

My name is Tonya McClure.

On August 9th of 2026, I celebrated ten years free from methamphetamine and prescription pill addiction.

But currently, I don't celebrate recovery.

I want to celebrate redemption.

Because recovery may have changed my life...

But Jesus changed my eternity.

If you had met me ten years ago, you probably wouldn't have believed I'd ever stand on a stage sharing my testimony, much less sharing my past.

And honestly...

Neither would I.

For years, I believed my story was about addiction.

But as I've walked with the Lord, He's shown me something different.

My story has never been about drugs.

It's been about a girl searching for a Father who had been pursuing her all along.

"I was six years old when my mom handed me the phone.

My biological father, my Daddy on the other end, saying, 'Hey girl... I won't be seeing you for a while. Tell Keith (my little brother) I love you both very much.'

that was it & he was gone."

I didn't know it then...

But no little girl should ever have to carry a goodbye for her father.

And I didn't realize it, then...

But that phone call planted a lie deep in my heart.

The lie was...

"I was not worth staying for."

At the time, I didn't know how to name that feeling. I just knew that something inside of me hurt.

I loved my dad. Even with everything that had happened, he was still my daddy. And when you're six years old, you don't understand addiction, abuse, broken marriages, or the decisions made by adults. He wasn't in any type of trouble, he just didn't choose us.

At that age you just understand that someone you love, isn't coming back.

And so I learned very young how to carry things I was never supposed to carry.

They majority of my life, I carried abandonment, anger & rejection.

And eventually, I carried the belief that somehow, all of it was my fault.

As I got older, that little girl's pain didn't disappear.

It grew up with me.

I became a teenager who was angry, rebellious, and desperate to belong.

We moved so many times that I never really knew where I fit. Texas, Alabama, Colorado, Kentucky, back to Texas, and eventually Tennessee.

Every new place meant starting over. A new house, new school, & new people.

But I brought that same little girl with me every time.

The little girl who wondered why her dad left her.

The little girl who wondered what was wrong with her.

The little girl who desperately wanted someone to choose her.

And I didn't know it then, but I was beginning a lifelong search for something only Jesus could ultimately give me:

A sense of belonging, safety, and the knowledge that I was loved.

By thirteen, the anger inside me had become almost unbearable.

My mother and I weren't close and both carrying wounds we didn't know how to heal. I blamed her for my father's absence, and she was carrying her own pain from the life she had lived.

And sometimes, hurt people hurt people.

There were times when the anger in our home became physical, and I became the target of things no child should experience.

One night, after my mother lost her temper, I was left with marks on my face and body, & I did something that changed the direction of my life.

I hid and called the police; I had enough of being hit and made to believe that it was a normal way of discipline.

When they arrived, they asked me if there was somewhere safe to go.

And I gave them one name.

Linda Trusty...

She was the sweetest lady I had ever met & was active in the school I was attending.

I didn't know it at the time, but God was putting someone in my life who would plant a seed that would take years to grow.

Linda came for me, no questions asked & She took me straight to church.

That night, I was baptized.

But I want to be honest with you in this moment.

I did not yet know, Jesus.

But, I knew I needed help.

I knew I was tired of hurting.

I knew I wanted something different.

But I didn't understand who Jesus was.

I didn't know that the woman who came to rescue me that night was simply planting a seed.

I had no idea that years later, Jesus Himself would meet me at the absolute bottom of my life.

I had no idea that the little girl who had been asking her entire life,

"Am I worth staying for?"

was eventually going to hear the answer directly from her Heavenly Father.

But God knew.

He knew all along.

"Going to church that night, didn't immediately fix my life. Being baptized didn't erase my pain. After 2 weeks of being with Linda, I went home carrying the same wounds I had walked in with. And eventually, that pain became more than I knew how to carry."

I reached a place where I didn't want to live anymore.
I made an attempt to take my own life, and that led me to Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute and eventually into state custody.

Looking back now, I can see God's hand even in that place.
At the time, I couldn't see it.
I didn't understand why my life had become so painful.
I didn't understand why God would allow me to experience the things I had experienced.
But I know something now that I didn't know then:
God was preserving me for a purpose I couldn't yet see.
My aunt, uncle, and grandparents fought for me with everything they had.
Eventually, I went to live with my grandparents in Alabama.
And for the first time in a long time, I had some stability.
But I was still carrying everything inside of me.
All that anger, abandonment & fear, was still there.
And I had no idea what to do with any of it.

Then, at fifteen, I met a boy.
His name was Bo.
We were so young, rebellious, and honestly, we thought we knew everything.
We fell in love.
He became my best friend.
My protector.
And my home.
Eventually, my husband.

For a while, I thought I had finally found the person who would love me and never leave.
But neither of us understood how much brokenness we were bringing into that relationship.
Bo had grown up surrounded by poverty, addiction, alcoholism, and abuse.
And I had grown up surrounded by my own version of a life the enemy wanted me to believe was for me.
Neither of us knew how to break the patterns we had inherited.
So the cycle continued.
There was love, anger, reconciliation, separation.
And eventually, there was also abuse.

We separated for the first time when I was six months pregnant with our first child because of that abuse.
But Bo & I would continue repeating the same cycle for years.
We would separate.
We would get back together.

He would promise things would be different...
And then the cycle would begin again and again.

But, here's something I've learned since then:
You can love someone deeply and still be living in something that is destroying you.
Love doesn't automatically heal trauma.
Marriage doesn't heal abandonment.
And another person cannot fill a place in your heart that was only created for God.
But I didn't know anything about that at the time.

I was still looking for someone to make me feel safe.
Someone to make me feel wanted.
Someone to convince me that I was worth staying for.
And eventually, that search would lead me into the darkest season of my life.

In 2015, our marriage fell apart.
And this time, something inside of me broke in a way I had never experienced before.
My husband became involved with a family member of mine, My cousin.

And that betrayal devastated me.
It wasn't simply the loss of my marriage.
It felt like the confirmation of every lie I had carried since I was six years old.
A daddy that left me .
Now the man I had built my entire life around had betrayed me too.

And that little girl inside of me heard the same lie all over again:
"You're not worth staying for."
I was devastated, filled with hate & ashamed.

I was completely lost.

Over the months that followed, things happened that pushed me deeper and deeper into darkness.
I received videos of them together and messages from the two of them that caused wounds I
didn't know how to survive.

And instead of turning toward God...
I ran from Him.
I ran straight into the darkness.
And that darkness had a name.

Methamphetamine.

At first, it felt like an escape.
It made me forget.
It numbed the pain.
It gave me somewhere to hide.

And the saddest part is...
I started to like the place I was hiding in. It became my friend.

I stopped caring about what happened to me.
I stopped caring about tomorrow.
I stopped caring about being a mother, & everything I loved.. I was diving head first into that darkness.

And over the next year, I wasn't really living.

To be real with you, I was trying to die.

But even there...
God was still watching me.

Even when I couldn't see Him...
He could see me.
Even when I didn't know Him...
He knew me.

And in August of 2016...
He was finally going to get my attention.

August 9, 2016.
That was the day I finally admitted that I couldn't do it anymore.

Tired, broken.
And most importantly, I was tired of hurting the people who mattered most to me.
My 3 little boys, my babies.

I knew I needed help, so I signed a temporary custody order, giving my parents custody of my children, and I asked for someone to help me get into treatment.

I can still remember the weight of that decision.
I wasn't giving up on my children.
I was finally admitting that I needed help if I was ever going to become the mother they deserved.

A caseworker with Warren County Department of Human Services helped me get into Serenity in Knoxville, Tennessee.
And that's where the real battle began.

Those first nights were so hard.
The nightmares were intense.
I would wake up screaming for my mom.

My body was detoxing, but honestly, my soul was detoxing too.
For the first time in years, I couldn't hide behind drugs or alcohol.

I couldn't run or numb anything.
I had to sit with myself.

And that was terrifying, I hated that woman looking back at me in the mirror.

I had to acknowledge the things I had done.
I had to face the people I had hurt.
And that shame was so overwhelming.

I remember thinking,
"What have I done?"
"What have I become?"
"How could God ever want anything to do with me?"

I was so convinced that I had destroyed my life, that my children would never forgive me, that my family would always look at me as an embarrassment.

I had even been called a junkie by my mother, & an embarrassment.

Eventually, I started believing those words. I believed that was who I was.

One night, I reached a place where the shame was simply too heavy.
And I began to pray.
But I wasn't praying the way you might think.

I wasn't praying,
"God, please make me better."
I wasn't praying,
"God, help me get sober."
I was praying,
"God, just take my life, because I wanted to die."

I didn't want to live with what I had done.
I didn't want to face my children or my family.

I couldn't even face myself.

I thought death would be easier than living with that shame.

But God...
He had other plans.

And this is the part of my story that I can never explain away.

Because there, on the floor of that treatment facility, when I had nothing left...
Jesus met me.
I can't describe exactly what I saw.
His face was bright—brighter than sunshine.
But more than what I saw...
I remember what I felt.
For the first time in my life in that moment, I felt completely known, & loved.

He told me something I had never believed about myself.
He told me I was worthy.
He told me my life had purpose.
And He told me that my Father loved me...
and that nothing I had done could make Him ashamed of me.

That night, on the floor of that treatment center.. The Lord met me.
I knew in the deepest part of me that it was Jesus.
I've questioned many things in my life, decisions I've made, people, & even myself.

But I've never questioned that moment.

Because when you have spent your entire life believing you are unwanted...
and suddenly you encounter a love that tells you,
"You are worthy."
you know it's something from God.
I didn't suddenly become perfect, or have all the answers.

But something inside me had changed.
For the first time, I had hope & an understanding that my life wasn't over.

I thought, Maybe God wasn't finished with me.
Maybe my failures and past weren't the end of my story.

Maybe...
Jesus was writing a new one.
And the truth is, He was.
I came home from treatment clean. Back to Bo, got my boys home.
And for a while, things were good.

But life didn't suddenly become easy.
The abuse returned, shortly after.
The old patterns of my marriage returned.
But, I stayed clean through the struggle.
Life was beginning to feel like that sick familiar again, but there was one thing that was different.
I knew Jesus.
I didn't always understand Him.

I didn't follow Him the way I should have.
I still had a lot of growing to do.
But I knew He was real.

I want to be honest with you, tonight.
Getting clean did not mean I had figured everything out.
I had been rescued from addiction, but I was still learning how to live.

I was learning how to forgive.
I was learning how to deal with my emotions without running from them.
I was learning how to love without losing myself.
And most of all, I was learning who Jesus really was.

There were still hard seasons, because there were still things in my life that needed healing.

But I was no longer walking completely in the dark.

I had met Jesus.
And once you've truly met Him, you can't forget what His presence feels like.

Then came 2023.
And that year brought one of the deepest losses of my life.
I lost my Gran.

My Gran was my everything.
She was one of those people whose faith wasn't something she simply talked about.
She lived it.
She loved Jesus fiercely.
She prayed, believed, & trusted God.

And I watched her live a life that pointed people toward Him.
And losing her broke my heart.

But something happened in her final moments that I will never forget.

As she was taking her last breath, I watched her lift her hands toward the Lord, as if he was taking her home, Himself.
And she was at peace.
There was something about watching her leave this world that made everything even clearer.

Jesus was absolutely real.

He wasn't just something my Gran talked about, or something I had experienced in a treatment center.

He was real. In that moment, He verified everything.
And my Gran was going home to be with Him.

But let's be honest, grief is very complicated.

As you all know, knowing where someone is doesn't mean you don't miss them.

I knew she was with the Lord.

But I still wanted her with me.

I still wanted to hear her voice, one more conversation. One more hug & One more day.

That grief opened a place in me that was hard to accept.

Two weeks after we buried her, I was in Cookeville with my mom, shopping.
She went inside, and I stayed in the car. I looked over and saw a liquor store.

And had a thought.

It seemed so small.

So harmless.

I thought,

"I'll just get a little shot of liquor."

I told myself,

"It's not meth."

"It's not a pill."

"I've been clean for years."

"Surely I can have one little drink to take the edge off."

But isn't that how temptation works.

It doesn't always show up looking like the thing that destroyed you.

Sometimes it comes disguised as something you think you can control.

In that moment, acting on an idea, heading to get that liquor... I stepped off the sidewalk.

And instantly, my leg gave out.

I collapsed.

I tried to stand, but my leg felt like a bag of jelly and rocks.

I couldn't make it another step..

I never made it to that liquor.

Instead, I was met by rescue workers, an ambulance, and police officers.

And I spent the next five days at Cookeville Regional Medical Center.

I had broken my leg.

What followed was something I never expected.

I was going to need a cadaver bone implant, & have to learn how to walk again.

And I was going to spend approximately the next six months in a wheelchair.

And all I could hear in my spirit was:

"Be still and let Me be God."

I had spent my entire life running.

Running from pain, all the rejection, anger, shame, even myself & now God was putting me in a wheelchair.

I couldn't run, fix it, make it better, or do anything but be still.

But somewhere during those six months...

God began changing me.

That wheelchair became a classroom.

And humility became one of my greatest lessons.

I learned what it felt like to need people.

I learned how to accept help.

I learned how quickly independence can become pride.

And I learned that surrender wasn't weakness.

Surrender was trusting God enough to stop fighting Him.

Jesus had rescued me from addiction years earlier.

But now He was teaching me how to surrender my entire life to Him.

I finally understood something:

Getting sober was not the finish line.

It was just the beginning for me.

Jesus didn't just want to keep me away from the drugs.

He wanted my whole heart.

My marriage.

My motherhood.

My relationships.

My grief.

My anger.

My future.

My purpose.

Everything.

And sitting in that wheelchair, I finally began giving it all to Him.

Looking back, I don't believe that broken leg was punishment or simply an accident that interrupted my life.

I believe God used that season to redeem the life I had been trying to control.

He was telling me,

"Be still."
And for the first time...
I had to listen.

That six months changed the way I saw everything.
I wasn't just surviving anymore.
I was learning to surrender.
And I didn't know it yet, but God was preparing me for what would come next.

So here I am, Ten years, later.

Ten years clean from methamphetamine and prescription pills.

And when I look back at the woman who walked into treatment ten years ago, I don't recognize her.
But I don't hate her either.

I love her.

Because she was hurting & lost.
She was doing the best she knew how to do with wounds she didn't know how to heal.
And Jesus loved her anyway.

I've failed, made mistakes, had moments when I've gotten it all wrong.
And I may even get things wrong again.
Because I'm human.

But I've learned something over these ten years:

Failure isn't the end of your story.

Falling isn't the end of your story.

Grief isn't the end of your story.

Addiction isn't the end of your story.

Abuse isn't the end of your story.

And even Your worst decision isn't the end of your story.

What matters is what you do when you find yourself on the floor.

Do you stay there?
Or do you reach for Jesus?

Because I've been on that floor.

I've been on the treatment center floor.

I've been on the floor in tears.

I've been on the floor in grief.

I've been in a wheelchair.

I've been at the very bottom.

And every single time...
Jesus was there.

When I was six years old, my earthly father said goodbye.

But when I was thirty-six years old, my Heavenly Father introduced Himself to me.

One father walked away.
My Heavenly Father never has.

And that little girl who spent her whole life wondering,
"Am I worth staying for?"
finally got her answer.

And It's always been, Yes.

I am worthy.
You are all worthy.

Not because of what you've done.

Not because you've never failed.

Not because you've earned it.

But because you are loved by a God who was willing to send His Son to die for you.

Ten years ago, Jesus found me on a treatment facility floor.
He found me when I was ashamed, when I was broken, when I didn't believe I had a future.

And He told me,
"I was worthy."

I've spent the last ten years learning to believe Him.

And if you are sitting here tonight wondering if God could ever use you... If you're wondering if you've gone too far... If shame has convinced you that you're too broken...

I want you to hear what Jesus told me.

You are worthy! There is still purpose for your life, there is still hope, there is still redemption, & there is still a tomorrow.

You may not be able to see it yet.
I couldn't either.
But God can.

And sometimes, you just have to trust Him with the next step.

I don't know what your story is, or what you've done, or what you've been through.

But I know who Jesus is.
And I know what He has done for me, He can do for anyone.

So tonight, I don't stand before you as someone who has never fallen.
I stand before you as someone who fell...
and who Jesus picked up.

I stand before you as someone who was lost...
and who Jesus found.

I stand before you as someone who believed she was worthless...
and Jesus called worthy.

And if there is one thing I want you to remember from my story, it's this:

Your story isn't over.
As long as God has given you breath...
He is not finished writing your story.

In the end this testimony doesn't belong to me.
It belongs to Him.

God has taken the very places where the enemy tried to destroy me and turned them into places of redemption.

He has used my life to reach some of the same people who once added to my pain. The very people the enemy meant to destroy, right alongside me.

Life today is much different, because I chose obedience, my parents are in church.

My husband, Bo, is now a man of God.
My children love having me as their mama...

And I am raising my little grandson, who loves the Lord.

Every day I look at that little boy and I am reminded:

I am worthy to be in His presence.

Not because I am perfect.

Not because I have never failed.

But because Jesus redeemed me.

What the enemy meant for destruction, God has turned into redemption.

And to God alone be all the glory.

& I would like to end with this:

He is still the God who sees.
He sees the tears nobody else sees.
He sees the battles you don't talk about.
He sees the obedience nobody applauds.
He sees the heart behind what you do.

And just like Hagar, you to, can say:

"I have seen Him, who sees me." ❤️