



Seasons In Time

ENCOUNTERING GOD FACE TO FACE...
IN OUR BRIEF JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE

Life Season I: My Childhood Years

Life Isn't Fair

Lawbreakers, gamblers, thieves and prostitutes! That's the kind of family I was born into. My mother didn't want me, much less need another baby. I was a terrible accident...an inconvenience and a burden. My father, well I never knew him and he had no clue I had ever been born. He was in another state living with his next girlfriend. As I grew into childhood, I thought this was just the way life was. I found myself in juvenile court, expelled from school and moving toward a life of crime. Fifteen years later, I was convicted of premeditated murder and sentenced to life without parole. *No, for me life was certainly not fair!*

The hospital emergency room was filled with pain and confusion. Some were unconscious, never to recover from their wounds. Others were writhing in agony, doomed to live a life of a cripple. Family members were weeping, some blankly staring out the windows in dismay. As my parents walked out of the ER and into the darkness of the night, their lives were shattered...changed forever. I died shortly after I was born. My parents were heartbroken and inconsolable. They never saw me go to school, enter into a career, fall in love, or have children of my own. *For my grieving parents, life wasn't fair!*

Ilived the life that only some children could dream about. Growing up in a close-knit nuclear family, I was loved and given purpose. Dad taught me to pray and Mother gave me a strong moral compass. I grew up with a good self-image, yet respectful...always looking for the best in people. But I'll never forget the day I saw a child, about my age, in a wheelchair...twisted hands and paralyzed legs with incoherent sounds coming from his drooling mouth. My little eight-year old mind couldn't comprehend the tragedy that had befallen this child and his courageous parents. *All I could think of was that life wasn't fair!*



No, God is never the author of the unfairness of life. But He's compassionately aware of all things. *Listen to the transformation in each person's story when they came Face to Face with the Living God:*

The prison dining area slowly filled as inmates walked in and took their seats. It was late Sunday afternoon, time for the local church prison ministry to begin. As the music played and the pastor spoke of the forgiving grace of God, something began to stir in my young heart. It was as if I was lifted out of my body and began to see myself from above. That's where I came Face to Face with the saving grace of the Savior. No, I was never paroled. But before I died in prison, I became a different man. *Leading hundreds to the Lord, I did more in prison for God than I could have ever done on the outside. (Philip. 1:12-13)*

Though I didn't live long, the impact of my short life was greater than had I lived for a hundred years. When I came Face to Face with God, I wasn't an infant...I was fully grown, mature and standing in the glorious presence of the Lord. So, what happened to my parents? The Lord visited them in the night hours and comforted their broken hearts. Years later they tried again and had another child. They must have told her about the illness that took my life, for that young girl grew up to become a leading doctor in curing childhood diseases. *Through our tragic loss, God brought hope and healing to thousands. (Rom. 8:28)*

Twenty-four years after I saw the child in a wheelchair, I came Face to Face with God. The Lord exchanged the confusion in my mind over an afflicted child for compassion for hopeless people paralyzed by sin and unable to help themselves. In that Face to Face encounter, God called me out of my profession into a life of full time Christian ministry. *Across nearly four decades, I've never forgotten that little boy...the one in the wheelchair or the one who grew up to serve God and give hope to the hopeless. (Matt. 9:36)*

Next: More Stories from My Childhood - *Bad Company, Wrong Friends and God!*

