

Undaunted

Josh McDowell

This morning I want to tell you a story. I want to tell you a story about an 11-year-old boy who woke up one morning and just wanted to die. He did not want to live anymore. It is my story.

Have you ever been lonely? Have you ever just felt all alone – no, have you ever just had that fleeting thought that it would not matter to anyone if you lived or you died? That is how I felt at 11 years old. I just wanted to die.

I was brought up in a little, old, tiny town of about only 1,800 people – Union City, Michigan. Growing up, my father was the town alcoholic. I hardly ever knew my father sober. I would go to school, and my friends would make jokes about my Dad downtown in the gutter making a fool out of himself. You know, they did not think it bothered me. You know why? I am like a lot of you out right here. You know who I am talking about. You know, you have the capacity to laugh on the outside, when you are crying on the inside. Every time they told a joke about my Dad, it hurt. But I never, ever let anyone know. And I carried that hurt for years.

We lived in a farm, and I would go out to the barn and I would and I would see my mother whom I loved very much, lying in the gutter in the manure behind the cows. My father had yanked the air hose off the pipelines and just beat my mother to a bloody pulp until she was so weak, she could not stand up. And at 8, 9, 10, 11 years old, I would be kicking and beating on him, screaming, “When I’m strong enough, I will kill you!” I hated him so much.

We had friends over, and my Dad would be drunk. Any of you who have an alcoholic parent, many of you do, you know what I talk about. You have to understand, when somebody has an alcoholic parent, you carry that shame every day of your life . . . especially when friends would come over. Friends would come over, and my Dad would be drunk. And so before friends would arrive, I would go out to the barn – he would either be passed out or halfway there. He was a little man. And I would grab him around the neck; and I would pull him across the barn into the pen where the cows would have their calves, and just drop him on the straw. You learn to drive young on a farm. So I would go, back up the car out of the garage, and park (03:00/41:21) it up around behind the silo so nobody could see it. And then tell the friends he had to go on an important call. Just so I would not be shamed and the family would not be. Then in case he would wake up before, I would go back up to the barn. It would take me awhile to do it and I would get him up against the boards. I would put his arms through the boards like this and tie a rope from one wrist to the other wrist. And then I would take another rope, and I would make a hangman’s noose out of it, and I go around behind him and put it around his head, put the other end around his feet; and as a little kid as tight as I could pull the rope, I would pull it, until his head would go backward over that top board. And then I would wrap it around his feet, and I would knot it.

And the first time I did that, it was probably about 6 o'clock at night. I would get out the next morning around 5 o'clock; and I was so discouraged, I was so disappointed – he was still alive. I just wanted him dead. All I ever wanted as a kid was for my father to quit hurting my mother; and I could not stop him. Do you know what was so ironical? I felt guilty because of it. I felt it was my fault that my father could hurt my mother, because I was not strong enough to stop him. Two months before I graduated from high school, I came home from a date about midnight on a Saturday, walked into the farmhouse; and I heard my mother crying. That scared me. And I remember running to the house yelling, “Mom, mom, what’s wrong? What’s wrong?” And I ran into her bedroom. She sat up in bed, just weeping and crying. She said, “Son, your father has broken my heart.” Then she reached out, put her arms around me, and pulled me to her. And I will never forget what she said. She said, “Son, I have lost the will to live. All I want to do is live until you graduate; then I just want to die.” Boy that was hard to hear! But you know what happened? Two months, actually 61 days later, I graduated, and the next Friday the 13th, my mother died. Don’t tell me you can’t die of a broken heart. My mother did. My father broke it, and I hated him for it. I hated him so much.

When I was 11 years old, my oldest brother, Wilmot – he was the oldest, I was the youngest of 5 kids – my brother Wilmot took my parents to a court of law and sued them for everything they had. And I did not know what was going on – I was only 11 years old – but I knew there was a problem. And I found out later that one of the things my brother got in the lawsuit settlement was a new home my folks had built on the farm for workers. And he had gone to my parents and told them that he was going to move it. And I found out my parents said, “No, don’t move it, we need it. We will buy you the land; we will buy you the house; we will give you the money.” But, you know, my father had so hurt or wounded my brother, that out of spite he said “no”.

I remember that Saturday morning when they announced they were going to move that house in 2 weeks. Now look, most of you have never seen a big house picked up and moved. I just couldn’t image what they were going to do. “Are they going to bring down huge helicopters or what?” I just could not imagine it. For 2 weeks, I could hardly sleep. And as Saturday morning came around, I got up extra early, did all my chores, went in, took a good shower, put on my best work clothes; and I ran out through the house. As you go out the back of the house, there is a little tiny sidewalk that goes to the left. As you go around the corner of the house, you can look up and see the house they were going to move. It was up the slope, probably about the distance from that corner to this corner, away from the main farmhouse. As I looked up there, I saw a small group of people, there were not very many, about 30, 40 people. And here is who they were – this is very significant: they were farmers and merchants from within and around Union City, Michigan.

But the key thing was; many of them were parents of my friends. These were people whose homes I stayed overnight in, where I went over to play and had a meal. Well, at 11 years old, I thought, “Wow! This is going to be quite a party!” I figured, oh, they could not believe you could move a house like this; and they came out to see it! It did not take me long to find out that is not why they were there.

They were there because my brother was very popular. And he knew my parents would stand in opposition to moving that house. So he went around and got these farmers and merchants, of which many were parents of my friends, to come out that day and stand in opposition to my parents.

Well, I did not know that. Well here I am, 11 years old, I am at the foot of that knoll, and I mean, my adrenaline was pumping! I ran up that knoll, I think sometimes my feet did not even hit the ground! And I got to the top, where everybody was, and my world came crashing down! I heard these farmers, these merchants from Union City, Michigan, these parents of my friends, yelling the dirtiest, filthiest names at my parents. At 11 years old, I could not handle it, and I snapped. And I lost part of my life to this day.

Three times, actually four times I went back. This summer I went back there. I stood at the foot of that knoll; and I just said, "God, give me back my memory. I know it is there." I do not know if I lost 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, or what. The only conscious thought I have – and it is conscious! – I can remember running down the other side of that knoll in front of everyone, crying and screaming. Now for an 11 year old boy, that is about the most shameful thing that could happen. And I ran to the end of the barn, where there was a room – not a huge room – but there were 3 bins in it – one for oats, wheat, and shelled corn to grind up for cattle feed. And I ran up the 6 steps, turned around, slid that big door closed, put the iron latch down, reached over and knocked down the 2 boards holding up the blinders on the windows, until it was pitch black. At 11 years old I climbed up into that shelled corn bin; and I buried myself in that corn up to my neck. And that is when I prayed to die. I did not want to live anymore.

You know what was probably the most hurtful thing? I remember I never, ever wanted to go to a friend's house again. That probably hurt more than just about anything at that age.

I was there for 3 hours, and my parents never came looking for me. Have you ever felt alone? Have you ever felt abandoned? Have you ever felt, "It really wouldn't matter to anyone if I lived or died." That is how I felt at 11 years old, buried in that corn. And I just wanted to die.

About one o'clock, I was so thirsty and hungry! I dug myself out of the corn; I jumped out of the bin. I went over, took the latch off the door, and when I slid that door opened that sunlight hit me in the face and shocked me into reality! At that moment, I started slamming the door on my father; and I damned him, and I cursed him. And I slammed the door on God, and I damned Him, and I cursed Him – for abandoning me in that corn bin. And for almost 9 years, I slammed that door! If any Christian ever acknowledged being a Christian in front of me, I would tear them up one side and down the other and spit them out.

I enrolled in Kellogg College in Battle Creek, Michigan. About the second week into college, I noticed a small group of people – they were not very many – they were like 8 students and 2 professors; and their lives were different. Have you ever be around a group of people who really stand out? I mean, some do it because they are weird; but these people really stood out because of some of the things

that were evident in their lives. But the one thing that probably caught me the most was – it is something you do not find everywhere – they seemed to have a love, a genuine love, for each other. They were very genuine. But this is what was different – they also seemed to have that same genuine love for those outside their group. You know, I kind of think it must be true of most of you here in this church. I really do – it has been a joy being here. You all are a little unique – do not ever lose that! But I wanted it. Oh, I wanted it! So I made friends with them.

After about 2 weeks, we were sitting around the table in the Student Union, 6 of the students there and 2 of the professors; and the conversation started to get to God. Yes! Look, if you are an insecure student, a businessman, woman or a homemaker, if you are insecure, when the conversation gets to God, you have to put on a big front. But you know something I have learned: I do not care what community, what organization, whatever; there is always the Big Mouth. What I have learned is that the bigger the mouth, the greater the vacuum. So I was putting on that front, but they were irritating me. So I looked over at this young lady and oh, she was a good-looking woman! I used to think all Christians were ugly . . . no, I really did. I am serious! I literally thought, if you could not make it anywhere else in life, you became a Christian! But here was a Christian; and she was really cute. So I remember, I leaned back in my chair. Now, here was the biggest problem I had – I wanted what they had! But I didn't want them to know that I wanted what they had. But all the time, they knew that I wanted what they had and didn't want them to know that I wanted what they had.

I did not want to appear interested. So I leaned back in my chair, and probably very arrogantly and with an obnoxious attitude, I said, "What changed your lives? Why are you so different from other students, the faculty and all?" All I know is this: she had a lot of courage or a lot of convictions. On the farm, we used to call it "guts". She shot back at me, with a little smile, and that could be irritating. She said 2 words I never thought I would ever hear in the University. She looked back at me, and she said, "Jesus Christ." And I said, "For God's sakes! Don't give me that garbage! I'm sick and tired of religion, the Church, the Bible and Christians! I want nothing to do with them!" Then, I could not believe it. Right there in the University; these students and faculty challenged me, now get this: to intellectually, to use my mind to examine the claims of Christ as the Son of God, and the Bible being the Word of God. Imagine doing this intellectually. I literally felt that was a joke I am serious. I grew up truly believing Christians had 2 brains – one was lost, and the other was out looking for it. I am serious! I thought Christians were walking idiots! I had met some! It is even like today, the majority of Christians I meet today: Oh, they could tell me what they believe; but they cannot give me any commonsense, logical reason why they believe it. And I just think that is the dumbest thing in the world! Well, they went on and on and challenged me. In fact, they ticked me off!

Now do not get me wrong. What they were doing was totally appropriate (14:20) – I was the problem. You see, when I started to stuff that anger down into my life, when I came out of that corn bin – you never react the same. Some of you know what I'm talking about, there's many of you here. You stuff anger and hatred down in your life and you never really respond the right way. And usually, something will happen and it will become like a volcano – maybe violence, something else, to a child, or

something else will happen, when it all comes out like a volcano. Um, well when they said Jesus Christ, it all came out like a volcano. And then, uh, finally they made me so mad, I said, “OK, I’ll accept your challenge. But I didn’t do it to prove anything (laugh). I wrote the whole background of my first book, uh, that’s that big gold one right there, to write that book, was to set out to write a book against Christianity, to make a joke of those Christians on campus. I figured that would be easy to do.

I left the University. I traveled throughout the United States, England, Germany, France, and Switzerland, gathering the evidence to write this book, and I’d returned to London, England. It was about 6:30 on a Friday night in a small museum library. And I remember I leaned back in my chair, and right in front of everyone, which was probably 3 people, I said, “It’s true! It’s true! It’s true.” Now this is what I meant by saying that to the New Testament. Not that it was the Word of God. Come on, I was not even close to that. As an obnoxious, antagonistic, angry, ornery university student; intellectually I concluded two statements were true about the New Testament: one what I have in my hands is what was written down, it has not been changed; and second, I concluded that what was written down was true. That Jesus has actually done that and He actually said that. Now be careful, I had not yet concluded that what Jesus said was true! I had only concluded that it was true that he said it. (16:30)

When I returned to the University in the United States, I could not sleep. I just could not sleep. And finally that December 19th at 8:30 at night, I put it to the test, and I became a Christian. Somebody will asked: “How do you know?” I was there! It changed my life!

I got alone with a friend of mine – made sure my other friends were not watching – I was a coward! I prayed 4 things that literally transformed my life. And what I truly believed was that God became man; His name was Jesus; and He was passionate about a relationship with me. And so I prayed 4 things.

” The first thing I was just “Thank you.” I think the most humbling thought I ever had in my life was before I ever trusted Christ that Saturday night in the dorm room, when I realized, if I were the only person alive, Jesus still would have died for me. I still get chills thinking of that; and I know it is true.

” Second, I knew the Bible was true. And I knew there were things in the Bible I did not like. For example, every time the Bible hinted at something like, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” I didn’t like that! I felt I was a pretty nice guy, unless I didn’t like you! But I knew the Bible was true! And I knew the Bible said, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness.” So I said, “Lord Jesus, forgive me. I accept your forgiveness – not based on anything that I have done, but of what Christ did on the cross for me.”

” The third thing I prayed was, knowing that the Bible was true, and I knew the Bible said that, “But to as many as received Him, to them he gave the right to become a child of God.” (chuckle) I have had a lot of dumb thinking in my life; probably some of the stupidest things I have ever thought is this: I have thought, like a lot of people do; they think that going to church made you a Christian. (laugh) That is crazy. Going to church does not anymore make you a Christian than walking into McDonald’s

makes you a Big Mac! It does not work that way! The Bible said, "But to as many as received Him, to them he gave the right to become a child of God." So in the best way I knew how, I just said, "Right now, I receive You into my life. I accept You as my own personal Savior and Lord."

"The last thing I prayed was just, "Thank you."

And nothing happened... Nothing!!! No bolt of lightning, I didn't buy a harp, or anything! I mean, nothing! I thought, I would have (19:17) – fireworks would go off! Nothing!

Well, something did happen. In fact, almost immediately, as soon as, I accepted Christ, I thought I was going to throw up. I really thought I was going to chuck my cookies. I hear all these Christians say how they came to Jesus; they were overwhelmed with joy and happiness. I came to Christ, and I wanted to throw up! And there were for, I think for two major reasons:

"One, I think, I almost immediately thought this. It was like having a conversation with yourself, it was like, "Josh, have you made an emotional decision to trust Christ, you will later regret intellectually?" And that scared me with the emphasis I put on the intellect.

" Second, and this was so bad (shaking head), I was afraid of what my friends would say. Incredible! One thing I learned before I became a Christian, this is neat, is that the God, Creator of the universe, wants me to spend eternity with Him. Wow, that is heavy! I do not understand all that, but I know it is true! And here, I was concerned about what my friends would say, as if I wanted to go to hell with them. And the problem was, I did not have the faith, or the understanding, or the experience to realize that most of my friends would come to Christ! And they did!!! But you see, at that time, I could not even grasp that. I was just afraid of what they would say.

I would say in 6 months to a year, year and a half, my entire life was transformed.

I just want to close with 2 areas.

" One relates to my father. I wish I would not have grown up hating my Dad! Because when you do – whether you are a Christian or not – you pay a price for it almost every day of your life. Bitterness has consequences. Hatred has consequences, folks! No matter what changes in your life! But I hated him. I grew up believing my father had killed my mother and destroyed my family. My one sister committed suicide. My one brother ran away from home years ago and never came back. My other brother sued my parents for everything they had, and my sister ran away for the army and volunteered for the front lines, just so she would not have to be home. It was not a very functional family. And yet after I became a Christian I found myself saying to the man I chose to hate, "I love you." Now, that scared me. Do you know why? I did not want to love him! Even as a new Christian, I chose to hate the man who I believe killed my mother and destroyed my family. And I found myself saying to the man I chose to hate, "I love you." That is when I knew it was real! I was not used to that!

I was used to loving those I wanted to love! And hating those I wanted to hate. I never had the capacity to love those I chose to hate! That is when I knew it was true. I knew it was true.

"I transferred from Kellogg College to Wheaton College. I was in a serious car accident, a very serious car accident. I was in intensive care in the hospital for 2 weeks. When they took me out of the hospital, they called my father. They took me 127 miles home in the ambulance. And my father thought I was dying. I was not – I was just hurting a lot. And they strapped me into bed, literally, they strapped my whole body, my head, everything, because they were afraid of further injury to my lower neck and my lower back. All I could do was move my eyes. And I could hear the ambulance leave the farmhouse. In no more than 5 minutes, my father walked into that room. Every muscle in my body tightened. He stood in the doorway. All I could do is flash my eyes, I could not turn to look at him. He was about like this angle. And I could see 2 things:

One, I could see that he was sober. I had hardly ever known my Dad sober my entire life. For 30 years my father drank 2-3 bottles of wine – he was a wino – 2-3 bottles of wine every day of his life.

And second, I could see that my Dad was crying. The only emotion I had ever seen in my father is when he was mad at my oldest brother or my mother.

When he walked in all I could do is follow him with my eyes. And he paced back and forth along the left side of my bed, probably no more than 2 minutes, but it seemed like forever. And then he stopped about right here, and he was just bawling. He leans right over my face. Literally, his tears fell on my face... And he said, "Son, how could you love a father such as I?" I said, "Dad, 6 months ago, I hated you, I despised you." But I said, "I have come to know Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord; and I learned one thing intellectually, that God became man, and His name is Jesus. And He is passionate about a relationship with you!" And my father turned around and walked out of the room. I thought, "Man, what did I say wrong?" It seemed like a long time, and in about 45 minutes, he walks back into the room. And he walks up to my bed, and he just blurts out. He said, "Son, if God can do in my life what I have seen him do in your life, I want to give Him the opportunity." And right there, my father prayed with me. You talk about joy – most people do not have this much joy in a lifetime I had in one moment! He prayed a very simple prayer – I would always call it a farmer's prayer – very down to earth. The best I can recall it was just, "God, if you are God, and Christ is your Son, and if he died on the cross for me, and if you can forgive me for what I've done in my family, and if you can do a miracle in my life like what I have seen you do in the life of my son, then I want to trust you as my own Savior and Lord – come into my life! My life was basically changed in 6 months to a year, year and a half... there are still areas to be changed. The life of my father was changed right before my eyes. It was like somebody reached down and turned on a light bulb. Now don't get me wrong – I never saw it before, I have never seen it since – such a rapid change. Just once I believe he got alcohol to his lips, and that was it. Fourteen months later, he died, because after 30 years of drinking; $\frac{3}{4}$ of his stomach had to be cut out; his entire liver was destroyed. But in that 14 month period, over a hundred men and women in that little town and surrounding area committed their lives to Jesus

Christ, because of the changed life of the town drunk (applause), my father! I concluded, and it has been one of the (27:00) driving forces of my life, that God became man, and His name is Jesus. And He is passionate about a relationship with every one of His creation.

I want to share is one other item which up until 2 years ago last April, no one alive knew it. I flew home said to my wife, "Honey, I need to share something with you. Then I lined it up for then my 3 children to come home who live near me and had the other one on the phone as I told them about this part of my life. And then I shared this part of my life with my best friend, then I shared it with Steve Arterburn. And then I shared it with Steve, who hosted my TV show for years. This is what I shared with my family and friends. With my wife I said, "Honey, this will help you understand who I am. Between 6 and 13 years of age, I was severely sexually abused. It has nothing to do with suppressed memory. I have a memory every day of my life. The man's name was Wayne Bailey. When I was 6 years old, he was hired on the farm by my parents to be a cook and a housekeeper (28:05). And from 6 years old on, whenever my mom would go downtown shopping or my folks would go away for a weekend or for the week; my mother would always take ahold of my clothes and march me in to Wayne Bailey. She would make me stand in front of him, and then she would say to me, "You obey Wayne. You do everything he tells you to do. And if you are disobedient, you will get a thrashing when I get home!" Trust me; you did not want a thrashing from my mother. So what do you do at 6 years old? You do what Wayne Bailey tells you. At 9 years old and 12 years old, I got up the courage to go to my mother; and I told her but she would not believe me. Whew, it is hard to put into words... you can't put into words what you feel like. I can still feel it today. At 9 and 12 years old, I remember feeling so scare. All these things were being done to me, and there was nothing I could do about it! And it was almost like those that God gave to protect a child were not protecting me. And even to this day, it is amazing. If I am sitting in a room alone; especially if I am focusing on something; and if a man walks into that room; it does not matter who it is. I have that experience all over again! Even to this day, years later! No matter what room I am in, the man walks in, I just momentarily sense that fear. At 13, I was playing football and working on the farm. So I was pretty strong. Finally when my mother had gone downtown for something; and Wayne approached me in the living room; I swung around, cupped my hand around his throat, pushed him up against the wall next to the furnace; and I said, "If you ever touch me again, I will kill you!" And I would have. He never touched me again. I remember when he left; my folks could not understand it. And I am sitting there just saying, "Why wouldn't you believe me?"

But I am so glad I came to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. I am so glad someone spoke out love loudly! And I could see it and hear it. (30:22) If I had not had Christ come into my life, I know my life would be a disaster today! I would probably be a homeless person, but with my personality, I would probably have 2 carts. (Laugh) I think I would In fact a couple days ago I saw this homeless person pulling a cart with another cart behind the first cart; and I really thought, Josh, if you were homeless, you would find out a better way to live homeless and to carry more things. Hah, that is how my mind works. I have always got to improve something.

After I trusted Christ as Savior and Lord in the University, after 9 months I think I got up the courage to go to the man who led me to Christ and tell him. You ask, why would it take so much courage? For this reason – I did not want to be hurt again. It hurts to be rejected! It hurts not to be believed! An when I was 11 years old, my father was arguing quite intensely with my oldest brother, and I said something; and he turned around, and he said, “Shut up! You are nothing but an unwanted child!” And I was. My folks were almost 50 when I was born. I was not intended in any way. And oh did that hurt! You do not forget those things! I finally got up the courage; and I told him. He believed me (ear-to-ear grin!)! I have got to tell you folks – that is like being born again... again! He believed me! And for 6 months – his name was Fay Logan. He pastored in a little, tiny church, no education, anything! Yet he is the wisest man I ever met. He mentored me for 6 months out of the Scriptures. If he had not have done that, I could not have ever been a minister or anything. At the end of those 6 months, I knew he was going to say it. I did not want to hear it. But I knew he was going to say it, when he said, “Josh, you need to forgive him.” I said, “No way! I want him to burn in hell; and I will usher him there.” But here was my problem – I knew the Bible was true. Folks, that truth has carried me through so many situations where others would bomb out! I knew that I not only believe the Bible is true, I know the Bible is true. And that is called conviction. And because of that, I knew I needed to go. I knew God commanded to forgive. And so I went. I did it out of obedience. The Bible says “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” In other words, by faith, believing that this will be acceptable to God, even though my emotions do not want to do it. I did it out of obedience.

I was living in Battle Creek, Michigan, at the time. He was in Jackson, about 45 miles north. I drove to his home; knocked on the door; he opened the door. I did not mince words. I just blurted right out, “Wayne, what you did to me was evil – very evil. But I have come to know Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. And Wayne, I have come here to tell you, and oh, I did not want this to be true, oh I just did not want it to be true, I knew it was! But I did not want it to be when I said, “Wayne, I have come here to tell you, that Jesus died as much for you as He did for me. I forgive you.” If I had not have done that, that bitterness, that anger, would have eaten away and destroyed me. And I still have consequences, many consequences today, that I pay a price for what happened to me. People come up around me, this happened in Mexico City the last several days. We just had some phenomenal meetings. A couple of pastors said, “Let us gather around Josh and pray for him.” As they gathered, I said, “Please, do not touch me.” There are people out there who probably think I am the most carnal Christian on the face of the earth. But when people come up and say, “Can I pray for you?” I say, “Yes, but please, do not touch me.” You can see the reaction of some people when I say this. But here is what I have found. You are probably not even aware of it in your own life when somebody does that to you. If just one person or 4 or 5 deacons gather around and put their hands on you, they ALWAYS start rubbing you. It is uncanny, it is uncanny. They do not even know they are doing it! But that is exactly what Wayne Bailey did to me. Then he would work down my body. So I do not want those memories to come back. And so I say to people, “Please do not touch me.” Sometimes they really get so upset, I have to explain why. And then even then, sometimes people do not understand, but that is OK. That is their problem. But, I still have consequences in my life today.

But I have learned several things, especially about sex abuse, or rape, or something like that, God is greater than any problem in your life. I truly believe that! Second, do not go it alone... you won't make it! Especially in sex abuse, you won't make it! I am a pretty strong personality – I would not have made it – it would have destroyed me. This is why God created the Body of Christ. This is why God created Christ Community Church, to come around people, and see through them a healing take place. People say, "All you need is Jesus!" There is a movement, Jesus-only movement, and I say, "That is heresy! That is heresy, it is not Jesus only. It is Jesus plus the Body of Christ. That is how He brings about much of His healing. Jesus brings His healing through His people coming around those who are hurting."

And so I say to young men find a mentor. If you are a young man, find someone that you look up to. There are some of you right here, you are 70 years old, 60 years old, you were sexually abused! There are probably 20, 25 of you men right in this room who have been sexually abused; and you have never really dealt with it until today. And it has been robbing you of your real joy in Christ over the years. Well, find a man, who not just seems to really walk with Christ and has a good knowledge of the Scriptures; and he has got common sense. You know, a lot of people walk with Jesus, know the Bible, but they do not have any common sense, i.e., they do not know how to apply the Bible.

And then if you are a young lady, find a woman, especially in the church, that you could share with, and ask them to mentor you. And be careful young ladies, do not ever, ever share with another woman who cannot keep her big mouth shut. I am serious. Do not ever! Do not ever trust another woman and some of you women know what I am talking about! Do not ever trust a woman who has to just talk about it! Because if they do, everyone will hear about you! That was the biggest negative thing I had in the church where I came to Christ! That some of those women could not keep their big fat mouths quiet! And it drove me away from that church, as a brand new believer. Thank God, the next church I found was the opposite! And then I grew in that church. So find someone you can trust, and that someone who can keep their mouth shut. Now listen when you go to a prayer meeting and someone starts a prayer request like this: "Ah, you gotta pray for so-and-so, you know that da-da-da-da." If I was leading a prayer meeting like that, I would ask that person to get up and leave. That is gossip, unless they give you permission to do that.

So God is greater than any problem you will ever face, and second, do not go it alone. You won't make it.

When I say that God became man, His name is Jesus, and He is passionate His relationship with you, that is what I want on my tombstone. It comes from Exodus 34:14, when the Bible says; you should worship no other God but the Lord. Now your translations probably say, "For His name is Jealous. He is a jealous God." That is the verse that Oprah Winfrey said drove her away from the Christian faith. I thought, "Isn't that interesting, that is the verse that drew me to the Christian faith." You know the difference between Oprah and me? I had enough common sense to check out this verse. What does it mean? No, I am serious! What does it mean? Do you know what I found out it meant? It is unbelievable what "jealous" means there! It is best used probably in the New Living Translation, where

it says this, "You shall worship no other God but the Lord." Now this is what "jealous" means: "for He is a God who is passionate about His relationship with you"! I want to know a God like that! I want to spend eternity with a God like that! And I just think it is marvelous the theme you have here: "Love Loudly"; which means they need to not only hear it, also they need to see it. That is what brought me to Christ: I not only heard it, also I saw it in people's lives. And it made me so hungry to want what they had.

I want to thank you for giving me this privilege of speaking to you. Remember, God became man, and His name is Jesus, and He is passionate about a relationship with every one of you and your friends. Thank you. God Bless! (40:52)

SUMMARY: Josh tells his story initially through the eyes of an 11 year-old boy who woke up one morning and just wanted to die. He begins with two questions: Have you ever been lonely? Have you ever had the fleeting thought that it would not matter to anyone if you lived or you died? That is how he felt at 11 years old. He grew up on a farm outside a small town in Michigan. At school he heard the painful talk of others telling about his dad being a drunk in the downtown gutter and making a fool of himself. He experienced the beatings his father gave his mother and kicking and screaming he attempted to attack his father to protect his mother. If friends were coming to visit, Josh would tie up his drunk father in what he thought was a way that his father might hang himself when he tried to get loose. Josh's oldest brother sued his parents for everything they had. When the house was taken away, neighbors came and shouted insults at his drunken father who tried to prevent the house being taken. In front of all these parents of Josh's friends and townspeople Josh broken down crying, raced away and climbed into the silo; where he buried himself up to his neck. Again Josh experienced loneliness since no one came to rescue him. Years pass. He goes to college as an angry agnostic, meets Christians who challenge him to read the Bible. He agrees to prove that they believe in myths. After travel and study in Europe on December 19th at 8:30pm he became a Christian. He explains what he did to become a Christian. Many unusual things happened after he became a Christian including his upset stomach, meeting his father, being mentored by a pastor, and telling the man who had abused him that he forgave him. Two truths: God is greater than any problem you will ever face, and second, do not go it alone. You won't make it. Exodus 34:14 confounded Oprah Winfrey and drove her away from the Christian faith. Josh McDowell explored the meaning of the word jealous as "passionate about His relationship with you." He was drawn to the Lord by this verse. Remember God became man, and His name is Jesus, and He is passionate about a relationship with every one of you and your friends. God bless.