

USING HIS WORDS

ERIN CLOUSE



MORGAN PRESTON



LUKE OSBORNE



By Erin Clouse

In the spring of 2018, I had a clear conversation with the Lord. He asked, "I am about to ask you to do something you never thought you would do. Do you trust me?" My response was, "Yes, of course." We felt the call for me to step away from the classroom. This brought a lot of anxiety and questions, but at the same time, we felt peace.

Nate and I know the calling on our lives, but it was time to relinquish that control and let God move. The Lord has given confirmation of His plans through His words. Those words have come in prayers and through trusted mentors and friends. As one chapter was ending, I began praying for God to use me in this new season.

The same week we felt confirmation to resign my teaching position, Ric Holladay spoke over me: "I am calling you to a higher calling--a bigger ministry beyond your voice. You will share your story of God healing your broken pieces and broken heart."

I had always lived in the comfort zone of my singing voice as my only ministry. I always felt my story was rather mundane. However, the Lord said the words I spoke would be of Him and would be used for His glory.

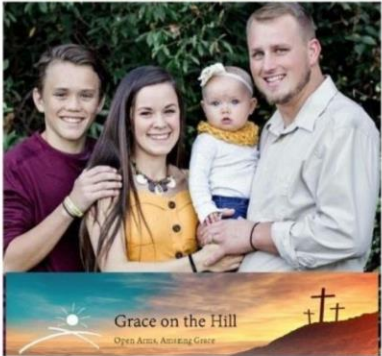
Writing has always been natural for me, but something started changing when the Lord spoke. Now, my prayers had melodies. When I needed to speak to God, or He needed to speak to me, the words became songs.

"See You Through" was a pure gift from God. The lyrics and melody were completed in less than 30 minutes, and I do not take the credit for it. That night, Nate and I just needed to hear from God. We needed to know that he was holding us. The Lord clearly placed the lyrics and melody in my heart.

The most recent song we completed as a praise team, "Mountains," started as a chorus I would continuously sing and declare when my anxiety was fighting to take root. It was the declaration that I may not know what my next step is, but God is already there and the victory has been won. However, this could not have been completed on my own.

The thing I love most about this movement is that it has been completely natural, and not of man. One of

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By Luke Osborne

It is so cool and humbling to see what God is doing through our people in the making of original songs. I never would have imagined that God would give me words and melodies that would somehow form into an actual song.

I want people to know that it wasn't me just sitting down and saying, "I'm going to write a song." For me, it was a moment when I was completely alone and quiet before the Lord at a time of struggle. I grabbed my guitar and wanted to try to worship as I knew that was something I could lean on.

As I began to play, the Spirit just moved and gave me the words "lay your weapons down, my child. I'm about to show you something wild!" The words came with a melody I had never heard before, but I couldn't let it go. So I just began to sing it over and over, because it was a truth and a prayer that I needed.

I know that I am not the only one that needs this truth, and so many other people need this also. So God said, "Put it out there!" A few members of our praise team that know way more about music jumped in, and the rest is history.

It's so cool to see what God is doing through this, and that other songs have formed as well, like a snowball effect. I'm looking forward to what God continues to do!

USING HIS WORDS

By Morgan Preston

I've always loved words. As a kid, I'd pick a "word of the day" from the dictionary and challenge myself to use it as many times as possible. As I got older, that turned into a love of literature. Now, I'm putting that love to good use as I teach my 8th graders the things God built into me as a kid! It seems I was beginning to see Romans 8:28 in action in my own life.

About two years ago, I began to feel God calling me into deeper relationships with Him. I began to feel a need to hear His voice and know HIS words for me. Around that time, our former pastor, Rev. Ric Holladay, came back to deliver some incredible, Holy Spirit-filled messages and to pray over us. I began to pray this simple prayer, "God, use me. Even though I'm not worthy, I want to be used by You." I could feel that He was working something together that was so much bigger than just what He was calling me into, and it was something that would serve our church. I knew I wanted to be a part of whatever was happening.

I'm so glad God uses imperfect people, because goodness knows I'd be of no use to Him if that weren't the case! I didn't have any idea at that point that He'd begin giving me songs. I knew He'd give me the desires of my heart, just like His Word promises in Psalm 37: 4-5, I just had no idea that the desire of my heart would be to write songs until Erin Clouse wrote "See You Through". It was after she wrote that song that I realized how He had written my story my whole life to lead to this point.

I began using a new technique of prayer journaling that Rev. Ric taught us about called two-way journaling and, sure enough, He spoke to me in these sweet words that turned into lyrics! For me, two-way journaling works like this: I go by myself to pray somewhere quiet (typically in a closet or in my room during naptime). I pray and ask Him to speak to me if He has words for me and thank Him for all the times He's spoken to me in the past, then, I wait. He speaks. I write! Sometimes it's lyrics, sometimes it's encouragement, sometimes it's identifying areas where I need to grow, but every time it is such a blessing to hear His words. Also, having them written down on paper gives me something I can come back to time and time again to remind me of His faithfulness!

Several of us started sending each other words and tunes that He has given us back and forth. It's been really cool to see how He's knitted each of us together through these songs.

Most of them were written as we were going through our own personal struggles, so His words became a healing balm for our souls and we hope that they come across that way for our congregation. Taking time to think on what God has blessed a few of us with, I can't help but be reminded of how Paul describes the church as if it is a body in 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27, explaining that each person in the church has its own role just as each part of our bodies has its own role, or job.

Are you wondering what role you play in the movement that is happening in our church? If you are, I want to encourage you to dig deeper into who God has created you to be! He doesn't give you interests and passions for no reason. He gives them to you so you can glorify Him with these gifts! It is such an empowering feeling to be able to live out your calling and to see how gracefully and purposefully He is writing your story. I encourage you to begin simply praying, "Use me, Lord" and watch what He will do! I promise He will bless you by using you just as he fearfully and wonderfully created you!
