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## My Testimony of Salvation in Christ

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Despite the constant fluid nature of knowing and following my Saviour, there are many beautiful moments that I return to as key- stones in my ever- growing foundation of faith. These moments represent the story of my life in Christ, one that is ever-changing and expanding as I strive to know God more and pursue his plans for my life. I have been blessed with the supportive fellowship of other believers throughout my entire life. My home was always a safe place for me to explore and question what a life of faith in Jesus should look like and it did not take long for me to desire the gift of mercy that God offers everyone.

When I was only four years old my journey changed from being a creation of God to being adopted into his family. Through a long conversation with my mother about God’s love for every person on the planet, I chose to accept that that I could not repair the gap sin had placed between God and myself with any of my own actions and that Christ had died for my sins and risen so that I might live a life in relationship with Him. My earliest years were not free of pain, but the Lord who promises to always be by our side walked with me and was very real to me. I continued to grow in the grace of the Lord and on Easter of my 11th year I stood before my church family to announce my love for my Saviour and my lifelong commitment to follow Him.

When I was a young teen my study and understanding of the Lord was shaken by external influences. My father had been an ordained Baptist youth minister for much of my life and I began to uncover the hidden pains facing our world as he counselled others in our home. I also saw the ways Satan tried to attack the fabric of our church through hurting people. My father, as well as other strong men and woman of God came alongside and taught me that I cannot rely on the faith of others to carry my own walk with Jesus and I have to look to Christ as my example in all things. God began teaching me how to see the world as He sees it and filter the messages I allow inside my heart.

I saw God move in many exciting ways throughout my life. One of my most vivid encounters I had with the Holy Spirit came during my 16th year when I was working at a Christian camp. I met God in the silence of prayer and worship and he humbled me and brought me to my knees. I can still remember the feeling of walking so close to my Heavenly Father during that summer, and the freedom of giving up pain I was carrying heart. I always desire and reflect that same growth and openness to God’s leading even today as I live my life.

I have always been filled with a passion, that I know is from the Lord, to live in the fullness of his love and share it with others. I chose to use my time serving God in every talent He has given me both at church and in other areas of my life. I took on ministry leadership positions from the age of 11 and have since led Pioneer Clubs, Awana Clubs, Jr. and Sr. youth Groups, nursery and children’s church ministries, teaching, leading music for kids/teens/adults, children and youth curriculum selection, summer child and youth staff for various churches, DVBS leadership, Mission Trip planning and leadership, worked with outreach programs to clergy families and staff, worked with our Baptist Convention to organize multi-provincial ministries, performed community outreach on a weekly basis, assisted with marriage conferences and so much more. Outside of the church I have chosen to work for local Christian camps as Senior staff and chosen jobs in the secular context that allow me to shine a light for Christ to a hurting world. In all of my leadership positions I learned the importance of feeding my own fire for Christ and seeking after God in all things. God calls us to live a life of purpose and passion; stagnant living is not what He desires for us. I choose to take any opportunity to go outside my comfort zone and learn more about what God is doing/how He can use us in His world. One of these many experiences was a Missions Trip to El Salvador in 12th grade. This experience ignited a passion within me to fight alongside the poor and hurting that God so clearly calls us to serve in His Word.

One of the many positions I have had outside of a Christian context was working as a proctor at my university. My years living in residence illuminated the pain of our world to me in ways I would never have anticipated. So many hurting people came to me looking for answers and I learned to be brave and listen to God’s leading in very difficult times. One of my residents lost her life to a struggle with alcoholism and depression and I learned how dark Satan’s attack on God’s creation can really be.

One of my greatest blessings in my adult life is my husband of two years, Stephen. We met at a Christian camp when we were 15 years old and bonded over our mutual experience of growing up with a Baptist pastor as a father. My husband inspires me to live closer to our Saviour and we see our marriage as a direct reflection to our world of the love Christ shows the Church. In the years we have been married we have taken on younger couples and youth to mentor in various ways. We too, have been mentored by older brothers and sisters in Christ and have gleaned the blessings from this experience.

In my lifetime I have been challenged in many ways by the words of others who do not understand the faith I hold so close. Often people assume my life is actively influenced by my upbringing, but to me it is my own faith, alive and growing outside of any other human influence. The part many of these people fail to see is the clear movement of my heavenly father in the world around us. I have seen Him save many, young and old, heal broken lives and hearts, free those who were captive to sin, and walk beside those who are hurting and seeking. God is not a song I sing on Sundays or a book I read at bible study but a living, eternal, loving tripartite being who offers us each His mercy and the fullness of life through His son Jesus Christ.

As I journey into this next phase of my life I long to share my passion for the Lord with the next generation, to show them the amazing love of their heavenly father as it is recorded in His Word, and to train them to passionately live for Him and disciple others in His name. I believe even my career must be infused with the joy and courage that only comes from God, and through my life others may desire God’s wonderful gift just as I did so many years ago.