

Testimony by Dave Chew

I was born and raised in a Christian home with two loving parents. My mother used to be a schoolteacher until she became pregnant with me and became a full-time homemaker. My father is an electrical engineer, a bible college professor, and previously served as an associate pastor of a Baptist church in Berkeley.

When I was 5 years old, my dad took me to a Billy Graham crusade for kids where Psalty the singing Psalter was the keynote speaker. It was during that time that I wanted to follow Jesus. Eventually, I was baptized at age 13.

My life has been far from easy. From Kindergarten through 8th grade, I had to be transferred to many schools because of the struggles I had been going through. In 5th grade, I received my diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome which is a part of the Autism spectrum. The best way to describe it would be to say that while there are areas in which I'm smart, it is hard to socialize with other people at times. When I was in middle school, I was trying to fit in with the other students who in essence made bad decisions both by actions and their attire. I did not fit in.

In my freshman year in High School, I was struggling so much that I was sent to another school. Unlike my previous schools, this was an unaccredited Behavioral Center, for students with extremely low functioning differences such as Low-Functioning Autism, Down's Syndrome, Bi-Polar disorder, and intellectual disabilities. After getting tired of being physically restrained, it became clear that I needed to change. I started to behave better, learn how to be more social, follow directions, and comport myself physically as well. As the second semester of school started, I was finally transferred, to Cal High in San Ramon where I stayed for the remainder of my term and graduated.

After several failed attempts to fit in with the crowds at school, I found my bible left open in my bedroom. After reading the first few chapters of Genesis and Matthew, I rededicated my life to Christ thinking that my life would get better afterward. I was so wrong! The truth of the matter was that life started to get harder for me. A lot of things happened throughout those young adult years ranging from damaged friendships, entitlement issues, criticism, etc. All of those events led me to feel hurt, depressed, bitter, and angry, so angry that I took all of my anger out on those within our church who sided with her and did not support me. I even started setting up a boundary around myself to prevent being hurt.

Despite these setbacks, I met a friend who was homeless during my 2 years living in Monterey for college. He had become a believer about a year before I met him. He had also gone through struggles in his life and persevered. He asked me if I ever heard about Celebrate Recovery. I said

no. He said it was a Christ-centered alternative to AA. I never imagined myself being in CR. I never did drugs and I'm allergic to alcohol. But he said it wasn't limited to those struggling with substance abuse, it was also for people who struggled emotionally.

About a year and a half after I moved back to the Bay Area, I was unemployed. Little did I know, that on July 13th, 2014, God answered my prayer and called me to assume a role in Media Arts at a Church in San Leandro. I served in that ministry until June 11th, 2017.

After I was leading a small group for a year, I felt that something was missing and that I was still hurting. At first, I was reluctant, scared, and very nervous. But it became clear at the beginning of 2015 that I needed to start attending Celebrate Recovery.

Now, most people with Asperger's won't recognize that they need help with their hurts habits or hang-ups. A lot of times, they'll have the whole idea of "It's either my way or the highway." The problem with that kind of thinking is that it doesn't advance God's kingdom. I've had to learn that the hard way.

I must admit, when I went through that ministry, it helped me gain a better understanding of my salvation as I was beginning to doubt before I got the help that I needed. I will never forget the day during my first month in that ministry when I surrendered myself to God on February 6th, 2015 when I gave Him my shattered heart pieces acknowledging my sinfulness and my need for a savior. The best part: He gave me a brand new one shinier and softer than my last one. This reminded me of what Paul said in Romans 3:23-24: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus..." (LSB)

After 3 years of working at a church in San Leandro, God called me over to a CR group closer to home in Dublin where I have been serving as one of the leaders ever since.

Reformed theology was introduced to me by one of my mentors who was also one of my previous pastors from one of my previous churches, Dr. Rod Phillips. Pastor Rod was also instrumental in introducing me to the concept of distinguishing a healthy church from an unhealthy one. I am immensely grateful to God for him and many other friends, brothers, and mentors who have walked with me on this journey.

About a few months after I started my current job in San Leandro, I learned that R.C. Sproul had gone home to be with the Lord. It was then that my curiosity about Reformed theology returned. Little did I know, it would also give me this desire to want to listen to several pastors during the week as a supplement to my Sunday morning worship. It was then that I learned how what I was learning in CR was pointing me to the Solas of the Reformation. I learned that I

was saved by Grace alone, through Faith alone because of Christ alone. It is to Jesus alone we give the glory and all authority comes from Scripture alone.

God has taught me that feelings are not facts and that all of what I learn has to be based on facts. He also has taught me that there is a humongous distinction between knowing OF God and KNOWING God.

What surprised me the most is that God used both a non-reformed recovery ministry (whether they knew it or not) and Ligonier to be some of the starting points to help me gain a better understanding of predestination and election. He taught me that there was no way I could have come to Him and given Him my shattered heart pieces. He waited for me to come to Him, acknowledge my sinfulness, and my need for a savior.

Since then, I have been continuing to draw closer to God and grow in His word so that I can be used by Him to follow the great commission (Matthew 28). He has also been continuing to help me become more receptive to those whom He has placed in my life here at NorthCreek. He has helped me become more vulnerable to people. He also used the people at Kaleo to walk with me in my storm last year (from August-December of 2021), even when they didn't have a clue as to what I was going through behind the scenes. Since then, God has given me the desire to be that shoulder to cry on for others. It gives me so much joy to be a part of that and I could never have done that all on my own. All Glory goes to Christ alone for what He has done, what He is doing, and what He is going to do.

I have had 5 life verses over the years,

But two of them have been crucial:

The first one is: Ezekiel 36:25-26 English Standard Version (ESV)

25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

And the second one is: Proverbs 3:5-6 English Standard Version (ESV)

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.