



JOSEPH LATULIPE'S TESTIMONY

My name is Joseph Latulipe. I'm 22 years of age and have been attending Faith Baptist Church for 2 years now. I have been in and out of Church but recently have established myself regularly at Church.

I was born on the 26th October 1989 into a Catholic family both loving and religious. I am the second eldest of five brothers and am grateful to be a part of this family who has been supportive of me. My whole life I was raised a Catholic. I went to a Catholic church, attended a Catholic school and basically my whole life revolved around Catholic traditions, beliefs and practices. I had submitted myself to the false doctrines that corrupted true worship. I received their sacraments which included infant baptism, reconciliation, Holy communion and confirmation. Now I know that all these rituals and sacraments don't marry well with scripture and in turn were taken out of context contradicting Biblical truth. I was very adamant thinking that I was in the right place but something inside of me wasn't really satisfied or convinced. I just felt empty. To me, going to church felt like a weekly chore and there was no real motivation to follow Christ. Although I was an altar boy at church, there was no real relationship between God and me. This was because I didn't base my foundations of faith upon Jesus Christ – the Author and Finisher of our faith. My faith was vain and so was my profession in Christ at the time which was evident in the lifestyle I was living. The truth was that I thought I was right with God; I thought God would make some exceptions for me. I thought I was okay. I was a fool to think such unbiblical observations. I had created a God that was fitting in my own eyes - painted a picture that was pleasing to me, that suited the lifestyle that I lived and made me feel guilt free. I was leaning on my own

understanding which faulted my faith and I wasn't achieving anything.

When I finished school, I wanted to join the army. From my early teen years I had idolized the army and I aspired to join. I wanted to achieve something in life and make the most of it. I wanted to prove my worth and see if I could be the best of the best. This thought was like a drug that fuelled my ambitions and self-discovery. This was my heart's desire. A couple of months after I had finished school, I applied to join, but was shocked to receive a rejection. I was deemed medically unsuitable for service because I had contracted an eye disease known as Kerateconus months before. I was working fulltime, forking out thousands of dollars to help fix the problem. I underwent operation after operation for 2 years, but there was no progress. It was an utter failure. I ended up appealing the decision the army had handed down to me but I ended up getting rejected 2 more times. I couldn't believe it! There was a dream waiting to be fulfilled but I was stuck in no-man's land. There was nothing more I could do. I felt so helpless, angry, upset, broken, depressed, hopeless, stressed, destroyed. I was a mental wreck. I couldn't cope with it. Everything was spiraling out of control. I never told anyone my feelings - I was too embarrassed. I felt unworthy and inferior to others. I'd look around and observe that people were content with the lives they were living and that I wasn't. I wondered to myself, "Am I going to live with this feeling for the rest of my life?"

When I was 19, a close friend of mine, Emil, invited me to a youth camp, so I decided to go and check it out. I remember that the theme to that youth camp was "Where will you spend eternity?" It confused me at first and I thought to myself, "How can you know where you will spend eternity?" It was a question I couldn't answer, but I was open to the preaching. Well, now I know that you can know your eternal destiny from the Bible. 1 John 5:13 says, "These things have I

written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life, and that ye believe on the name of the Son of God.” The second night of camp, Brother Charlie preached Jesus Christ to me and told how I could have my sins forgiven. “...how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” – 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. I believed every word of it and repented. I accepted Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour that night. Christ became my city of refuge when my sins condemned me to death (Romans 6:23), He offered me sanctuary (Matthew 11:28) and gave me the assurance of my eternal security (John 10:28,) and I know the gates of hell will never prevail against! (Matthew 16:18). The camp was instrumental in helping me establish a personal relationship with God but the hardest part of all was learning to maintain it and to develop that relationship, fellowship and spiritual walk with God daily. It wasn't easy for me as a teen to sustain it and I fell back into the world very quickly. I recovered that emptiness within the next few months, with nothing to satisfy the flesh or the spirit. I was living in continuous carnality and was quenching the Spirit who was convicting me without remorse. I was struggling to cope and discern. I ended up coming back to Faith Baptist months later, and enrolled myself into the Discipleship course. It helped me further increase my Biblical understanding as and it opened my eyes to a clearer understanding of God's intentions for us and how we can truly live for him. It was a blessing. I took further lessons with Brother Rob, Brother Charlie and Brother Angelo who took me under their wing, which showed me on a personal note how God can really work in us because I observed the abundant blessings that were evident in their lives. It helped me establish my feet to walk in fellowship with God. Over time, I involved myself in the SLAM ministry. Joining the SLAM ministry really changed my opinions and expectations about prison inmates. I pictured them as fierce and disrespectful animals who would be hard to crack but really it was the

exact opposite. Most of them are humble human beings eager to keep themselves from a tragic lifestyle. Giving the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to these inmates and also to the outcasts of society is just as important as witnessing to my family and friends.

As months went by, I slowly gathered the desire to join the army again and my previous ambitions resurfaced. I was in two minds between serving God or serving myself and I ended up leaving the church again. I became impatient. I was praying vain, selfish prayers to God for a selfish desire. I was treating God like He was a K-Mart store open 24/7. James 1:8 says “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” and I found that out the hard way. I was experiencing dark moments at times, and I guess He let me, just to let me learn through experience. The thought crossed my mind several times when Jesus said, “...For without me ye can do nothing”. And I praise God for intervening in His timing and I praise Him for He is rich in love, mercy, grace and forgiveness. The Lord assured me through those times, “...For he hath said that I will never leave thee nor forsake thee”-Hebrews 12:9. “Being confident in this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”- Philippians 1:6. All those lessons from Bible study and fellowship were not done in vain. The good work had already begun and because the “Lord is my helper” He helped me get through all the dark moments of my life.

I found myself back at church and reconciled with God. I know if the army had never rejected me, I wouldn't be saved. I guess God declared me fit for service in the spiritual army, fighting a different kind of warfare which not many take part in. The Lord dealt with me and was really patient. It kind of sparked a revival in me and humbled me immensely. I began to establish myself regularly in church and on a personal level with God. I have rededicated my life to God. Galatians 6:3 spoke to me personally on every level. “For if a man

think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.” I have never been so happy to be in Church, to hear the word preached, it really uplifts me because every message speaks to me. I know that there’s a purpose behind everything that God does, and in the mean time, I’m in the process of discovering God’s potential through me. I’ve been praying for baptism, a symbol of my own death, burial and resurrection and the answer of a good conscience towards the Lord Jesus Christ. I’m eager to begin serving the Lord through ministry, just starting off with something small and further progressing in God’s timing. Lately I’ve completed the soul-winning course and I have moved on to undertake a course at Bible College known as “Miracles of God”. It’s a great course taught to us by a great staff, faithfully committed to teach the younger generation, further enhancing our knowledge of the faith and better equipping us with answers. The more answers we have, the more people we can help and hopefully lead them to Jesus Christ. The best decision I’ve ever made was to follow Christ. I have no regrets and I know I never will. I pray that I may be an effective soldier for Christ conquering under His banner and expanding His Kingdom. The only victory we can ever have is in Jesus. Victory in Jesus.

Your brother in Christ Jesus,
Joseph Latulipe
Psalm 33:4