

My testimony-Carrie Porter



I grew up as an only child in a home where we went to Sunday school and church weekly, I don't remember a time before becoming a Christian. I know I made a decision in my young elementary years to ask Jesus into my heart. I remember looking up to Mrs. Albright who taught Children's Church and how important her real life missionary stories were to me. I rededicated my life in Jr. High at Camp Spofford with my counselors and I knew I wanted Jesus to forgive my sins so I could go to heaven and He would live in me to guide me.

We attended two churches before mid-elementary school before we came to Hope. By then after seeing two good pastors pushed out and congregations destroyed, my father said he had had enough of Christian love so mom and I started coming to Hope back when we met in the school across the street. Dad joined us about a year later. My mom is a believer but I did not know if my dad was and I never saw him take communion, but he had the qualities that people would think a good Christian had, ie., morality, would do anything for anyone and if he said something, he meant it....etc.

In high school I was part of the leadership/ "Hub" group in my youth group. I first got involved in Children's ministry and started teaching at VBS in high school and it became what I love most. I felt we lived here in spiritual wasteland because I was the only Christian in my high school. My Hope youth group was my close circle of friends though it drew from 6-7 high schools. We were together very weekend night, if it was not a youth group event, we were all out together anyway and everyone, even fringe attenders were called to come.

Though I loved my youth group, I couldn't wait to go to a Christian college to be with so many other believers and take Bible courses. My parents said they would only pay for a Christian college which was another gift from God. College was the first big growth experience in my Christian walk. My walk with the Lord took off there at Taylor Univ. I was soaking up every Bible course I could take for my Christian Ed. Major. There I discovered Christian music which helps me keep my life focused as well as lifelong Christian friends and profs/mentors. My dad and I wrote letters back and forth even though I got letters from mom signed love mom and dad....I shared with him the Keith

Green Song called “Song To My Parents” which talks about how I’m not who you should look to but look at Jesus and when it’s time to go to heaven, I really just want to see them there. He did not talk about it but I know he read it.

I met my husband at Taylor, worked there, moved back here and got married here at Hope Church. My times of greatest blessing here at Hope was teaching or directing VBS, and leading the nursery.

Life has gotten tougher in the past 16 years and God has brought me through another huge growth “spurt” where I learned that my faith was real in the hardest times. In the spring of 1992, when my daughter was a year and a half old, my husband said he was leaving and that morning God provided someone to stand by me every day through the next 2 ½ years of limbo. He used my small group at the time to let me know I was continually prayed for and they were there with wise counsel when I needed confirmation in prayer. In the worst of times, God allowed me to see His hand clearly orchestrating my life and taking care of my daughter and me. As an example, as I sat in the court waiting area with my Bible, a man came up to me and said, “You’ll be fine”. I agreed and thanked him. As God will do, it turned out later out of the 4 court rooms, that man was the guard in mine. He stood next to my table and outside later told me he had prayed for me the whole time....guard in the Stamford courthouse is his side job, he’s also a pastor at a church in South Norwalk...The last time I was there, unfortunately he was not, but God was while I was screamed at and ridiculed for having my Bible with me and for what I believed. God orchestrates all for His good. There are too many stories like that to mention but they remind me for life that God is here and cares. At the very end, God honored my conviction that I would not say the marriage was irreconcilable. I did not feel I could say that if I claimed to believe in the God of the impossible and if I had refused to say it, the limbo would have continued but the judge said it for me.

God used Psalm 37 daily to get me through: “The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way. When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; because the Lord is the One who holds his hand (Verses 23-24). It was confirmed in me that living for God is truly the only way. Knowing that you are in God’s will and you are doing the right thing, no matter the consequences or the fallout, it is worth whatever the world brings on. When I needed it most, God gave me that peace that passes all

understanding and I learned firsthand the reality of “Depart from evil, and do good, so you will abide forever. For the Lord loves justice, and does not forsake His godly ones”.

Of course after a trial, you want a little break so I was able to join a singles/college age Bible study group here at Hope. First night in the small group of nannies that I was sitting with, the whole subject of “just making sure you marry a guy who claims to be a Christian”. I thought I’ll just listen, (beside 2 personal friends there) they don’t know how old I am, nor that I’m divorced or a mom but God was screaming in my ear so loud, I felt like the group could hear him. He was saying “SAY SOMETHING” So I mentioned that I was divorced, had married a Christian guy but that is not enough, not things cannot go wrong anyway but that we needed to marry men sold out for Christ who wanted to put us second to their relationship with God. So much for hiding in the crowd. Again this was another gift from God as He set up a situation where the nannies for the next few years met at my house for a Bible study we took turns leading and my house was the home away from home for them.

About 7 years ago, my dad was diagnosed with a rare cancer and given 2 months to live. I told my family that he could not go anywhere until he could promise Erin that he would see her again. God’s gift to us was 6 years more with him. He had been going to church all along and was reading his Bible everyday and talking with Erin about it. Then one Sunday, as you may remember in the news, at Calvary Baptist Church in Darien, many people got sick after taking communion because the juice was tampered with at the store. Dad came home saying his throat was burning and he did not feel well, I said to Erin – that means Dad took communion and he doesn’t do anything he doesn’t mean so this is God’s way of telling us Dad has that relationship with Christ and he spent the last years witnessing to his closest friend.

Toward the end of the cancer story, many of you know, my daughter, Erin, started having 24/7 migraines that everyone now has discovered are caused by neck issues. It’s frequently frustrating to be able to see God’s hand throughout life for so many years and events but to then be thrown by a new trial. This one seems to put me past what I could handle. I was angry at myself for not being able to juggle everything well and this has been a tougher time that ever for me to seem to “relearn”....to trust enough and relearn to rest in Him. There were so many doctors, bills, hospital stays, my job, and Erin missing ½ of Jr and Sr year. I struggled with where does my responsibility of what God has given me

to do and the resources He has provided me and how to rest in Him while doing all this running in every direction. I am obviously forever a work in progress -

I started a new phase of life this week as I dropped Erin off at Taylor University in Indiana. It looks impossible to stay in this area and I have felt called to work at Taylor for the past 25 years so I am waiting to see what God has planned for me next.

When I ever talk about my life, I'm sure I am talking about someone else. These were not my plans, I did not ever see myself as a single mom and I never would have chosen this but God can use anything and I pray He continues to mold my daughter and me into the Godly women He can use building on what we have experienced so far.

To close, I would like to share some lyrics that to me are a prayer:

*Where are you taking me-why are we turning here
This road is strange to me-this path is not so clear
Must be the place where my doubt turns to faith
Where I close my eyes and take your hand
I've made some plans you know-mapped out a strategy
Somebody tell me where did the seasons go-have you forgotten me
I've heard the [darkest hour](#) is just before dawn
And wherever you are the sun will shine
There will be shadows-but I won't be shaken
'Cause you've never forsaken a vow
You've never failed me before this I know
And, Jesus, you won't fail me now*

*I'd rather walk in the dark with Jesus
Than walk in the light on my own
I'd rather go through the valley of the shadow with him
Than to dance on the mountains alone
I'd rather follow wherever he leads me
Than to go where none before me have gone
I'd rather walk in the dark with Jesus
Than to walk in the light of my own – Wayne Watson*

