

“I Thought”

How God Saved a Religious Lost Man

**Personal Testimony
Of Brian Purdy**

Saved May 18, 1996

I find as I begin to write my testimony, that there is more to say about God in my heart than my mind was words to describe. I know without a doubt, that it is only by the wonderful Grace of God, that I have anything at all to testify about. Before God saved me, I remember reading about Him in the Bible, and reading about His Saints, Prophets, angels, miracles, and even His principles that I could live by. These and a lot more in the Bible were all good to read and talk about with others. But until the night that I met the savior that the scriptures testify of (John 5:39), I can only say that 'I thought' I had salvation. I did not know it then, but I was exactly like those Jews that were relying on what the scriptures said rather than on the One the scriptures testify of for my salvation. (John 5:40) Thus the title of my testimony, for not only in this one point, but in every way, God has had to change my thoughts from mine to His.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-8

I would begin by telling you that I was not always a religious person. My parents divorced when I was five years old, and my dad raised all five of us while managing dairy farms in many different parts of the country.

As we were growing up, we did not attend church very much. And when I was about sixteen or so, my dad would try to get me to go to church with him, but I only went a few times. I did not even like the idea of going to church until I had met the young lady that I would later marry. Going to church did make me feel better about myself, and also made me look better in the eyes of others. This is when I started being religious, which did not take long. All I had to do was act like everyone else, and I fit right in.

But, after going to church for only a few months, and learning only very little about salvation, (except that I needed to be saved like everyone else), I began to think about getting saved. During this time, what I would have to say was a small amount of conviction over just being 'a sinner' came upon me. The only thing about this time that I remember is wanting to be saved, and the encouragement of others to go forward to the preacher. The preacher and I talked, and I am sure that I prayed something, though today I am not sure what. After that, the preacher and I told everyone that I had been saved. This made everyone happy, even me for a while, though I never really looked closely at my 'so called' salvation to see if any of what had taken place was even close to what the Bible had to say about being saved, or in Christ, or being born again.

No, I did not, like the people of Berea, search the scriptures to see if the things that were preached were even so, (acts 17:11), or if what others called salvation was indeed real salvation! For as far as I could tell, I was 'by all outward indications,' just as saved as most of the other people at church.

If perhaps I had known, or searched the scriptures very much at all, I would have discovered that I could not have been saved without understanding. (Matthew 13:13,15; Mark 4:12) But, at 18 years old and thinking about my girlfriend, work, and many other things that went on at the time, I gave little or no attention to my 'so-called' salvation experience for a long time.

From the time that I was 'supposedly saved,' until the days that God lovingly drew me to Himself, 'life as usual' would best describe my course.

As for church, I would go for a while, and then sometimes I would just not go. If for a while my friends would come by and want to go fishing, I would go fishing. And at other times, I would make it my goal to be at church every time the doors were open. We did stay in church for a couple of years or so two or three different times. But then each time, for one reason or another, I would stop making sure that my family and I made it to church at all. I know that God's word tells us not to forsake the assembling together of ourselves. (Hebrews 10:25) And it was at these times when I did not lead my family to church that we would end up having problems in our marriage. But when it got bad enough, and I could not keep it all together, or we would go so far as to get separated, I then would make a very strong effort to get back into church and back to God any way that I could. I am not proud of the way that I handled my responsibility as a father and as a husband. But I am very grateful to God that He in His grace saw fit to keep my family and I together. In fact, God used the last time that we were separated to bring me to Him.

In 1991, after not being in church for six or seven months, again our marriage and family were in great trouble. This trouble turned even worse when, after a notice of a pending divorce was given me, I moved out of the home. This was not the way I wanted my life to turn out. Even though I did not want it, the world seemed to say that I had no choice in any of it. So, after losing 20 pounds, my desire to work, and seeing no hope for me or my family, I tried to find a friend just to talk to. Of course, the world did not offer a lot of good choices, so I just went.

I found myself at a nightclub in a neighboring town, and after thinking about my situation and looking at the people around me, I saw nothing but people with no real life at all, in a place that offered no life. I became uncomfortable where I was and started thinking that I don't need this, I need God! So, after leaving that place, I went to my house, and set my alarm for 9:00 a.m. Before I fell asleep, I began to think about which church to go to in the morning. I could only think of one, Arlington Baptist Church, which we had visited with some friends a long time ago, about nine years. I liked the thought of going there because most likely, nobody would know me or my family, and probably not be gossiping about our situation.

Looking back, I can tell you that this is where God caused me, like the prodigal son, to come to myself, and start on my way to Him. This could also be called where God put me in the narrow way.

At the time, I could not see what God was doing. I only knew that I would be better off in church than to be anywhere else. And that this time, family or not, I was not leaving God's house anymore!

What I found at church the next morning were people that were friendly and kind. And even though they could see I was miserable, they all made me feel welcome and invited me back. It was also good to know, like I had hoped, nobody knew me or my wife, and there was no gossip about our problems in their town. That next Thursday the pastor and a deacon came to visit me and asked about my family, and I told them. They said they would be praying God would put us back together.

He did.

After only a couple of Sundays of going, one morning I asked, as the Sunday School class dismissed, if they would pray that God would somehow put my family back together. I did not expect quite so quick of a response. When praying was finished, we all headed to the church. As I walked in, much to my surprise, there was my wife and all three children! From then on, God did put us back together. In less than a week I had moved back in and started to be the husband and dad that I

thought I should be.

We soon became friends with everyone and continued going to church even when in May or June of 1993, the pastor announced that he had been called to another church in Illinois. This left me in a place that I had not been before. But even when later on the church became a place of unrest, I was not about to leave. God had so worked in me that even in the difficult times I would not miss

church.

During the time when we had no pastor, an interim pastor from the local Baptist seminary came and preached for us. After our interim pastor had been preaching for about three months, one Sunday when he was not going to be able to preach, he asked another preacher from the school to preach for him. This preacher's name was Bro. Greg Moffitt. We heard him that morning and that night. Some of us would have liked to have called him as our pastor that day, but the pulpit committee was not of the same mind.

About a year later Bro. Greg came to fill in again. After this second time God had changed the mind of our pulpit committee. At first, they said that his being young, and still in seminary was not what we wanted. This was mainly because of previous pastors that had attended seminary, gotten their degree, and soon after been called away to another church. But the pulpit committee recommended on Wednesday night that we call Bro. Greg Moffitt to come and preach to us a trial sermon before we called him to be our pastor.

That next Sunday was November 20th, 1994, and after his preaching and some question-and-answer time, the church voted a closed ballot vote. The count was 100% in favor of Bro. Greg. We took this as God's sure approval of our new pastor. I know these may seem to some to be unimportant facts. But these are the events and people that God used to bring me to the knowledge of the truth.

As my new pastor preached, I listened carefully. He did some things a little different than I had seen before in my sorted time of going to church. His preaching was always in line with and taken from the Bible. But he would give his testimony about how he had been 'born again,' and talk about 'knowing God,' and how a saved man would act, and a lot of other sermons about salvation. I knew something that I saw and heard about Bro. Greg was real, though I didn't know exactly what it was.

Then, one day as Bro. Greg preached and I read along, the text asked a question that God was going to let me answer. He was preaching from 2 Corinthians 13:5. At first I saw no harm in examining myself. But the more I looked back, the less evidence I found to answer the piercing question that God's word had put before me. This was even more evident when Bro. Greg went to 2 Corinthians 5:17, "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.*" This was supposed to help me to see from God's word some evidence of salvation. Needless to say, I was looking inside for that new creature, and coming up with nothing.

During the next couple of weeks, I kept thinking about those verses. It was then that God let me look back to when I was 18, and when I supposedly had gotten saved. I thought that the question would be answered here. I thought wrong! For a little while longer I kept on looking, reading, and listening, but finally I had to admit that what I had was not true salvation. Therefore, I was as a 'matter of fact' lost. I say 'as a matter of fact' because at first, and for a long time, that's all it was to me.

After the examination I decided to go to Bro. Greg and tell him what I had found out. As I told him that I could not say that what I had was really salvation he was very understanding and only asked a few questions. He did not try to pressure me in one way or the other. Instead, he just smiled and said that he would be praying for me.

So now I learned that I was a 'seeker,' (Hebrews 11:6), and even though I had not heard that word very much, it was OK, and Biblical. Then, as Bro. Greg preached, I tried to listen more, pray more, and read my Bible more often hoping God would save me. Sometimes I would think since there was nothing I could do to save myself, what's the use? But I also knew that the Bible says that *'He is a rewarder of them that diligently see Him.'*

At other times, I would hear about repentance from the preaching of His word, and start trying to repent or be sorrowful for my lost, sinful condition. Nothing seemed to work. Of these times I can say that the scriptures are true when in Ephesians 2:8-9, they say, *'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.'*

No matter what I did, I could not save myself.

Sometime in the summer Bro. Greg mentioned on a Wednesday night that the people at the church he used to go to, Grace Baptist Church in Pontotoc, Mississippi, were building a new church building. He also said that any of us that wanted to could go and help them frame up some walls on

Saturday. As soon as he told us, I thought I could be of some good help to them, but also wanted to meet Bro. Terry Owen and the friends that Bro. Greg had talked so well of.

As it turned out, I was the only one going that day. That did not bother me though. I drove down with the intention of being as much help as I could. When I arrived, I met Bro. Terry and the others and we got right to work. Then, as we worked, Bro. Dale Owen, Bro. Terry's dad, was talking to me about something concerning God and said, "Isn't that so Bro. Brian?" I replied, "I wouldn't know Bro. Dale, I'm as lost as a goose." That was my way of letting them all know where I stood with God. But that did not bother them. Instead, during the next hours of work, all of the men came to me one at a time and told me they would be praying for me, and that God would save me.

This was different for me. These men did not just look over my head, or lightly speak of their prayers for me, or my being lost. I did not feel like an outcast just because I was lost. I felt as though these men meant what they said and later on that evening God proved this was true.

As the day came to an end for me, about 7:00 p.m., I was getting up to leave and Bro. Terry called all of the men over to say good-bye and to pray. Bro. Terry thanked me for my help as we all held hands, and then he asked Bro. Mark Tutor to pray. I will never forget when Bro. Mark started praying. He began to weep and pray and ask God to help me. He said that God had burdened him for me ever since he found out I was lost! And he also prayed that God would give me the same salvation that he had! I did not know what was going to happen. I just knew that this was something

that I had not seen or felt before. I thought that I would go and help God that day, but God had plans to help me.

Still, from January until December of 1995, I had watched others that had been lost, get saved. One was my wife, and another was a good friend. But I was still lost! I just kept on going to church and trying to get saved. I did not know it then, but I was frustrating the grace of God (James 4:6, Job 22:29). I had no idea what I was doing until December 1995.

Bro. Greg and his family, every July and December, would go to what they called Camp Meeting. The camp they would go to was the Mississippi Delta Camp Meeting in West Helena, Arkansas. Bro. Greg would talk about God moving and people getting saved and other things related to this Camp Meeting. That made me want to go one or two nights and see what Camp Meeting was all about.

So, we went two or three nights in July, and was glad that we did. We met a lot of very loving people there and were made to feel very welcomed by everyone.

By December, I was looking forward to going to Camp Meeting again. Nothing that I could tell was going on with me concerning my salvation. To be honest, I thought and expected that God would save me at Camp Meeting because that is where I thought it would and should happen. But God had it that I should first learn about my real problem, me. I can say for sure that this is not what I thought would happen at Camp Meeting!

First, while I was talking with someone about a relative of mine, in regard to his pride being more than that of mine, a preacher friend passed by. Hearing my comment, he replied, "Probably not." Although I grinned and laughed with the people around me, something inside of me didn't like what I heard! This man was a friend, but more than that, a preacher! I did not get upset with him just because of that. That was beside the point. I had until Friday to get saved. I kept on asking myself,

"Why am I not saved? What is wrong with me?"

After going back to the motel room and not finding any answers, I needed help. Then I began to think of who could help me find out what was wrong. Even though it was very late, I had to talk to my Pastor! So, I went to his room, knocked on the door and he let me in asking if he could help me. By now I needed whatever it took to help me get to God! I asked Bro. Greg one question, "What is keeping me from getting saved?" His response was immediate, "*You've got a lot of pride.*"

I knew he was right. Even though it was very humbling to hear, I found I was my biggest problem! He talked with me for a few minutes and I went back to my room. It was then that I started to honestly look at myself. Both of the men that God used to tell me about my pride were right!

From that night on I began to ask God to humble me and take away my pride. Even as a lost man, I knew that I needed grace. I did not want God to resist me because of my pride (James 4:6). During

the past year, I had been told by Bro. Greg and others that I was too analytical about everything, especially about salvation. When I thought that God was working on me, or when something was preached that touched me, I would closely analyze every detail about it. I thought I could figure out or understand God, even though I didn't know him! I did not know that God was teaching me about His wisdom and my foolishness (I Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 11:25).

After Camp Meeting we were invited to Grace Baptist Church to attend the dedication service on January 6, 1996, for the new building. I thought a lot about going but did not make up my mind to go until the night before. The next morning all I could think about was getting to Pontotoc and being on time. The family got ready, and we left on time, but as I drove along, I began to ask myself what I was doing. The weather was very cold, and it had been raining. It was beginning to snow and the bridges were icing. Here I was, with my whole family in the van with me just to go to a Church a little over a hundred miles from home! Then I started to think about seeing Bro. Terry Owen and all of the friends I had met at Grace. I wanted to see the new building. We made it there and ran in to get out of the rain. The building was beautiful, outside and inside.

After all the hellos and hugs, we sat down. It wasn't until then that I noticed the scripture written on the wall above the baptistery. As I read the verse, it seemed as though God was speaking just to me! The verse read, *'Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool'* (Isaiah 1:18). All I could do was cry and think about what God was telling me. One moment I would listen to His promise; the next, I would weep and tell Him that all I had to come to Him with was my sin!

Well, I got calmed down inside a little and stopped crying. Then, I thought I would read the verse again. Again, God spoke through His word just as real as minutes before! He still wanted me to 'come and reason together with Him!' So, I held on to what He had promised me. That night I drove home with a promise from God that gave me hope and helped me continue to seek God.

Later on in February, after seeking as much as I knew how, and trying to repent of all I could, I became frustrated in myself and began to ask God to show me why I was getting nowhere in my search for Him. Then one Sunday before church, at home, God let me see that I had not, since camp meeting, gone to the man of God that he had sent to me for my help. He was right! I was so blind, I thought I could somehow find God on my own and had not trusted His preacher to guide me to Christ. I had not submitted myself to him and therefore not profited in my intended way (Hebrews 13:17).

God helping me to trust Bro. Greg gave me a lot of help in believing that God actually had me on His mind. This also gave me more hope that God would one day save me. My wife also tried to help me by explaining 'gently' to me the fact that I did not see myself or my sin the way that God does. This would disturb me, and I would tell her that I do see my sin, and that she just did not realize that I

Did!

Then one Sunday in April, Bro. Greg preached to us out of 2 Chronicles 15 and ended up at verse 12.

“And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with

all their soul.” So, the whole church at the end of the preaching came up to the front of the church

and covenanted together to seek God with all of our heart and soul.

One Sunday night shortly after, I had again almost given up hope of God ever saving me. Bro. Greg

came to me and told me that God had told him to tell me that God was going to save me. This was

the best thing I had heard for a long time! From that day on, I never had what I would call a fear of

hell or dying. I really needed that word from God! And yes, I did trust that the preacher that I knew

God had sent to help me was telling no lie at all!

A couple of Sundays went by, and then Bro. Greg announced that we were going to have a meeting.

When I heard this, in my heart I became very glad and anxious for this upcoming meeting. But when

he said that it would start that Wednesday night, I began thinking that I would not be able to wait

that long. I was hoping that it would start the very next night on Monday! He also said that Bro.

Terry Owen would be preaching and his dad, Bro. Dale Owen, would be leading the music. This was

fine with me because I liked Bro. Terry and Bro. Dale and felt like Bro. Terry loved me. I also

somehow knew ‘by God’s Grace’ that I could trust what he said and preached to be true.

On the first night, May 15, 1996, Bro. Terry came to me and asked me how I was doing. I told him

that I was OK. But I knew that was not exactly true because I was still lost. Then he asked if anything

had been happening with me, and I told him that lately I would start weeping during the preaching, and not knowing why, I would begin to try to figure out why I was crying and then the tears would stop. He then told me to stop trying to figure out why, and to take my hands off what God was trying to do.

This was not normal for me not to try to figure out everything. But I was determined to submit myself to the man of God and do what he said. He also told me that my tears were where God worked, and that they are not despised by God (Psalm 51:17, 34:18, Isaiah 57:15).

Then that night Bro. Terry preached on Psalm 85:8, '*I will hear what God the Lord will speak.*' That night that's all God wanted was my attention. He wanted me to hear what He had to say!

The next night the preaching was from Matthew 15:21-27. One of the points was that if we were not real Jews, then we were considered dogs. That is what Jesus said. But driving home that night with my daughter Christal, comparing circumstances and thoughts, we agreed that we did not think of ourselves as dogs. Unlike the woman that Jesus was talking to, we were not convinced that we were dogs and would not agree with what God was trying to tell us.

Friday night was our turn to prepare the supper meal for Bro. Terry and his dad and their families. So, after supper, Bro. Dale and I had a little time to visit before the meeting began. We had not talked very long when Bro. Dale told me something that I did not really want to hear. He said,

“Brian, I don’t think you see your sin the way God does.” Well, that was the same old thing my wife had been trying to tell me for months! And I was tired of trying to convince my wife and myself, and now Bro. Dale, that I did. So, I agreed with him and even said, “You know Bro. Dale, you’re probably right. I don’t think that I see my sin the way that God does.” (John 9:41)

This night the preaching was from Matthew 21:44. And that *‘whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.’* The first half speaks of Jesus’ breaking and then saving. In the second half the Bible says that if this rock should fall on us, it would grind us into a fine powder, speaking of the wrath of God that abides upon the lost, unbelievers.

That night the gospel brought with it a command, *‘Cast yourself on Jesus the rock, and He will break you and save you.’* Then Bro. Terry explained that to ‘fall,’ or ‘cast,’ meant to prostrate oneself by laying flat out on the floor and calling out to God for salvation. He preached that if someone would humble himself and do, or obey what God was saying, that Jesus would save that one.

At the end of the preaching Christal went to the altar. As I watched and prayed, Christal, by the grace of God had obeyed just what God had said, and believing on Jesus, had been saved! At first, when I saw that apparently, she had been saved I started to become angry at God about Him not saving me on the same night that Christal got saved. But as I looked at the peace and joy on her

face, I began thanking God for her salvation! God had done a very marvelous thing for my daughter.

And then I wondered when would He do that for me?

Then came Saturday night. I knew that this would be the last night of the meeting. Tomorrow would be just another Sunday. I would still be lost, and I didn't even see myself or my sin the way that God does. I needed something from God. I felt like tomorrow held no hope, and I needed God to help me somehow!

When I sat down, I was wondering if maybe the command from last night, 'cast yourself on the rock' would still apply to me. Would God really save me if I were to cast myself on His Son and trust Him? Then Bro. Greg came over and we talked. I told him what I was thinking, and he said that the command from last night might still be true for tonight. Well, I knew that I was hoping that it would still be true, and asked God in a silent prayer if it was. It seemed to me that He agreed that it was still so. Even though I was lost, somehow, I knew it was true (John 9:31).

Then we sang, and the preaching started. The text was from 2 Kings 5:1-14. As Bro. Terry began, it was evident to me that God was telling everyone in the church who I was especially me! It was as if God was letting me see for the first time who Brian really was. Yes, I was, in my own eyes, a man just like Naaman, great, honorable, mighty in valor. But then he read, '*but he was a leper,*' AND I

WAS LOST!

The way to salvation was not quite what I thought it was. And by the time Bro. Terry had finished preaching the story of Naaman, God had described the attitude of my pride, and my unbelief! I did not really want to cast myself prostrate on the floor and cry out to God, even for my salvation! That would be too embarrassing for me! That was the attitude of my pride. Not only that, but I could not believe that when I did obey the gospel that I had heard, that Jesus was actually going to be there to save me. UNBELIEF!

I remember asking God to help me believe and humble me out of my pride! I knew that I should obey, and I wanted to, but I just couldn't believe! Then God sent me some help. Bro. Terry went to Hebrews 4:1-2 and warned us to *'fear, lest the promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to fall short of it.'* And he went on to preach to us that the obedience was to believe.

Well, I was fearing, and seeing that I was falling short of His promise. I could not think or figure, and I was beyond my own help! I only knew that my pride and unbelief were causing me to stagger at the promise of His rest.

Then as Bro. Terry was ending verse two, I just went on and read verse three. And something happened when I read, *'Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.'* My heart seemed to believe that word *'finished!'* I felt like Jesus' work on the

cross was already finished for me. But I just couldn't believe enough to cast myself on Him and buried my head in my hands and began weeping over my unbelief.

At this same time, there were a lot of people praying and weeping as others were in the floor or at the altar trying to find God. As I heard them all, I knew they were praying for me. A lot of my friends from Grace were there, and all of them were weeping and praying! I thought again about casting myself on Him, but when I looked at the floor, there were so many of the ladies there praying that I could not lay myself out on the floor, that would just not look right. At least that's what I told God.

Then, as I thought about my present state, I began crying again. Seeing no hope in any other way, I once again looked at the floor in front of me. It was now empty; and I still could not obey!

But God knew that I needed help to overcome my mountain of unbelief, and sent to me my helper. As I was sitting there crying, it seemed that I was so close but so far from God and had no thoughts as to how to overcome anything anymore. It was then God sent my daughter Christal, who, sitting down beside me, looked in my eyes and said, *"Daddy, God saved me, and He can save you too!"*

Something inside me began to say 'YES!' By now all I could think about was casting myself on Him, even if it meant lying prostrate in the floor and crying out to Him!

Before I knew it, I was on the floor weeping and asking God to save me! I told Him all about my pride and my unbelief, and everything that I could not do for myself! And began telling Him that all I needed was Jesus' blood to cover me! There, peace and rest came to me.

Just like Abraham, I was 'fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform' (Romans 4:21) God had convinced me that what He had been telling me about His son was true through preaching (Romans 10:14-15 & 17), through the testimony of the scriptures in Hebrews 3, and John 5:39, and '*by the word of their testimony*' through Christal (revelation 12:11).

The next thing I knew, (a few minutes later,) Bro. Terry was next to me asking me how I was and what was going on inside. I thought, and then told him, "*I don't know.*" Then he told me just to give him one word to describe how I felt inside so that he could help me. Well, as I searched for just one word it was as if I did not even have a vocabulary anymore (2 Corinthians 5:17)!

Then a word finally came to me, CALM! That was the only word that really told what I felt inside!

So, I told Bro. Terry, "*calm, that's all I can tell you is calm!*"

Bro. Terry then asked me, "*What's that a result of?*" And immediately the word SALVATION came to my mind! But I could not speak that right then, (2 Corinthians 7:11), and told him, "*I don't know Bro. Terry.*" Then Bro. Terry got up, and patting me on the back said,

"You'll be all right."

'You'll be all right.' What did that mean? What happened to me? How come I don't know anything? Well, it was apparent that I was not going to figure this out tonight, so I told everyone good-bye and headed to the van to go home.

Then something else happened before I left. Outside, while telling Bro. Greg good-bye, he said he had a couple of quick questions.

First, he asked me if Jesus was Lord, and I said, *"Yes!"*

He asked me if Jesus was Master, and I said, *"Yes!"*

Then he asked me if Jesus was Saviour, and I said, *"Yes!"*

As I said yes to Jesus being Saviour, I started giggling down inside! I had to put my hand over my mouth to stop this from happening. I did not know why I was so happy, but it was still OK with me, so I went home.

Sunday morning came and we all got ready and went to church. At Sunday School one of the ladies testified about God saving her the night before. And as I listened to her talk, I started agreeing with everything she said. It was then that someone asked, *"What happened to you last night Brian?"* I just smiled and said, *"I don't know..."*

When Sunday School was over, we went into the sanctuary. I noticed that I was smiling a lot, and everyone else was smiling too! Then Bro. Greg started leading us in a hymn. The hymn was called, 'Ring the Bells of Heaven.' Well, as we started singing, something started going on inside me that I had never known before. I felt like my heart would just bust! I looked at my wife in the choir, and she and all of the other ladies were crying. I was crying too, and it didn't bother me at all (Romans 1:11).

After the song was over we sang another hymn, 'Heaven Came Down.' As soon as the hymn began, it started again! Something coming from way down inside that would just not stop! Jesus said in John 7:38, "*He that believeth on me, as the scripture hat said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*" But I would like to tell you, I had never before had this happen to me!

And then, some time before the first verse was over, 'The spirit itself began to bear witness with my spirit, that I was a child of God!' (Romans 8:16). And I realized that I WAS REALLY SAVED! All I could do was wave the tissue that was in my hand and shout, "GLORY TO GOD! THANK YOU, GOD, FOR SAVING ME!" (Romans 1:10)

Salvation is not what I thought, it is much better!

*“But, as it is written, Eye hat not seen, nor ear heard neither
have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared
for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His
Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God”*

(I Corinthians 2:9-10).

God has been very good to me ever since that night, May 18, 1996, when He gave me ‘life eternal,’
and let me know Him, the ‘only true God, and JESUS CHRIST whom He has sent!’ He has been ‘a
God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth!’

I could write much more about God and His goodness, but let me say for now that God is real, His
salvation is real, and you too can know this Merciful Saviour and ‘be filled with all the fullness of
God!’