

## **BIOGRAPHY**

I am a native of Atlanta, born and raised specifically in Dunwoody. I matriculated at several institutions of higher learning: the Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, George Mason University, and Marine Corps Command and Staff College. The fruit of these matriculations include an undergraduate degree in History, a Master's of Arts in American History, and a Master's of Military Studies.

In 1999, the Lord blessed me beyond measure with a wife named Tracey, until He called her home in December 2013 after a valiant battle with brain cancer. God blessed me yet again in July 2016 beyond measure when I wed my wife Brianne, who's love for Jesus and her vibrancy in pursuing spiritual growth is evident daily.

I love to hike and kayak; just about anything outdoors or sports related. Baseball is my favorite sport and I am always up to either play or spectate when it comes to hardball. My favorite thing to do in the entire world to spend time with family and friends connecting about life.

## TESTIMONY

*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:33*

Upon my birth, the only Christian in my family was my mother. Over time, thanks to her faithfulness and prayers, the Gospel spread throughout our family. Being the third of four boys, it is safe to say that I am a product of a rather masculine upbringing. Yet, a woman walking with Jesus is what created the biggest spiritual impact on us. My mom tried her best as she took us to church while we were growing up, at times against our will. The Lord sealed the deal when my oldest brother Jay came to know the Lord in his mid-20s and led me and my little brother Philip to Christ we were 16 and 14 respectively. The ministry of Perimeter Church disciplined me as a young Christian and figures prominently in my growth as a believer. A few years later, the Lord took my brother Philip home after he was killed in an accident; an event that will always be with me; a tragedy that the Lord continues to redeem for His glory.

After burying a brother and a wife, the Lord continues to impress upon me the same exhortation Paul gave to Timothy. *“Share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”* (2 Timothy 1:8-10). The Lord continues to redeem loss and struggles in my life so I know that we are *“to walk by faith, not by sight.”* As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:1-8:

*For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*

*So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.*

Swimming in what often times feels like deep water, God produces eternal hope by redeeming extreme difficulty and suffering to produce hope. Romans 5:2-5:

*Through Jesus we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

Despite at times amounts what amounts to disbelief and sinful disobedience, this supernatural process detailed in Romans 5 takes over. This process almost sounds like a math equation: suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope. This

process is exhausting and painful, until that moment you realize hope comes out on the other end while producing endurance and character. Suffering produces hope.

In this short passage, we see all the persons of the Trinity at work: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In addition, we see at the beginning of the passage that it starts with Jesus and the Cross. Suffering and difficulty can only make sense when it is redeemed at the Cross with the suffering Christ. So, through Christ we stand in unfathomable grace that is unmerited and not deserved. From this spot and this spot alone do we rejoice in the hope of God's glory and begin to rejoice in the suffering and difficulties as we see the eternal hope produced.

So, as followers of Christ, we rejoice not only in the future glory of heaven but in present trials and sufferings, not because they are pleasant, but because they produce this transformative sequence of events that makes believers more like Christ. And, it produces hope where worldly thought only sees despair.