

WHY WE NEED A SAVIOR

MAN

GOD

IN THE BEGINNING . . . The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were created by God and enjoyed perfect fellowship with Him. They were without sin and lived peacefully in a beautiful garden that supplied all their needs. God gave them only one rule, which was not to eat the fruit of a particular tree. However, Satan tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit by saying it would benefit them. They ate it, and that act of disobedience against God was the first sin. It severed Adam's and Eve's relationships with God because He is holy and cannot have fellowship with evil.

MAN

SIN

GOD

OUR CONDITION TODAY . . . Since we are all Adam's descendants, every child in the world has been born with his fallen nature. Instead of coming into the world desiring to do right, we are all born with an inclination toward sin and evil. Proof of this natural downward tendency is abundantly evident anywhere human beings are found. Our sin results in tremendous pain, sorrow, and suffering. The consequences of sin reach far beyond this life because those who reject God and die in a sinful state will go to Hell and be separated from God eternally.

MAN

JESUS

GOD

GOD'S PLAN . . . God wants to remove sin from our lives so that we can have a relationship with Him and spend eternity in Heaven. However, the penalty for sin is death, and that penalty must be paid. Out of His great love for us, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. Jesus lived as a man and died in our place for our sins. Because of that, if we follow the steps that God has laid out in the Bible, our sins can be forgiven. God will change our desires and give us power to live without sin so we can enjoy eternal life with Him in Heaven one day.

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GOD'S MIGHTY DELIVERANCE



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In life-threatening situations, Mary has proved God's faithfulness.

By Mary Fasola

From an early age, I had a longing for satisfaction within. My parents introduced my sister and me to a number of Christian denominations, and from that time God gave me a hunger to serve Him. However, we went from one church to another, never staying at one of them for long because the church leaders did not lead good lives. Though we still did not know what Christianity really was, we somehow understood that there must be more to it than what we saw in those churches.



Our family lived in Delta State, Nigeria, and in the 1980s my sister and I were attending grade school. One

of my teachers was a Christian, and something about him seemed different from the other instructors. In fact, he seemed different than all the people I knew. When my sister and I asked him what church he attended, he gave us a tract with the location of an Apostolic Faith Church and we made plans to go there. The moment I stepped into the church, I heard a quiet Voice speak within my heart, "This is where you are to worship." I do not remember who preached or what was said; I only remember the Voice that spoke to me. My sister and I began attending the church from then on. Before long, she had received the Christian experiences of salvation, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. For some reason, I did not feel compelled to seek those experiences. I was content with just going to church.

When my sister was eighteen years old, one day as she was on her way out of town, she was struck by a car. It was a terrible accident that caused a severe brain injury. She ended up in the intensive care unit at one of the big teaching hospitals in Nigeria, and I went there to stay with her. I loved her so much and was desperate for God to heal her. I took all the tracts and other church literature that we had to the hospital, and some of the church members also visited her. The teacher who had first told us about the Apostolic Faith came regularly to pray for her as well, but she remained in a critical state.

On one of the teacher's visits, he looked at me and told me that my sister's condition was better than mine because I was not saved. That really struck me because the injury had left her with almost no ability to function. Before leaving, he also opened his Bible and read to me from it. Afterward, I wanted to find the verses he had read, but at that time I still did not know much about the Bible. I had seen that he was reading from somewhere toward

the back of the Book, and I prayed to God to please help me find those verses. God answered my prayer. When I opened the Bible, I found where he had read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). For the first time, I read the Bible and understood it, and that made me so happy. There in the hospital by my sister's bedside, I prayed a simple prayer based on that verse, confessing my sin and asking God to be merciful to me. He made a change in me that was a turning point in my life. My sister passed away shortly after, which was very sad for me, but I came to understand that she had everything she needed from God, and He was ready to take her to Heaven.

The difference in my life after salvation was noticeable. My mother had tried to make me a good person through harsh discipline, but salvation accomplished the change that her punishments could not. I became a blessing instead of a problem to my mother, and it was completely because of what Jesus had done in my heart.

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In time, I married and had two children. In my late twenties, I took a new job that involved traveling to Europe and transporting goods to Nigeria. One terrifying night, armed robbers broke into our home yelling, "Where's the

Madame of this house?" That day, I was supposed to have brought home almost \$5,000 USD. However, I had given that money to somebody else, so there was nothing for the robbers. My younger brother was in the house and he and my husband helped me to hide under a bed in one of the rooms, but I could hear the burglars terrorizing my family, demanding to know where I was. They shot holes in our bedroom walls, and I heard them tell my son, who was only about three years old, to say goodbye to his dad. Then one of the men said, "Let's finish the man." In agony I cried out, "Jesus!" from under the bed, but my brother was in the room with me and insisted I stay quiet so I would not be found.

The intruders eventually did find me and ordered me to give them the money. My mind went blank; I just looked at them and did nothing. My husband had offered them our cars, but they wanted the money. They told me, "You love money more than your life." Then they forced me outside to search the cars. I do not know how we escaped harm, but somehow God preserved us and eventually the raiders left.

That incident became a serious trial of my faith, because up to that point, since the day God had saved me, I had always experienced His mercy and protection in every part of my life. He was my trust and my confidence. Yet, I knew the thieves had not entered without God's knowledge. I began to question why God had allowed that incident to happen, and fear and doubt started to set in. It affected me so much that I could not sleep at night. I was worried intruders would come again, and I would stay awake until the time the robbers had left—about 4:00 a.m. I had not experienced fear like that since before I was saved.

I needed God to speak to me and restore peace in my heart, and in His mercy, God did just that. He walked me back through every detail of the day the robbers had come, and showed me how He had protected us. He reminded me how they had taken my husband and said, "Let's finish him

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off," yet they did not hurt him. They shot their weapons, yet not one person was harmed. When they found me in my hiding spot and then led me out to the car alone, they could have beaten me up, but they did not even touch me. In fact, God reminded me that before the invasion, He woke me up and urged me to dress properly and to pray. Also, that \$5,000 USD could have been stolen, but by God's grace it was not in the house. God had protected us through the whole ordeal. When the Lord brought all of this to my mind, I realized that yes, He was always with me. My questions and doubts disappeared, and I could thank God for taking care of us. Finally I understood that whatever situation we may go through, God will always be with His children.

God has done so much for me that I cannot tell it all. There have been mountains and there have been valleys, but through it all He has been there for me. God has given me peace that passes all understanding and the hope of Heaven someday.

■ **Mary Fasola is an Apostolic Faith group leader in Canada.**

STEPS TO DELIVERANCE

ACKNOWLEDGE

Admit that you have sinned and need God's help.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

CONFESS AND REPENT

Be genuinely sorry for the sins you have committed and ask God to forgive you.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3)

FORSAKE

Determine that with God's help you are going to turn away from all sin in your life.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him . . . for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)

BELIEVE

When you have honestly and sincerely taken the steps above, then believe that God will hear your prayer and save you.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

RECEIVE

God will let you know that the work is done in your heart.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)