

## Jakey Rae's Testimony

Hi all!

Today I'm going to tell you my story.

It's not overly joyful but I promise, it's worth hearing.

Let me start at the beginning.

April 13, 1994.

It was a cold rainy day in Upper Ferntree gully but on that day a legend was born.

That was me ☐ ☐ ☐

When I was born my mum lived with my birth father who was incredibly violent and abusive towards my mum and possibly towards me but I can't confirm that.

We had moved to Tasmania shortly after I was born, but before my first birthday mum left with me and we moved back to live with my granny in Croydon.

My mum was still only young and she enjoyed partying so it was common that she would go off to parties on weekends.

One weekend at a party everyone got very drunk and there was a fight, long story short a man died and my mum as well as a few others went to jail for manslaughter for 3 years.

Unfortunately at that time my granny was the only family I had but she was working full time and long hours so I went to live in foster care.

I was then in and out of foster care for the next 6 years.

While in foster care I moved to a few different homes, some were really nice. But some I have horrible memories of abuse or simply being treated as an outsider.

When I was about 7 I went back to live with mum and I was very happy about that.

Mum found a partner who I eventually claimed as my dad.

He did his best to provide for us but unfortunately all he knew was crime, eventually when I was about 8 he went to jail for 4 years.

A lot happened in this time mum and I were involved in about 20 car accidents, (mostly due to her being on drugs) we moved a lot, usually every few months and usually several towns over so I would need to start a new school every time.

My only consolation was that I've always been a people magnet so I made friends and was always very popular anywhere we went.

Also in this time mum had several boyfriends and most of them physically abused her and myself.

They were controlling abusive men sadly they eventually caused a division between me and my mum.

When I was 10 I was sexually assaulted by one of these men while my mum was in the next room. I felt so hurt at this time and couldn't trust anyone but my mum but when I spoke to her about it she said she knew and there was nothing she could do.

I felt so angry I ran away that night and I was eventually picked up by the police, I refused to tell them who I was or where I lived but eventually I broke down and told them what had happened.

There was a big court case and I was asked to say what had happened then my mum took the stand in the court, she told them all it was a very common thing for me to lie and this was just another one of those times, she assured the court there was no truth to what I had said, with that the case was dismissed.

I hated my mum.

I hated her.

I really struggled to be around her and I deliberately avoided being alone with her. Eventually she left that guy and moved on and there were others.

Soon the man I called dad got out of jail and mum reignited the flame with him and I was happy, I knew he would always look after me.

Then just a few short months later we were playing Xbox I went to get a drink, I came back and he had died right there on the couch.

He had contracted a blood infection while in jail that eventually got to his heart and stopped it.

From there, mentally I went downhill very fast.

I refused to leave my room for a year I didn't go anywhere except my room and I missed my first year of high school because of it.

In the last few months of that year we became homeless, we lived in our car with our 2 dogs for several weeks before we were eventually offered a house by the department of human services.

It was in Moe.

All we knew of Moe was that it had a Maccas on the highway and it was in the middle of nowhere but we had nothing else so we moved from Rosebud to Moe that day.

So I started school again, at Lowanna College.

But I was not liked, I was treated as an outcast and it was a very unreal feeling for me as I'd always been popular.

I became determined to be popular and when some "popular" kids told me all I had to do was beat up a guy and I could be a part of them, I jumped at the chance.

The guy would be in the same spot after school every day, so I would meet him there to beat him up and those people would come to watch, I was never going to be a part of their group but I was angry scared kid who just wanted to be loved.

This guy, he could've changed his spot he could've hid, but instead he waited every day for me to get there and he would say "I know you're gonna beat me up but do you want to come to youth group"

It was infuriating.

I thought this kid must really have something wrong with him.  
Eventually I couldn't take it anymore and so one Friday I gave in, I said to him "yes, I will come to youth group"  
That night I went to youth group for the first time.

That night, Phil Kennedy preached on how we are all made by god, how god doesn't make mistakes and how he loves us as we are, suddenly I felt a huge wave of God's love rush over me.  
I felt happy and I knew who I was for the first time, a child of god.  
I gave my heart to Jesus that night.

I continued on my journey of faith for many years and through this time I grew spiritually and I was a youth group leader and even began discipling some of the younger guys in the youth group.  
I was on my way to becoming a strong godly man.

Then one day while going through some old stuff I found an old friends number, Matt who was my best friend in Rosebud.  
I was so excited, we hadn't spoken since a few days before I had to leave Rosebud unexpectedly, I'd never got to say goodbye.  
I rang the number, his mum answered and when I explained who I was she became very abusive.  
She told me how Matt had killed himself, how he had written in his suicide note that his only friend had abandoned him.  
She swore at me and abused me and although I was crying I couldn't help but apologise. I definitely felt it was all my fault.

From here I fell further into depression than I ever had.  
I was no longer connected to God but I told people I was.  
I couldn't be. I felt unworthy to be in his presence, I felt unworthy to be His creation.

I started doing things to try and fulfil that love I was missing, I cheated on my partner, eventually I had sex out of marriage and began living heavily in sin.

I tried to stay slightly connected to God by going to church and getting the Sunday fill but then people began to find out how I was acting outside of that.  
After that happened I no longer went to church.  
I felt ashamed to be amongst gods people when they knew I wasn't one of them.

I caused a rift between me and my partner that was never able to be fixed due to my sinful ways.

I tried to mask my depression, I tried to push myself out there and kept piling responsibilities on top of myself, eventually I was heavily involved in 12 different community groups then working full time and soon enough I just broke.

One day I woke up and 2 years of my life were gone I didn't remember anything, I missed the birth of my son and his first year of life because I was too busy trying to get satisfaction from the world when I should've been getting it from my Creator.

After the memory loss I began to try and put the pieces back together, I found the important things that were missing in my life and put them back in there, I reconnected with my mum.

After years of anger and resentment I forgave her in my own heart and we spent some great time together.

We shared an amazing time over the Christmas of 2017, one of my greatest memories ever. Sadly, then in January 2018 I went to visit her and found she had been passed away for a few days.

As you can imagine that was a heartbreaking moment for me, I really struggled with coming to terms with it.

Accepting she was really gone was the hardest part.

But after her passing I found myself needing God. I prayed for the first time in a long time after her funeral and asked God to guide me, to help me to make my mum proud.

From there I reconnected with God and restarted my relationship with him.

I avoided going to church though because I was still ashamed of what I had done and felt I would be judged.

Eventually though, I bumped into Barrie at the train station one day, we had a bit of a chat and I told him I was coming to church on Sunday.

He said "Oh, are you? Okay I'll see you then" and even though I had no idea why I'd said that because I had no intention of going before I saw him, I was also pretty sure Barrie didn't believe me.

So I was determined I was going to be there, so I did.

I was welcomed and embraced by all just like the prodigal son.

I realised I was back home with my family, I've stayed since and I'm never leaving!

When I look back now it's just incredible to see that no matter where I was, no matter how hard things got, God was right there with me.

I was in over 20 car accidents and almost every one the cars were written off, but I was left untouched.

Philippians 1 talks about when Paul was arrested and in chains for preaching the word of God and in 1:12 he says "now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel"

I assure you God has been keeping me safe, He is building me into a warrior for Christ.

I have a purpose, I am here to change lives and bring glory to God.

Thanks for listening guys,

God bless.