

September 2019



Miraculous Recovery

Jesse Jensen was just twelve years old when we produced a *Reach For More* event in Northome, Minnesota that featured Sujo John, a survivor of the 9-11 tragedy, and the Christian Rock Group, Shofar. It was Jesse's first music event, and he was mesmerized by Shofar.

Shortly after that, when I was visiting the Baptist Church in Waskish, his Mother Dawn, followed me out of the church after the service. She expressed deep concern over Jesse's love for rock music, and that he was often listening to secular rock on the radio.

"Does he like Shofar?" I asked.

"He loves Shofar."

"Well, I'll talk to Larry. Maybe he can send a CD up to Jesse."

Larry was the leader of Shofar, and a good friend of mine. The next day I called him and related my conversation with Dawn. Larry overnighted a CD to Jesse along with a personal handwritten letter encouraging him in his Christian faith and suggesting some practices to grow in the Lord.

Jesse said he was blown away at the time, that a "Rock Star" would write to him, a handwritten letter, no less. He framed the letter and it hung on the wall of his bedroom for many years. He said it was a major boost to his faith.

Jesse would need his faith . . . little did he know how much!

*Photograph above left to right:
Jesse's wife, Stephanie, Jesse, and their son Jedidiah*

A few short years later, Jesse was helping his Dad, John, fixing the Feller Buncher for logging, when tragedy struck suddenly. A hydraulic hose came off of the tree shear head and it suddenly plunged downward, pinning Jesse to the track. Jesse was crushed and lost consciousness immediately.

John somehow managed to get the hose back on and lift the 2500-pound shear head off of his son. Then he frantically called 911, and Jesse's mother.

As Jesse said in our recent interview, he doesn't believe in luck. So it wasn't luck that an Emergency Medical Transport happened to be returning from Baudette and was just going through Waskish at the time of the 911 call.

The EMT vehicle and First Responders were on the scene quickly, as was Jesse's mother, Dawn. Lyle, a local First Responder, asked who this boy was. Jesse's face was so contorted, that Lyle didn't recognize him. Dawn said that he looked like a cartoon character. The blood had been forced to his face so that his eyes bugged out and his entire face was deep purple.

The force of the shear head had pushed Jesse's organs into the left shoulder area to the point that the left side of his chest stuck out six inches above the right side. His diaphragm was torn completely loose.

Consciousness returned quickly and Jesse said to his mother that he feared he would be paralyzed because he couldn't feel anything except pain in his left ankle. Dawn assured him that if he could feel his ankle, he wasn't paralyzed.

It was snowing heavily by this time. Arrangements were made to meet the helicopter at Busy Corners, a few miles south of Kelliher. The fear was that the EMT vehicle would get stuck pulling up to the helicopter. At sixteen, Jesse was already six foot four, and they had to load him into the helicopter, backwards to normal.

Because of the snowstorm, the decision was made to fly him to the Bemidji Hospital, rather than the emergency unit at Fargo. In this case, apparently the snowstorm worked for the good, because Jesse said if they had decided on Fargo, he would have died during the flight.

During the operation at Bemidji, the anesthetist made the remark, "What are we doing here? This kid shouldn't be alive."

The surgeon put Jesse's diaphragm and organs back in place. The eight inch incision in his abdomen was closed up with 38 staples, and Jesse was put on morphine for two weeks.

Jesse's tibia had a spiral break from knee to ankle. Four rods were inserted so that it would heal properly.

During the interview we made a connection that brought a spell of laughter from all of us. I am told that I have a morbid sense of humor and laugh at the wrong things. Jesse appears to have the same twist. During his stay at the hospital, he repeatedly asked for a mirror, but no one would give him one. They didn't want him to see how grotesque his bruised face looked.

One day when he was alone in his room he spotted a small mirror on the table five feet from his bed. He somehow managed to hook the table and pull it to his bed. Then he grabbed the mirror and looked into it.

"It was the coolest thing!" he said. "My eyes were completely red, with little black dots in the middle!"

At this point, our wives groaned . . . while Jesse and I roared with laughter!

Well, you have to realize that I was looking across the table at a handsome fellow, six foot seven feet tall, who doesn't appear to have a thing wrong with him.



That's the miracle! Nine years have passed since that horrible night in the snowstorm. Jesse is not only formidable in physical stature, but resilient, wise and robust in his character and faith.

On the other side of the table sat his lovely wife, Stephanie, and his one-year-old son was playing happily with an assortment of trucks just a few feet away on the living room floor.

Is this happy scene not an incredible testimony to the grace and love of God?

I remember quite clearly, just a couple years ago, when I was speaking in the Baptist Church, which for years was about fifteen people. There, three rows back, was Jesse . . . and in his row were six young people, all of those whose Jesse's influence had drawn to church.



It is obvious that God has given Jesse favor in the community, made evident by the many stories he shared of young people coming to him for advice and counsel. It surprises him that some who don't know him well open up so quickly with their problems and pain.

Jesse is a tall dude, but more importantly, he stands very tall in the respect of his peers, and is an anchor to troubled lives around him.

Some things that happen in life are past figuring out, just like God is past figuring out.

This much we know . . . our Heavenly Father sees every sparrow that falls, and He gives us this promise:

*"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."
Romans 8:28 NKJV*

So . . . how is God using you? In Acts 10:34, Peter says, "God is no respecter of persons." You do not have to have a near-death experience in your life to be used of God. God has a purpose and plan for your life just as He does for Jesse. Are you allowing God to work through you?

In His Service,

*George and Lorraine
Halama*

George and Lorraine Halama

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georgeandlorraine.com



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P.O. Box 41291, Plymouth, MN 55441

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