



The Storyteller Radio Broadcast

Chug Garreau (Lakota)

My name is Fay Allen Garreau. Those who know me on the reservation all my life know me as Chug, and that has been my name since I was a wee little boy. Not because of the things that I've done in my grownup years, but because I was a... my grandfather said I was a chubby little baby, so I chug-a-lugged along, and Chug has been my name since that time.

I've grown up and was raised on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in Eagle Butte area. My parents were ranchers, my grandfather, grandmother were ranchers, and I grew up in the life style of ranching and rodeo when I was younger. I learned how to ride when I was very young.

When I was born, my mother had bought me a saddle, and so I grew up on horseback, I grew up the cows, I grew up stories of the old west, and enjoyed life out in the country and all the benefits of that.

In my family, I'm the oldest of eight children, and things were, I remember, you know, mom working very hard to make ends meet when we were kids, and I don't know how she did it, but I realize that she had put a lot of effort into taking care of the kids, and dad also.

Growing up when I was younger, it was... not all things were good for us, and even though we were there as a family - we had a home and a place to go to out in the country, and enjoy the outdoors - I do know that alcohol was very much part of our family, and I don't... I've never seen my mother drink, but I know that dad drank, and, yeah, I remember looking up to all of those older men in the rodeos and ranching, and everybody drank back then.

There's something that, even today, that kids want to do, and we thought that was a symbol of our manhood if we could drink when we were younger, but it caused a lot of problems.

I remember, you know, dad doing the best he can, but yet, he was good at rodeos, he was good at ranching, knew a lot of things, but alcohol was taking a toll on his family and we had... I know we had to run from him at times. Mom would take care of us, and those were scary times for us kids, and I know for me, because you, on one hand, you know, you see dad there, but you see him acting under the influence of alcohol, and that was not good.

I can look back on this and see how, you know, what it has done to dad, and what it had done to influence my life, but I guess I also need to mention at this time, is that dad hasn't drank for over fifteen years now, and you know, the things that... the changes that have been made in his life are just tremendous, and he's such an advocate against alcohol and what it can do families, and I'm very proud of him for that.

And I'm thankful, you know, that God has kept him alive to experience the life that I know that he would have desired to experience even more when he was younger.

But those early times were tough, and a lot of alcohol involved and a lot of running, a lot of fear that we had experienced because of alcohol; there was fighting and arguments in our home and you know, nobody desires that, but, you know, alcohol was having its effect upon us.

I know myself, there was within that, there was also in the midst of those times, there was also, you know, influences of the church. I remember, as a kid, wanting to go to church, not really understanding why but knowing that, even at a young age, that church was... it seemed to be a place of security, and then, later on in life, as we, as I got older, you know, just adopting the ways of the adults around me and drinking and smoking, and getting into high school and then just really, you know, settling and beginning to experiment with marijuana and then other drugs.

I look back now and see how it just really, you know, changed my way of thinking, and especially as, you know, getting to those rebellious years and wanting to do things of my own that alcohol didn't mix with my father and I, and we ended up getting into a fight and I moved out. It must have been around my junior year of high school, and moved in with a friend of mine.

I went on to graduate high school living at his place, but still alcohol and drugs were pretty much an everyday part of my life, and it just, you know, my cousins were there, we'd all do these, you know, we would all be partying together, and I look back and see the effects it has upon, you know, some of those individuals today, because their still doing that, and I know they must be hurting. I was hurting back then, and I wanted change.

And again, as I look back on it, during those times there, you know, that there are people within our community who I didn't know were Christians at the time, but there was something different about them and, you know, I was drawn to that, but I didn't know how to approach it.

And I really... during those times I didn't know what Christianity was. I knew that there was churches, and that we were supposed to go. We did have a little bit of formal background in the church, but I knew something was different, and part of me wanted to be with them, but yet just hanging out with the other kids, I stayed involved in alcohol and the drugs, and things didn't go well.

I remember, after high school, leaving, living with a year with my uncles out in Arizona, things didn't change; there was still the rodeos and the drinking and the drugs; returning, and then going in the military in 1978, and going through basic training, and going over to Germany, and the idea of experiencing Europe over there, you know, again the things in military were exciting. They did a great, did a lot for exposing me to things of the world, how to become more independent in myself, but, yeah, just the alcohol and the drugs, you know, still continued to use even over there.

I look back on that with, you know, with regrets because I see that, you know, we could have been so much better in the work that we done, if those things hadn't been a part of it.

Oh well, I've changed from being active in rodeos and ranching and being in the military, and still, just kind of, you know, very wild and rebellious, you know, when I got back from when I got back from Germany and went down to Fort Hood Texas. At that time I bought myself a Harley Davidson, and the only attitude I had on my mind was 'Ride hard, Die free,' you know, running around with others, others that were living that same life, and again, just the drinking, the drugs, was very much a part of my life style.

Returned home and met my wife, Karen, and, you know, but, you know, felt that there was direction, you know, felt like there was direction now in my life, and through that, you know, we weren't married, but we were living together, and then she became pregnant with our first born son, and we got married. It just felt, you know, that was the right thing to do.

But with my old life style still a part of it, I wanted to devote more time, seemed like, to riding my bike and my friends and drinking, than I did to my family, and over time it eroded our relationship, and you know, that I began to be attracted to other women, and I committed adultery on my wife, and I knew that was wrong, and not knowing how to get out of it, and you know, we separated, and you know, felt like I was losing everything.

And we were able to get back together again over time, and you know I said I was going to change and make those changes but, you know, again it just, those things just were there, you know, the running around, the drinking was taking a toll upon my life.

A big change came in April 13th 1985. My wife was going into labor and we took her down to Pierre, to the hospital, and while we were down there, she gave birth to our second son. And I used the excuse that I had another son to just go out to drink.

And I see that, I look back and I see how God was about ready to answer a prayer of mine, and I remember sitting, and, it was in the evening, and I was sitting at the Silver Spur in Pierre, and I remember looking up and watching the crowd, and I could hear the music, I can see the smoke, I see people laughing and dancing, and everything going on around them, and I remember so distinctly saying, "God I don't want to live like this anymore. I don't want to live like this anymore."

And I walked out of the bar and got in my uncle's pickup, and about ten minutes later I was stopped and picked up for DWI, and I spent the night in jail, and the next day they let me out. Well, by that time I was beginning to feel a deep remorse for my actions.

My wife was in the hospital, she had just given birth to our son, and, you know, the things she must be experiencing, and here I had to add to that pain by getting thrown in jail, DUI, not knowing what's going to happen, wasn't there when she needed me, and I went for a

drive, and I ended up... it just seemed like at that time everything that I had ever done to people, it was suddenly just coming upon my conscience.

And I was feeling the burden of all those years of abusing others and, you know, I needed a way out. The internal pain was worse than the outside because, you know, the voice inside your head, the scream that you want to get out are just unbearable, and you want... you think of ways of quieting that, and of course the only way I could think of was to, you know, I wanted that to end my life, and so I drove around trying to figure out a way to do that.

And, you know, even at the point of just driving the truck into the lake and, you know, just ending it because, just the deep shame and regret that a person feels, and as I was driving by the reservoir thinking about these things, I stopped at this little building that's sitting up there, it's on the Lake Oahe, there's a little church building there, and I got out and I started walking around, you know, I didn't know how to talk to God at that time, but I just began to pour out things in my heart that were deeply affecting me, and thinking, you know, "I just want to change".

I didn't know how, and in the midst of that, in the midst of that, suddenly it's, I felt as if a presence of just warmth go through my body, and at the same time it was just this voice in my head that said, "Everything is going to be all right."

And at that moment that burden that I felt physically upon my body was lifted, and I could not explain it at the moment of what took place. I knew at that moment that I needed to go and tell my wife that I was sorry, ask for her forgiveness, and that I would never drink any more, and it was the toughest thing that I ever had to do in life.

I left there greatly encouraged but not understanding what had taken place, and I went to my wife and I told her that what happened to me. She looked at me, and I didn't know if she believed me or not. But I told her, I asked for her forgiveness, and in that I told her I'd never drink again, and that I was going to change my life, and we began life new, and a couple of weeks later I appeared in court and I told the prosecuting attorney that I wasn't going to get a lawyer; that I knew I was guilty and when I got in front of the judge I told him I was guilty, and he took my license away for 30 days, and I had to go to AA for six weeks. And that was a hard thing, to have somebody take your privileges away, but he allowed me to drive to work.

From that, we went home and things began to change. I had a desire to want to read the Bible, and I tried to at that time, but reading is hard for me cause after I got to the... I started at Genesis, and I got to the begots, I lost interest.

But I wanted to read. My friends kept coming by, my relatives, and they would bring beer and they'd bring dope and whiskey, and they would want to drink, and I found that I could tell them 'no' now. 'I don't want to do that anymore, I'm not going to drink with you,' you know. 'Don't bring it into my house,' and they cussed me out and they called me all kinds of names. They called my wife names and, well, I told them that I told them 'no.'

And I found that they would leave; they quit coming around, and with that I also seen that there are great temptations for me... that there was... to get to the grocery store, I had to go by the bar, and so I would walk around, I would walk around the block so that I wouldn't have to go by that bar. When I was willing to the long way around, I would have peace of mind.

Well we... life was getting better, things were changing. I went to the AA, I heard the stories, but I noticed that people were not changing through their stories; they were still struggling and after that was done, I no longer went after my requirement.

I went back into the military, and we moved our family, moved to Fort Carson, Colorado, and it was there that we began our new life, and, again, I wasn't drinking. I did try playing around with that near beer for a while but it didn't make sense.

So when I got in, went back to the military I greatly increased in rank, I made sergeant in less than two years, and our family was together. I smoked for many years, even since I was a kid, was smoking cigarettes, but my son must have been about four years old, he came walking through the house with a pencil in his mouth and he said, "Look Dad, I'm smoking just like you."

And at that moment, I realized that he was watching me closely, and I didn't ever want him to do what I did, so he caused me to stop, and I quit smoking at that time.

But from that I ended up going to Korea, my third year there in the military, I went to Korea; we were separated for a year. I took my family down to El Paso where my sister in-law and her husband were stationed at, and I went to Korea for a year.

I did not know that my wife had accepted Christ then, but I knew she was going through hard times, and when she began to tell me about her new life in Jesus, I didn't understand what she was going through.

I didn't understand the joy that she had, and, one time she wrote me a letter with words on it like, 'praise God, thank you Jesus,' and it so offended me that, I remember, I saved all the letters except that one, I tore that one up. It so offended me that... I didn't understand why.

Well, I returned from Korea and I wanted to immediately move, but God had some things for me to hear, so while we were there, Karen takes me to the church there to hear a speaker, and that night there was going to be... the speaker was a biker and his name was, they call him Lurch. And Lurch is somewhere around 6'6" and was a huge man, and he rode a Harley all his life, so I went to hear his testimony.

And the testimony that he shared was very similar to the things that I experienced in life, and just his desire to know Christ, his change after accepting Christ, so deeply affected me

that it was as if it was breaking up the hardness in my heart, and a couple of days later I accepted Christ.

And, you know, that's the first time I heard the story of forgiveness. I always... I grew up with the fear of God, in that God was... I knew I was doing wrong and I learned that from an early age, and I knew that I was breaking all the ten commandments, I knew that at an early age, and as I got older I knew of no way getting around that, that I was just getting worse and worse.

And I believed that, you know, God... the punishment for me was worse and worse, and I didn't know how to get away from that, but I had never read that... nobody had ever explained to me that Jesus... that Jesus Christ died for my sins on a cross.

And as I read in John 3:17, that 'He did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world,' and that He did not come to condemn me but to save me.

And those were refreshing words, those words I never heard before, and one thing I needed, I needed to be forgiven of all the wrongs I had ever done, and the wrong was to God.

And I accepted God, I accepted His forgiveness through Christ's death on the cross, and invited Him to come into my life, and, for the first time in my life, I felt clean. I felt forgiven, and when I got up from the floor, I wasn't suddenly glowing or jumping around or doing, you know, just suddenly change into doing something different outwardly by my actions, but inwardly God had done a work in my life, and the very next day I woke up and I remember getting ready, doing something... I can't remember what I was doing, but I know that I said a cuss word, which up until that time was just every bit a part of my language.

And it dawned on me that I didn't want to say those words anymore; it felt as if I had a mouth full of gravel, and I remember saying a few more cuss words throughout the day and just feeling very, very uneasy about that, and in a matter of a week, I would say, about 90% of the words that I used were gone from my language.

Now, that wasn't me the day before; I coulda cared less what I said, but it was the Holy Spirit living within me now that was letting me know that those weren't good things to say, and that I felt good about not saying them. It was that obedience that I was wanting to... the obedience to God that I would like to have done for years, suddenly I was doing it supernaturally by God's... under God's power.

And I quit drinking in '85, but between '85 and 1989 there was still that great longing in my body to want to drink.

Every time I would open up a newspaper there was liquor commercials, advertisements, TV, there was alcohol, billboards there was alcohol, on the streets there was alcohol, in the

grocery stores there was alcohol, and I could not get away from that nagging feeling to this is what I still wanted.

A week after I accepted the Lord, I... of course, I didn't like to go shopping the supermarkets cause we had to cross by the beer and wine to get to the dairy products. That following week, I was standing there and I was getting some... probably buying some butter, and it dawned on me that I had walked through the whole section of alcohol and it was as if I had never seen it. I walked through that whole section of alcohol and it never affected me.

And then it dawned on me that, you know, this is what God had done. God had taken that desire that so haunted me for all those years, He took it out of my life in a moment, upon accepting Christ.

And from that very moment, I look back and see that the advertisements, the billboards, the commercials, anything that had to do with alcohol and drugs, never bothered me again. And I look back and I say that it's as if I never drank before in my life, but I know all the dangers of it.

And I can only thank God for showing me personally how can He can deal with some of my deepest fears or struggles. And I say, 'Well, why did He do it?' Because He loves me! He wanted me to know that He was going to take things and change them from my life.

And so, I think about all those who have been in AA, and I know there's only one answer... that, you know, that I'm glad that people want to sober up and they can go to places like that, but God's just got one step, and that's Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit coming inside of you to take that away, take those desires out of your life.

From that ,I remember the change that took place was, every time I heard the word of Jesus on the radio station I wanted to listen to it; you know, I just wanted... that wasn't me just the week before, and I found that when your accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and you're born again, I began to experience life as God intended it to be; that I would have a relationship with God and He would begin to show me what new desires, new joys, and He would show Himself to me by, as I would begin to read.

He maybe show me how I'm to love my wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, and how to raise my children, and from that I was able to ask others to forgive me.

I remember my dad, those years that we had... I look back and see the years that he drank, and the abuse that was put upon the family, but I also look, you know, through another look, I seen how I was not a part of the solution, I was a part of the problem, in that I had greatly dishonored my father during those years, even though he was just doing what, you know, living a life that he was living at the time, and I should have still been honoring my father.

My dad came one time to a Jesus festival that we had, and I remember in my heart going up to him and saying, “Dad, you know, forgive me, you know, for what all I’ve done to you as your son; you know, I wasn’t honoring you.” And I wanted to let him know I was sorry about that, and I did want to honor him.

And, you know, there were tears in our eyes, and we, you know, we embraced each other, and you know, he accepted that, and it’s just been a neat way of restoring relationships; you know, God makes that possible.

He restored my relationship with my father, He restored my relationship with my wife; you know, I even just, you know, asked Him to forgive me for all the way I treated her during those years.

And her acceptance of that, of forgiving me and restoring us, we see how the family was beginning to be, through restoration, what God intended a family to be, and that all along this was what He desired for our people, the people of the world, that we can live the life as a family in a Godly manner, a manner in which He intended it to be.

And I thank God that my sons grew up... they remember me smoking, but they seen dad quit, they’ve never had to experience alcohol in their lives in the manner of which I experienced alcohol, and they grew up in our home and seen the things that God was doing in our life. And I thank God that He has granted them an opportunity to see life as He begins to change people, that there’s a greater life, outside of the life they see around them, that others are experiencing.

So God has restored our family, He restored my life, He’s granted me new life, and together, my wife and I, we walk hand in hand with the Lord through this life, and He’s given us a desire to want to share His Word with others so that they too can be... know that God has forgiven them of their sins and that God desires a relationship with them, and that He wants to expose them and empower them to live a Godly life while they’re here upon this earth.

Their hearts are... their hope is set in the heavens eternal, but they can experience that life here on earth, yet even through hard times, difficult times, that God is able to give us that sense of, you know, contentment through this life.

And that’s a life that is free to each and every individual, whether they’re Native American or European or Asian or from any other country.

God’s plan and purpose for life is that we might find our life in Jesus Christ.

Jesus has given to me the life that I desired when I was a younger child. I remember, before life became complicated with peer pressures and the issues of life, that I remember life as a sense of peace and contentment, sheltered from the things around me that could harm me, and at the age of 32 when I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior, I began to experience a

life that reflected that, that I had a sense of peace, I had a sense of joy and security that I had longed for for many, many years, and I did not know that it was found in Jesus Christ.

So when I accepted the Lord, He'd forgive me of my sins, He empowered me through His Holy Spirit to walk accordingly to His Word, and He gave me the joy of experiencing marriage and children as He intended it to be, and relationship with others in our community that He desired us to live.

And there is no other way that we can love God and love our neighbor, if we don't have Jesus Christ in our life, and God knows that, and He wants to make that available to each and every person that is in this world.

And so I read in the Scriptures where, in Revelation 22, where 'the bride and the spirit say come, everyone who is thirsty, come' – you know, it's that invitation to come to God because His hands are extended toward you to give you forgiveness of your sins and a new start.

So I'd invite you, if you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then I'd invite you to accept Him today, and God will honor your words as you place your faith upon Him, He will come in your life and make you new and show you great and wonderful things.

Being a Native American, and coming to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, I found that I've encountered other Native Americans who look at Jesus Christ as the white man's Gospel, as something that is harmful and hurtful to them, and so they try to leave you with a sense of guilt; "Well, how could you being native embrace something that is not native, that is not of your culture or your background and heritage. How can a person do that? We're supposed to stay true to your own belief."

And I can only answer that by sharing with them that when I called out to God for His intervention, He heard my cries, and He met me right where I was at, and I found that I did not have to go and seek certain objects or certain people and to perform certain rites to be accepted by God and to maintain that relationship, but that God accepted me as I was, in the midst of all my guilt and shame, and he accepted me as I was, and at that moment I placed my faith in Him, He changed me. He forgave me of my sins and He placed within me His Holy Spirit.

If the Holy Spirit lives within you, then what do you become? You become Holy, and God did it. He did it without any external rituals or rites or such, but He did it simply based upon my faith in Him.

And I found that the truth of that, and the truth of God accepting people of every nationality in this world, is the same - simply faith in Jesus Christ, and you believe that He died for your sins, that He rose again, He was buried, and He rose again the third day and ascended into Heaven, and that one day He's going to come back for us.

That never changes, but what I did find was that when I had to go through alcohol classes, treatment classes, was that people were seeking God's help in different ways and the question was, 'why aren't these ways working?'

When I accepted Christ, God did that work that they were seeking in their own lives that they wanted, God had completed in my life, simply upon me believing in Jesus.

And I found that no matter which nationality I went to, any other ethnic group in the world, if they were Christian, then God had done the same thing in their life.

And so the universal name of Jesus Christ is God's way of reaching every nationality in the world and giving them that opportunity to be forgiven, to be saved in this world and spend eternity with God, cause I notice that if I... if you go through the different cultures of the world, and if you're not doing what they require, then you are not in harmony with the God in that manner.

So you can search the world over and never be in harmony, but if you're a Christian, God's Word never changes, so no matter where you're at, you've always got His pattern to live by and that never changes. So you need not be fearful of the things that are in this world.

But one life verse that really helped change many things for me was that, it's in 1 John 4:18, it said, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves torment, but he who fears has not been made perfect in love; we love Him because He first loved us."

And I looked at that and said, "What are the things that cause fear?" because it says, "fear involves torment." And I was fearful of the judgment of God; I was also fearful of the stories that I heard within my own culture, that if you speak against the things of the spirit that you could be... the spirit could affect you, and not only my own culture but other native cultures, and how you cannot leave finger nails or hair outside, or talk in certain ways about spiritual things, because you lived in a sense of fear that the spirits could do something to you. And you lived in fear of individuals who were spiritual, who would use spirits to go against one another.

And there was a life of fear, and I said, "Perfect love casts out fear." If Christ has come into my life, what is it that I need to fear, and I need not fear anything! I don't have to fear judgment because God has forgiven me, and I need not fear the spiritual things that I learned about within my culture and the other cultures, for they're not of God. Therefore I need not fear them, for "Greater is He that is in you than he who is of the world." And if Christ is living within me and suddenly I experience this sense of freedom, there was no more torment anymore, but only a sense of love and peace in knowing who Christ is, and God is one who delivered me from those fears.

And He seeks to deliver all of us from those fears that we been instructed as children, and like a child is able to run into the arms of Jesus to sit in His lap, that's kind of relationship we have Him.

We go right to Him and be in His presence; we need not fear cause even if we've done wrong He said, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

And that we can go directly before the throne of grace and ask for help in times of need, and His arms are always open.

So if you're experiencing these things in your life, you have those fears, remember Jesus knows everything you've ever done, but He accepts you as you are.

And He has come to forgive you, and He died so that you might have a new life, and so go to Him, "Lord, forgive me of my sins, cleanse me from all unrighteousness, come into my life and fill me with Your Holy Spirit."

And you do that, and Jesus will make you a new person. Those old fears will disappear, and you'll have a new relationship with God.

© 2016 Without Reservation (www.withoutreservation.org) Permission granted to reproduce and freely distribute this resource provided you do not alter the content in any way. This copyright statement must be included on all reproductions.