

Would you like to hear the Good News?

God still loves you. He never stopped loving you. He loved you so much that He sent His Son Jesus to bring you back. All you have to do is let Him bring you back. Will you pray with me?

"Lord Jesus... I want to stop trusting in myself...and what I can do...and start trusting in you...and what you have already done...when you died for me on the cross. I know that! am a sinner...and I am sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me...I believe you rose again...and I invite you to come and live inside of me. I want you to be my Savior and Lord...which means being #1 in my life. I want to repent and turn away...from everything you and the Bible call sin...and I totally commit myself... to obeying you...every day, for the rest of my life. Lord Jesus baptize me in your precious Holy Spirit. Thank you Jesus."

Now that you have made peace with God, He is ready for you to begin to grow in a personal relationship with Him.

Receiving More of Jesus? "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit"

Who is the Holy Spirit? He is God. You might ask, "If the Holy Spirit is God, and Jesus is God, and the Heavenly Father is God, are there three Gods?" No. There is only one God as stated earlier. But God is unified as One and exists in the three Persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This threefold nature of God is exhibited even in creation. Humans have a body, a mind, and an eternal spirit. Our mind is not our body. Our spirit is not our mind. Are we then three people? No. We are just one person with three manifestations.

After we receive eternal life through confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior, we can also receive what the Bible calls the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this Baptism is to be anointed like Jesus and do the works that He did. Through this Baptism we receive the power of God, the supernatural fruit of the Holy Spirit, and the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). We receive these supernatural capabilities in our lives when we receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are listed in 1 Corinthians 12. Through the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, God distributes these great gifts to each one individually as He wills for each situation (1 Corinthians 12:8-11).

Would you like to receive this great gift? Yes No

Throughout the New Testament, the Bible shows the manifestations of the gifts that may be received after receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Initially the gift of utterance, a language not previously known to the person may be received, or interpretation of tongues, or prophecy. The gifts of power are faith, healings, or miracles. The gifts of revelation are also available: word of knowledge, word of wisdom, or discernment of spirits, or any combinations of these gifts. The Holy Spirit will manifest His presence differently at different times depending on which gift or gifts are needed at that time.

Do you believe these things? Yes No

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is received by faith just as salvation is received. Pray the following prayer or one similar to it.

Dear Heavenly Father. I believe You are the source of all love and power. I ask right now for the gift of the Holy Spirit. I have faith in You, and that You will give me this great gift. Because I have asked, I believe I have now received the Power of God, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit in my life. I have received all these wonderful gifts by faith. I also ask that You will show me how to use these gifts for Your glory by Christ Jesus. I pray now thanking you in the name of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Luke 11:13

Do you believe you have received these great gifts? Yes No

You have received these gifts. You should begin to use these gifts now that God has given you.



Hearing His Voice

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"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." Revelations 12:11

I WENT FROM FIGHTING IN A CAGE TO LIVING IN A HUT



Justin Wren

While growing up I faced some pretty severe bullying. Maybe it's because I was chubbier and had pimples on my face; maybe I was too nice and let other kids walk over me. At the age of 13, I was diagnosed with clinical depression and I battled suicidal thoughts, which is something a thirteen year-old boy shouldn't have to face.

Luckily, I had a loving home and my parents did everything they could to help me improve my self-esteem. They encouraged me to get involved in athletics. I've loved the sport of wrestling since the moment I stepped onto the mat. It took my focus off my struggles. I didn't start off as a great wrestler. In fact, I was terrible. But a coach

saw something in me and he never gave up. Eventually I became one of the best and won multiple state and national championships. That's what started me on the road to professional cage fighting.

After graduation I moved to the Olympic Training Center, to pursue my dream of wrestling in the Olympics. In a match with a world champion, I ended up in a bad position. Rather than give him the point, I let him gut-wrench me against the mat, twisting my arm the wrong way. In a freak accident, my arm snapped like a twig. I was in terrible pain from my neck down to my hand. My elbow was broken and dislocated. I'd torn the ulnar collateral ligament. There was nerve damage, and my insurance company didn't want to pay for my surgery.

In the meantime, I took painkillers and was hooked immediately. The drugs dulled not only my physical pain, but also the emotional pain and depression that had tormented me since elementary school. I would go through a month's supply of Oxycontin in a week. Eventually, I had three doctors in three different states prescribing me narcotics in rotation; none of them knew about the others.

Skyrocketing Addictions

My wrestling career was in limbo, but the drive to fight remained. When a friend of mine was injured, I took his spot in a Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fight. Wrestlers often perform well in MMA, and I was no exception. After my first win, I caught the fighting bug.

As my popularity in the MMA community grew, I got sucked into the fighting lifestyle, which can be dangerous. Fans wanted me to sign autographs and take pictures. Everyone wanted to party and my career skyrocketed, along with my addictions. Before long, I added cocaine and alcohol to my already out-of-control narcotics addiction.

After my record reached 9-1, I appeared on Spike's reality series The Ultimate Fighter. While I didn't win, it catapulted my career, and before long I landed an Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) contract. I was the youngest heavyweight at the highest level. I split my time between fighting, training, and doing drugs. To this day, I'm missing memories of

entire weeks due to drug binges.

My life hit rock bottom when I was kicked off one of the world's best fight teams for drug use. My childhood dream had turned into a living nightmare. But when everyone else had written me off as beyond redemption, one friend, Jeff refused to walk away. He called me several times a day, inviting me to a Christian men's retreat. He promised to train with me in the mornings, as long as I would attend the sessions in the afternoons. I was expecting a bunch of "kumbaya moments" around a campfire, but the men were raw and real about their struggles. They weren't wimpy men like I thought, but had a peace I envied. After a few days at the retreat, I knew I needed what they had and I prayed, "God, I'm a drunk and drug addict. I'm a liar and a cheater. I'm many things I've wanted to be, and I'm everything I never wanted to be. God, I've hurt everybody. I don't want to hurt anybody anymore. I don't want to hurt. I desperately need you in my life."

As I prayed, I felt God lift me up, and it felt like something finally released me. I was free. All the emotional chains of depression and all the bondage just broke and fell away. At the same time, I felt God's arms envelope me, the way a father bear-hugs his sons.

Instantly, things began to change, and I threw the rest of my drugs into the campfire. It's remarkable because so many people quit drugs, only to fall back into their old habits. God took the desire away from me, and I've never wanted to return to the life I had before.

The Vision

After Jesus helped me overcome my depression and addiction, my dreams for my life changed. I wanted more than MMA fame; I wanted to serve God however I could. I started volunteering at local ministries and prisons, sharing my story with anyone who would listen. I also knew I needed a break from MMA and even though I still loved the sport, the temptations were too great. In desperation, I prayed: "God, I'm yours. Is there anything you want me to do? I desire to do your will, not mine."

That's when a strange vision flooded my head. I watched myself weaving through the jungle. Among the forest's white noise, I heard the faint sound of lively music, unlike anything I'd heard before. As I stepped into a clearing, I saw 150 people, living in a cluster of twig-and-leaf huts. I took a step forward, and the vision changed, with flash-fast images of malnourished children and starving old men. I saw a man dying from a disease eating him alive. For some reason, I could tell these people were oppressed and outcasts.

I sobbed and left a puddle of tears on my Bible. I wondered if I was crazy, but I knew couldn't have imagined what I saw on my own. I didn't know who these people were, but I knew I had to help them. Turning to Isaiah 58, my eyes focused on verses 6-12, about God's heart for the poor and oppressed. The passage started a fire in my heart.

I shared my vision with my mentor, Caleb, and he immediately knew I was describing a Mbuti (or Pygmy) tribe in the Congo. He told me he was leading a group there in a month with his high-risk missions ministry, Unusual Soldiers, and he encouraged me to go with him. Our goal on this trip would be to find the most remote Mbuti villages in the jungle, form relationships with them and learn more about their needs.

I saw firsthand that circumstances there were graver than I had seen in my vision. Caleb connected me with Shalom University, a Congolese Christian school dedicated to serving the Pygmies. I knew I couldn't help them unless I understood them first, so I lived with them for a year. I slept in a twig-and-leaf hut, ate their food, and suffered from the same diseases. One bout with malaria nearly killed me.

But no matter how tough things got, I felt more at home than I ever had in the gym.

I was soon adopted into the Pygmy tribe and given a new name: Eféosa Mbuti MangBO. "Mbuti MangBO" means "The Big Pygmy," which is appropriate, since at six foot three I tower over the average (four-foot-seven) Pygmy man. "Eféosa" means "The Man Who Loves Us."

Recently, after a five-year hiatus, I returned to the MMA cage with the goal of raising money for Fight for the Forgotten, the organization I founded to help serve the Pygmies. The drive to fight is still there, but I'm no longer fighting my inner demons. I'm fighting to fulfill God's call on my life.

Justin Wren is the author of *Fight for the Forgotten: How a Mixed Martial Artist Stopped Fighting for Himself and Started Fighting for Others* (Howard Books).

OUR VISION is based on a vision that God gave to a businessman- a dairy farmer. In that vision, he saw hundreds of despondent men who felt they had no chance of making it in the world. Then they heard a message of hope and they came alive! Their heads held high; they were transformed into productive men with dignity and purpose.

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR OUR FELLOWSHIP

- To reach men everywhere for Jesus Christ with the same social, cultural or business interests.
- To call men to God: to help men become born again, baptized in the Holy Spirit, operate in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- To mentor young men who have never had a positive male role model by being a spiritual father to them.
- To provide a basis of fellowship among all men everywhere, regardless of church affiliation.
- To bring about a greater measure of unity and harmony in the Body of Christ.
- To train and equip men to succeed in the business world.

Learning about Business

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