

My Testimony

by Mike Sikora



My name is Mike Sikora and this is my story of how God, in mercy, saved my precious soul.

I was born in Kelowna British Columbia October 6, 1980 to Angie and Jerry Sikora. 16 months after my birth Mom gave birth to another son, my brother Joe. I also have a half sister living elsewhere.

Mom and Dad were opposites, Mom being meek and mild, and my father was a recovering alcoholic with an addiction to marijuana. It was not a healthy situation by any means, and the next few years got even worse.

We spent the first 5 years of our lives being hid from unhealthy things at home and often sent to the neighbours, or going for car rides with Mommy so that she could get some peace and quiet. At home there was smoking, fighting, yelling, and holes in the walls. My Dad was not doing his job as a father and was loud, angry, emotionally and verbally abusive to Mom and us.

Eventually, my Mom could take no more and took Joe and I to stay with some new friends from the church we attended. We spent the next year or so there. While staying there we heard about Jesus Christ and experienced His love for my family through the love of the church. We eventually moved into our own place and there began the restoration of my parent's marriage. At first Dad was very angry that other people were infringing on his and my Mom's relationship, and asking: "Who is this God?" Slowly, but surely, the love of Christ and the church won him over, and he gave his life to the Lord. This began his personal and agonizing transformation.

Throughout the years I watched and I learned. Before I was 14, I knew how to throw a punch; how to run away from a fight; how to ride a dirt bike; and how to flare up in anger and destroy everything in one minute that had taken months to rebuild. As an observant child, I remember listening to fighting, swearing, crying and doors slamming. There were a lot of changes being worked out as Mom and Dad tried picking up the broken pieces of shattered years before. I had a Dad at home now, but before this point in time, he knew very little about being a Dad. He was definitely learning. Where he missed out, my Mom picked up. If it weren't for God's strength and wisdom shining through her spirit, we would never have survived as a family.

Not only did I learn the bad things, I also learned through the teaching at Westbank Bible Chapel and Morning Star Bible camp the foundation of Christianity. At the age of 10 I accepted Christ as my personal Saviour at Morning Star Bible Camp. I learned that God never lets go and that even if I was the only person on earth, Christ would still have died for me because He loved me so. This is where I learned goodness and love, kindness and gentleness. I saw what a christian life was and how a healthy family functioned. I met some amazing people, people that in the years to follow would spend many an hour on their knees battling for my soul.

About 1994, after finally beginning to see some foundation in my family, I started having trouble in school. I started to get bullied and had to defend myself on a regular basis. This is where, at the age of 14, I learned how to fight at bus stops or back fields, and that is when my life began to turn upside down.

At age 15, when my school life had really began to destroy my childhood and teenage years, I had a group of friends who smoked cigarettes and drank every other weekend. These guys liked me, so eventually I was doing the same thing. The weekend drinking quickly escalated to smoking marijuana, eating magic mushrooms, and before I knew it, I was either stealing money from my parents or robbing local houses to support a quickly growing drug habit. This was just the beginning. I went from a somewhat good Christian life with Bible camp and Sunday school to a hopeless dope addict where I could never get enough.

Over the next few years I found my friends getting involved in hard drugs like cocaine and heroin. Most of them were selling it and these drugs brought us around some real hard people. It wasn't long before I was putting all my hope and trust in local bikers; wheeling and dealing drugs in bars and strip clubs. Cocaine was a regular occurrence and eventually it turned into a full on crack cocaine addiction. This addiction cost me everything, my

jobs, my money and my friends. At one point I was even low enough to rob members of the church that I grew so close to. This is where the drugs brought me, and they weren't finished yet.

In the year 1999 I entered my first treatment centre. It was called The Salvation Army Miracle Valley, Mission BC. At my age and with my attitude, I lasted a mere 2 weeks. From there I decided a change in location would be my saving grace. I relocated to Calgary and that is where my life dropped to its lowest level. Drugs were everywhere and sold on every corner. It was a concept that I was not used to, selling crack everywhere you turned. For the first time in my life I had nothing and no one. I even sold my duffle bag of clothes for another hit. But, being resilient, I quickly learned how to hustle drugs for other people and make a quick buck and a little bit of dope to go with it. I was now completely lost, homeless, hopeless, and all alone in a huge city with only one single desire... more crack!

I soon grew tired of hustling for other people and making nothing out of it. I began to search out my own leads to get drugs and sell them. They weren't hard to find and I quickly grew on the street in the eyes of those around me, and all of a sudden I was somebody again. I had everything that anybody would need. Money was quick and so was everything else around me. Overnight I went from broke and no dope to having anywhere from 2-10k in my pocket, and all the drugs I could possibly want. I was really living the life now, or so I thought! Night after night riding around in taxis, eventually reality caught up with me...I finally realized. . . Mike you are alone, you have no friends and are heading to the grave! This realization sent me on a crash course of destruction. I was getting careless and saw the inside of a jail cell more times than I could count, always getting out for a little bit of bail money. This would soon catch up to me. In the two to three years I was in Calgary, I saw one person murdered right in front of me, I was stabbed, hit with a hammer, and have also been on the inflicting end of the latter. It wasn't an appealing life. A life where girls or guys will sell any part of themselves for five dollars; where life is as valuable as one more hit of crack; and where the only warm place to sleep is on the grates at a bus stop where the warm air blows through to keep you from freezing to death on a cold winter night.

Eventually, it all came crashing down. Late 2004 I was arrested for the last time and was charged for 27 different offences from money and drugs to assault and escape. The judge dismissed my life with a wave of the gavel, and I was on my way to a federal penitentiary doing no less than 30 months of straight time. In late 2004 I entered Drumheller Penitentiary and this was the beginning of a new life. Here is where I witnessed first hand the miracles of God. My parents came to see me, an 8 hour drive from their home, and this is where I first witnessed the great work that God had done in their lives. I saw a spiritually strong family, a Mom who had grown in Christ, and a completely new Dad.

Dad quickly became my hero as he was now a gentle humble man with unending love and compassion for his lost son. Spending the next 33 months in the Drumheller Penitentiary, I grew in many areas. God was dealing with me and I slowly sought God in my own time. This meant throwing out a lot of the things I did before. I made up my mind to change, and on August 14, 2007 I was released from Matsqui Penitentiary. I had been transferred there from Drumheller and after 2 years, to the care of my parents. I re-committed myself to the Lord and entered into a year long discipleship program called Teen Challenge, and I continued to obey the call that God had on my life.

Today, almost 4 years later, I have been blessed by God to marry a beautiful God fearing young christian lady who plays piano and sings praise to God, not only as a hobby, but also as a career. I have been given the opportunity and the call to lift high the name of Jesus through my life. I have been given the privilege to work with 2 organizations that do that very thing. God has opened tremendous doors to work in the field of addiction and mental health with the Salvation Army and in partnership with many local agencies. I get the opportunity to seek out the lowest of the low, and give them a glimmer of hope and a hand up, if they are willing. With this job, and my job at Teen Challenge, God has trusted me with much, and "to whom much is given much is expected". I can't wait for what God has for me, as it is my dream to glorify Him. I hope to pursue a University education as an addiction counselor and walking with those who have fallen into the same things I once had.

Today I am redeemed and sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ, and to quote John 8:36: "He whom the Son sets free is free indeed". Although God never promised to take away all of my struggles, He has promised to walk with me and carry me through them. A verse very dear to my heart is:

**"God has removed my hard heart and pierced my soft one with Him
and His Spirit, causing me to have new desires."**

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (Paraphrased)