



Miracles Change a Saloon Keeper's Home

By Ernie Caton

Following in the footsteps of my father led me into a life of misery and addiction.

My father was a saloon keeper, as were his father and grandfather before him. I thought I would eventually follow in their steps, but God performed a miracle in our home.

As a child I spent much of my time around my father's saloon. I can't remember when I was given my first drink of liquor. But as a little boy I used to climb onto those high stools, and when the glass was passed around. I had a drink with the rest of them. I was literally taught to sin from my youth, but even when young, I was saddened by that burden of sin.

My parents loved their children, but there was no peace or happiness in our home because of the quarreling and fighting that went on. We did not read the Bible, and we never prayed. I had been to Sunday school a few times when I was young, but I didn't want that kind of life. I wanted to be tough like my dad.

A Terrible Fight

One day, my dad and my uncle had a terrible fight. My uncle tried to shoot Dad, but the gun misfired. After that, Dad decided to sell out and move our family several hundred miles away. I saw my father go down in bitter defeat, as he tried in his own strength to get away from sin. He found out the hard way that it couldn't be done without God's help.

As I grew older, my dad said to me many times, "You won't live very long in this world, so get the best you can out of it." I tried to follow that advice, and soon the things of this world became my gods. I thought I was having a wonderful time, but the habits of sin soon fastened onto my life to the extent I couldn't get rid of them. I began to realize I was a defeated young man, and I wanted a way out of sin. I knew that my dad's way out hadn't worked, and in great love and mercy, God let me hear of His saving power.

They Heard the Gospel Story

One day, my aunt and uncle showed up at our front door, and what a message they brought! They told us that after we had moved, they met some people from the Apostolic Faith Church. When they heard the Gospel story, my aunt and uncle prayed and were born again. They were set free from the old life of sin and defeat. My uncle said he had come to our home to ask my father's forgiveness. This impressed me greatly and gave me a glimmer of the light of salvation.

Along with the other troubles in our home, my mother had cancer of the stomach. The doctors told her that six months was the most she could possibly live. I was the oldest child in the family, and with five younger brothers and sisters. I wondered many times what would happen to us when Mother died. During their visit, my aunt and uncle told us that God could heal Mother and remove every trace of that awful disease. That fall, Mother asked my dad if he would take her to Medford, Oregon, so she could spend her last Thanksgiving Day with this aunt and uncle who had been born again. We arrived before the holiday, and my aunt and uncle soon began to tell us more about Jesus. They told my mother that God could save her soul as well as heal her.

For some reason, I didn't feel comfortable in that house. I was a smart-aleck teenager, and the Christian lives I saw there made me miserable. I didn't realize that the misery I had was conviction for the sin in my life. When I felt I could take it no longer, I left that home for a few days.

Mother Was Healed

As Thanksgiving Day drew near, I knew I should go back and be with my mother, because I was sure it would be her last holiday with us. What a miracle I found when I returned! Jesus had saved her and healed her of that awful cancer. As I sat across the dinner table from her that day, I watched in amazement as she ate a hearty meal. She had not been able to eat solid food for months, and there she was, eating anything she wanted. I kept saying to her, "Mother, what in the world are you doing? You will be screaming and crying with pain!"

She answered, "Son, while you were gone, I visited the Apostolic Faith Church. Those people of God prayed for me, and Jesus saved my soul, and He healed my body. Our home is going to be different now."

As I watched her, God spoke to my heart and let me know that my mother had found something I needed. She asked my dad and me if we would go to church with her that evening. I thank God that we went.

I will never forget that night. As I sat in the church and heard the story of Jesus, I realized I had come in contact with the Truth. I heard that Jesus could come into a person's life, take out the sin and misery, and give him a new life. That was what I wanted.

When the service ended, I went forward with my dad, and we knelt at an old wooden altar bench. I didn't know about my dad's decision, but I knew I was through with sin. I poured out my heart to God and asked Him to give me what He had given my mother. What a change took place! The burden of sin lifted, and the Lord put peace and joy into my heart. In an instant of time, He cleaned up my life and took away all desire for liquor, cigarettes, fighting, and all else that was evil. Sin no longer had me bound. That same night the Lord saved my dad. Our home was changed into a Christian home. What a miracle!

Years later, my mother became ill, and my sister insisted she go to the doctor. After x-raying my mother, the doctor said to her in amazement, "What in the world has happened to you? Part of your stomach is gone. It is a beautiful operation! It is the cleanest job I have ever seen. You don't even have an incision mark!" Mother told him, "Jesus operated on me. He did the job." The Lord had done a perfect work.

I have had the opportunity of proving the Lord's faithfulness in many hard places, and He has never failed me. I love the Lord, and I praise Him for the hope of Heaven that is in my heart.

Ernie Caton served the Lord for many years after the Lord healed his mother of stomach cancer. He has now gone to be with the Lord.

