

Stories of Healing

How God has worked in our Church Family

Week 12

My Faith Grew from a Mustard Seed

Nathan Armstrong's Story

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

John 12.24

And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.

Mark 4.8

Twelve years ago, Nathan Armstrong made Jesus the King of his life. Nathan would have described his life before Christ as turbulent, full of conflict, and having a lack of direction. His early home life presented some challenges that most people may not have experienced. He saw drug use and abuse of various sorts that left a lasting impact. While he acknowledges that his home life wasn't perfect, he says since he has found grace in Christ, he extends that same grace to his family as well.

So, how did Nathan end up becoming a disciple? It all started with his great-grandma Edith. Edith took care of him pretty often. Her godly example still has a strong impression on Nathan as he recounts her role in his story. As a very young boy, Edith always had Nathan in the pew of a local Church of Christ. She gave him structure, encouragement, and planted a seed of faith that would eventually take deep roots.

Nathan always knew something about his life, and the world he was in just wasn't quite right. He longed for something more, something higher. Once he got out on his own in life, Nathan was committed to seeking a brighter future... but there were some speed bumps.

Despite his commitment to transcend the darkness of his past, Nathan stumbled into some of the same sins he had seen growing up. However, he started realizing his trajectory. In the middle of that darkness, he started thinking about his great-grandmother Edith.

“I wanted to be more like the person she was than the person that I am right now.”

He remembered sitting with her in church. He remembered her prayers. He remembered her opening the scriptures with him. Nathan determined that it was time for him to seek out a church. Nathan found one in the “Villageview Church of Christ” in Bowling Green, Ohio.

Nathan was met there with love. A man named David Boswell took him under his wing and invested in him personally. He began to teach him from the scriptures. They developed a strong relationship and eventually the gospel had its intended effect on Nathan. Nathan heard the call of repentance and answered it. He gave his life to Jesus in baptism after about two months of studying in the scriptures.

Since then, Nathan found his way back to Dayton and began working at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in August 2009. He found a church home at the Kettering Church of Christ. From his first visit, he made some new connections and some new relationships. Nathan found a spiritual family and a home. People took him under their wing and spiritually mentored him. He found a warm welcome, open arms, and stimulation for growth in his spiritual walk at Kettering, now more recently known as the Cornerstone Church of Christ. He found purpose, direction, and hope in Jesus and he now shines as a light in this world for His Kingdom.

Applications and Takeaways

- **All it takes is a mustard seed.** A tiny seed of faith might be all it takes for someone to end up living an entire lifetime of fruitful service to King Jesus. We can never underestimate how far planting a little seed can go. *For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you. (Matthew 17.20).*
- **God is working to prepare the way for His people.** God’s perspective is not restricted by time, and He is actively blazing a trail for all those who purpose to seek after Him. *It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. (Deuteronomy 31.8).*
- **We have a part to play in bringing faith to people.** Nathan’s great-grandmother Edith gave an intentional effort in discipling him and showing him the importance of being a part of a church, reading scripture, and praying. She modeled and had an intention to pass on her faith to him, and those efforts had their desired effect. *I planted... (1 Corinthians 3.6a).*
- **People have to intentionally invest in their relationship with Jesus as well.** God plays a part, other people play a part, and we need to play an active role in our spiritual formation. If we refuse to cooperate with God and with others, then we will never sprout,

grow or bloom spiritually. *For this reason, make every effort to supplement your faith... (2 Peter 1.5a).*

- **Discipleship is necessary in order for growing Christians to reach maturity.** Once we see a faith-seed starting to take root, we should continue to nurture the sprout that springs up, and continue to help them reach up to maturity and fruitfulness in Christ, just as many at Kettering did for Nathan. *...Apollos watered... (1 Corinthians 3.6b).*
- **Jesus is the only, and the best foundation for lifelong spiritual prosperity.** At the end of the day, our spiritual life is nothing without Jesus' work of providence in our past, active role of spiritual leadership in our present, and ultimate role as savior in our future. Our faith ought to be fully built on that one solid foundation. When it is, we can be sure that it will increase and produce fruit as it has in Nathan's life. *...but God gave the growth (1 Corinthians 3.6c).*

1. What stands out about this story to you?

2. What are some small things that we can do to plant seeds for the gospel?

3. What is God's part in the 'gardening' process?

4. What is the part of other people in planting seeds for the gospel?

5. What is our part in bearing fruit for God?

6. What happens when someone sprouts spiritually (is converted) but is not discipled (brought to maturity) into a deeper relationship with Christ?