

Listen, Hear, and Obey

If Noah didn't listen to the calling of God, he could have built a park instead of an Ark. He would have been repenting all the days of his life. The same way with Moses, if he only listened to what God said to not strike the stone and just tell the stone to pour water for the Israelites to drink if he only listened to God's instructions, Moses could have entered the promise Land.

Today, I would like to share how listening to God became a huge blessing in my life. How in praying I hear God's precious voice, and how my obedience to Him becomes a lifetime joy and testimony.

I became a born again Christian 19 years ago. I didn't grow up in a Christian home, but the Lord gave me a family that walked and guided me in my Christian life. In my first two years after receiving the Lord, I was mentored and studied the bible with my mentors. God is so good that I can't believe it was that long ago already, but the teaching, mentoring and blessings, I can still remember as if it was just yesterday. And during those two years after receiving the Lord I was so on-fire sharing Jesus and His gospel to anybody that I met; rich and poor, young and old. And so thankful to God for that fire in my heart it didn't go away it is still on fire sharing Jesus and his gospel to everybody. Even to my neighbors who are already born again, lol.

My life is not ordinary, God designed it so well. He gave me two families that I love, and who loved me back. My family will always be first in my heart. Living with both my foster family and my real family was not that easy. My foster family believes in the same faith I have in God, Jesus, and the Spirit I have, while, on the other hand my real family did not. My foster parents exposed me to different ministries and Missions. My foster family had a mom and dad, but my real family only had mom. My real dad left us when I was about 14 years old. For so many years I didn't have my real dad around, but the Lord promised me when I received Him that "though my father and my mother will forsake me, I still have the Lord to receive me." Psalm 27:10 I claimed that and it is so true. God gave me foster parents to show me how much He loves me, so that I wouldn't feel abandoned and live as an orphan.

With my real dad being gone, life moved on for me and my real family. I joined three ministries, on top of my studies and church activities. One night, I was with Youth With A Mission sharing the gospel to the red light area in Olongapo, and Aasmund one of the other four men who mentored me, asked me if I would like my real family to be saved and said I should start praying for them. I listened, I heard it as if God was telling me to pray, and I obeyed.

So many times when I led someone to receive Jesus and become born again, I asked God, God when will my real family become saved? Is it today Lord? My prayers for salvation for my real family started two years after I received the Lord. It became a burden in my heart. Soul after soul after soul that I helped lead to Jesus, for so many years, the same question I asked God, is it today Lord? And for many years, I was not embarrassed to ask fellow Christians I met to pray for the salvation of my real family.

For many years I continued serving the Lord. Last year, January of 2008, was the hardest time of my life being here in Michigan. January 10, 2008, my real-mom's mom died. This is the grandmother who was so close to me. It was the most devastating time for me inside...on top of this after three months my real-dad's brother died, then a month later my real- dad's dad (my grandfather) died. God opened a door for me to share fully with my brother and my real mom about my faith through all the losses that we had, during that time, my youngest brother and my mom were the closest people that I could share my innermost feelings. I mourned in the presence of God, isolated myself and just soaked with God and His word. I asked God if my grandma received His son Jesus before she died. God answered me through a dream, I saw my grandma coming into a big shiny door, a huge hand welcome my grandma and I heard His gentle voice "welcome my beloved one." I was a relieved, at least those times I shared with my grandma about Jesus were not wasted.

I didn't understand, I couldn't understand. It was too much to carry inside me knowing that I was not able to come home to mourn with my family, and to mourn with my own loss. I was angry and frustrated. God was so good because in spite of all these sad situations during that time God was talking to me about my family's salvation. I didn't really listen because most of the prayer time I had with God since I came here, I was the center. I often preached to God, counseled Him of what to do, and gave Him suggestions of what I thought was right. I yelled at Him, I taught God what He should tell my family the way I thought they would accept Him. Of course I didn't think I would win, but God is a good listening God. He listened to every tear that I had for my lost family, in spite of my anger and frustrations.

The night I was coming home from jail ministry. The First Wednesday in December 2008. I was crying, and telling God I wanted to give up. I led a lady to the Lord, and was tired to ask God, is this the day Lord? Lord you said if I got saved and followed you, my whole family would be saved.... When Lord? I stopped at the boardwalk and just cried. I heard a voice telling me to call my mom and tell her about the life in hell, tell her the way I told the story about the rich man and Lazarus with the women in the jail that night. I got chilled and said "You've got to be kidding my Lord? Telling my mom about hell will be like wishing I wasn't born at all. God I wish that I won't have to tell her this, but God is not a fairy tale kind of God, He speaks the truth, and when he say his words, thing happen in truth. Then, on my way home, I heard His voice again, saying don't lose hope now, my little one, stay on the winning team. Ok Lord, I will call my mom, tell her about hell and then just hang up the phone. So I called Nanay (mom), God open up a conversation for me and Nanay and led us to talk about heaven, hell, faith, and salvation. I told her that if she will not receive Jesus as her Lord and savior she will not be able to enter heaven, and if she goes down below, I will not be able to e-mail or call her there. So you have to choose like in the restaurants Nanay; smoking area or non-smoking? She got mad at first and didn't talk to me for a week. I called her again and followed up with her, and she said she will think about it. It was buckets full of tears and prayers experienced for me. Another phone call she asked me

how she can know about my God...I told her there is no other way but through His son Jesus Christ.

During that time my dad came back home to live with her again. My youngest brother was also becoming curious about my faith, and I was sharing with him too. I didn't call for about 2 months after Christmas, then while we are hosting the 40 days of love study, the third Friday after our study, I called my Nanay in the Philippines because I received an e-mail from my brother to call her. When I called it was a huge shocking moments for me to hear from them that they all got saved and had just finished with their bible study in my mom's house. Even my real dad got saved, which never in my dreams will he appear to receive Jesus as his savior. The owner of the college that my oldest brother graduated from was used by God to continue reaching out to my family.

I cried to Dave, cried a lot, a bucket full of tears. And I cried to all my friends from Norway, Ireland, Britain, Philippines and from everywhere who never gave up praying and fasted for my family for 17 years. James 5:16 says "when a believing person prays great/wonderful things happen", Philippians 4:11 "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death, sadness, crying or pain." I felt like a warrior that just dropped my sword, the war was over, I was with my God's winning team. If you will ask me how I prayed, I didn't do it alone, I have my friends, family in the church from the Philippines and my new family here in Cornerstone who prayed with me to have this miraculous answer...The God who heard my prayers from the Philippines is the same God who heard and answered my prayers here in America.

To this present day, it is a huge freedom for me to call them and ask them to pray for my concerns, and to talk to them about God's word. When we listen to God and walk with obedience, God gets the glory, and we receive the joy from Him. Noah walked with God, but he didn't do all the talking. In one conversation that I had with my mom early May I asked her what made her come to my Jesus, she said our separation was too much to comprehend. If she wouldn't see me again, she has the assurance that in Jesus Christ we will meet again. She also said that she was so thankful that I have given her my two ears to listen to her, and she appreciates that. So often people around us just need someone to listen to them, if they needed to be counseled I know that they will ask to be counseled. Giving up our time is also one other key. I wrote her an e-mail through my brother's email address, in the e-mail I included a hymnal that I longed to sing to her before I left Philippines, at least on the e-mail she will understand now that she knows the Lord, The e-mail goes like this: Dear Nanay, I am glad to welcome you and our family to our home in heaven. Nanay our separations tear my heart apart but I am grateful to God that we are now family not only here on earth but also in heaven with our Jesus love. Nanay you are the best mom and best friend I ever have and I am glad that you and mommy Denise taught me well. I love you and mommy Denise with no comparison in the world. I long to sing this for you but didn't get the chance; but now that you are a believer of Jesus I know you will understand the meaning. I hope you will like this:

Soon we'll come to the end of life's journey. And perhaps we'll never meet anymore, 'till we gather in heaven's bright City, Far away on that beautiful shore. If we never meet again this side of heaven, as we struggle through this world and it's strife. There's another meeting place somewhere in Heaven, by the beautiful river of life. Where the charming roses bloom forever, And separations come no more. Nanay, if we never meet again this side of heaven. I will meet you on that beautiful shore.

For my real dad, his old ways are gone and I don't want to meet him and look upon him with his past. He is now a new creation of Christ. Time healed me from my past hurts from Him. I am on the winning team and my real dad joined in. Sometimes a winner is like a dreamer who never gives up. God allows trials in our life not to impair us but to improve us. My family is a very great example of God's grace for people who are in need. But the past is gone and now it is time for my real dad's new life with the Lord which is a joy for me to see....My Nanay didn't just gain my real-dad back but also gained a spiritual leader in their home. Now, they read the bible everyday together and pray together, I can't even keep up. They give their tithes faithfully to their church, and have a growing number of attendants to their bible study in their own home every Saturday morning. Amen to that!

I am rejoicing inside me and thankful to God for this wonderful gift of salvation. I would like to encourage you today, Today is the day of salvation, start praying now for your family and friends who are still lost. God hears your prayers.