



## Amplify Series 20-21 Texts

*[In program order]*

### **BENJAMIN SMIDT**

**Coronavirus 2020**

*(March 17, 2020)*

I'm standing in the depths of black turmoil awaiting my prison sentence determination  
Length unfair, time unknown and undecided  
Fighting to stay sane but underneath  
Piles of I don't knows  
Anxiety as high as the sky  
I'm afraid and overwhelmed  
I wish I knew more  
Can't God heal everyone right now?  
Dirty

### **MITCHELL ROBINS**

*Adapted from Mitchell's blog, "Mitchell's Life with Autism"*

"I lo-"

I have been alone for most of my life inside my body

"I lo-"

People have tried to make me communicate before, but I couldn't stand the limitations. Nobody could ask me what I wanted and they assumed that I had no opinion and that I understood very little. I couldn't get what I wanted so I felt frustrated and angry. I am more complicated than some may think. I am constantly thinking about everything and keep it to myself. I am much more intelligent than people know, but I don't speak. I am bright, strong, and persistent. I have thoughts and needs like everyone else, but sometimes people don't realize that.

"I lo-"

It took me a long time to learn Rapid Prompting Method and it was a lot of work but it opened up my world.

"I love you."



I have learned how to answer questions, tell my needs, express myself and advocate for myself.

“I love you.”

## **BENJAMIN SMIDT**

**Hope!**

*(2018)*

Do you ever feel trapped with no way out? Only thoughts, and no vehicle to deliver those thoughts? That was my life, and I was trapped with no exit. This was the case until I was 12 years old. I wanted to talk so bad it piloted my every prayer. Hope comforted me, because I knew that one day God would answer my prayer. So, in 6th grade, a necessary connection was made and the rest is now the story titled ‘Hope!’

During my sixth grade year, I wasn’t able to do much of anything. I had no challenge, no friendships, and I deeply craved both of those things. I always just wanted to die, because I had no life- at least that was my perception at the time. At school, I worked on getting the basics. They had no clue that I already knew them, and I would get so frustrated and livid when I couldn’t show them the correct response. I so desired to learn, yet at that time my dream was off the table. I did have two good things going for me, though, my family and trust in God! I had a mustard seed of faith, and a hope that God would eventually send the sunshine. That was my comfort at the time.

In the second semester of 6th grade, everything started to become hopeful. In December, my parents had met a lady from a church nativity program named Kristen. I started working with her a few times a week. She had given me a ton of challenges. I was introduced to so many rich topics: pre-algebra, poetry, wars, and hard readings that actually made me think. It was so exciting for me, but also so terrifying and hard. During the first few months, my arms ached because I was pointing and using my arms, wrist, and fingers for long periods of time. My challenges during my RPM lessons were major during the time as concentration, sitting, thinking, and writing were all unpracticed things. Yet, I grew and all of that became another common practice in my life. I was also afraid that eventually I would fail. I didn’t know if I would ever have a voice, like I do now. Still, I worked. Soon I had choices, and then a word. I never knew how liberating one word would be, but I finally was able to express. That had never been plausible or attainable in my life. It was a big ordeal.

A couple of months later, one word turned into a sentence and that turned into paragraphs and essays. Conditions in my life began to change, because I was now heard. Life became beautiful. I could have friends, go to school, take finals, chat with my parents and cousins, have a sleepover with a friend, share at church and the list goes on and on. I was freed from the snares of hopelessness.

In all of this, I found part of my purpose- even though at times I still get too emotionally involved with what I lack ;). I have, though, learned much. I now treasure what I was taught by the Lord- beauty comes from overcoming pain and obstacles in life. You see, during that time of



anguish and anger towards God, I hoped that one day God would eventually use it all and make a treasure from all the pain. He did just that, and since finding my voice, I am hopeful. That is how hope came to be.

## **AIDEN LEVY**

What is in a wind sound  
That sings to the trees  
When falling leaves  
Are not green  
And the air is cold  
The day is short  
It gets dark  
Wind scatters leaves  
on the ground

--

The clouds were piling  
Sky had lightning  
Piling, scaring  
Finally showering  
Streets were flowing  
Water rushing  
Thunder rumbling  
Clouds were piling

## **PABLO HERNANDEZ**

*Excerpts from Pablo's blog, "Not Too Trapped In My Head Anymore"*

### **Having Words that Learn to Fit**

(April 14, 2020)

My hardest goal feels too hard to have. Having my hard times makes me want to purposely fail. My experience is that learning something you may make mistakes.

Maybe what I want to say is right there. It is making my happy thoughts known – that is much work. How do thoughts, much too complicated to feel, fit in words? How can my words hold the thoughts that make the work to force themselves into language?



## **Nighttime Meeting**

*(April 27, 2020)*

Understand that my meeting with forgotten problems happens almost every silent night that I can't sleep. Having something caught in my head is the worst meeting. It seems fast – having my mind taken over by haughty laughing people. Back in my head the worst, hard thoughts are there. Back in the recesses of my mind are the things that wear me down in the hovering sounds in my room.

The truth is that it's hard to talk to the world about these things, but too many have maybe suffered like this, having these nights.

## **Having a Happy Mind**

So many things,  
Weak things,  
Make me happy.

Feeling love in my heart,  
Feeling hope in my heart,

Being funny,  
Being understood,

Having mom,  
Having family,

Knowing math,  
Knowing hard words,

Learning to understand Spanish,  
Learning everything I can think through.

Little things,  
Fun things,  
Make me happy.