



NATALIE'S TESTIMONY

What great joy it is, to have this wonderful opportunity to testify the marvellous and miraculous work that God did to draw me out of the darkness and deceptions of this world and into the warm light of Jesus Christ our Saviour. I strongly believe that what happened to me 3 years ago was no coincidence; it was a perfect plan by Christ our Lord to reconcile me back to the Creator, Jehovah God.

Well, a little bit about my background first. I was born and raised in a Catholic home. As a result, nearly every Sunday we went to church whereby I would say the same prayer, take the Eucharist, sing songs to Mary and all the other chores I felt I must do. I would drag my feet to church and always felt like I had to go otherwise God would be angry with me. However with all of this, I always had a love for Jesus. I knew He died for me but never understood why. According to my mum and photos I was baptised at the age of 1. For this reason, I grew up having a false hope about my salvation as I believed that the sacraments of the Catholic church would give me a license into heaven. Furthermore, I grew up to believe that sin was excused by the death of Christ and so to pay Him back, I could go to church and try being good. With this kind of attitude, I got myself into a mess! I immersed myself into the world and its sin. I was truly on the road to hell and was serving another god- the world's god being the devil. My life as a catholic allowed me to believe that being born in a 'Christian' home and believing that God existed was enough. Sadly this was a lie as I had no relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord nor was I born again. Satan himself believes in God, so having a belief of the existence of God (alone) is not enough.

In 2007, I had a friend who attended the Assyrian church of East. I was invited to come and so I did!! Now the ideology of this church is very similar to Catholics except the church looked very different. It was a simple set out with

no idols or paintings. They had an alter which was covered with a curtain and could only be seen at certain times of the service. Anyhow the first time I walked in I realised a difference; I just thought to myself “why?”, “how could people call themselves Christian but be so different to Catholics?” This was a time where God began His work. He began to stir questions in my heart which encouraged me to seek especially when the issue of Mary was brought up. Now I loved Mary and I use to pray to her so I was very offended when the priest said “we shouldn’t worship Mary”. I remember thinking “how dare he tell me Mary is not to be worshiped” and so (due to my stubbornness), I wanted to prove this priest wrong. So now I had a mission!! That was to read the bible and show this priest the truth. Well in fact, I began to dig my own hole. Apart from the search for Mary I found a mirror which highlighted all my sin and displayed God’s wrath for sin. At the same time, I realised God’s grace through His death and His love for me. I remember crying like a child would because I realised I was dealing with a Holy God and I was this filthy wretch standing before Him. This was a time of great confusion, fear and struggle as I realised that I may have been living under a lie. The picture or idea I had of Jesus as a catholic was not the Jesus I was reading. There was no emphasis on repentance and sacrifice in the Catholic church. It was all about doing good works and deeds to pay your way in heaven. What heresy and false doctrine that was! That is NOT the God of the bible. Now I wasn’t saved at this point. I just started to understand things more. God used this time because another event was about to take place.

During this time I spent most of my time reading the bible at home. My family, especially my mother witnessed this and she was terrified as she didn’t know what I was getting into. She thought I was in a cult and displayed her sad and fearful emotions to me, which at times made me feel guilty of what I was doing. Satan didn’t win here because I kept reading. I fell in love with God’s word and I really felt in my heart that something so real was blessing me. Reading His word gave me such great peace and joy, thus I knew that I had to continue seeking.

I stopped talking to this friend from the Assyrian church and in 2008 I met someone else at uni who was a born again believer and knew a fair bit about the bible. We had some great talks and more was shown to me about God, His

Word and how I fit in there. Because he couldn't answer all my questions he introduced me to his parents who truly love the Lord. God delivered these parents to me as they enhanced my knowledge of the true Christ found in the bible. During this time I learnt so much, especially about Christ and how His death was a ransom for me. That through His blood I am saved and that there was nothing I could do to earn salvation. It was a walk in pure faith and trust in Him and that's what I fell in love with!!! Here I realised that the God I knew growing up as a catholic was not the God of the bible. It was at this point whereby the sirens started going off in my heart and its noise was so piecing it didn't leave me. I treated my soul and life as an emergency- I needed Him and wanted Him. I realised the urgency to repent and choose a life with and for God. I realised that it is the eternal aspects of life that matters and that was my soul. I knew that my life was not right with God and so if I had died in my sin, I would be separated from God eternally and that was not His will for me. I willingly chose to accept life with Him eternally, not because I feared hell but because I have a Father that I belong to and a Father that loves me so much that He sent His only begotten Son to take the penalty that I deserve and that is death. I was purely drawn by His love for me! At that point I was saved and from here God opened my eyes to discern more on things and I began to hate sin and all that was part of my old self. Several months later I chose to get baptised.

Well I can go on for another day about how God guided and helped but to cut it short, after being baptised I still struggled!! Satan really hated the choices I made; I started to doubt my salvation, my dad warned me to not read the bible under his roof, mum thought I was in a cult, I was persecuted at work and I left many worldly friends. However with all this, I stood firm by God's strength (and only through His strength) and learned to only love Him more. I didn't care about what anyone thought. After all I knew that we are only passing through this earth for my citizenship is in Heaven, so I was and still am after one goal and that is to be a servant for my God.

Since I don't believe that this is a story (as there is no end), God is still moulding me and working in my life every day. I am always in need of Him as I am not perfect. But I am so glad I have come out of this dark world- I always look back and think "was that really me"? but the power of God only makes

Him more real to me because I never imagined to be here at this point with such goals. Our Lord Jesus Christ has not only blessed me but has filled me with love, peace, hope and assurance.

I would just like to leave off with one verse that I love and which has always stayed with me; Psalm 84:10 *“For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness”*. Surely, just one day with the Lord is so much better than a thousand days elsewhere. When my mum questions why I sit and read so much in my room and go to church all the time, or my sisters ask me why I don't hang out with my old friends, I just always pray that they would know the joy I feel in spending time with God and His people. And if your reading this and haven't received the Lord Jesus Christ as your saviour, I beg you to seek Him with all your heart and come to the saving knowledge that He loves you so much and can offer you eternal life if you truly accept His perfect gift. There is one thing that God cannot do and that is lie;

Matthew 7: 7-8 *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

Come to Him; it changed my life dramatically and He can change yours.....
Natalie