

BEAR MAN

The title 'BEAR MAN' is rendered in a bold, black, distressed font. The letters are thick and blocky, with a grainy, textured appearance. Overlaid on the text are several white, diagonal claw marks that cross through the letters, suggesting a bear's scratch. The words 'BEAR' and 'MAN' are stacked vertically.

James H. VanSteenhouse

Lord, allow me to be carried into Heaven
with my quiver empty upon my dented
and damaged shield.

I pray that upon my arrival Jesus
welcomes me with the words,
“Well done, my good and faithful servant.”



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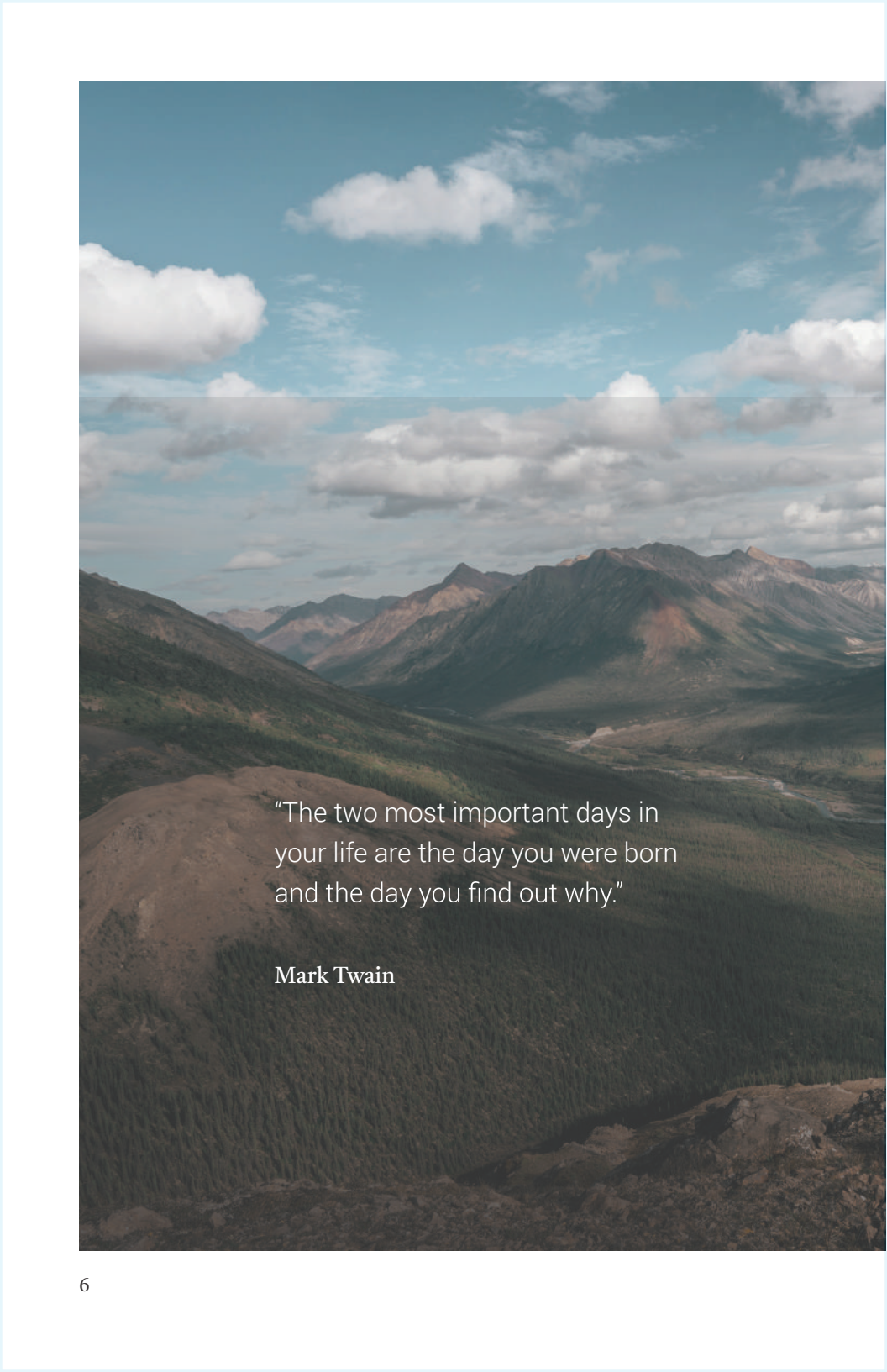
Preface

Although the grizzly attack happened in September 2015, I can still close my eyes and vividly go back to each moment of that journey. Traveling the country recounting my BearMan testimony, I can clearly see how this grizzly encounter was God's way of getting my attention. As it states in Proverbs 3:12, "For whom the Lord loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights." Scripture also says God will humble us before Him, "...and those who walk in pride, He is able to humble." Daniel 4.37b

The accounts of my BearMan testimony are as I remember. I've taken the liberty to change the names for privacy purposes. My memory is all I have of this attack and may differ from those eyewitness accounts involved in saving my life. This is my first-hand account of the grizzly bear attack, and the true beginning of my journey with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



James H. VanSteenhouse



“The two most important days in
your life are the day you were born
and the day you find out why.”

Mark Twain

A person wearing a light-colored jacket and dark pants stands on a rocky, dark-colored ridge, looking out over a vast mountain valley. The valley is filled with green forests and a winding river. In the background, a large, rugged mountain peak rises against a sky filled with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is one of natural beauty and adventure.

The Adventure Begins

This is the first time I have told the
Grizzly Bear attack story in its entirety.

I have told bits and pieces to many, but
outside of my wife, Elizabeth, I have
yet to tell it from start to finish.

This story began in the early 2000's when I put down my rifle and converted to a bow and arrow. That conversion took hunting to a whole new dimension for me. No longer at a distance, I was now up close while pursuing the target of my hunt. These pursuits created what I have dubbed the "bow rush"; that intense feeling that rushes throughout the body when being incredibly close to the intended target.

I had a "bow rush" on the Alaskan peninsula in October 2012 when my guide, Roger, and I spotted and stalked the target; an 800+ pound brown bear. The brute moved in close and was standing a mere twelve feet away just staring at something on the other side of a patch of alder. That "something" turned out to be the two of us! Roger, just a few feet to my right, was visibly on high alert. As my guide, Roger was responsible for not only putting me on the target, but also for my safety. As I looked at Roger in that moment, I saw him ever so gently swing that "smoke wagon" (aka his rifle) around until it was pointed directly at the brown bear's face. Had that bear even slightly twitched, I'm confident Roger would have released the rifle's fury.

For reasons we will never know, the giant brown bear took a slow turn and walked to his right. After a few short steps, he appeared again from behind the alder a few yards directly in front of me. At that close range I should be able to put an arrow through a nickel. I went to full draw, took aim, and released. The arrow sunk into the brown bear slightly back in the ribs. I could hear the bones break under the inertia of the full metal jacket arrow tipped with the 125 grain G5 Montec fixed blade broadhead. Upon impact, the bear roared and spun and then struggled away. It crossed a small salmon stacked stream, stumbled up the embankment and then

stood motionless and visibly laboring. I nocked another arrow, released, and landed the shot right in his neck. I was not aiming for the neck. The shot was either my error, or perhaps I had not properly adjusted for the wind. Once the arrow hit, he roared again and disappeared into the alder...never to be seen again. Although we searched for days, we never found him.

Hunting is not all about killing a trophy. More so, it is about the pursuit. There is nothing more invigorating than accomplishing something extremely difficult. When you fail, you practice harder and smarter. You get better and then try again. I have one steadfast rule...never give up; never quit.







Days 1-4

Ground Zero

Some of the largest moose are found in Alaska, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories. After researching and speaking to references, I chose the Northwest Territories of Canada and secured a professional outfitter. I just never knew it would become a life changing experience. To get to where I would hunt, I flew from Houston to Edmonton, Canada, took a smaller plane to Yellowknife and then made the last commercial flight to Norman Wells. From there, I caught a float plane to base camp situated deep in the McKenzie mountain range.

Thinking back on that life changing day in 2015, I remember having an uneasy feeling about the hunt. Bow hunting for moose in the Northwest Territory had an allure for sure, but there was something unsettling about it for me. I wanted to go, but I had trepidations; something simply just did not feel right deep within my soul. It did not feel right the way I left my wife that day. We didn't get into a fight or anything, but something about the "good-bye" and the "I'll see you soon" just did not feel right. I figured this hunt was a long way from home, out of the country, and way up north. Something felt different. Get over it, right? I tried to. I went so far as to text a friend and told him, "Brother, I have an unnerving feeling about

this hunt.” We exchanged a few text messages, but in the end I put the uneasiness aside and boarded the jet headed to Canada.

The only people on the float plane with me from Norman Wells to base camp were the pilots and six other rifle hunters. The pilot informed us the flight duration would be roughly an hour and 50 minutes. At about an hour and 45 minutes into the flight, the plane began a hard decent. As we went soaring around a mountain, a small football field sized lake came into view. Along the shoreline I could clearly see the base camp comprised of a small log cabin, canvas tents, and what looked like a short corn silo. The pilot whipped the plane the rest of the way around the mountain and brought it gently down on to the lake, safe and sound.





Day One

Base Camp & Deployment

Introductions at base camp were short and simple: meet your guide, pack up, and stand ready for deployment. We were slotted to head out straight away that afternoon.

I met Wyatt, my guide and guardian for the next couple of weeks. He said, "We're headed out for five to seven days. If we don't see action after that,

we will return to base camp, repack, and move to an alternate location." I was strategically stuffing essentials into my backpack when Wyatt said, "Let's get our food selections handled." We entered the short metal silo I had noticed on the flight descent into camp. I asked, "Why is this thing metal?" He responded, "So the grizzly bears don't get into it." Roger that!

Inside the silo was a cornucopia of hunter culinary delights; freeze dried food, cans of sardines, tuna fish, carbohydrates of all sorts, and candy bars. "Are you picky about what you eat?" asked Wyatt. I said, "You can grab anything, just stay clear of sardines. I can't handle those little suckers." Wyatt made it clear that I needed either tuna fish or sardines, something for protein. I said, "Just grab tuna. Get enough to last for 5-7 days. While you're doing that, I'm going to sight in my bow and finish packing."

Shortly after packing, the base camp helicopter began taking each hunter and their assigned guide out one pair at a time. The owner and pilot would bark, "Sal, you're next. Michael, you're next." Wyatt and I waited anxiously for our turn. Then I heard, "VanSteenhouse, load up!" I grabbed my gear and threw it in the back of the awaiting helicopter and jumped in. I asked the pilot, "Where are we going?" He responded, "Don't know yet. I have thousands of acres to choose from." Roger that! We flew around for close to an hour and saw several animal species. Then suddenly out of nowhere it seemed, the pilot announced, "We're going to set her down." We landed on an oxbow of a river. Orders were being barked through the headset instructing this and that. Wyatt was in the back of the chopper nodding his head. I was glad the two of them were on the same page because I had no clue about what they were discussing!

Day Two

Grizzly Encounter

For those who have never done a trip like this, a typical day begins leisurely. We'll begin by taking care of essentials such as getting our gear together and grabbing a simple bite to eat before heading out to spend the day hiking and glassing for moose. If we are fortunate to sight a harvestable animal, we will stalk within bow shot distance which is about 30 to 40 yards. As the day draws down, we begin our return trip to camp before dark, eat dinner, and go to bed always keeping one ear open for predators.

Around 10:00 a.m., on day two, Wyatt broke open his first can of sardines. I followed his lead and opened my first pop-top tuna fish as well. As I was eating my tuna, I recalled the fact that a few cans of tuna were pop-top, however the others were all the traditional cans that would require a can opener. So, I asked Wyatt, "Do you have a can opener?" He responded, "No. I eat sardines so why would I need a can opener?" I then asked him about his plan for opening the traditional tuna cans when I run out of the pop-top tuna. He answered, "Don't know, but I've got a few days to figure that out." Roger that.

Later that day we spotted a cow moose (female) moving in and out of the willows in the draw below us. We knew eventually a bull moose would be along to seek her out. As we were watching the cow moose, Wyatt





pointed to a moving object a good way off and said, "Hey! We need to keep a keen eye on that grizzly!" I grabbed my binoculars. The bear was over a mile away and just a tiny spec in the binoculars at this point. Wyatt kept glassing to the north and I glassed to the south. After a couple of hours, I heard Wyatt shout, "Jim, get over here. I don't see the grizzly and look right there!" Looking down the slope a couple hundred yards, the cow moose had skirted all the way down the draw from her willow hideout. While still glassing the cow moose I heard Wyatt add, "That grizzly bear is likely here somewhere close. We've got to be alert!"

No sooner had he gotten those words out of his mouth when suddenly that grizzly appeared and was staring right at us from roughly 70 yards away. Wyatt said, "Get your bow and nock up. If that bear comes any closer, I'm going to have to shoot." I didn't have a problem with that. Grizzlies are protected in the region; hence they fear nothing. The bear approached and when he got within 60 yards of us, Wyatt released a warning shot directly in front of the grizzly's face. The dirt exploded and the massive bear immediately reared up to charge at us. Wyatt quickly loaded and fired a second round directly into his ribcage. I could hear the "thwack" as that 44-round impacted. The grizzly roared, spun around, and then disappeared into the thick willows.

I asked, "What do we do now? The advertising brochure didn't say anything about charging grizzly bears!" Wyatt replied, "We are going to get up over this mountain and hunt the other side. We aren't going to look for the bear. I don't know if I killed it or not. We are just going to get out of here." So off we went and true to his word, we summited up and over the mountain; walking a few miles and glassing the rest of the day.

Day Three

The Stalk

We glassed all day and didn't see a single moose. As the sun was setting, Wyatt indicated it was getting late and we had a couple mile trek back to camp. We rounded the first bend and off in the distance was a large mature bull moose. Game on! Wyatt said, "I'm going to give a call and when I do, he is likely to come toward us. Do not let him see you or he may run right at and over you." Roger that!

We were losing daylight and had to rush the stalk. We did manage to get within 65 yards of the moose, but unfortunately the thick willow and the waning light made a shot impossible. I was disappointed and elated at the same time. We had put on our fist stalk, and I was excited of the many more to come in the days ahead.

Wyatt said we needed to step it up and push hard to get back to camp by dark. He was walking so fast that it felt like I was jogging through the mountains! Keeping up with him was like trying to keep up with a mountain goat. I asked Wyatt, "Why we were running?" He snipped back, "After dark we are on the menu!" Roger that.

I was bone-tired by the time we got back to camp, but I had seen and stalked my first moose. I laid in bed that night thinking about what was going to happen on day four. I don't think I slept a wink. Rather, I just stared at the tent ceiling anxiously envisioning my next stalk.

Day Four

The Attack

The morning was exceptionally cold, hence prompting me to put on every piece of clothing I could muster. This was the fourth day. I was excited. I had acclimated to the elevation. I had my directional bearings. I was confident. I knew what was going on. I was ready.

We quickly climbed up the mountain and started glassing. After a few hours, Wyatt suggested we head up the remainder of the ridge so that we could glass the opposite side. He said, "We will just stay up there for a little while. Leave the packs. I'll take the rifle; you take your bow. We will be right back." And so, we headed up the mountain.

I had no idea I was about to run into the devil. Visualize what I was about to see: In this region, a mature grizzly can weigh upwards of a 900+ pounds and their bite pressure is enough to crush a bowling ball. They



can reach speeds upwards of 35-37 mph for short distances, smell food from two miles away, and their sense of smell is 2,100 times better than that of humans.

Wyatt was sitting on the ground a few feet from me. Long periods of peering through the binoculars were giving me a throbbing headache. I gently put them down and asked Wyatt, "Tell me again, how you are going to open up the traditional can of tuna fish without an opener?" I remember him turning toward me and instead of looking at me, he had a cold fixed stare as if he was looking through me. I froze and then Wyatt muttered the words I never wanted to hear, "BEAR!"

I felt a cold chill go down my spine as the hair stood up on the back of my neck. I slowly looked over my right shoulder and there he was: a mature grizzly standing at my 4 o'clock less than a couple yards away. He was swaying his head back and forth while snapping jaws, curling his lips, and making a slow grunt sound. I took a deep breath and slowly turned back toward Wyatt. If he had shouldered the .44 magnum lever action, I would be in the line of fire. I would have to lay back to let him roll that .44 thunder over me.

Wyatt had a look of sheer terror on his face. I glanced back at the grizzly just in time to see him lunge with his mouth wide open. I can still vividly see him in my mind to this very day. I distinctly remember thinking at that moment, "Lord have me. Here I come. This is it. I am going to die." I rolled my right shoulder away from the grizzly and toward Wyatt. The bear hit me from behind. I'll never forget the force of the impact. Instinctively, I went into a fetal position with my hands over my head. I felt



the top of his mouth on the right side of my head and the bottom of his jaw on the left side. I could feel the wetness of his mouth on the back of my hands and heard the bones in my hands breaking under the pressure. I could feel him clamp down on my head burying his teeth deep into my skull. He tossed me around like rag doll, biting and clawing down my shoulder, back, left side, right side, and legs. He was so powerful, and I was powerless. There was absolutely nothing I could do.

I have read articles about bear attacks. The individual kills them with a knife or sticks their hand down the bear's throat because they supposedly have gag reflex or something like that. Not me. I simply screamed, "LORD, SAVE ME!"

The attack was over within minutes. Afraid to move, I laid motionless on the ground. I had no idea where I was. Can I feel my toes? Legs? Arms? Wait. Why don't I feel pain? Am I alive? Slowly I opened my eyes. Blurry from blood, I could see the grizzly standing over me. He was close. He was very close! Out of the corner of my left eye I could see his nostrils twitching. I laid very still. After a few seconds, he took a couple of steps away and turned to look back at me. He repeated this ritual until he was about 10 yards away. I gathered enough strength to lift my head and look at my broken body. There were large pools of blood all around me. I could feel blood streaming over my eyes and down my face. Everything within me wanted to curl up into the fetal position and for this nightmare to be over. I did not want to move. But I realized that staying vulnerable was not the best choice. The grizzly was still within yards of me. But where was Wyatt?

Slowly, I got up on my knees and looked around. I could still see the grizzly nearby. I looked at my hands. They were shredded and my fingers were bent, broken, and pointing in directions I had never seen before. I could feel the blood steadily streaming down my face, torso, arms, legs and back. It felt as if someone was pouring bottled water over my head. I looked down at my body and could see that my clothes were shredded to pieces. The bear had dragged me over 50 yards down the mountain. I mustered the energy to start crawling back up the mountain calling

Wyatt's name.

Finally, I saw Wyatt running down the mountain toward me. All I wanted to do was ask him if my head was okay and how bad am I? But before I could even get the words out, he looked at me and cried, "Holy S***!" At that point I was stricken with fear. I had felt the grizzly bite into my skull and now, after Wyatt's response, I thought the worst.

Wyatt had shot the bear while it was on top of me. The cardinal rule is you do not shoot an animal when it is on a man. It's too dangerous. Rolling around, the shooter could easily miss the bear and hit the man, as well as a bullet could ricochet off a bone of the bear and end up killing the man instead. However, Wyatt said that he had to shoot because the grizzly was getting more and more aggressive. Additionally, he said that he only had one shot left. One shot left?! I hadn't heard any of the shots. I said to Wyatt, "I'm really glad you counted your shots. I thought that only happened in the movies." We both shared a brief grin.

As we made our way back up to the mountain ridge, I kept repeating, "Watch our six!" Upon reaching the ridge top, I remembered that all our gear was several hundred feet down on the other side. When we finally got down to the gear, I collapsed to the ground against my backpack. Wyatt took out my first aid kit and held bandages against my head.

Wyatt carried what is called an "InReach" system, a small satellite device used for communicating with base camp. He plugged in "Emergency" and hit the "Send" button. No response.



I had an Iridium satellite phone. It had a flip-cover red SOS button. Although I had not read any of the directions, I powered up the device, flipped open the protective cover, and depressed the red SOS button. I muttered, "Here come the Navy SEALs." A few seconds later I got a text message that read, "Important! Please register your Extreme Iridium Geo-Satellite Service before sending another SOS message. The service is free, but it is mandatory." I thought, "Are you kidding me? I just hit the SOS and received a text message back?" My heart sank.

We were in the middle of nowhere and getting no response. Wyatt was having a hard time dealing with everything happening. I could tell that he was struggling. I never told him about the satellite text message I received. Instead, I told him we had to call my wife. He said, "But you pushed the SOS button. They are going to call us on the satellite phone." "Well, let's just call her anyway," I said. "I know the longitude and latitude and we can tell her." Wyatt grabbed the phone and called my wife. He told her I had been attacked by a grizzly bear, explained we needed emergency extraction and gave her our longitude and latitude coordinates. After he gave her the coordinates, the phone line went dead. Apparently, the emergency system does work without registering because they broke in to respond to the SOS.





The Rescue

The emergency dispatch contacted the outfitter base camp. Fortunately, one of the gentlemen in the group at base camp was a doctor. He had shot a moose on the second day and was at base camp when the call came in. He and another guide jumped in the helicopter as it came to get us. We could hear the chopper coming, echoing off the mountain canyons, from miles away. Wyatt had a burlap looking sack which he was frantically waving hoping the pilot would see us. I remember laying there on my backpack while the chopper was going back and forth and thinking, "Are you kidding me? How do they not see us?" It was surreal to me because they were so close, but they could not see us. Then suddenly, like in a movie, the helicopter elevated up over the mountain ridge and hovered directly in front of us. I could clearly see the pilot as he navigated toward us and sat the chopper down safely.

Waiting to be airlifted, I remember looking at my hand; it was crushed thinner than a pancake. At the time, I did not know I was in shock. It's a very weird surreal feeling. On the mountain, the doctor and guides kept asking me questions. In my mind, I was answering every one of them. But they kept saying, "He's completely non-responsive."

Once the chopper had landed, I was carried on a make-shift gurney comprised of two backpacks and placed in the back of the helicopter. Wyatt was left behind with the other guide.

Norman Wells

From the mountain, we flew to base camp. Medical help was needed right away. The pilot and doctor jumped out and stripped everything out of the chopper to lighten the load. After topping off the fuel tanks, the pilot lifted off for the flight to Norman Wells. My thoughts were focused on how fortunate I was to be alive, and that surely God's hand must have been on Wyatt and me. Yet, at the same time, I was freezing in the back of that chopper while continually questioning my faith and whether I knew God at all. Was I in the right place with the Lord? Was I saved? Was my faith where it needed to be? Did I even have faith? If I died, would I go to heaven or straight to hell? My mind was spinning. I panicked. And then, for the first time I can recall, the Holy Spirit came over me and I remembered that at eight or nine years old, I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior in the small Wisner United Methodist Church basement. Jesus took all my sins when He died on the cross; all of them. My faith in Jesus is my salvation. Calmness and warmth came over me like someone put a wool blanket around my shoulders. I was secure in my faith, and I was at peace.

I remember flying out of the mountains, seeing the airport, and thinking, "Man, there are a lot of emergency vehicles down there." They were on both ends of the runway with ambulances in the middle. And then it hit me...I may be in real trouble. The pilot landed that helicopter right in the middle of the runway. The airport was awaiting my arrival. The ambulance pulled right up to the chopper, and I was taken immediately to Norman Wells Medical Clinic.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

When we arrived at Norman Wells Medical Clinic, the nurses began the process of preparing me for the Medevac flight to Yellowknife. Upon examination, the medical team at Norman Wells concluded that the grizzly bear had missed major arteries and fortunately had not punctured my lungs. Either of those wounds may have been catastrophic. Both hands were broken in multiple places and my head was torn down into my skull. While I was laying in the emergency room bed, the nurses were on the phone getting instructions from the doctors in Yellowknife. The nurses put in an IV and catheter, flushed the wounds with saline and intentionally left them open.

While I was lying in the Norman Wells clinic, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police entered the room. They asked me questions and argued with the nurses. The nurses were busy readying me for the Medevac, and the Mounties were busy trying to ask questions about the attack. During their arguing I laid there in the middle listening. My head was pounding. I asked the nurse if I could have an aspirin. She laughed and replied, "I've got something better than aspirin!" She put something in the IV and everything got immediately better!

Yellowknife

The Medevac jet took me from Norman Wells to Yellowknife. It was the nicest plane I have ever been on, a real first-class flying hospital. The accident had occurred around 10:10am. I arrived at Yellowknife at 4:00pm. After full body x-rays and a multitude of body scans, I was ready for surgery at 9:30pm. Everyone in the room mutually agreed I was fortunate to be alive.

Surgery ended at 3:00am. It took 5.5 hours to stitch and staple me back together. I had multiple breaks in each hand, 47+ staples in my head, and more stitches than I cared to count. From surgery, I was taken to a hospital room.

The next morning, I woke up and there was a young man who came in with a plate of food. So happy to see him I asked, "You got anything sweet? I'm a 'sugarholic.'" He responded, "Yeah, but it'll cost you a dollar." I told him, "I was in a hunting accident and all my gear is still up in the McKenzie Mountains. When I was in Norman Wells, they cut off all my clothes. All I have to my name now is this standard issued blue hospital gown. I have zero money." He looked at me and said, "Let me see what I can do." True to his word, after a while he walked back into the room and laid down a multitude of candy bars. I asked, "How much do I owe you?" He replied, "You don't owe me anything. **You are the BearMan!**"



Coming Home

When I had recovered enough to return home, my brother flew up from the states. He walked into the room and remarked, "Well, your face is still there." We started the trip home. What a sweet feeling that was! I had inhouse nursing care for months. Some wounds were so deep that a wound-vac machine was required for healing. The recovery of my physical body, though slow and painful, was obvious to all who were familiar with what I looked like before the accident. What was not as obvious to those who knew me was the change that God was making on the inside of me. Deep inner healing and transformation takes time but eventually becomes as obvious as healed physical wounds.

If there is anything you take away from this story, aside from the fact that I may be the only person you will ever meet who survived a grizzly bear attack, I hope it's the fact you understand the hand of God pulled that grizzly off me. The attack has given me an acute awareness of the brevity of life and the mercy of God. This new awareness has led me to follow Jesus Christ wholeheartedly and to encourage all who will listen to give their lives to Christ before their time on this earth is gone.

The Fifth Estate

EPISODE 2 | AMAZON UNPACKED

NOW
STREAMING

North

Grizzly bear attacks hunter near Norman Wells, N.W.T.



The hunter and a guide were spotting moose when the bear attacked

CBC News · Posted: Sep 11, 2015 1:24 PM CT | Last Updated: September 13, 2015

A hunter has been medevaced to Yellowknife with serious injuries after he was attacked by a grizzly bear in the Mackenzie Mountains near Norman Wells, N.W.T.

The attack happened around 11 a.m. Thursday morning.

According to the RCMP, the hunter and a guide were spotting moose when the bear attacked them. The hunter and the guide didn't see the grizzly until it made its attack.

RCMP say the bear pulled the hunter down an embankment and he received "multiple injuries during the attack."

The guide fired a shot which scared the bear off and stopped the attack.

The injured hunter was rescued by a helicopter, treated in Norman Wells, and then medevaced to Yellowknife for more treatment.

The Lord puts only a select few people in your life who make altering and lasting impressions. The man who came to my aid that dreadful day back in September 2015, Dr. Bob Burlingame, is one of those individuals.

Dr. Burlingame's impact on my life goes far beyond his mountain heroics. This man of faith is in my life because God firmly planted him there and I wouldn't want it any other way.



Changed

by Dr. Bob Burlingame

I met a man I used to know,
And though he looked the same,
He spoke of what had brought him low,
And how his heart was changed.

One fateful day on distant hill,
Midst crushing jaws, and stench and blood,
His Savior broke his self-served will,
And left him lying in the mud.

Convinced of death, and apt for sure,
To leave this world from that far mount,
He weighed his life and came up short,
As failure and trespass he tried to count.

But then his Savior, strong and clear,
Made known to him from distant past,
A prior claim, a prayer, a bond,
Twixt he and Him, that held him fast.

In spite of flesh, in spite of sin,
In spite of all that he had done,
That simple prayer, by earnest faith,
Through Christ's own death had eternity won!

And now his life, forever changed,
Is drawn to serve, make known to man,
His Jesus, his savior, his Lord, his friend, his "all that matters" in the end.

So listen close, that you may know,
The Savior has a bear for you,
To crush your spirit, His love to show,
Your flesh be weak, His love is true.

If ears can hear and heart believe,
That selfsame prayer my good friend said, you will live on, eternal bliss,
When on That Day, your flesh be shed.



JHV: Good Timber

One of my favorite poems is "Good Timber" by Douglas Malloch. It depicts my life wherein I can close my eyes and vividly imagine the pruning process I have undergone. I can also see these fabulous forest patriarchs firsthand anywhere I hunt in the great outdoors.

Someone once asked me, "If you could go back in time to September 10, 2015, just before the grizzly attack, what would you do differently?" The answer is I wouldn't change a thing. As painful as that sounds, and the fact that this was a deep valley in my life, the only way for me to get from one mountain to the next is through the valley. I believe this is exactly what God intended.

Like everyone else, I do not enjoy the pruning process. It is simply a necessary part of bearing more fruit. As scripture states in John 15:1-2; "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."

It is possible to look at life's valleys through a different lens. It is possible to turn darkness into light. It is possible solely through the saving grace of our Lord & Savior, Jesus Christ. In John 16:33 Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

RECEIVE JESUS

Choosing to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior is the most important decision you'll ever make!

"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. . .

For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

(Romans 10:9-10,13)

By His grace, God has already done everything to provide salvation. Your part is simply to believe and receive. . .

To accept and receive Jesus Christ into your heart and be saved, you may say this salvation prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for your unconditional love for me, for sending Jesus Christ to die on the cross for all my sins. I believe in my heart that You raised Him from the dead and by faith in Your Word, I choose to receive Jesus into my heart. I confess that Jesus is Lord and Savior and His precious blood washes me clean. Thank you that all my sins – past, present, and future – are forgiven. Now I am declared righteous and under Your favor because of His sacrifice. Thank you Father, that surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life from this day forth. Thank you for saving me, making me into a brand-new creation, and helping me to know You more intimately every day. In Jesus' powerful name, Amen.

The Word of God is clear—the moment you call upon Jesus Christ for salvation, the truth of His Word instantly comes to pass in your spirit. If you prayed that prayer, there's a brand-new you! Praise God, all of heaven is rejoicing, you are a born-again child of God!!

On the next page, discover your next steps for MOVING FORWARD in your new life with Christ...

Good Timber

by Douglas Malloch

The tree that never had to fight
For sun and sky and air and light,
But stood out in the open plain
And always got its share of rain,
Never became a forest king
But lived and died a scrubby thing.

The man who never had to toil
To gain and farm his patch of soil,
Who never had to win his share
Of sun and sky and light and air,
Never became a manly man
But lived and died as he began.

Good timber does not grow with ease,
The stronger wind, the stronger trees,
The further sky, the greater length,
The more the storm, the more the strength.
By sun and cold, by rain and snow,
In trees and men good timbers grow.

Where thickest lies the forest growth
We find the patriarchs of both.
And they hold counsel with the stars
Whose broken branches show the scars

Of many winds and much of strife.
This is the common law of life.





JHV: Our Time

My father wrote the following poem entitled "Our Time" back in 1992. After the grizzly bear attack, I suffered in September 2015, this poem became even more powerful and precious to me. It reminds me of how fast life passes by and how important it is to cherish each day of life. The poem is also a challenge to let those whom we love, know how much they mean to us every day. Life is too uncertain to live it any other way.

"Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes."

James 4:14

"Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own". Matthew 6:34.

Our Time

by Larry J. VanSteenhouse '92

Sky's gray and dark; winds - - - North - East,

White caps lean on our blind.

A speck on the horizon twelve o'clock - low.

Is it a duck or goose?

I nudge my hunting partner,

See him?

Ya Dad.

It's "Our Time".

Years ago, Sarkozy, Learnens, Walkers and I hunted.

Decoys spread in a corn field, each carefully placed.

Blinds dug in, camouflaged.

Heads down, quiet!

The only sound, geese honking.

I look to my right - - -

Your head low, eyes straining; gun ready.

You learned well; that too was "Our Time".

Time passes - - - so too will ours.

The sky, gray and dark - - -

Cattails leaning, winds North - East, white caps churning.

Mallards, wings cupped,

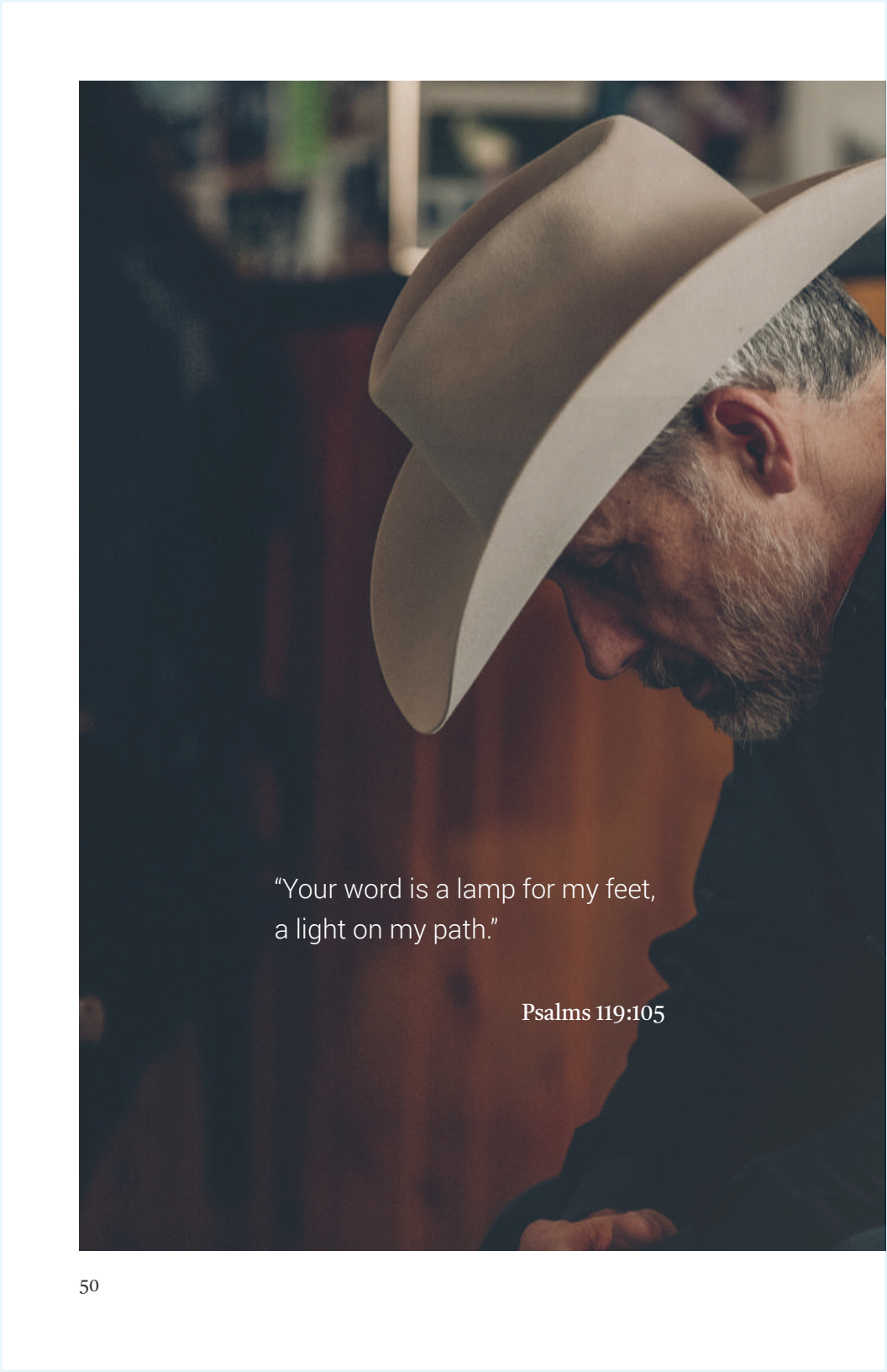
Thirty yards and closing six feet above the decoys.

Your finger on the trigger, sights perfect, lead - -

Just right.

This one time, ease "safe on" whisper --
"Take him Pop!"
As he glides away safe, I'll know.
A tribute to years past.
"Our Time".



A close-up, profile view of a man with a grey beard and hair, wearing a light-colored cowboy hat. He is looking down and to the left. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting with wooden paneling.

“Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.”

Psalms 119:105

A photograph of a person wearing a dark blue, long-sleeved button-down shirt. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, with their back and shoulder visible. The background consists of vertical wood paneling. The lighting is soft, creating a warm atmosphere. The text 'Moving Forward' is overlaid in the lower right quadrant of the image.

Moving Forward

Moving Forward

As a new Believer in Christ, here are some Biblical practices that you can begin *immediately* to get you *Moving Forward* in your spiritual life!

1. Get a Bible and begin reading it daily—go to the table of contents and find the book of Ephesians. I recommend starting with the book of Ephesians because this book powerfully highlights your new covenant blessings given by the extravagant riches of God's grace. Also, throughout its pages, you will learn practical instructions and wisdom to empower you to reign in your daily life as a blessed child of God.

2. Make prayer a part of your daily life – prayer is simply talking with Jesus, no fancy or eloquent words needed, just be yourself! However, if this is helpful to get you started, use the acrostic **GRACE** to guide your prayer time:

Grace: Grace upon Grace is yours in superabundance. Pause and take a moment in prayer to praise God for His boundless grace and His gift of righteousness, freely given so that you may reign in life. How awesome—you stand justified before God not by your own merit, but through His unearned favor. Because of God's grace, you are blessed and highly favored, completely loved, fully accepted, empowered by His grace for every good work. Believe and Receive! (*John 1:16; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 5:17*)

Reliance: Rely on Jesus. Let go of the exhausting struggle to control life's circumstances through your own strength. Jesus, our compassionate High Priest, invites you to enter into His rest. Release and rest your whole being—spirit, soul, body—into the loving and caring hands of Christ. Moment by moment, as you surrender to Him and trust in His care, you will find rest for you weary soul. (*Matthew 11:28, Romans 12:1; Hebrews 4:14-16*)

Ask: Ask for God's help. Because He cares for every detail of your life, come to His throne of grace with both humility and confidence, laying before Him your struggles, burdens, the concerns weighing on your heart, and your concerns for others. In these vulnerable moments of intimate prayer, His mercy meets your weakness and His grace sustains you precisely when you need it most. (*Matt. 7:7; 2 Corin. 12:10; Hebrews 4:14-16;*)

Confess: Confess and be relieved. When sin weighs heavy on your heart, bring it honestly before God and be relieved of your burden. Praise God, you have a forgiving Redeemer! Jesus Christ is the ultimate Advocate—He declares "case dismissed" over your life. Because of His precious blood, His forgiveness is like a

mighty waterfall completely cleansing your conscience. Sincerely confess, then keep walking in freedom as His beloved child! And remember always, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. (*1 John 2:1; Hebrews 8:12; Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:17; Romans 8:1*)

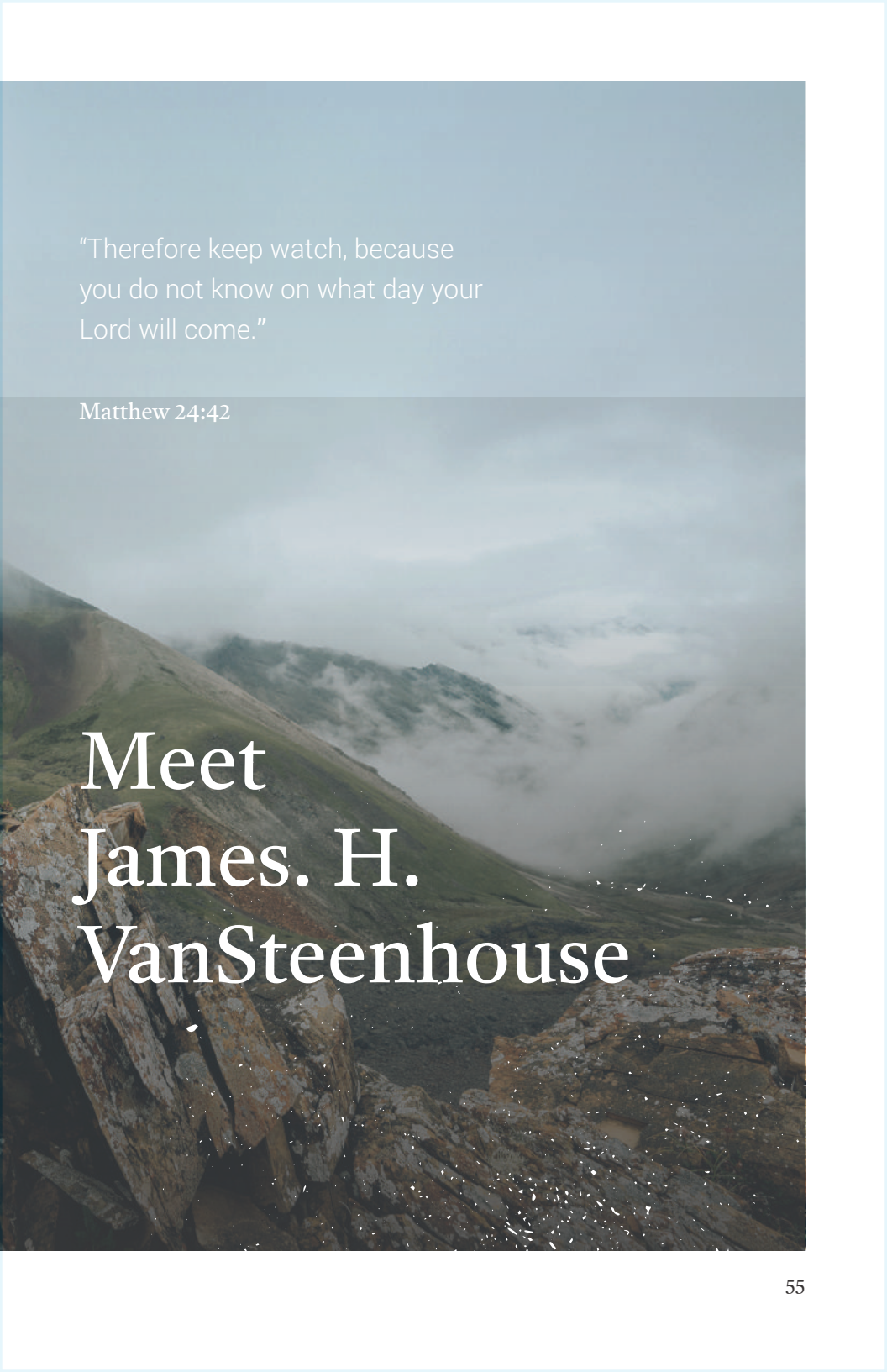
Embrace: Embrace your new identity in Jesus Christ. *Believe* that you are a brand-new creation as a born-again child of God. Like a dirt crawling caterpillar transformed into a beautiful butterfly, the old has passed away—behold, the new has come! Acknowledge again and again, that you are blessed and highly favored, completely forgiven, seated with Christ in heavenly realms, and created for meaningful purpose. Daily declare the truth over yourself: *“I am the righteousness of God in Christ.”* Divine protection surrounds you continually, and every promise He has spoken over you is *“yes and amen.”* Thank You, Father! There are countless Scriptures declaring your new identity in Christ—meditate on them daily, and watch your life be radically wonderfully transformed. (*Psalm 91; Isaiah 54:17; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:6, 2:10*)

3. Be Baptized — tell a Pastor you have recently become a believer in Christ and want to be baptized. Baptism is a public declaration of your faith in Jesus, and is symbolic for your new life in Christ.

4. Attend church as a normal part of your life—attend a Church that lifts up Jesus Christ and teaches the entire Word of God. I encourage you to join a small Bible study group within the church, so that you may be encouraged through His Word and get to know your faith siblings on a deeper level. We find strength to overcome every obstacle within the Body of Christ and learn how to use our spiritual gifts to bless others.

5. Find a Praying Friend—prayerfully seek out a trusted faith sibling (or two) – someone who will speak the truth in love into your life, just as you will speak into theirs. God has designed for us to walk side-by-side in our spiritual journeys – Enjoy your journey with Jesus and one another!!





"Therefore keep watch, because
you do not know on what day your
Lord will come."

Matthew 24:42

Meet James. H. VanSteenhouse

James H. VanSteenhouse retired in early 2021 to pursue sharing his testimony through BearMan Ministries and be involved in supporting global evangelism through his International Ministry, RoughWaters.

RoughWaters seeks to support areas in the world where the harvest of souls is great, but the workers and resources are few. This ministry has carried Jim to Africa where thousands of people are now giving their lives to Christ because of the support given to indigenous evangelists and pastors.

Jim will go anywhere to share what God did in his life through the grizzly attack. One of Jim's favorite scriptures is Isaiah 6:8; Then I heard the

voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"



Since Jim has made the commitment to go wherever God sends him, he has spoken in public and private schools, prisons, churches, sporting events, banquets, men's and women's rallies, outdoorsman banquets and the list goes on.

As Jim is fond of saying, "My bags are packed! Let's go!" Jim

looks forward to the possibility of coming to your church or event to share his story or one of his outdoor films and the spiritual lessons learned about God and life in the outdoors.



For information on
booking a speaking
engagement, please visit
thebearman.com or contact
James H. VanSteenhouse at
jimv@thebearman.com



"The BearMan kicked off our Men's Ministry for Foundry Church and we could have not had a better speaker. Jim connected his story with the issues which we men struggle. I was not expecting the overwhelming response of our men to Jim's call to follow Christ, but so grateful for all the changed lives!"

Danny Hannon
The Foundry Church, Houston
Texas

"Jim's powerful and moving testimony made a significant impact on the men that attended our quarterly Fireside Forum series. Jim understood our audience and tailored his presentation to provide maximum effectiveness. The response of the men was overwhelming and very positive!"

Bruce Matthews,
NFL Hall of Fame Class of 2007
SEARCH-Houston

“Everything changed in a second when Jim VanSteenhouse realized he was being stared down by a grizzly bear. Locked in the powerful jaws of the animal, one thought came roaring to the surface, “Will I go to heaven?” Jim survives to tell his powerful story and to inspire others to ask the same question. As a speaker, “The BearMan” entertains, inspires, and provokes thought. Prayerfully, each of us needs to ponder Jim’s question and be sure of our answer.”

Dr. Ed Young
Second Baptist Church, Houston

“Knowing Jim personally, I greatly admire his courage and energy. Jim was knocked on his back in a brutal way but he is back on his feet and is a better man for it. We all get knocked down at some point in life but not everyone decides to get back up. Jim’s story will inspire you to get back on your feet and encourage you to be a difference maker.”

Lance Berkman
Retired MLB All-Star

"Through Quest Ministries we have been serving special needs kids and purple heart veterans for many years. This year we got to hear The BearMan speak to a group of our veterans...awesome! His message really spoke to us and we know that it moved the hearts of those we were serving. We would highly recommend The BearMan to anyone looking for a speaker...it will change your heart and your life."

Ken & Verna Barrens
Quest Ministries

"Our annual men's retreat is one of the best attended and important events in the year for our men's ministry. The BearMan did a great job of challenging and encouraging our men to "get out of the cave" and answer God's call to be the "mighty men of God" He is calling them to be! What a great message and so well delivered and received! The BearMan's testimony and authenticity of how God met him in the wake of being attacked by a grizzly bear was profound and a testimony that should be heard by everyone."

Rev. Kevin C. Rudolph
Senior Pastor
Windwood Presbyterian Church

"The BearMan was our guest speaker for the annual hunting outreach event at Two Hats Ranch. The message that Jim brought was relatable, inspiring, and life changing for all our guests in attendance. Without hesitation I recommend Jim to your next event where people need to be inspired and leave with hope!"

Skipper Bettis
Two Hats Ranch

"Wow! Is the only way to describe what God did through Jim at our Sportsman Banquet! Over 1,000 men heard an inspiring story of survival and transformation that was delivered with passion and conviction. Jim connected with the men and the men connected with God through Jim's ministry. We are looking forward to having the BearMan back!"

Doug Bergsma
Senior Pastor City Church
Rockford, MI



If but **one**, and the goal is **10,000,000**



RoughWaters International Ministries was established to equip those that are “Going” and “Making” disciples in places that are ripe for harvest, but are difficult places to labor, severely under-resourced, and ill equipped to reach the millions of people that are ready to place their faith in Christ.

RoughWaters finds, vets and resources the leaders that are currently working the harvest in their country. A small amount of money goes a long way to reach thousands of people when the harvest is ripe.

RoughWaters is blessed to be partners with some anointed, amazing, indigenous leaders that are working to harvest souls in very difficult places. These leaders are already gleaning the harvest, but so much more can be done if these workers had what they needed to be more effective. If more God called workers could be identified and resourced, the numbers of people coming to Christ would grow exponentially.

RoughWaters International Ministries is gathering prayer and financial partners that have a desire to see people around the world hear and respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. RoughWaters currently has teams in



We are trusting God to allow us to see **TEN MILLION** people give their lives to Christ around the world.

place that are sharing the story of salvation and hope that Jesus offers. In many of these places the gospel has never been preached.

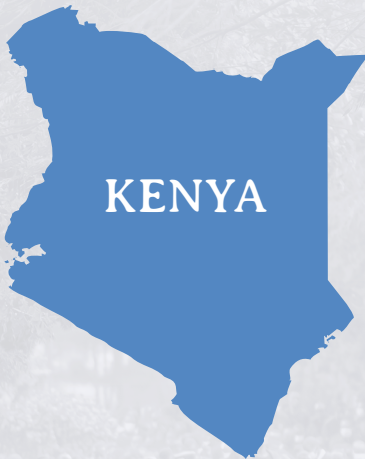
RoughWaters International Ministries guarantees that **100%** of all donations go directly to the field where it is needed. Not one dime stays at RoughWaters. Every dime is used on a foreign field to win people to Christ.



ROUGH WATERS

THE FIELDS ARE TRULY RIPE FOR HARVEST IN KENYA.

Rough Waters will share the gospel with thousands of students this year in Kenya. On average over half of the students that hear the gospel place their faith in Christ.



10,000 Schools

2,000,000 Students

The goal is to share the gospel in every school, with every student in Kenya. Currently the average cost per salvation in Kenya is \$3.00. A gift of \$6.00 will provide a gospel presentation to 2 young people and one of them may become a follower of Christ. Thank you for your prayers and generosity!



**TEXT KEYWORD “GIVE”
TO (833) 892-6209**



Will you partner with us to equip the harvesters that are already laboring?
Will you be one who gives to see ten million precious people saved
around the world?

roughwatersministry.org



“God promises a safe landing.
He does not promise a calm passage”



For information on booking a speaking engagement,
please visit thebearman.com
or contact James H. VanSteenhouse at
jimv@thebearman.com

Shop Bear Man Merch!

