

Worthy: A Decade of Grace

My name is Tonya McClure, and on August 9, 2026, I will celebrate ten years free from methamphetamine and prescription pill addiction. More importantly, I celebrate ten years of walking in the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.

My story is not one, about how strong I am.

It is a story about how faithful God is.

I was born into a family carrying wounds that stretched back for generations. My mother came from a strict Appalachian home marked by alcoholism, arsen and abuse. My father came from a Prominent Southern Gospel family with generations of pastors, but behind the public image were struggles of their own. My grandfather was a pastor, but he was also abusive, and my father learned those behaviors early in life.

My parents were young, wounded, and searching for something they did not yet understand. Their marriage was built more on rebellion than on a foundation. My mother wanted freedom from her upbringing, and my father fell in love with the idea of rescuing her. Together, they created a storm that eventually consumed everything around them.

My brother and I often stood in the middle of that storm.

My father became addicted to alcohol, women and other substances. Violence became normal. I had witnessed things no child should ever see. Some memories have faded with time, while others remain painfully clear.

When I was around four years old, my parents divorced. We spent much of our time with our maternal grandparents while my mother struggled under the weight of her own pain and eventually turned to alcohol herself.

Then 1984, my mother met the man I would come to know as Dad. He stepped into our lives and became a source of stability when we desperately needed one.

During those years, my brother and I continued to visit our biological father. Those visits eventually came to an end with a phone call that would shape my life in ways I would not understand for decades.

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

"Hey girl, I won't be seeing you for a while. Tell Keith I love you both very much."-He said..

Those were the last words I heard from my father for over twenty years.

Despite everything that had happened, he was still my daddy. Looking back, I realize no child should ever carry the responsibility of delivering a goodbye message to her brother. Let alone to themselves. That moment planted seeds of abandonment, rejection, and anger deep within my heart. But, Life moved forward.

As I entered my teenage years, I carried tremendous anger. My mother carried anger too. I looked exactly like the man who had hurt her, and neither of us knew how to process the pain we carried.

By then, we had moved all over the country—Texas, Alabama, Colorado, Kentucky, back to Texas, and finally Tennessee. While those experiences gave me many memories, they also left me feeling like I never truly belonged anywhere.

When we settled in Tennessee, the relationship between my mother and me remained fragile. I blamed her for my father's absence. She was carrying wounds of her own. The result was a painful cycle of conflict that often turned physical.

At thirteen years old, God placed someone in my path who would become a lifeline.

Her name was Linda Trusty.

After a particularly violent incident left visible marks on my face and body, I called the police myself. When officers arrived, they asked if I had somewhere safe to go.

I asked for Linda.

She came immediately.

The first place she took me was church.

That night I was baptized, but if I am being truthful, I did not yet know Jesus. I knew pain. I knew fear. I knew I needed rescue. Looking back now, I can see that Linda was planting seeds that would not fully bloom until many years later.

A week later I was returned home, but the pain I carried remained. Shortly afterward, I made my final suicide attempt. That decision landed me in Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute and eventually in state custody.

My grandparents, aunt, and uncle fought tirelessly to bring me home. Eventually, I moved to Alabama to live with my grandparents.

The transition came with its own hardships. Decisions made by adults around me disrupted my education and removed me from school just two years before graduation. At the time, it felt as though I was a child being punished for circumstances beyond my control.

But God was still writing my story.

At fifteen years old, I met the boy who would become my husband.

We were young, rebellious, reckless, and deeply in love.

He became my best friend, my protector, and the person I believed would never leave me.

Yet the same generational wounds that had shaped our families slowly emerged in our own relationship.

Bo grew up in deep poverty. Like many Appalachian families burdened by generations of addiction and alcoholism, trauma had become woven into everyday life. Before long, patterns of abuse and dysfunction began appearing in our marriage. He beat me for the first time when I was six months pregnant with our oldest son. I went back to my parents.

The years that followed became a cycle of reconciliation, conflict, separation, and pain.

Addiction had not yet entered the picture, but the groundwork had already been laid.

Then came 2015.

Our marriage collapsed.

My husband entered a relationship with my cousin, and the devastation that followed broke something inside me.

I was overwhelmed by betrayal, humiliation, anger, and grief. Videos and messages sent to me during that time only deepened the wounds. Whatever hope remained seemed to disappear.

I stopped caring.

I stopped believing.

I stopped fighting.

That is when methamphetamine entered my life.

The darkness that should have frightened me became a place of comfort. I embraced it because it numbed the pain. For the next year, I slowly destroyed myself.

I wasn't living.

I was trying to die.

On August 9, 2016, exhausted and broken, I signed temporary custody of my children to my parents and asked for help.

That remains one of the hardest decisions I have ever made.

A caseworker with Warren County Human Services helped me enter treatment at Serenity in Knoxville, Tennessee.

The first days were brutal.

The nightmares.

The withdrawal.

The shame.

The overwhelming realization of what I had become.

One night, overwhelmed by guilt, I began praying.

Not for recovery.

Not for healing.

I prayed for God to take my life.

I believed I had ruined everything. I believed my children would never forgive me. I believed I would forever be known as the town embarrassment, the addict, the failure.

But God had another plan.

There, on the floor of that treatment facility, Jesus met me.

His presence was brighter than anything I can adequately describe.

He spoke directly to my heart.

He told me I was worthy.

He told me my life had purpose.

He told me that my Father loved me and that nothing could make Him ashamed of me.

In that moment, everything changed.

That was the night I truly met Jesus.

Not in a church building.

Not in a baptismal pool.

Not in a religious ceremony.

I met Him on a treatment facility floor when I had nothing left to offer Him except my brokenness.

The Savior of the world came looking for a broken addict, and He called her worthy.

Recovery was not instant.

Life was not suddenly perfect.

I returned home and continued learning how to live clean. God was healing me, but I still had much to learn about surrender.

Then, in 2023, I experienced one of the greatest losses of my life.

I lost my beloved Gran.

She was my everything.

She loved Jesus fiercely and faithfully. She prayed, she believed, and she lived her life in a way that pointed others toward Christ.

Being with her during her final moments changed me forever.

As she took her last breaths, I watched her lift her stiffened hands toward Heaven. There was no fear in her. There was no struggle. There was only peace.

Watching her leave this world made one thing abundantly clear to me:

Jesus was real.

The faith she had lived out for so many years was carrying her home.

Yet even in that beautiful moment, grief found its way into my heart.

I missed her desperately.

The sickness, the loss, and the emptiness left behind opened wounds I didn't realize were still there.

Two weeks after her burial, I found myself riding with my mother in Cookeville.

She went inside a store while I waited outside.

A thought crossed my mind.

"I'll just sneak over and buy a little shot of liquor. It isn't meth. It isn't pills. It'll help me relax."

I had stayed clean.

But I was beginning to compromise.

The enemy rarely starts with the thing that destroyed you before. He starts with the thing you think you can control.

I stepped off the sidewalk.

And my leg collapsed.

Completely.

One moment I was standing, and the next it felt as if my leg was nothing but rocks and jelly.

I couldn't stand.

I couldn't walk.

I wasn't going anywhere.

Certainly not to buy that liquor.

As I sat there in shock, I heard one phrase over and over in my spirit:

"Be still and let Me be God."

Within moments, I was surrounded by first responders, police officers, and an ambulance crew.

I spent the next five days in Cookeville Regional Medical Center.

The diagnosis would change everything.

I would require a cadaver bone implant.

I would have to learn how to walk again.

And I would spend the better part of the next six months in a wheelchair.

"Be still," He said.

And He meant it.

At first I didn't understand.

How could a broken leg possibly be a blessing?

But during those six months, God stripped away every distraction.

I could no longer run.

I could no longer stay busy.

I could no longer rely on my own strength.

I had no choice but to sit still.

And in that stillness, I learned humility.

In that stillness, I learned dependence.

In that stillness, I learned surrender.

Years earlier, Jesus had met me on a treatment center floor and saved me.

But it was in that wheelchair that I finally surrendered every part of myself to Him.

He wasn't simply my rescuer anymore.

He became my Lord.

Looking back now, I can see that what appeared to be an interruption was actually an invitation.

God was slowing me down so He could draw me closer.

He was teaching me that sometimes His greatest blessings arrive disguised as our greatest hardships.

Then, one Sunday morning in April 2025, while driving to church, I felt led to stop at Freedom Life Church.

I listened.

That decision changed everything.

Since that day, my relationship with Christ has deepened more than ever before. The Lord began revealing something I had never fully understood.

When Jesus called me worthy on that treatment facility floor, He was not simply saving me from addiction.

He was preparing me for a purpose.

He was preparing me to become an example of His redemption.

He was preparing me to help lead my family back to Him.

Today, my parents attend church.

My husband attends church.

My children attend church.

None of us are perfect. All of us are still growing. But I have watched God move through my family in ways I once thought impossible.

The little girl who felt abandoned has been adopted by her Heavenly Father.

The teenager who wanted to die found purpose.

The addict who lost everything found grace.

The woman who believed she was worthless discovered her identity in Christ.

For years, I thought my testimony was about addiction.

Now I understand it is about redemption.

God was present in every chapter of my life, even when I could not see Him.

He was present in the abuse.

He was present in the abandonment.

He was present in the addiction.

He was present in the recovery.

He was present in the grief.

He was present in the wheelchair.

And He is present today.

Ten years ago, I entered treatment believing my life was over.

Instead, it was the day my real life began.

All glory belongs to Jesus Christ, who rescued me, restored me, pursued me through every season of my life, and reminded me that I was worthy—not because of who I am, but because of whose I am.