

## How God led me Down the Right Path

Good morning everyone and Happy Father's day to all the men here at Woodside. For those of you who do not know me, my name is Tim McCafferty and this is my story of how Crist came into my life. I must say this is a whole new perspective for me, standing here center stage. I'm usually out there with you folks or sitting back here behind the drums filling in for Cliff.

So when Pastor Doug asked me to speak today I was like wow..... he must be really desperate. I'm kidding.. Honestly I was excited, honored and to be honest a bit nervous. I turned to my wife with excitement like a little kid and said.. guess what Doug just asked me? She replied, "Something about small group?" No no no guess again, "ahh something about band practice?" No no no guess again. She then said, "Are you feeling ok?" So I finally told her and she was just as excited as I was.

Let me start off by giving you some background on my life. I come from a family of five. My mother Joan, my father Dale, older brother Mike and younger sister Teresa. We were raised as Catholic's and attended St.Bedes church. My brother and I went to Sunday school as well. After a few years my family and I stopped attending services at our local church. My brother, sister and I were relieved because we found mass to be extremely long and boring. I had a wonderful childhood growing up. Played all kinds of sports; baseball, football and wrestling. My brother and I both played the drums. He was more of a jazz type of drummer as I was more like a hard hitting rock drummer. He had the pearly white kit and I had the all black kit. My brother would refer to my drums as Satin's drums. My poor mother and father had to listen to two drum kits in the house for years, but at least they knew where we were.

When I got into my mid to late teen years my life started to turn the wrong direction. I starting hanging out with the wrong crowd. Started smoking cigarettes and drinking beer, alcohol or whatever was around. I quit the wrestling team in my junior year of high school, my grades had dropped and nothing really seemed to matter to me. My senior year was all about getting by with minimal effort. I did manage to just squeak by and eventually graduate. Not that I didn't have the smarts but rather I just didn't care. My poor mother would stay up late every night until I came home, which was usually after 2:00am. Sometimes I wouldn't come back for days. One night at the dinner table my Mom noticed I was the only one not present. She asked my sister and brother as to my whereabouts. My brother spoke and said, "Um he said something about going to ft. Lauderdale, Florida for spring break. Oh yeah, he left yesterday Mom, he will back sometime later this week." Mom was not too happy to say the least and I never mentioned anything to her about going down there. You get the idea of where my life was heading...nowhere. I remember my Dad saying, "You are taking the wrong path in life son." So true so true.

Fast forward 20 years later, I was invited to an outdoor swim party at a friend of mines mother's house in Newtown. Annette (My buddy bills mom) had also invited people she worked with from Warminster General Hospital. One of the several women she invited happened to be Jennifer Reynolds. Jennifer was with her two kids, Chelsea age 3 and Michael age 1 at the time. I was immediately attracted to her and needed a way to break the ice. When I finally got the courage I went over to talk to her. I noticed right away there was something special about her. As I was talking to her Michael would cling

to her like there was no tomorrow and then would start crying. We really didn't have too much of a conversation between Michael needing attention from his mother and Chelsea asking a thousand and one questions. She was known to be quite the chatter box. As the afternoon was winding down Jennifer and her 2 kids were packing up to leave the party. They gathered their belongings and headed towards their car. I quickly ran into the kitchen and looked out the window only to find that they were now in the car. I was very disappointed that I blew my opportunity to at least ask her out on a date. Then I noticed she had gotten out of the car and was heading back to front door. I quickly found a pen and scrap piece of paper and wrote down my name and number. I felt like I was back in high school again. She came back into the kitchen to pick up a bowl that she had brought. As she turned back towards the front door I said, "It was very nice meeting you." She replied with same, "Nice meeting you as well." The piece of paper was in the palm of my hand so as I went to shake hers I slipped her my note. She gave me a smile and walked out the door back to her car. I then thought to myself, "What 32 year old slips a note to a woman for a date. I'm such an idiot! That was so immature and something I would of done back in high school. Well I can only hope for the best." Two days later the phone rang and it was Jennifer on the line. I was shocked that she called. We had a nice conversation even though she had two kids in the bathtub bathing. We dated for about 7 years and were married on June 14<sup>th</sup> 2003 right here at Woodside in the sanctuary. Pastor Doug was so kind to marry Jennifer and I. He paraphrased lyrics from my all-time favorite band, Led Zeppelin throughout our wedding service. He was brilliant as always!

We moved into our new home in Hedgerow Woods that fall. It was everything we wanted in a house and more. I immediately started fixing up the place and re-doing several rooms as most people do with a new home. A few years had passed and I started feeling extreme anxiety. I felt as if I couldn't keep up with what needed to be done. In order to deal with these problems I began to do things my way. I was going to the bar every Saturday and Sunday. I was not violent or loud when I drank. I considered myself to be a social drinker but found myself becoming social from noon until the time I went to bed. This eventually spilled over into the weekdays. I would get off the train from work and go directly to the bar for an hour or two and then head home. Doing it my way made me feel pretty good. But as we all know it takes more and more and you're never satisfied.

Now my wife knew all of this was going on but never really confronted me about it. One Sunday morning Jen asked me to go to Church with her and I accepted. Now keep in mind, the only time I would go to Church would be for Christmas and maybe Easter. That particular morning is when God started paving the road for me. Pastor Doug was preaching and the message was about God coming first and allowing him into your life. He talked about how people try so hard to do things their way or shall I say my way. As he continued speaking he gave examples such as addiction, substance abuse, etc. This really captured my attention. For a moment he looked off to his right and starred directly in my general direction for about 10 seconds. At that point in time, I was almost certain he was looking and talking to me. Those 10 seconds seemed like a lifetime. I was literally shaking and my heart was racing. I nudged my wife and whispered from the side of my mouth, "Did you tell Doug I was coming today?" She replied, "Don't be silly." I replied, "I take that as a no." She said, "Just be quite and listen." If his eyes were lasers it would have burned a hole in my head.

As the years went on I started to attend Church more frequently. I learned to listen to the message instead of just hearing it. I wanted to know more about Jesus; where he came from, how it all began and how it all came about. The only John and Paul I knew of at the time were members of the Beatles.

In 2010 God had planted another seed on my journey to getting to know him. I joined my first small group hosted by Cliff and Debbie Hutchens. We had 10 to 12 members in our group. At first I was a bit reluctant about going. I thought that everyone in the group would be well versed in the Bible and that I wouldn't fit in. I was afraid of being asked a question regarding scripture, verses or geographic locations from which the Bible describes. Well .it turns out that most people there had some Biblical knowledge but not everyone. This made me feel more relaxed knowing I wasn't going to be judged on what I did or did not know. Our small group disbanded the following year.

Fast forward to the year 2014. On Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> God gave me a gift that was beyond what I could do on my own and was much bigger than me by far. Jesus gave me his love. The Holy Spirit within me was lit. I know he always loved me but I just needed to let him in. That same day with his all mighty strength behind me was the day I quit drinking. To this day I truly believe it was God's power that helped me. I am now alcohol free to this very day. Later that day when my wife came home I told her that I was done for good. Without saying a word, she knew exactly what I meant. Shortly after she said these words to me, "I prayed for you for years. God has answered my prayers." At that point I broke down with tears of joy. It was a very emotional day for the both of us.

In May of 2014 my wife and I had a college graduation party for my daughter Chelsea. She had just graduated from DeSales University. We invited family and friends to join us in celebrating her graduation. It was a beautiful sunny day; warm without a cloud in the sky. During the party I noticed Doug sitting outside congregating with folks enjoying a tasty burger. I went over to chat with him. We started talking about general things like, how's the family, how's your job going, etc. Then I asked him if was still playing the guitar? He replied, "Yes I am." He then asked if I still playing the drums. I said, "No not at all. I haven't touched them in over 15 years." He then said, "well stop by the church and we will give you a try out audition." I contemplated for a moment and then agreed. I then proceeded back into the house and in the kitchen getting ready to leave was Darlene Stevens. She pulled me aside and asked if I would like to play for her celebration band. I replied, "Sure I would love to." She mentioned that Cliff was asking her to find another drummer to give him a break for a change. In retrospect God was providing yet another path for me to bring me closer to him and also helping Cliff to find some piece of mind from playing every week.

My first band practice had finally arrived. It was a Tuesday night; I walked into the vineyard and nervously started to setup the infamous red drum kit. I really wasn't sure what to expect since I was the new kid on the block. It was Glenn and Mark to my right, Jamie, and Barb to my left and the singers were up front. From the first song to the very last song I was horrible. I was playing way too fast. I was too loud and my hands felt like lead from being so nervous. For me it was an absolute train wreck. Darlene would make suggestions throughout practice as to where to play softer, when to stop, etc. and I still

got it wrong. I will be honest; I never learned how to read music. Darlene would say to the band, “ok... on this song...It starts out with the intro, then we immediately go to the bridge, followed by the chorus twice, back to the bridge, then into the instrumental followed by the tag. Then on verse 2 stay quiet and verse 3 start to build. And on the last chorus I want a really big sound. Tim, if you miss the tag just listen for the keyboard, when she plays that C sharp that’s when you can come in.” I was like, “Ahhhh what? Can you dumb it down it so I can understand it?” Right over my head! I was lost again. So in order to get my act together I asked Cliff for advice. He said, “Print out the lyrics sheet for all the songs and make notes.” It was great advice. Making notes on the lyrics sheet made it so much easier to follow. Whenever I need help with song I go to Cliff. He knows all of them like the back of his hand. I greatly appreciate it, thank you Cliff.

As time went on I gradually got up to speed. We also have prayer time in the middle of our practice. One person from the group is designated to speak about how god has affected their lives. This could be a passage from the bible, scripture or something they have learned about themselves through Christ. I’ve learned a lot during our prayer time. Not only about how Christ changed them but also about who they are, their background, their personality and realizing that none of us are perfect. Except for maybe Jamie Stevens. Go head ask him, he’ll tell ya. Overall these people have been so kind to let me in and have never judged me. I also thank Dawn wills and Jen Uhlman for allowing me to fill in from time to time in their bands; Higher ground and Peace jam.

Another gift that god put in my path was small group hosted by Doug and Lisa Hogland. The people in my group are wonderful people. Every Monday night we meet from 7:30. To 9:00. From 7:30 to 8:00 we hang out and talk amongst ourselves while we snack on treats before we discuss a chapter from whatever book we are currently reading. Right now it’s the Believe series. Now for me I’m not a big reader. Fortunately Doug has the believe series on DVD. Most of the information I get is from watching Randy Frazee from the DVD. After the video we gather around and discuss the chapter. The questions that are asked of the group are very challenging but keep us thinking. Between coming to Sunday service, prayer time at band practice and small group, I’ve come to know God and the power and strength he gives me day in and day out. It’s made me a better person over all.

So what path is God leading you to? What signs has he given you? Follow them, for only he knows which path is right for you.

Thank you so much for listening and God bless you all!