

GOOD NEWS STORY

Ian Pinhey, a Devon farmer, shares experiences of God's faithfulness



I live in mid Devon with my wife Debbie, and my five children. I am a fifth generation farmer, and have a passion for feeding people both physically and spiritually. I was asked to share my story on BBC TV's Songs of Praise last year, which opened the doorway for me to meet David Hull when he spoke at the West Devon Filling Station in the autumn. I didn't know anything about MET:Revive and was encouraged to hear what David shared with us that evening.

I have always felt that faith and farming go hand in hand. Life on a busy farm in Devon can be challenging and rewarding, all at the same time. The farm is a fantastic place to bring up a family and to see God's hand at work all around you, particularly

in the springtime as hedgerows, woodland, and crops of various kinds burst into life.

We have had our fair share of trials over the years, but God has remained faithful through it all. I feel blessed to have been brought up on a farm and in a Christian home, and can never remember a time when I didn't know that God was real and that he cared for me.

I left school at 16 and came straight home to work on the farm, but within a few years we were thrust into the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001. To see our livestock culled and business crumble in front of our eyes left us wondering what the future would look like. It turned out to be another opportunity for God to open doors that may never have been opened, had we not gone through that pain.

One such opportunity was as a result of not having any livestock for 12 months, which gave me the opportunity to go out to Bulgaria with a team from local churches in my area. A team would go out each year to help improve facilities in a rural orphanage, and it was while I was there in 2001 that God really challenged me.

I had felt him prodding me for some time about exploring the call to preach, but being a very shy young man, I managed to convince myself that God couldn't possibly be asking me to do that, so I ignored the call. Deep down, I knew this was God. It was while I was out in Bulgaria, that I became very aware of how comfortable my life was, and yet I was willingly ignoring his voice. I made every excuse under the sun, but it was when I saw how joyful the children in the orphanage were in the face of poverty, it humbled me, and meant that I was unable to say 'no' to the God who had given me everything.

I guess the rest is history, and I now find myself regularly preaching, largely in the Methodist circuit, in mid Devon. I met Debbie in 2002, we were married in 2004, and now we have a full house with five children from 10-18 years old. It's been a joy to watch faith grow in each of their lives and we trust that God will lead them each along the path that he has for them.

Throughout life, we will all experience our share of joy and pain, but through it all, God remains faithful. If he calls us, then he most definitely equips us too. The verses from Proverbs 3:5-6 encapsulate this: 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight'.