



Volume 10, No. 2, February, 2022



Tell Me the Story of Jesus

*Tell me the story of Jesus,
Write on my heart ev'ry word;
Tell me the story most precious,
Sweetest that ever was heard;
Tell how the angels in chorus,
Sang as they welcomed His birth:
"Glory to God in the highest!
Peace and good tidings on earth."*

*Fasting alone in the desert,
Tell of the days that are passed,
How for our sins He was tempted,
Yet was triumphant at last;
Tell of the years of His labor,
Tell of the sorrow He bore,
He was despised and afflicted,
Homeless, rejected and poor:*

*Tell of the cross where they nailed Him,
Writhing in anguish and pain;
Tell of the grave where they laid Him,
Tell how He liveth again.
Love, in that story so tender,
Clearer than ever I see;
Stay, let me weep while you whisper,
"Love paid the ransom for me."*

Refrain:
*Tell me the story of Jesus,
Write on my heart ev'ry word:*

DS:
*Tell me the story most precious,
Sweetest that ever was heard.*

WORDS: *Fanny J. Crosby (w. 1880)*
MUSIC: *John R. Sweeney (w. 1880)*



BORN CATHOLIC BUT CHOSE CHRIST

I was raised in a large Catholic family, the oldest of eight children. I loved my family, and I loved being a strong Catholic. My parents were happy that I was in school to become an Army nurse. But when I was baptized into Christ at age 21, my mother was adamant: "I no longer have a daughter named Cathy, your mother is now Eva." My fiancé was equally adamant when he broke up with me: "I cannot live like you are trying to live as a Christian." As heartbroken as I was, I knew that choosing Christ, following Jesus, was worth it all.

When I was a young girl, I remember telling God that I wanted to live for him. I said the rosary (recitation of the Lord's Prayer and prayers to Mary) each night with my family. I followed all the Catholic teachings as carefully as I could and with all my heart. I went to Catechism classes, went to Catholic school, and always went to mass each week and often during the week. My mother was an especially strong Catholic, lighting candles in front of the statue of Mary, mother of Jesus, and to other statues of "saints." I followed in her footsteps. This was not just "religion" for me. It was my life.

My parents had both served in the Air Force during the Korean War. My Dad was a fighter pilot, and my Mom was a nurse. So, in my senior year of high school, I was thrilled to be accepted into the Army Nursing program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC with 120 other students from all over the USA. During my junior year of college, the Army nurses who taught us were diligent. Work and school were challenging. All the students complained, except for one young woman, Eva, who was to become my best friend.

Eva was quiet and gentle, and she talked slowly - the opposite of me! I saw things that were different in her: a deep confidence in God, peace in the midst of overwhelming workloads, and she went to church when everyone else was madly studying. Eva asked me to come to a weekly Bible study in her dorm room, and I refused her 4 or 5 times in a row. Finally, the last time she was to

This Is My Story

ask me, I ran out of excuses, and I attended. I was truly amazed at what I saw during that hour. These young women knew their Bible! I never had a Bible until I was 18 and had not read it personally. These women prayed their own prayers, not rote prayers and it seemed like Jesus was their best friend! I wanted to know Jesus like that! When Eva asked me for a personal Bible study during our short lunch breaks, I eagerly accepted.

Eva and I studied the Bible for three months, and my heart was being convicted by God's Word. I was also able to ask questions of an ex-Catholic nun who attended the church with Eva. Then I went to a priest and asked him to show me where infant baptism was in the Bible. I believed he would show me chapter and verse in the Bible, like Eva always did. But he could only share about history, tradition, and obeying the Pope's rules. I was sad and emotionally torn, but I knew that day that I must make a choice. Would I love and obey Jesus and God's word, or would I love and obey the teachings of men? My eternal destination depended on this answer!

I told Eva that I wanted to be baptized but wanted to talk to my parents first at Christmas time, in Phoenix, AZ. I also told her that I knew my parents would disown me if I obeyed the Bible instead of my Catholic faith; but I wanted to obey God and His Word, no matter the cost. Eva prayed a lot for me! My parents were shocked and begged me to believe what the nuns and priests had taught me. I truly wanted my parents' input, so I also asked them to show me what the Bible teaches about infant baptism—but they could not. That was heartbreaking for me, but it helped me tremendously in my decision to follow only Jesus and God's Word.

So, when I returned to Washington DC, I immediately went to a Friday night college devotional, determined that I would not leave the church until they baptized me!



On January 7, 1977 at 10 pm (45 years ago), I was baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of my sins and received God's gift

of His Holy Spirit. I have never looked back or regretted my decision to obey Jesus and be His disciple. The cost was great, losing my family (for a while) and losing my fiancé (forever), but God's Word comforted me and has been fulfilled: "Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much...along with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life." I am so blessed!

Cathy Cassidy, Rolla, Missouri



I can remember as a small child attending a very rural church in Northwest Arkansas with my mother. I do not remember my dad ever attending services with us during that time. When I was nine, we moved to Southern Missouri, and there was no Church of Christ in the town where we lived. Apparently, my mother did not entertain the idea of attending any other form of worship, so we did not attend any services at all.

When I was thirteen, I met a girl who ultimately became my lifelong best friend. She attended a small country Methodist church. Imogene invited me to their active youth group, and I went. It was a lot of fun, and I started attending regularly. One week there was a gospel meeting, and I went with Imogene. I remember during the "altar call" the preacher left the pulpit and came directly to me and tried to get me to respond. For some reason unknown to me, I refused. It just didn't feel right, and I was very shy. He embarrassed me. Imogene did not respond either.

That encounter made me aware that I probably needed to explore my relationship with God, but for some reason the Methodist ideas did not make sense to me.

In the meantime, a new preacher came to our town. He rented a very old house in town. He lived in some of the rooms and the church met in the living room/dining room area. That preacher came to visit my mother. I still don't know how he knew she was a member, but he was diligent. Mother promised to attend, at least for a few meetings.

When it came time to go, she asked me and my brother to go with her. I did not want to. I was not comfortable with the Methodist church, but at least I knew Imogene and her sister there. Mother gently pleaded and I agreed. That first visit did not impress me at all. It wasn't even a "real" church. It was a house, and they didn't even have a piano. What was up with that, anyway? I couldn't carry a tune, but that piano sure would have helped drown out my squeaks. I did not want to go back.

Mom talked to me on the way home and said, "Just go with me for a month. If you don't want to go after that, you don't have to, but please go just a month." I agreed.

The bible class was led by a very godly man who knew he was dealing with bible illiterates, and he started with the plan of salvation. He went right on to explain the need to become a worker, not just an observer. The preacher preached on basics including the use of instrumental

music. It didn't hurt that he was single and very attractive, even though he was much too old for me. I hung on every word. Before the end of the month, I knew what I needed to do. I responded to the invitation, and we drove 25 miles to the nearest baptistry, since it was the middle of December.

That was the winter of my junior year of high school. At the end of my senior year, I moved to Kansas City to find a job. I ended up at the Brush Creek Church of Christ, and they immediately handed me a teacher's manual and set me to teaching a toddler bible class. I suddenly had to learn how to teach, since I had never attended classes as a child. May I interject here, don't do that to your new converts! Helping to teach a class is a great learning experience, but don't throw people into the deep end all alone like that! I have talked to many women who experienced that same situation, and it is terrifying, and maybe even enough to drive some people away.

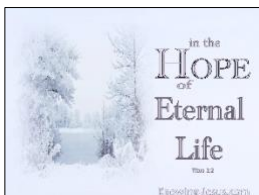
At any rate, I did teach, and eventually grew enough to be able to teach others how to teach. I met my husband at Brush Creek, and through the years we have been married, he has served as a deacon in more than one congregation. He also served as an elder for thirteen years before we moved to Louisiana. I have taught children's classes, ladies' classes, spoken at ladies' days, and written articles for Christian Woman magazine and several newsletters such as this one. I help produce and distribute two other newsletters, one here in the United States and one out of Uganda. I truly hope to wear out rather than rust out before I die.

Wilburta Arrowood, Napoleanville, Louisiana



FROM HOPELESSNESS TO GREAT HOPE

Hope in eternal life in heaven is what Christianity is all about. Without that one vital belief, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:19, "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men." The world is filled with hopelessness, but it doesn't need to be. Satan blinds the eyes to that hope. If others only knew what we as Christians know by faith and what has taken me a lifetime to learn! Psalm 25:4-5 says, "Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are my God and Savior, and my hope is in you all day long."



This is my own personal story; a story that only in the recent past have I been able to talk about and share. The Lord brought me from hopelessness to great hope,

peace, and contentment. This is the first time I have related my whole story. Take it from me, there *is* a great light at the end of that long, dark tunnel.

From the time I was a young teenager, I felt unloved. I thought my parents loved me, but it was never spoken out loud. When I started high school, I was an outsider because of where I lived (the wrong side of the tracks, as they say). I had one good friend through those four years. She was also an outsider and had recently lost her father, so she was going through much grief. Those four years were very difficult for both of us. During my last year of school, I met someone much older than me, and flattery and infatuation made me accept his invitation to date. Being very young and naïve, I had no idea what was in store for me—something that would change my life forever. Because of circumstances beyond my control, I was forced to marry.

During the first years of marriage, my husband continued to live his single lifestyle as though he had no family and only came "home" when it suited him. During that time, I pretended all was well and struggled to hold on to my faith, raising my children to the best of my ability in the Lord. I knew intellectually that God was there, and I believed His word; but I was blind to Him working in my life. All I could feel was the wrath of God for sinners because that was all I heard growing up. That's a very fearful life to live.

No one ever knew the circumstances that preceded that loveless marriage. I was too young and naïve to realize what was happening to me and then too ashamed to ever tell anyone. I lived a life of silent guilt and torment that took me into a deep depression. Through God's grace, I was brought into contact with an extremely competent Christian psychologist. I didn't know much about God's grace at that time, but still tried to hold on to my faith. For two years, with gentle and biblical help, he brought me out of the deep dark hole I was in and helped me to overcome the guilt and shame I had felt for years.

I was first baptized when I was 15 because others were doing it. I just got wet. In my late twenties, I began my own personal study of God's word to see if what my parents taught me was true. At that time, I began to develop my own faith. Sometime during that time, my mom felt the need to be "rebaptized," so I went with her and was rebaptized also. I still didn't completely grasp the connection between baptism and the gospel: the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. It was many years later that I came to fully

understand the reason that baptism is essential is for salvation. Then I obeyed the gospel, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. For the first time in my life, I felt completely forgiven and free.

In 1975, my mother became very ill with cancer. She fought hard for seven years but died at the age of 56. During that time, my mom and I became best friends. I took care of her as well as I could. When she died, the grief was a heavy burden. That was one of the reasons I went into a deep depression. Whether right or wrong, I decided to get a divorce in 2004. I had already lost all feeling for him many years before, but it was still the hardest thing I ever did.

The Lord led me to where I am now. He taught me to be content. He took away all desire to acquire material things. "Godliness with contentment is great gain," 1 Timothy 6:6. He gave me the peace that "passes all understanding" in my soul, Philippians 4:7. He taught me to trust Him completely. When I look back, I see His guidance through all the difficult years. I was too mired to see it at the time. He was bringing me to where I am now, both physically and spiritually. I trust Him completely and know that whatever happens, good or bad, my life is His. My only desire now is to serve Him and look forward to heaven!

Mary Anna Melton, Rolla, Missouri



DON'T BE AFRAID TO SEEK THE LOST

We all have our own special and unique stories. It could be how we met our spouse, the births of our children, something job related – there are many situations where we have our own special story. For Christians, one of those special stories should be about our conversion – our walk with God. I want to share mine.

First, I have to admit that my husband, Larry, and I had no interest in church whatsoever. But what do you do when someone like Junior Mace calls and wants to come and visit? You know what he wants to talk about, but you don't want to say no. So, we let them come, but we made it clear we were not interested.

At the time, Larry was working nights so his sister, Mary Anna, invited the kids and me to church. Again, how can you say no to your sister-in-law? So, my journey began. It took me about 6 months of attending services to turn my life around, repent, and be baptized. Larry, however, was still not interested.

Lloyd and Evelyn Waite did follow up studies with me. Lloyd, bless his heart, was very patient with Larry and his disinterest (which was evident). Larry would go out to chop wood while we studied – Lloyd would go out to help and "wait him out." Eventually, Larry would sit in on the studies. Before long, he was filling out the lessons in advance. Before long, he was truly interested. It got to where before our studies, I would sing the Oak Ridge Boys song, "Why Not Tonight," to him in regards to his baptism. At that time, I didn't know the invitation song with the same name. Eventually, he stepped forward on a Wednesday night, and we've been going strong ever since.

We were blessed to have a strong congregation when we began our Christian walk. We were able to learn and grow as a result. We were encouraged to step out of our comfort zone and try new things. My passion has always been with ladies activities and serving. Larry was able to "get his feet wet" by bringing lessons on occasion on Sunday evenings. He began filling in at other congregations when they needed a speaker. That led to filling in when a congregation didn't have a full-time minister, which then led to him being a full-time minister in Owensville. That was 15 years ago! We have been truly blessed.



Never underestimate or be afraid to call on someone who makes it clear they are not interested. And don't be afraid to invite someone who isn't interested. You never know where it might lead!

Vicki Harris, Owensville, Missouri



Sunrise is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. Sunrise is printed and distributed (primarily via email) to individuals and congregations around the country. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveandlove.org>. Click on the Resources tab, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

