

## **Drew Adam**

### **March 5, 2010**

My parents split and married other people when I was nine.

*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.* Isaiah 41:10 (New International Version)

Started faith Journey – defined self by my performance.

I applied what I knew of my relationship with my father and earning his acceptance to my spiritual walk. I loved serving people, picking up hitchhikers, hanging with the homeless, going to bible studies, youth group and church.

Great Dad. I knew how to earn his acceptance by doing what he wanted me to do. My Dad loves me but at times it seemed conditional or situational, after all he is human.

Today is March 5<sup>th</sup> 2010. It's really odd how I am giving my senior sermon today. A buddy of mine just chose a random day and signed me up. I was surprised when I got the letter in the mail and saw the date was today for my sermon. You see March 5<sup>th</sup> is the birthday of one of my deepest personal scars.

March 5, 2003 seven years ago to the day, my world changed when My Father Committed Suicide.

I gave the elegy and was depressed.

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, <sup>[a]</sup> who <sup>[b]</sup> have been called according to his purpose.* Romans 8:28 (New International Version)

Questioned God. What good could come from this death only life could be good from this death.

Stopped feeding my lizards because I was depressed, and they got sick. I didn't want more death so started feeding them more. They started breeding. I had tried for years to breed them, but I later found out that they only breed if you stop feeding them for a while so they think its winter. So the baby lizards were born because of my father's death. God used that scripture to help me through that time.

I soon became a leader, giving talks at weekend retreats, being a camp counselor, leading bible studies, leading youth groups. I was known as the guy with the bumper stickers, the Jesus shirts, the guy excited about faith and the one who is living the Christian life. – I defined myself by what I did.

So when I would take a break and not lead stuff for a while I would feel worthless, like I didn't know who I was, I was not earning, or doing anything. I just was.

The tough thing about reading scripture and maturing is that you find out you are not perfect, and your even worse than you thought. I do all the right stuff, but I still sin.

*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 2 Corinthians 12:9 (New International Version)*

I had anger problems, would lie, lust, and be lazy. I would judge, and hate. And probably one of the worst parts was how much like a Pharisee I was. I knew the stories and the bible trivia, and when others thought I was somehow closer to God, I would agree with them deep down.

Yet my mask of the Christian guy was fading and cracking. I couldn't keep on performing, I needed Grace, and I needed a savior. I needed him just as much as the people I was telling about him.

I feared my life was going to be boring....so I started praying for true wisdom and excitement and adventure.

That was about a year ago when I was so afraid life was going to be boring.

I said: God bring it, I trust you. I can do anything with you. I was thinking the handle bars were coming down on the roller coaster and it was going to be one wild ride and super fun.

This guy on Facebook starts to stalk me. Text messages, phone calls and letters. I block him. I hear from family he was an old family friend who went crazy and tried to kill me and my family when I was two. Now, I attempt to get a restraining order against this guy. The court date was conveniently set during finals week December of last year.

I see him in the court room and after some formalities, I get a two-year restraining order, and then he said "Your honor just wanted to tell him that I am his father." Yes, I found out he was my biological father. This means I had been raised by a man who was not biologically my father.

What? I had to study for finals so I didn't have the luxury of reflecting on this. So the bad guy meets up with the good guy in the death star/court room and says, Luke/Drew, I am your father. What does this guy think he is Darth Vader?

I stumble through finals making Star Wars jokes. I hope my girlfriend isn't my sister. Princess Leia.

Questions start to consume my thoughts. Who is my father? Who can call me son? Who should I call father? Which is more important Nature vs. Nurture? Psychology class was fun the next

semester to discuss such theories that hit so close to home. Nurture father killed himself, and Nature father tried to kill me.

Search the scriptures Lord help me out here. This guy, or that guy, or something in between. Black and white or some shade of gray?

I keep reading and then the creator and redeemer of all says in the gospel of Mathew which pierces my heart. Who should I call father, Lord?

Matthew 23:9 says: *And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.*

“Oh,” was really all I could say. God in heaven who created me and saved me is my true father in heaven. Jesus says we can call him “Abba Father.” That’s like “Daddy.”

So God answers my deepest questions and even though it’s hard, he carries me through it.

One could say I started this school year with some baggage, and I started counseling.

Background: The earthly father who had raised me left me an inheritance of about \$100,000. This affected how I lived my life, how I saved, what I did with my summers, and caused me to be very generous with how I spend my paycheck from my part time job.

I tried to get money out of my account for school and found out it was gone. I should still have \$60,000, and it was stolen off a credit card through identity theft. It’s gone. I’m now in debt. My inheritance was gone seemingly overnight.

This was not pleasant to hear and yet the thought immediately came to mind that rainy November morning that I still have treasure in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. Matthew 6:20

And that I still have a spiritual inheritance from my heavenly father that has been prepared for me since the creation of the world. Matthew 25:34

I thought, oh that’s nice, a good life lesson, a healthy dose of wisdom; but I would have rather read it in a book. God’s will might be for me to learn wisdom from these life situations—for what I don’t know. Even though I know that my will is different than God’s, I fearfully pray the Lord’s prayer with “Your will be done”..... God, My Savior Jesus, I know you want what’s best for me, and I trust in your promises that’s its going to be worth it.

One afternoon I was in the woods reflecting on all this, and I said, “If it’s what praises you, Jesus, what I go through, then bring the rain.”

Five a.m. the next morning my mom sends me a text, my step dad is moving out, getting a divorce, and my mom doesn't have enough money to keep the house. I talked to my Mother and she was losing it. I felt I had to be the one to keep it all together.

God, I meant the current rain, I didn't know it was going to down pour.

*Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup>The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. Matthew 7:24*

This timed perfectly with religion classes where my theology had totally changed.

I could no longer stand on my own ideas of God. I could no longer define myself by my good works or my mistakes. I could not be a better or worse Christian than anyone else and could not do any thing good or bad to change how God loved me, thought of me, and I COULD NOT EARN HIS FAVOR OR ACCEPTANCE BY MY WORKS. It was only God and his promises over me that I could cling to.

I could not stand on my financial security—stolen.

I could not stand on my home always being there—possibly evicted.

And there was a short time where I had no food and my car was not running so can't trust material things.

I could no longer stand on my strong family for unfailing support—Mom losing it. Father suicide.

I couldn't even stand on knowing my own story of which my father was—changed in the court room.

And I could not stand on my identity based off my performance—I am a sinner in need of a Savior.

Jesus is the solid rock on which I stand, some days because it's all I have left.

I'm not going to lie and say all is great now that I have Jesus. It's foolish to think a life with Christ is a life without suffering. A life with Jesus is the only one worth living.

The footprints of the little wisdom I have gleamed off of all this to share with you is:

Define yourself by who God says you are, not your performance. He promises you are a sinner and will always be, but He gives you his son's righteousness as an inheritance. So live not in legalism focused on performance, but in Grace focused on trusting your father in heaven.

Jesus has carried me through some interesting stuff and I know it's not over yet, but knowing who I am and who my father is can help get me through anything.