

DEVOTIONAL SERIES

ALIVE WITH CHRIST



THOUGHTS FROM MAJOR BILL BLACKMAN

At the heart of this song, and ultimately the Scripture in which it is based, is this idea that Christ makes us alive. Perhaps this sounds really odd, even to those who have been followers of Jesus for years. We forget how significant this is, and how different our lives are because of this truth: "Because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ."

The easiest way to understand this concept is through stories, or those old testimony times that used to excite and inspire us. In our first appointment, we had a young family join our church. The wife had found this new life, and quickly entered the very fabric of our church. She brought along her family which included her husband who was very musically talented. He didn't come every week but would participate when he was there. He was a professional musician who was in a rock band that were gaining momentum in the Canadian music scene. As many would have agreed, he was living a good life with an awesome family, a budding career, and a future full of potential. There were moments when he seemed to enjoy being at church, but it became evident to us that he was there to be with his family and support his wife. As officers, we were moved across the country to another church, but I would stay updated through Facebook to stay connected as best as possible with those from our previous church family. After over a decade of no contact, I received a cryptic message through the Facebook page for our church that there was a man who wanted to speak with us about something incredible that happened in his life. I reluctantly called, hoping it wasn't an internet scam. To my surprise, it was the husband from our previous church family. He quickly told me that his life was radically changed; that he had become a follower of Jesus, and for the first time in his life, he truly felt alive. It was as if he went from being deaf and blind to seeing and hearing. He understood the beauty of a life surrendered to a good and loving God. There was an obvious shift in his demeanor as he was joyful and excited to talk about his new life and the strength found in reading and understanding the Bible. His budding music career had brought him brokenness, addiction, and destruction in his life. His marriage had ended and he was starting over again. His old life, which looked so promising, only accentuated that he was actually dead and trapped in his sin by the empty promises of the world (Ephesians 2:1-3). Somehow when he was at his worst, Christ lavished His love on my friend. He became alive and he believed that God would create something new and beautiful with his life.

When Noel Samuels wrote this song, it was originally intended to help us memorize these important verses of Scripture, reminding us that even though we were once dead, Christ has made us alive (Ephesians 2:1-5). He also added Romans 5:1-2 in his lyrics to remind us that this life is not something we earn, but a gift from God that we do not deserve. In verse 3 of the song, the lyrics reference Philippians 4:13 and Romans 12:2 to teach us that this journey only begins with our conversion story. As we grow in our relationship with Christ, we not only gain a new life, but an abundant life filled with beauty and more hope than anything this world has to offer. This is my testimony. That throughout my life, my actual God-given aliveness, God has always proved to be faithful. He uses my successes, failures, brokenness, and pain to draw me closer to Him, so that I can know that by His grace, I am truly alive.