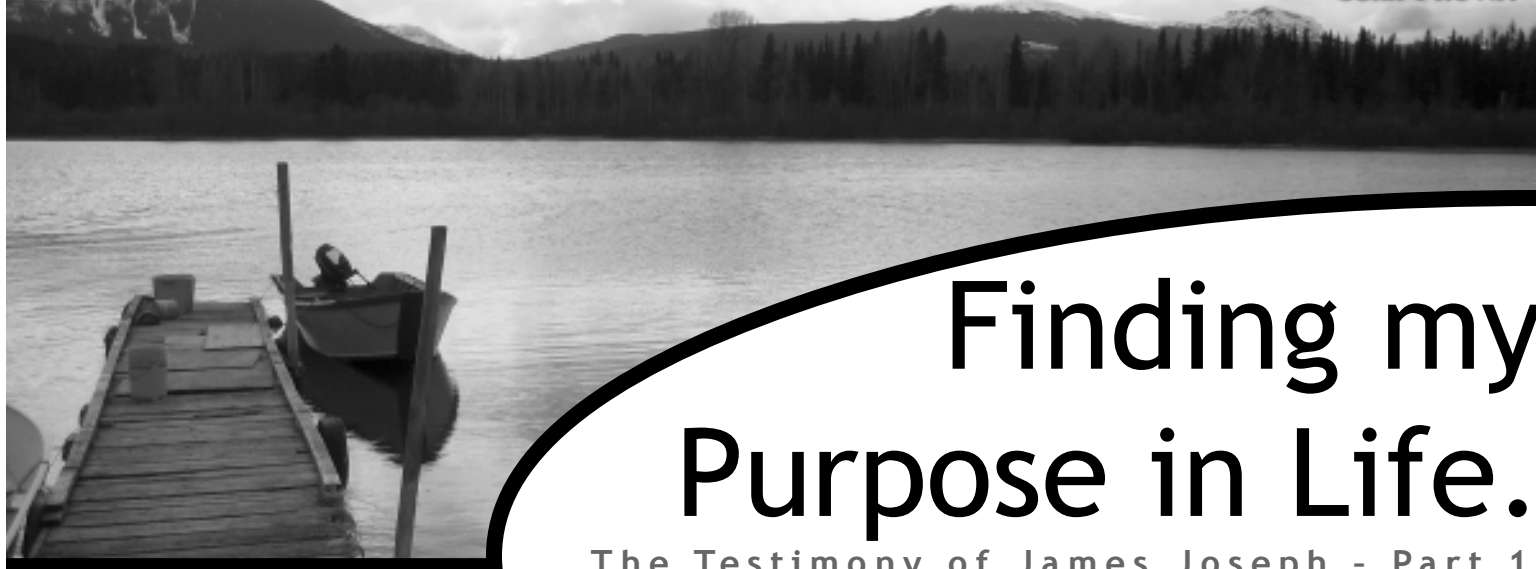




# The Streetcorner

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 14:6 NIV



## Finding my Purpose in Life.

The Testimony of James Joseph - Part 1

I was born in the beautiful northern British Columbia town of Smithers. I was adopted together with my younger sister Angela, at the age of 2 1/2, because our parents could not get a ride from our home at Fort Babine, to come to a court hearing to get us back.

I remember, at a very young age, asking my adoptive parents if we could go see our real parents, and they would say "someday," but that day never came. This left a void in my life which affected me negatively until recently.

We were adopted by a Dutch family, and although we went to school like other children, we had to work a lot harder at home than the other neighborhood kids. This made me really angry and rebellious when I was younger. It seemed like no matter what I did, I was always getting straps at home and at school. I was not permitted to go out and play very often, and in turn I had to do more work at home.

Our adoptive family was in the upper-middle class. My dad had a yacht, and he bought me a sail boat and my sister a small motorboat when we were younger. We would spend our summer vacations boating up and down the Sunshine Coast with the family. Even though our new parents gave us things and cared for us, the only person that Angela and I knew who loved us unconditionally was our Grandmother. She loved us more deeply than anyone else.

**Smoking cigarettes,  
drinking alcohol,  
and smoking pot  
were what we did.**

Often we would stay over night at our relative's houses and the girls would sexually abuse me. It was very confusing for me because it happened at several different relative's houses. Being sexually abused by these people would go on to negatively affect me until I went to Bible College. Only in the Bible was I able to find an answer to fix that problem and let go of that abuse.

When I was in grade seven, a friend introduced me to smoking cigarettes and smoking pot. When I moved on to grade eight I found that there were many different peer groups, and the one I chose to associate myself with was the one that partied all the time. Smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and smoking pot were what we did at these parties. As if the sexual abuse was not hurting me enough, I chose to take a dark path that led me to much pain. By the end of grade eight, I had become a full time party animal, and I had dropped out of school.

After quitting school, I ran into professional criminals. I got into the street scene and ended up going to jail for three different summers. I came before the same judge on two different occasions, he told me that if he saw me one more time I would be put into jail for a long, long time. This scared me so badly that I ended up going to Fraser Valley College for up grading.

On one particular evening, while hitch hiking from school, I caught a ride with a man named Wayne. He was the first person to tell me about Jesus. He told me about verses that were from the Bible, with the big one being John 3:16; "For God so loved the World that He gave his one and only son, that who ever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." He told me that I must believe that God's son Jesus died and suffered on the cross for our sins. Jesus was bur-

ied and rose on the third day, and ascended to Heaven. Jesus is now at the right side of the Father and is going to return to take over the authority of the earth and it's affairs. He also spoke of Acts 3:19, and to this day it is very much clear in my mind: "Repent then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." Another one I remember that really moved me was John 3:3, where Jesus declares, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." This is where Jesus told Nicodemus that even though all people have been born physically into the world, we need to be adopted into God's family spiritually by having faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and thus becoming children of God. When Wayne had finished telling me what he believed, I knew I was a sinner and without Christ I was lost and was going to be thrown into the eternal fire, where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth forever. It was at that moment that I accepted Jesus into my life and let him have control of my behaviors.

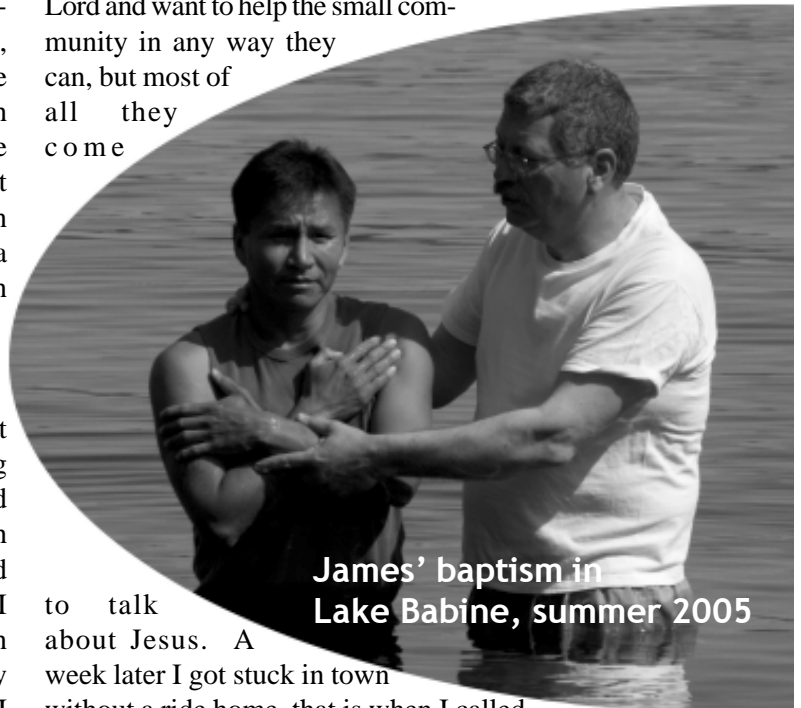
After going to Fraser Valley College, I moved up north so that I could work. After working there for the summer I was getting ready to head back to school. I had a little time on my hands and wanted to find out where my father was from, to reconnect with where I came from. I decided to hitchhike out to Ft. Babine, and by this time I had not gone to church for the whole summer. I remember walking for hours along a long gravel road. I had been walking so long and had seen so few cars that I was getting very hungry and thirsty. I finally got picked up and the first thing I noticed that all the people in the vehicle were happy and friendly. I asked one of the fellows how far it was to Fort Babine. He told me it was over a hour, and because of my hunger and thirst I asked if he had any food or something to drink. He told me all they had was bread and beer, he offered me some. It took me a long time to answer him, and little did I know that this was a decision that would go on to haunt me for the next 30 years. It would impact my life, community, family, and my children. I said yes, and thought that one drink wouldn't hurt. With that decision I lost the relationships with my children, and I can never take that decision back. I lost time, jobs, dignity, respect, my license, and almost my life.

After many years of living that life, with that single decision in mind, I was brought back to my senses on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Due to the kindness of Vicky and Laura opening their home I was able to seek out my purpose in life. I would

***"For so many years I had been searching and searching, but nothing seemed to fill that empty void that was in my heart."***

spend endless hours in my room in their basement reading and thinking. It was my son's birthday, and I remember looking at him and I felt so humiliated and embarrassed that I was drinking and setting that kind of example for him and his brother and my community. What made it worse was that I had already learned the secret to Life, the secret of Jesus Christ. I cried out on that moonlit night and asked God for forgiveness. I asked for the strength to turn my life to him so he could use me for his purpose.

Over the summer I met Ken and Mike, from Streetcorners Ministries. They are two missionaries that come out to Fort Babine faithfully every Wednesday, an hour and a half drive, to bring the gospel to this reserve. I started to get to know them, and knew that they were real believers. They come out because they love the Lord and want to help the small community in any way they can, but most of all they come



**James' baptism in Lake Babine, summer 2005**

to talk about Jesus. A week later I got stuck in town without a ride home, that is when I called Ken and his wife Eunice and asked if I could stay for the night. I remember Ken saying "No problem!" We went to a Bible study together and then went to his house. I said "Why don't we read some scripture and pray?," and so we read Romans 8. It was then, over tea at Ken's house, that I told him I wanted to go to Bible College. Ken said he knew of some places, and that he would make some calls. He was up before me the next morning, and by the time I had gotten up he had called Key-way-Tin Bible Institute and had spoken with a man named Jon. Jon had told Ken that he was going to send us an application, and that I needed to fill it out if I still wanted to go. I filled it out, sent it back to Jon, and within a week I was on my way to Alberta to learn about the Bible.

This was truly a miracle of the Lord, because I had tried A.A., Native Spirituality, and tried on my own to change my life. For so many years I had been searching and searching, but nothing seemed to fill that empty void that was in my heart. The only thing that I know now is that God and His son Jesus are my life models, and the wisdom from the word of God has made my life complete and given me joy and peace. The big thing that has come out of making peace with God is finding my purpose in life which is to obey his commandments and to serve Him. I learned from God's word, that my life is not about being self serving but to give. I am working out my relationship with my two sons that I love very much, which may take years but I am trying with the help of the Lord.

I challenge you to give all your problems to the Lord, you can trust Him, he will give you all the desires of your heart, if you seek Him and trust Him.

My road has not been easy, and I recognize that I still make plenty of poor decisions and bad choices about how to live my life. One of those decisions recently almost cost me my life, I would like to share it with you in the next issue of The Streetcorner.



*Have you ever struggled, like James, with an empty feeling inside your heart and life? Here's a letter by Ingrid Hurrell that expresses God's loving heart and outstretched hand towards you.*

## **When you feel like giving up... a love note to you.**

by Ingrid Hurrell

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*My Dearest One...I know just how you feel right now.*

*There was a moment in the Garden of Gethsemane when I too, cried the prayers you have. "Take this cup from Me, Father," I begged. He chose not to, for He knew that I would be willing to go through it all, for you.*

*And now here you are. Facing something so overwhelming, you have wearied yourself with fear, agony, questions and despair. I have wept with you. I never left your side for a moment - I AM with you even to the very end.*

*You have exhausted your own resources and solutions. You even feel there is no one left who cares or who understands what you are going through. The road ahead seems so dark and alone right now, does it not?*

*You look at yourself, and wonder if you will even be missed if you ended your life. You have never felt so abandoned and without hope as you have felt lately.*

*I know. I am very aware what your thoughts are! In fact, My heart has been broken as I have seen your struggles. You want to give up, but I won't let you. You see, I have never given up on you. I never will.*

*For I know the plans I have for your life. They are good plans. I want to give you a future that you will enjoy. Your happiness and contentment are so important to Me. Did you know that it is very important to Me that you are happy and fulfilled? Or did you see Me as One who is far off and uncaring?*

*Never! Never, My beloved!*

*Yes, I know you have made mistakes. Even some wrong decisions and the consequences thereof ate at you for a long time. I know there have been areas of sin and bad habits where you have greatly struggled. You feel a failure often, don't you?! But that is not reason enough for giving up.*

*If you give up, it is because you have left Me out of the picture. You have not fully understood (yet) that I AM your answer. The One who has the Way out. The One who is able and willing to give you a fresh start. A new beginning. A new life. I AM able to mend the brokenness in your heart. And oh, how I would fill your life with My wisdom and grace!*

*Here I AM, standing at the door of your heart, and I AM knocking. You are the only one who can open the door and let Me in. Ah! You say, but my heart is so unclean, so full of darkness and pain. Exactly why you need to invite Me in. I will sit down with you. We can eat, talk, be together and before you know it, you will see that I have given you a heart of flesh for the cold one you had. I have so much to share with you! I love you and want to be with you, be part of your life.*

*Don't think of giving up - there is still so much living to be had! If you are worn out from your struggles, take a break. Be with Me for a while -I will restore you and give you new strength to go on.*

*I AM in your future already, so your tomorrows need not be bleak or without hope. Don't cut Me out or switch off the Light. Allow me to light your way, and it will be well with your soul!*

*Love: Jesus Christ*

Ingrid Hurrell is ordained as Chaplain with the Salmon House Diocese, and serves as Christian therapist with the Cascade Christian Counselling Association for 3 days per month in Smithers. For appointments through CCCA please call 1-877-585-1411. Ingrid lives in Langely, BC with her family.

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# A Legacy of Faith

**“I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.” 2 Timothy 1:5 NIV**

In James’ testimony he refers to his grandmother who really loved him. James shared with me how he remembered her as a real Christian and how her faith has affected his life to this very day. This got me thinking of my grandmother Maria Neufeld. She was a special lady who also had a deep love for God and for her family. She had a rough life, persecuted by the communists in Russia, forced to move to Canada with my mother at her side.

Grandma spent many summers living in her summer home near our place in the Kootenays. Sometimes I would go to visit her, these were special times where we would talk, just her and I. She would give me some homemade candies, as she spoke into me some advice about God and about life. She was gentle and kind, come to think of it, what I saw in her, was Jesus living his life through her. I always respected her faith in the Lord, which I also saw in my mother and my father. I was often a naughty boy and she would rebuke me for this but she still loved me and never gave up on me. Her beautiful flower garden of petunias, gladiolas, roses and many peonies reflected her life, she was peaceful and safe to be around.

The last time I saw my grandmother here on this earth, was at a family reunion in the mid 1970s, but her influence on my life will be with me for all eternity. She left me with a legacy of faith.

What kind of legacy are we leaving for our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren? My prayer for you and for me is that the Lord would help us to be more like Jesus, so we too can leave a legacy of faith for our families and all those around us.

This I Believe!



The opinions stated in news reports and personal experiences do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Streetcorners Ministries or The Streetcorner.

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## WHAT WE BELIEVE

### The Bible and Its Authority

a) We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are the supreme and final authority in faith and conduct.

### The Eternal Godhead

b) We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### Man and His Need

c) We believe that man was created in the image of God; that through sin man incurred both spiritual and physical death. Consequently, man is totally depraved, alienated from God, under his righteous anger, and in need of the new birth.

### Jesus Christ and His Work

d) We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary and is true God and true man.

e) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that all who believe in him are justified on the ground of his shed blood.

f) We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his ascension into heaven, his present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate and in his personal return.

### Salvation for Sinners

g) We believe that by the grace of God, all who in repentance and faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God. Such are sealed unto the day of redemption. Nevertheless, the believer is commanded to be filled with the Spirit, moment by moment.

### The Future

h) We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, in the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and in the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.

**VISIT US AT:**

**www.thestreetcorner.org**

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