

# **How God loved A God Hater**

**Personal Testimony  
Of Halle Vance**

**Saved February 15, 2023**

My name is Halle Vance. I was born September 20, 2002 and was raised in church all of my life. God began dealing with my heart as a child, and I have many memories of feeling God's power in many services. It was in these moments that God revealed Himself to me and gave me a desire to know Him and a hope to one day be saved. Many times, I would go to Bro. Greg and talk to him after services and tell him what I was feeling, but most of the time I was too caught up in emotions to actually know what God was saying. As I got older, God really started speaking to me in the services, but my heart was so caught up in my own life that I never really moved forward in any of what He was telling me. While I never really went forward with any of what God was telling me during this time, it was these moments that when later on as a teenager struggling with a desire to leave the church, God reminded me of His power and presence.

In my teenage years, I really began to distance myself from the church and began to feel God less and less. Every now and then, in a revival or powerful service God would move on me and I would try to seek Him, but my heart was never truly in it. I was constantly chasing the world and all it had to offer. As time went on, I was very torn between staying at Lighthouse and leaving and going off to college with my friends. I was terrified of Hell, and the fear that I was lost was basically the only thing keeping me in church, but even it had eventually lost its weight on me. I was angry at God for things that happened in my life, and confused as to why He wouldn't fix problems I had asked Him to many times. I started to believe the lie that God did not love me and I even questioned if God was real at all. In my heart, I couldn't deny His existence, but it fed the lies and allowed me to go on in life as I had been with less guilt. I was constantly at war in myself over my future, and there was absolutely no peace in my life at all. One night, I was 17 years old, and I was spending the night over

at one of my best friends from high schools house. While she was sleeping, I laid in bed next to her and wrestled inside my mind. I was envious that she could live such a normal life and do the same things I was and feel no guilt about it. I did not believe that even if I stayed at lighthouse that God would ever save me and began to ask God why he ever chose me to be there. Why wouldn't he pick someone who would listen and obey him? Why was I exposed to the truth and not her? A part of me was grateful for being in the truth, but in such unbelief, I couldn't see how it would truly benefit me since I was convinced I would die and go to Hell. Angry at God, I started to ask Him why he ever made me. For once, instead of trying to hide my feelings from God I just broke and told Him I wished he had made me a plant or an animal, something that would die and had no soul so that I wouldn't have to worry about heaven or hell. I told God that I genuinely wished He'd never made me, and that at this point in my life, it felt like I was just waiting to die to meet His wrath. I really struggled with having the will to live because of the turmoil I felt in everyday life. I felt like I had no hope of salvation and that by living I damned myself to Hell even more and the constant guilt I felt made it where I could never find joy in anything.

A few weeks after this happened, bro Terry came to preach a meeting. I honestly could not tell you what the services were actually about, but something he said made me go to Bro. Greg for the first time in a long time. As we talked, I finally confessed a lot of what I was doing and where I was at. Bro. Greg told me it was time to choose between God or the world. He told me the story of Jacob and Esau, and how Esau gave up his birthright for a bowl of beans. Growing up, whenever I heard the story, I never understood how someone could be so foolish that they would give up something so precious for a temporary moment of pleasure. I realized while Bro Greg was talking to me that that was exactly what I was doing. After we got done talking, I went down to the alter and repented

for what I was doing. I spent the next few days grieved because even though I had seen myself doing this, I still really struggled giving up my life. One night, I was sitting in my car and cried out to God to help me want to stay at Lighthouse. I told God that I knew I couldn't do it on my own, and to do whatever He needed to do to get me out of my own life and the mess I was in.

The next day, I went to work and since we were technically closed, I was the only one there. I turned on some music, and Kari Jobes song, "The Garden" came on. The song is about a person struggling with faith and almost giving up all hope, but God coming in and healing their soul. While it was on, I began to weep. God told me that He loved me, and He was not against me. I knew then I could never leave Lighthouse and began to have some hope that God would work in me. Later that day, I found out that there was a pandemic breaking out and we would be going into a nationwide lock down. All of the plans I had made were immediately canceled, and I could not even return back to school or see any of my friends in the world. God had heard my cry and literally removed me from the mess I had gotten into and began to work on me without the distractions that had been controlling my life.

Time went on, and while I was committed to coming to church, I was not committed to seeking God.

I would be stirred up in meetings or in some services, but my desire to find Him would fizzle out within days and I would fall back asleep spiritually. It was during this time that I fell in love with my now husband, Charleston. Charleston loved me in a way I had never know and had pursued me even when I pushed him away. He was only ever kind and loving to me and it completely blew me away. God would constantly remind me that even as much as Charleston loved me, He loved me infinitely

more and he just wanted me to love him back as willingly as I did Charleston. As happy as I was in my relationship, God showed me I would never be satisfied with just an earthly love. In the midst of God constantly telling me and showing His love for me, Bro Greg preached a sermon one night about hating God. Although I can't remember much about the service itself, God showed me that not only did I not love him, I hated Him. Bro Greg told the lost that we should literally open our mouths and say it, but I would not do it. It felt like my mouth had been sealed shut and I had never felt so convicted. It literally felt to me like there was no oxygen in the room. After the service I went and talked to Bro. Greg and told him what was going on with me during his preaching and he told me that whether I admitted it or not, I hated God. Not just didn't love God but hated him. He told me I might as well just get honest with God because I couldn't hide it from Him. I was absolutely terrified of who I was, an enemy of God and a God hater. I knew it was true because I knew I had never trusted God or believed Him with anything, but I felt like I could never admit to something that bad. To me, there was no one who ever grieved God like I had. Instead of moving forward with what God told me then, I tried to hide it and kept waiting for another service to come and for God to move past that. The church moved forward of course, but that truth never left my mind and when God would convict me of other things it all came back to that service. Every sin I committed, and every issue Bro Greg preached on was because I hated Him.

In 2022, I was all over the place spiritually and honestly physically. I was very distracted with planning a wedding and a lot of issues in my physical life. Two of my closest friends left the church and it felt like I was hit with a new trial every time I turned around. Then in November, three weeks after Charleston and I got married, we had an electrical fire and lost essentially everything we had. I was really struggling at this time. I kept begging God to please help with my physical problems but in

His providence, he continued to allow things to happen. I began to wonder where was God in all of my chaos, confusion and hurt? Did He hear me? Was this finally when all my sins would come back to haunt me? When I look back now, I can see that this was another time God had mercy on me. He had heard my cry, but He also knew that I was way too physically minded and based whether God was good or if He loved me on what I was going through. God had to remove the comforts of my life so that I would not be satisfied in anything but Him. In time and through much praying and crying out to Him, God began to work the smallest bit of faith into me that I could trust Him fully with everything.

In January of 2023, Lighthouse had our annual New Years Eve service. Bro Greg preached about us not fulfilling what God had planned for us in the last year and that I the lost had wasted another year. He said that NOW was the time to be saved and even though this truth was hard, God had been gracious in waking us up and was telling us that He would save if we would seek Him. I was very grieved about how much time I had wasted. God had turned me almost three years before and I was still lost. God reminded me of the parables of the sower, and I saw how I was the stony ground and how the cares of this life kept choking out His word. I told God then that I was tired of wasting time and that I wanted to find Him this year. I decided that every service that was preached I would seek to hear something and move in it instead of leaving it.

Not too long after this, Bro Greg preached on drawing nigh to God and He will draw nigh unto you. God was on me heavy during the preaching, and I finally broke down at the alter and told God I just wanted to be with Him. When I went down the alter, I went with a lot of fears and doubts, and

eventually I didn't feel him as much. I didn't feel like I had necessarily done something wrong like I had in the past when God would leave me, but I definitely knew that it was not salvation. After the service Bro Greg came down and sat next to me and asked me what had happened. I told Him I knew God wanted me to draw nigh unto Him, but I felt like I didn't know how, and I had so many doubts that He would save me. Bro Greg calmed me down and told me that the reason God had left me where I was is because I came with no faith that he would save me. He told me I didn't really believe that God loved me or wanted me, and I knew that that was true. He told me God was not far off and salvation was nigh if I would walk in faith. I told Bro Greg I had literally no faith and didn't see me ever having it, and he told me that God would help me if I just asked Him and He knew what I needed. He told me God would not lead this far just to leave me. I left that service very encouraged and hopeful that God would help me.

Over the next month, there were several services that really helped me. When Charleston and I went to Pioneers Birthday Celebration, Bro. Scott preached on God being with us and faithful to finish His work. Bro. Scott admitted that while searching for a new building for Hope, he struggled believing that God would give it to them. He compared it to when the children of Israel went into the wilderness and told God that He brought them out there to die. My heart broke. I knew I had done the same thing to God. I never believed that God would save me, much less that He loved me. With my unbelief, I kept accusing God that He was not faithful and that He didn't care for me, when in reality I was the problem all along. Instead of God being angry with me, He told me that He loved me and that He still wanted to be with me. For the first time in my life, instead of being angry at God for never fixing all the problems in my life, I began to become thankful that He would use me to maybe one day help someone else that had gone through some of the same things I did. God

showed me that He had never allowed those things to happen because He hated me, but rather because He loved me too much to be content in anyone or anything.

A few weeks later, we went to faith for their meeting with Bro Terry. I was absolutely shocked when he started preaching on unbelief and dealing with right where I was since he was not my pastor, and this was not my church's meeting. Bro Terry compared unbelief to inviting someone over and them laying a plate of food in front of you and you refusing to pick it up and eat it. Bro Terry said that God had concluded us in unbelief, and God had also concluded to have mercy on us, which made me hopeful that even God would therefore help me with my unbelief.

That Wednesday night at Lighthouse, Bro Matt preached on coming to God. He started by saying that we should all be grateful that we were even there that night, and he said to think of all the people that had driven by Lighthouse. I just felt so thankful that God would even let me sit in the room where He was speaking. I began to just thank God for the grace that had set the bounds of my habitations. In my heart, I was truly grateful that I could thank God for that work, but I was longing to thank God with the saved in church for what they had. I was tired of not being with God and I just felt this desire to know Him like my saved friends do. Bro Matt went on to preach out of Matthew 11 and told us that God sent Him to tell us that if we were weary and heavy laden that it was time to rest. With everything in me, I wanted to fall on God right then, but my unbelief and fears filled my mind. I felt absolutely paralyzed. Bro Matt kept preaching and told us that God wanted us to come so much that He sent His son to uphold the law perfectly, personally, and perpetually so that we could come. He said that some of the keep trying to figure out what to do to be worthy to come, but



that it was just the invitation that made us worthy, nothing that we do. I felt more encouraged but still fears and doubts flooded my mind. I just couldn't see how I could just trust God and come to Him. Bro Matt started telling us that we didn't have to figure anything out or fix anything and told about how the father saw the prodigal son a far off and didn't give him any stipulations, but just welcomed him home. I began to have hope that even though I was still struggled with my unbelief and knew I couldn't fix it, I could go to the one who can because of the work that Christ had done on my behalf. Beside me, Bro Brian said "there's no figuring in faith." That little phrase began rolling around in my heart and mind and I broke. I knew there was nothing I could do or be to be worthy to come to God and that i would never be able to "figure it out" and I just needed HIM. I fell into the altar and cried out and began to tell God that I just wanted to come home and I believed but to please help my unbelief. Before I even finished telling me my heart, I realized that as soon as I fell on the altar, all the turmoil and fear that I was feeling was gone and I felt this peace in my heart. I wondered if I had done something wrong and spent the rest of the service down in the altar trying to get the conviction back on me and couldn't. A small part of me wondered if the work was actually done but I thought that there was no way. Finally, the service ended, and I called Bro Greg and told him what had happened. He told me that it could be salvation and asked me to write it out for him and we would talk about it when he got back home from Boston.

When Bro Greg came back, he preached a message to the lost and after the service, I went to him and told him that I really struggled during the service because I didn't feel any conviction. I had also been struggling with believing that I could be saved because I couldn't see why God would save someone if they struggled to believe that He did. The only time I even felt God talking to me was through one little phrase in the service that Bro. Greg said which was that to baptize someone he

didn't need them to be perfect, he just wanted to see fruits that they loved God and wanted to obey Him. In that moment, it felt like God was sweetly whispering in my ear that He had never asked me to be perfect, just to love Him back. I still couldn't fully believe that I was saved, but Bro Greg explained to me that it was not anything that we do or think that makes salvation. We are only saved by what God has done and that I couldn't look at myself or for what I had done because there was nothing I could do because salvation is impossible with man. I was really encouraged with what he said to me because I knew that God had done something in me, but I still struggled calling it salvation.

The next Sunday, Bro. Cam got up and preached a message to the lost and began talking about how with every service, their condemnation grew and grew. As he was saying this, I began to think of the song "And can it be," and the line that says, "no condemnation now I dread." This line played over and over in my head, and I began to thank God for taking away my condemnation. As Bro. Cam went on, he started telling a bit of his own testimony. As he talked about what happened in his life, I saw a mirror of what happened in my own. As I was listening to Bro Cam say that he believed that the blood of Christ was enough to save him, God asked me what else was I looking for in salvation? I told God that He was right, and that I knew He had done a work in me and that I had nothing else to ask or look for but that I was just fearful.

After the service, I went and talked to Bro. Greg. I told him what went on me, and he told me I would just have to settle it in my heart with what happened to me when God saved me, nothing else. I told Bro. Greg that if I only looked at what God did, I knew it was finished, but when I put my

thoughts on it, I was scared that I could be wrong. Bro. Greg told me that I would have to trust that God would not allow me to go on for years believing a lie and that He would assure me. The next night, I was laying in bed and could not sleep, and fear began to overwhelm me. I started praying and I just told God that I was fearful and that I didn't want to be wrong about something so serious.

God reminded me of what he told me in Bro. Cams service about what more are you looking for, and the song "How firm a Foundation" began to play in my head. God reminded me of the line that says "what more can He say than to you He hast said? To you who to Jesus for refuge have fled." I began to thank God for what he did, and I told God that I knew I could trust Him with this because He had been faithful before again and again. I told God that I fully believed that if the work was not finished, He would tell me and would not let me die in ignorance because He loved me too much and had done too much of a work in my life. I went to sleep that night thanking God for not only saving me, but for the confidence to thank Him for it.