

## **Megan (McPherson) Lafferty – Testimony**

My life before I knew and trusted Jesus as my Lord and Savior was full of sin. I allowed myself to numb my feelings with drugs and alcohol, I was in and out of abusive relationships. I was always passing judgement on others but not holding myself accountable for the same things. I knew sin would lead me away from God and I did it anyways. I had been in and out of different churches when I was younger. I had only been going because my friends did. I never had a solid foundation for my faith. I only knew of God, the power of prayer, and I can recite the Lord's prayer. I still didn't understand why it was so important to have a relationship with Jesus or the magnitude behind God's word and His commands. Even with all my past sins as a child to young adult, there was nothing to prepare me for the toughest time of my life. I used to think life was so hard and complicated until life really smacked me in the face. A big reality check. Marshall was diagnosed with Metastatic (stage 4) High Risk Neuroblastoma. The deadliest diagnosis in childhood cancer. It was March of 2023, just one month shy of his 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Marshall was instantly thrown into treatment. It was a long road ahead and none of this team of doctors or nurses were sure he would make it to the next thing. Within the first 9 months after his diagnosis, Marshall had 6 cycles of chemo, abdominal surgery, 2 back-to-back stem cell transplants, a month of radiation, and had 4 cycles of immunotherapy. He was beating all the odds, overcame all the obstacles of side effects, and had just begun to thrive again. From June of '23 to June of '24, Marshall had been cancer free. But June of '24, it came back, this time on his brain. The pressure of the mass caused Marshall to have a grand mal seizure that lasted 20+ minutes which resulted in a 911 call and trip to the ER. While in the ER, he had a second seizure that lasted 6 minutes. He had brain surgery at 4 years old to remove the mass, which was a successful surgery. Although the surgery was successful, his scans that followed showed multiple spots along his spine and ribs. Marshall then completed another month of radiation and after that was started on immunotherapy again.

At this point, I was just not okay. Mentally, physically, or emotionally. I had nothing left to give. But I knew I needed to do something because my family needed me. I was empty inside, with no hope left. Most days, I forced myself out of bed because I had things I had to do. As a mother, my duties never stop.

I reached out to my Aunt Lynn and Uncle Jeff about attending church with them. Between them and their kids, they were all excited and encouraging for me to come. So I picked a Wednesday to go and drove to Lighthouse. I almost didn't get out of the car, but eventually I did. When I walked through the doors, I KNEW I was in the right place. I was exactly where I needed to be. I hadn't made it 5 steps into the church, and I had tears in my eyes. I physically felt all that I carried around with me be lifted and I could finally breathe.

I sat in service and just listened. I had been so angry with God for allowing Marshall to get cancer, heal him, and then allow it to come back. And then Pastor Josh said something that convicted me to my core: "God never needs forgiven." This statement made me realize that God

wasn't the problem. It was my mind and heart that was the problem. Instead of being angry with God, I should have been trusting in him and giving Him all the glory and praise. I should've been praising Him for allowing Marshall to breathe without a ventilator when nobody thought his body could handle it, for giving Marshall the strength to relearn to walk and begin reaching milestones again, and for giving us the time we had gotten for making more memories with Marshall. After a couple months of attending on Wednesdays and Sundays, Lynn finally convinced me to go to Foundations class. Lesson 1 with Pastor Josh changed my life. I learned about salvation. I repented of my past sins and let Jesus' forgiveness fill my heart. Pastor Josh lead me in prayer and I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior, and I was saved. I was finally getting answers to questions and an understanding of just how important knowing Jesus is.

The change within myself and my life began to show and reflect my new relationship with Jesus Christ. I speak to my children about Jesus; I read my bible every day. I'm praying daily and I love sharing with others what Jesus has done for me and my family. Even though there is a lot going on in my life, I'm filled with peace. I know that no matter what happens to Marshall, he will be made new again in heaven, Jesus will keep him for me until I, one day see him again there.

This baptism means more to me than I can find words for. But God knows.

Two verses that speak to me are:

Ephesians 2:8

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"

Matthew 6:33-34 (Anxiety)

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."