

Personal Testimony – Laura

Hey, I have a big birthday coming up this year! October 25, I'm going to be twenty-one years old! 21!

Twenty-one years ago I accepted the forgiveness of God and I became His child. Twenty-one years ago I started my life as His.

I had been in church all my life, but that was the day someone opened the Bible and explained to me who Jesus Christ is and what He was doing on the cross.

I heard 1Peter 2:24 for the first time that day. *He himself took our sins in his body on the tree.* I heard that, and I got it. Something in me jumped up. I got what He was doing there! It was because of me. Because of my sin.

The verse goes on to say, *by His wounds you are healed.* So it was because of me. But it was also for me. I was being offered healing. Forgiveness.

And you know what I did? I grabbed for them. I apologized to God for what I did to Him. And I thanked Him for what He did for me. I asked Him to forgive me and heal me and join my life to His life. And that day He did. I stepped from death into life, like the Bible says.

That was the day I saw Him for who He really is. And in light of who He is I saw myself for who I really am.

•**That day a sinner met her Savior.** What a relief it was to admit that I am a sinner. It's something we all know, don't we? We just don't want to admit it. But as soon as I did, as soon as I confessed my sin, He took it from me. I was free.

- Do you know Him for who He really is?
- Do you know yourself for who you really are?

What came before that day in my life? Well, a decade earlier I was in a psychiatric hospital. I had been wrecked by my childhood. And I was curled up in that hospital and not eating. I was curled up and not speaking. I was curled up against the pain of this world.

My family looked just right. My father was a Yale-educated doctor, my mother was a musician. We lived in a beautiful area with private schools and church every Sunday.

But my parents were not able to be there for each other or for their 4 children. They divorced early on and my mother committed suicide when I was nine. Our family was broken up and by the time I started high school I had lived in ten different households.

For as far back as I can remember I was neglected and terrified and overwhelmed by the demands life was making of me.

- Do you feel that way sometimes?

I became manipulative and angry. By the time I was 20 my life was entirely ruled by fear and self pity. And I hated myself.

- Do you ever feel that way?

So when this Word comes to me that I am loved by God. That I was created by Him. That He knows all about me and my past. And that He offers full forgiveness, this was the word of life to me! And I grabbed it!

- Have you ever grabbed it for yourself?

For 21 years I have been living as a loved one of God. I am forgiven. I am secure. Life hurts me sometimes. Memories hurt me sometimes. But I am not alone. I am His. And I am at rest. I am fully known and fully loved. I am grateful.

Sin carries us away from God. But I want to tell you that the One who created you wants you back. He is calling to you. He is holding out full forgiveness. And new life as His. Only turn in His direction and He will be running to you. Like the father to the prodigal son. Turn to Him. Accept the gift of forgiveness He is holding out to you. It is only a prayer away.