



This is my personal testimony of how I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ and how good God is to me.

Childhood was not fun. My mother taught me church is an awful place where you are yelled at and threatened you will go to hell. And church goers were needy and gullible. My father taught me all church goers were hypocrites – every one of them.

We never went to church in my entire childhood. There was no support, no encouragement, and definitely no fun or love. It was me against the world. Always in survival mode, even as a child.

When I was 12, I was finally big enough to stand up to my mother and the physical abuse completely stopped. It was at that time that I learned anger was a very effective tool. Anger became my best friend and comrade in arms. Whenever I needed to get something done, I would make sure I was good and angry first.

I didn't have any help when I was a young adult and I didn't know how I was going to make it. So, I got married young and thought I would finally have someone on my side. Didn't turn out that way. Even though I had a husband and two beautiful children, it was still me against the world and found myself continuing in survival mode.

I hardly ever cried. I'd just stuff all the pain and hurt deep inside and carry on.

When I was around 20 years old, A lady had been witnessing to me about the love of God. That was the first time anyone had told me about God being good to us and having a personal relationship with Him. It made me think. Also during this time, I had been having headaches, and decided to make my first prayer.

I made a deal with God that if he got rid of my headaches, I would stop saying I don't believe what's in the bible, but would actually read the bible first and make an education decision. I instantly felt a hand go into the top of my head, grab the pain, and pull the pain out. The pain was gone. I did get a bible and read it cover to cover and studied it. But unfortunately, I was stupid and decided I did not believe it. I found out 20 years

after that that I have a dead brain tumor and a Neurologist said he had never seen anything like this. It is still in my brain today. I believe the Lord healed me that day and I otherwise would have died in my 20's.

After 18 years of a horrible marriage, I finally got my divorce, and it was messy. Soon after my divorce, my 12 year old daughter asked if she could go to church with a friend. I said yes, but don't get involved with that Jesus stuff. But weeks later I realized this church had become important to her, so I wanted to go check it out and see what was going on. I asked my 14 year old son if he would go with me so he could check out the youth service part.

I went to a bible study while my kids were in youth group service. The Holy spirit hit me so hard that day. I just couldn't stop crying. This type of crying was different. It was powerful. I could not deny what I was feeling, so I decided to try attending the church.

Salvation was a process for me. A long gut wrenching process. First the Lord was my councilor and made all my hurts and pains that I had stuffed deep inside come up to the surface and I had to cry it out. Oh that hurt. I cried constantly for over a year. I could feel Jesus crying with me and comforting me, but it was still so hard.

Then, I went through a stage of being angry at God for allowing me to go through all that. I would yell at God and say horrible things to him and call him a liar. He was not loving nor was he good in my eyes, but I still went to church 3 times a week, read my bible and prayed every day. Seemed like I just couldn't get enough. The anger towards God stage lasted over 2 years.

Even though I was so horrible to God, He was always gentle and kind, and oh so patient with me. I saw miracles during that time. I heard God's voice and He led me. The Lord went with me through everything.

I got baptized on May 27, 1996 at Bass Lake during a church outing. It was then that I publicly proclaimed Jesus as my Lord. I had only been going to church for a year and I was still in the crying it out stage. The anger at God stage came shortly after.

After going to church for 3 years or so, I felt that I needed a break. I was a single mother with two teenagers and was having a hard time keeping up. I couldn't quit my fulltime job or quit being a mother, so I decided the only thing I could cut out was attending church.

In prayer, I casually told the Lord that I would still read the bible and pray, but I needed to take a break from attending church. The presence of the Lord strongly came upon me. The Lord asked me: "What if I were there in person? What if I was walking down those isles. Would you go to church then? How would you feel if missed it?". I suddenly felt like I had actually missed it and started sobbing. There was an opportunity to see Jesus in person and I missed it!! I wept for what seemed to be hours. So I told the Lord that I'll keep attending church.

The next Sunday, I went to church. The praise team was singing praise songs as usual. But then something different happened. The pastor came on stage and interrupted them right in the middle of a song. He apologized for the interruption, but the Lord had just instructed him to come ask this question. The Lords asks "What if I were here in person? What if I were walking down these isles? Would you behave differently? No

wait that's not right.... Would you come to church then if otherwise wouldn't?" Then he gave the microphone back and worship continued. After worship, pastor came on stage and said "Jesus wants you to know that He IS here, and He doesn't want you to miss it!". Besides the pandemic, I have never taken a break from attending church.

I cannot pinpoint the moment when I was saved. There was no grand gesture or formality. For several years I did not feel a burden of needing forgiveness of my sins. When you're a victim and in survival mode, you don't have the luxury of thinking about sinning. You're just surviving. But I definitely did repent from a life of anger to a life of following Jesus.

Once life became more normal and I was finally out of the survival mode, I did start noticing my sins and I have to ask Jesus to forgive me often.

Until recently, I wasn't able to see the Lord in my childhood or marriage. I didn't believe he was with me during all those difficult (me against the world) years. But now I can see it was his helping hand that got me through it.

He gave me high moral values (even though no one around me had). So high, that it drove my family and friends crazy. They would keep things from me because they knew I wouldn't like it. Sure, when I was young, I did suffer from peer pressure and did things with my friends that I would never do alone and that I knew were not right. But I never let that go too far. These high moral values kept me safe.

Also, he gave me strength not to become an addict. People with addictions were also all around me, but I wasn't tempted by that at all. He also kept me from having suicidal thoughts. Even though life was so awful, suicide never entered my mind.

And even though I did not have a clue how to raise children and all the things my kids had to endure, my grown children are happily married and are wonderful parents; living a beautiful life. I give God all the credit for that.

To conclude: I follow the Lord wherever he leads me. There is now a beautiful peace inside me. I know now that he is a good father, a good councilor, and great friend and comforter. And most of all; Jesus is my lord and my savior.