

## Chapter Five

### *The Unexpected*

At this point I was about to discover two very unexpected truths. First, I had no idea God was going to be personal to my life's details. I never expected Him to communicate with me, and guide my life in a real and tangible way. Secondly, the secular man would expect that if the Christian message is true then everyone "believing" in Jesus would be saved. Eternal life and the complete forgiveness of sins are incredible gifts that I assumed everyone would want and have already obtained. I was about to discover this wasn't the case at all.

I knew that people prayed, but I didn't understand God interacts in the personal details of people's lives. I figured He did enough by saving us and giving man the Bible to go by. I really thought we were on our own until we died, and then went to heaven to be with Him. I knew that God had healed and saved me, but I didn't expect anything else. I never heard anyone except the woman from the lab talk about what Jesus was doing in their lives. If he was personal and involved then people should be talking about it. I heard silence for thirty six years.

I didn't know He wanted a personal relationship with me. This really blew my mind. A daily ongoing personal relationship to provide support and guidance through prayer was unimaginable. I then began *Looking Back* at my past and realized how the Lord had put all of the pieces together in my life to save me. If He orchestrated all of those details then He logically would want to be involved in my life now. You see I realized that I didn't find God in a personal quest for truth at all. He came and rescued me! The entire *Journey* was my Father in heaven coming after a lost son. This blew me away! I could sense the love just by thinking about this.

Then I started praying all the time. I talked to God wherever I went about anything and everything. It really felt good to talk with him. I felt like an *Orphan* that had been found by his lost Father. I was overcome with joy, peace, and meaning until it hit me. Suddenly, I realized a lot of my family and friends were not saved. They were still living in *The Great Deception*. Now the horror began. They were headed straight to eternal separation where those that never acknowledge God spend eternity without Him. I began to pray for family and friends who were lost. My prayers focused on a chance to give my testimony to those who might need to hear it.

The results that I have seen from prayer in the past six months are staggering to the imagination. The orchestration of all lives and events by God has been made very clear to me. Ultimate "coincidences" and specific results have both been observed in direct relation to prayers for specific individuals. Things began to happen to people who I prayed for to such a degree it made them stop and think. People began to be saved and it was awesome. My life was dichotomous. I was overcome with excitement and wonder about God saving me, but I also was filled with great fear for those people still deceived like I was for thirty six years.

I did have some Christian friends though! Thank goodness they would all be saved, and I didn't have to worry about them! What a relief at this point! They had been religious their whole lives, believed in the Bible, and went to church. I could certainly take them off my list. I called one of my friends who is

Jewish and married to a Christian. I figured he would think I was nuts, and she would help me convince him to be saved. I had to approach him no matter what he thought, because he was my buddy. We had lived most of our lives as good friends and he was first on my list to help. I knew if I could convince him that his family would follow. Thank God I could count on his Christian wife for assistance right? You can see it coming, I was wrong.

She basically said “I don’t see what the big deal is. Why are you bothering him with this? We believe in God. You are just stating what the Bible says. I went to Christian high school, and I believe in Jesus and the Bible. My husband believes in “God”. What is this Holy Spirit and being saved business? I know the trinity but so what?” I was speechless and didn’t even argue. What she said says it all. This illustrates one of the most critical problems facing Christianity today that was totally unexpected to me.

She didn’t get it. She was a “Christian” and still didn’t get it. I was going to have an easier time with him! She did not understand her own faith at its most crucial point. How could this be? Jesus Christ came to earth to save mankind. Christianity without salvation is useless. I could not understand how a Christian would not embrace the critical issue of salvation for her family. It didn’t make sense to me, but I didn’t understand what was going on yet. I quickly thought this must be a fluke.

I then decided to talk to some of my church friends who would be glad to hear I was saved. They were likely praying for me all along, and would rejoice at the news. I quickly noticed that most of them were very uncomfortable with my good news. They seemed very uneasy and looked at me like they had no idea what I was talking about! They almost didn’t even want to hear it! What in the world was this about!? I just didn’t get it!

It came out in these conversations that most of them had never read the Bible, and did not understand salvation, the Holy Spirit, or a personal relationship with God. Even more astounding was quite a few of them didn’t really believe when you pinned them down despite many years of church attendance. I was shocked again to learn that many of their churches didn’t even teach the Bible let alone believe it was the word of God!?!? This absolutely blindsided me. When I tried to explain it to them it was like a fog was over them. They just didn’t get it. I was irritating them! This is crazy but true.

At this point insanity was setting in and so I called my new pastor over to my house. I asked him what was going on. He knew exactly what I was talking about, and was even a little amused at my ignorance. I was so unchurched that my innocent confusion was almost funny. Then he laid it out for me. I will never forget this moment as long as I live.

He explained how many people in church are not saved including the pastor! He told me how the Bible wasn’t being taught as the cornerstone to the entire problem since it is the power of salvation. Many churches have become Sunday social gatherings to feel religious and quiet the conscience in order to avoid accountability and a changed life. False doctrine, manmade traditions, and rituals have largely replaced a personal relationship with Jesus Christ to the point that the beautiful message of the Gospel of salvation has been lost. Not only that but when you try and tell people the truth they fight it, which he explained reveals the underlying motive of the heart.

I kept asking him “Why? Why?” God is so good and personal why would people avoid Him for religion? Why wouldn’t people want to go to heaven and live forever? He then explained that many churches don’t even teach Biblical salvation! They have false doctrine even about heaven and being saved! He told me to talk to some people in church about their salvation.

Most of the people I talked with had “A Story”. Many of them had spent many years in church before actually being saved. A very common link was emerging. Wherever there were problems with salvation the Bible was absent. I didn’t realize the power of God’s word that makes the heart ready, the faith sufficient, and convicts the soul. This is the trinity of salvation and the reason that the Bible is the power of salvation. All of these people had been in *Churchianity*. It was all about church and not Jesus!?

One person thought they had salvation from joining a church. Another was convinced for a while that his baptism at birth and official ceremony of joining his faith earned him salvation. One person decided to join a faith, and took some classes and was told he was now “good”. One lady spent many years in church and never even heard about salvation, and so she assumed she had it. One person thought because they thought of themselves as Christian and were raised going to church that this defined being a Christian. Another man recited a sinner’s prayer and thought he was saved from a word formula.

They were totally blown away when they discovered Christianity is not a moral social club a person decides to join. These were all people who could now look back and realize they were *Mislead and Deceived*. They thought they knew Jesus Christ but didn’t. They had never repented of sin. Some of them had confessed sin, but they did not desire to change. I also began to realize that I had humbled myself and literally cried out for mercy and grace that night. I had come to the end of myself and knew I needed a savior. A lot of people are not willing to humble themselves because of pride. Asking for salvation is like being a beggar who admits being a helpless failure in the eternal sense. Many people “believe” in Jesus and understand who He is but never receive Him. Some people told me that when they got saved people church friends avoided them! It actually caused problems?!

What was going on here? How could all these people who went to church for many years, listening to sermons, and intellectually believing in Jesus be so close and yet miss the mark? It’s like a bunch of people won the lottery that are sitting in the claims office but never redeem the tickets. Why? I just never thought I would discover something so strange. If God is real then why not rejoice over Him? If salvation is a real event and transaction why get upset over it? I was told many people like to go to church, but didn’t want God to be that real.

As you will see many people are victims of churches in *The Great Defection* which make people feel good and “Christian” to quiet the conscience by watered down doctrine. Maybe if these teachers realize the true implications of *He Heard Me* they will teach the truth out of fear. Many people are trying to do the right thing with sincerity and honesty, but are not being taught the truth. Christian religion is probably the most dangerous risk factor for missing heaven. This is sad but true.

Those who are sincere and in search of truth should be encouraged by a scoffer and physician turned evangelist almost overnight. People who are victims of *Churchianity* will be helped by the testimonies of people who escaped *The Great Deception*. You will read their testimonies.