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Beyond The Four Walls — A Gentex Story



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It was late July 2010 when My wife, 1 year old son and I packed up our bags and jumped into the U-Haul. After completing and graduating Bible college, we moved from Tulsa, Oklahoma all the way to Holland, Michigan. I knew we were entering into a new chapter in our life and I was ready for God to offer me any ministry opportunity. Little did I know, that ministry opportunity would only be found outside the four walls of a church.

After a few days back in my hometown, good old Holland Michigan, I knew I needed to make an income to start supporting my family. I was told left and right that Gentex was hiring. I didn't have much skills with my hands but I definitely was determined to support my family. I said to myself, "Sure, Gentex it is." I still remember the very first day when I walked into the temp service building and specifically asked for a Gentex position. Of course, the lady that would work with me was on a two-week vacation and that day was her first day out of her office. I patiently waited for those two weeks to come to an end. Finally, the call came in. I was asked to come in for an assessment training on the job site. As nervous as I was, that day I walked in with confidence knowing that God will give me all that I need.

After a couple of days of assessment training, I passed with flying colors. But there was one issue, more like an attack by the enemy. On the very last day of my training, I was specifically told by HR that if I wanted this position, I better not wear or speak anything that has to do with this Jesus crap... What?! I was shocked! Talk about total discouragement. I honestly wanted to quit on the spot. If I can't be open about my faith, then I don't want anything to do with this job. I honestly walked out of that training with my head down and ready to give up. Then my wife brought some words of encouragement. She said, "You are favored!". Those words echoed in my heart, it reminded me that I am His child and that I am called to places where Jesus is not welcomed. That was enough for me to get on to my next step. Within minutes, I was offered a first shift position starting the following Monday. With a quickness, I accepted the position. So begins my new journey in the factory.

Jesus said in Matthew 10:16 "Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves."



For the first seven months, I was in total discouragement. I felt like I was going nowhere in life. I told myself, "This is not what God wanted me to do. This is not what I studied for. This is not what I wanted. This is not what I signed up for." I wanted to preach the word of God. I wanted to share God's love. I wanted to be a light to the world. And again, I was ready to quit!

I specifically remember that day that I walked away from my assignment to go use the restroom. I didn't have to use the restroom. But I was done for the moment. As I weaved my way through every line passing people, bee-lining to the restrooms, I saw an image in my head. It was more like a vision from God. I saw a man sitting down on a canoe on top of an open pond. I remember the waters were still and there was absolutely no movement from the man. Then I could see the waters underneath the man. There were hundreds and hundreds of fish swimming underneath. For a moment I honestly thought God was showing me a vision of me taking a fishing trip or going on vacation. I rejoiced for two seconds. Then I heard the Lord speak.



God said, "This man is you! Those fish you see are people around you. This man will never catch any fish if he does not cast his reel. Jesse, you need to cast your reel for me. You have been called to be a fisher of men. Go and start fishing!"

I have never been so fired up to hear the voice of God. Better yet, the voice of God gave me a direction. It was like my eyes opened up for the very first time, and I could see these people through God's eyes. I started having compassion for them. I started seeing them not have a savior in their life. At that moment, I said to myself, "I am ready to get fired for Jesus."

I could no longer keep my mouth shut. So, I asked God for wisdom and how to cast my reel. I needed my heavenly father to teach me how to fish. God is faithful. He showed me how to work and listen at the same time. I listen to countless stories of peoples' lives, I was so interested in hearing people talk. I simply wanted to let them know I'm their friend. For months I listened and listened and listened. Then one day, the opportunity arose. I got to share my faith with someone.

It was 5:30 in the morning and I was standing next to a lady name Sarah. Sarah was in her mid-40s and was a very nice lady. She grew up in a different country. She believed in a god name Buddha. Sarah shared about her god and talked about her culture back at home. She described how they would worship Buddha and how he was so important to her and her nation. I kept asking her to tell me more. She did. And I listened. After she shared everything about her religion, I knew in my heart it was time to cast my reel. I simply asked her, "May I share my God with you?" Was it the best approach? I don't know. But what I do know is that I cast my reel and for just a few minutes I shared about a man named Jesus and I shared how much He loved her. Then she asked me a question. She said, "What's the difference between your God and my god?"

After quickly ask the Holy Spirit to help me, because I didn't know how to answer this question, these words came out of my mouth. "Where is your god's gravesite?" She answered by giving me some details that I honestly don't remember. Then I went on and said, "My Jesus doesn't have a gravesite. He rose from the grave and is still living today."

Her ears perked up and she began to ask me more about Jesus. I definitely filled her in. Then I gave her the invitation to ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of her life. She accepted and I was able to pray with her and lead her into asking Jesus to be her Lord and Savior. The moment we both said "Amen," I could physically see the Spirit of God make a home in her heart.

As she started to blush red, she expressed how she was feeling really warm. I explained to her that God is making a home in her heart. Then she went on to say, "What's going on?"

Once again, I explained to her how much God loves her and how he is making a Home in her heart. At that moment I was asked by my boss to move positions into another line. As I walked away, I could see the tears fall down Sarah's eyes as she was truly feeling the love of Jesus. I didn't know what to do. I didn't really want to leave her behind, but I had a job to do.

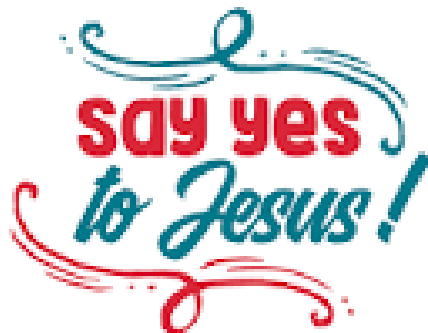
After a few hours, I went back to visit Sarah. There she was, still crying. As I approached her, she said to me, "Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me." Wow!!!! Talk about God working in someone's heart!

A couple hours later I asked a friend who is a firm believer in Christ to go check on her one more time. She came back with a report that Sarah is still crying and expressing how much Jesus loves her. There were many more opportunities that God gave me to cast my reel and lead people to Jesus. The friend that I asked to go check on Sarah, I had the opportunity to lead her to Jesus prior. A gentleman that I knew of when I was a teenager, he was an ex-gang member, always in prison, I was able to lead him to Jesus. Another lady who believed in Buddha, God gave me the opportunity to lead her to Jesus and years later she become my nursery Director at the church My wife and I lead for years.

My very own boss asked me questions about Jesus. He never pulled the trigger on asking Jesus to be his Lord and Savior, but I had the great opportunity to plant a seed. I know someone will go water that seed.

I had four wonderful years at Gentex, being an influence to people and leading people to Jesus Christ. I also never got fired. That's the faithfulness of God. I will never take these years back, knowing all the impact that God made through me.

I almost gave up, before the race even started. I committed from that day forward to never allow anybody to discourage me from sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Little did I know, in the process of those four years, God taught me how to be the light, how to preach the gospel and how to lead people to him. This truly was a Father-son moment. I had my Daddy teach me how to cast a reel to catch some fish. God will use anyone in any place to create a ministry opportunity. You don't need a platform. You don't need a microphone. You don't need lights on you to share the good news. All you need is a willing heart to say "Yes, Jesus."



PastorCare West Michigan and CareLinc Home Medical Equipment & Supply collaborated to purchase Christmas gifts for 14 children with incarcerated parents through the Prison Fellowship Angel Tree program.

Sue beautifully wrapped all of the gifts. We are enjoying driving around together delivering the gifts to each of the households.





Merry Christmas



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