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# REDEEMED AND SAYING SO PART II

February 5, 2012

## LET THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD... \_\_\_\_\_ !!!

We're going to follow this theme for the next couple weeks, encouraging you to be brave with your Christian faith.

### MATTHEW CASKEY'S FB POST

*"Not long ago I was questioning the idea of faith, what Jesus really stood for, and the overall idea of being "saved." Today, I felt something inside of me I have never felt before and towards the end of the sermon, I walked up to Brad Graves and gave my "20 seconds of insane bravery". I asked God to save me. I realized at that moment the true meaning and value of Jesus and what he stands for. Words can't express the feeling of happiness, freedom, and pure excitement that I have felt all day. "* - Matthew Caskey

That's a little "saying so" right there. He's a Jesus freak...

Continuing with this theme, here's a story about saying so... I was 12 when me and a friend went walking out of the studio...he was real popular in the cast... he was 14. He tried to get me to talk about girls in a wrong way. I thought about it...mustered up some courage...and I told him that wasn't the right thing to do. He called me a couple of choice names, and said I wasn't a man. He proceeded to tell me about all kinds of things that a 12 year old shouldn't be hearing about from a 14 year old...I lost some innocence that day. I kept on doing my best to argue, and go against where he was trying go with the conversation. Finally he got hacked off and said we should just go back into the studio.

We went back into the studio...and everyone was wide eyed, staring at us. Both our lapel mics were on, we didn't know it. Our conversation had been played in the studio for all to hear. We were all actors in a kids Christian TV show. I had been tested...and I didn't even know it...so had my "friend". In that moment I chose to be brave, even though I was made fun of for it. You could say in that moment that I was a martyr.

"MARTYR: someone who suffers for what they believe in"

### MORMONISM FOUNDED "HERO"

Most Mormons will tell you that their founding prophet was martyred for his faith...actually killed for it. History shows something much different. He was actually arrested for dealing in the black arts, a type of spiritual prophesying called "divining". He was taken into custody for this crime and imprisoned. On June 27, 1844 in Illinois, an angry mob broke into the prison to kill him. Before he was gunned down in his jail cell, he shot and killed several of his attackers with a pistol that he had smuggled into prison. This is not an example of a Martyr.

Some say he was but martyrs don't fight back...at least not with the same tactics of those attacking. Martyrs fight back in a completely different way... with a consistent dedication to their beliefs...no matter what it costs them. This should be true of all the Redeemed, and should fuel your motivation to Say So. There are bigger things going on than just what meets the eye. Brave people are tuned into these things, they aren't so blinded by what's directly in front of them. They understand that they are part of a much bigger story.

Some people are brave enough to be martyrs...some people wimp out because of fear. What are you like when the heat gets turned up? Just like when I was tested without knowing it outside that studio, God wants your strength to come out even stronger when it gets hotter. Let's take a look at a situation in the Bible where the heat got turned way up.

***John 13:37-38 NIV*** <sup>37</sup>*Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."* <sup>38</sup>*Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"*

Peter is full of some big talk. Peter knows that Jesus is about to go through something terrible...and he tells Jesus that he wants to be there with Him. Jesus basically asks him how strong he'll be when the heat gets turned up. Peter was about to face a test and even though Jesus told Peter that he would in fact deny that he even knew Jesus, you've got to assume that Jesus hopes that Peter will stand up and be brave. When I think back to that day outside that studio, I had a choice... I could just go with however everyone was going, and avoid standing out or I could step up and Say So. If I'm honest...I was scared...and yet I totally felt God pulling me along to be brave. Don't ever feel that you're alone when you're "saying so"...YOU AREN'T ALONE! If you listen closely, and are sensitive to God, you'll hear him cheering you on in times like this.

*"IN TIMES OF TESTING THE DEVIL HECKLES YOU FROM THE CHEAP SEATS, WHILE GOD CHEERS YOU ON FROM THE FRONT ROW...BECAUSE GOD PAID A MUCH HIGHER PRICE FOR HIS SEATS."*

Now it is true that a while after this statement from Peter he did display what he thought was bravery in the garden while Christ was being arrested. Peter pulls out his sword and starts going all ninja on the guards. He was pretty bad with his skill though...he missed the guy's neck and just got his ear. There is an important lesson for us in here. Peter acts as if he knows what he should do, and gets all emotional and battle ready but not when it really mattered. He had a big dramatic performance to show off how good he was in the wrong time and place. Later, when it would really be needed...well, we see a much different picture. Take a look at what happened with Peter when he had the chance to Say So.

***JOHN 18:15-17 NIV*** <sup>15</sup>*Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple (John) was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard,* <sup>16</sup>*but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the girl on duty there and brought Peter in.*

***17 "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" the girl at the door asked Peter.***

## PETER IN HIS "COURTYARD MOMENT"

Peter is brought into the courtyard...the place where Christ is being questioned and persecuted. A servant girl asks Peter a simple question...almost in jest... in verse 17 the stage is set for Peter to "Say So". The servant girl asked him, "Are you one of Jesus' disciples?" There it is, the moment of truth... will he be brave? will he stand for what is right? His microphone is on and people are listening... What happens next is so sad...it's almost as though his decision making ability and his character takes a little vacation.

***JOHN 18:17, 25-27 NIV 17 ...He replied, "I am not."***

***25 ...Peter...was asked by another, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?"***

He denied it, saying, "I am not."

***26 One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove?" 27 Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.***

In this moment, according to Peter, the Redeemed of the Lord Say NO. Once Peter began to fall into this downward spiral of weakness he couldn't get out. It's very interesting because a few hours earlier in the story Peter displayed what he thought was bravery when he took out his sword and waged war against Jesus' aggressors. It was a display of false strength, taking a big dramatic stand against the enemy. But when it got real personal, when true bravery would be called for, when it was time for Peter's Say So spirit to really come out, he dove headfirst into a downward spiral of weakness, shame, and, I would submit...addiction.

## ADDICTION

Isn't it odd to you that Peter would change so drastically? And so quickly? As if there was no thinking or rational decision making that went into his action of total betrayal?

Here's a word on addiction... The human brain is an extraordinary complex and finely tuned communications network containing billions of specialized cells that give origin to our thoughts, emotions, perceptions, decision making, and drives. When an addictive behavior is first applied to feel pleasure or relieve depression or stress, the choice is short lived...because it disrupts a well balanced system that is already in place in the brain to deal with these stresses. It takes work and effort, but this system is in place. However, the addictive behavior soon replaces a person's healthy plan to deal with stress with a one track mission to seek and apply that behavior to get relief.

At the point that the behavior becomes a constant, the normal desires, motivations, and decision making will shut down...the human brain has now been trained to take this pathway of least resistance to feel better. Some doctors suggest that addictions create grooves in the brain in which normal healthy processes have in a sense become short circuited, and now replaced by these destructive grooves. In other words, when the addict is given the opportunity to take part in destructive, sick behavior, that addict's mind literally shuts down, and the downward spiral of destruction gets deeper and deeper, until the life is in ruin. There is hope, though...major hope!

## PETER'S RECOVERY

So is this the end of the story of Peter? Does he wallow in this cycle and lose his soul to fear and weakness? Hardly! Go home this week and read Acts chapters 2 and 3. You'll find two of the strongest, brave, risky, dangerous sermons ever recorded. He preached these messages against the religious machine of his day...one that stood battle ready against him and at the end of the second sermon he was arrested and sent to prison. The Bible records what happened as a result of these sermons

***ACTS 4:1-4   <sup>1</sup>The priests and the captain of the temple guard...came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. <sup>2</sup>They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup>They seized Peter and John...and put them in jail until the next day. <sup>4</sup>But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.***

Here's the hope...doctors have also found that the brain is quick to heal itself when new courses of action are applied, and healthy habits are placed on top of sick ones. I think it's safe to say that Peter changed that night the rooster crowed and he started a new life of Saying So, that literally changed the world... is a rooster crowing in your heart right now?

## WHAT ABOUT YOU

If you've failed in this life to do right and make a name for Jesus, you're in good company. It's your courtyard moment...God still cheers you on...and so do a lot of your Christian brothers and sisters gone before you. Christians that have been Saying So since the creation of the world. Believers in God that knew their microphones were on...AND HOW THEY LIVED IN PRIVATE TRULY MATTERED TO THIS GREAT CAUSE CALLED THE "KINGDOM OF GOD".

***Hebrews 11:33 – 12:1-3   <sup>33</sup>...“these heroes of the faith...shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup>quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. <sup>35</sup>...Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. <sup>36</sup>Some faced mockers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. <sup>37</sup>They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—<sup>38</sup>the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.***

*<sup>39</sup>These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. <sup>40</sup>God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.*

*Hebrews 12 <sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of these witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. <sup>2</sup>Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

## LIVE LIKE YOUR MICROPHONE IS ON

Live your life so the preacher won't have to lie at your funeral. Live a life in public and in private that puts the spotlight on Jesus and all that He has done for your freedom. You have been redeemed by his perfect life, his perfect death, and his perfect resurrection.

Let the Redeemed of the Lord Say So!!