

MY TESTIMONY

By Pam Vaughn

Psalms 139, Tells me:

The Lord has examined my heart and knows everything about me.

He knows my every thought.

He precedes me and follows me.

I can never be lost from his spirit

If I walk among the dead, he is there

If I try to hide in darkness, the night becomes a light around me.

I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

He made all the delicate inner parts of my Body

He scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe.

His thoughts are continually on me.

I was raised by my grandmother along with my two younger sisters.

When I was 14, we went to live across town with our mother. Up until that time her involvement in our lives consisted of mostly financial assistance.

My parents divorced when I was two. At age five my dad stopped his visits suddenly, leaving behind a letter with his explanation. I heard from him when I was age twenty but did not actually see him again until I was in my early thirties.

My sisters and I were raised by my grandmother in a Pentecostal church. At age twelve, I was baptized in the name of Jesus and filled with the Holy Ghost.

I remember as a child, I longed for the relationship that I saw other children having with their mothers. My grandmother took care of us, as best she could, but she was neither affectionate nor nurturing. I remember seeking out ladies in our church to fill those missing components in my life.

Our grandmother was extremely protective. As little girls, we were never allowed to talk to or play with any males of any age. So we played together with the girls in our neighborhood and at church. Being the out-going person that I am, I had a lot of female friends.

I remember having a crush on this boy in the seventh grade that lasted until I met my future husband in high school.

I wasn't allowed to go on dates alone. I always had to have one of my "tell-all" sisters or someone else with me. Nevertheless, I eloped at age sixteen with a young man who went to the same kind of church I did.

My husband and I sang in the church choir and were very active in our church. My entire young life, I loved going to church. By age twenty, I was the mother of two little boys who were the joy of my life.

I don't regret my early childhood. I was raised in truth which gave me a solid foundation to draw strength from in the years to follow.

Proverbs: 22: 6, Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

There were things that occurred later in my marriage, causing a lot of hurt and disappointment. The Enemy uses every tactic he can to find weaknesses in our lives. Then he moves in with deception.

After 18 years of marriage and a lengthy separation, my husband and I divorced. During my separation, I returned to school, getting my high school diploma and training in a technical field. Up until that time, I had been a stay at home mom. Now I was forced to be in the work arena. It was also during this difficult period in my life that the enemy sent his *perfect* delusion my way. I may have been hurting, but I do not blame anyone else for what I allowed in my life.

THE DECEPTION

I was introduced to the gay lifestyle by a friend that I had grown up with in church. She had left the church as a young adult. I began going to gay bars with her. People don't tell you about the hurtful relationships, insecurities, guilt, and secrecy that naturally accompany that type of lifestyle. It somehow seems to remain hidden until you find yourself in the trap!

I drifted deeper and deeper into darkness. Up until then, I had only been in a bar maybe one time, and that was to listen to my bother-in-law play the piano.

Through all of the darkness, Jesus never left me. He also never pressured me or stopped me from making mistake after mistake. Every time I gave Him a chance, I could feel His Spirit touching my heart.

Psalms 23:4, Yea, though I walk (not stop and stay) through the valley of the shadow of death, (deep darkness) thou art with me;
Verse 6, Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

Jesus protected me from alcohol, drugs and cigarettes. Every time I was offered those things, something inside would tell me "That's one more thing to deal with when you make it out."

After many years of a destructive lifestyle, I finally realized how trapped I was. I didn't know anyone who had ever been able to come out of the lesbian lifestyle and stay out, so I didn't feel there was anyone I could talk to; anyone who would understand. I didn't have the courage to seek counsel from my pastor, so I just tried to accept my life as it had become. I knew what I was involved in was wrong.

I prayed to God, "If there is a way out, help me find it."

Other times I remember telling myself that I would just die and take my chances with God. How could I ever think any thing like that? Satan's goal is to conquer and destroy the souls of men.

I would attend church once in a while and even on occasion get one of my "friends" to go with me. I wasn't really communicating with others in the church except my younger sister and my grandmother.

I was aware that my grandmother knew what I was doing. She knew everything! It wasn't because I told her. God did! She told me, she actually saw a dark cloud over me when I was walking down the aisle at church, just before it all began. Like other times, I dismissed it as her imagination but deep inside I knew what she was talking about. She did not bring it up again or treat me any differently than in the past but I knew she was praying. She never gave up on me!
1st Thes: 5: 17- Pray without ceasing.

In 1985, after a short illness, my grandmother died. Some of her last words to me were, "Go to church." God's presence was so sweet during that time. One night He spoke to me (a sinner) and let me know she was in His hands, and that I should trust Him to do what was best for her. I am so thankful for a praying grandmother that taught me truth!

MERCY SAW ME

About two years after Granny died, I was sitting in the house where I was staying when I started singing "*Lord You know I need a brand new touch. My strength from yesterday is gone. . .*" Where did that come from? I know now where it came from. I had given my inner man a chance to sing in the prison. Just like Paul and Silas sang in their prison, I too found the strength to sing. Something happened that night! Hope and mercy walked into my prison. God recognized my voice and heard my desperate cry.

Through the scars from the pain, sorrow, and battles of my mind, I wondered how God could recognize me. I wasn't the same. I should pay for all my wrong and for walking out on Him. I truly thought I had gone too far and done too much. I had to learn to see myself through God's merciful eyes.

HE HEARD MY CRY AND MY SONG IN THE NIGHT

I cried out to Jesus! I withdrew myself as much as I could from negative influences and I began attending church again on Sunday evenings. I did not let myself dwell on the devil's negative talk, and I kept asking Jesus to help me.

It was at that point that I really began feeling demonic forces fighting me. It was a fight to get dressed for church. Things would come up on Sunday night, enticing me to stay away from church.

Ultimately, I remember telling God, "If you will take me back, I'll be happy to just sit on the pew and worship You." I didn't consider that He would ever allow me to be a useful part in His

kingdom again.

One Sunday afternoon, I called a lady in the church looking for my son. She asked me if I would be at church that night and I told her I was trying but it was a struggle. She made a statement that gave me a revelation. She said, “Your inner man is bound. It has to be freed, then you can do what is right.”

That Sunday night, I was standing in the back of the sanctuary with the lady I had spoken to earlier. She softly placed her hand on my head and began praying silently. God’s Spirit went through my entire body. I felt the demonic oppressive spirits that had me bound leave. I could lift my hands to Jesus.

The next day my sister and brother-in-law asked me to move in with them. I packed up my belongings, drove away and never went back to where I was staying again. I broke **all** communications with those people that I had been associating with. God had offered me a way of escape and I took it.

In the days and years since I made that move, God has ministered to me in such sweet and loving ways. He’s guided me through some very difficult changes. He gave me some of the best friends anyone could ask for. He has never failed me.

I returned to the choir, and eventually became involved in church leadership. I am so glad Jesus looks beyond all our scars, mistakes, and faults, and sees not what we are but what we can be. I learned that rebellion, self -will and self-talk will allow Satan to come in and rob a person of their self-esteem, their dignity and their soul.

It has now been almost 22 years since that night when Jesus showed His power, mercy, love, and grace to me; His prodigal child. God restored to me all I had thrown away back then, plus, He gave me so much more.

There have been temptations and trials along the way, but Jesus has done as He promised. With every temptation, He has provided for me a way of escape.