



Shiloh Messenger

July 2008

One Day At a Time

“This is the day which the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24)

We recently began a fictional series about the life of Cecil. If you would like a copy of the earlier installments, please ask us or visit our website at www.shilohmensministries.com to view newsletter archives. Cecil continues learning dependence on God even in the wilderness of East Texas.

I am two months into this Shiloh experience and I am in agony. The lack of meaningful communication with my family is getting to me. I yearn to see my wife Renee, to talk to her, and to learn if our marriage still exists. What is she thinking? Is there hope for us? It has been nearly three months, or maybe an eternity, since I left my wife and children and checked into the hotel in Oregon. I have not had any drugs since that night. My mind is clear now, but I am so isolated and separated from everything. The chasm between me and my past life is huge. I struggle not knowing what of my past will be redeemed and what is lost forever. It is unbearable not to know if God is going to salvage my marriage, or will he allow it to have been forfeited because I walked away. I write letters to Renee, and all I have received is one note. One brief note! It had nothing in it about us, no news of the children, nothing I can cling to. Only one sentence, “Cecil, I and my Sunday School Class are praying for you, and we encourage you to stay the full year.” I guess I should be comforted knowing she is praying with someone about me.

I pray and forcefully discipline myself to stick to the daily quiet time appointment with God. I think it helps, but I feel like I am just muttering when I pray, and God is just watching me writhe around in my loneliness and helplessness. I read my journals and I hear myself repeatedly praying, “Dear God this is too much! I am flat out afraid about my future. What about my kids – Do you even know how fast they grow up? Here I am, sitting in East Texas - it is 100 sticky wet hot degrees here, and there are mosquitoes, snakes, and weeds, and I don’t even know what else. How is my sitting here singing songs, reading, and praying all day any help to my marriage and my kids. Please, please, I beg you not to allow some other man - I just could not tolerate another man raising my children. These guys, Lord - I am boarding with all these other men – living with them in this bunk house is really no picnic. It is a challenge for me everyday to live in such tight community with other men who are also struggling to order their messed up lives. None of them even cares that I am a college graduate. Pastor Rocky has me working on some guy’s ranch in the afternoons, cleaning horse dung out of stalls. How does that help support my wife and kids? Why does one of the other guys get to help out in the office on the computers? I am the one that is a highly skilled computer analyst. 12 months is just way too much! When I signed on here, I did not know You. I did not know that with You, I could beat this thing like never before. I know I have this addiction beat this time. I have learned my lesson. I am thankful for what I have learned at Shiloh, but I miss Oregon. I miss my wife Renee and I really miss my children. I am struggling now that I know that I am well. Pastor Rocky warned me that I would feel this way and that it was the enemy’s trap he would try to bait me into. I must guard my heart. I told them when I first arrived that I would be here for the year no matter what. Now look at me. I really do not think I can take much more of this limbo, waiting game. Please help me Lord. This is sure not easy. Now it is time for our scheduled Praise and Worship. Man, how in the heck can I sing? I never did like to sing, and they expect me to sit in that chapel and meditate some more, and then actually sing and rejoice over this stupid situation I am in. My heart aches. Everything around here is scheduled. Wake-up, eat, pray, go to class, work at the ranch or do miserable cleaning jobs around here. I know how Joseph must have felt when he was working for Potiphar and then stuck in a prison in Egypt. Finally, God completed His work in Joseph that Joseph was ready to be used by God. Only then did He lift Joseph out of prison and put him in charge of all of Egypt. (Genesis beginning @ Chapter 39) I really feel like the Israelites must have felt when they were wandering around in the wilderness. I experienced freedom from the slavery of addiction, and now I am just wandering in the wilderness. I am reminded though that they complained so much God finally denied them passage into his Promised Land and just left them in the wilderness until all but two of them died off. (Deuteronomy 1:30-38) I do not want to stay in either the enslavement of my addictions or in the wilderness forever, but now I really think I am over it. I want to move on into the Promised Land - How much more of this limbo life I can take?

I clean up and miserably trudge into the chapel with the other men. I have not ever heard this Worship CD that is playing. The music soothes me. I am learning to hear the Holy Spirit speak to me. He is telling me to calm down, be still, and know that He is God. In spite of my terrible attitude, I feel his peace come upon me. I am captivated by the powerful and true words of the music.

You Know I’ve had some lonely days. I’ve made mistakes and had to pay.
I’ve had some friends who walked away, Just like Mama told me.
But there’s someone Whose love is real. Who cares about the way I feel.
Jesus you’re my every thing. The Cross you did that just for me.
So whatever you take me through, I’ll promise You, I’ll spend my always with You.
Jesus my whole life has changed. Since that day I cried Your Name. (Kirk Franklin)

We camp in the solace of the music for a while, and then Brother Jason starts praying. He is saying, “*This is the day that the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*” (Psalm 118:24) I remember that I should pray this confession to the Lord when I wake each morning. I am translated again into the very sanctuary of God. Brother Jason then speaks about daily thanking God for our freedom to choose life and about the need to speak life over myself by speaking God’s Word over my life each day. Power comes from the Holy Spirit when I purposely choose only good words and thoughts. I remember that since I first yielded to God, I have been absorbing Him. In this tranquil place as I sit still, I reflect on why I am here and why I must stay. I look back over my anxieties, and I understand that I am not well yet. I need to build a firm foundation in You Lord, or I am of no use to You, my wife, or my kids. If it takes sitting here in East Texas, and it evidently did, for me to become like You, I must choose to grow in You. You cannot use me to lead anyone in my family into the Promised Land until You complete a great work in me as I sit here in the wilderness. Use this time for your purpose. You gave it to me and with a grateful heart, I give it back to You. Father God, in the name of Jesus, I beg you, please give me the strength to stand fast, please bind the temptation to trust in myself, please continue healing me, please keep me still and grant me the knowledge that You alone are God, and You are in control. Father God, please give me the awareness that this truly is the day You have made for me to live and learn, and show me each day how to live completely and rejoicingly in it.

Student Testimony

My name is Blake Shaw. I'm 25 years old. I was born and raised in Mississippi. January 1, 2006 was a memorable beginning to the end of my six-year drug and alcohol addiction. On that day, my father showed up at my apartment in Mississippi uninvited and unannounced while my friends and I were still partying from the previous night's festivities. He came to see me to plead with me to change my life and get right with God. When he looked at me, he saw a walking dead man. I had cheated death a couple times before, but this time might be my last. In a fit of anger, I told my dad to leave and I told him I did not want anything to do with him. As I began to try and erase the look on my dad's somber face that was stuck in my head, I began to pass out. Before passing out though, I begged God to save me from my filthy pippen of a life. As I lay passed out on my couch, my dad was driving back to his home in South East Texas. The Lord spoke to him as he drove and told him to go back and get me, or I would be dead soon. He struggled with that thought for miles down the interstate, but finally yielded to the Holy Spirit. He came back and got me and took me home with him. After moving to Texas, I figured I could fix myself. I thought just going to church and trying to do right was good enough. The Bible says, "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." (Galatians 5:17) Every time I would feel I was making spiritual progress, I would soon relapse into sin. Although I sincerely tried to change myself using a mixture of the world's ways and God's way, I finally ultimately decided the only way I would ever be completely free from addiction was to submit totally to God. Partial submission does not yield the fruits of the Spirit. I especially lacked the fruit of self-control which only ripens when a man totally yields to God. On July 20, 2007, I arrived at Shiloh. Shortly after coming here, I became broken and received a revelation that although I had made Jesus Christ my Savior, I had never allowed Him to be Lord of my life. Once I decided to make him Lord, my old sinful man was finally crucified. As the new Christ in me man began to emerge, God began to reveal to me his plans for my future. God laid his word in Isaiah upon my heart. "I have set you among my people to bind them to Me, and provided you as a lighthouse to the nations. To make a start at bringing people into the open, into light: opening blind eyes, releasing prisoners from dungeons, emptying the dark prisons." (Isaiah 42:5-9) Upon graduating from Shiloh, I plan to do some volunteer ministry work. On September 21, 2008, I plan to enter the Youth with a Mission (YWAM) school of discipleship training in Nashville, TN in preparation for the international mission field.



Blake Shaw

Shiloh Ministries gives the LORD honor and praise for lives that have been delivered from a life of slavery. We celebrate Kingdom Life here at Shiloh. All of our supporters make a tremendous contribution towards lives that forever are destined for eternity with God. We ask and encourage everyone to give financially to help with the cost of restoring lives. It cost approximately \$500.00 a month to house one man. The LORDS Ministry at Shiloh is free to the men who seek restoration. It is a walk of faith for our financial needs to be met every month. Would you please consider being a monthly supporter? God always speaks to those He has asked to give. We believe that His people will respond out of a heart of gratitude for what He has done & continues to do for them. Thank you, for your generosity in giving & co-laboring with us in the LORDS Ministry at Shiloh. (Shiloh Ministries is recognized by the IRS as a 501C3 Charitable Organization)

Please be in prayer with us for the following:

CD Audio Recording device to be used for recording all classroom teaching.
Hamburger meat for meals.

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