

From Tragedy to Triumph

A tragedy in the night brought this rebellious preacher's son face to face with his need for salvation.

By Nick Segres

God's power can rescue a preacher's son who goes bad. I know, because that is what happened to me! My parents had reared me in a Christian home, and carefully taught me the right way to go. The Bible was an open book in our home, and attendance at Sunday school and church was required. However, though I knew Jesus had died on Calvary so we can be forgiven, I had never received a born-again experience. Somehow I turned away from God's call to my heart.



Growing into my teen-age years, I began acquiring bad habits. Drinking, smoking, stealing, and gambling all became a part of my life. Though I hardened my heart, I still had no doubt that God was real. He proved that to me one night in an unmistakable way. I had my mind made up to attend a dance that evening, but to get there I had to walk past the church where special revival services were being held. As I came near the church building, I could hear people inside singing the praises of God. Somehow the Lord laid it on my heart that I should go in, rather than continue on to the dance. But even as these thoughts went through my mind, I went on down the road. I looked up at the sky and told God, "If You want me to go to church tonight, let that star fall." I raised my hand and pointed out a bright star. As I brought down my hand, that star fell! At that moment I knew God was real, and that He had heard my prayer. Fear struck my heart, and I turned around and started back toward the church. The devil wasn't going to let me go that easily, though, and some friends drove by on their way to the dance. When they stopped and invited me to go with them, I didn't have the courage to tell them no. I went to the dance.

On my own!

God still dealt with me. I spent some time in the military. Then, after receiving my discharge, I rented an apartment in a neighbouring city. Living by myself, I was my own boss at last. I could do my own thing and live like I wanted to. My dad had ruled his house, and we couldn't come in drunk, smoke around the yard, or anything like that. While I was in the service, the army enforced their rules—but now there was no one to order me.

I made new friends. Evenings and weekends we spent having a good time—at least, that is what we called it. I would stay up all night, getting back early in the morning with just enough time to change clothes and go to work. Soon I became involved in stealing. At the plant where I was a shipping clerk, I could get things out the door without anyone's noticing. Oh, how far I had drifted from my Christian training!

A tragedy unfolds

Thank God for His faithfulness. He brought me up short one day, and made me realize that I was taking a chance with eternity. On that Friday afternoon, a friend and I started talking while on the job about how we're going to live after we were married. My friend said he supposed he would cheat on his wife some and probably still wouldn't live a good life. My feeling was different. I told him that when I

married, my life was going to change. Down in my heart I really meant what I said, and I believe God saw that purpose. We talked for a while longer and then left work and decided to put in time working on his car. By the time we got to the car, a lightning storm was coming up. We pushed the car under a tree to keep the rain off us, and we raised the hood against a clothesline connected to the tree. I was squatting against the tree trying to stay dry, when the mechanic with us said he needed a flashlight. The nearest store was a mile down the road, but I decided to go.

Just as I was almost back to the car, lightning hit. The current raced down the tree to the clothesline and across to the car. My friend was leaning on the car—where I had been just a short time earlier—and he fell to the ground, unconscious. In panic, we picked him up and rushed him to the other car. Heading for the hospital, I crouched in the back seat and gave him artificial respiration, trying to keep him alive.

The nightmare wasn't over yet. We were driving fast through the pouring rain, and water was accumulating on the highway. Suddenly, the car went into a spin. As we slid around, the back door flew open and the man lying on the seat started to slide out. I reached to grab him, and then I was falling too. Somehow, I caught the handle of the door and managed to hold us both in as the car spun crazily in circles.

When we were finally on the road, we went on to the hospital. But we were too late; my friend died.

God dealt with my heart

As I went home that night, God talked to me. He asked, “If it had been you, where would your soul spend eternity?” I knew the answer. Something had to be done about my soul. I went home and then went to church, but the people were away at a convention in Century, Florida. Oh, how I wanted them to hurry home so I would have someone to pray with me! After a whole long week, they came back. The first meeting was on a Wednesday night. I was there, and when the meeting was over, I prayed. I repented of all the sins I had committed, and I asked forgiveness for turning my back on God for so long. He didn't reject me the way I had Him. He saved me! What peace and joy came into my heart?

The Lord gave me the wonderful second experience of sanctification, and later He baptized me with the Holy Ghost and fire. Since then, I have been living on the victory side. Sometimes it is on the mountain and sometimes in the valley, but it is triumphing wherever! How thankful I am to be a child of the King.

Nick Segres began preaching in 1974, and pastored Apostolic Faith churches in Winfield, Kansas and Aiken, South Carolina, before his decease in May, 1995.