Hi my name is Alyssa Belz, I’m 15 and I was asked to give my testimony tonight. I was pretty nervous about sharing my story, but I hope it can be encouraging. You may already know a bit of my story from the letter Ryan and Megan shared a week or 2 ago, but this more of a picture into my life. By the way, thank you for all your prayers they are very appreciated, and hopefully God will act upon them soon. It’s been a blessing to not only have the church, but have them be so invested in our family. Back to my testimony. I don’t really view my life as particularly special, or remarkable. I figure everybody has their story, but mine is a bit unique as compared with other girls my age.

The first part of my life, I lived in California till I was about 4. I placed my faith in Jesus, and knew I loved him and wanted to live a life for him. I didn’t know what this life would be, but I knew God was going to help me through whatever happened. Then my family and I moved to Africa as missionaries for about 3 years. This was such an amazing experience, and really changed the way I viewed the world. We moved back to America after my mom got sick, and our family finally settled into Olympia Washington. I was 9 at the time, just starting 4th grade. That’s when I got sick. My life really changed from that point on. I had to be pulled out of school many days, and was eventually homeschooled. I lost my friends, and was confused about what was happening. I spent many days in the back of a car, feeling sick on my way to doctor appointments. After a few years of no one knowing what was wrong with me, I started really wondering what God’s plan was. It was so frustrating that I couldn’t do normal activities and I spent many hours laying on my bed crying out to God. Could this be the rest of my life? Laying in my bed, in the same house feeling sick?

I felt like my life was taken from me and all I could do was lay in bed and feel miserable. I wanted to be in heaven with no pain and suffering. Having a Christian walk is not the easiest thing in the world. We are going to be hit with trials and hard circumstances, and it’s during these times that we have to draw near to God most.

Being sick has given me the ability to be still before God and not be distracted by all the things I should be doing, but be quiet before him. I’ve spent many nights out on my porch looking at the stars thinking of God and many nights on my bed listening to music worshiping him. He’s given me the nudge to focus on him, which I wish I would do more in everything I do. And if I do get healed, I wish that I would never lose that close relationship and reliance upon him.

When we do suffer and go through hardships, it makes us have the opportunity to trust God more and look to him for our needs, rather than just get frustrated at all the things that are going wrong. Even though that many times is our first response. He is the ultimate decider and creator over all our days, and he has seen the beginning from the end, so we shouldn’t get upset at him for our circumstances. At the end of the day it’s not about us, it’s about giving God glory, that’s the reason he created us. So we could be an image or reflection of him.

The angels say in Isaiah 6:3, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

God made me for his glory, so I can trust that he will do what is right even if I don’t like my circumstances and feel limited in serving Him.

This is something I’m still learning today.

Though every day I still struggle with my health, crazy food allergies, super low energy, as well as trying to have hope for my future, I know God loves me and I know I get to live with him eternally in heaven. That really makes **all** the difference when you feel hopeless and sick. It makes you long with all your heart for the day that you will meet face to face with the God of the universe. I can’t wait till I can run up to Jesus and pour out my whole heart to him. The anxiety, stress, sickness, and hurt will all melt away at his feet and I will be filled with His love, joy, and the mercy he had for me when he died on the cross.

Though my life isn’t what I’d chose, I’m so thankful for the deeper relationship I have with God, and I wouldn’t change it for anything. I long to live abiding with his spirit and him abiding in me. I long to not have sin in my life, and have him working in me instead. Though I know I’m not perfect, and never will be, I know Jesus will always have mercy and will be there to guide me.

One of my favorite passages is Romans 4:25- 5:5 which says: “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

One last thing:

Sometimes I do doubt my faith, which for me is a bit scary because I want to always have strong unwavering faith. But I know God is faithful, even if I don’t always think he’s there or understand how he is working. I am reminded in 1 peter that faith is refined by suffering, and as vs 8 says, “though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with a inexpressible and glorious joy.” And as Pastor Greg has said, the bible, as well as the church throughout history is a way that we can have proof that God is working.

I am so thankful that I have been saved by Jesus, and I praise him that through my sickness, he has given me hope every day for the future I have waiting for me in heaven. And for the days I do have, I only hope he continues to work in my life for his glory.

Thanks for listening to my testimony ☺