

Surrendering to His Light

by

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My name is Courtland Bonaventure. I was a young attorney at one of the most reputable law firms in New Orleans when I had an out-of-body experience and finally surrendered to His light. Daddy and I had just had an argument because I wasn't being serious about my Christian faith. I had played the church game my entire life, but I also wanted to live large and have fun. Surrendering to God was never part of that plan. Besides, going to church and being good was going to get me into heaven.

Daddy was determined to open my eyes though. He kept telling me that I needed to stop chasing God and just surrender to Him. We argued on the phone for almost an hour until I hung up on him. I jumped in my red sports car and drove off. A few minutes later, I lost control of the vehicle, ran off the road, and struck a tree.

My eyes opened, and I realized that I was floating over a hospital operating room. Looking down, I could see several doctors and nurses aggressively tending to a bleeding patient. One doctor yelled out, "Hurry folks! We have to move fast before he flatlines! Somebody, see if you all can reach his next of kin."

A nurse shouted, "We need to get Dr. Delcore, stat! He's on-call and can be here in fifteen minutes. I'll try to reach him before we lose this guy."

The medical team appeared determined to save the man, but he already looked dead. It didn't take me long to realize the patient's identity. He was Courtland Bonaventure. I was the dying man on the operating table.

I continued to observe the action below until the space around me suddenly went dark and obscure. I could no longer see the operating team or my lifeless body. It was only darkness, and it frightened me.

Still hovering in the blackness, I noticed a bright figure on a roadway. His glowing, white gown radiated enough light for me to see him gracefully walk along the path. With each step, he proclaimed his status as the only light in the black and dim biosphere. I presumed his name must

have been The Light. His significance was obvious, yet there was so much unknown. I couldn't even see his face.

While I remained in awe of The Light, I noticed another figure walking in the darkness. The faint glow surrounding him revealed his all-black wardrobe. He shamefully hiked with his head down so I couldn't see his face. His physical stature seemed familiar though. His body language exuded pain, sadness, defeat, and disappointment. He seemed like a misplaced soul, a wanderer. I figured his name must have been The Lost.

As I continued to stare, The Lost unexpectedly sprinted toward The Light. He gave his all to get to the sparkle. Despite The Lost's effort though, the luminosity remained unscathed.

Appearing tired and defeated, The Lost stopped running. He took a deep breath and exhaled it. He then dropped to his knees in a praying position.

A short time later, The Lost stood up and ran again. His body moved much faster, closing the gap between him and The Light. The closer he got to the glimmer, the more visible the sky became.

Thanks to the daylight, I was able to get a closer look at The Lost. I couldn't see his face because of the hood he wore. I did notice that his hands were brown like mine.

Suddenly, several people appeared on the street with The Lost as he ran. Some of them walked about while others chatted and visited with each other. The gathering spot appeared to be a French Quarter street in the heart of New Orleans.

Looking exhausted, The Lost stopped running. His head moved from side-to-side as he searched for The Light. Seeming overwhelmed, The Lost dropped to his knees again and prayed. I couldn't hear his prayer though.

A short time later, The Lost stood up. He observed the crowd and spotted The Light. As he chased the glimmer, he struggled to push his way through the people. No matter his efforts, the crowd acted as a roadblock. He would have to overcome that obstacle to reach the radiance.

Appearing frustrated, The Lost dropped to his knees to pray. Several minutes later, he stood up and immediately spotted The Light. The wanderer seemed determined to reach the shining being. Just as Moses had parted the Red Sea, the people cleared the way for The Lost.

After a brief chase, The Lost finally made it to The Light. He carefully reached towards the glow, but quickly retrieved his hand as if he was scared to make contact. I couldn't understand why The Lost was so hesitant to embrace The Light.

Acting anxious, The Lost dropped to his knees again to pray. A short while later, he stood up and sighed. He slowly reached towards The Light until his brown hand grasped the hem of the being's white garment. The illuminated one then disappeared.

The Lost suddenly seemed free from the bondage of pain, sadness, defeat, and disappointment that had once imprisoned his soul. Miraculously, his dark attire suddenly morphed into an all-white wardrobe. The single touch of that snow-colored garment had injected new life into him.

Still clutching the white frock, The Lost used his other hand to remove the hood from his head. Immediately, his familiarity was obvious. He was I. I was the lost one who had been hurting, who had sought the light, who had faced challenges along the way, who had prayed for and received breakthroughs, who had connected with God, and who had received new life. I was that person.

Before the ordeal could completely overwhelm me, there was the sound of a jazz band playing in the distance. The music was indicative of some of the traditional, New Orleans, jazz pieces I remembered listening to in elementary school. The tune was upbeat and jovial.

The actual jazz band soon paraded along the street in which I was hovering. The ensemble included some of my family and friends who had passed away. Big Momma and Grandmamma were there, along with Uncle Michael, Uncle Larry, Aunt Jackie, Aunt Visie, Mr. Walter, Mrs. Juanita, and my cousin, Big James. There was also Grandma Leslie, Grandma Willie Mae, and Sunny Man. Big Momma's rooster, Eddie was part of the group as well. They were all playing instruments, dancing, and just having a good time.

Some of them carried posters that contained my name and picture. I figured they were actually giving me a traditional, New Orleans, jazz funeral. The old Courtland Bonaventure had died. However, I had received new life in Christ after touching the hem of that white garment.

The bright pink poster that Big James carried really held my attention though. It said, "Not yet, Cuz. His will shall be done there first. Open your eyes and seek Him. Surrender to His light."

When my eyes opened, darkness was all around me. I couldn't see much. Thanks to the bright, red numbers on the clock radio though, I did notice that I was in a hospital bed.

While staring into the darkness, I felt the urge to pray suddenly. I did not know why, though. It was a strange feeling, but I did not fight it. Through the physical pain, I managed to open my mouth. The words flowed out.

“Dear Heavenly Father, I have chased You for so long by playing the church game. Being nice, obeying laws, and donating to charities were all part of the charade. So many times, I’ve come close to committing my life to You. I just couldn’t follow through with it. I didn’t want to become a boring and lifeless person, always aiming for perfection. I no longer see it that way. That’s why I am committing my life to You and surrendering to Your light. I will no longer be a lost soul navigating the dark and difficult times in this life without your radiance and light. From this day forward, I am eternally yours. Amen.”

Just after I finished praying, I heard a noise. It sounded like someone had flipped several light switches. When my eyes opened, the hospital room was bright. All the lights were on. No one was there though. I smiled. There was still time for me to surrender to His light. It is not too late for you either.