



Revived, Not Reformed

By Virginia Bahs - Dec. 2002

My older brother Gale Palmer encouraged me to write this down and share it while still fresh in my memory in the hope that it would be a blessing to someone else and a witness to God's infinite Grace, love, and mercy.

As the daughter of Baptist Missionaries I grew up believing that God was real, that Jesus was his son, that He was born of a virgin, suffered and died on the cross of Calvary for my sins and the sins of the world, was resurrected on the third day, and went back to heaven. I don't think there was ever a time when I did not believe this. I even made a profession of faith at the age of 13 or 14 and was baptized. Soon after I graduated high school, I left the church completely, went out in the world, and led a very immoral and sinful life. I knew full well what I was doing was wrong, but I was not overly worried or convicted about my life style. I was married in 1987 to my husband and we attended a Protestant church sporadically. Once the children were born, I even joined a church because quite a few of my husband's family attended there. They never once asked me if I was saved, redeemed, or born again. Plus, I knew I was not living the life I knew a Christian should live. My mom and dad sent the children Bible story books, which I read to them. I had the knowledge to answer their questions, but it left me under great conviction. My words rang hollow as I was teaching them scriptural truths, because I knew I had not been living them.

About two years before my father passed away in April of 1998 I began looking for an Independent Baptist Bible Believing church. Shortly after his passing I found and united upon letter of transfer to Grace Baptist. I was to see both of my children and husband saved and baptized there. When an opening came up in the Sunday School Dept., I was asked to teach a Sunday school class which I did. I had the doctrinal and Bible knowledge to do the job, but it brought me no joy. I was just doing what was expected of me. After all as a Baptist Missionary's daughter I knew how to walk the walk and talk the talk, but I knew I had no real testimony of salvation in my heart and life. I didn't sense any power in my prayers or the lessons I taught. I could see the joy in others and thought, maybe I just needed to read my Bible and Pray more, after all I told myself, I was living a good "Christian" life now, I had "come back" to God, had even called and made amends to folks I had wronged in the past, I was a "reformed" person.

After attending Grace Baptist Church for a few years and hearing the word of God taught three times weekly as well as studying for Sunday School lessons, I began to question whether or not I was truly born again as the scripture says you must be in order to enter heaven. I struggled for over a year with the question of my salvation; I went to the altar during the invitation time after time under deep conviction unable to be honest with myself, praying for understanding, asking God to forgive me and to soften my heart that had become hardened by

my years of living a sinful life. Many times no words would come, just tears. I know when we can't find the words to speak that God knows our hearts, Praise the LORD he knew mine.

Then one Sunday the pastor preached on Ezekiel chapter 37 and the valley of dry bones, he talked about how even after Ezekiel prophesied (preached the word of God) and the dry bones came back together and the flesh and sinew was on them they were re-formed but they still had no LIFE in them. He talked about how hearing the word of God can certainly bring about reformation, because it shows you what you need to do to live a good life, but reformed is not "resurrected", those bones with flesh and sinew could not come alive until God breathed on them and gave them life! WOW! That hit me like a ton of bricks! "That's me"! I had been put back together (re-formed) was foolishly trying to live a "Christian" life. (Because, of all people, I knew how!) Beyond studying for a Sunday school or Vacation Bible School lesson, I had no joy or desire to get into the scripture to see what God had for me. I knew deep down this was not the way it should be.

For about 3-4 weeks after hearing that message, I couldn't get it out of my head; "re-formed not resurrected" was all I could think about! I could no longer say I was saved or born again, I now knew better. Still I kept putting it off not wanting to admit it, especially not publicly, "What would people think?!" Finally the night of Dec 9, 2002 I could put it off no longer, I went to bed, but God would not let me sleep until I got things settled. I got out of bed, went down stairs knelt beside the couch in the living room and prayed. I confessed to God that I was a wicked sinner, unable to save myself, unable to live a Christian life without Him and unworthy of His forgiveness. I ask Him to forgive me and told Him that I wanted to know Him personally, and please give me the desire for Him and His word, I wanted the joy! I saw in others. I asked Him to **SAVE** me and come into my life as my LORD and Savior. I know I didn't use those exact words but God knew my heart! I cannot describe the burden that was lifted off my shoulders that night, I still had to face my family, my church, and my pastor and ask for their forgiveness, but I was no longer fearful, I was **SAVED!** Born Again a new creature in Christ! GLORY! Praise God! I now know I am truly **SAVED** by his power divine, **SAVED** to new life sublime" I have the witness within that speaks to me and says welcome home you are a "Child of the King"!

*"...and this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may **know** (not guess or hope but KNOW, emphasis mine) that ye have eternal life". I John 5:11-13.*

I can sing with the writer of the song "Whosoever Meaneth Me,"

*"I am happy today and the sun shines bright, the clouds have been rolled away,
For the Savior said whosoever will can come with me to stay!"*

Praise the LORD! Thank you Jesus!

Friend,

If you read this and you are like those dry bones, trusting in you own self made reformation, I urge you to repent and turn to the Savior like I did so you can know Jesus as your Lord, Savior, and Friend! Just Tell him that you believe Jesus is his son, that he was born of a virgin, suffered and died for your sins, and was resurrected on the third day and that you realize there is nothing you can do to save yourself , that you are turning from your sin to him as your Lord and Savior. Then go and tell others about his wondrous salvation.

If you accepted Christ as your Savior after reading this, please email me and let me know so I can rejoice with you!

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