

Testimony

I've been a Christian and follower of Jesus for as long as I can remember. Between growing up in a Christian home, going to church and attending Christian school, there was no shortage of opportunities to "ask Jesus into your heart," and I made sure to several times and always wear my best dress to chapel. I soaked up Sunday school stories and found a genuine passion begin to stir in me for the Word of God and Christendom as I entered junior high and high school.

My schooling from sixth grade through senior year was unique. I went to a private, Christian and Classical school. Without going into too much detail, one of the foundational tenets of Classical education is learning formal logic and reasoning. We learned Latin, memorized all of Hebrews 11 (by heart, and recited it in front of the class), studied the book of Mark in ancient Greek and wrote forty page argumentative papers on subjects of our choice (that we then had to publicly speak on for an hour and defend in front of a panel of cross examining judges). Much of our schooling focused on this intense writing, speaking and memorization. This resulted in my mind being extremely developed in God's word, while my heart struggled to find its feet.

In this rigorous school environment, I always sensed I was missing something about Jesus and what it meant to follow Him. I was able to see through the religious, oppressive and misogynistic atmosphere of my school and church and know there was something more, but I didn't know what that something was. I wasn't leading a double life, I was seeking God as best as I knew how and I had a true love for the Lord and was surrendered to Him. But when a bout of depression took its toll on me the summer before leaving for college and a trying romantic relationship plagued me for the first two years of college, I became even more desperate for a deeper connection to Jesus.

I told God in my sophomore dorm room, "I feel like you're asking me to be a whore. You ask for all of me, but I don't feel like I get all of you. I can't live like that." God answered my prayer by revealing His Holy Spirit. Up until this point, the teachings I had had on the Holy Spirit were dismal and always unsatisfactory to me. It never felt like the whole story. By God's grace and mercy, my sophomore year of college, God introduced me to a community that was filled with the Holy Spirit and moved in miracles, prophecy and the healing power of Jesus.

Meeting and being filled with the Holy Spirit has been the single most transformative event in my Christian walk and life. I found the presence of Jesus that I could feel in worship, learned His voice, saw healings from my prayers and moved in prophecy. I finally felt that I had the whole picture of following Jesus and it was everything I had ever hoped for and more. I finally felt healed and liberated and that I was following someone who was going somewhere hopeful.

My friends and I hosted weeklong, 24/7 prayer and worship events ending in powerful worship. We spent the weekend nights in the bars and on the streets praying for students and making sure they got home safely. We met weekly for prayer, independent of our organized campus ministry. Whatever we prayed for, we saw in that season.

Out of college and into marriage, adult life, career and new motherhood, the Lord has continued to show Himself faithful and bring new revelations and prunings to my heart and character. One thread continues to grow stronger as I walk with Jesus: His desire to see me singing and worshipping and leading others into His perfect peace. I've served in Youth Ministry and Worship for the last ten years at the same church, helping it grow from less than 100 congregants to over 300.

Worship artistry and leading wasn't something I initially wanted for myself and, truth be told, it's been something I've kicked against in different seasons. But Jesus continues to reinvoke me back to the

path and confirm His calling for me. In college, a friend asked me if I wanted to help lead the campus ministry's worship team. I could sing, but I was new to leading worship. Under her mentorship and through witnessing the authentic worship of my community, God laid the foundation for me to lead in diverse gatherings and minister His Spirit specifically and with compassion.

My testimony can be summed up, as so many others can: I was blind but now I see. I've seen the Lord, tasted of His goodness and I'm ruined for anything else. He continues to mature me and gently lead me through every season, and it's my greatest joy to do His will and bring Heaven to earth.

Worship Approach

I've never been formally trained in worship artistry and leading; I've never even read a book about worship leading. What I have had is great mentors, from near and far, and abundant opportunities to practice in safe spaces and build trust with the Holy Spirit in this area.

My worship approach is simple: minister to Jesus with my whole being. My voice, my body, my faith, my mind, my heart...all pointed towards Jesus in unison with the goal of blessing and loving Him.

To me, a foundational Scripture for worship leading is Proverbs 18:21a, "The tongue can bring life or death..." Sometimes in worship settings we are proclaiming, sometimes we are confessing, sometimes we are speaking the truth even though everything in us and around us feels like it's not true. I believe that act of speaking and singing out the truths of the Gospel and who Jesus is, even when it's hard or feels incongruent, is a holy sacrifice and offering and that the Holy Spirit stirs within us to comfort, convict and guide us as we choose to worship simply because Jesus is worthy.

As a worship leader, I see it as my ministry to create a safe and single-minded atmosphere that gives the congregation space to worship, pray and connect with Jesus Christ how they need to in that moment. Whenever I'm building a set, I prayerfully consider what songs the Lord wants to hear in our gathering and I discern how He might want to minister to His children. I regularly worship the Lord in private so that my leading times are an overflow of praise and connection to the Holy Spirit. I strive to enter the rest of God in these sacred spaces; not creating needless hype or demanding a "spiritually high" experience, but trusting that the Holy Spirit is always at work and Christians always have the honor to be in flow with and partner with His work.

I'm equipped and practiced enough to know when to sing spontaneously and create a ministry moment, when to stick to the songs and when to stay quiet and let the instrumentalists or silence bless the Lord and His people. I've worked with a variety of diverse teams, some high production some little to no production, and have learned how to collaborate with other vocalists and instrumentalists to create an excellent and service-oriented set and worship experience. I'm also sensitive to the setting of the worship time—be it a Sunday morning church service, a set apart worship night or a conference—and the different approaches and platform demeanors that each space calls for in order to best serve the larger goal.

Vocally, I sit in the alto and mezzo soprano registers. My voice's range is comfortable for both men and women and I prioritize authenticity and service over showy vocal performances. I'm an active worshipper, meaning I jump, walk, kneel, raise my hands and interact with my fellow teammates and the congregation. I don't play an instrument, but I can still communicate with instrumentalists and vocalists alike to achieve a smooth flow throughout the set and an excellent sound.

I don't use the word "calling" lightly, but I do believe that worship leading and artistry is a calling the Lord has placed on my life and that it brings Him great joy whenever I get to serve His Church in this way. I've been dramatically changed and have met with Jesus in powerful and tender ways through the pure worship of others and how the Holy Spirit settles into a worshipping room, and I hope to continue to

bless the Lord and others with this gift.

I hope my heart for worship and the Lord has been made clear in this Statement. I would love to connect further and help your organization share the Gospel.