

## Testimony of Jedidiah Isaac Murphy

"Problems cannot be solved with the same level of awareness that created them."  
(Einstein)

"Why should man expect his prayers for mercy to be heard by what's above him when he shows no mercy for what's below him?"  
(P. Troubetzkoy)

I started this with the two quotes above because they are simply written, yet are so full of the very wisdom that I think we lack as a people and a society, at times. I want to touch on the distant past because I don't think we can go forward without recognizing the past that helped to shape us into who we are, or who we want so much to become. Taking you through all of it is unnecessary, so I will just give you a brief summary of it.

I was raised for the first 5 years of my life in my grandparents home along with my parents and siblings. There were 10 of us in a 3 bedroom house. My father was a chronic alcoholic and was violent toward all of us. He beat my mother nearly to death, so she ended up taking my ½ brother and sisters and left, abandoning the rest of us out of fear that he would kill her, and her children from a previous marriage. The violence was so shocking that I would rock myself in dark places, and learned to dissociate myself from the world where things like this took place. That dissociation would eventually lead me here, but that is where it all started. Long story short, my father drank himself to death when he was 40 years old. My grandmother had a heart attack and died during recovery, and my grandfather just gave up on living without her. My brother, little sister and I went to a State Orphanage in Dallas Texas. This was the ending of everything we were always told about family and love.

There are endings and there are beginnings, and sometimes they coincide, with the ending of one thing marking the beginning of another. But sometimes, there is simply a long space after an ending, a time when it seems everything has ended and nothing else can ever begin again. There is nothing to take your mind from that void, nothing to redeem your pain, nothing that makes sense at all. Instead, for a time, every other ending you have ever known is a fresh wound and your hope is that somehow you will find your way back to another beginning.

I was looking out the window from the utter devastation of my dreams when an employee asked me what I was doing. I explained that I was looking for my mom, because she was going to come and get me. I was barely 6 years old. This man, probably intending to give me hope, told me that if I was good then she WOULD



come and get me. I took him at his word and I moved through that time barely disturbing the air when I would enter the room. I barely ate, as not to be a burden to anyone, and yet, in the end, she never came back for me. I blamed myself because obviously I had not been good enough for her to return. The bruises from that second abandonment were one the bones of a child, and they bled through every inch of every dream I ever imagined for myself.

My brother and I were shipped to a town in East Texas and were eventually adopted. We were removed by the state 4½ years later for abuse by those same people. I won't waste time going through all of that, but I will say that evil isn't something you can just slay like a dragon. Real evil isn't a demon or spirit either. Real evil is a society or country that feeds on its poor and oppressed like a mother eating her own children. Demons and monsters are obvious; we'll always band together to fight them off. But real evil, insidious evil, is what lets us walk away from another persons pain and say, "Well, that's none of my buisness.", and that is what happened to my brother and I for each of those 4 years.

From there, we were placed back in Foster Care and though we were 12-13 years old, we were anything but children at this point. My brother never left that house, where we were deemed things, and not people at all. My childhood withered and died within those walls, and the things that were stolen there could never be returned to me again.

After going back into the system, I was fostered and adopted again for the second time. I learned during that second adoption that they change your birth certificate to make it seem as though you were born by the people that adopted you. So, at this point in my life, I had 3 birth certificates saying I was born from 3 different sets of parents. I tell people all the time that you cannot know "who" you are, until you've settled on "whose" you are. That to be lost, you have to be someone first, and I learned well that I was nobody at all. I had mental health issues with dissociation and by this point it was plaguing me. I didn't understand what was happening but I knew I was different from the people around me, and it just isolated me more from everything I wished I could be. I'd already spent a lifetime with others defining me. So many people telling me who I must be.

When opposing forces collide, they define one another. Protagonist/Antagonist. You cannot advance without letting them shape you. You push and you're pushed



against. You measure yourself against others, by their approval or by their displeasure, and every time you will find that you have given them power over you, whether you like it or not. I'd done this so many times by this point in my life that I hated everything about myself. How could I not? When I'd always lived through the abuse. Lived, not because I deserved to. Lived, but never earned it at all. Lived, but never once making anyone's life better for it. I've always wanted to protect the ones I loved, but I couldn't even protect myself.

That all changed the day I took my first drink of alcohol. All of the anxiety, the chains that bound me to the failures that I claimed as my own, fell away, and for a time, I could live in the world that others around me enjoyed all of the time. I was addicted instantly to the world of the normal, where laughter was natural and being around others was no longer something that scared me to death. By the time I was 16, I drank nearly every single day and that was when the family I was adopted by the second time, split up. At this point in my life, I was not going back to Foster Care, so I cut a deal with my adoptive father to live on his lake lot in a big R.V. that he owned. By doing this, each parent had one child so it negated the child support he was paying, before I made the deal.

I graduated high school drinking 12 beers a day and I left that town the day I graduated. I did not say anything to anyone. I had no reason to stay there, and unlike the friends that grew up their whole lives in this area, I had no ties to anything or anyone. I found myself running with people that valued me for my ability to problem solve their criminal businesses. That led me right to prison. I was suicidal beyond measure and when I was released, I thought about killing myself daily.

I was in a relationship that was unhealthy and we had a beautiful baby girl in 1997. I learned that good kids do not fix bad relationships, and in mine, that was evident. By this stage in my life, I was compromised mentally with Dissociative Identity Disorder and it was out of control. I can only describe this disease as insidious, because I would blink in and out of consciousness, and yet, the only person that knew it was me. I was being mimicked and it was setting fire to everything I had gained. I decided enough was enough and overdosed on pills and whiskey. I did it intentionally and was found on the bedroom floor and was taken by ambulance to the hospital where I would be stabilized. I was in a coma, and my family was called in because they did not know if I would wake up or not. They would periodically shut off the ventilator to see if I would breathe on my own, and then they would turn it back on when I wouldn't. They did this for 4 days and on that 4th day, I woke up.



That event made the problems I already had, much worse. I completed a court ordered treatment program for alcoholism, and for 9 months, I went to 271 meetings at A.A. in a row. The day I stopped, I started drinking and it was like I never stopped at all. At this point in my life, I'd lost my ability to decipher what was real and what wasn't. I was seeing things, hearing things and dissociating for hours at a time. I would go to sleep at night and the next waking memory I would have is walking down the street, or standing in a mall 60 miles from home. Imagine how you would handle that. I would eventually be committed to 4 mental hospitals because I could not handle the things happening to me at all anymore. It cost me everything I had, or so I thought.

On Oct. 4th 2000, I was arrested for Capital Murder in Dallas Texas. I don't remember leaving the house at all. I was blinking in and out of control and I carjacked someone for no reason at all. It resulted in their death, and regardless if it was intentional at all, I was responsible for it happening. I left a full confession on my sisters table and planned to kill myself after seeing my daughter. I was caught by S.W.A.T. and eventually sent to Death Row to die.

The details of the trial, and the machine that spit me out are not included, because I don't remember much of my time there and it was just the latest step on the path that led me here. I was another loss in a lifetime built upon them. Losses are to me like nails stuck into our lives, pinning those moments to us forever, the punctuation of sorrow. I could no more tear myself from this situation than rip my skin from my body. If they are not dealt with, they are like bonds of the sort that few can ever see, the kind of bitter understanding of the worlds dark truths, and the kind that tear at a life as you struggle against them and leave wounds that hardly ever heal. After all, were all just men here, for the most part. Ordinary men with all our vices and virtues. But where other men live their lives with death as a side issue, we live ours with death as a constant companion. We have to accept death to move forward. I made my peace with all of that years ago, long before I ever came here.

I spent the vast majority of my time in prison trying to fill the holes in my life and my soul with THINGS. In prison, people say.. "If I only had a girl, things would be better." "If I only had money, my problems would be solved." "If I only had power I would be happy." I was one of the men that said each of those things and believed them to be true. What I can say is as my time progressed here, I gained each of those things and more, and yet, I was still unhappy



with my life and myself. The things that I had were what everyone always talked about and yet the peace they were supposed to bring wasn't there for me.

God had given me a wife that stood right beside me while I burned down the world around me. Stood by me when I was hurting her with selfishness that I could not even see at all. Loosing special visits after tickets were bought and money was spent. I did that 6-7 times to this woman, and yet, she came anyway. I would be on Level II or Level III and she would fly from half way across this country for a 2 hour visit with a man so broken, he was slowly doing the states job himself. Killing myself.

I did everything unhealthy and destructive thing I could find because I wanted to numb the echo's pain, hurt and loss that reverberated throughout my every waking moment. I needed more than money, more than love, more than drugs, more than power. I needed God, I just did not know that yet.

I won't detail my record here because I don't want to glorify the ignorance beyond saying that it led me to the place I am today. My map to redemption. I can still remember laying on the steel bunk, because I did not have a mattress, and searching for the words within me that could somehow make this mess I was in make sense. People were the puzzles that I never managed to solve. I've always been better at breaking things apart than putting them back together when it came to relationships and people. Yet, it would be great if human beings were just a little more human to one another.

I was hurting inside and getting close to a breaking point by this stage of my life. The more I lived, the more I realized that "deserve" has nothing at all to do with it. Blessings and curses fall on the bad and good alike. Fair is a fairy tale. Nothing is claimed by those who don't want it, and nothing is kept by those who won't fight for it. So I fought for the wrong reasons and for the wrong things. I told myself I would take the world by the throat and make it give me what I wanted. This philosophy left me broken on the floor like a disheveled question mark. I was killing myself, hurting my family and making a hard life three times harder than it needed to be.

In 2020 I found myself BACK on Level III. I was tired physically and psychologically by this point. My life was off track and I had hurt my wife and family again by loosing visits, and I could tell my wife was loosing hope that I could ever change. Some lessons are learned, but the important ones are earned.

The day I lost my level was like pushing a tomb door closed. Felt it slam on all my futures I'd allowed myself to wish for. All the happy endings I'd let



myself dream, exhaling the last of the hope inside me. Nothing remained..nothing at all. You never know what can break you until your falling apart, and you never miss your shadow until your lost in the dark. You can't know how sweet it is to breathe until you've had your ribs broken, and you cannot appreciate being happy until someone makes you cry. There's no point in blaming yourself for the kicking life gives you. What it taught me was to think about how much it hurt, and how much you don't want to feel that way ever again.

For years I prayed each night before bed but the prayers never kept me from doing what I wanted to do, instead of what God was telling me to do. But that night, something changed for me. I was as broken as I had ever been, and started telling myself again that dead was better than what I was dealing with. Prison was finally breaking me.

This is the paradox of life behind bars, where any day could end in bloodshed and every morning strives to start exactly the same way. We wake here, and for two beats of our heart, we don't know where we are or what we've become. Those few second are magic, a warm flicker before reality walks across our chest, a black dog of remembrance trailing its feet..stillness, at first, then memories of all of the things that came with years upon years in a box. You have to be taught the rules of prison, taught when to fight, and when to bend, and that even the worst things end in time..even the forever days in the endless dark. That's prison, broken lives and tears, like bookends, and mine had just become too difficult for me to manage.

So, when I got down on my knees that night, I begged the God that I threw aside all of the time to SHOW ME that he was listening to me. I was Level III and I told God that if he would restore me back to Level I, and prove to me that my prayers were being heard, I would stop living for myself and start living for him. The details of what happened next as unimportant, but 31 days later I was back on Level I. I did not have the case tossed out on some technicality at all. I went to court and the officer that wrote me up could not remember the incident at all, so they dismissed the case completely. It is so rare for anyone to have that happen to them that I don't know of a single person with that story to tell. I was shocked, and nothing I tried to use to rationalize the event would work. It was God showing me he was listening and that HE was in control and not me.

On the Polunsky Unit we have 5 field ministers, who are inmates themselves, but went through the seminary and help implement programs within the prison



system. Terry Solley and Troop Foster were the two that I dealt with all of the time, and had come to see me dozens of times when I was at my worst, just to hear me pour out my pain. After I came back to Level I, Solley and Troop told me I should sign up for KAIROS. Before he finished that sentence I was already shaking my head and saying..NOPE! As soon as I got that "nope" out of my mouth, I could hear God's voice saying.. "Oh Yeah?". Guilt flooded my heart. I knew I was not holding up to my promise and there was no way I could forget I ever made it.

Troop and Solley came to my cell 6 times asking me to sign up for KAIROS, and I stood my ground with guilt raining down on my world the whole time. The last time, Solley filled out the I-60 himself and told me, "Just sign the thing Jedidiah, they probably won't pick you because you have been in so much trouble here." So, that is exactly what I did, I signed the thing. I knew it would keep him from coming and talking to me about it again, and like he said, they would never pick someone like me anyway. I learned that God isn't only capable of doing anything and everything, he also has a sense of humor because the first name chosen was none other than Jedidiah Isaac Murphy. Solley came in with that list smiling like he stole something. Once again, I was totally out of my element.

You know why I like checkers? Because the playing field is laid out in a strict grid, no deceit at all. You know where you stand. You know the score. The pieces are laid out on the board, the enemy is visible and you can watch the tactics unfolding into larger strategies. There is a winner and a loser. There are RULES! when I have to figure out people and the world around me, I get it wrong all of the time. So my being picked for KAIROS was totally out of my control and comfort zone, and I was as lost as a child in the fun house. To be honest, it scared me and I felt I was set up! Funny how you see things so clearly the moment after you can't do anything at all about it.

I was moved to A-pod, C-section and placed there with 13 other men that were selected to be part of the very first KAIROS ever done on Texas Death Row. So this was not just any event, this was the trial run to see if they would ever be allowed to do this again, and they let someone like me in? I was so sure I would not be chosen, yet all too often, the things that I have been the most certain of are the things that I have been the most wrong about. And now, the thing I was so wrong about was fixing to change everything about me.

I think life works like this..as we/you walk through it, you can't really see the big moments coming at you. Don't notice them until they've gone by. We



always see them from the back, never from the front, which presents a somewhat distorted perspective. Everything looks different from behind in that wonderful reflective afterglow. Afterward, things consistently appear bigger, more obvious, and we think or (I) think. "How could I have missed that?" But the moments that change our lives are indistinguishable from everything else because they aren't significant, until they ARE. That is what KAIROS became for me.

The whole thing was cathartic for me and initially I was more excited about the food than anything else. But the day things clicked for me was the burning of this small piece of flash paper. I had someone in my life, a sister to me, commit suicide some years ago. It was and still is tragic for me and my family. So each year, I would write her a letter and send it home to have my wife burn it for Julie. I did that so the smoke would rise and she could catch my love for her on the wind. In KAIROS, we were to write the names of people that harmed us on that flash paper. Without knowing what was going to happen at all. When we returned that, they said a small prayer over that paper and immediately burned it. For whatever reason, it completely shattered me. Writing this, it still brings tears to my eyes. Something about my heart changed and though that may seem a small thing, it began what became a life changing situation.

If I had learned one lesson in all the years here, it was that no situation lasts forever and that problems are simply opportunities with thorns attached. KAIROS became the opportunity for me to change the path I was on through HEALING, and not avoiding what had done the most damage to me and my life. I'd spent my life living a lie and hiding from the truths about my pain. Faking it.

Truth is a clumsy thing, sometimes angry, sputtered through tears and apologies and broken hearts. Truth reminds us just how heavy our scars weigh us down, and how much they hurt when the nights get cold and lonely. So people lie the way I'd been lying most of my life. Because lies are not clumsy at all. Lies are crafted. Lies are mined from a dark place, hammered into shape and sharpened to a fine point. Yet this is the thing about lies, you can forge them as hard as you can, polish them to a high shine, make them sharp enough to cut through rock, but it will still be your hand that throws them. And every time you do, you risk missing your target and breaking someone's trust and their heart. Even a good shot is not that good at all. The truth may be ugly, but people can love ugly. After all, my wife still loves me. But nobody will love deceit, which is where all of the lies will lead.

KAIROS exposed that to me, and God opened my eyes in a moment to just how



wrong my eyes had been about everything I thought I knew. The event lasted 2 days, and most of the men that were chosen for KAIROS were signed up for the first "faith based" section on Death Row. You had to have been case free for 3 years, and I had not done that in a decade, so I was ineligible. That word seemed stuck to me like a bad prison tattoo.

Captain Gibson and Warden Dickerson decided that the 14 men that participated in the first successful KAIROS could ALL be in the new "faith based" section and program. Warden Dickerson spoke to me and told me.. "Jedidiah, I'm going to let you stay, but you better not mess up my program." God had once again afforded me GRACE where I needed it most. Doors that were closed to me on the outside were starting to open. Little did I realize, they started to open inside me as well.

There is truth in my saying I didn't know what normal was anymore. I thought I did once, but then I lost it somewhere, along with everything else. And now, all I had was my family and thee scars and a little voice that told me I would never know what normal was like again until I crossed from this world to the next. In prison, THIS NORMAL, is like somewhere dark, beneath society, and choked in the dust of 100 dead dreams, and a 1000 dead ambitions. Yet now, God was going to upend all of the things about this life, and life in general, in ways I never thought possible.

You live long enough in this place and you will lose people close to you. By the time all of this happened to me, I'd lost several people that were like family to me and tons that I called friend. You learn that execution days are as long and as sad as the last broken string on an old harp. By this stage in my life, I'd endured so many things that now my soul seemed locked in some foul place, preyed on by vicious phantoms of subconscious that clung to me like leeches. I was somewhere inside the flames and the world was safe away from the fire named Jedidiah. My entire philosophy was that I was to suffer until they killed me, dying the slow death, like an abandoned building.

We started taking classes and I wont detail every one of them, but taking those classes opened my eyes further, so that I could see that my pain was not unique tome at all. I was seeing that I had something in common with the people around me and that pulled me further toward the healing that God prepared for me. My life changed and I found myself on my knee's, talking to God more and more, and this time, it was very clear that he was listening.

In our lives, we come to moments of great significance that we fail to recognize, the meaning of which sometimes does not occur to us for many years.



Each of us has his/her agenda and focuses on it, and therefore we are often blind to what is right before our eyes. When God opened my eyes, it was like a blind man seeing the sun for the first time. BRIGHT, and the truth of what I saw about my life and the way I had lived it, hurt me to see.

For years, a part of me longed to lay it all down, the weight I carried, the acid pain of memory, the corrosion of self hate. There's something brittle in me that will break before it bends. I'd allowed these things to limit me and define me all of my adult life, and suddenly, those chains fell away and off I flew. Vices I have struggled with all my life were gone. Bad habits that people knew me by, gone as well. I'd heard stories like this but never really believed them, yet now, those stories were coming out of my own mouth. Remember this: our world is one where the impossible occurs every day, and what we often call "supernatural" is simply God moving in ways we don't understand. My life had never been this good.

I graduated the "Faith Based" program and completed 8 classes in the process. I also took classes on the side about the prophets and graduated that as well. I cannot say enough about Warden Dickerson, Warden Enriques, Captain Gibson, Captain Neyland, Chaplain Gay, Chaplain Martin, Troop Foster, Terry Solley, C.F. Hazelwood, and all the people that believed in me just enough to let me TRY. God knew what it would take for me to submit, and when I finally did, he opened all of the doors I needed and led me to the changes I had dreamed of all my life.

I've learned that these bodies we wear aren't who we are. They aren't our identity. In fact, they are really a prison for us all. Our bodies keep us pinned to this mortal life..locked away, controllable. Most are sold a lie their entire lives that these bodies are free, but they're jailers for us all. Our mortal rulers, flesh. The only way to be free is with God. I know because he set me free from the ignorance I thought I knew all of my life.

Faith is the one thing that we can give God in his never ending battle against sin and satan in this world. God guides us, but the choice to be strong or weak, to fight or flee, that comes by personal choice and from within us all. God will grant you strength, he will grant you the grace to make mistakes, and believe me, I still do, but you have to surrender control of your life to God. It's not east, but there is no better life than one with him in control.

I tell people all of the time that I was loved to the place I am in today. By God obviously, but also by my wife and family. She's loved me when I was



crawling on the floor drunk, a man that cussed in the worst way without really hearing it at all, and someone so hell bent on killing himself, that is was silently killing those he loved as well. Blind, Blind, Blind, and destructive beyond measure. But this is what I know about love.

I once saw my grandparents dance, my grandmother's head on my grandpa's chest. I was about 5. Both of them had their eyes closed. They seemed perfectly content. If you can find someone like that, someone you can hold and close your eyes to the world with, then your beyond fortunate. Even if it only lasts a minute or a day. The image of them gently swaying, no music, in how I picture love in my mind, even after all these many years. In our own way, that is exactly what my wife and I have done all the years I've been here. In many ways, we've danced the world away and known love in ways my grandparent's showed me snippets of when I was but a child and there is none but her that I'll ever dance with throughout life. God gave me this woman, and just like I did not deserve God, I did not deserve this woman and her love either. But I've learned that man cannot separate what God himself put together and our relationship is living proof of that.

Men ask me all the time what the "secret sauce" is to having someone stick this life out with you the way that we have. The truth is, my wife believed in God and believed that he would give her the husband she had long prayed for me to become, and her faith in that came true. Anyone can love someone BECAUSE. That is as easy as putting a penny in your pocket. But to love someone DESPITE...to know the flaws and love them too? Now that is rare, and pure, and perfect and I have exactly that.

There is a philosopher named Camus and he said, "In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me lay an invincible summer." My wife could see that in me long ago and she prayed that God would someday show me the way to it. to HIM. The dream I live now is because this woman and these men led me to God. There is no secret to it at all. She loved me with grace and was there to catch me when I fell, and that is exactly what God knew I needed, and will do for us all. I know, because he did it for me. I've learned that God's love can and will make you happy. It will make you into the best version of yourself. C.S. Lewis said, "You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending." My ending is one of HOPE, one of HEALING, and one where, come what may on my execution date of Oct. 10, 2023..I will spend eternity with God. There can be no better end than that. God Bless.