

My bedroom became Sunday School classroom and children's church room; my brothers' bedroom, the nursery; my parents' room, another Sunday School room. Weekend cleaning ensured that the house would look its best every Sunday. I heard frequent sermons concerning a place called Heaven and another bad place called Hell. When youth activities were held at our home, I sat in one of the pews that filled our living room and listened to the preaching. Soon I began realizing that the messages I heard applied not only to the big people around me, but also to myself.

FEARS

Back in our duplex, before we had moved to the farmhouse, my second-story bedroom window had overlooked the neighbor's yard, where a large light illuminated a garage. Somehow I connected that light to the idea that Jesus was coming back.

I knew the Bible taught that Jesus would return to earth and take His children home with Him. It would happen quickly: "*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we [believers] shall be changed*" (I Corinthians 15:52). I knew I was not God's child and was frightened by the knowledge of Christ's return, for I did not want to be left behind. When I saw that light, I'd hide under my covers, hoping to block out the reality that Jesus was returning and I wasn't prepared, for I did not yet know Him.

Romans 3:10-12 states of all humankind, "*As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no not one.*" Even though I tried to be good, I knew I could never reach God's standard, for although I was but a little child, I knew I was "not righteous."

QUESTIONS

As the weeks passed, I began thinking to myself as I lay awake in bed, "Why did Jesus come to earth for me?" "What does it all mean?" I had to find out. I had to have answers; I had to know why He was nailed to a cross and why His coming to earth was so important that my parents were always talking about it. Down the steps I went that cold November, night after night, over the course of about three weeks, to my dad's study, to ask questions. And he patiently answered them, one by one.

"Why did Jesus come to earth?" I asked him.

"Because you are a sinner," he replied. "Do you know what sin is?"

"Yes, all the bad things we do."

Right. God hates lying and disobedience. Pride is something He despises."

I nodded. I was certainly guilty.

"But why did Jesus come to earth?" I wanted to know.

"Because He is God. As God, He is perfect and has never did anything wrong. So He never had to die. But God, His Father, sent Him to die for you. He loved you that much." He taught me that God was a Spirit, one God in three personal distinctions: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

One night I asked, "Why do people go to hell?"

"Because they don't trust Jesus to save them from their sins."

I learned that salvation was not by works—no one could ever do anything to measure up to God's standard as found in Matthew 5:48: "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*" So one night I asked, "How can I be saved [literally, 'delivered' from the penalty of death and eternal punishment in Hell]?"

"You need to turn from your way and depend on Jesus as the One Who can save you from sin," my dad explained. "The Bible says, '*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*' Do you believe that if you came

to Jesus in faith He would deliver you from your sin?"

"Maybe," I replied.

"Then you need faith, Heather. God can give you that faith to believe," my dad said. This faith, he explained, was not just something one knew in his head—that Jesus had come to earth and died on a cross. No, it was placing my complete dependence on Jesus Christ to take away my sin, sin which He paid for when He died on the cross.

EMBRACING CHRIST

Finally I was ready. "Mom," I said, as she tucked me into bed one night near Thanksgiving, "I want to be saved."

"Are you sure you understand?" Mom wanted to know.

I nodded my head, but she explained in detail once again my problem of sin, its penalty—eternal death in Hell, Christ's payment when He died on the cross, and the promise of eternal life that would be mine if I looked in faith to Christ to save me from my sin.

That night, I put my dependence on the Jesus Christ, God's perfect Son, Who had died for my sins. Having been convinced of my own sinfulness ("*The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?*"—Jeremiah 17:9), I turned from my sin of unbelief to Jesus Christ, knowing He would deliver me from all my sin as well as from the punishment I deserved for those sins—eternal Hell. When Christ had died on that cross, He paid the price for every lie I had told, for every instance of disobedience, and for every sin I would ever commit. What's more, He conquered death when, three days later, He rose from the grave for me! What a wonderful truth!

In coming to Christ, I received the precious gift of eternal life and began a relationship with Jesus that will continue until I get to Heaven. The Bible says, "*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*" (John 17:3). How wonderful to be

delivered from sin and to have a daily, vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ, who is the *“Friend that sticketh closer than a brother”* (Proverbs 18:24). I now know that, should Jesus Christ return today, I would be with Him forever. I do not need to fear death or eternity, for I am ready to meet God. Like the psalmist I can say, *“I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears”* (Psalm 34:4).

Even as a child, I wanted to tell others of what Christ had done for me. How grateful I am that Christ delivered me from sin’s bondage! Because of Christ, I remained pure before my wedding day, have never touched a drop of alcohol or any drug, and have been able to serve God with my life, dedicating my time since college graduation to training young people in a Christian school. *“If any man be in Christ,”* 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *“he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Are you confident that, should you die today, you also would have eternal life? You can know for yourself, because 1 John 5:13 promises that you *“may know that ye have eternal life.”* You may be religious, but Christ’s words to a very religious ruler were these: *“Ye must be born again”* (John 3:3). You may be trusting your good deeds to get you to Heaven; but Jesus gave us God’s standard in Matthew 5:48, when He said, *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.”* Regardless of how “good” you may appear to others, your heart is corrupted by sin. In fact, Isaiah 64:6 says, *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”* No matter how righteous you may consider yourself, see God’s standard and your *“fall[ing] short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23).

Not only do we miserably fail when compared to God’s righteousness, but also we deserve the penalty He has prepared for sin, as

stated in Romans 6:23a, *“For the wages of sin is death.”* Revelation 21:8 clarifies the extent of this death: *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”* While you deserve this penalty, God, in love, sent Jesus to offer you eternal life.

Christ Alone satisfies God’s standard of perfection, for He was made *“to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”* (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus Christ was completely human and completely Divine; only He could break the curse of death put on humans by Adam’s sin. First Corinthians 5:22 puts it this way: *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”*

As I did, you too can come to this Christ, who died for you, rose again, and lives today at the right hand of God. You can put your complete dependence upon Him. Acts 17:30 explains that God is commanding *“all men everywhere to repent”*—or turn from their sin—to Jesus Christ. In the words of Isaiah 45:22, *“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”* Why not turn from your sin to this living Savior and embrace His gift of eternal life today?

Mukwonago Baptist Church

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
Sunday 10:30 a.m. Morning Service
Sunday 6:30 p.m. Evening Service
Wednesday 7:00 p.m. Prayer Service
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If you would like to hear more about the Savior that changed Heather’s life, or about the overwhelming evidence for the Bible, visit: faithsaves.net



HE DELIVERED ME FROM ALL MY FEARS

By Heather Ross

A PREACHER’S KID

“Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so . . .”

Millions of children in Sunday Schools throughout the world sing the beloved words to this Gospel song and have done so for over one hundred years. I was one such little child. My parents met while attending Bible college and married when my dad was in seminary preparing to become a preacher. Later, they moved to the small town of Mukwonago, Wisconsin, where my dad began a Bible-preaching church, meeting first in a Savings and Loan Building and next in a funeral home. As a girl of three, I remember moving into a large farmhouse, which dually functioned as our home and a church building for over three years until the church was able to move to its own location.