

What in the World Has Happened to You?

by Greg Locke

The sermon explores the concept of being in Christ and how it brings about a new quality of life, with a focus on the speaker's personal testimony of how God changed his life from a life of addiction and sin to one of salvation and purpose.

Duration: 38:18

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Acts 4:12, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Material Wealth", "Gospel Deception"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker invites a man to share his testimony and plans for the mission field. The man talks about his past experiences as a 14-year-old teenager, making money and seeking approval and applause. Despite his success, he realizes that material wealth is temporary and does not bring true fulfillment. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not being deceived by the allure of riches and highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the gospel.

Transcript

Please, look at 2 Corinthians and chapter number 5, a very familiar portion of Scripture this morning that we'll be dealing with. And I'll just give you some things this morning that the Lord's laid upon my heart, something probably a little bit unusual that I'll be doing this morning for Task Force Chapel. But as I've prayed about it and sought the Lord, I just feel like this is the direction that God would have me to go this morning.

2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse number 17. I want you to stand, if you would, please, out of respect for God's Word. 2 Corinthians chapter number 5 and verse number 17.

I'll read it two times and then we'll pray and we'll have our message this morning. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17. The Bible says, Paul is writing, he says, Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. Notice it again, 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. This morning I bring you the simple message, what in the world has happened to you? Thank you very much. You may be seated.

Let's bow our heads and hearts. Let's pray and ask the Lord to bless our time together this morning, shall we? Lord, thank You for today. Please help these young people now as they listen to that which You've laid upon my heart.

You've used the Bible in a very special way. And I pray, Lord, that when we leave, we can know that we've been in Your presence, that, Lord, You've spoken to our hearts, and not only have You stirred us through Your Word, but, dear God, may we see that You also want to change us through Your Word. And so I pray that You'd have Your will and Your way.

Empty me of myself, fill me with the Spirit of God. In Jesus' name, Amen. I'm sure you're not a stranger to 1 and 2 Corinthians.

And last week when I preached on the subject of separation, I told you that dealing with the subject of separation, the Apostle Paul wrote to these people, and on several occasions, he told them that one of their biggest problems was this, that after they got saved by the grace of God, they had the grand old idea that they could live any way that they jolly well pleased. And Paul said, listen, you will not be perfect when you get saved. You will not be sinless when you get saved.

He said, but you will be made different by the grace of God when you get saved. It's kind of like what John Newton wrote. You know, John Newton was the writer of Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound That Saved a Wretch Like Me.

I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see. And everybody knows he wrote that, but many people don't realize that he wrote this on his deathbed. I may not be everything that John Newton wants to be.

He said, I may not be everything that John Newton could be. He said, I'm not everything that John Newton's friends would like him to be. He said, I am certainly not everything that God would like John Newton to be.

He said, but I thank God John Newton's not the man that he used to be. And young people, in 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 17, Paul said, when you get saved by the grace of God, you are in Christ. Not in church, not in camp, not in the task force, not in the waters of baptism, not in communion, not in good works.

He said, but in Christ, that is obviously a reference to salvation. He said, when you're in Christ, He, the word He there is generic. It means he or she, humanity in general.

He is a new creature. Talking about a new quality of creature, new character, new desires, new goals, new ambitions, new passions. He is a new creature.

And the Bible says, old things are passed away, behold. That word behold is used several hundred times in your Bible. Most of the time we see it and we say, what's the big deal? So what? So this.

The word behold means a declaration. It means, hey, stick some toothpicks in your eyelids. Listen up.

Don't cross your arms and sit around and not pay any attention. Paul says, behold. When He declares something to you, all things are become new.

Now, what I've done at this camp before in the past is I've shared my testimony, but what I've never done in task force chapel is shared my testimony. Some of you know some of it. Some of you know all of it.

Many of you know none of it whatsoever. But this morning, I'm going to share with you how this verse rings true in a life. Did you know if I did not have a copy of the word of God, I could prove to you there's a God in heaven? I can prove to you that that God is trustworthy and I can prove to you that that God could change your life without even having a copy of a Bible because this morning in this chapel assembly, you're looking at a modern day miracle.

And I believe that although you'll not be perfect when you get saved, you will be different and God will change your life. So I want to share with you, just for a few moments, my personal testimony, that which God has done in my heart and in my life in the past nine or ten years. Now, please understand I put a preface on this message.

I have never, and by God's grace, I will never give my testimony with the intent of wanting to let people know how glorious my life used to be. I'm not interested in glorifying my past. I'm not interested in glorifying the devil.

I'm not interested in glorifying and uplifting and exalting Gregory DeWayne Locke this morning. I'm interested in letting you know that I was a wreck. I was wicked, I was vile, I was ungodly, but I've been saved by the grace of God and I did not clean up my life and get saved.

I got saved and God cleaned it up for me. Young people, I believe in the testimony of a changed life. Now, there's much that I could say and I'm not going to back up 15,000 centuries, all right? I'm not going to give you a great big dialogue and a great big discourse on things that would bore you positively, absolutely to tears.

I was like any young person. I was like you and every other guy and girl in America. I went through certain stages of my life.

Went through certain degrees, certain things that I liked a little bit more than others, but let's jump all the way to the time when I was 13, 14, and 15 years old. Because regardless of the stages that I went through in my young life, I want you to understand, when I was 13 years old, I made a decision that changed my life and that decision was not for the better, that decision was for the worse. When I was 13 years old, I got heavily involved in what most of you and I know today as the rap music industry.

Last night, whenever Brother Duffy was preaching about the subculture that goes with music, I'm a living testimony to that because my life was sold out to the devil. It was sold out to the world and it was sold out to Greg Lotz for the sake of rap music. Now, you know, a lot of people say, well, you know, I like rap music.

I like rock music. I like country music. I like this type of music.

I'll tell you something, I did not like rap music. I was desperately in dire love with rap music. Rap music ruled my life.

Rap music ruled my thinking. It changed the way that I walk. It changed the way that I talk.

It changed the things that I did, the places that I went, the people that I hung around. And I was addicted, no doubt about it. I was addicted like some heroine or some cocaine or crack addict would be addicted to drugs.

I was addicted to the culture and to the relationship, to the bond, and to the passion that I had for rap music. So not only did I enjoy listening to it, I enjoyed performing it. I enjoyed singing it.

I enjoyed the rhythm and the beat that Brother Robertson cultured out, that over-syncopation of the drums and that great bass and sound. And I enjoyed all of that because it did something deep within inside of me cause that little leg to begin to shake and that eye to begin to twitch. And I'm telling you, it did something in my body, not for the good, but for the bad.

And it completely, totally changed my entire lifestyle. For those two and a half or three years of my life, my friends back at school referred to me as MC Locke. I had one goal in life and it was to be a professional rap star.

I didn't care who got in my way. I didn't care how much money it took. I didn't care how many people I had to beat down to get on top of the totem pole and be the chief among the Indians.

I was going to be a rap star and I was well-nigh going on that way. So on Friday nights and Saturday nights, I would go to little state fairs and I'd go to little county and community fairs. We would go and rent out a little skating rink center and we'd do these little parties and things.

And I'd do these little talent shows and I'd go over to some of my friends, you know, that have these birthday parties and they'd have me come and I'd get the little bass drums and all this kind of stuff. And I'd get in there and I'd rap and I'd dance. Had a 355 pound bodyguard by the name of Bubba.

Not somebody you want to meet on a dark alley on a lonely road, that's for sure. A great big old guy. We called him Eight Ball.

Here I was, I had one of these great big old hairdos that kind of poked up high like this, you know. I mean, had more hairspray in it than you'd ever be able to wash out of your hair in a month. I could have put a plate of spaghetti on my head and ran the 540 in about five seconds and I don't think it would have fell off the top of my head.

It was so stiff and that stuff would stick up about three or four inches high. I had these little lines and you know, these little squiggles and words and stupid stuff all shaved up in my head, you know. I had one of them big old long rat tails braided all the way down to the middle of my back.

Had three earrings in my left ear and I wore all kind of stupid fake gold, you know and fake necklaces. I wore them big old baggy pants, you know. You could fit about 25 teenagers in.

You could jump out of a Cessna airplane. You could float to the ground like a leaf and it wouldn't even hurt you, you know. And so I'd walk around like that and you know, I'd sweat when I walked and I'd talk funny and act funny and look funny because I was funny.

I was stupid's what I was. I had sold my life to rap music. Somebody came to me and they said, they said, you know, with the talent that you exhibit, with the talent that you have, why don't you try to do something and get your name out there a little bit? So when I was 14 years old, I said, I'll do just that.

I went to a place that used to be a nationalist called Opryland. It's not there anymore and obviously that's where the Grand Ole Uproar what we call the Grand Ole Opry is and they sold it now. They put a great big old meal there.

Opry Meals Mall is there now. And so, but they had some recording studios that you could go to for pretty cheap and I didn't have a whole lot of money then. I'd saved up some.

My friends had given me a little bit. My mom had gave me some. And so I went to one of these little kind of semi-perfectional recording studios and I took some tracks and some sounds in there and I said, here's what I want to do.

I said, I need a demo tape that I can play on some radio stations to try to get some air time. I said, I need a demo tape that I can give away to some people to try to get MC Locke's name big. And so I paid a hefty little sum of money at that time and I cut my first demo album, LAPDL, Lyrical Assassin Producing Dope Lyrics.

I thought it was cool then, but I think it's dumb as a box of rocks now. But anyhow, I cut my little record and cut my little album, you know. I took it down there and gave it to a couple of my friends, couple of the radio stations, gave it to the family.

I duplicated that thing, mass production, friends. And I passed it around and everybody that listened to that thing and everybody that watched little videos from the talent shows and the different places that I went, they said, oh, man, you're going big places. Man, you're going to go big places.

Things are going to go well for you. You're going to make money hand over fist and everything's going to be great. Everything's going to be, as my little brother says, hunky-dory in town.

And so man, my head was swollen up like a watermelon and all I could see was a star. All I could see was the lights. And I'm going to tell you something right now, everything that glitters is not gold because you're looking at somebody that had the glitter and the gold and it never did me good whatsoever.

Matter of fact, my Bible tells me that riches make themselves as wings and they fly away in the morning. And as a 14-year-old teenager, I know what it's like to make a little money. As a 14-year-old teenager, I know what it's like to have people pat you on the back.

And I know what it's like for a man to come to you by the name of Mr. White, Bill White. And he said, hey, I'm a commercial producer. He said, how would you like me to fly you to Tallahassee, Florida and pay you big bucks to do a commercial? I said, big bucks to do a what? He said, that's right.

He said, national television commercial. He said, this will be your opportunity to get your foot in the door. He said, maybe then people will know who MC Locke is.

And he said, maybe then when they see you rapping and dancing on national syndicated television, maybe then you'll get your foot in the door and you'll get your opportunity to be the big rap star that you want to be. My grades were a mess. I didn't care anything about school.

I didn't care anything about work. I didn't care anything about my family. I didn't care a thing about one single person in the world except for Greg Locke.

And I said, man, that'd be great. Give me the details. He said, I'll fly to Tallahassee, Florida.

I'll pay for your flight. He said, I'll keep you down there for a couple of weeks. He said, your mom, I have to sign some type of contract to get you out of school for a little bit because it's going to be during the spring.

It's going to be during the school year. He said, we'll pay you big bucks. We'll take care of your limo.

We'll take care of your clothes. We'll take care of your food. We'll take care of your hotel.

He said, we'll take care of it. You can take somebody down there if you'd like to. Your mom wants to go, fine.

If a friend wants to go, brother, whoever it is. He said, that'll be fine. He said, I'll pay you big bucks for 30 seconds.

That's it. 30 seconds of glory. He said, for about 30 seconds, I want you to dance on a commercial for something that you and I heard of.

They're called hit sticks. They came out in about 1990, 1991. You wear this stupid little thing on your side here.

It looks kind of like a lapel mic. It's got these little drumsticks that are to it. You fix the pitch and the volume and how much bass and how much treble you want.

And you kind of beat them in the air. They make all these boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom type of noises. Okay.

And I figured that'd make JK laugh. That's why I did it. He always laughs when I do that.

But nonetheless, that's what he wanted me to do. So I said, man, oh, what an opportunity. Won't that be wonderful? MC Rock, have my name in life.

Man, have my name on signs and have my name on flyers. And I'm telling you, that's what I wanted. I wanted to get up there and I wanted to be the white rapper of the world.

The old vanilla ice geek. I wanted to get up there and I wanted to be just like him. And I wanted to wear my clothes backwards and get up there and rap and have everybody just kind of melt in the aisles.

And then I had the sugar plums dancing in my mind. And that's all I could think about. Oh, I'm going to do a commercial.

Oh, I'm going to do a commercial. I just put out a demo tape and I'm going to do a commercial. And man, I'm telling you, I was living high on the hog and I learned every minute of it.

But I'll tell you what the problem was. My life was in shambles. You see, regardless of how much drive and ambition, goals and passions that I had to be a professional rapper, I wasn't going to make much more than a professional nut and a professional bum for the rest of my life.

Because I'm not going to glorify sin and I'm not going to be excited about this because I'm not. But I'm going to tell you something. I know what it's like as a 15-year-old teenager to wake up in the middle of the night with your eyes flipping back in your head and vomit on the front of your clothes.

You've been out on one of your stinking drinking binges with your buddy and you're out smoking your marijuana cigarettes and thinking you're cool because you're smoking your Marlboro and you're out buying your stinking liquor and doing all this kind of stuff or getting somebody to buy it for you and having your six-pack and your 24-pack and all that kind of junk out there with your buddies and tell your mama you're out with your friends and you'll be home at 10 o'clock and you come home 4.35 or 6 o'clock the next morning. Hey, I know it's that slight young person and my life was in shambles. My life was absolutely, positively, totally a mess and although I had these big ambitions and these big desires and these big goals, there is no doubt in my mind I would be rotting in hell right now had I never been saved.

I would not be on a stage rapping. I would not be on a stage dancing because my life was a mess and every single time I got in trouble with my friends or got high with my friends or got stone cold drunk with my buddies, the next weekend I was right back with the same pack, right back with the same crowd because those are the people whom I felt accepted around. Hey, I've been to church all my life.

I'm telling you, I went to a Southern Baptist church that probably had almost 2,000 members in it. I didn't care about the gospel. I knew the gospel.

I knew for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There was no excuse. God should have just thrown me away long ago, but I'm glad He's long suffering.

I knew the gospel. Hey, I knew Adam's sin caused the entire human race to be depraved. I knew that.

I knew I was lost. I knew I needed to be saved. Hey, I remember driving down the road one day coming from a court case and my mother looked at me with big tears in her eyes and she said, you need to give your life to God and He'll change it.

I'm going to tell you something, that is exactly, young person, that is exactly why I would not give my life to God because I did not want to change. I enjoyed my lifestyle. I enjoyed that rap music.

Hey, I enjoyed the opportunity to be able to fly down to Tallahassee and do a 30-second national television commercial. Hey, I enjoyed those opportunities. I enjoy all of that stuff that I was steeped in and when my mother told me, hey, give your life to the Lord, He'll change you.

That is precisely why I would not. I knew the gospel. There was no excuse.

I knew how to be saved, but I was not about to get it. And so here I was in the midst of getting ready to fly down to Tallahassee and do this commercial. Here I was.

I just put out this demo album and then everybody was all excited about it. 14 years old, big bodyguard, making money, hand over fist, and loving all the attention, loving all the approval, all the appraisal, all the applause, loved every bit of it. My grades were straight to the bottom.

You know, I spent nine years in K through sixth grade, if you can believe that. Nine years in K through sixth grade. Kindergarten, first grade, first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, fifth grade, sixth grade.

Nine years just to get out of sixth grade. It took me nine years to figure out that F meant failure, not fantastic. You know what I mean? Some of you need to figure that out when you go back to school this fall.

But nonetheless, my life was in shambles. All the desire that I had to be that professional rap star, all the people I had, even my family pushing me into that industry, all of the help, all of the financial support I had, it was all nullified by the fact that my life was in shambles. From the time I was 11 years old, and I realize that's young and I'm not a bit proud of it, there are some people, young people, who have lived, I'm only 25 years old.

I'm going to be honest with you. I believe in 16 years, the years it took me to get saved, I saved a month for my 16th birthday. In those 16 years, I believe I lived more of a life in those 16 years than a lot of people live in about 50 or 60 years.

And I'm not a bit proud of that. But I'm going to tell you something, from the time I was 11 to the time I was 16, six different times in the same courtroom with the same lawyer and the same judge, Haywood Barry. I remember they pulled me out of school one day and mama said, well, it's time for your court case.

That was no big deal. I'd already been on probation several other times. They just slapped me on the wrist and said, now, bad, bad little boy, don't go out and do it again.

And I'll tell you why I went out and did it again. I'll tell you why I did vandalize. I'll tell you why I did steal guns and why I did steal go-karts and why I did rob shopping malls and all that kind of stuff.

I'll tell you exactly why, because I knew all I was going to get from them was a bad boy and all I was going to get from my mama was, hey, don't do it again. Hey, it's right in the Bible when it says, spare the rod and spoil the child. I remember one time in my life when I was about eight years old, my mama slapped me in the face.

I was never spanked. And I'll tell you, because I was not whooped, because I had no discipline, because I did not have a good Christian home, I'm telling you, I was as rotten as an old dozen eggs. I was stinking.

My mama said, time to go to court. So I remember I went there. I'll never forget it.

Life-changing experience. I'm sitting here, about 300 people in this courtroom outside of Nashville, Tennessee, a little town called Lebanon. Here I am in the little judicial court system here, you know, sitting around watching these people.

And this guy got a speeding ticket. This guy's getting a divorce. This guy's breaking and entering.

This guy's vandalism. So finally they called me, Gregor DeWayne Locke. So I stood up, you know, you're supposed to dress up real nice, you know, and here I was, all rebellious, and I had them old airbrushed brood jeans, you know, I'm old tank top, and I come walking up there, I'm old Nike tennis shoes, you know, like I'm something big and special, like everybody owes me a favor or something.

So I walk up there and there's my mom, and here's my lawyer, Mark. I don't know how many thousands of dollars my mama sank into that crazy guy trying to keep me out of some reformatory school, but this is the last straw. So I'm standing up there, and that judge looks at me, and, you know, he's got his big robe on, he's got his nice little gavel, order in the court, order in the court.

I had to step up on a little box, you know, it's probably not much higher than a couple little steps there, and I had to step up on a little box, and stand there, and here's my lawyer, and here's my mom, and here's the little bailiff, police officer, all the people, had this big old wraparound pulpit. I stood before this guy five

times since I was 11 years old, five times. I mean, we was on a first name basis.

All the probation reports, the certificates for getting off, yee-haw, and all that kind of stuff. But now's the sixth time. I stand before him, he takes his gavel and lays it down, and he stands up, and I don't know if there was a little step back there behind him, I'm not sure, but he leaned up over the pulpit, little area there, and he stuck his finger right in my face.

He said, son, 20 years ago, I locked your father, Steve Lock, up in the state penitentiary. He said, if you ever, in front of 300 people, he emphasized in big bold black blazing letters, the word ever. If you ever stand before me again, he said, you will not see the light of day until you're 21 years of age.

He then turned to my mother. My mother's name is Judy Sumner. She was remarried when I was five to a man that I never could get along with, and we never did get along until the day I got saved.

He still needs to be saved. You pray for him, and there's a lot of areas and questions and things that he has in his life about the gospel, but nonetheless, we never got along. And so, hence my mother's name is different than mine.

But he looked at her and did not say Miss Sumner. He did not address her as Judy. As nice and as cordial, this Mr. Judge was.

He did not even call him. In front of all of those people, with me shaking in my tennis shoes and my mother standing there with a nice dress and high heels, he stuck his finger right in my mother's face and said, lady, your son is a menace to society. And you will find a place to put him or the state of Tennessee Juvenile Department of Corrections will find a place to put him.

My mother broke down in that courtroom like I've never seen her break down before. We got in the car. She wept and squalled and cried like a baby.

She called my grandmother, who in 1992, three months after I was saved, she went home to be with the Lord and I believe the Lord left her around just so she could see me get saved by God's grace. She had prayed for me for years. Really the only spiritual influence I ever had.

My mother and her began to pray that God would open a door whereby I could go to a place that would help me. Little did we know there was an independent Baptist church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee called Franklin Road that had a children's home. First of all, they called a place outside of Chattanooga, Tennessee called the Calhoun Boys Ranch.

They called them. They said, we can't take him, but we know a place that will. To make a long story short, they sent me to the Good Shepherd Children's Home in February of 1992, not to live, but for a visit.

I remember I come walking in that place and honestly, I thought these kooks and retards fell off Mars long ago. I thought, what in the world? Look at these guys, the way they're dressed all night. Look at these girls.

The guys sit at one table and ate. The girls sit at another. They prayed.

They quoted verses. They sang. They had devotions in the morning.

Sometimes devotions at night. All the girls were nice. They went to Christian schools.

They went off to camp in the summer. I thought, this is ridiculous. They're going to stick me with a bunch of David Koresh's.

They're going to bring out the Kool-Aid like they did with Jim Jones over in Jonesville and make me drink something. And I'm telling you, I thought these people were crazy, but obviously the way that I was dressed and the way that I was acting going through their mind was they were saying, hey, this guy is crazy for sure. And so I'm walking around.

Mike Granzer, who had just graduated the master's degree from Bob Jones University, took this place right out of college. I mean, just kind of, just a young buck, boom, just took the place. He comes over to me.

I'm his first prime candidate. Now, there were other kids that were there, but I'm the first one that came since he was there. And so he says, well, I'm not going to have any problems.

He says, I'm going to ask you this right the get go. Do you want to be here? Well, I said, that's kind of a silly question. I said, obviously in my heart, I don't want to be here.

I said, you know, I want to be the big rap star that everybody's pushing me to be. And I'm going to go out and do all this and I want to go out and be with my friends. He said, if you don't want to be here, I'm not going to make you come.

I said, listen, I call him brother Mike now because he's like a dad to me. I love him. But then I said, Mike, I said, Mike, I'll tell you something.

I said, I'll come to your little children's home for one year. I said, I'll sign my little John Hancock on your paper. It doesn't cost anything to go.

It's not state provided, just funded by independent Baptist churches all around the world. I said, I'll come and I'll sign my little John Hancock. I said, you got one year.

One year, you got me. That's it. I said, after one year, I'm going right back to the house, go right back to my public school, doing everything I've always done before.

He said, that's fine. We'll see what the Lord will do. I said, Lord, nothing.

I said, I've been around the war business all my life. I said, I'm not interested in that. I said, Lord, nothing.

I said, you got one year. That's it. Little did I know, I'd get saved by my wife there, end up living there for four years, get called the priest there, graduate from high school there, go off to Bible college from there.

So God knew exactly what he was doing. He had a plan for my life. I said, one year's all you got.

He said, okay, in April, I want you to come. I went back to my friends. My mom's giving me up.

I've got to leave. And I wept and squalled and cried and packed all my bags. April the 7th, 1992, smoked my last cigarette on the way there.

Stomped it out. Had to cut my rat tail. Had to shave my head down.

Had to get rid of all them words and stupid things that was around the back of my head. Had to rip my earrings out and I had to do all this kind of stuff. Packed my clothes up.

I go to the children's home. April the 7th of 92. My mom signed some more papers and she drops me off and she drives out of the driveway.

And I told the young people the other day, that's the first day, by the way, that I realized how much I love, needed and respected and wanted my mother to be back the day she dropped me off when I didn't have her anymore. I realized, hey, I've been messing around too much. I've not been respecting her and honoring her and loving her the way that I should.

And I cried myself to sleep the first about two and a half weeks, three weeks I was in that children's home. Buried my face in a feather pillow every night and cried like a baby. Because I had no friends then.

Had no family then. Had no fellowship with those outsiders, if you will. And here I was in a children's home where I could visit my parents one Saturday every month.

Now things are a little bit different now the children's home. Things are a little bit more lenient, but this was right still then when it was just real strict. The previous director had just passed away.

Uncle Fred, his wife Aunt Martha is now our secretary for our evangelistic ministry. She lives across the street. We built her a home and she takes care of all of our mailing, all of our checks and bills and love offerings and things like that.

And so nonetheless, here I am with a bunch of people I don't even want to be around. Brother Mike came to me the very next morning, early. I was enrolled to be at an A.C.E. Christian school.

I was so many years behind when I got saved. I had to get caught up, obviously. And so they put me in a PACE program whereby I could work at my own pace.

The Lord used that after I finally got saved and right with God in a wonderful way. And I caught up several years then transferred to a traditional Christian school and graduated by the grace of God. But nonetheless, he came to me that very first morning I was there which would have been April the 8th.

And he said, Greg, he said, listen, I don't want to have any bad blood here. He said, but you know, you can't have these things that you've got. You know, I'd already stuck my posters all over the wall and stuck my stuff all over there and already lifted up the mattress and shoved some stuff under there.

It didn't take them long to find that. They must have had some kids like that before. And I already had my clothes all the way that I wanted them.

You know, he said, listen, if you're going to live here for a year, he said, you have to live by our standards. He said, I know you're not going to understand this right now. He said, but I love you and I'm praying for you.

And he said, you're going to have to get rid of this. He said, the children's home will buy you all new wardrobe. He said, we'll take you to the shopping mall, take you to Walmart.

We'll get you some new things. So I didn't argue. I mean, we took a big UPS box, great big thing.

And I put all those clothes in that I could not have all those CDs, posters, books, everything that I had. After I got saved, right by God, I burnt every last bit of it. Got rid of all of it.

But at that time, we boxed it up. And that morning, we went to the UPS. We wrapped it up, paid a hefty sum of money and shipped it 45 minutes away to my mother in Mount Jillett, Tennessee.

I couldn't go to school that day because I did not have blue pants for what I had to have a red, white and blue uniform. Didn't have the blue pants. They were still coming in the mail.

They had ordered them for me. They had to have them tapered or something like that. And so I got to skip school the first day.

I was used to doing that. So I thought, hey, this might be a good year. Yeah, I don't have to go to school first day.

Amen. And so here I was, I went back to the children's home. We had lunch.

I went into my bedroom. Brother Mike said, you need a new thing. And I said, well, to be honest with you, I said, I just think I need to be left alone.

So we walked out. I shut the door and I stood there as a 15 year old teenager, one month from my 16th birthday. If I've ever told the truth in the pool, young people, I'm telling you right now, I looked into my closet and there was one outfit hanging there.

I came there with more clothes than Donald Trump. I came there with more clothes than all them kids combined. I was a spoiled, rotten brat with a silver spoon in my mouth and everything I ever wanted, I had and that was my problem all of my life.

No restraint whatsoever. But all that was gone now. And in my closet, I had one outfit hanging there.

Ugly, I wouldn't even wear the thing today, but it was one outfit that they let me keep. They said was reliable enough to wear to church. On my body, I had a brand new pair of red, white and blue 1992 Michael Jordan tennis shoes, had a pair of stonewashed blue jeans and had on a white T-shirt and a 1992 red Chicago Bulls championship basketball cap.

And I was not saved. I knew the gospel frontwards and backwards. I was lost as a ball in high weeds and with big tears dripping down my face out loud.

I said to myself, Gregory Dwayne Locke, you're a fool. You are a fool. For almost 16 years of your life, you have served the devil with every bit of them vigor and vitality in your body.

With all of your sweat, with all of your energy, with everything you got, you have served the devil. And when he dropped you off without your fame, without your fortune, without your friends, family and pat on the back, the only thing he left you with was the clothes you've got on your back and one outfit hanging in the closet. And for the first day in my life, utter despair entered my heart.

And I realized out of all of the fun so-called that I thought I had after that last conviction of stealing that go-kart, that \$5,000 diamond ring and that black 357 Magnum. After all of that, I realized how foolish I had been to follow the crowd. Let's suppose I said to you now, and I'm not going to, so please do not.

Let's say I said, okay, heads bowed, eyes closed, you're going to pray and we're going to be dismissed. You know what you'd say? You'd say, whoa, wait a minute. Aren't you leaving something out? Man, you've dealt with a lot of things and all the things that you used to be in.

But wait a minute, does the story stop there? Thank God it does not. Nine days later, on April the 16th of 1992, I attended, an evangelist was preaching. I attended one of his meetings.

His name was Evangelist David Benoit. He was holding meetings at the Metropolitan Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. Bellwood Christian Academy, Franklin Road Christian School and the Children's Home all got together.

We got on several buses. They took us there. I sat in about, I don't know, maybe the third or fourth row from the back.

There was about five or 600 teenagers there. He preached on the corporate tendencies in rock music. I'll never forget it.

Didn't bother me one bit. I did not budge. After the service, I went to him.

I had a little name tag on and I said, Mr. Benoit, I said, I appreciate what you're trying to do, sir. I said, but that didn't bother me a bit. I said, I don't care anything about rock music.

I said, I'm a rapper. What do you think of that? And I should have kept my mouth shut because that man of God told me what he thought about it. He looked at my name tag and he said, Greg, he stuck his finger right here at me.

He said, Greg, son, if you can listen to that type of music and it doesn't bother you, he said, you've got a black heart and you need to get saved by the grace of God. Man, it was almost like he just lit my dynamite, buddy. Oh, what do you mean? Get paid, got a black heart.

I mean, I gave it to him. Bus out there just waiting. I'm here giving it to the man of God, buddy.

I'm running up side and one down, one side and down the other. I mean, smoke barreling out of my ears, nose, eyes and everything. And I'm telling you, I said, I will not be back tomorrow night.

He said, son, that's all right. He said, I'm gonna pray you do come back. But if you don't, he said, I got 600 other teenagers here I can preach to who need the gospel.

I got on that bus and buddy, I was mad. They stopped at McDonald's. I didn't even go in.

The girls were talking to me. I didn't even talk. Now, when a 16 year old teenager don't go to McDonald's and don't talk to girls, you know, he's mad about something.

Amen. And so I stayed there on that bus. We got back to the house and I ran in there and I sold my stuff on the bed.

I am not going back to hear that man preach tomorrow night. He said, is that right? I said, that's right. He said, oh, yes, you are.

Put us on the bus. April the 17th, 1992. We stopped and got gas.

Five minutes late. That's it. Five minutes late.

Are you five minutes late in the Baptist church? Tough luck, pal. Your glory comes down. If you ain't getting a backseat in the Baptist church, if you're five minutes late, you're getting down front.

There was a couple of spots right in the third row. Guess who got there? You got it, me. The lights went down.

The screen came down. He opened up his Bible. He read his text.

And he began to preach. And I'm going to tell you what he preached on that night. I don't even think I have to tell you.

Rap music. Man, he preached me up one aisle and down the other. I mean, he preached me through the Baptist streets.

He preached me to the front. He preached me to the back. You know, about 35 minutes into the sermon, I wanted to stand up and say, hey, why don't you just go ahead and call my name? Because everybody in this whole auditorium knows exactly who you're talking about.

And I'm telling you, he gave it to me with both barrels. I mean, he shot and he shot and he shot and he preached and preached and preached. And he gave the invitation.

I'm telling you, young person, for one of the first times in my life, the Holy Spirit of God showed me that I was a hell-deserving sinner, showed me that I was lost. There was no hope without Jesus Christ. Big watermelon tears welled up in my eyes.

And if I wouldn't have went forward, that would have come out of my nose and mouth. I guarantee you. I ran forward.

I got down on my knees at the altar because I grew up in a Baptist church. And that's what I've seen people do. You know what he did in front of 600 people? He said, get up.

Scared me to death. I got up. I turned.

And there was probably 20 or 30 young people on either side of me doing the same thing. He said, turn around and face the audience. Now, wait just a minute.

Everybody knew why I was turning around and facing the audience. And I'm telling you, my knees began to shake. And I stood there and I thought my eyes were going to roll back in my head.

And I thought to myself, somebody better leave me to Christ quick because I'm about to drop dead of a heart attack right here. I mean, I was getting all sweaty. He said, we need some personal workers.

Like frogs on lily pads, buddy. They began to hop all over that place. Jump here and jump here and jump here.

My basketball coach, Mike Harris, took me in a side room. He opened a King James Bible and got me down on my face and showed me I was lost. Showed me I needed to be saved.

Showed me there was nothing I can do. And he said, Greg, you want me to pray with you? I said, Mr. Harris, I've grown up in church all my life. I said, I believe I'll just pray myself.

A young person. I prayed that night, 8.30 at night, April the 17th, 1992. Say, why do you remember it so well? Because God changed my life that night for time and for eternity.

Young people, I was on my knees and I'm telling you, I had so many tears in my eyes I couldn't have read my name in boxcar letters. But when I got off my knees, I could read my Title D dimensions in the sky just as clear as I could read my name on my driver's license. Young people, I'm going to tell you something.

That night, a 16-year-old teenager did not just get saved by the grace of God. That 16-year-old teenager got changed by the grace of God. And no, you will not be perfect when you get saved.

You will not be sinless, but you will be different and you'll have a desire to sin less. And Paul said, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. If I didn't even have a Bible, I could prove to you there's a righteous, holy God in heaven because that God has changed my life.

Now, I'm going to tell you something. Whenever a person gives their testimony in such a way, somebody, no doubt, always says, oh, what a glamorous, glorious testimony. How God can so greatly use somebody like that.

Now, you hear me? You hear me well. We close. Two years ago, I was preaching in a camp meeting in Franksville, Alabama at the Anchor Baptist Church.

Now, camp meeting is kind of what a lot of preachers get together in the mornings. They have kind of what they call popcorn preaching. They just call you from the floor and you get them to preach about 15, 20 minutes.

Well, I was preaching one of the mornings and I was supposed to preach on Wednesday night and share with them exactly what I just shared with you. There were two preachers that night and there was going to be several minutes between them, kind of an intermission. Pastor Casey Poole said, Brother Locke, my church, by the way, when I was on staff at this particular time at a church in Alabama, my church was meeting just down the road.

It wasn't very far, maybe seven miles away. So I went to our Wednesday night service while the first guy was preaching and I got to that service and I preached between those two. He said, take about 15 minutes and share your testimony.

He said, I believe it'll help the people. About 300 people were there. I got up that night.

I shared with him exactly what I just shared with you from 2 Corinthians 5, 17. And obviously, I condensed it just a little bit. Young person, I got through preaching.

I sat down in the front row. Pastor Casey Poole got in the pulpit and he said, Brother Locke, I appreciate that. And he said, praise the Lord for a changed life.

He said, we got a missionary that's here tonight going to Micronesia. He said, that missionary has about five minutes according to my watch. He said, Brother Locke, it didn't go very long.

He said, got about five minutes according to my watch. He said, Brother, why don't you come up here? Why don't you come up here and tell us about your family? Give us a quick five minute testimony and tell us what you're going to do in the mission field. And God is my witness.

I sat down and here he was with his wife and had two beautiful little baby kids right there on the front row. He got up in the pulpit and walked over here and he took his Bible about like this and just kind of plopped it on the pulpit. Brother Shetlow, I'll never forget what he did.

He looked all those people in the face. He gripped both sides of the pulpit and here's exactly what he said. Well, I guess after hearing that tonight, I don't have much of a testimony to share with you.

He said, I was raised in an independent Baptist preacher's home all my life. He said, I was saved when I was six years old. Remember it like it was yesterday.

He said, my daddy baptized me. I became a member of the church. He said, when I was 12 years old, I surrendered to the mission field and that's why we're going off to Micronesia with some island I believe was Micronesia.

He said, I've never seen my mom and dad curse one another and smack one another. I've never been drunk. He said, I wouldn't know what a marijuana cigarette was if you rolled it up and dropped it in my lap.

He said, I wouldn't even smoke a cigarette if you lit it and stuck it in between my lips. He said, I've never been to a movie a day in my life. He said, I've never messed around and flirted around and petted around in the backseat of a car.

He said, that lady right there is the only lady I've ever been in bed with in my life. He said, there's never a time in my life when I ever remember looking at pornography in a magazine or on the internet. He said, I've never chewed a bat.

He said, I've never done anything behind my parent's back that I can think of. He said, I haven't been perfect. He said, but I'm gonna be honest with you.

He said, after hearing that tonight, he said, I just don't know if I have much of a testimony. He said, we're going to Micronesia. Pray for us.

God bless you. And as a 23-year-old evangelist at that time in my life, big tears welled up in my face and I began to weep on that front row and I thought to myself, dear God, we've not been blessed to have any children yet, but if we ever have the opportunity, the privilege and the honor to bring children into this world for the glory of God, that is exactly the kind of testimony that I want my boys and girls growing up around. And we've got this low-down, dirty, filthy, wretched, cotton-picking idea that the worse you were when you get saved, the better God can use you.

And I've got a good Tennessee word for that, young people. It's called Tommy Ross. There are scars, although I am saved, that I will live with the rest of my life.

And the best testimony is not that God pulled you out, but that God kept you from ever getting into it to begin with. And I meet some of these young people in schools, and I meet some of these young people at camp. I'll tell you what, I met one of them at a college.

I won't name the college, but last year I met one of them at the college. He came to me after I preached and said, I want to tell you something about the Lord. He said, the only reason I'm here is because Mom and Dad are splitting the bill.

I want to tell you something. It grieves my heart when a young person that has a good, solid, Christian family that they grow up in, but they rebel against it. And honestly, I want to take a young man or a young lady like that and just pull them up real close to my face and maybe even grab ahold of their jugular vein and let them know I mean business.

And say, buddy, what is wrong with you? You better thank God you've got a mom and dad that love you. You better thank God you've got a dad who will open the Word of God and be the priest of your home and pray with you. You better thank God that you've got a mom and dad who will put you in a Christian school.

You better thank God you've got a mom and dad who have standards and convictions and laws and rules and regulations, because I didn't think of that and I look back now and wish to God that I did. Young persons, the best testimonies are not those that God pulled out of the gutter and wants to parade around and say, look at my trophies of grace. No, I believe true trophies of grace are those who've never even gotten it to begin with and they have no scars and they have no regrets.

But regardless if a person is kept from it or regardless if a person is saved out of it, I still believe that God changes lives. So as we begin our sermon, so we end our sermon. What in the world has happened to you?

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