

I Found His Feet

Personal testimony
of Christie Garza

As a child I would ride the church bus every week to my aunt's church, Ft. Cooper Baptist, because my parents did not attend at that time. I loved going to church and being around the things of God. When I was 7 our church had a revival. I felt under conviction during the invitation and wanted to go to heaven when I died, so I prayed and asked God to save me. I was baptized shortly thereafter.

I continued going on the church bus for years. When I was in 8th grade my parents started coming to church faithfully. They became very faithful and that encouraged me to stay in church during the "rebellious" teenage years. Eventually I was teaching Junior Church with my parents and became a leader in the teen group. When I turned 16 and was allowed to start dating, I began praying for God to send me the right person. Within weeks I met Charlie and we began dating. Charlie and I have been serving in church together from the very beginning of our relationship. By all appearances I was the perfect teenage girl.

Though people did not doubt my sincerity for serving God, I was good at hiding what was truly in my heart. I did wrong secretly. I loved looking religious but my heart was far from God. I had my life planned and I wanted God to fit into what I wanted. I had no idea of what it is to follow God. I thought that since I had prayed for salvation and had served God continually that God would let me do what I wanted and be OK with it. My sins at this time were mostly self righteousness and looking down at those who did not "follow" God. Boy was I stupid. I was clueless when it came to following; I was trying to lead!

Charlie and I were engaged right before we graduated high school. We had our lives planned. I already had a scholarship to go to college to become a teacher. Charlie enrolled in classes at the same college to become an EMT. Our intentions were to go to college, get married and serve together in our church.

A week before our college classes started Charlie visited the Bible seminary with our youth pastor to fellowship with some of the young preachers. That day changed our lives forever. He came home with a full load of classes and dropped his EMT training. Our youth pastor told him that every good Christian should go to Bible school for at least one year. When he came over that night and told me I was furious. I felt like he made such a major decision without talking to me first. Being engaged, his decision greatly affected me. Then a few months later he surrendered to preach. This sent me into panic! I DID NOT WANT TO BE A PREACHER'S WIFE! We broke up for a short time. Then I realized that God put us together and God has called him so I needed to accept where God had me.

We got married and moved to the seminary. I quit college to help bring in income while Charlie was in school full time. During the seminary years we bounced around to a few churches.

This brings me to the first time that God ever showed me that he loved me particularly. I had always heard that God loves each person, but he finally made it real to ME! I had a very serious complication during my first pregnancy. I began to miscarry. Had I gone into full fledged labor I would have died before I got to the hospital. My doctor told me that he was referring me to an abortion doctor. We refused to go. That evening was, until this point in my life, the scariest night I ever had. Many people were praying for God to intervene. The next day, after much searching, we found a doctor who was willing to see me with my complications. When I arrived at the office the doctor did an ultrasound and

my “complication” was gone. Over night God had healed my body and spared my life. This was the very first time God showed me that I was special to him.

About 4 months after that, Charlie was called to Westwood Baptist Church as the youth pastor. In February 1995, just months after going to Westwood, the church was having a Revival with Bro. Tim Rutherford. I was only able to attend the meeting for one night because I worked in the evenings (with Wednesdays off for church.) But that night set me on a course with God that I did not expect! Until that night I felt fine with God. I had served without question feeling saved the whole time. That Wednesday night God spoke to my heart directly and told me that I was lost. I can’t even tell you what Bro. Tim preached, I only heard God speaking. I went forward that night and prayed at the altar. I got up with no peace!

I was afraid to tell anyone that I was lost because many of the people in our church believed you could just pray a prayer and get saved. I knew I had already tried that and it didn’t work. I didn’t want to share what was going on with people who would only try to get me to do something to be right with God.

I sought God privately. I didn’t know who to go to for help. I cried to God every day for almost 3 years. I cried myself to sleep every single night begging God to save me. I was in deep despair over my soul! God continued to make me sick of myself, my life, my sin!

I had gotten to a place where I did not even like to be around Bro. Tim. I did not like what God would say to me when he was around. I began to make excuses about going to church when Bro. Tim would be there. I’m so thankful now that God used Bro. Tim to bring the truth to me!

One night I was in bed begging God just as I had done every night before. God asked me a question and pointed to why he was resisting. He asked me, “Why do you want me to save you?” My immediate response was that I wanted to go to heaven. Man, God pierced my heart with that answer! I just thought I was seeking God. He showed me that I was seeking him for my own benefit. I began pleading with God to change my heart. I begged him to help me want him only, because he is the only thing that is worth giving up for.

A couple of months after God showed me where I was at I remember begging God to change my heart. I was in deep despair over being worthy. My heart cried out to God, “I’m going to serve you whether or not I go to heaven because you are worthy.” That night I surrendered my life as a servant. I truly thought that I had gotten saved that night because I felt a peace in my soul that I had not felt for a long time. But I rested on my works.

I felt at peace for years in my soul until Bro. Charlie began preaching on the “Ingredients of Salvation.” He made every church member write their testimony for him to examine. When I wrote my testimony out I felt like something was missing. I realized that I had not heard a particular gospel given to me. I had the church read it and no one questioned my testimony so once again I felt peace.

That peace however was very short lived. God would not let me rest on anything short of a work from Him. At winter camp, Bro. Mike was preaching to the young adults who were on the edge of straying and he said words that pierced my soul, “You might just get what you want, but it might cost you your

soul.” God told me that what I wanted was to be saved quietly so that no one would ever know that I was still lost.

That spring, Bro. Charlie and I had the opportunity to go to the birthday celebration at Lighthouse. The entire preaching was to the lost. We were being compelled to seek and not be complacent. The same preaching was at camp just a month later. I was in trouble by this point. I had been hiding from everyone who I really was, a miserable sinner who needed God. When we got home from camp I broke down and told Bro. Charlie where I was at. He cried with me.

Just a month later we had the house fire and I have to say that seeking God was placed on the back burner. I had my world turned upside down with one phone call. It was about a year after the fire that I had enough stability to really focus on seeking God with strength. But through that whole time he just kept telling me that he loved me.

But this time seeking was different... every time I would move toward God in my heart it felt as if He would leave me. In reality He wasn't leaving, He was seeing if I would continue seeking Him. I left services discouraged time after time. I wasn't mad at God, but mad at myself for not doing things right. It got to a point where I chose to not move toward God because I didn't want His presence to leave me. I would argue in my heart that it wasn't for me, it was for someone else tonight. Or I would argue with God that He didn't really want me...as if there was sin in my life that He wasn't aware of. God has been telling me for months now that my sins were already forgiven and that He just wanted me to love on Him. How can I believe that my sins are forgiven before a holy God when all I can feel is the condemnation of my soul?

One night Bro. Charlie was preaching and he said that some of the lost had offended God by rejecting His love. I knew that was for me. It only made me feel more guilty in my soul. I felt unlovable.

A few weeks later Bro. Greg Moffitt came to Beulah for a meeting. Wednesday night, before our meeting started, God gave my husband a strong burden to do something to let the church know how precious the words were that God was going to be sending to us through Bro. Greg. He made a great sacrifice of something that was very precious to him. I realized that this was a very important week.

At the beginning of the week Bro. Greg said that our striving would not be in vain. That gave me a lot of hope. This week he preached so strong to the church about how much God loved Beulah and how special they were to him. He focused on God's love all week. I was torn up every service. But once again I found myself afraid to move toward God because I was feeling His presence. Friday afternoon came around and God reminded me of the great sacrifice my husband had made to prove the preciousness of the words we would be hearing. I felt guilty because, though I was touched in the service, I had not truly been obedient and moved toward God.

Bro. Greg got up behind the pulpit and began reading the story of Mary and the alabaster box. When he finished he said that God just wanted somebody who will love him. I couldn't stand it...I was about to bust! I got up and went to the altar and God's feet were right there. I wrapped my arms around His feet and cried all over Him. At one point Bro. Greg asked me if I was ok and then he left. I was just with God needing my sins to be forgiven.

A little while later my husband came up and told me that God just wanted me to tell Him how much I love Him. I began pouring myself out on Him.

I began remembering when my doctor told me that I was going to die and God healed my body. I was thankful for being married to one of His men. I was thankful for the men of God he's put in my life . I got so thankful in my heart and He reminded me of all the things that He's done in my life to show His love to me.

I started asking Him to send Bro. Greg to me to tell me that my sins were forgiven. Bro. Greg did not come. I heard Bro. Greg say from his seat that God told him when he was trying to talk to me that God had it under control. I knew Bro. Greg wasn't coming to tell me anything. I was forced to remember all that God had spoken to me in the preaching. I remembered the words that my sins were already forgiven.

Suddenly, I had peace in my soul and began thanking God. I didn't really understand at that moment that I had gotten saved. I only knew that I didn't ever want God to leave. I wanted to stay wrapped up at His feet all night! I had found my Savior!

God is faithful to save! He brought a religious, self-righteous preacher's wife to a place as seeing herself as a filthy, sinful woman who was unworthy to even be asking for salvation. How great is our God!