

2026-04-22 Points

Title: From Darkness to Light: A Testimony of Redemption and Grace

Sermon Summary: This is a powerful personal testimony of transformation from a life of addiction, violence, and self-destruction to one of faith and purpose through Jesus Christ. Jason shares his journey from a childhood exposed to drugs and alcohol, through decades of substance abuse, criminal behavior, and broken relationships, to finding salvation and community at Branches Church. The testimony emphasizes that no sin is too great for God's forgiveness, highlighting the importance of intentional discipleship, accountability through "mat carriers," and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. Jason's story demonstrates that God can redeem even the "worst of sinners" and use their testimony to reach others who feel beyond hope.

Key Points:

- No one is too far gone for God's redemption and forgiveness
- The importance of godly leadership in the home and centering families around Christ
- Breaking generational cycles of sin and dysfunction
- All people are guilty of breaking God's commandments and need salvation through Jesus Christ
- The critical role of intentional discipleship and accountability relationships ("mat carriers")
- The necessity of genuine repentance and accepting Jesus as personal Lord and Savior
- Baptism as a significant turning point in spiritual growth
- The power of Christian community and men's ministry in supporting transformation
- Prayer should focus on God's will, courage, and guidance rather than just asking for relief
- The importance of being the light in a dark world and showing Jesus to others

Scripture Reference:

- Exodus 20:2-17 (The Ten Commandments - used to demonstrate universal sinfulness)
- Mark 2:1-5 (The paralyzed man lowered through the roof - illustrating the concept of "mat carriers")
- 1 Timothy 1:12-17 (Paul's testimony of being the worst of sinners shown mercy)

Stories:

- Witnessing his great-aunt Eva's death as a child and seeing what he believed was an angel
- Childhood encounters with what he describes as familiar spirits or demons
- Smoking marijuana with his father and grandmother as a teenager
- Holding his father's hand on his deathbed and regretting not sharing the gospel with him
- Losing his best friend to cancer
- Planning suicide on his 50th birthday at the beach, but instead celebrating with his wife Bree
- Meeting Bree as a teenager, having his heart broken, but reconnecting decades later
- Watching the movie "Nefarious" and realizing his guilt in abortion/murder
- First attending Branches Church and crying through the entire sermon
- Meeting John at Easter lunch and being struck by his intentional prayer
- Noticing Steve's marked-up Bible in men's group and being inspired by his dedication