

WOMAN, WHY ARE YOU WEEPING?

Annie Zac Poonen

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THIS BOOK AND YOU

A woman has been blessed by her Maker with a sensitive nature. She is capable of great depths of feeling and has a rare capacity to understand people's problems. Thus she is able to alleviate the pains of others with sympathy and concern.

But this sensitivity is also the cause of many of her problems. Tragic things happen to her just like they happen to others. And it is then that she herself needs help!

Some women weep for weeks on end as if their sorrows could be drowned in the sea of their tears. Others weep inwardly and are crushed by the weight of their grief. Many women retain the emotional scars of their suffering long after their problems have been solved.

But sorrows and trials can be turned to a good purpose – the purpose with which a sovereign God Who loves us intensely, allows them to enter our lives. Trials can shape our character. Like the sandalwood tree that imparts its fragrance to the axe that cuts it, a woman can become a blessing to many (even to the one who harms her) through what she has learnt of God in her sorrows! To become a woman of God, one must be prepared to face many trials, but these trials must not be permitted to overwhelm us.

Many of my friends have gone through great depths of grief and sorrow. In some of those cases, I was unable to fathom the depths of their suffering. But giving them a listening ear, talking to them, writing to them, and being a friend to them has enriched me immensely. I have discovered that we can become better persons, if we learn to handle suffering aright. We receive a unique education in the school of suffering. The final reward is Christ-likeness in character.

“When He has tested me I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

But the fire that purifies the *gold* also hardens the *clay*. A woman too can be hardened through her sufferings and live her life with endless complaints against others, and against God as well!

Almost all our trials and sufferings are events over which we have no control. But the Lord can turn them to our profit by making something good happen *within* us. All things work together for good to those who love God and who are called according to His purpose (Rom.8: 28).

Jesus meets us women today, just as He met Mary Magdalene when she was weeping at His tomb on the resurrection morning. He asks us the same question too: **“Woman, why are you weeping”**.

“He knows every detail of what is happening to us” (Job 23:10 – Living). He is not ignorant.

And He goes on to ask us: **“Whom are you seeking?”**

What will our reply be? Will we be able to say honestly, “Lord, it is **You** that I’m seeking in the midst of my trials. It is **Your face** alone that I long to see through my tears”.

How insufficient is the comfort we get from *people*. Let us look to Jesus instead.

Even the weeping mother of Jesus found comfort from *Him* as He hung on the cross. He arranged a home for her to stay in and told John to look after her.

Such is His concern for each of us women even today. Let us find our rest in His concern for us.

Bangalore

Annie Zac Poonen

CHAPTER ONE

GOD IS YOUR FATHER

“I ascend to My Father and to your Father” (John 20: 17).

While working as a doctor, I came across a number of women who used to abandon their babies in the hospital, if the babies were *girls!* The mothers would disappear without paying their bills. They were poor and they were disappointed to have borne girls, who they felt would only be a burden to them all their lives. The wretched dowry system in India causes so many problems, especially to poor girls, in every part of our country. Those mothers felt that their girl-babies would have the opportunity for a better life, if left in a Christian hospital or orphanage, than if they were taken back to their village. In an orphanage, perhaps some rich person may even adopt their girl! And there was less chance in a Christian orphanage, of their child being abused by men.

In my surgical ward, there was a sweet, nameless, two year old girl, who never smiled, never spoke, hardly cried and even refused to eat. She was found at the gate of the hospital by a social worker. The girl seemed to be quite intelligent. But looking into her eyes filled with pathos, one could only imagine what horrors she had already faced in her brief earthly life. All of us who worked in that ward liked her and did our best to cheer her up. Usually such little girls were sent to some Christian orphanage. This one was my patient and so, when she recovered, some Christian friends and I arranged for her to be sent to a well-known Christian orphanage.

I used to enquire about her occasionally through the years and even prayed for her now and then. Then one day, more than 30 years later, I met her. She was now married and had children. But the very first question she asked me was: **“Who are my parents?”**

All through those 30 years, this question had haunted her. There was a vacuum in her heart that had longed for the love of a father and a mother – something that she had never received in the orphanage.

She had everything else that a woman would want – a good husband, children, education and even a good job. But there was still this ache in her heart that made her weep as soon as she met me.

Unfortunately, I couldn't tell her who her parents were, for I didn't know. But I could tell her of a loving Father in heaven who could be more to her than any earthly parent could ever be. She couldn't however, bring herself to forgive her unknown parents for deserting her when she was a baby. I could see that those feelings of rejection were destroying her soul.

I can think of other girls who, even though they have parents, have not received from them the love and attention that they longed for. These girls too have grown up as insecure, lonely, unhappy individuals in a hard and cruel world.

And then there are the girls from broken homes, and girls born to unwed mothers. Many, many girls facing such tragedies feel that their parents cannot understand them.

Many young girls come from backgrounds that are tragic, but all of them can find the security, love and care that they long for, if they come to the bosom of our heavenly Father.

Do you hurt from memories of some abuse that you may have suffered in the past - perhaps a deep, secret hurt, which you cannot tell anyone? I met a girl once who had been sexually abused as a child. She felt so dirty, angry and robbed of her virginity that she could never trust any man. How relieved she was when I told her to look at the whole matter as “an accident” that happened to her - for which she was in no way responsible.

Jesus alone can heal every hurt and cleanse away the guilt and shame. He can help you to forgive the one who harmed you. Your experience can make you compassionate toward others who have suffered similarly - so that you can help them.

Perhaps you resent your strict parents and the restrictions that they imposed on you about your dress and conduct etc., Some girls at times feel like running away from their home to end their lives. But there is no girl whose future looks entirely negative. There is a silver lining in every dark cloud. So learn to think of the good things that can happen to you.

Be thankful for the good things your parents did for you, so that you are alive today. God can help you to adjust to the difficulties and trials you are facing. So don't ever give up hope.

Don't envy the lot of those who seem to have a better deal in life. God did not make any mistake in the way He made you or in the environment that He planned for you. There are millions in the world whose lot is more sad than yours. You have much to be thankful for.

Perhaps you sinned and conceived a child before getting married. I know many girls, in such situations, who made the the *right* decision, to *have* their babies. Some kept their babies with them; others gave them away for adoption. But they did not kill their babies. And when they humbled themselves before God and repented, He gave them understanding husbands too. The Lord took away their guilt and shame. So you can trust God even in such dark times - even if others malign you.

The Lord is waiting to receive you and offer you a new life.

Some time ago, we read in the newspapers in India of three sisters in a family (all of marriageable age) who together committed suicide, by hanging themselves in their bedroom. Their father had been unable to afford the large dowry that the parents of every boy was asking, if their son was to marry any of these girls - and the father was getting desperate and frustrated. They decided to put an end to their father's misery by ending their own lives!! How tragic!

Perhaps you are facing a similar situation, where every marriage proposal that comes for you ends up being cancelled because of the large dowry demanded. Don't get discouraged. God is your Father and He knows your need and cares for you. Marriage is not the greatest thing in the world. Fulfilling God's plan for your life is. So dedicate yourself totally to God and seek to do His will alone in your life. And you will have a fulfilling life when you come to the end of it, whether you are married or not. Some of the greatest missionaries in the world have been unmarried women.

Have you *failed in some examination*, even after trying your best? Do you feel that others do not sympathise with you? Does the devil make you feel that your whole life is a failure? Don't entertain those demonic thoughts, for they can finally lead you to the point where you may try to end your life.

You can stop weeping, my sister. Your life need not come to a standstill just because you failed in one examination – or even in many examinations. Do those exams again. One day you will succeed. Never give up. And if you don't pass, or don't have the intelligence or the financial resources to study further, remember that God has chosen the poor and the weak of this world to shame the clever and the rich.

God loves you just as you are – whether you pass your examinations or not! He doesn't look at your marks-card before accepting you!

Perhaps you have been *disappointed in love!* The one you had hoped to marry has now married someone else. And you weep - as all youngsters will do at such times.

But if that young man married someone else, that only goes to prove that he was *not in the will of God for you*. God has someone better or *something* better for you – perhaps a *single* life of service to Him.

God allows many things in our lives to make Himself more precious to us than everything and everyone else in the world. Let Him then be the fairest of all on earth to you from now onwards.

So to those who were *forsaken by their parents*, let me say: There is no need to find out why your parents abandoned you. *You were not a mistake*, for all your days were written in God's book from eternal ages (Psa.139: 15,16).

You were chosen by God before He created the worlds (Eph 1:4,11). You are not responsible for the mistakes of your parents.

You have pined long enough for a family. Rejoice now that you have a Heavenly Father Who wants to make you a part of His family. And remember: *He never abandons His children*.

He has loved you with an everlasting love and He has lavished that love on you. Picture yourself always as a child, safe in the loving arms of God your Father. You were created in His image and He longs to bless you and to be available to you always.

He is waiting to show you all that He has kept in store for you. One day He will take you to live in the mansion He has prepared for you - a far better place than any earthly house or inheritance. But you must accept His offer to become His child and be a part of His family. Then no one can wrench you out of His hand. So give your whole life to Him.

"As many as received Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become the children of God even to those who believe in His Name"(John 1:12).

You can become a child of the heavenly Father if you admit that you are a sinner, accept the death of Jesus for your sins.

Repent of all your sins and forsake them – and He will cleanse you thoroughly in the blood that He shed for you.

Forgive all those who have wronged you - including your parents.

Don't allow memories of the past to haunt you or condemn you.

You cannot fulfil God's plan for your life, if you keep feeling condemned about your past.

You must put your past behind you once for all. Put your past under the blood of Jesus – and press on towards the future.

Jesus suffered and died not only to make you clean, but also *to make you feel clean*.

When Christ comes into your life, you are justified before God.

And God looks at you now, *just as if you had never sinned in your entire life*. Let the realisation of that fact bring joy to your heart - *always*.

Thus you, like many of us who did what I just wrote, will belong to the wonderful family of God .

As you read the Bible, you will hear God speaking to your heart.

And when you speak to Him in prayer, you will have the assurance that He hears from heaven and will answer you.

The Father told Jesus once, "You are My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". One day He will call you His beloved child as well – one in whom He is well pleased. Do not weep any more.

You are not an orphan. ***You are the child of a King.***

I read a letter some time ago, that beautifully expresses what I am trying to say. It was written by Barry Adams, who has very kindly given me permission to quote his inspired compilation here in full :

FATHER'S LOVE LETTER

The words you are about to read are true.

*They will change your life if you let them - for they come from the heart of God. He loves you.
And He is the Father you've been looking for all your life.
This is His love letter to you.*

My Child.

You may not know Me, but I know everything about you	(Psalm 139:1)
I know when you sit down and when you rise up	(Psalm 139:2)
I am familiar with all your ways	(Psalm 139:3)
Even the very hairs on your head are numbered (10:29-31)	(Matthew
For you were made in My image	(Genesis 1:27)
In Me you live and move and have your being	(Acts 17:28)
For you are My offspring	(Acts 17:28)
I knew you even before you were conceived (5)	(Jeremiah 1:4-
I chose you when I planned creation (1:11-12)	Ephesians
You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in My book (16)	(Psalm 139:15-
I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live	(Acts 17:26)
You are fearfully and wonderfully made	(Psalm 139:14)
I knit you together in your mother's womb	(Psalm 139:13)
And brought you forth on the day you were born	(Psalm 71:6)
I have been misrepresented by those who don't know Me	(John 8:41-44)
I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love	(1 John 4:16)
And it is My desire to lavish My love on you	(1 John 3:1)
Simply because you are My child and I am your Father	(1 John 3:1)
I offer you more than your earthly father ever could	(Matthew 7:11)
For I am the perfect Father	(Matthew 5:48)
Every good gift that you receive comes from My hand	(James 1:17)
For I am your provider and I meet all your need (33)	(Matthew 6:31-
My plan for your future has always been filled with hope (29:11)	(Jeremiah
Because I love you with an everlasting love	(Jeremiah 31:3)
My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore (18)	(Psalm 139:17-
And I rejoice over you with singing (3:17)	(Zephaniah
I will never stop doing good to you (Jeremiah 32:40)	
For you are My treasured possession	(Exodus 19:5)
I desire to establish you with all My heart and all My soul (32:41)	(Jeremiah
And I want to show you great and marvelous things	(Jeremiah 33:3)
If you seek Me with all your heart, you will find Me (4:29)	(Deuteronomy
Delight in Me and I will give you the desires of your heart	(Psalm 37:4)

For it is I who gave you those desires 2:13)	(Philippians
I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine 3:20)	(Ephesians
For I am your greatest Encourager Thessalonians 2:16-17)	(2
I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles 1:3-4)	(2 Corinthians
When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you	(Psalm 34:18)
As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to My heart	(Isaiah 40:11)
One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes 21:3-4)	(Revelation
And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth 21:3-4)	(Revelation
I am your Father, and I love you even as I love My Son, Jesus	(John 17:23)
For in Jesus, My love for you is revealed	(John 17:26)
He is the exact representation of My being	(Hebrews 1:3)
He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you	(Romans 8:31)
And to tell you that I am not counting your sins 5:18-19)	(2 Corinthians
Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled 5:18-19)	(2 Corinthians
His death was the ultimate expression of My love for you	(1 John 4:10)
I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love 32)	(Romans 8:31-
If you receive the gift of My Son Jesus, you receive Me	(1 John 2:23)
And nothing will ever separate you from My love again 39)	(Romans 8:38-
Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen	(Luke 15:7)
I have always been Father, and will always be Father 3:14-15)	(Ephesians
My question is, "Will you be My child?"	(John 1:12-13)
 <i>I am waiting for you.</i>	 (Luke 15:11-32)

*Love,
Your Dad,
Almighty God.*

(Copyright Barry Adams –1999)
[You can see "Father's Love Letter" on the webpage:
<http://www.fathersloveletter.com>]

CHAPTER TWO

GOD IS YOUR HUSBAND

“Your Husband is your Maker, Whose Name is the Lord of Hosts. Your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel who is called, the God of all the earth (Isa.54:5).

A good friend of mine suddenly lost her husband in a tragic accident. He had not even wished his young wife good-bye. His life was snuffed out by the cruel mistake of a drunken driver who ran him over on the road. And this happened as he was on his way to a prayer-meeting.

Another friend of mine lost her husband after a very brief illness. That unwelcome visitor called “Death” comes uninvited to every home. Only the bereaved one can understand the gnawing pain and the loneliness that death brings. Your thoughts are full of memories of your loved one and you keep wishing that you could re-live those happy days with him again. But it is not to be. Tears that flow day after day and torrents of weeping at night are the only relief that you get from your overwhelming grief. The Bible says that our Lord makes a note of all our tears : *“You have seen me tossing and turning through the night. You have collected all my tears and preserved them in your bottle! You have recorded every one of my tears in Your book” (Psa.56:8-Living).*

One precious child of God read the following article the very month her young husband went to be with the Lord. When I met her, I saw how she had found great comfort in God through it:

“There is perhaps today some woman who a year ago or it may be a few months or weeks or possibly a few days ago had by her side a man so strong and wise that she was freed from all sense of responsibility and care, for all the burdens were upon him. How bright and happy were the days of his companionship. But the dark day came when that loved one was taken away, and how lonely and empty and barren and full of burden and care is life today. Listen woman, there is One who walks right by your side today who is far wiser and stronger and more loving and more able to guide and help than the wisest and strongest and most loving husband that ever lived. He is ready to bear all the burdens and responsibilities of life for you. Yes ready to do far more. Ready to come and dwell in your heart and fill every nook and corner of your empty and aching heart and thus banish all the loneliness and heartache for ever.” (A.W.Tozer)

Another woman could not live anymore with her alcoholic husband and felt she had come to the limits of patience. All her friends suggested that she separate from him. She was at her wits end. She had nowhere to turn and she did not know how she would ever be able to cope all by herself.

Are you suffering something like that? Is your loneliness arising from a separation from your husband? Are you haunted with memories that bring regret and remorse? Do you find yourself wishing that those angry outbursts had never occurred?

Even if you are a single parent facing tangled, complex situations because of your children and surrounded by unhelpful relatives, nothing is too difficult for the Lord.

He will enter into your life and undo every knot that Satan has tied and solve every problem - if you will only yield your all- unreservedly to Him.

So stop weeping. Just hand over the broken fragments of your life to Him. He is the Master-Potter who can remake every broken vessel. We are but clay in the Potter’s Hands! (Jer:18:6).

Are you facing the cold, chilly blast of another woman who has entered your husband’s life? The Lord can help you to forgive both of them. Your life need not be blighted *even by that.*

Don’t shed tears of anger. The Lord will make up for the loss of your earthly partner. He can even change your partner’s heart and turn it towards you once again. He is a God Who does wonders.

Don’t plan something in hatred. Instead, ask God to fill your heart with His love and to give you grace to speak words of love to your husband, instead of bitter words. God is near those who are crushed in spirit.

Perhaps you longed to be married, but nothing has worked out for you as yet. Find your comfort in Jesus alone. The Father has already given us the best Helper - the Holy Spirit (Jn.14:16). He will not leave us comfortless.

Perhaps you are disturbed each time you hear the news that someone is getting married. You don't feel like congratulating her. Instead you feel like weeping in your room. Jesus is near you and feels your pain.

The dark nights of weeping covered up by outward tranquillity in the daytime, are all known to Him. He does not stand aloof when His beloved child goes through sorrow. His heart bled for us. He will reach down and touch you and pour His healing balm into your heart and your sorrow will become bearable.

His yoke is easy and His burden is light. And your faithfulness in this trial will finally bring you an eternal weight of glory.

I have heard the testimonies of some widows whose husbands were martyred for the Lord. What a note of victory there was in their words!

It amazed me!

How could they forgive the ones who killed their husbands?

The Master who prayed for those who crucified Him saying, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing", alone can help us.

I met a poor, young widow once, whose husband had been axed to death in North India for preaching the gospel. I was moved immensely as I heard her testimony. Standing there with her little children, she said that her prayer was that in the very place where her husband's blood was shed, a church should be born. Indeed, she was a triumphant, weeping sister.

The blood of Jesus cries out for mercy, unlike the blood of Abel that cried for vengeance.

A true child of God can live as the Lord taught us to live in the *sermon on the mount* (*Matthew chapters 5,6 and 7*).

God is the God of the *widows* and *fatherless*.

Jesus taught a parable on prayer where He likened us to a *widow* who went to an unjust judge for protection against her adversary. She persisted and thus got what she wanted.

Jesus once publicly appreciated a *widow* who offered two mites - what others considered as so little - to God. But she gave from her poverty and it cost her, her whole livelihood to make that offering.

There we learn that Jesus takes note of every little sacrifice that we make for Him - and especially the sacrifices that we make for Him through grief and tears.

The Bible says that a godly widow will "*wash the feet of the saints*" (*1 Tim.5:10*) - or in other words she will refresh the hearts of God's people by her service.

A widow can do that only if she has first laid her own burdens, sorrows and tears at the feet of the Lord.

CHAPTER THREE

GOD WILL SAVE YOUR CHILDREN

"*I will save your sons [children]*" (*Isa.49:25*).

I got a desperate long-distance telephone call from a mother one day. She had sent her son to study in a college some hundreds of miles away. There his friends had led him into a "*Christian*" cult-group.

Instead of completing his education, the boy had become a fanatical member of that group, and was now giving away all his money to them. He had adopted their ways and their language, and wanted to have nothing more to do with his family. The group quoted Scriptures to justify their actions, but all sensible Christians could clearly see that they were wrong. The leader of the cult would give directions to the members on every little detail of their lives and they lived as a close-knit family. Although they claimed to be happy, they were empty and under bondage. Only a few were ever able to leave the cult.

The parents had not given time for God in their family, when the children were growing up. It was only when calamity struck that they began to seek God. Now, they realised that God alone could speak to their son. Only prayer could break the strong chains that bound him.

I think of another young man – this one grew up in a fine Christian family - who was taught by his parents from childhood, to be separate from the world. When he went to college, the peer pressure there made him succumb to wild drinking parties. But God answered the fervent prayers of his distraught parents and today he is a fine Christian man.

Some children who have grown up in godly homes may, at times, have temporary setbacks when they seek to try out the pleasures of this world. We mothers must then *pray them out* of such dark days.

All mothers have had times when they have wept for their children.

Some weep because their children are born with physical defects or health problems, or are suffering from incurable diseases.

Others, because their children have strayed away from the Good Shepherd and are living like the prodigal son “*in a far country*” with no communication with the parents, even while living under the same roof as them.

Some are weeping because their son or daughter is lost in a cult and will have nothing more to do with the parents. Some children are victims of alcohol or drug abuse. Others are trapped in wrong friendships. Some have got into criminal ways and are arrested and locked up.

In all these situations, the child may have been going through pressures that the parents could not understand or fathom. Maybe the child never felt that he ‘*belonged*’. He may have felt isolated because of the generation gap between him and his parents. There might also have been a lack of communication between the parents and him.

But there is hope for every one of them.

I have heard of many a young man who finally yielded his life to the Lord in a prison.

Our children cannot run away from the Lord *forever*. His love and mercy follows after them and catches up with them finally. A godly woman once said, “*Nothing is too great for His power and too small for His love*”.

So, dear mother, your tearful prayers are not wasted. Keep on praying.

I visited a Christian family once, where all the four children had been afflicted with a physical disability, that made them waste away when they reached adolescence. Three of the children were bedridden and the oldest had died. But the whole family was still radiant with the love of God. The mother worked hard to make life comfortable for her children, even though she knew that she would have to lay them down in their coffins one by one some day. She wept, but she knew that she would see them in healthy, resurrected bodies one day. A few months back I heard that all the children were now in heaven, and that their life of suffering on earth was over.

God gives us our children as a loan for a short period on earth, to train them for His kingdom. I read a poem once that tells us of our responsibility for the children God gives us:

THE CHILD GOD LENT US

*“I’ll lend you for a little while a child of mine”, God said,
“For you to love while he’s alive, and give back when he’s dead.
It may be for a year or two, or five, or four, or three.
But will you, till I call him back, take care of him for me?
He’ll bring his charms to gladden you; and should his stay be brief,
You’ll always have his memories as comfort in your grief.
I cannot promise he will stay, since all from earth return.
But there are lessons taught on earth I want this child to learn.
I’ve looked across the whole wide world and searched for teachers true;
And from the folk who live on earth, I now have chosen you.
Now, will you give him all your love, nor think the labour vain,
Nor hate Me when I come to take this lost child back again?”*

*And this is what the parents said, “Dear God, Thy will be done.
For all the joys this child will bring, the risk of grief we’ll run.
We’ll shelter him with tenderness, we’ll love him while we may.
And for the happiness he’ll bring, we’ll ever grateful stay.
But if You come and call him home much sooner than we’d planned,
We’ll brave the bitter grief that come and try to understand.”*

(Author unknown)

Remember, dear mother, that children feel many things inwardly. But it is difficult for them to express their feelings in words. So you need to be understanding when they are moody or silent or withdrawn. They are not being evil. They are just struggling with something.

Whatever your child is going through, remember that there is One in heaven Who understands them fully. He stood at the bedside of Jairus’ dead daughter and raised her up. Picture that scene, where Jesus took a few of His disciples and the grief-stricken parents of the little girl into the room and shut the door. Then He raised her from the dead and gave her back to her parents and told them to give her something to eat.

Let Jesus do the same for you today. Allow Him to take you as you weep, into the privacy of your room. He will do something just as wonderful for your child too. Don’t be discouraged.

All mothers who pray regularly for their children will remember occasions when they suddenly got an intense burden to pray for a particular child. After a time of prayer, they find that the burden has gone. Later they discover that it was exactly at that time that their child was facing some danger. This is how God makes us prayer-warriors on behalf of our children. Prayer is not the last resort, but the **only answer** to the problems our children face.

The widow in Nain got her son back from the dead. Your child may be spiritually dead and even stinking (like Lazarus was). But he or she too will hear the call of Jesus and come out alive. So cry to the Lord day and night for your child. God has given us many promises and He will fulfil them all and answer you speedily. Your eye has not seen, neither has your ear heard yet, what the Lord has kept in store for you, if you wait for Him. **“What is impossible with man is possible with God “.**

This verse has been a hidden spring that has strengthened me so many times in my trials. I can testify to innumerable answers to prayer with regard to my own children, in so many varied circumstances. I give all the glory to God for what He has done for all my four boys in answer to prayer. I know that *prayer changes things*. It can change things for you too – and for your children as well. God is able to do far more for us and our children than we can ask or even imagine (Eph.3:20).

If your child is the victim of a bad habit, never blame him. He is already hurting enough. He wants to be free, but he cannot break free. And never blame yourself either. That is *not* the time to say, “If only I had been a better mother.” No mother is perfect. We all do our best, but we make many mistakes as well.

Confess to the Lord anything that is bothering you, and get it over with. Get rid of all feelings of regret and condemnation. Condemning oneself is one of Satan's sharpest arrows with which he wounds and paralyzes many of God's children and makes them prayerless. We are in a battle-field, fighting for the lives of our children. So let us not spend our energies weeping. There is work to be done and it has to be done right now. Ask God to help you as you speak with your child. Let God break down the barriers that have been built up over the years. Your tearful pleas will work wonders – both with God and with your son and daughter.

You need to fight on your child's behalf - because he is helpless. It is *you* who needs to be strong. As David snatched a lamb out of a lion's mouth once, *we too* have to snatch our children out of Satan's mouth.

You were a weak, timid woman until now. But rise up now, dry your tears and join the battle in the heavenlies. Feed on the Bread of Life, use the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, to fight the devil and to chase him out of your family. Rebuke him in Jesus Name and he will flee, as the Lord promised – at the speed of lightning (*James 4:7 & Luke 10:18*).

God's Word must be precious to you at such times. Don't let this trial with your child sap your spiritual energy. God's wonderful promises can sustain you in your deepest moments of sorrow. Read the psalms of David. They have a special power to lift our spirits in times of trial and sorrow. Go to God and ask Him to "*show you a sign of His favour*" towards you (*Psa.86:16*). Claim promises such as these:

"I will restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten." (*Joel 2:25*).

"He is faithful Who promised.....Has He said and shall He not do it?" (*Hebrews 10:23; Numbers 23:19*).

"The latter glory shall be greater than the former" (*Haggai 2:9*).

"You did awesome things which we did not expect" (*Isaiah 64:3*).

"God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed." (2

Corinthians 9:8).

Such words are prophetic and powerful - and can work wonders for us.

"O wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord.!

True wisdom its pages unfold:

And though we may read them a thousand times o'er,

They never, no, never grow old.

Each line has a treasure, each promise a pearl,

That all, if they will, may secure;

And we know that when time and the world pass away

God's word shall forever endure."

(Julia Sterling)

The Lord Who delivered David from the snares that his enemies laid for him, will deliver your child too (*Read and claim Psalm 124:6-8*).

Treat your child as if he has a disease, not as though he is a criminal. Never say words like this to your child at any time: "*How could you do such a thing to us?*"

Perhaps you are ashamed, because of what others may say about your child. But don't care for the opinions of man. My husband always says that you should throw man's opinions in the garbage bin! Your child is worth more than any man on earth. So don't waste your time weeping for the honour of your family that is tarnished. Weep for your child that he may be restored to God. That's all that matters.

Speak words of healing, forgiveness, faith and reconciliation to your child. Treat him/her like a mature person, because that is what he or she is going to be.

Pray in faith and rescue him out of the devil's trap. Use the prayer support of Christian friends. Be ready to receive your child *unconditionally*, just as the father received the prodigal son. If necessary, be willing to get medical, professional help for him. There are people trained to handle such problems among youth

and you can get their help. Or you could read up about your child's problem and help him yourself. Above all, be united with your husband and pray for your child. If there is division in the home, the devil has a foothold. Jesus said that if two are united in His name and ask the Father for anything, it will be granted.

So don't blame *anyone*. Even if your child may be reaping the consequences of a wayward life, remember that there is hope for everyone. *Psalm 119: 15* says, "*I thought on my ways and turned my feet to Thy testimonies*". The prodigal son returned to his father's home finally. I am sure his parents must have wept much for him. But one day their tears of sorrow were turned into tears of joy.

Whatever is happening to your child right now may have come as a surprise to you. But it was not a surprise to God. He knew what was going to happen and He already has a solution for it. He has a solution for every problem and even for our every mistake. So we can turn to Him with total confidence and perfect assurance that He will bring our children out of every crisis.

"When my heart was embittered, and I was pierced within, then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before Thee. Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast taken hold of my right hand. With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me, and afterward receive me to glory.(Psa. 73:21-24)

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. (1Cor 10:13).

God will never test you beyond what you can bear. Weeping may last for a night but joy comes in the morning. *"The Lord is near the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psa 34:18).*

All these crushing experiences make us yield more fully to the Lord and make us wait for Him to work for us and within us. One day even this trial will come to an end. But don't wait passively. Be ready to act when necessary. God will give you wisdom as to what to do. Bear the crushing, but work while you weep.

We are all so self-reliant and self-sufficient that only trials can teach us to pray and depend on the Lord. *"Tribulation works patience..."*

The Lord has taught us to fast and pray. Knock at Heaven's gates and they will be opened for you, however timid and weak you may be. In the secret hours of the night, pray your heart out to God. You will soon see heaven open and the answer to your supplication. Write down the promises He gave you in those dark days and you will see each one like a rainbow or a precious gem that you can pass on to help others one day. The Father who hears your prayers in secret will reward you openly. He has also said that He will answer us speedily. So persevere in prayer until you get the answer. It is not God's will that your child should be lost eternally. The kingdom of God belongs to those who take it by violence; Jesus challenges us to take the kingdom .

"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who reverence Him and delivers them." (Psa 34:7).

"God is able to do far more than we ask or imagine" (Eph 3:20).

So ask Him in faith. Come boldly to the throne of grace and persist in prayer.

"Arise cry out in the night. Pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord.... for the lives of your children" (Lamentations 2:19).

Fasting applies not only to food. We can fast from the vanities of life, from living a life of pleasure and from doing what our selfish passions dictate. It is not difficult to fast when there is a crisis - for our appetite vanishes anyway. But fasting is a choice that we make. Jesus said that some demons could be cast out only if we fasted and prayed.

We do not wrestle with human beings but with demonic forces. Satan is furious because his end is near and he is throwing newer and more cunning missiles at God's people. But Satan and his demons were all defeated by Jesus on Calvary. In the book of *Revelation*, we see a description of their final end. And by *faith*, we see Satan *already* in the lake of fire. Praise God!

I heard a godly man once say that prayer is like a rope with which we can pull our children back to God.

In 2 Kings 4:7, we read of a creditor (a picture of the devil) who had come to take away the sons of a poor widow, as slaves. The prophet Elisha told the widow to go home and collect empty vessels from her neighbours, shut the door behind her and her sons (a picture of prayer) and to pour out the oil (a picture of the sufficiency of the Holy Spirit). Her debt was thus paid and her sons were miraculously freed from the creditor. That poor widow must have wept and prayed to God, because she did not want to lose her children. Her prayer and weeping must have been desperate. And God answered her prayer.

My dear sister, God will do the same for you. Are you weeping today for your children? Let me give you a promise from *Hebrews 10:35*: “*Women received back their dead by resurrection.*”

Claim that for your loved one who is spiritually dead at this time. God will bring him back to life. God wants to show you great and marvellous things in answer to prayer (*Jer 33:3*) - and He always plans to do good to you (*Jer.29:11; 32:40*).

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation and continue steadfastly in prayer” (Rom12:12).

“This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith” (1Jn 5:4).

CHAPTER FOUR

GOD WILL BE WITH YOU IN DEATH’S VALLEY

“Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. Jesus asked her, ‘Woman why are you weeping?’” (Jn 20: 11).

Jesus knew *why* Mary was weeping. But I think He was asking her (as we would ask our child), “Why do you *need* to weep?” There is no *need* to weep when Jesus is near us.

Jesus Himself wept at the tomb of Lazarus. He knew that Lazarus would be raised from the dead. But He wept because of the terrible state mankind had come to, because of sin. But death has now lost its sting – ever since Jesus rose from the grave.

One childhood memory that stands out vividly in my mind is that of a mother wailing for her dead children. In the town where I grew up, there was a poor woman whose house had collapsed after heavy rains, and her two teen-aged sons had been killed in that calamity. We passed by her broken-down shack on our way to school and saw the bodies of the boys who never woke up from their sleep that morning. That devastated mother was calling out to them hysterically, in sorrow and anguish, as if to waken them. But it was in vain. She knew they were dead. Every onlooker was moved to tears. God cares for such mothers too, who have lost all hope.

Recently on our national holiday a terrible earthquake destroyed whole towns in Gujarat. What a lot of weeping there must have been in those regions. How many were orphaned and rendered homeless in a matter of seconds! Earthquakes are not necessarily God’s punishment. When a tower fell down in Siloam in the time of Jesus, He said that those who died were not more sinful than others. He warned us that in the last days there would be wars, famines and earthquakes. So earthquakes only remind us that our Lord’s coming is near. We must repent and be alert and pray. We must pray earnestly for our land of India that the Lord will be merciful to this land which is so steeped in idolatry.

Mary Magdalene had been grieving like all the others who loved Jesus, when He was cruelly crucified. She went early that Sunday morning, after the sabbath, to have a glimpse of the body of Jesus, to embalm it and to weep at the tomb.

One way to get over our sorrow is to weep. We should not stifle our tears.

Mary Magdalene was the first one to see the Lord after His resurrection. How thrilled she must have been when she recognized Jesus and when He spoke to her! She had no more tears of sorrow after that! Jesus then commissioned her to go and tell His disciples that He was alive and would meet them too. After all this, Mary still continued to be the same humble, ordinary sister that she had always been in the early church. She did not promote herself as the first one to see the risen Lord. She remained in the background. It was the once-fearful apostles whom the Lord would use for all the public ministry in the church. What an example Mary Magdalene is for us sisters. Even when the Lord gives us wonderful revelation, let Him and the church get all the glory.

Dear sister, in your sorrow, think of Jesus who wept at Lazarus' grave. Think of Mary who wept. It's all right for us to cry when a loved one departs from this world.

It takes time for us to get over such intense sorrow. But we are not to grieve like the ungodly people in the world. Screaming and wailing, speaking words that bring dishonour to God and questioning God, must never be found in us at any time.

I have heard people curse God at funerals and it has made me feel like leaving the place. The heathen should know that we have a living hope for the future.

Those who die in the Lord have gone immediately into the presence of the Lord. Because Jesus rose again from the dead, we have a glorious hope for the future.

Sometimes the hardest thing to deal with is the question of whether our loved one who passed away is eternally lost or not. We must finally leave this question with the Lord. The secret things belong to the Lord.

No human being can answer that question for us. Don't ever go to fortune-tellers, or to even so-called "prophets" to find out the answers to such questions. The Lord has warned us never to do such things (*See Deut.18:10-12*). Only the Lord can help us overcome our grief.

Be careful that you do not fall into the mire of discouragement. That can harm you emotionally, mentally and spiritually. You might even stumble others with your speculations. You may meet that loved one in heaven and regret all the time you wasted - time when you should have gone on with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15 is a good chapter to get comfort from, when we weep for a departed loved one.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 is another passage that tells us why we need not grieve as others do: "*We do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of {the} archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.*"

Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die*" (*John 11: 25,26*).

The risen Lord said to John, "*Fear not, I am the First and the Last, the Living one; I died, and I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death*" (*Rev 1:17, 18*).

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou are with me" (*Psa. 23:4*).

Rom. 8:38 tells us that even death cannot separate us from God's love.

Dear mother, you may be weeping as you think of one of your children who has gone ahead of you to heaven. But think of how happy he/she is today, free from all disability, and enjoying the company of

Jesus and the angels. Your child is waiting there to welcome you too one day. So weep no more. Here is a poem of a child of God who went to be with the Lord, speaking to his loved ones on earth:

IF YOU COULD SEE WHERE I HAVE GONE

*If you could see where I am now - the beauty of this place -
And how it feels to know you're home and see the Saviour's face;
To live in peace and know no fear - just joy beyond compare!
While down on earth you miss me now, you wouldn't want me there.*

*If you could see where I have come, and made the trip with me,
You'd know I didn't come alone - the Saviour came with me.
He travelled with me by my side and held me by my hand,
And brought me right into His home - this grand and glorious land.*

*If you could see where I am now, and see what I've been shown,
You'd never know another fear, or ever feel alone.
You'd marvel at the care of God - His hand on every life -
And realize He really cares and bears with us each strife.*

*If you could see where I am now - where God is always near -
You'd see how He just longs for all to find their way up here.
You'd see He grieves when one is lost, His heart is filled with pain;
And you would see His joy at last when one comes home again.*

*If you could see where I am now, could stay awhile with me -
Could share the things that God has made to grace eternity -
You'd never, ever want to leave, once heaven's joys you've known;
You'd never want to walk earth's paths, once heaven was your home.*

*If you could see where I am now, you'd know we'll meet some day
And though I'm parted from you now, that I am just away.
And now that I am home with Him, secure in every way,
I'm waiting here at heaven's door to greet you some sweet day.*

(Author

Unknown)

What a glorious hope we have as Christians!

CHAPTER FIVE

GOD'S NAME WILL BE GLORIFIED WHEN YOU ARE PERSECUTED

I have many friends who have accepted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, but whose husbands have not been converted. Their husbands harass and torment them. Sometimes they abuse them physically, publicly humiliate them and torture them in many other ways. Some of those wives have even been

divorced against their will. Some endure every indignity silently in order to keep their family intact and to remain with their children.

There is a lot of heart-wrung weeping in homes like that. The Lord has given grace to these wives to stand true to Him and to be witnesses to the forgiving, meek and submissive nature of Christ. Their children have seen them suffer patiently for the Lord's sake and some of these children have accepted Christ. See how God turns evil to good. Eventually some of the husbands have been won over to the Lord.

A friend of mine told me of the immense suffering she faced because her husband was a member of a *secret* organisation. There was confusion in their home for many years. How she wept and pleaded with her husband not to let their family suffer the consequences of his association with that group. But he could not break away from it. He had become wealthy, as a result of his contacts with the businessmen in the organisation.

Satan used a similar tactic to tempt Jesus: "*If you bow down to me, I will give you all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory (which includes their wealth)*". But Jesus rebuked Satan and told him to get away from him.

Some, who have left such secret organisations and become Christians, have revealed that new members have to invoke curses on themselves and their families, if ever they break the rules of the group. In some groups, members have to write the oaths in their own blood. Many make these promises without realising the seriousness of what they are saying. Some of these groups even worship Satan in secret. Such deliberately chosen chains are not easily broken. But God can help a person revoke every evil oath he made in the past. Many have been freed by the Lord from such groups - even some who were at one time leaders of such organisations.

So never give up praying for your husband, whatever he may be a captive to. Weep and pray in faith. Seek the Lord's protection and pray for your husband, as you would for your only son. Christ broke every fetter when He died on the cross. ***He came to set every captive free.***

Some unmarried girls who accept Christ face intense persecution from their relatives. One mother threatened to commit suicide when her daughter accepted Jesus. Jesus knows how your heart aches to hurt your dear mother who worked so hard to bring you up. But the Lord calls us to love Him more than we love our parents and to be faithful unto death. Your tearful prayers to the Lord for the conversion of your parents will not be in vain. Years later the mother (mentioned above) attended her daughter's wedding to a fine Christian man.

I know of teenage girls who have been thrown out of their homes even in these days, just because they accepted Christ or obeyed Him in water-baptism. I am certain that the Lord will honour them and He has prepared a glorious future for them. In the final day I know the Father will say to them, "*This is My beloved daughter in whom I am well-pleased*".

Did you discover that due to financial difficulties, you have to live with your husband's parents forever? Even though they are good people, you have to live in a '*joint family*', where you share your home with your husband's relatives; and your husband's mother runs the home. Everything in the house is common property and at times you feel that even your thoughts are common property! You resent it and you weep inwardly. You feel cheated out of a home of your own. You long to share your feelings with your husband. But you cannot say anything about his relatives, for that will hurt him. You live one day at a time and somehow manage to pull on, accepting the miserable situation, just as many other married women in India do. Sometimes you have outbursts of weeping and anger, because things are not as you would want them to be. There is chaos in your mind as well as in your life.

You cannot change the culture of India. But God can change ***you!*** You can learn to forgive and not take offence at words spoken to you. Those words are not going to matter a hundred years from now. Think positively of the many advantages of your situation - the practical help you have in the house, and your children having their grandparents with them. Many families live far away from their relatives. And with all the external turmoil in the house, you can still have a secret walk with the Lord in your *heart*.

You can also be a comfort and strength to other women in India who are facing similar situations. Every crushing experience we go through helps us to partake of Christ's sufferings. We can thus acquire the nature of Christ and be a blessing to those around us who are going through the similar problems.

Are you being harassed (by words and actions) by your husband's relatives because of "*insufficient dowry*". Perhaps you are disgusted with those around you and are in despair, wishing you had never got married. We read of "*dowry-deaths*" almost every day in the newspapers. Your life is not your own. It belongs to God. So don't ever think of ending it. Instead ask God for grace to endure this trial. Don't do things that will be tragic for your family. Find your security in the Lord. He has promised not to allow any trial to become too much for you. It is futile to spend your days in accusing and blaming others. Wait in faith for the Lord to work on your behalf. Those who trust in Him will never be disappointed (*Isa.49:23*) and those who wait on Him will rise up and soar like the eagles one day (*Isa.40:31*).

Ask the Lord to give you wisdom in your situation.

Some believers have had *the unique privilege* of being dragged to court for the Lord's sake. That *is* indeed a privilege and an honour, because our Lord Himself was taken to court by His enemies. The charges levelled against you may all be false. But the Lord allows *even that* with a purpose. He has assured us that when we stand before judges, we need not worry about what we should say, for *He will tell us what to say*. So we can rest in Him with a child-like trust.

Here are some wonderful promises that God has given in His Word for all who are taken to court unjustly. You can claim all of them in Jesus' Name (Quotations are from the *Living Bible*):

"The Lord is my lawyer and defender, and He will rescue me." (*1 Sam. 24:15*).

"The Lord says, 'Don't be afraid! Don't be paralyzed! For the battle is not yours but God's! You will not need to fight! Stand quietly and see the incredible rescue operation God will perform for you. The Lord is with you.'"(*2 Chron. 20:15-17*).

"The Lord will not let the godly be condemned when they are brought before the judge" (*Psa.37:33*).

"Judgment does not come from the east or from the west, from the north or from the south (that is, from any man). It is God Who is the Judge condemning some and acquitting others. He will break the power of the wicked, but the power of the righteous will be increased." (*Psa.75:6,10*).

"The Lord will not judge by appearance, false evidence, or hearsay, but will defend the poor and the exploited. He will rule against the wicked who oppress them." (*Isa.11:3-5*).

"Their insults cannot hurt me, because the Sovereign Lord gives me help. I brace myself to endure them. I know that I will not be disgraced, for God is near, and He will prove me innocent. Does anyone dare to bring charges against me? Let us go to court together! Let him bring his accusation! The Sovereign Lord Himself defends me - who then can prove me guilty? All my accusers will disappear; they will vanish like moth-eaten cloth. All of you that plot to destroy others will be destroyed by your own plots. The Lord Himself will make that happen; you will suffer a miserable fate." (*Isa.50:7-11*).

"The Lord says, 'Your enemies will stay far away; you will live in peace. Terror shall not come near, for I am on your side. Your enemies will be routed for I am on your side. No weapon turned against you shall succeed, and you will have justice against every courtroom lie.'" (Isa.54:14-17).

"The Lord says, 'I will be your lawyer; I will plead your case.'" [Jeremiah 51:36 (Living Bible)]

"O Lord, You are my lawyer! Plead my case! For you have redeemed my life. You have seen the wrong they did to me; be my Judge, to prove me right. You have seen the plots my foes have laid against me. You have heard the vile names they have called me, and all they say about me, and their whispered plans. See how they laugh and sing with glee, preparing my doom" (*Lam. 3:58-63*).

"Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly" (*Luke 18:7,8*).

"No one could arrest Him because His hour had not yet come" (*John 7:30, 8:20*).

If you or your husband ever have to stand in a court before your accusers, for the Lord's sake, don't weep. Hold back the tears. *Instead, feel sorry for your accusers.* How terrible will be their judgment in the day that the Judge of all the earth deals with them!

Jesus Himself was betrayed and taken to court and had to stand before a mocking crowd. Do not wonder then at what is happening to you. Aren't you His disciple? It is a rare privilege that He has given you to follow in His steps even in this area. Be bold. This is no time for tears. Leap for joy instead, for your reward in heaven will be great. Jesus is praying for you, and one day He will vindicate you and honour you.

Here on earth our life is to be one of suffering. We are partakers of His sufferings, but He gives us His overflowing joy as well in every trial. He Himself was betrayed by a close friend and taken through a mock trial. He was slapped and beaten so much that His back was furrowed. Today, we can hire a lawyer and hope for some justice. But Jesus did not even have a proper trial and was unjustly condemned to die. His death was the most cruel death anyone could ever have suffered. But He had joy within Him because He thought of the reward of those sufferings - the reward of delivering you and me from the clutches of sin, to be His bride. He can give us joy too.

Isaiah 53:7-9 is a passage of Scripture that always moves me:

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He never said a word. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He stood silent before the ones condemning Him. From prison and trial they led Him away to His death. But who among the people of that day realized it was their sins He was dying for – that He was suffering their punishment? He was buried like a criminal in a rich man's grave; but He had done no wrong, and had never spoken an evil word." (Living Bible)

The apostle Paul suffered much for the sake of the gospel. But from his prison cell he wrote some of his most wonderful epistles, like *Philippians* for example, where he tells us to rejoice in the Lord always.

All who seek to live a godly life in Christ will suffer some form of persecution. So we should not be surprised when that happens to us, as though some strange thing were happening to us (*1 Peter 4:12*). The Lord will encourage us through His Word each time.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (*Matt 5:10*).

The Lord has taught us to forgive those who persecute us, to love them and to pray for them. We prove that we are children of our loving Father when we do good to those who harm us. God is good to all. Perhaps your closest friend or relative has stabbed you in the back. Don't weep. Rejoice that you have the privilege of walking in Jesus' footsteps. Let the mind of Christ rule you at such times.

I have read of pastors who have been imprisoned for many long years for the Lord's sake. This must have been very hard for their wives. We must pray for the families of Christians who are being persecuted even today in many countries. Persecution will come to us in India too. Let us pray that God will keep us strong in faith. It is good for all of us to take time to read the stories of martyrs and those who were persecuted in past times for the Lord's sake. That will strengthen us when our time comes.

"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us" (*Rom 8:15*).

"Our momentary light affliction works an eternal weight of glory" (*2 Cor.4:18*).

"When you pass through the waters, they shall not overflow you" (*Isa 43:2*).

"God comforts (encourages) us so that we can comfort (encourage) others" (*2 Cor.1:4*).

"Jesus Himself helps us and lives to make intercession for us" (*Heb.7:25*).

"He is our Advocate" (*1 Jn.2:1*).

"The upright will not fear bad news" (*Psa 112:7*).

"As your days so shall your strength be. The eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." (*Deut. 33: 25,27*).

“He rejoices over you with singing (Zeph 3:17).

“All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Psa. 46:1).

Peter speaks of fiery trials that we will have to face, and the Lord assures us in *Isaiah 43:3* that when we walk through the fire we will not be burned. That means that our soul will not be destroyed in persecution.

Jesus teaches us to pray. The Holy Spirit also makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. When we are not able to put our anguish into words, the Holy Spirit comes to our aid. So let us yield to the Holy Spirit and He will cry out from within us.

CHAPTER SIX

GOD WILL DELIVER YOU FROM WORLDLY SORROW

“The sorrow of this world works death “(2 Cor 7:10).

Much weeping among women arises from self-pity, getting offended, being slighted, or not getting some earthly thing that they wanted.

Some women are over-sensitive and touchy by nature. Their violent temper makes them flare up easily. *James 1:19* tells us that we should be “*slow to anger*” - for “*anger resides in the bosom of fools*”(Eccl.7:9). Satan often makes people lose their temper and then makes them wallow in self-condemnation. Beware of Satan’s tactics! Get up from the muck immediately, repent of your sin and turn back to the Lord.

Some women constantly compare themselves with others who are *better off* than them. This always leads to discouragement and despondency that makes them miserable. If you want to compare yourself with others, then compare yourself with those who are *worse off* than you, like those who live in the slums.

Some women are habitually lonely and impose themselves on others, never finding the comfort they need anywhere. Instead, we could develop an intimate relationship with the Lord.

Some middle-aged women are physically weak and weep easily, due to hormonal changes. Such medical conditions can be treated and so they should see a doctor. God is the One Who created us and He knows our frame and is more than willing to help us at such times - *if we ask Him*.

Does your *weeping* arise from *worldly sorrow*? Go through this check-list and see :

- Were you brought up as a *spoilt* child by indulgent parents, because of which you are now easily irritated and unable to cope with small inconveniences and delays? Is that why you *weep*? Don’t blame your parents. Deal with your irritability at the egg stage itself, before it hatches and becomes a deadly serpent that will hurt both yourself and others. Ask God to help you overcome the hang-ups of your upbringing.
- Do you love material things, clothes, music, jewelry, etc., so much that if you don’t get them, you become unhappy and start *weeping*? Do you start a tirade against your parents or your husband for not getting you such things? Confess your worldly attitude to the Lord and ask Him to deliver you from it.

- ❑ Do you *weep* because you or your husband or your child didn't get a job or a promotion or a college-admission? God knows what is best for your family and He is in control of all your circumstances. So give thanks to Him in all situations.
- ❑ Have people hurt you deliberately in some way? Do you find it difficult now to forgive them? Are you *weeping* in anger and hatred? Do you feel like speaking evil of such people to others? If so, you are being vengeful. Take such matters to the Lord and ask Him to help you forgive all concerned. Release them all from your mind and forgive them. Then you can greet them with a sincere smile, when you meet them.
- ❑ Are you *weeping* because you suffered some financial loss, through being cheated or treated unjustly? God can use your loss to free you from the love of money and make you more like Jesus. So praise the Lord even for financial loss. All such losses can be replaced by our Lord, Who is the Giver of all good gifts. He is the Judge who will one day deal with all the wrongdoers of the world. So it is best to leave such matters in His Hands. If you keep thinking of those who cheated you, you will only make yourself miserable. A good question that you can ask yourself in such situations is: "*Is this going to matter fifty years from now?*"
- ❑ Are you *weeping* because of problems with your husband, that you cannot tell anyone about? Satan is out to destroy marriages. Reject all thoughts of jealousy. God planned marriage to be a beautiful thing. So cultivate your marriage as you would a *garden*. Water the garden constantly and pull out the weeds of discord and suspicion that the enemy sows there. Sow godly seeds of love and forgiveness in the garden instead.
- ❑ Are you *weeping* because you are pregnant again? Perhaps you did not want any more children and you are disappointed to discover that you are pregnant again. Remember that *every* child is a gift of God. The very thought of rejecting a child is like killing it. Accept every child God gives you, in Jesus Name. You may find that the child you didn't want, brings you greater joy than all your other children. Later on, you can "*plan*" your family.
- ❑ Are you *weeping* because you have discovered that *crying* gets you attention, and enables you to get what you want from your husband or your parents - if you *cry* sufficiently? Ask the Lord to deliver you from such selfishness.
- ❑ Are you *weeping* because things are not working out as you want them to? Are you upset because God has not answered your prayers? Such an attitude comes out of a sense of self-importance. Ask the Lord to give you His patience.

Are you preserving the memory of your worldly sorrows (as '*Egyptian mummies*' are preserved) for others to give you their comfort and their sympathy? Whenever you are tempted to remember unhappy events of the past, ask the Lord to help you reject such thoughts immediately. If you keep doing that regularly, you will find over a period of time, that you forget such episodes altogether. And your soul will be healed. Your past is like a decomposed corpse that needs to be buried permanently. When you do that, you will find yourself liberated, and begin to experience a little bit of heaven here on earth. Thus you will make the world a better place for yourself and for those around you.

Live your life as God wants you to. Repent of your selfishness, and surrender your all to the Lord Jesus. You may feel at times that you have come to the limit of your endurance. But you will discover later that you were only over-reacting and that God's grace was sufficient to see you through. God will never allow you to be tried beyond your ability.

Many saintly women have suffered much for the Lord. In the 16th century in France, Madam Guyon was imprisoned for her faith, for a long time in a cold prison cell. But she wrote books from that prison-cell that ring with a spirit of triumph, and that bless people even today, because she remained devoted to her Lord.

God wants us women to be tough. He wants us to help others who are struggling and not end up with nervous breakdowns ourselves. His power is available to us at all times and He can make us strong. So let us trust Him, and we will find that our *worst* times can become our *best* times with the Lord's help.

Give your life and your future completely into the Lord's hands and He will help you through your most difficult times. There may be even greater trials in the coming days, but you will overcome them all. He will enable you to overcome the giants in your temperament and give you the power to live a life that pleases Him.

Thus, you will become a blessing to many.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GOD WILL DRAW YOU TO HIMSELF THROUGH GODLY SORROW

"Godly sorrow works repentance unto salvation" (2 Cor.7:10).

"Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted" (Matt 5:4).

Godly sorrow is the sorrow produced by the Holy Spirit within us. The Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in human words (*Rom 8:26*).

It was such a sorrow that made us repent and come to the Lord at first. And throughout our lives it is good for us to be responsive to such workings of the Holy Spirit within our hearts.

We must weep whenever we fall spiritually or when we lose fellowship with our Lord as the bride did when she lost fellowship with her Beloved (*Song of Sol. 3:1-4*). Such weeping is good for our soul. Tears of repentance are never in vain. When we see our life in His light, we will discover how the cobwebs of our touchiness, covetousness, pride, selfishness and self-pity have defiled our heart and made life difficult for us and for others around us. Our weeping will then lead us to a brokenness and humility that will enable us to receive God's grace continually.

Peter was so confident that he would stand like a rock and never deny the Lord. He even took out a sword in Gethsemane to defend his Master. But he fell in the time of temptation, just as the Lord had warned him. But the compassionate, forgiving look of his Master broke him to the point where he wept bitterly. He wondered if he would ever get a chance to tell the Lord how sorry he was for his failure and how much he loved Him?

This has been the experience of many of God's children, who have failed the Lord at some time. If that has been your experience, dear sister, then let me assure you that there is hope for you.

Remember, Satan had to get permission from God before he could sift Peter. And Satan has to get permission from God to sift you too.

Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail. And Jesus prays for you today. The Lord had faith that Peter would come through the time of testing and be restored. He has faith in you too. After Peter was restored, he went on to strengthen his fellow-believers and did a great work for the Lord. Thus will it be with you too.

If Peter had heeded the Lord's warning in Gethsemane and prayed as he was told to, he would never have fallen - but Peter was self-confident. And so he failed. But the Lord appeared to him after His resurrection and encouraged him. And Peter got an opportunity to tell the Lord that He loved Him. And then the Lord re-commissioned him as an apostle.

God is a good God and He allows adversity and trial in our lives in order to reveal our true nature to us. Thus He humbles us and breaks us, so that He can transform us into His likeness. Nothing can separate us from God's love.

In times of personal sorrow, we should not be so wrapped up with our own problems that we have no concern for others. Our Lord, as a "*Man of sorrows*" was yet "*acquainted with our griefs*". He wept as He looked at the people in the city of Jerusalem who had rejected Him.

*"He had no tears for His own griefs,
But sweat drops of blood for mine".*

Our Lord wept for others. Now it is our turn, as Jesus' representatives, to weep for others.

Think of the story of Joseph who had been imprisoned unjustly. But there in prison, he forgot about his own sorrows and was concerned about the problems of the other prisoners. His concern for Pharaoh's cupbearer was what finally led to his deliverance from prison. A genuine concern for others can be the first step for your deliverance too (Gen.40:7).

"He who goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed will come home rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psa 126:6).

Here are some examples of men who wept with a godly sorrow:

- ◆ *Isaiah* wept when he saw the glory of God and the corruption of his own nature and said, "*Woe is me for I am an unclean man*" (Isa.6:5).
- ◆ *Jeremiah* wept for the backslidden people of God and wished that his eyes were a fountain of tears, so that He could weep for them continually (Jer.9:1; 13:17).
- ◆ *Daniel* wept for the sins of God's people (Dan.9:20,21).
- ◆ *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* wept when they saw the fallen condition of God's people (Ezra 10:1; Neh.1:4).
- ◆ *Paul* had great sorrow in his heart continually for his own people (the Jews) who were unconverted (Rom.9:1-3).

Godly sorrow will make us *grieve for the things that grieve the Lord*.

Think for a moment of the idolatry in our land and how the Lord must be grieved about it. We may have got so used to seeing temples and idols in our land that it does not bother us at all (Acts 17:16). But we have a responsibility before the Lord for the land in which we live.

God has said, "*If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land*" (2 Chron.7:14).

I can remember occasions in the past when the Lord laid a burden on my heart to pray for others.

A mother once asked me to pray for her son who suffered from sleeplessness. He was addicted to rock music and had no interest in God. Psychiatric help was useless. His head throbbed like the drumbeat of the music he listened to. God in His mercy answered our prayer and he is fine now. Many mothers are unaware of the dangers that their children face through rock music.

In one of my travels, I saw a group of men and women having some 2-year old and 3-year old girls with them. I noticed something queer about their behaviour with the children. The little girls looked numbed and fearful and were possibly drugged. They were probably being kidnapped. Since there was no way in which I could prove this, I could do nothing about it. Seeing those poor children made a deep impression on me and drove me to pray for child-abuse in our country.

On another occasion I met a girl from a Western country who had come to India to find peace through gurus, meditation and eastern religions. I got an opportunity to tell her of the real Guru, the Lord Jesus, and found myself burdened to pray for her. Some Westerners have found the Lord in India. Ask the Lord to use you to witness to such needy, searching people or to pray for them.

When Jesus was carrying the cross through Jerusalem and saw some women weeping for Him, He told them not to weep for him but for themselves and their children: “*Daughters of Jerusalem*”, He said, “*weep not for Me but for yourselves and your children.*”

Daughters of *India*, can we hear what He is telling us today?

CHAPTER EIGHT

GOD HAS A PLAN EVEN IN YOUR PHYSICAL PAIN

Many women are afflicted with chronic illnesses and have to live with constant pain and sleepless nights. And their minds are filled with foreboding thoughts about the future – especially the fear of their children becoming motherless. Such thoughts can be horrifying.

Many long for some respite from their pain. Even the strongest analgesics begin to lose their effect after a while.

When someone hears of another having been diagnosed with cancer, they begin to wonder if it will be their turn next!

Jesus suffered pain too - and He can sympathise with us and comfort us. He endured the cross, and he alone can help us endure till the end, when we are in pain. Don't ever yield to the temptation to take away your life. The key of Death is in Jesus' hands (*Rev.1:18*). Don't try and snatch it away from Him. Wait for God's time, no matter how much you have to suffer. God can sanctify your suffering for you meanwhile. “*There is a time to be born and a time to die*” (*Eccl.3:2*).

Amos 4:12 says, “*Prepare to meet your God.*”

We don't have to look at those words as a horrible threat to get ready to die. Instead, we can look at those words as a loving invitation from our Creator *to meet with Him*. Death is only a change of residence for a true Christian. It is like shifting to a far better house. Heaven is our final home.

I read of a mother dying of cancer, who in the midst of all her pain, recorded a taped message for each of her children - giving them advice for their growing years, including the matter of choosing a marriage partner. She also told them that if their father decided to bring home a new mother one day, they should accept her gladly and make her feel welcome. She turned her pain over to the Lord and did all that she could do for her family, when she knew that her time on earth was short.

Do you weep when the doctor gives you bad news about your health?

Are you constantly waiting for the next shot of morphia to relieve your pain? Cry out to Jesus. He bore intense pain too and He can make things bearable for you. He will never allow you to be tested beyond your ability, but will give you grace and strength to bear every trial. Our earthly pain makes us look forward to that better place where there will no more pain or sorrow.

I think of a chorus that we often sing in our church-meetings:

*“There is joy in the presence of the Lord,
There is joy in the presence of the Lord,
All our tears and sorrows must go,
There is joy in the presence of the Lord.”*

The remaining verses speak of *peace, power and victory* in the presence of the Lord. Singing has a tremendous power to soothe us, when we are in pain or experiencing some sorrow.

If your life is totally surrendered to the Lord in every area, you will find that things are much easier when physical pain comes to you. In the past, even a headache may have been unbearable. But now you can pray and *rejoice in the Lord*, even if a life-threatening illness comes upon you. The Lord has promised “*to be with us when we pass through the waters*”, and He has assured us that “*even the floods will not overflow us*”.

“When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you.

When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown!

When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned –

The flames will not consume you. Don’t be afraid. I am with you.” (Isa.43:2,5 –

Living)

His grace is sufficient for us in every situation. As our trials grow greater, the supply of His grace will become greater too. Praise God!

Many of God’s most precious jewels are those who have come out of depths of unimaginable suffering. Just as diamonds are formed in the depths of the earth, they too have suffered tremendous heat and pressure, unseen from the eyes of all men. You can be His precious jewel too. Tears are a part of the process that transforms us into the likeness of Christ - if you submit to God’s dealing joyfully, and don’t shed tears in self-pity. God can change *your pain* into *your gain*.

A close friend of mine was given a wrong medical treatment and suffers perpetually now as a result of it. But she suffered even more, because she could not bring herself to forgive the doctor. [We mustn’t forget that doctors too are human beings, capable of making mistakes.] It took her a long time to forgive the doctor and to accept her lot. Jesus is the great Physician, Who heals our inner wounds as well.

I know of a young non-Christian girl who, while waiting at a bus-stand, was accosted by her boss who came disguised as a woman, wearing a purdah (veil). He had had a grudge against her for some time and now came to take his revenge on her. He threw acid on her face and ran away. She was scarred and blinded permanently. She had been a beautiful girl, but her beauty was now gone forever. The agonizing, scalding pain was unbearable and the hospital ward she was lying in, resounded with her cries. But in that hospital someone spoke to her about the love of Jesus and her *spiritual* eyes were opened to see Jesus as her Saviour. Her family became impoverished as a result of her prolonged medical treatment. But they too came to know the love of Jesus and were saved. I saw a picture of her former beautiful self (before she was scalded) and I know I will see her as more beautiful than that in heaven.

I met a young woman who for many years, has had to care for her paraplegic husband. He was crippled after a fall. They had never heard of Jesus before. But when all their relatives forsook them after the tragedy, and they were helpless and devastated, the Lord met with them and they both found Jesus as their Saviour. Now God is using them to minister to other cripples and many are coming to know the Lord Jesus. Despite their immense poverty and their suffering, their faces are radiant. All who visit them are blessed and can never forget their radiant, triumphant look. Yet at the time of the accident, this wife was newly married and was expecting a baby. She became like an insane person, crying day and night for months on end, asking God why He allowed this tragedy to happen to them. Then Jesus came and flooded them with His peace and power. God is now using them powerfully in a remote part of our country. Whenever I think of them I am reminded of *Psalms 34:5* that says: “*They looked to Him and their faces were radiant.*” Their powerful testimony challenged me immensely.

I know another young wife who was unable to bear the harassment she received from her husband and his parents, and who tried to commit suicide by pouring kerosene on herself and setting herself on fire. This, as we know, is the most common method of suicide that women in India adopt, when they are harassed by their husbands and their parents-in-law for dowry. But this young woman did not die. God not only saved

her from those flames but also from the flames of hell. She is now a wonderful sister in one of our village-churches, and is a testimony to the love and the mercy of God.

These are examples of women who found the Lord Jesus as a result of serious accidents. Whenever I am reminded, I pray and at times weep before God, for these women who have to live with constant suffering.

I also know of women who have been healed miraculously. Some have become disciples of Jesus after being healed. Some have been delivered from demons and are living for the glory of God now.

Jesus healed all who came to Him, when He was on earth. Ask Him to heal you too. The Bible tells us to ask the elders of the church to anoint us with oil and pray for us in the Name of the Lord when we are sick. The prayer of faith will heal the sick (*James 5:14*).

Sickness can also be connected with sin. When the Lord healed people on earth, He told some of them, “*Your faith has healed you. Now don’t sin any more.*” Illnesses such as arthritis, allergies, high blood pressure and gastritis, are *sometimes* connected with inner tensions, bitterness and feelings of hurt. So we must first confess our sin and ask the Lord to forgive us. We must also set matters right with those whom we have offended. Make sure that an unforgiving spirit does not get a hold of you – no matter how great the crime someone may have committed against you. God is the one who heals, either through medical means or otherwise. And when you are healed, don’t forget to give thanks to God and to give all the glory to Him.

Submit totally to God’s will and then ask the Lord in faith to heal you. *The Lord is your Healer*. And after you have been healed, give your healthy life back to God and dedicate it to be used in His service to bless and help others.

We cannot understand why God allows some of His most faithful children to remain sick while He heals others. God is sovereign. He allowed James to be killed, but released Peter miraculously from prison (*Acts 12*). But as we considered earlier, it is our Lord who has the keys of death, and only He can open that door for you. So we cannot die before our time, if we live in His will. We don’t have to fear death. The early Christian martyrs went singing to their death.

Amy Carmichael (of Dohnavur, South India) wrote such wonderful books and poems when she was bedridden. She might never have written these if she had been fit and healthy.

Christ can be magnified in our bodies both through health as well as through a continuous *thorn* in the flesh (*Phil 1:20*). So let us take our sorrows and trials as opportunities to humble ourselves before God and men. Let us *never* weep for ourselves.

“*O my people, trust Him all the time. Pour out your longings before Him, for He can help you*” (*Psa 62:8*).

When your “*heart is close to breaking*”, the Lord will be close to you (*Psa.34:18*).

When we pass through the valley of weeping (Baca), God can turn it into a spring of waters that will flow out in blessing to others (*Psa.84:6*). As God comforts and refreshes us with living water from heaven, in the midst of our sorrows, we can share this living water with others around us.

One day, God has promised to wipe every tear away from our eyes (*Rev 21:1-4*). There will be no more sorrows or trials or death then, no more mourning, or crying or pain, for all those things would have passed away. We wait eagerly, looking for that new heavens and new earth, where our Father will dwell with us forever.

So our hearts eagerly cry out saying, “*Come quickly Lord Jesus.*”

CHAPTER NINE

GOD CARES FOR WEeping WOMEN

The Son of God came to earth to show us that the Father loves us and is not angry with us. He also lifted women from the low and degrading levels into which society had thrown them. We read in the gospels of many women who came to Him at different times with varying needs. Never once did Jesus ignore their cries. He always had a kind word for weeping women.

We could say that He was always silently asking them this question: “*Woman, why are you weeping?*”

Mary Magdalene had undoubtedly *wept* much in her life. She had once been possessed by seven evil spirits. But Jesus had delivered her - and she never forgot her debt to Him. Her gratitude resulted in a passionate devotion to Jesus. Satan had destroyed her life. Demon after demon had possessed her and she was known in the city as a violent woman – a woman to be avoided. But we see in her, a demonstration of how Jesus can raise up those who are in the depths of despair, those deeply entrenched in the gutter of sin, and place them on spiritual thrones. Hallelujah!

Mary and **Martha** were two others who *wept*. They were sisters who had opened their home to Jesus. The Lord had often found food and refreshment in their home, and they had always been glad to work tirelessly for their Lord. One day their brother Lazarus fell seriously ill, and they immediately sent an emergency call to Jesus. But *John chapter 11* relates how Jesus deliberately delayed His arrival to their house. And they couldn't understand it. Why wasn't He coming? Every delay in the answers to our prayers is also planned by God to give us something better than what we asked for. Finally Lazarus died. Then Jesus arrived. Mary and Martha reacted differently to Him - one complained bitterly but the other kept her bitterness within and was silent. But Jesus understood their sorrow. He sympathized with them and even wept. He forgave their complaints and their bitterness and raised their brother from the dead. They had expected only a *healing* from Jesus, but He gave them a *resurrection*, and their weeping was turned into joy. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. He can do far more than we ask or think. He weeps with women even today and then wipes away their tears.

We read in the gospels of **an unknown woman** who had lived with continual bleeding in her body for 12 years. She had gone to one doctor after another – and they had fleeced her of all her savings. Her sickness was an embarrassing one, classified as “*Haemorrhage*”. She must have been weak and anaemic from all the blood loss. Many a night she had wet her pillow with her tears pleading and asking God to heal her. She had been waiting eagerly for the Messiah to come to deliver Israel from all its sorrows. But for twelve years there had been no answer. Then one day she heard that the Messiah had come and was visiting her town. The crowd was immense that day, thronging around Jesus. But she was determined to get in through that crowd and touch at least Jesus' clothes. This weak woman pressed past men, women and children and managed to reach her hand through the crowd and touch just the lower part of His robe with her fingers. And she was healed immediately. Jesus stopped and called her forth and she testified timidly before the crowd. Her testimony has now blessed people in all nations for 2000 years.

You too may be an unknown woman who has shed many tears. You may be suffering from some embarrassing disease. The Lord will not disappoint you. Come to Him. We can touch Him by faith even today. Jesus bore our sicknesses and our diseases and by His stripes we are healed.

In *John 4*, we read of another needy woman – this time **a Samaritan** - whose life was one of rejection, and who had married and remarried five times. The one she was living with finally was not even her husband. She must have been sick of her life. The Jews despised the Samaritans as an *inferior race*. Women in Samaria normally went to the village-well in the mornings, to collect their water. But she must have had so many bad experiences in the past, with the other women of that village. They may have

despised her, taunted her and shunned her. Shame, rejection and sorrow may have been her constant companions in Samaria. So she now preferred to come to the well at noon, when no-one else would be around. Imagine her surprise then when she found a man there. The Master had deliberately travelled through Samaria to meet her and had stayed back at the well that afternoon to talk to her. He used His thirst as a starting point for the conversation and gradually pointed her to her need for the water of Life. Finally, the Lord used her to bring the entire village to repentance.

What hope Jesus gives for despised women who are shunned by society. You may be downtrodden, ignored and belonging to a despised race, with no-one to fight for your rights. *Woman, you don't have to weep any longer. Your Redeemer has come for you.*

In *Matthew 15:22*, we read of **a weeping, but persistent Canaanite woman**. She was not a part of the "chosen race". But God cared for her. Her daughter had been demon-possessed for many years and she did not know where to turn for help. She had heard that a Prophet had come to Israel Who cast out demons. But it was very difficult and perhaps too expensive for her to travel to Israel. Besides she was not an Israelite and she did not know if Jesus would have the time to listen to her or help her. And so she gave up all hope of ever seeing her daughter healed. Little did she know however, how much God loved her and how He had seen her tears: *God sent Jesus to her*. Jesus walked from Galilee to her hometown and back - 50 miles each way - *just to help her*. When she met Jesus, she knew that she was an alien and deserved nothing from God. She gladly accepted the position of a dog before the Lord and asked if she might have at least a crumb that fell from the children's table. *She believed that one crumb from the hand of the Lord was enough to drive the demon out of her daughter. What faith!!* Jesus granted her request. The daughter was miles away, but she was delivered instantly. The tearful years were replaced with joy and laughter that day.

What an example for you, dear mother, to seek our wonderful Lord. He has seen your tears too, and He knows your need. Your child may be living far away from you. But you can bring her to the feet of our Lord and she can be delivered. The Lord will travel any distance to wipe away your tears and to turn your weeping into laughter. And remember, you are *not* a dog, but a daughter of God. You can have *the children's bread itself*, and not just the crumbs that fall from the table! Go then in faith to the Lord and ask what you will for your daughters and sons, who have been deceived and possessed by Satan. The Lord will deliver every one of them.

A weeping woman caught in adultery was once brought to Jesus by the Pharisees (*John 8*). According to Jewish law she deserved to be stoned to death. And so they brought her to the Rabbi of Rabbis, in order to trap Him. If He set her free, they would accuse Him of nullifying the Law. If He commanded her to be stoned, He would lose His reputation for compassion. It was a "No-win" situation. "Heads they win and Tails you lose". Jesus dealt with each situation wisely. Even the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men (*1 Cor.1:25*). Jesus had compassion on her because He understood what it was that made her live the life she was living. It may not have been of her own free choice. Some man may have lured her with false promises and then ditched her. After that, men had repeatedly used her and discarded her. She hated this life. But how could she earn her living? Hardly a day went by without shedding tears. But who would understand her? Who would help her? Yes, Jesus would do both. He would understand her and help her.

I know of many women today who are being rescued from such a life by brave disciples of Jesus, who are taking the risk of confronting the mafia lords who run the brothels. The weeping women in such brothels have lost all hope of living a normal life. Some of them were kidnapped as children by agents who operate the flesh trade. They do not even know who their parents are, or where they come from. Many of these women have now become drug-addicts and need the money they get from prostitution to satisfy their craving for drugs. Many others are infected by HIV and are dying a slow death. Jesus cares for such weeping women and wants to deliver them. He wants to use you and me for this ministry, even today.

That woman (*of John 8*) never thought she would live another day. She must have been weeping even as she was standing there before her accusers, expecting the first stone to hit her any moment. She saw the

compassion on the face of Jesus and her pleading eyes hoped He would understand. He did. He forgave her and turned her path into a new life of discipleship and usefulness to society. He can do the same for you, no matter how low you may have fallen. *“I do not condemn you. Go and sin no more”*, are His words to you today.

In the Old Testament too, we read of another prostitute who found mercy from God. Her name was **Rahab** and she lived with her children in the city of Jericho. She had *faith in God*, despite her moral failures. She must have wept much over her past life and wanted to become a better woman, for the sake of her children. God saw her desire and so He directed the steps of the Israelite spies to her residence. She helped them and thus her life was saved, when all the rest of Jericho was destroyed. She even married an Israelite called Salmon and became a part of the family tree of Jesus Himself!! Her name is now found in *“Faith’s Hall of Fame” (Hebrews 11)* along with Abraham and Moses and Joshua! Isn’t that amazing? The only two people of that generation to find their names in Hebrews 11 are Joshua and Rahab!! God’s ways are truly amazing. God can do the same for you, dear wayward sister.

We see **a weeping widow** in the city of Nain. Her only son, the young man who was taking care of her in her old age, had just died suddenly. She wept uncontrollably. She tried to delay the funeral as long as possible, lingering to look at the face of her dear son in the coffin. Reluctantly she allowed the mourners to take the coffin out of her house and she tearfully followed. She was expecting to spend a lonely, dismal night in her home, after the funeral. Little did she know what joys her loving Father in heaven had in store for her. Jesus planned His journey by Nain at that time. He is never late. And He stopped that funeral procession, got the coffin opened and raised up that dead young man and restored him to her mother. God cares for you and He will come by you in your time of sorrow too, dear helpless widowed sister.

All widows have a special place in God’s heart. They usually have no one to care for them on earth. They are helpless and many people exploit them. But God is the God of the widows and fatherless and He says, *“Let your widows trust in Me” (Jer.49:11)*. Claim your rights then, dear widowed sister and go freely to your Divine Husband and your heavenly Father.

In the Old Testament too, we read of **a woman** whose son had died (*2 Kings 4*). She went to find God’s prophet Elisha, for she knew that he alone could help her. No one who saw her that day had a clue that she was *weeping inwardly* as she travelled that long way. And when she met Elisha, she spoke to him in the language of faith, and said about her dead child, *“It is well with my child” (2 Kings 4:26)*. No wonder she got her son back from the dead. God honours such faith.

In *Luke 13*, we read of **an invalid woman**. This one had been afflicted by some strange ailment for 18 years, that bent her body downwards, so that she could not walk erect. But she ignored the pain and the disability and went faithfully to the meetings every week. It was good that she did not miss the meeting this sabbath day, because this was the day that God had planned for her healing. She had been bound by Satan for many long years. Her utterly hopeless condition made her walk like an animal. That is what the devil makes of his victims (*Luke 13:11-13*). All those 18 years, she must have wept as she walked down the streets, bearing the taunts of children who made fun of her. She was unable to look up. But her heart waited for her God to deliver her. She may have been an object of pity to others. But even *this* can make one weep. Some children may have been frightened by her warped, wrinkled appearance. She must have cried out to God on many a night, asking for freedom from the evil curse that the devil had put on her. Then Jesus came and set her free. Jesus saw her in the synagogue and called her out to the front and spoke those wonderful, liberating words, *“Woman you are freed.”* Now she could look straight up to heaven and praise her Father Who had set her free.

Those words have *now* come down to you through twenty centuries: **“WOMAN YOU ARE FREED”** (*Luke 13:12*).

Dear Sister, won’t you take that as a personal word to you from your Lord today? You are free now to glorify God, freed from every bondage, every sin, depression, bad moods, hang-ups, hangovers, and every wretched thing that Satan ever invented to harass women through the ages. You are free from the bondage of traditions, free from your foul temper, your uncontrolled tongue, your bitterness, your

unforgiving attitudes, your resentments, free from the demonic forces that have oppressed you for so long and bound you. Straighten up right now and glorify God.

Serve Him. No more need you walk with your low self-esteem. You are valuable to God, even if others despise you and do not see your worth. The Hand of God is on your life from today.

"The Son of God came to untie every knot that Satan ever tied on you" (1John 3:8-Paraphrase).

"If the Son shall make you free you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Jesus called that woman "*a daughter of Abraham*". We too are daughters of Abraham, according to *1 Peter 3:6* – daughters of **Sarah**, that woman of faith, who has been given to us as an example there. She got the child she was promised in a miraculous way. She too *must have wept for many years* after her marriage, when she was barren. She waited and waited for the promised child, and must have been tempted to give up hope many a time. It was a shame in those days (as in many parts of India today) to be barren. Many proud mothers may have taunted Sarah and she must have faced the subtle comments and snide remarks of others. She would go into her tent and weep before her God. And God saw her tears and answered her. So don't give up praying with tears. Don't ever lose faith. God will answer you speedily, O woman of faith.

It is perhaps best to conclude with the beautiful story of that *weeping, sinful woman* who brought an alabaster vial of expensive perfume and anointed Jesus feet, after washing those dust-laden feet with her tears. (Those tired feet had walked the streets of Palestine for you and me as well.) Jesus saw her tears, her repentance, her desire to give up her sinful life and her longing to be accepted by God. He also saw the reasons behind her tears. The religious leaders at that dinner only saw her as a sinner. They looked at her on the outside. Jesus saw what was in her heart. She had been forgiven much and so she loved much. The alabaster vial of perfume (which she must have spent her life's savings to buy) was a token of her love. She spread the fragrance of her perfume, not only in that house that day, but through her story, into the hearts of many other women like us for 20 centuries.

Jesus gave her *forgiveness, salvation and peace*. And then He told all the dinner guests the story of a money-lender who forgave two debtors, one who owed him a small debt and the other who owed him a much larger debt. "*Which of the two would love the creditor more?*" Jesus asked. And then pointing to the sinful woman, He said that she loved Him more than anyone else there, because "*she had been forgiven much*".

Jesus used sinful, suffering women to teach other people many wonderful truths of the kingdom of God. He understands the condition of women in our Indian culture today, and has come to lift us up, and to give us hope and an awareness of our tremendous value in God's eyes. No one who comes to Him will ever be rejected. He blessed every woman who ever came to Him in her need, when He was on earth, and He is just the same today.

Dear fellow-women, we have all been forgiven much. This is why we must love the Lord much. He wants to use us now to show His marvellous truths to many others around us.

So, "*Wake up, O (Indian) daughter of Zion, clothe yourself with strength. Put on your beautiful clothes. Rise from the dust. Take off the slave-bands from your neck. Let your light shine, for the glory of the Lord has risen upon you*" (*Isa.52:1,2; 60:1-Living*).
