

When I was asked to share my testimony my first thought was “Oh dear, I do not have a dramatic Damascus road experience to share, and I do not have a testimony”. My wife then reminded me that if I say that I do not have a testimony to share it is as good as saying that God has not saved me.

So here I am to share with you my testimony about how my life would be so different if I did not have Jesus. I would like to do that by recounting how God drew me to Himself, and also by sharing some events in my life where God’s hand has been so clear.

I was born into a Christian family. Well, perhaps a better way to describe us would be to call us a family that went to church. I went with my mother to church twice a year – Christmas & Easter. I have only a vague recollection of this period, but suffice to say I was not serious about Jesus then.

Church did not make a reappearance in my life until I was in Primary Three. My best friend invited me to church. I went with him, and I continued to go week after week. It went on for several years – I went to church but I did not know Jesus. I forget when, but there came a point where I thought that church could not just be about singing some songs and meeting up with friends on a Sunday morning because so many people around me were teaching about this person called Jesus. I started to uncover Jesus and learn about Him, but I still had not been fully transformed by the gospel. I knew about Jesus but I did not fully appreciate the seriousness of sin & my great need for Jesus. This manifested in my view of church and service in church. I was religious about both. I rarely missed a weekend in church, and I was on roster for service almost every week. I excelled in them because I thought that I had to hold up my end of the bargain, and that if I was a good church-goer Jesus would save me. Thankfully God did not allow me to be too comfortable with that view because at some point (and sadly I cannot pinpoint when exactly because it was gradual) something started to happen in my heart. I am so thankful that He softened my heart and He made me see that I had been trying to save myself, which was futile because no one can save himself. Only Jesus can save. God wants to save us all, and He showed that by sending His son to the cross for all of us. God made me see that I am saved by His grace as it says in Romans 3:23-24 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”. That was very comforting because it was as if a huge burden had been lifted, but it was also a little terrifying because I realized that the Son of God Himself had done that for me. How does one respond to that? There is no appropriate response to such a weighty act of love, except to humble myself & to give my life to Him. I had moved from knowing about Jesus to knowing Jesus.

What was also amazing (unknown to me then) was that God was also working in the lives of my family members at the same time. My parents, sister and grandparents all came to accept Jesus. I have no idea

how it happened. I was definitely not praying for them. My grandmother's story is not unique but very amazing. She was a very staunch Buddhist and a head honcho in the temple. She was illiterate and did not read the bible but God was able to touch her. After she accepted Jesus she destroyed the altar in her home, and she went around to all her followers (from her head honcho days), took their altars and told them that now that she had found Jesus they were not allowed to worship another. This grandmother who offered me, her first grandson, to the temple gods is the same grandmother who constantly reminded me, toward the end of her life, that Jesus loves me.

Psalm 139:13-14 "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made". I used to read these wonderful verses to my daughter. But because they are all too familiar I sometimes fail to fully appreciate the lovingness behind them. It took an episode in my life to remind me. My mother was a doctor in a hospital and when she was pregnant with me, she was exposed to something that she should not have been exposed to. Her doctor strongly advised her to terminate the pregnancy. My mother told me that just when she was about to agree to it I kicked! Now, I do not remember hearing the doctor ask her to terminate me nor do I remember kicking, so I am convinced it was God who was working. Praise God for that. I would not be here sharing my testimony otherwise.

Let me share a more recent event in my life. About 10 years ago, I moved to London. New job, new country, new weather. All very exciting. It was to be the best adventure. Life was very good indeed. However, it went pear-shaped very quickly. Adventure became worse nightmare overnight. I am not prepared to go into detail about what happened, but suffice to say it is the most painful thing I have had to experience because the pain was not a physical pain. It was painful because it challenged everything good that I knew about family & friendships. I dulled the pain by doing things I knew I should not have been doing, drinking excessively being one of my favourites. My life spiraled out of control. The things I used to do I stopped doing, with the exception of going to church. I have no idea why I kept going to church but I did, and to cut a long story short I remember reading the bible while I was waiting for the service to begin one Sunday evening. I was reading chapter 6 in the book of Matthew. "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

That day I felt God say He loves me. It was the start of me discovering God's immense love. That day God told me that of course he knows my needs, and He knows that I am in pain. He even cares for the

flowers and the birds so how can He not know. I still do not know why what happened had to happen but it was not important anymore. What was important is that God did not forsake me. Looking at how I was spiraling, I would have left the church if God did not actively pursue me. Isn't that a most wonderful trait of God – that He actively pursues us!

I would like to end by saying that the fact that I am able to stand here today is completely God's doing, but I would like to add that it does not mean that I have it all figured out. I still struggle with Holy living and I need prayer. Thankfully God is committed to His creation and does not give up on us.

To God be the glory!