

**Text: I Peter 3:13-17**

**Title: HEROES: Ordinary People Living Extraordinary Lives**

**Part One: Cassie Bernall**

### **Introduction:**

Some of you may remember hearing about the Columbine shooting on April 20, 1999. That day started just like any other day. Teenagers cramming for a science quiz, scarfing down some breakfast, and running out the door. Here is how Cassie Bernall's day started:

***Cassie stopped at the door to put on her shoes...grabbed her backpack, and headed after her brother. As she left I leaned over the banister to say goodbye, like I always do: "Bye Cass, I love you." "Love you too, Mom." She mumbled back. Then she was gone...***

Little did Cassie know that in a few hours she would be in heaven. On that day, an ordinary person did an extraordinary thing. This hero said yes when asked if she believed in God. The person asking the question was one of the two troubled classmates who entered Columbine with the intent and purpose of killing as many of their fellow students and teachers as they could. Before ending their own lives, they killed Cassie plus 12 others. Tonight we search to see what lessons this hero, a martyr for Christ leaves behind for you and me to learn. The character and life that Cassie lived show us that it doesn't matter where we begin, but rather where we end. The stand that she took shows us that heroes come in all shapes and sizes. What do we see from the life of Cassie Bernall:

### **1. Her Life Changed – Salvation**

- Lonely, Rebellious, and Lost – these words would describe Cassie's condition before Christ changed her life.
- Confused, Careless, and Scared
- Her friend Cassandra remembers when Cassie first began coming to the youth group, she said:

***Cassie wore these ball-chain necklaces and shiny blouses, and I was so scared of her. She had this intimidating image – this don't-mess-with-me attitude. Later I found out there was a real person underneath, and I became a really good friend with her. I saw that this idea I had of her was probably all in my head; that she just came across that way...[we need to] dare to leave our comfort zone and get to know the people who don't look like you or scare you.***

#### **• Application –**

→ Ephesians 4:22-30 tells us that when we remove, renew and replace we gain a:

1. **New Mind** – “renewed in the spirit of your mind” vs. 23
2. **New Man** – “put on the new man” vs. 24
3. **New Mouth** – “putting away lying, speak every man truth” vs. 25
4. **New Manner** – “be ye angry and sin not” vs. 26
5. **New Method** – “don't give place to the devil...steal no more, but rather labor” vs. 27, 28
6. **New Ministry** – “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” Vs. 29
7. **New Mark** – “sealed unto the day of redemption” vs. 30

## 2. Her Life Challenged – Submission

- Submission to authority can be a real difficulty for people who at times would rather eat nails than be told what to do. One of the biggest struggles in Cassie's life was submitting to her parent's and God's authority. She wrote this in an English essay about her attitude before she got saved.

***Throughout this time I hated my parents and God with the deepest, darkest hatred. There are no words that can accurately describe the blackness I felt...***

- Because she was changed and had a new mind, a new mouth, a new ministry, and a new mark she was able to submit to her authorities:

Cassie's Submission:

### a. To her parents

→ After a weekend at camp, Cassie said this to her mom:

***Mom, I've changed! I'm totally changed! I know you are not going to believe it but I'll prove it to you.***

→ She was going to try to improve her attitude and show them respect.

#### • **Application**

Ephesians 6:1-2 "Children, obey [to heed or conform to a command or authority:--hearken] your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour [value] thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)"

### b. To her God

→ Remember that English paper she wrote that talked about a deep hatred for God? Listen to her submissive desires now.

***I will die for my God. I will die for my faith. It's the least I can do for Christ dying for me.***

→ I think everyone would agree that they enjoy being around genuine people because they know what they see is what they get. Cassie Bernall felt the same way. She once said:

***I need to be completely honest with myself and to God and stop thinking I can fool him – he's God, for crying out loud! And I can't make compromises. It's like being lukewarm – he'll spit me out if I keep it up. I can't ride the fence one day, trying to convince myself I'm just "reaching out to people" by acting "normal," and then trying to be a dedicated Christian the next. I don't want anyone to think of me as the WBCC (her church) Hypocrite...***

#### • **Application**

Adam and Eve tried to hide from God – that didn't work

Moses tried to argue with God – that didn't work

Jonah tried to run from God – that didn't work

Satan tried to tempt God – that didn't work

Ananias and Saphira tried to lie to God – that didn't work

The world tried to defeat God – that didn't work either

James 4:7-8, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh unto you. Cleanse your hands ye sinners and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

James 1:8, "A double minded [two-faced] man is unstable [unreliable] in all his ways."

**c. To her authorities**

→ Shauna, a staff member who worked at her church related this story about Cassie.

***One day she came to me crying. She was torn up about a conversation she had had about me behind my back. She had just heard a negative comment or some other gossip about me, and hadn't defended me, and she felt guilty about it.***

**• Application**

Hebrews 13:17, "Obey (trust, yield) them that have the rule (lead) over you, and submit (surrender) yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy (cheerfulness, calm delight gladness), and not with grief (with grief, groan, grudge, sigh): for that is unprofitable for you."

**3. Her Life Completed – Steadfast**

• ***"Mom, I'm not afraid to die, because I'll be in heaven."*** Said a week or so before her death

• ***"All of us should live so as to be able to face eternity at any time."*** The solitary sentence Cassie underlined in one of the books she read.

**• Application**

→ Paul said in *Philippians 1:21*, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

→ Are we ready to meet our Savior, are we prepared for the judgment seat of Christ.

→ Living our life to the fullest...

**Conclusion:**

Let's all go to the library of Columbine High School and put ourselves in Cassie's shoes for just a moment. Listen as a student recreates the scene as she saw it in the library that day:

***We heard shots, first down the hall, then coming closer and closer. Mrs. Nielsen was yelling at us to get under the tables but nobody listened. Then a kid came in and dropped to the floor; there was blood all over his shoulder. We got under our table fast. Mrs. Nielsen was at the phone by now, calling 911. I was shaking so badly...Then Eric and Dylan came into the library, shooting and saying things like, "We've been waiting to do this our whole lives," and cheering after each shot.***

Imagine that the following words describe you instead of Cassie:

***I couldn't see anything when those guys came up to Cassie but I could recognize her voice. I could hear everything like it was right next to me. One of them asked her if she believed in God. She paused, like she didn't know what she was going to answer, and then she said yes. She must have been scared, but her voice didn't sound shaky. It was strong. Then they asked her***

***why, though they didn't give her a chance to respond. They just blew her away***

Her youth pastor said these words,

***"Don't put her on a pedestal, Cassie was no different than the rest of us. She just chose to be faithful."***

***1 Peter 3:15***

***"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"***