Katie's Testimony



I can't tell you exactly what it was, but something happened to me October 4, 2022, and it was amazing. Scratch that, I do know what happened. It was the glorious grace of God. And the best part? The joy I received on that day hasn't gone away! I'm not sure if what I experienced was the revival of a doubting heart, or true salvation for the first time, but either way, I can now confidently say that I KNOW I'm saved. Not in an arrogant way, but with a confidence that Christ is faithful and will keep his promises. Let me tell you my story.

I have struggled with doubt most of my life. Since I first professed to be saved at age 15, I often questioned whether or not I truly belonged to Jesus. I was raised in a Christian home, went to church 3 times a week, went to all the special services, prayed before meals…all the things I thought Christians were "supposed" to do. I was quickly distracted by my high school social life, sports, and academics, then by college and all the distractions that come with it. I read my Bible on occasion, because I knew I probably should, and I would talk to God a little, but he usually felt far away. I always felt like something as "off". I called out to God on several occasions, asking him to change me, forgive me, save me or to do something, but it often ended with me feeling nothing. At those times I would conclude that I was either already saved or a lost cause. I would feel desperate for peace, but at times when I did feel some peace, it never lasted. So I would go on with life just focusing on the here and now, because I didn't know what else to do. I had no Christian friends to turn to, and during college I felt very alone, turning to whatever group of friends made me feel included, even if they weren't good influences on my life. I couldn't figure out what was missing. I believed in Jesus, I knew I was a sinner and I knew Jesus was the only way to Heaven, but something still wasn't quite right. When I heard other people talk about their walk with the Lord, it sounded

like I was listening as an outsider. I knew I was supposed to have a personal relationship with Jesus, but it sure didn't feel personal. If someone were to ask me if I was going to heaven when I die, I would have said yes, but with a small, unsettling pang in my stomach that said "are you sure"?

After graduating college and marrying my husband, the doubts continued off and on. My husband probably got tired of explaining to me the promises of God, but he was patient and supportive when I needed it. After a pretty cold and bitter spiritual time, we joined our current church and, though I didn't have the peace I longed for, things started to improve. Jesus was exalted, and I started to learn more about what true Christianity is. I was inspired by the love for Jesus I saw and their zeal for sharing the gospel. I started to see more of the holiness of God, and how awesome Jesus is, but when other ladies talked about their Jesus in their lives, it felt like I was watching from the outside. I wanted that closeness with him, but as I mentioned earlier, I didn't know what was missing.

Sometime during the summer of 2022 I was having a mental and spiritual low. I had always wanted to have a Bible study with my pastor's wife, but didn't want to bother her as I figured

she had more important things to do (which I know wasn't true). My husband knew I needed help so he reached out to our pastor's wife on my behalf and asked if she would have a Bible study with me and, of course, she was happy to. A short while later I started meeting with a friend on occasion to talk about life, the Lord, and read some scripture. I was introduced to a Biblical podcast and I was listening to it regularly. I started reading my Bible a bit more. I could feel the Lord working.

One day, which I later figured out to be October 4th, I was driving home from meeting with my friend, listening to a podcast about living free from condemnation and walking in the grace of God. Maybe 5 minutes in, someone posed the question "what do you tell someone who is struggling with their eternal security and can't let go of past sin?" to which one of them responded with a quote from R.C. Sproul: "I would say to go back to the Lord in prayer, but this time instead of asking him to forgive you for the sin that has been haunting you, ask him to forgive you for questioning his integrity and refusing to accept his forgiveness". It was at this moment that God stabbed me in the heart. That is exactly what I have been doing – calling God a liar. I believed, I knew I was sinner, I knew that Jesus is the only way, and I even repented, but did I FULLY TRUST that he was going to do what he said he would do? I concluded that I didn't. I would never have admitted it, but what I was really doing is trying to fix myself. Trying to be perfect. And when I committed those same sins I struggled with over and over again, I would doubt my salvation, assuming that there is no way I could be saved if I couldn't conquer these sins. So right there as I was driving, I took my hands off

the wheel (yes, in hindsight I should have pulled over!) and reached upward and said "here, they are yours (referring to my sin)! I don't want them anymore! And I trust that you will take them from me and I trust you to keep me eternally" (or something to that effect). And wouldn't you know, my desperation turned to joy! My helplessness turned to peace! Now, I've had religious experiences in the past that were more like emotional highs that didn't last, so while I felt fantastic, I wanted to make sure that this wasn't just an emotional high. So went on with my normal life… but now I thought about Jesus all the time. I couldn't wait to find those rare alone times that I could read his Word. I wanted to proclaim how great he is to others. And 2.5 months later, I feel just a joyful and peaceful as I did on October 4th. Where the rubber meets the road for me is that it hasn't been a blissfully perfect 2.5 months. At times I've lost my temper with my kids. I've been cranky with my husband. I've been impatient. One day I even had a mental breakdown, which would normally spiral me into a pit of despair and doubt. But the difference this time? I called out to the Lord and fell into his parachute of grace. I repented, got right with him, and moved forward with peace. And I KNOW I am forgiven, because God is faithful!

Psalm 40:1-3 – I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heart my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he had put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.

Psalm 130:7 – …for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption (I love this phrase!)

Bio:

Katie James is a wife and mother of 3 young children. While spending most of her time as a stay at home mom, she works 1-2 days per week as a physical therapist and loves serving her Savior at Hope Baptist Church in Fairfield, Ohio.