**FAITH IN GOD WHEN I JUST GOT PUNCHED IN THE GUT**

On the day I lost Luke I told God (Yahweh) that I wouldn’t turn my back on Him. My wife and I also dedicated ourselves to each other. I felt like I needed to have those two things set in stone. I couldn’t let our loss tear us apart, both in faith (not religion) and our love for one another. Now, two plus years later, I am still struggling to have the same relationship with our God that I had before Luke passed. We would participate in our Church, not just be there, but help in youth group and various church functions like small group or set up and tear down of tables. It was as much a part of my life as anything else. I felt like God and I were best friends. He had my back, and I had his. After my son passed, I still leaned back onto God but it was different. I wouldn’t say I have a cold shoulder; I still walk in faith. I know God does what He needs to do to get us all into Heaven. Which can mean things transpire that, at the time, are not in my family’s best interest. Our relationship is still there though, but the trust that he wouldn’t let anything happen to my family is gone. It was naïve thinking. Things happen and none of gets out of this world alive. Murder, suicide, accidental death happens to children everywhere though I falsely thought that being a follower of Christ would keep those tragedies away from me. That day and all the thoughts afterword made me rethink my walk with God.

Something else that happened during those early months after my son had passed, is that I had a hard time reading the Bible, and when I did, I really couldn’t relate to it. My prayers were me saying stuff just to keep my faith from falling away. Now there are times when I close my eyes and I really, really pray, and in the mornings, I read the Bible. After a time, I came to the conclusion that what I needed to do was still walk in faith with God through LFL. After all it was God who told me to start LFL. I trust that God will open the doors so we can reach as many people as possible out in the world who are truly hurting and needing solace. The heartache is real. The hurt is so deep it takes faith and courage to still walk with God. To still lean back on God on those dark days. To trust in God to be my rock while chaos is all around me.

 As terrible as this has been to endure my faith in God is deeper now than it has ever been. God has a plan to get us all into Heaven and I need to have faith that that plan got my son there. Pastors often preach about Christians being the light of the world. Putting our faith and testimony out into the world in hopes that those who don’t believe will turn to God. Christ must be real for so many to believe. Right? There are so many people with different walks of life, bad situations, good situations, rich and poor who believe and have some level of faith in Jesus. The opposite is also true. There are so many other beliefs and religions we can’t count them all. Early humanity was worshiping the Sun and the Moon and how many different beliefs have risen and fallen since then? So why Jesus? Why God? Why faith in something unseen? How can any type of being or spirit tell me what to do? Can an Omnipresent Being truly exist? Why would God take my child so soon, or put me through such hard times? There can’t be a good and loving God if I am suffering so much. Faith isn’t easy. Usually when I ask those questions it’s because I want something for myself. My heart is not aligned with my faith and I’m not thinking of those who I can reach out and help. It’s a constant battle, me or thee, who will I serve today? This I can tell you. When I just turn my brain, ego, wants and desires off, and just listen. *I hear God*. I can feel the Holy Spirit moving in me. It’s not a deep godly voice or anything like that. It’s just thoughts that form in my noggin that *I know* aren’t my own thoughts. There are days that are dark,

and I feel hopeless and then I see something of beauty that reminds me that all is not lost. My youngest son and I were taking a back road home on a late winter day. The sun hadn’t quite set but as we came around the curve the Columbia River stretched out below us, trees lined the mighty river and dark clouds reflected off the water. The setting was a dark and brooding winter day, but it was also so beautiful, a setting like no other. For me that is a God who knew I needed that moment before I was born and set about a series of events knowing the pain and doubt would be there. And just like a Father he was picking me back up and putting me on my feet after a hard spill. Him patting me on the shoulder letting me know it’ll be alright.

 Maybe this has helped someone. I don’t know. I am probably the worst Christian in the world. I screw up all the time. I road rage yell at drivers. I think bad thoughts and think about myself and my wants far too often. I worry that I won’t make it into Heaven and really deep down inside I didn’t feel worthy of starting LFL. I guess I’m trying to tell you that I’m not a super Christian or anything close to it. Just a regular guy trying to help others understand and walk through some of the darkest days of their life. I read about a man who lost his son, then his wife, and another son but he still walks with God. Some would say he’s crazy, but he sees this life as a passing moment to when he will see his family for eternity. I know he still aches for them that’s our human condition of the heart. But in his faith he knows one day he will rejoin those whom he lost and his family will be whole again. I’m kinda there and kinda not there but my walk isn’t complete yet so we will see. Until the next post my friends.