

From Prostitute To Prophet

by Scott MacLeod

This year I received from the Lord one of the best Christmas presents that I have ever received! It was Christmas Eve and I was quickly shuffling through a stack of mail that had been sent to my office when I found it. It was a simple Christmas card. Now I'm not one who is normally moved by cards but this one really touched me. As I opened this card I was greatly surprised and encouraged by who it was from. It was from a lady named Anna Lee. I hadn't heard personally from her in almost three months. Just the day before, Anna Lee had been on my heart and I had asked one of our team members about how she was doing and if they had heard from her. Anna Lee is currently in a drug rehab center.

Just reading her honest words that were so beautifully hand written on the card reminded me again of how amazingly powerful her story really is. I met Anna Lee one Thursday afternoon in late October on a street corner of our inner city community. This is the same street corner that has recently been labeled by the Metro Police as "the most dangerous street corner in Nashville." It all began to unfold as I was returning from visiting some of the residents of our community when out of the corner of my eye I saw this woman sitting there on the infamous stone wall. I had seen her walking and working these streets previously, but this divinely appointed encounter was my first time to actually communicate with her.

I was not alone at this time for little Audrey, a precious 8-year-old girl, accompanied me. Just a few moments before, Audrey had run towards me waving and calling out, "Pastor Scott!" I greeted her with a hug and she then proceeded to grab my hand and we were in the process of finishing up the visitation route together. Now I have to stop for a moment and tell you Audrey is a ray of heavenly sunlight that cuts through the darkness of the inner city. She has been a consistent part of

Kids Club (our Saturday morning children's outreach) for a few years now. She is an exceptional child -- she memorizes Scripture and radiates Jesus like few children I've seen.

The Woman at the Wall

As I looked across the street to the corner that is known for every kind of inner city action (degradation) you can imagine, I observed a woman sitting on the wall. She was not by herself as this wall was a well-worn leaning post for other women of the street (prostitutes), slow moving drunkards, nervous drug dealers, anxious addicts, and a small variety of other suspiciously idle characters. But even from across the street this day it was as if Anna Lee was somehow highlighted and she stood out from among the others.

The Lord then told me to "cross the street and go talk to her." I remember telling the Lord, "but Lord she is a prostitute... I don't know her... and I don't know what to say to her." And the Lord instructed me, "Cross the street and then I will tell you what to say." Fortunately I obeyed and started across the street. I could see Anna Lee's eyes watching us carefully as Audrey and I dodged the hurried traffic and moved directly towards her. And sure enough once I got right up close to her I knew just what to say.

It was very simple and to the point but it burst out of me with surprising energy, "Did you know that Jesus loves you... big-time!? And that He has sent me here just to tell you this?"

She immediately burst into tears and responded, "Yes... I do know He loves me and when I saw you coming across the street I knew that Jesus was coming right here to me and that he had something to say to me."

I was greatly encouraged and somewhat surprised by how soft and responsive her heart was. At this point we started up about a 15-minute remarkable conversation during which I don't think her tears ever stopped flowing. I was well aware of

the other curious (and some not so curious) inhabitants of the wall watching this unusual transaction take place, but I kept pressing into what the Lord was doing in this one woman. I could feel the presence of Jesus right there with us on the street corner as we talked. I wondered if this was somewhat like His encounter with the woman at the well.

The Lord graced me to be able to speak into her life prophetically. By the Spirit I told her some of the things she'd been through as she nodded emphatically. As I told her who she really was in Jesus I was encouraged to see that the truth was dismantling many lies and breaking down strongholds that had held her captive for decades.

Anna Lee told me that she had been sitting on this wall listening from a distance this summer as we "poured our hearts out" preaching the Good News in our open-air outreaches every Saturday in the park. She said that a couple of times she had told her friend that "she knew that God was speaking directly to her and that the message was just for her." It was evident that God had been preparing her for such a time as this. I told her that this was now her time and that Jesus had come for her to take her off the streets and he was here to set her free and to give her a new beginning.

Anna Lee told me that she really "wants to be set free and to do right" and that she had tried many times before but that she was again on a "relapse." She said that just the other day a friend of hers had been reading the Bible to her and she remembered a part that talked something about "apostles, prophets, pastors etc." She said to me that when she had heard this she told the Lord that she wanted to "be a Prophet for Him and to shine for Him." She said that she wanted God to use her to help set free other women in her situation. I told her I believed God was going to do exactly just that. I told her that I believed that she is called to minister and to speak God's

word and that she is going to be used to help set others free in the same way Jesus is going to set her free. I could see her being filled with hope.

I remember thinking to myself right then, "Wow... what an amazing transformation this was going to be... from a prostitute to a prophet!" I felt strongly that the Lord was ready to answer her heart's desire for she seemed genuinely broken and sincere.

She began to tell me her story and of her many struggles. She told me that she was a crack addict and that she been on drugs since she was 13 years old. She said that she wanted so much to change and that she knew she was dying. She was now forty years old and most of those years had been consumed with drugs and prostitution to support her addiction.

She agreed that this was her time to be set free, but I could see and feel a horrendous battle raging for her soul in those few critical moments as we talked together.

I asked her if we could pray for her she said, "Yes, please" and she squeezed my hand hard as we talked to Jesus. We prayed and then as I was winding down something amazing happened. Little Audrey reached over and grabbed Anna Lee's hand. Anna Lee looked up and this little girl said in a sweet and yet very concerned tone, "You need to be filled with the Holy Spirit." Anna Lee began to cry even more and she softened and smiled at this little angel.

The Moment of Truth

There had been many tears and prayers but now the moment of truth had come. Could she make the leap? There was undoubtedly a great chasm between where she was and where Jesus wanted her to be. And this chasm certainly was not void... it was inundated with demonic opposition that stood between Anna Lee and her liberation.

I told Anna Lee very plainly, "You need to come now.

This is your time. We have a place for you to stay and people who will help you. You cannot make it alone.”

She graciously said thank you, but that she didn't think that she could make it right now. She began to make excuses and said that she would come and meet us a little later on. Our ministry was right around the corner... just half a block away from where we stood at the wall.

God's Secret Weapon

I said, “No if you don't come now... you won't make it.” She agreed. Then she said she still didn't think she could come right now. I said, “You are going to die if you don't come now.” She agreed but she still said that she couldn't make it. She was now physically trembling and looking about nervously. I could tell the demonic realm was working overtime. But they were about to lose their wicked grip on her because God had sent in his secret weapon... and her name was Audrey.

We were at a stale mate and I had run out of things to say. It felt like the devil was going to maintain his death grip on Anna Lee when all of a sudden little Audrey reached over and took Anna Lee's hand and said, “Come now... you need to come.” She spoke with unexpected authority. Anna Lee broke down and began sobbing. Then she stood up and held our hands and we all began to walk together towards freedom.

Anna Lee was shaking hard as we walked, and she said she could feel the demons running all over her. I told her to keep walking... and that Jesus is with us. She said, “I know it feels like gravity pulling me this way. Oh I can feel the Angels now!” She looked back just a half a block to the stone wall where her “friends” still sat and said, “There is darkness over there but there's light over here.” I said, “That's exactly right... and today you have come into the Light.” It was a very short walk in the natural, but it seemed like a very long distance to

journey in the Spirit. But to God be the glory, we made it to the safety of our old renovated warehouse called “The Fortress of Hope.”

As soon as we turned the corner I said, “Now let me introduce you to some of our team.” I quickly rallied together a few of the young women from our ministry and introduced them to Anna Lee. There were many smiles and hugs exchanged like the welcoming of a long missed family member. I was so blessed to be able to entrust her into their loving hands and they instantly began to do what they do best... set captives free by extending the unfailing love of Jesus.

A Divine Transformation

We set her up to stay in our apartment and for the next seven days... 24/7... our team stayed with her and ministered to our new found friend... body, soul and spirit. There was a few times where it seemed like she wasn't going to make it and that she would fall back. She had to face drug withdrawals and many fears of the unknown, but by God's grace she held the course and she held on to Jesus. Anna Lee joyfully gave her life to the Lord and she began to everyday become more and more like a child again... she became much like Audrey... innocent, lively and powerful. The Devil had stolen her innocence and her childhood and he was about to completely destroy her, but now right before our eyes in just seven days God was swiftly restoring and rejuvenating her life. It was amazing for our team to witness and to be privileged to be part of Anna Lee's dramatic transformation.

We were able to get her into a good women's shelter that has a six-month rehab program. Some of our women have been continuing to visit her and we have heard that even within a month's time that she was doing amazingly well and that she had risen to the top of her class. God was swiftly answering her prayers and her heart's desire.

Another remarkable thing is that the very next week after Anna Lee had gotten off the streets there was another drug related gunfight; and a woman who was sitting on the same corner as Anna Lee just one week earlier was shot with a stray bullet. This woman died in the hospital. This could have well been Anna Lee's end too if not for the grace of God.

This story again has greatly warmed my heart with renewed affection and adoration towards our wonderful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. His tender mercies never fail and His loving-kindness reaches to all people no matter how far they have fallen. Again I realized afresh that Jesus is truly the great Shepherd of our souls who was willing to risk it all and to lay down His life for one lost lamb. Anna Lee was her name in this case.

“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.” (Matthew 18:12-14)

As I have reflected on Anna Lee's story I am continually amazed and overwhelmed by the unlimited power and goodness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is truly the grace and power of God that leads to salvation!

“He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

Here are Anna Lee's actual words as she wrote them in her Christmas card...

“Dear Pastor Scott and Andy,

Hello there, how are you guys? :-) Well first of all I like to say once again thank God for using you guys to help me to help myself.

Scott, you and Audrey and the Lord, I really believe saved my life the day I left my life of destruction with you two. I have been clean from that moment! Praise God!

I have learned a lot from being here. I believe [know] that this is a designed purpose in my designed destination from the Lord. I know that he's with me every second of every day. He has revealed Himself to me. He lets me feel His presence. I feel a peace that I've never felt before.

I still have a lot to learn, as we all do, but God has cleaned my heart and soul and He's using me to help other girls like me. I came here October the 14th and have already moved to the other side... to the Hope Center. This is where the real healing begins. I'm breaking free slowly but surely. The joy is overwhelming here being around Christ-like people it is just totally amazing. I'm on a high and I never wanna come down! :-)

Have a very Merry Christmas!

Love,

Anna Lee

P.S. To all my Foundry family hello. Especially “Angel” cause she sure is a heaven-sent Angel to me!”

P.S.#2 Oh Yeah, I meant to tell you, God's bringing me all my family back together... one by one! My children came to visit me Thanksgiving weekend! Awesome!