

The Gathering Church
Gene Loyd - message 9/27/26

My Story Matters
Discovering Who I am
Deepening My Journey
Seeing God in Every Step

Be Someone's Support
Fear No Man
Strong and Courageous
Seek the Lord
He Will Answer
God With You
He's Changing Me
In His Likeness

I'm sharing with you today about the grace of God in my life that God has used, situations and people that have made a life altering impact on my life.

Background;

I was raised about 60 miles west of Chicago in a little town by the name of Sandwich, Ill. I was raised in a church going home. Many would say it was a Christian home. My whole life's focus was on basketball. I got hurt and that dream ended. So I focused on drugs for a short while. I was looking for something real. I saw church as a social gathering for those looking for friendships and I was letting people know what I thought of church. I wasn't a very nice guy.

The journey begins.

I helped one of my high school teachers move to Saint Augustine Fl. Then I hitchhiked to Cocoa. I had an aunt and uncle and cousin that lived in Cocoa. I knocked on my aunts door she answered, and I said, "Hi, I'm your nephew Gene." After a minute she let me in. She ask me what I was doing and I told her, "I'm here for a week; can I stay here?" She said, "Yes."

My intentions were to turn my cousin on to some drugs and have a good time. Little did I know that my cousin Bruce had and encounter with the Almighty God. Jesus had changed his life. I just looked at him and said, "Okay."

It was so different than anything I had ever seen before in any church. Bruce was excited about Jesus. That freaked me out a little bit.

Bruce went to a little bible study. I don't know what they taught but Bruce and his friends were saying things like God had told them this and these people were happy to talk about the relationship that they had with God. So I watched.

Meeting Jesus.

So During the bible study I told God, if He would give me the kind of joy and purpose that I saw in all of them, I would give him my life. So I gave my life to Christ that night.

Hearing God?! How?

I went home and told my mom and dad that I gave my life to Christ, and I'm saved I've been born again. They said they thought I had already done that and I said "I don't know about back then, but I know I've been born again now. I've met the Lord Jesus!"

My Dad was a ruler of our house. My dad would tell us that 'kids are to be seen and not heard.' That was said many times growing up. We didn't have any impute in life.

I came home from church one Sunday and my dad was a little upset that I wasn't there at the dictated time for lunch. He knew I was coming from church. He ask me what my plan for my life was. I told him I didn't know but was praying about it and God hadn't showed me yet about where to go or what to do.

Dad said well he “didn’t care when I left, just so it was tonight or tomorrow morning!” I asked no questions, because I knew it was a safer for me to be quiet.

So, the next day I packed my bags and headed to Florida; the only place at the time where I had experienced the love and the presence of God.

The devil wanted to kill Christ’s Spirit within me, but God was just getting started on me.

Guess what? I went to my aunt Ruby Jewell’s house and knocked on the door and said, “Hi.” She said, “Hi, what are you doing? and I said, “Well dad ask me to leave and here I am. Can I live with you all?” She said “Yes.”

Gods was directing me without me having a clue.

I got a job as a janitor’s helper at the 1st Baptist Church of Merritt Island. Wayne Martin was my boss. He’s in our men’s group today. I’m forever grateful for Wayne and his wife Rebecca.

Jerry White, a pastor, came and spoke one weekend at 1st Baptist Church in Merritt Island, and afterwards there was a brunch and fellowship.

I shared my testimony with Jerry. Jerry said he was just starting a Christian retreat center just outside Lynchburg Va.

I was asking God what he wanted me to do or go; just something! I don’t know why, but I found myself praying “If I could get closer to You by go living with Jerry White, then have him ask me to come live with them.”

About month later Jerry came back to speak again. We had a brunch afterward and after a while Jerry came up to me and said God had put me on his heart and asked me what the possibility of would be moving to Virginia and help build the Christian retreat center The Master’s Inn. I said, “Absolutely!”

Now, I look at my dad’s action as not good, but his heart might have been right, and he just didn’t know how to guide me except telling me to hit the road. The devil was wanting to cause me devastation, but God was in control.

So, you have got the background now part two.

The Master’s Inn driveway. God used my time at the Master’s Inn to imbed in me a ministry vision.

God had given Mr. White 50 acres for this retreat center. God provided a road construction company to cut the road in and clear for the lodge free of charge. Praise the Lord!

When God starts something he does provide.

There were 10’, 20’, 40’, and 50’ tall pine trees of all different sizes; some 16” in diameter, some 4”, all different sizes.

God has burned that picture in my heart.

They cut the road through the forest. It was magnificent. The trees went straight up, reaching to the sky. I went home in awe. The next day I came returned and many of the smaller trees had draped over the road. Some of them looked like they were going to break. I couldn’t believe it. The Lord put that picture of the trees in my mind. I saw the different size trees as Christians of different levels of maturity and how the big ones which were once small, were holding up the smaller trees, and that they needed each other to make it in life. We walk through the remanence of the fall of man; in the continued results of the sin

nature that came through the fall of man. Even though Jesus has given us a new nature through His son's death on the cross and has given us a new nature in Christ Jesus, we are still walking through the results of the fall of man all around us.

Matthew 22:37-40 ³⁷ Jesus declared, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments."

I saw that one way that I was to love my neighbor is by being a support. Standing, just standing! Be Someone's Support.

After The Masters Inn was built and they were having bible studies, I met the love of my life, Joan. We met, got engaged and married 10 months later. The first time I saw her at the bible study I knew she was the one for me. It took her a little bit longer. We had two boys Micah and Matthew 18 months apart. Stephanie and Joana would follow soon.

Work; called to be in business; waited three years

Advisers; Dad, Jerry White, Joan

Dad lived in Illinois.

Jerry White had moved to Titusville and had taken a position at Park Avenue.

The move back to Florida.

Again, praying and asking God to Lead us and if I could get closer to Him and learn more about Him then I was willing to move. So in July 27th, 1980, we pulled into town.

I had visited to check things out.

No Job, no house.

About two weeks or so, a man Jim Pugh of Merritt Island called me and said "I've been wanting to build my house for two years. Would you be interested in building it for me?" I said, "Okay!" That was the start of my construction company. God gave me this promise to stand on:

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

I saw myself as a steward of the work that God brought to me, and I tried to treat each job that way.

I had hired a couple Christian guys.

Through my construction company, God gave me the privilege to work with Liberty Lodge, a recovery program here in Titusville. I saw this was how I could use the construction company to come along side and stand by these men and support them as they were overcoming their addiction; a way to love others.

In 2004 I had a major life event in our family that shook my foundation. I found that I was the one in need of being supported by the Christian community. One person really stood next to me. I don't remember much of what he said. **I just knew he was there.** Richard Lord, who was staying close, asked me to go out

to the Ultimate leadership conference in California. I've always interested in learning ways to be a better leader, so I went. Boy, was I in for a surprise.

The leadership conference was led by John Townsend and Henry Cloud.

There were two questions that changed the way I was looking at life.

1st. What is in me that is keeping me from being all that God wants me to be as a leader.

2nd How did that make you feel? (Remember my dad.)

Over the week I saw how people dug down deep in their lives and how I needed to as well.

My continuous rattle snake dream

I found myself going back in my childhood and living through some of those childhood experiences.

I realized that I had developed a life pattern that made me safe as a child but as an adult this life pattern was unhealthy toxin to my soul.

The unhealthy part was that I would become fearful of anyone I had to deal with that had my dad's overbearing. (**Fear No Man**)

Personality. I would shut down and withdraw. In my dream I was in the middle of these five rattle snakes. Each had a person's name with them.

I knew that if I didn't deal with them they were going to hurt me or my inner self was going to die.

As I dealt with each one of these people the next dream there was one less snake, until they were all gone.

Remember to Love the Lord God with all your heart, soul and mind and your neighbor as yourself. We need each other. (**Seek the Lord** and **He Will Answer**)

*Deuteronomy 31:6 Be **Strong And Courageous**, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. (**God With You**) He will not fail you or forsake you.*

Song: (Lyrics to the Christian praise and worship song "**Little by Little**" written by Colin Buchanan.)

Little by little in every day, little by little in every way, Jesus is changing me, **He's Changing Me**.

My blessed savior I'm not the same person that I used to be,

Sometimes it's slow going, but there's a knowing that **In His Likeness** I will be.