

"A Visit From Jesus" - Pastor Bob's Story

I grew up number 4 in a family of 8 kids. Dad was gone a lot; he drove truck. Mom took us to church every Sunday. She was a good Christian, who plastered the back end of our family van with catchy Christian bumper stickers. But somehow, I grew up without God really being real. I believed in Him; I just never thought about Him.

By the time I was 21, I married my wife. She came from a Mennonite background but rebelled against God by the time she was in high school. (Read her story for more on that.) We weren't serving God and our lives were a mess. But so were all the lives of those around us.

One couple kept asking us to church stuff. This event. That speaker. Finally, we said yes - to get them off our backs. As I was sitting there listening to the speaker (or not listening), my wife said, "I'm going; are you?" I said, "Yeah." I thought she meant we were leaving. Instead, we walked to the front and gave our lives to God.

We began reading the Bible. Our lives drastically changed. Nobody had to tell us what to change; our hearts told us. And as we read and did what the Bible taught, our lives got better and better. My wife was getting set free, and problems were leaving my life.

I will never forget the first time we walked into what you would call a "non-denominational, charismatic, word of faith" church. To say 'it was a little different than what we were used to' would be an outrageous understatement. During praise and worship, people were clapping, dancing, and raising their hands. We almost left. But as strange as it was to us, we could sense God there. And peace. And real joy. So we stayed. And stayed and stayed.

One night as we were visiting with our pastors, we prayed and were filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. It was that night that I received a visit from Jesus Himself.

I was in my bedroom when Jesus just showed up. He called me into full time ministry and began to show me in 3D Technicolor the things I would be doing - some of which have yet to be fulfilled. That was in 1980.

In the meantime, I continued to work my secular job and we served wherever we were needed. We worked anywhere from the nursery to janitorial to grounds to youth to eventually serving as assistant pastors. It wasn't until 1985 that I entered full-time ministry.

In 1988, we moved our family from Ohio to Michigan and took our current position as pastors. I asked God one time, "Why me? Why do I qualify to be used by you?" He responded with, "Why not?" Then He took me to 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, *"For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are..."*

Then He said to me, "There's your call." I thought to myself, "Well... then I qualify." And He has used me mightily ever since.

From Quincy, Michigan, we have seen miracles and have preached the gospel all over the world - Costa Rica in South America; France in Europe; Ukraine and Russia in Asia; Israel in the Middle East; in Australia; and here at home in the United States of America.

I have always considered it a privilege to do what I do and will do it with all my heart until that day.