



### From the SEA...To the ROCK!

I remember the first time I ever got drunk. I was 14 when a school teacher introduced me to *Harvey Wall-Bangers*. I was so sick afterward that I swore to myself I would never drink again. By the age of 18, I had been in the Canadian Navy for about a year and a slave to alcohol and drugs. We never intend for it to happen that way because it starts out to be just for fun. I remember seeing what it did to others around me; homes breaking up, violence, vandalism, deaths and suicides. But I said over and over again that I would never get THAT bad. Nope! Not proud 'Bosun Jones'. Even after 9 years in the Navy, then finally getting discharged for causing too many administration problems. I was always in trouble both on the ship and ashore because of my excessive drinking. I continued in my rebellion and bought a Harley with my pension. I thought I would try the *bikin'* scene for awhile, trying to be someone I wasn't, like a lot of other people in the world hiding behind a disguise. After a few years, I finally started getting sick of the perversion and the filth, the cheating, lying and guilt. It seemed that no matter how hard I tried to live without booze, I was very miserable. The bottle was a big part of my life I grew up with and became very dependent on it. I guess I didn't know how to live without it. I tried going to AA (*Alcoholics Anonymous*) but listening to others talk about their problems got me down and I wanted to drink more. I went to a treatment center, and that was comfortable being straight until it was time to go back out THERE and face live again. Something was definitely missing in my life and I couldn't figure out why I felt so lonely all the time. I've always had lot's of friends and was quite popular in the party scene because of my sense of humour. But, at the same time, I was lonely, sick and tired of drinking and druggin' but miserable when I wasn't. By this time, it was a miracle that I even managed to keep a job with the *British Columbia Railway*. Finally the depression and self-hatred became unbearable, I wanted to die. You see, there was a lie going through my mind. If I can only end this life and start a new one, (*reincarnation*) maybe everything would be better the next time around. I heard that my younger brother had become a *born again* Christian a while back and he had sent me an invitation to his wedding in Chilliwack. The thought of being in a church made my skin crawl. I hated church and those that went to them. I figured all Christians were a bunch of wimps who needed a crutch in life. (*At that time I didn't see my addictive lifestyle as a crutch*) Of course I went to his wedding. I remember the people

in this church, they seemed sincerely happy. Some of them had the nerve to ask me if I was 'SAVED'. Ha, what a joke. I hated how they talked to me as if they really cared. Or did they? I was very brutal with my choice of vocabulary as I responded to them. They continued to reach out to me. Some of the things the preacher (*Pastor Marks*) said during his short sermon about God's promise of a new life really ate away at my insides. But I refused to pay any mind to it and just shrugged it off with a proud chuckle. Besides, it just sounded too good to be true. I went back living life for whatever it was worth. The more I thought about that church, those people and the Pastor's words, the more I felt the driving force to stay drunk. The weeks went by and I was on one of the worst drunken binges of my life. The depression became so bad and the desire to kill myself wouldn't leave me alone. The loneliness became too much to handle. After several days of tormenting arguments in my mind, I sat down in my trailer and drank myself into a stupor and a state of boldness, ready to take my life. The voice of that Pastor echoed in my brains, "*begin a fresh start, let Jesus change and heal your life.*" I would be in such a state of fear and confusion, sometimes breaking out in hysterical fits of sobbing (*thank goodness no one was around to see the tough guy crying like a baby*). I had stopped going to work because of my drunkenness and depression. The next couple days, I began reading the gospel literature that my brother had given me about salvation (*My brother and his wife had dropped in on me a few times to reach out to me and I still thank God for that*). That same driving force to kill myself continued to torment me. Again, I would read the gospel tracts and think about those people at the *Potter's House*. They seemed to have something real. I thought about my brother and how he had once lived a life of drug abuse. I phoned him in Chilliwack and told him I wanted that new life he was talking about. He drove for 3 hours to pray with me on a Saturday afternoon. We said the 'sinner's' prayer together and I asked God to forgive me and come into my life.

Let me tell you friend, what I experienced was so real. It felt like a thousand pound weight rolled completely off from my shoulders. I felt the warmth and love of God flood my inner being that no drug or drink could ever produce. I suddenly felt an inner calmness that I haven't known in a long time, since I was a young boy. From that day on, I've been a new man. It's not a religion but a real relationship with God our Creator and Heavenly Father; He has totally restored my dignity. I haven't had the slightest desire to get drunk or use drugs in many years and God has blessed me with a beautiful wife and 3 sons. I finally found life, life more abundantly (*John 10-10*) through Jesus Christ. That's my story friend, what's yours? How's life going for you? Are you really happy? Maybe you struggle the same way I did. Maybe you want to die and end it all. Or perhaps you've heard the same voice over and over again in your mind to commit suicide and maybe starting over again? (*reincarnation*). Please don't do it! It's a lie. The bible says, "*it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement.*" (Hebrews

9:27). You can experience a new beginning my friend, a fresh start like I did and multitudes of other born again believers. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation."* You don't have to on like this for one more minute, just simply surrender to God and repent. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, *"Come to me, all of you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* You can know life is worth living after all. God thinks you're worth the death of His Son. You have great value in God's eyes and you can become the person He created you to be. Jesus never turns a sinner away. *"Him that comes to me, I will not cast out."* (John 6:37) You can be free. John 8:36 says, *"If the Son therefore makes you free, you shall be free indeed."* Maybe you haven't reach a place as low as I have, and maybe you don't have any addictive habits. And, maybe you think you have everything life has to offer you. Maybe you think you're an okay person. Please, don't be deceived, we are all sinners and in need of God's forgiveness. *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* (Romans 3:23) and *"There is not a just man upon Earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."* (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Maybe you're not ready or you want to hold off until you've reached 'the bottom'. 2 Corinthians 6:2 says, *"Behold, now is the accepted time; Behold, now is the day of salvation."* We were created for fellowship with God, to walk and talk with Him. We were not created for a life of sin, fear, misery and separation from God. But our sin has separated us from God. The prophet Isaiah said, *"Your iniquities have separated you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you so that He will not hear you."* (Isaiah 59:2) So Jesus Christ (God in the form of a man) shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins. To be 'SAVED' means to be in right standing before God. When we are forgiven of our sins, we are at peace with God. He said, *"I am He that blots out your transgression."* (Isaiah 43:25) 1 John 1:9 says, *"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* God actually removes the thing that separates us from Him. *"And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."* (1 John 1:7) My friend, you to can experience forgiveness of your sins. Don't think for one minute that your sins are too great for God. Before his conversion, the Apostle Paul, the writer of 14 books in the New Testament, was a murderer of early Christians. You can have a fresh start in life. The bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away, all things become new."* Old desires and habits pass away. All things become new. You receive a new life, a new nature, new desires and new ambitions. You receive Christ's life. Salvation is for all of us and we don't have to earn it. The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, *"For by grace are you saved through faith; And that not of yourselves; It is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast."* All are welcome. *"Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."* (Revelation 22:17) FINALLY... You can enjoy peace of mind knowing that you are saved from the wrath to come. God is angry at sin and will judge all sinners.

Acts 17:30-31 says, “*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men every where to repent; because He has appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness.*” My prayer for you friend, is that you will accept God’s free gift of salvation, complete forgiveness of your sins and eternal life with God in Heaven through faith in Jesus by repenting and turning away from your sin. It’s good to build a life you find fulfilling and satisfying. Jesus challenges us to think not only of the physical side of life but also consider our soul’s needs. Don’t put it off any longer. It could be too late tomorrow. Don’t be caught as one of those that will say, “*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.*” (Jeremiah 8:20) Even though I had all of my physical needs met, the most important thing was missing. “*What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul.*” (Mark 8:36) But Jesus offers you forgiveness for every wrong thing you ever thought or done. He Himself paid the penalty of our sin by dying on a cross and rising again. He took our punishment upon Himself. It is like if you had a large fine to pay in court but could never pay it, and someone stepped up and paid it in full for you. “*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but make alive by the spirit.*” (1 Peter 3:18) The Lord is near you this very moment. So if you have not yet accepted Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, find a place alone with God where you won’t be disturbed and pray to Him this prayer:

*Dear Lord Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner in need of your forgiveness. I call upon your name and ask you to forgive me of all my sins. You died in my place and I believe you rose from the grave according to the scriptures. I ask you to come into my life as my Lord and Saviour and that you will help me walk with you from this day forward. Thank you Jesus for saving me. Amen*

If you just prayed the prayer and really meant it, then I would like to encourage you to contact me if you have any questions about your new life and walk with Jesus and what to do next. God bless you.

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