

Dodd's Testimony

I grew up dreaming of being a country singer. My dad gave me a guitar when I was 6 and I started learning to play as fast as I could. I dreamed of being the next Merle Haggard. I have always been a very focused person and when I set my mind to something I will do anything possible to make it come true. I was playing professionally by the age of 14. I played in bands through high school and into college. I have played in bars and honkytonks all over the country. At the pinnacle of my career I was opening shows for big name artists and playing to thousands of people every night. That kind of life led me to be a very arrogant individual and I was drinking a lot and treating everyone around me like they owed me something. Thinking back I'm really ashamed at the way I treated so many people I loved. I thought my turn to be the headliner was just around the corner but God had a different plan. Near the end of 1996 I lost the deal I had with Arista Texas' development label and after devoting my entire life to that dream I just didn't have it in me to try again. I found myself at that place where you have nowhere to look but up. I got on my knees and asked God to save me from the mess I had made of my life. I begged him to come into my life and give me direction and that is just what He did. God changed me from the inside out that day and gave me a new start. 2 Cor 5:17 says anyone whose is in Christ is a new Creation, the old is gone and the new is come. That describes me perfectly. I no longer desired the wild life of playing country music in the honkytonks, drinking, using foul language, putting myself above others... You get the idea. Everything changed. I got involved in church and the music ministry came natural to me. About a year later I was introduced to southern gospel music and decided to pray for the opportunity to sing with a quartet. God answered that prayer quickly and I got my start with the Jericho Road Quartet singing Tenor. I sang with that group almost 5 years and saw a lot of lives touched through that ministry. One of the lives touched was my own father. My dad was an alcoholic and I never remember seeing him sober until I was an adult. When I was playing in the bars my dad was my biggest fan but when I got saved and began to sing for Jesus he didn't care too much for that at all. You see my dad was the kind of person that believed he had lived to wild a life and that Christ would have nothing to do with him anymore. I would tell him he was wrong but he just didn't get it. He just couldn't grasp that God gives us grace and mercy. I used to visit him and we would sit on the porch and pick and grin but after I got saved I just couldn't do it anymore because all he wanted to do was drink and play cheating songs. I would suggest he not drink and we sing more inspirational tunes but he would just tell me to stop preaching at him. It got to the point that he suggested I not come visit him if all I was going to do was preach at him for the way he lived his life. Needless to say I didn't visit very often after that, but I began to pray for my dad's soul and enlisted others to help me pray. I knew my dad would never go listen to a preacher preach but I knew he loved music, so I prayed "God get him to one of our concerts". Prayer works because my dad showed up one night and he wept like a baby from the first song to the last. I knew the Holy Spirit was breaking his heart. A couple of weeks later my dad called and said he was going into the hospital for surgery and he wanted me to pray for him. I knew something was up because he had never asked for prayer before. I made my way to the hospital and found out the surgery was life threatening. There was a good chance he would not survive but a greater chance if he didn't have it at all. You see his wild life had finally caught up with him and at the age of 59 he was staring death in the face. I went to his bedside just before

he went into surgery and looked him right in the eye and said “daddy I have to know before you go through those doors, do you know my Jesus? Do you know my Lord? Daddy, do you know where you will go if you don’t make it through this?” I will never forget the look in his eyes, as a tear began to roll down his cheek and a smile came across his lips, he said “son you don’t have to worry about that because the Lord and I got things right the other night at your concert. Son I’m not worried one bit if I don’t come back I will be waiting for you in heaven.” My heart nearly leapt out of my chest. For the first time in my life I was able to look at my father and know he was at peace. He survived the surgery but he never came home. My dad served Jesus for the remaining few months he lived from a hospital bed. He used gospel music as a tool to witness to people in the hospital. He would play our music in his room and call out to people in the hall, he would tell them to come in and listen to the music cause they are singing about Jesus, they are singing about my Lord.

Friends, salvation is the greatest gift anyone can ever receive and it’s the one gift only Jesus Christ can give. The good news is He wants to give it to everyone and He will, all we have to do is ask for it. If you have loved ones you know aren’t saved I encourage you to begin praying for them today just like I did for my dad. Those prayers will not go unheard. God is faithful to give us the desires of our hearts, let your greatest desire be that your loved ones get to heaven and you pray for the opportunity for you or someone else to be a witness to them, then watch what God will do.