

## **The Story of How Jesus Christ has Worked within my life - Dr. Shawn E. Seitz**

I grew up in a stable and secure household with absolutely wonderful parents. As a family, we attended a large church on Sundays and typically prayed before meals. I had bought into the idea that being a good person got you into heaven and believed most people were basically good; some just had bad breaks. I had also grown to believe in, "The American Dream," that if you worked hard, you could have anything or become anything you wanted. That's where joy came from. It made sense to me, and I had no reason to doubt any of it at the time. As a young boy I guess you'd say I was content, secure, happy and without worry.

As I entered the 5th grade, everything abruptly and unexpectedly changed. My father, who was my very best friend and role model for living, drowned in a duck hunting accident off the shores of Lake Erie in Michigan. He was lost along with a friend of his for an entire month before finally being found washed up on Canadian shores. At first, many people made attempts to visit us and to encourage us. But eventually they all did the same thing. They simply disappeared. In time there was really no one around us anymore; no calls, no encouragement, no assistance. I found it terribly difficult to deal with, to make sense of. Why did God take my dad anyway? It was impossible to understand at the time, and although I didn't realize it until years later; the questions, the loneliness and the devastation I was experiencing all set me on a journey to restore some kind of meaning to my life. I began pursuing all sorts of things; but nothing I ever did or sought after brought me any lasting fulfillment. Everything ended the same way; leaving me either rejected, disappointed, or hungering for more. The "American Dream" I had grown to believe in wasn't working for me. I found myself becoming a slave to a number of unfulfilling appetites, and I increasingly carried around a burden of guilt over my disintegrating lifestyle and values. Where was I going? What was I doing? Why was I doing it? What was I looking for?

Though unaware of it at the time, I now know there is a heavenly Father who was looking out for me every step of the way. He was there and reaching out to me even when everyone else seemed to have vanished. Every so often He would send someone into my life that seemed to have that something I was lacking. These were people who happened to talk about Jesus Christ in a way I wasn't comfortable with. They seemed at peace and victorious in their lives and alive in a way I couldn't pinpoint but could definitely recognize. Ironic as it may sound, I tried to avoid these people, thinking they were fanatics or perhaps involved in some kind of cult. But as hard as I would try, I'd run into another one, and each time it would impact me a little further.

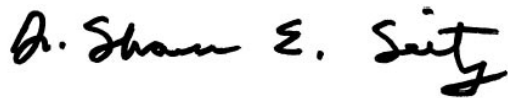
By the time I was in my mid 20's I had run into a number of people like this. An older missionary woman at a military airbase in the Philippines, a young black man on an assembly line of an engine plant in Michigan, a young woman at an apartment complex I once managed, and many more. As I began to consider it might be something more than coincidence I decided to go to church (I had stopped shortly after my father had died) and began reading the Bible. It was around this same time that I heard an evangelist on television, a preacher named Billy Graham. I had heard of Billy Graham before but never had the opportunity to listen to him, so I decided I would listen to what he had to say that day. As I did, all the pieces began to fit together. For the first time in my life I heard a clearly articulated message from the Bible about who Jesus Christ was and what that meant for me personally. Dr. Graham said we were created to be in fellowship with God and could only find true fulfillment in a right relationship with God. That's what we were made for. He then went on to say all people had a significant problem, because all were guilty of breaking God's laws. I had no trouble acknowledging that truth in my life. It was the source of the guilt I carried. He went on to say that breaking God's laws eternally separated us from fellowship with God. As I listened, I knew that's what was missing in my life; I was made for God, but I was separated from Him by my disobedience, by something the Bible refers to as sin. He then went on to explain that God, out of His great love, had provided the way, the only way, to have that severed relationship restored. That's what Jesus Christ came to do! God sent His only Son to die on a cross in my place and for my disobedience. I realized then, that even if I were the only

person alive that day, Jesus would have still come to die on the cross for me, creating a pathway to be forgiven and eternally restored into relationship with the Father. It was something very personal, and nothing I nor anyone else had the capacity to accomplish. That's love and concern for one's well-being like I never understood before. A lot of people had unknowingly abandoned me and my family in life, but God never did. As I pondered those things, I was convicted within my heart of the truths they held as I realized that Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead victorious over the grave so I could be forgiven for everything I had ever done wrong and be perfectly and eternally restored in relationship with Almighty God. God is the sole refuge where true fulfillment and peace come from. There is no other. Dr. Graham said I needed to acknowledge my disobedience to God, turn from it, and ask Jesus Christ to come into my life as Savior by assuming residence as its rightful owner. That's what I did. Since the day I was born, it was God working in and upon me to bring me to the point where I was able to recognize I was lost, in need of Him alone, and make that decision. It was all His work.

That day I asked Jesus Christ to take over my life. (*"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."* John 1:12)

I remember feeling as if a large weight had been lifted off my shoulders. Over the next several years my life slowly began to change as I studied the Bible more (it's God's word to us), got more involved in a good church, and continued the ongoing work of surrendering my life over to Christ. God was giving me a whole new set of priorities to live by. I increasingly found my life was no longer lacking significance or purpose, and I wasn't lonely any longer. I found myself to be finally at peace and more and more saw my life as being victorious because of Jesus. I realized I didn't have to be a slave to appetites any longer. Difficult times would come now and again, but I now handled them differently. Jesus made all the difference in the world. I became a new person just as the Bible promises: *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."* 2 Corinthians 5:17). I now have a personal relationship with God, and I know I have the gift of eternal life. I owe it all to Jesus! I had a rough time and a lot of questions, but none were too difficult for God to deal with. He made me, He stood in the gap when I lost my father, He stuck with me while I walked aimlessly and never abandoned me, He called me to Himself and loved me enough to give His Son Jesus to die in my place. I deserved none of that kind of loving favor. That's purpose, that's fulfillment, that's victory, that's love, and that's joy. He's real, He loves you just like He loves me, and if you do not know Him, you can know Him too. And, He's given us the Bible (His inerrant, breathed out, Word), to learn about Him, to learn about ourselves, and to lead us out of darkness into the wonderful light of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the descriptive names given of God in the Bible is "The Alpha and The Omega" (the beginning and the end). I thought it fitting to name Alpha Tech Pet, Inc. with this thought in mind. My first (beginning) desire for the business is to honor God in all of its' affairs and to continually give witness to the glory of God's Name and the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



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