

*I waited patiently for the Lord;  
he turned to me and heard my cry.  
He lifted me out of the slimy pit,  
out of the mud and the mire;  
he set my feet on a rock  
and gave me a firm place to stand.  
He put a new song in my mouth,  
a hymn of praise to our God.  
Many will see and fear  
and put their trust in the Lord.  
Psalm 40:1-3*

## Foreword



**D**o you hunger for perfect faith? Are you longing to possess an unwavering belief in a loving God that remains rock solid despite enormous obstacles and crushing tragedy; a spectacular faith that will send you soaring high above the tallest mountain yet will also carry you to safety, securely wrapped in arms of steel through the darkest valley?

I ask you to take my hand and walk awhile with me. You will witness the birth of precisely that sort of faith. The title of this book, *Trees Wear Glasses, Don't They?*, is symbolic of believing God and trusting Him even when it appears to make no sense to do so. The title stems from an encounter with God that left me convinced that walking with Him in perfect faith is attainable. Bound as we are by human limitations, we may lose our grip on it momentarily. We are weak and falter as our minds struggle vainly to comprehend what is truly incomprehensible – the enormity and awesome power of God. Nevertheless, if you experience true

unquestioning faith once, even if only for a moment, you will pursue it again forever.

Thank you for joining me on this journey. Since we are strangers to one another, it seems appropriate to begin with introductions. The most important detail to know about me is that I am an ordinary person – just like you. Until a few months ago, my life was filled to overflowing with the typical triumphs and struggles of a middle-aged woman juggling career responsibilities and motherhood. My little boys had grown into young men, and within a few years they would be finished with college and, with any luck, become self-sufficient. I reassured myself with the hope that the problems of recent years would be resolved by age and maturity, and that our lives would become less rocked by turbulence. Peace beckoned, seeming to linger just beyond the horizon, but it wasn't to be; not in the way I desired it.

In one moment, in just a single instant, all hope disappeared and my life was shattered... forever changed.

Within these pages you will discover renewal and redemption, enduring love, healing compassion, and supernatural power. I did. And my heart's desire is to share it with you so that you may also find comfort in the midst of your pain. I was convinced that I was broken, ruined beyond all hope of repair, and the Lord proved me wrong. He tenderly gathered every jagged piece of my heart and carefully put me back together. The end result was a new person, formed in the image He desired, infused with His power, and infinitely stronger than before.

I readily admit that I am not a seminary-educated Bible scholar. No one knows better than I that there is much left for me to learn about the Lord. My single credential in sharing my story lies in the fact that I am emerging from this tragedy still a walking, talking, functioning human being. The credit for this belongs completely to God. Left to my own devices, you would find me crying and cowering in a dark closet pleading for an end to the torment.

No, on my own, I am nothing special. I am simply a mom who wanted more than anything else in the world for her children to be happy and successful. Perhaps, therein lay the root of the problem. Happiness and success in my mind were defined in worldly terms

and standards. But, isn't that true of most families? We all engage to some degree in the pursuit of material possessions that is so encouraged by our society. And superficially, it appeared to be working. My oldest son, Stephen, had some serious problems, as do many teenagers, but we were addressing them. And we loved him so much. I thought that surely our love alone would be enough to help him overcome these issues.

We were living a typical life filled with typical challenges. You could be me.

And then on a December night, my worst fear, the one that always threatened just beyond my consciousness, the one I would never really allow myself to consider, became reality.

What do you do? Where do you turn when the very foundation upon which you have built your world crumbles to dust? Who do you call when you realize that your own strength is ridiculously inadequate to carry you through?

I certainly didn't know, and I was sinking fast. Everything was gone. No hope remained. I had never before experienced such aching emptiness. I desperately needed answers but there were none.

And then, I noticed a faint glow; a glimmer of light flickering at the end of the dark tunnel that had begun to define my world. I didn't expect it. At first, I didn't even recognize it. Yet, even before my puzzled interest could be transformed into complete astonishment, God literally swept me into His loving arms and rescued me.

Are you in need of rescue? Are you also struggling with hopelessness and paralyzing despair? If you are, I understand. Life can become so unbearably difficult that you question whether it is even worth the struggle. For what purpose do we endure such hardship?

You won't find the answers in the secular world. Nothing I had learned in the pursuit of worldly success provided a single ounce of comfort to me when I needed it most desperately.

My answers were born in pain. I discovered some powerful truths during my walk through the valley. When the world offered me nothing, God gave me everything. In times of plenty my heart had remained firmly closed to Him; but once broken, it recognized only its piercing need: a need for Him. During the past year, I have learned to hear, to recognize, and to obey God's voice. Making the

decision to take His hand, to close my eyes and to hold on for dear life, has transformed me in ways I would never have dreamed possible.

Is deliverance and redemption also available to you? I believe with all of my heart that it is. You only have to ask. For some, the realization of God comes gradually. Others experience Him flooding their lives in a rush. God knows your need. Regardless of how you meet Him, an intimate relationship with your Savior begins as a budding knowledge that blossoms into full-blown glory within a willing heart.

When I first began to experience God's love surrounding and comforting me, I wasn't completely convinced that He existed. I recognized that something I didn't understand was happening to me, and I began a search for explanations and reassurance. I felt a tremendous need to hear from others who had experienced God in personal and powerful ways, and I craved specifics. I wanted to know, "How did you know it was God? How exactly did He speak to you?" I urgently *needed* to know. Something supernatural was happening to me. I could not deny it and this realization simultaneously comforted and terrified me.

You will come to know me well as I relate the details of our tragedy. I hold nothing back of my weakness, my despair, my doubts, and my fears. Too often, we try to present ourselves to the world as strong and capable. We hide our innermost fears out of a false sense of pride. I have chosen to ignore that natural inclination because I want you to see in me—and my story—your own secret thoughts revealed. I invite you to recognize my undermining, self-defeating emotions as similar to those that plague you.

Measure your struggles against mine. I realize that I am not the only person who has ever suffered devastating loss. Your pain is equally difficult to bear. The reason for sharing my tragedy so openly is not to say that I am unique in my suffering but rather to reveal the extent of my redemption: to contrast my situation in December 2003 with where God has brought me one year later. My emotional condition was critical. It was life-ending. And when I most needed Him, God was huge! He embraced me and shielded me with a love that surpasses description.

As you walk with me along this journey, I encourage you to ask yourself this question, “If God cared enough and was powerful enough to rescue her, will He not do the same thing for me?”

Now it is your turn. Who are you deep down inside where no one else can see? What demons are scratching at your door? Although I don't know your name, there are some things I do know about you. Whether or not you are already a born-again child of God or one not yet convinced of the awesome intensity of His love, you crave answers. You may have sought them in many places you would prefer not to remember; perhaps in the arms of a lover ... in alcohol or drugs ... in overachievement or underachievement ... in the endless pursuit of beauty or the quest for worldly success. You long to know that you are accepted and valued and have a meaningful purpose in life. I may not know every need that led you to pick up this book. But of one thing I am absolutely certain: God knows and He cares. You have tremendous value to Him. Your name is written in the palm of His hand and you are never out of His thoughts, not for a moment.

Let me assure you that I also care, immensely. My fervent prayer is for some aspect of my experience to touch you, to change you, and to draw you closer to God. If even the faintest possibility exists that witnessing my struggles and doubts will help you to overcome the same, I willingly lay them bare for you.

As we walk through the birth and strengthening of my faith in our Savior, you will observe that the person with whom you are beginning this journey is not the same person who is with you in the end. The change in my heart was not instantaneous. The development of faith is a process. My trust, gratitude, and love for God did not spring up overnight. Rather, each grew steadily. I doubted. I wondered. I resisted the concept of obedience. And, thankfully, my Lord isn't finished with me yet. I am undoubtedly a work in progress, and I continue to learn and grow every day. Yet, as I look back at where I have been, the transformation He has made in my heart and in my life is nothing short of amazing.

Let me be clear. I am not proposing my experience as a formula for the way God works in everyone's life or as a standard method in which He communicates. The following account is simply the way

He chose to reveal Himself to me. Some of you already have, or will in your lifetime, experience more dramatic manifestations of His power than I have, and others will come to know Him through more subtle means. The end result is the same: a deep, lasting peace; comfort in times of trouble; and the glorious promise of an eternal home with Him in heaven. God, in His infinite wisdom and compassion, provides us with exactly what we need, in exactly the way we need to receive it. Each need is unique, as is each relationship with our Lord.

My life in the past year is described eloquently and succinctly in the words of King David recorded in the 40<sup>th</sup> Psalm. Although written centuries ago, these verses speak a powerful truth. What solace they have been to me! In my darkest moments, I have whispered them through the tears, repeating them again and again ...until I feel His warmth envelop my heart and banish the terror. God's mighty but gentle hand dries my tears and calms the turbulent waters of my soul, offering hope and deliverance from pain. A touch this comforting is available from only one source: God.

What can you do to earn such treasure for yourself? Nothing! It cannot be purchased with good behavior, intellectual ability, or worldly acclaim. Your efforts to save yourself are futile. There is only one path to salvation and freedom. Simply, accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and allow Him to reign as the uncontested Lord of your life. Because of His immeasurable mercy, God will provide the same freedom for you that He did for me. He will raise you from your personal nightmare and miraculously transform your despair into a wellspring of hope and joy.

Don't we all long for that sort of life-altering, rule-breaking, mind-bending miracle? In truth, our battered hearts ache for it.

Despite the stoic face we present to the world, hidden deep behind our smiles and confident exteriors lay a vast emptiness and a hunger that can only be satisfied by God.

Your pain may be of a different sort than mine but its sting is equally as sharp. Regardless of your station in life — man or woman, young or old, businessperson or stay-at-home mom — your heart cries out for a Savior Who has the strength to lift you from your pit of despair.

You haven't faced tragedy yet? I wish I could spare you the pain that is inevitable in every life. You are bound to face loss of some kind: death, rejection, desertion, betrayal, illness, financial loss, disappointment ... the list is endless. Satan has a never-ending and creative supply of tools with which to torment us.

True liberation results from relinquishing control of your life to God. He offers freedom from desperation and worry. I don't intend to suggest that salvation provides you with an impenetrable shield from pain and difficult circumstances. We live in a fallen world. No one is immune from hardship, and no such promise has been made. The difference lies in deliberately laying down your sword and giving the battle to the only One with the power to win it for you.

Aren't you tired? Tired of feeling that you have to manage everything and wondering why you are just not quite good enough to do it?

As a redeemed child of God, you will never again face life's difficulties alone. What an awesome power is contained within that statement. You will always have a devoted friend by your side who is providing you with everything you need to emerge victorious!

At this very moment, you could be one heartbeat away from an event that will knock you to your knees. I pray that you will know what to do while you are down there.

I was in that cold, dark place and our Almighty God joined me there and raised me up. He became my dearest friend and protector.

Won't you allow Him to become yours? Take His hand. He has been reaching for yours since the moment you were born.