

Eugene

I would like to share a little bit of my life's journey, emotional and spiritual, with you, in search of God and mercy.

I was raised in a very religious home- devout Catholic. We attended church faithfully, prayed before meals, in the evening before going to bed, at weddings, funerals and other church related events.

Some of the events that stand out in my memory are my First Communion, attending Catechism, being an altar boy at the family church and Confirmation. I believed that I knew the Lord and was on the right path religiously. I was attending church, praying, going to confession and praying penance for my sins.

Growing up as a young child, I was under great pressure to be the best- have good manners, submit and obey, be neat and clean, never disobey or talk back (respect my elders) (children are to be seen and not heard), etc. Misbehaving was not an option as the retribution would be swift and merciless. I grew to believe that all authority was unmerciful and looked down upon the weak of mind, body and spirit. I modeled myself after "authority" and came to have no mercy for myself or for others who did not "measure up" to standards.

As I got older, I drifted away from going regularly to church, although I still believed in the Lord and felt that I could praise and worship Him even though I was not in "His House". (Church). I also began to be consumed with "Living", instead of being "Alive". I became totally immersed in earthly desires- working hard, acquiring "things" that were symbols or "false gods" that I worshipped. My life was always focused on working, getting ahead, getting more and nicer "things" as symbols of my accomplishments. I became very goal-oriented, striving to be the best in anything that I attempted, and was very scornful and unforgiving toward anyone who did not have the same ideals.

I had become that, which as a child growing up, what I had feared the most. Authority- unforgiving, merciless, judgmental and incapable of loving my fellow human being.

During this time I experimented with different desires of the flesh- drugs, alcohol and other vices. I never had a problem casting out these demons- telling myself that I could do without them- basically going it on my own. During this time I felt that I was in complete control of my life- that I did not need any one's help. Little did I know that I was living a lie.

Eventually the pressures of living began to overwhelm me and I started self medicating with more and more alcohol. It began with drinking on the weekends, and then graduated to drinking during the week, then eventually I would have a drink in the morning when I got up just to feel "normal", and then I began drinking on the job. Things really started spiraling out of control. I knew that I needed a change. I had lost all respect for myself and had feelings of hopelessness and disgust regarding my behavior. Every time that I tried to drag myself out of the "pit" and failed, I would look at myself in the mirror and curse at the person that I had become. I had no mercy whatsoever for the image that was looking back at me, even though I knew that deep inside me there was still a good person struggling to rise to the surface. I was causing irreparable damage to many of my relationships with work, family, friends, co-workers and life.

I knew that I could not do it on my own anymore- I needed someone's help.

PSALM 55: 1-4 ESV- Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy! Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan, because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me. My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen upon me.

When I heard of the Mustard Seed Program, I decided to give it a try- little did I realize that my spirit was crying out for salvation from the demons that possessed me. I came into the Program, still very skeptical of getting anywhere, because if I couldn't do it- who could?

I didn't trust anyone, and believed that if anyone did try to help me, it was for their own hidden agenda, and not because they cared about me. I slowly began to renew my relationship with Jesus Christ, and came to realize that it was important for me to accept Jesus Christ into my heart, because only through the Grace of God, and through God, will I be able to truly have mercy and forgiveness for myself and for others.

LUKE 6:36-37 KJV- Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.

MATTHEW 5:7 KJV- Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

MATTHEW 6:14 KJV- For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Some have a great emotional experience when they come to Christ and are born again. Others experience little or no emotion. They may not even be able to pinpoint the exact time when they gave their hearts to Christ, but they know they did. That has been my experience. There was no great revelation, just a slow awakening of my spirit. The important thing is that Christ moved from the outside of my heart to within.

The road to redemption is littered with potholes- constantly under construction and guaranteeing a rough road ahead. I struggle every day for mercy and forgiveness, but I have faith that with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, I will succeed.

ROMANS 5:1-6 KJV- Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

I know now that I do have someone there to help me- Someone who is merciful, someone who will forgive me unconditionally and Someone I can put my complete trust in.

PSALM 23: 1-6 KJV- The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his names sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

AMEN.

