



Shiloh Messenger

November 2008

REMEMBER ME!!

“Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when the Lord said to me, Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children”. ((Deuteronomy 4:10)

Shiloh has moved on and repaired most of the damage wrought by Hurricane Ike. Hopefully, I will not experience one of those again!! Now we are all kind of numb as we track the political happenings in our country and reflect on how our country has drifted so far from its Judeo-Christian heritage. Even though we are in the wilderness of East Texas, our teachers here are using current events as teachable moments to inspire us to look for God's hand, His movements, and His teachings in the latest domestic and foreign policy situations before us and the characters of the candidates and the ways the candidates and the American people are responding to and arguing about the issues. I knew so little about God before I came here that I never even thought about considering that He may have had a perfect will for this country and that when the country was in its infancy He was guiding its leaders and those who wrote its founding documents. I never thought to look at issues and candidates on an election ballot and pray about my vote. I previously did not care and did not even go vote.

I am having really mixed emotions about facing Thanksgiving away from my home and family while I continue on here at Shiloh. This will be a unique set of holidays for me in that I intend live and sense every taste, smell, and emotion of Thanksgiving. In the past, I used the holidays as opportunities to numb out with drugs and alcohol. Thanksgiving provided a perfect chance for me to numb over starting on Wednesday night and stay stupefied until the following Monday morning because I did not have to go to work for four straight days. I would partially experience some football and hear my wife and my mom go on and on about whatever they were cooking and serving up for me to gorge on while I was sitting around in a drunken stupor yelling at the kids because they were bugging me. By the weekend, I would drift over to some friend's house, crash in front of their TV, and stone out watching football all day on Saturday because my wife and kids would have had enough of me and left to go stay with her parents. On Sunday, I would always somehow end up back at home in a pout about being alone as I nursed my terrible headache and dreaded returning to work on Monday. I would have no clue what happened on the previous Thursday, Friday, or Saturday, and I would be out lots of money for all of the drugs and alcohol I had gone through. I did not know or care what my family had done with their previous four days, but I would somehow justify my misery by saying nobody cared about me and questioning why did my family leave me rather than stay at home to be with me. I always found myself somber slouched on the couch in front of ESPN rationalizing to myself that all of my troubles were definitely the fault of the wife and children. Given how little they obviously appreciated me, what else was I to do but use drugs and drink myself under the table over the holiday vacation.

I will face this Thanksgiving away from home and be sober for the first time in eight years. I will absorb every minute of it and I will spend it giving thanks to God for life. I am enjoying listing everything I thank God for. During my quiet time, I cannot write fast enough. Today, I keep running back to my note pad and jotting down more and more. On Thanksgiving Day, we have been told we will each have an opportunity to tell what we are thankful for. I cannot wait for my time to share. God has been so good to me. I am thankful I am not in Hell. I am thankful my health is good even though I have treated my body poorly. I am thankful God set me free from the bondage of my addictions. I am thankful that my family has not given up on me. I am thankful I believe with all my heart that God is preserving my marriage. I am thankful that God waited on me. I am thankful that there is a place called Shiloh Ministries. I am thankful that even though my heart aches, I can actually feel pain now and I choose to not try to escape it. Wow, I never thought I would say that. I am thankful that the Bible is coming alive to me. I am learning to understand it, and I am learning to recognize God's voice. I am thankful for the other men who live here. We have several new students. I try to help them by encouraging them that they can make it. I have already been here seven months. If I can make it, anyone can. I am told we will have a nice Thanksgiving at Shiloh. We will have a Thanksgiving meal complete with Turkey, Stuffing, all kinds of casseroles, and plenty of pies. I marvel at how God provides for this ministry through His People who have already started donating Turkeys and Hams, and asked if they could drop off homemade breads and desserts.

I know this Thanksgiving will be dramatically different. For the first time in my life, I am truly experiencing life with a heart full of gratefulness and thanks. Over the past several months, my experiences have humbled and changed me. The holidays coming up will bring me sad memories of how I failed my family and never exemplified anything but Godlessness to my children. Although it is saddening to reflect on the wasted life of my past, it is encouraging to ponder on the hope guaranteed to me as I face the future. As I heal and grow in the Lord, I am learning about how a Godly father and husband should lead his family. I am learning that the holidays are memorial moments that a Godly man uses to instruct and teach his children that they may know the attributes of God by learning of the times and events where He has protected and guided His people. In **Deuteronomy 4:8-9** the Bible teaches, *“Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and grandsons.”* [emphasis added] I no longer yearn to be with my family because I am selfish and I need them to comfort me. I want to be with my children so I can teach them about the attributes of God. I want to tell them about my journey into God's presence. I want to teach my family about what I am learning about this country's first Thanksgiving. I want to read to them Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Day proclamation he made during the darkest days of the Civil War so my children will not be deceived when the media and their schools tell them that Thanksgiving has nothing to do with thanking the God of the Bible and the God I now know for his benevolence, grace, mercy, and protections he has bestowed upon our land. I want to celebrate with those I love the most in this world and be sure that I never again let a memorial moment pass that I do not spend it focusing on what God has done for us lest we forget the things which our eyes have seen, and lest they depart from our hearts. I want to make it known to my son and my daughter and my grandsons and granddaughters all that God is. I never want to escape from and miss a Holy Day with my family again.

Shiloh Ministry Team.

Earlier installments of this fictional story about Cecil Armstrong are on our website at www.shilohmensministries.com

My name is Jonathan Painter. I graduated from Shiloh's twelve month program in May 2005. Prior to arriving at Shiloh, I had spent several years struggling in a lifestyle that revolved around drugs. Had I not found Shiloh, it is unlikely that I would have experienced the blessings God had designed for me. During my time at Shiloh, I developed a new understanding of the Lord and how his healing and liberating power could free me from my drug dependency. I spent my twelve months at Shiloh strengthening my relationship with God, developing an appreciation for what Jesus Christ saved me from, and ultimately submitting my life completely under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Upon graduating from Shiloh's year of discipleship, I yearned to continue my spiritual growth and training. I experienced God's directing me to attend Texas Bible Institute. I began at TBI in September 2005 and went through their Bible school program. While at TBI, I learned a great deal about the Bible, and I learned about serving people with a minister's heart. I learned by observing the lives of the people teaching and mentoring me at TBI and also through the many retreats and weekend events I participated in where I had the opportunity to grow in relationships with the other students. At one of the retreats I attended, I met Elizabeth Kokajko, a fellow student. We became fast friends and learned together how to trust God with everything. My wonderful friendship with Elizabeth progressed into a blessed courtship, and after we completed our second year program at TBI and had been serving as full-time staff members at Burchfield Ministries, we were married on August 9, 2008. Elizabeth and I are now serving in our second year as full-time staff members at Burchfield Ministries and we are helping to build Believer's World Outreach Church in Katy, TX. Our involvement in helping to build this Church is rewarding. I enjoy serving as an usher, heading up the Parking Crew, and working in the Food Services Department for the Bible School. Elizabeth shares her faith as she leads the Nursery in the Katy Church, and helps recruit for TBI. We are both so glad we waited on God's perfect choice and plan for our marriage and we encourage others to do the same. God always knows and wants the best for His children, so wait for His timing and your life will be blessed! My life since I stepped foot on the grounds of Shiloh has been one of an amazing transformation and it is a testimony to the faithfulness of the Lord. I can testify today that He who began a good work in me is definitely proving faithful and just to complete it according to his Word.



Jon & Elizabeth Painter

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:

Meat (Hamburger, Chicken & Pork) for meals.

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