



## **Dannemora, NY**

My name is Clint and I am a sinner, but I didn't always realize that. My parents just celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary. I have two older brothers and I'm from a decent community. My family lives for the status quo, "Don't stand out, don't be different, and don't cause a fuss." Growing up, I always felt something was missing. Eventually, I felt like I just didn't belong. As a family, we said grace prior to meals, but aside from that, religion was off limits. My grandmother bought me my first children's Bible when I was six or seven. I read it, but in private. If my family didn't agree with my likes, interest, or ideals, they tended to send me on a guilt trip that made me feel ashamed and worthless. I have struggled with multiple mental issues, including many suicide attempts. I somehow reached my mid 20's even though I didn't care to live anymore. By this time I had started housesitting for distant family, and folks from my grandmother's church. I finally had freedom! Thanks to my strong character and reputation, people trusted me to care for their home and pets. What did I do with that opportunity? I turned to every bad decision that I could be numb to the pain. Spoiler, it didn't work! I was a sinking ship, but the good news was, nobody else would go down with me. I was on one of my last housesitting jobs when I got news that my grandmother had fallen and could not get up. I got in the car and was there far faster than I should've been. The door was already secured for the night, so I found an unlatched window. I am not a small guy. I imagine it looks

like a full-grown man trying to fit through doggie door. I made it through one roll at a time. Most importantly, my grandmother was unharmed and safe. Within a couple months, we discovered a long list of concerns and struggles with my grandmother. As one whose life would be least disrupted, I volunteered to care for her. To this day, I do not understand my logic, but I knew and know that I made the right choice. My grandmother, or Makka, as we called her, was kind, gentle, and an extremely stubborn woman. We say as stubborn as a mule, but mules say as stubborn as Makka. Her life revolved around church. Makka belonged to the same church for roughly 50 years. She was choir director for nearly 35 years of that. Pastors would call her to get approval of Sunday sermons. She was a force to be reckoned with. That's why it was so heartbreaking when her dementia would take over. I had no idea what I was in for in taking care of her. I lost every bit of freedom I had left. I lost all my friends. I got distant from my family. I drifted from community and every shred of sanity was gone. Or so I thought! I was startled many times by the figure of a small boy with a baseball and glove. He would throw that ball into the glove, and the pop of leather would catch my attention. Every time this figure would appear, or I heard that familiar pop, Makka was in need of help. God was guiding me! Every time Makka had an appointment or activity at church, the lousy weather would turn to sun or very calm. Once at our destination and safe, the lousy weather would resume. God was protecting us! To continue Makka's duties at church, I helped her select

music for the service. I can't read music and can't carry a tune for my life, but I discovered a gift for words and their deeper meaning. She always baked for coffee hour, so now I did too. Turns out I have a passion for baking! As Makka's health declined, community disappeared altogether. Despite Makka sending hundreds of cards to shut-ins around the community for decades, she didn't receive a single one. But God never left her! Even with falls and other medical issues, Makka did not spend one night in a hospital, not one minute in any care facility, and not one second away from loved ones. Makka passed away on December 26, 2018, which just happened to be her late husband's birthday. God brought them together again! Everything does happen for a reason! Turns out, I gained more than I lost. I found God! I am blessed to be alive considering everything. I didn't chicken out on those suicide attempts, God intervened. I'm here for a purpose. I now pray hard and often, I read my Bible multiple times per day, I attend weekly service and Bible studies, and I'm working on multiple correspondence courses. I look forward to being baptized and the laying on of hands. I long for a Christian community and church. I hope for God to use me as a vessel to help my brothers and sisters. Compared to where I am right now, that would be heaven. A lot was left unsaid. 2018 was a minute ago and obviously I didn't end up where this testimony was headed. God had other plans! I could jump to current day and try to put a nice little bow on everything. But I won't do that. Every setback is a chance for Him to

touch our lives, but that's a testimony for another day. **C.S.**

### **St. Petersburg, FL**

#### **A Heart**

A heart has stopped beating  
A life has now ceased  
Senselessly ended  
By the knife of a thief.

Never will it beat again  
Never will it breathe  
No way to say I'm sorry  
No way for anyone to say goodbye.

Oh, if things could be different  
Circumstances changed  
I, as a conspirator  
Would take the knife in her place.

I can never go back though  
Events cannot be changed  
For the acts I've committed  
There is only grief and shame.

Though this side of heaven  
The question still remains  
Why was there a victim, Lord?  
Why, for everyone involved, all the pain?

Caught now in a prison cell  
The pain and the grief  
The answerless questions  
Only in JESUS, have I found relief!

Given all to my FATHER  
Casting all my hurt and cares upon HIM  
Delivered from the deserved penalty  
Forgiven, through HIM, all my sin!

A heart has started beating  
A man in a cell  
Has made the decision of JESUS-  
Of Heaven over hell.

A heart is now beating  
A life that's now HIS  
Through the shed blood of JESUS  
Eternal life is now lived!

Composed by Edward P. Lusch,  
in prison for life, but freer than most outside.

### **Fort Worth, TX**

I am currently incarcerated in the Tarrant County jail awaiting my court date. I was raised going to church on Sunday morning, but never really paid much attention. Now I'm 47 years old and possibly going to prison. I got a new cellmate one day and after getting to know each other, he told me he couldn't read or write. So with nothing better to do with my time, I offered to help him learn how. One evening, before lights out, he asked if I would read the Bible to him. It has become a nightly thing. I've added the daily bread and other motivational reading. I've found Jesus Christ again and accepted Him as my Savior, been reborn, and have changed my life. I've never felt so free spiritually or mentally. Even though I'm still locked in this concrete and steel room, my heart and soul are free with Jesus. By taking the small step to help someone learn to read and write, I ended up changing my life in a way that I didn't see coming. All these worries, stress, and heartache are gone. I'm walking with the Lord and shining bright. Praise Jesus!!!

**K.B.**

### **Fort Worth, TX**

I finally decided to give my life to Christ officially. On 9/5/2024 a chaplain came to visit us and I told him that I wanted to be saved. I've been living my life in the wrong ways. I stopped going to church, stopped attending Friday Bible studies as a youth. My mother never understood why. I was kicked out and on my own by the age of 16. On a continuous life of crime, my life spiraled upside down. I burned a lot of bridges. Eventually, I moved from New York to North Carolina, in

search of a fresh start. I wish I would've found the Lord then, but I ended up with a blessing, my daughter. But with the path I was on, listening to the devil, I lost the family I made with the mother of my child. She doesn't even speak to me. I now live in Texas. Every time the Lord gave me a blessing or a breakthrough, I messed it up. Drugs played a big role. And I was trying to fight depression. I wasn't catching the hints. God saved me! I now feel a big weight lifted off my shoulder since I have been saved. When I get released this time, I am going to attend a church and continue to allow the Lord to guide me. I hope and pray that I can someday see my daughter and the mother of my child and be with them. I want to tell them how sorry I am for allowing myself to be so misguided. I do feel I am a changed man and I want to show them I can and tell them I'm a better person. I want to let the Lord guide me into guiding them into a life of Christ as well. I need prayer. I pray for a clear state of mind away from depression and anxiety. I thank God for the sentence He gave me and the knowledge He has instilled in me while being here. I wish I had a mentor or someone to help me on a path of righteousness. But with the Bible, I really feel I can do it with the Lord's continuous blessing.

**R.B.**

**Send your testimony letters to:**

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