

Sinners, Saints, and the Furious Love of God: Raw Ragamuffin reflections from a wannabe vagabond evangelist

David Leo Schultz



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Why does it seem that Christianity creates a space where it is so challenging to be our authentic self? What's your authentic self? Exactly who you are in this very moment. No pretending. No games. No masks. Most of us in Christendom are addicted to putting on a good boy and good girl image in front of those whom we want to think we have a polished "Christian Resume." Some of the most edifying, lovely, beautiful, cherished, and nourishing experiences of my walk with Christ have been in those moments when I am with friends with whom I can just be me. Not the cleaned up, polished, or polite version of my self. But the real me - not the who has struggled - but the one who is struggling. The one for whom failure is not a matter of the past - but the present. The one who not only has been hurt - but is hurting. The one who hasn't only been walking in the desert of confusion - but is currently running around blind in the dark screaming for mercy. Because when I live and am honest with myself - I can finally face the music: That I am deeply broken and deeply in need of Jesus' wild and furious love. I wanted to write a book for ragamuffins like me. Screw-ups that haven't arrived but are still on the journey. If you're looking for a book by someone with all the answers this book isn't for you. If you're looking for a book by someone with whom you can have a synchronized swim within the lake of theological refreshment - this book isn't for you. If you are looking for a bible guru, self-help saint, or a goodie two-shoes - this book isn't for you. I wanted to be me in this book. At least as much as wisdom would allow. Not the watered down, sugar coated, half-mast version of myself. But the person I really am: A sinner saved by grace. Not grace that I bought, earned, or put on lay-a-way but the one that was and is haunting me day and night with the presence of Jesus and his love. This book is two things. First - it's a raw conversation filled with honest reflections about life and faith. Like the one you'd have at a dingy bar, hole-in-the wall coffee shop, or a cross country road trip. Second and more importantly - it's a witness to unfair and undeserved grace. It's a witness to ups and downs, a few beautiful mountain tops, and even more dark and dangerous valleys. It's a witness to the Divine crashing into my life and hunting me down with His furious love. On this road trip with me you'll pick up hitchhikers with names like depression, heart break, and loss, and although they will stay with you for a while, they won't make the whole trip with you. You'll reflect on their purpose with the eyes of mercy, the lenses of hindsight, and the visionary hope of forgiveness. What you're about to read is my story. My ragamuffin story. And in my story I have discovered God chasing me down with his furious love through the sinners and saints that have shipwrecked into my life. But my greatest hope in our time together - should you dare to pick up this book - is that you will read my story and forget my story and fall in love with Jesus. I pray that my story will fade into the background and your story will take center stage - so that you too can see where God was and is, where He is ready and waiting to tackle and ambush you with his incomprehensibly tender and overwhelming love.

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Robert Jones:

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