

I Was Chief of Sinners

Personal testimony
of Hannah Tutor Purdy

Saved June 16, 2010

I was born and raised at Grace Baptist Church in Pontotoc, MS. to saved parents, Mark and Dixie Tutor. I know when people read this they will think of how blessed I was and you are right. However, it brings much shame to me that in the midst of so much God and truth in my life, I took it all for granted. I'm so blessed to even be here today. God has been so long-suffering and merciful to me.

While growing up I was a typical selfish teenager - just going thru the motions of going to school, going to work and going with my parents to church. I thought I was such a good girl and was very full of myself. I prided myself in how much I thought I knew about the truth but being just as wicked as my friends at school were the whole time.

I was always afraid of going to hell from a young age. When I was 15 or 16 years old I went down to the altar during a service at Camp Liberty during a sermon being preached about the cross. It was purely out of fear of going to hell. I made a profession that night but it was clear after a short time that there was no change and I told my church I was lost. Then again at 19, during a service at Camp Liberty, I made another profession. Again, no change of heart.

To sum it all up, I lived a big lie, trying to "look" like a saved person and failing miserably the whole time. I didn't even know what a saved person was. I didn't even know what a lost person was. I had never experienced even conviction.

In December of 2006 Johnathan and I were married and I moved to Tennessee with him, still trying to tell myself I was okay. I had a hard time in the beginning being in a completely new place but eventually reverted back to my old ways of working. After being married and not under my parents anymore, it was as if I didn't care how I acted or what I appeared as. My heart really started coming out. It was very clear to me after a series of events that I loved none but myself. God began to show me my wicked heart.

After I told my church I was lost, I became so afraid, from seeing my wickedness. Things that I had prided myself in that I would never do, I saw myself doing. I wanted the world and saw there was no difference between me and the wicked people I had always looked down on.

Shortly after this, Johnathan and I found out we were expecting a baby. The day I found out, all I could do was think about how unfit I was to be anyone's mother. It wasn't too long after this that being pregnant, looking for a house to raise a family in, and working a full time job began to take my heart and mind - not completely, because there were still moments when I would see my wickedness but just tried to push it out of my mind. That didn't work for long.

Bro. Greg preached a sermon one night on the two mounts. He said, "Somewhere you have to stop looking at yourself and look at God." That sermon stuck with me. One morning at my house, the thought came to my mind that I'd never be saved. I believed it. The next couple of services I looked for any excuse to stay home from church. I didn't see the point in going. I had gone too far and was too wicked for God to save me. Finally, I decided one day to tell Bro. Greg what I was thinking. He explained to me about the fiery darts of the devil and assured me that God wouldn't have shown me I was lost to leave me that way.

One service when Bro. Greg was out of town, Bro. Scott Smith preached on being a reproach to the church and told us he had advised the youth group to not look at us because we were terrible examples. That slew my heart. It was clear that my being lost was not just affecting me. I was full of shame. After that, my life began to make me sick. I was basically leading a pointless life.

On May 7th, 2010, my son's first birthday rolled around and in the middle of his party while everyone was laughing and having fun I thought to myself, "What is there to celebrate? John Mark is a year old and lives in a home with two lost parents. We should really be crying for him instead."

Not too long after this, we had a Sunday morning service of just hugging each other. It was on me that morning to go to Casey and Luke Allen and tell them I was sorry for being a bad example and to please not look at me. I just couldn't stop telling them I was sorry. God stayed on me even after I had gone back to my seat. A week later, Johnathan and I had invited Bro. Greg and Mrs. Janet over for dinner after church. Bro. Greg and I stayed at the table for a while and I began to tell him how I felt about my life and shared with him how I felt like God was moving on me the Sunday morning before. He told me I was in a good place, hating my life. I didn't expect that but it gave me hope.

On June 16th, 2010, the Wednesday night before Camp Liberty, Bro. Greg was preaching on "Come now..." He was stressing a "now" and telling the lost God had everything prepared. By this time I had become so tired of my life. I didn't see how I could stay in my seat. I got to the altar and was just broken, telling God I was so tired and asking Him to help me. The altar was full of lost people and I was full of fear. I had to have help and worried that Bro. Greg wouldn't come to talk to me with so many others needing help. Bro. Greg continued to preach to us about the table God had prepared for us and all we had to do was sit and eat. I tried to picture a table to sit at but couldn't. I didn't know what to do. I tried to say things and see if anything would happen but nothing. But, the pressure wouldn't leave me. I had to stay where I was. At one point, Bro. Greg said something directly to me from the pulpit. He told me I didn't have to be afraid and that I was way past a word-only salvation. I was still afraid and just needed help. I wanted Bro. Greg to come down there with me.

Finally Bro. Greg began to dismiss and told us he wanted to talk to each of us one on one before the next Sunday. Immediately I thought, "No, I can't wait." Then he said, "But I have to talk to Hannah now."

After everyone left, he came down and asked me what I was thinking. I told him I was so afraid. I knew God saw and knew my wicked heart. I deserved to go ahead and die right then and go straight to hell. For the next few minutes he just told me about God - His mercy, love, grace, long-suffering, and how he wanted me. It was like I was hearing about God for the first time in my life. He asked me again what I was thinking and I held out my hands and said, "I can see myself so clear but I can see God too and I don't know how to put them together." He said that made sense and told me the verse - Mercy and truth have met and righteousness and peace have kissed each other - the truth about myself and the mercy of God. That mercy was so real to me. So I just told God thank you.

Before I knew it, "thank you" was pouring out of me. When I stopped, I realized nothing was going on and I just told Bro. Greg I was confused. God had just saved me. I've struggled for a while now because there is so much I don't understand. All I do know is that He came into the world to sinners, of whom I am chief.

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