppered with lies, without her on the stand, it convinced the Judge.

What stung more was that this woman, Barbara, was the elderly lady I had helped for years as pastor of the church she had attended. She had been the victim of child abuse, leaving her very scarred. My **counselling had brought her into a new lease of life in Jesus Christ.**

Years after the divorce, Barbara tried to contact me. A lovely, mutual Christian friend, Cilla, finally convinced me to meet her. But Barbara was the reason I had lost my children! Why on earth would I want to see or speak to her? I visited her care home in Clifton, Bristol.

Staff warned me that she may not recognise me. I assured them that I would not be long. So as we entered her room, we were met by a shrivelled, emaciated, forgetful creature slouched in a bed. To everyone’s surprise Barbara squinted at me for a moment, and then became very lucid. *“Nigel, I need to talk to you!”*

“OK, I’m here now Barbara, what’s on your mind?” expecting some patronising twaddle about why Christians should never get divorced. *“Nigel,”* she tried to sit up straighter now, *“I am so sorry. God has been telling me these last two years that I needed to see you and say how wrong I was; about your children. Please bring them to see me so I can say sorry.”*

“Barbara, what you wrote, split us up; you are at the top of their list of people they never want to see again.” She nodded in recognition of their stance. *“Nigel, I should not have written it, that letter, I lied. I got so caught up with the story I wanted to believe it!”*

Was this another sick joke to add to previous twisted experiences divorce brings? She was saying sorry? She had perjured herself in court! Barbara continued, *"God has been telling me Nigel, **I was wrong, I need to repent, and I must say sorry** to you and the children."*

I needed time to think. **Jesus forgave me freely**, no strings attached – that's **GRACE!** Eventually, **I could only do the same**. My children, now older, needed to decide for themselves. They did meet with her. They heard why the judge had made the decision he did...

Sometime later, I was home with Claire, our new baby daughter, my eldest son up in his bedroom and my eldest daughter on computer video link chatting with us in the front room. The phone rang. I had been invited to Barbara's funeral.

Today we still live in Bristol, UK. Claire & I have our own son and daughter, plus my son (now based in Hollywood where he runs a successful music company) and daughter, a lovely home, jobs and we are debt free. **In each church where we have been members, we have always served.** Our ministry & preaching work has seen us teaching in churches & the Gypsy camps with healing and salvation and other venues too. I often compare my life to God's promise to Job. I do have more than twice as much as I had. **Trust in Jesus Christ does attract Bible promises into our lives...**

Turn to page 24 for further advice about Him.



Kelvin Starr

Innocence Destroyed

There comes a time in most people's lives when they grow up, they become adults. Usually it's a time when it's right to lose that childish innocence; to move through the rites of passage to manhood.

Dreadfully for some that innocence is ripped violently away by an evil force called sexual abuse. For me my childhood ended in the early 60s, the day I entered the woods where we played as children. Hours later I staggered home bleeding and in pain. My innocence had been ripped away in a most brutal manner... raped and beaten, threatened with dire consequences if I told anyone who had done this to me. I staggered all the way home with tears streaming from my eyes.



It would be over 50 years before I was able to enter those woods again. The woods had been a place of adventure. Climbing the waterfall with friends, playing in the river catching sticklebacks and annoying the farmer because we had trodden through his hay field, being the kids we were. Climbing trees to collect conkers, everyone knew the best ones were the highest and on the way to the woods we would dare each other to go through the church yard. Everybody knew that ghosts lurked in there, ready to catch unwary children. Or dare each other to cross the railway lines before the steam train rounded the bend coming out of the village station.

My Fault?

On arriving home the question was not "What's happened?", but "*What have YOU been doing?*" I didn't have the adult words to tell my mum what had happened, but through my fear and sobs I

blurted out, "He stuck his willy in me!" Hugs? No! I was sent to bed with the caution **"Wait 'til yer father gets home"**.

As a child, I like many other children, feared those words. When my dad got home I was questioned, "Why didn't you run away?", "Why did you go into the woods?", "Why did you let him do that to you?" **WHY? WHY? WHY?** Couldn't they see he was 10 years older and so much stronger than me? Nevertheless the die had been cast; it was entirely my fault. In those days parents didn't really know how to deal with this kind of abuse. These days there are excellent counselling services available to help the broken to deal with it.

Like Jesus?

Priests are supposed to be like Jesus aren't they? In my naivety I thought that they lived a life reflecting **gentle Jesus, meek and mild**. I trusted the local priest, telling him what had happened to me. I felt relieved that someone was listening to me. Horrified, that was to change drastically. He already knew what had happened. My abuser was the head choir boy. He had already listened to him. Now it was his turn to abuse me!

The pain and humiliation seemed to go on for hours, though in reality it was no more than 20 minutes! Twenty minutes of agony. How could I have been so naïve as to let it happen again? *"Take your clothes off."* The priest advised, *"Let me see where you were hurt."* That sick, twisted sub-human stripped me. Sexually abused again, my young body convulsed and wretched; how did it come to this? This time I didn't tell anyone; I didn't want the belt again. I became moody, quiet and withdrawn. I guess these days you might call it **PTSD or depression**. I hated them both. They got away Scott-free; I was sent to my grandparents' house 20 miles away for the final weeks of the summer holidays.



Lavender

I love the smell of lavender. It transports me back to a time when I felt safe. Nans house felt safe, a haven, a place where I would be spoilt with cuddles and sweets. I wanted to live there forever. Even

today when I smell lavender in the air it reminds me of **a place of safety**, of calm and of cuddles! Nan never blamed me for anything even when I did drop her best bone china teacup!

Hidden

All good things come to an end and so it was with the summer of 1964, with Roy Orbison and the Beatles topping the charts. It was time to return home and to school. No one at home talked about what had happened to me and for my own sake I buried that part of my life deep, deep in my subconscious; only to have it surface decades later.

Things at home didn't change much, except my beloved stuffed toy dog was taken from me and given to my younger brother! I was told I was too old for baby things. I was still held responsible for my siblings' behaviour for the most part. I was even once told by our father that he and my mum had to get married because of me, (my fault again!) They married in the March, I was born in August. I'm sure you can do the maths!

Work

Throughout my miserable teenage years the abuse I suffered was buried deeper and deeper. Teenage hormones were raging, and all that that meant; *"You dirty boy. Wait 'til your father gets home"*. I wanted to cut my 'bits' off. How the hell could I stop what was happening?

I left school at 14 and started work on my 15th birthday. I had no choice. I had to earn my keep. My first wage was £7.50. Five pounds went for housekeeping, fifty pence for coach fares to work. That left me £2 a week for myself. Or so I thought. Now I was out working I had to pay for my own lunch in the staff canteen and also pay for my own clothes.

Life Changing Events #1

At the age of 18 I met a wonderful girl later to become my wife. We married when I was 21 and she was a beautiful 19 year old. Today, we have a son and daughter, one grandson and two grand-daughters. All were life changing events.

During my time working in the Fry's Chocolate factory I developed serious back problems. This led to me wearing a body cast for two years. I underwent an operation and was finally given ill health retirement.

At the age of 30 my life was at an end. **No hope. No point. No use!** Sat in front of the TV each day taking large doses of strong pain killers assisted by two bottles of whisky each week, life as I knew it was at an end. It was my fault again. Why hadn't I looked after my back?



Life Changing Events #2

My son, around 8 years of age, decided he wanted to join the local Boys Brigade in the church just up the road from where we lived. I didn't want him to have anything to do with church. Nevertheless he kept on and on until I agreed he could attend. To me **church was an abomination**. Feelings of bile-fueled hatred for the church were being stirred up in me. I didn't know how to deal with feelings this strong. Does any man left to his own thoughts?

Six months after my son began attending that Boys Brigade, the inevitable happened. The parents were invited to attend a church parade. *"NO WAY!"* I yelled. My son was so upset; *"I'll be the only one there without a dad"* he blubbered. I attended. It wasn't too bad. We were invited a few weeks later to a special service at the same church. The preacher wasn't over the top. A nice gentle sermon about forgiveness seemed fair. Then came something I had only ever experienced once before. A feeling of **utter desolation and helplessness** enveloped me. What was happening? I heard the preacher say that there was someone in that service with unresolved issues. He went on to describe how people who had been abused as children could hold hatred and unforgiveness in their hearts. How could he know?

Deal with the Past, Look Forward to the Future

Some memories are good ones, aren't they? Some are just plain bad. Many of the bad memories that I had buried deep down in my subconscious came flooding back. The preacher asked those who were struggling with the past to come forward and talk to someone about it. I however couldn't move. I felt such a heavy weight on me. Feelings of guilt and shame bombarded my mind. (The devil has a way of making us feel like rubbish.) I hated the men who had hurt me all of those years ago. How could I forgive them? Hatred burned at my insides! Over the next few weeks I became a very unlikeable person. Moody, argumentative, depressed. I wanted revenge on my abusers.

Let Go, Let God.

I had used part of my ill health pension to buy into a business, a removal company. Another life changing event! The business went bust. My business partner and his wife scuttled off with what little money remained. Things couldn't get any worse; could they? My life was a mess, with seemingly no way out. In pain, reliant on pain

killers and whisky, with our house about to be repossessed and bills mounting up, things did alarmingly get worse. As the man of the house I felt it was my entire fault.

My wife and I were in arrears with our mortgage and were being threatened with eviction as the bailiffs knocked. There was no way we could pay off the arrears.



Another invite to the church led to the answers I needed. This time the preacher, an ex-boxer, was speaking about Jesus Christ. This Jesus was a bridge between us and God. He said that all of our problems could be handed over to God through this Jesus and this Jesus wanted a friendship with me. ME! All I had to do was tell Jesus that I was sorry for all the wrong things I had done. That was the easy part. It also meant that I had to forgive those who had done wrong to me. WHAT? Wait a minute! Doesn't this Jesus know how those two men hurt me? Doesn't this Jesus know how I've been cheated? Doesn't this Jesus know how much pain I'm in? Of course he did. He'd been there, done that. (And I bought the t-shirt!)

Debts Cleared

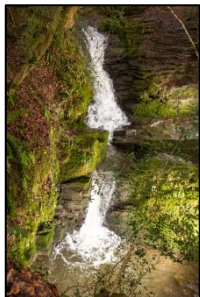
Of course Jesus doesn't wave a magic wand to make all of our problems disappear. He does however help us to have the courage and strength to deal with them. The outcome was that my mother-in-law stepped in and helped us to pay off our debts. Today we remain debt free. As trust started to seep into me I was advised to attend counselling. My counselor, through prayer and talking, helped me to deal with the past sexual abuse and empowered me to forgive my abusers. The freedom that bought me was incredible. All of the shame, the guilt, the hurt, and the humiliation dissolved almost overnight.

I had become a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ. I had accepted the fact that Jesus had given his life for mine, **a life at last!** The biggest life changing event ever to hit a man!

I went on to train as a Pastor and was ordained in 2001. I also have the privilege of helping others who have gone through similar life crippling abuse through my training as a CBT counsellor. (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy)

A Walk in the Woods

So, come to Jesus and everything will be great? Well no! It doesn't work like that. Stuff happens! A few years ago my wife Wilma and I



went through a crisis in our marriage and our ministry. You don't need to know the circumstances. Suffice to say we were at breaking point, when we meet, ask me about it. I had decided that I would end my life under a bus. A main bus route runs past our house. It was on a Sunday that I visited a good friend of mine, Nige Burr. I've known Nige for almost 25 years now, and he said he wanted to pray for me. As he was praying he said that God had told him that I wasn't to end it all

under a number 42 bus. I had told no-one of my intention to end it all, but God knew.

I broke down in tears. The bus route I chose that passed my house was the number 42 bus! It was the start of the road back to strength and wholeness. As I wrote earlier Jesus Christ gives us the strength and courage to deal with our problems, sometimes I need to be reminded of that.

Nige and I do our own photography and it was through this that I was able to face up to one of my greatest fears; that of walking through the woods of my childhood. We wanted pictures of a waterfall. (See above.) There was a waterfall in the woods very near

to where the abuse first took place. Miraculously this time the woods took on an air of peace and tranquility. There we prayed for the last vestiges of fear to leave, my tears of relief flowed like the waterfall beside us. God's Holy Spirit was my comfort. The power of the cross put to rest the trauma I had carried. The devil's work was now finally destroyed.

A Life to Last

Thanks to Jesus I have recovered the desire to climb trees for conkers again. Though at my age (60) I may just settle for the smaller ones lower down the tree. I have the childish desire to run through the farmers hay field. Ok, ok perhaps walk quickly through the hay field. As for the sticklebacks, I'm now after bigger fish. Knowing Jesus has been one of the best decisions I've ever made.



So Much More

There are so many more things that God has done in my life; too many instances to mention in this small book. If you want to know more about my journey you'll have to ask me in person. Mind you, make sure you have plenty of time to listen. God, through Jesus Christ, has miraculously healed me and used me to bring freedom to others. Other's perhaps just like you. You may know you need

a helping hand. Now you know where to look.



Why Jesus? (is for You.)

Mankind is fascinated with **the possibility of eternal life**. 2000 years ago the Bible says God became a man to warn us about the life choices we make and to speak to us about eternal matters. **This man was Jesus**. He worked for only 3½ years on earth, but His legacy has been the transformation of billions of people from every walk of life, on every continent of the globe. He gave them **peace, joy and hope, forgiveness, love and new life**. No one else has or will have such an impact on humankind. **Only God could do this**. (*By far the largest faith movement on earth: 2.2billion Christians (31%) out of 7.4billion people {Worldometers 2016}.*) For the love, healing and miracles he showed, Jesus was crucified. The Bible predicted this event hundreds of years before His execution. The Bible describes how Jesus died to buy back our freedom for a loving God, fulfilling the requirements of the law, so need not 'die'. **He took the blame, we get the life; an incredible exchange**. Topping this, 3 days after his death, Jesus was seen by hundreds of people, alive and kicking! Even death, man's ultimate fear, had been defeated. **Only God could do this**. Many scholars, lawyers & professionals wanted to prove that Jesus never did these things. After studying the evidence they finished up by kneeling themselves to accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour. **Only God could do this**. (*Examples: Josh McDowell: Evidence that Demands a Verdict & Lee Strobel: The Case for Christ.*) Evidence is presented to us in the New Testament (*Christian Bible*) that Jesus fulfilled over 60 prophecies and predictions stated in the Old Testament (*Jewish Bible*). On this evidence we can make an intelligent and heartfelt response. We need to realise, God loves us as we are. To accept Jesus Christ as our personal Lord & Saviour unlocks this personal promise. **Jesus Christ is the gateway to eternal life**.



The ART of living. ©

A–**ccept** God's love & help.

R–**eceive** forgiveness & a fresh start.

T–**ransform** as you copy Jesus Christ.

A–**ccept** God's Love & Help.

***The world around us is hugely messed up.** Why is this? At the centre of each person is a choice; to choose life or to choose death. Choosing life we live for others, choosing death we live for our own selfish ends. Let's face it that's all of us. We all battle with selfishness. This selfish core the Bible calls SIN. A good parent does the loving thing as they show their child when they are wrong, by helping them to choose a new way of doing things. We are all like children; we need an almighty loving Father God.

The Bible says that we **ALL have sinned** and need help from God.

***The core of the problem is the problem of our core.** Our inner being hides our true motives. Yet God sees right through to our core. He put us together, so He knows how to fix us. The Bible describes the core like this – **Luke 6:45** **"A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."**

***Our thoughts, words & actions draw us into a daily selfish**



existence blinding us to this loving, forgiving God. All these things the Bible describes as the effects of sin. For example if we steal something we are a thief; if we have an affair we are an adulterer; if we lie to others that makes us a liar.

Collectively the Bible says this type of activity is sin – which makes us all SINNERS. The Bible shows us, **Hebrews 4:13** “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid out bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.”

***All issues have a root cause.** Admitting that the root cause is our sin is the starting place to deal with the issues and to destroying that root. We get God’s love & help and the outcome is a new life entwined with peace even though around us all seems chaos!

R–eeive Forgiveness & a Fresh Start.

***Our past words, thoughts and actions** do bring shame and guilt. We yearn for forgiveness. As we try to live up to the laws, we still break them. Law is thrust upon us. **GRACE** comes personally in **JESUS CHRIST**. He took the blame for the laws we have broken. He was **CRUCIFIED** for it all. Thankfully the Bible shows us that **FORGIVENESS** is a free gift. **Acts 10:43** “All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” We must let go of what we are struggling with to receive His wonderful **FREE gift of forgiveness**. We are trapped in an open prison – but we can walk free any time! As JESUS CHRIST died on that cross and came back from the dead, He legally before God fulfilled the laws’ death sentence.

Everyone is free because the prison door of our soul is unlocked. Let’s not be one who still sits in that prison, because we never had the courage to walk out.



***All future words, thoughts and actions** – JESUS CHRIST died for all people and all of our sins. So sin is forgiven already. Jesus' words have been recorded in the Bible, **John 19:30 Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.** It is finished / done / the New Covenant started. To follow Jesus Christ is to have a fresh start, a fresh life and a fresh outlook as our sins are forgiven.

***Abundant life & freedom** – life with Jesus Christ is infused with peace, freedom & creativity. Here's an incredible promise and many more like it can be read about in the Bible, **Galatians 5:1 "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free."**

T-ransform as You Copy Jesus Christ.

***Lifestyle & attitude** are indicators of the type of character a person has. None of us are perfect this side of heaven. Yet when we realise how much God loves us, how much it cost Jesus to forgive us and how empowered we can be through the Holy Spirit, we will want to live the life God created us for; exchanging that new life for the one we wrestle with.

The Bible describes a follower of Jesus as a disciple. A disciple copies Jesus. Here is what Jesus did. **Matthew 10:8 "As you go preach this message: The Kingdom of Heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give."** The New Testament clearly shows what is expected of all disciples – and this is exciting.

***Prayer, Bible & a Jesus centred Church** are three points of the same strong triangle. Civil Engineers use triangles to build tough structures. Asking Jesus to come into our lives is only the beginning. These three points will ensure we become a tough Christian, impenetrable to the devil's schemes. The Bible advises us, **Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."** Also about the Bible: **2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for**

teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...” plus that same Bible will show us about church, **Hebrews 10:25 “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another...”**

***Supernatural activity comes with the territory!** Christians too often do not realise that Jesus passed the baton onto His first disciples, who in turn passed it onto other disciples - each one to become empowered by the Holy Spirit. Asking God right now to fill us with the supernatural empowerment of the **HOLY SPIRIT** invites God to live within us as He lived in the first disciples. Living within us, He, the Holy Spirit, will teach us how we can do what Jesus did; to be disciples copying Jesus.

The Bible also makes it clear as to how we need to tell others about knowing Jesus. **The Great Commission seen in Matthew 28:16, Mark 16:15 & Luke 24:47** – tells us to get involved. This makes you part of history.

Take a look at this in the Bible. **John 14:12 (Jesus said) “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these...”**
What is your conclusion?



Your Fresh Start Prayer

You are a simple prayer away from your fresh beginning. By speaking this out as you truly believe it deep in your heart, God's forgiveness for your past, a fresh start now and a future full of hope and promise will be yours.

***Father God, thank you for loving and accepting me.
Thank you that Jesus came to exchange His life for
mine.***

***I am grateful that Jesus died for me on the cross and
defeated death for me with the empty tomb.
I have sinned, done wrong, and need Your help &
forgiveness.***

***Take over my life & continue the transformation You
know I need.***

***I commit my life to you Lord; please empower me with
Your Holy Spirit.***

***This is the first day of my life to last, and the first day
of the rest of my life with you.
Jesus, take control of my life...
Amen.***

***The date you said and meant this prayer: _____
This is your day of fresh beginnings...***

Your Name: _____

What Next?

† **Connect with a good church** – Have a look around and visit a few of the churches in your area. We may even be able to link you with a good church in your area.

† **Connect with new friends** – Getting involved in a good church will boost your confidence no end. There will be people like you with whom you can walk through life.

† **Connect with us** – Let us know through our Facebook page how this has affected you. We can help and advise you more.

Bible References: Get a Bible version you can understand.

Eternal Life: John Ch. 3 v 16 / John Ch. 5 v 24

Jesus is the only way: John Ch. 14 v 6

Sin: Luke Ch. 4 v 25

All have sinned: Romans Ch. 3 v 23

Crucifixion Predicted: Psalm Ch. 22 v 16

Reason for the Crucifixion: Isaiah Ch. 53 / Matthew Ch. 27 v 32

Jesus' Resurrection: Matthew Ch. 28 / Luke Ch. 24

Jesus is Seen Alive: Mark Ch. 16 / 1 Corinthians Ch. 5 v 6

Holy Spirit: Ephesians Ch. 1 v 13-14 / Acts Ch. 2

Transformation: Romans Ch. 12 v 2

Freedom: Galatians Ch. 5 v 1 / 2 Corinthians Ch. 3 v 17

Abundant Life: Romans Ch. 5 v 17 / Ephesians

Grace: John Ch. 10 v10 / Ephesians Ch. 3 v 20

We have no excuse: **Romans Ch. 1 v 20** “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

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