

Experiences of Salvation

Elder Barry Armour

My testimony of when the Lord saved my soul. The revival was going on at Sunrise. I was about eight or nine years old. I still remember how I enjoyed going to revivals as a child. I would get to be with my friends and go outside after the service was over and play tag or hid and go seek. But one night all the fun thoughts of playing after church stopped. That particular night the preacher preached on “hell.” He told about the fire and torments and that, if you died without being saved, that’s where you will go. I tried not to think about it. I tried to do whatever I could to distract myself from the service and the preaching. I went through the song books, page by page, looked out the windows—anything to distract myself.

A couple of nights into the meeting my friends that we sitting with me started going to the altar and I was left sitting by myself, holding on to the bench. The next night they went again and one got saved. That really turned up the heat of that sermon on hell. I was already getting to the point that I was afraid to go to sleep because I knew I was lost and if I didn’t wake up, hell would be my home forever, eternally.

The next day or so my other friend told of being saved at home. Now I was by myself. Several people talked to me up until the night I made a move. I could not sit there any longer. I was so scared and convicted that I ran to the altar. I poured out my heart and did not get saved that night. I continued to go to the altar asking the Lord to save me. I did everything ; I tried every position, on the altar, under the altar, lying in the floor. I did everything that I had seen other people do in times past when they got saved.

Then one night I gave up doing things my way or someone else’s way. In so many words, I said, “Lord, I’ve done everything I know to do. If I’m going to be saved, you will have to do it. “ After that there was a space in time I ‘m not sure of. All I know was that there was peace in my heart. The fear and worry of hell was gone. I did not tell anyone for some time. I kept going to the altar for some reason. I guess the devil made me think that wasn’t salvation, it wasn’t good enough, there’s more to it than that. One night while I was on the altar someone was giving a testimony telling about praying for the people on the altar with them instead of praying for themselves. The Lord showed me clearly that night that I was saved because that’s what I was doing myself. Shortly after that, I joined the church and was baptized. We serve a God that lets you know you are lost and lets you know you are saved.

Tracey Choate Armour

My physical birthday is May 6, 1967. I was born the daughter of Billy and Betty Choate of Lafayette, Tennessee. I was carried to church at Days Cross Roads Missionary Baptist Church during their Sunday church services and I attended Sunday School at Lafayette Missionary Baptist Church. My spiritual birthday was on a Sunday in July. I think that I was around eleven years old, but

I'm not one hundred percent sure of the age and the date. It was Sunday morning revival time at Days Cross Roads Missionary Baptist Church. In my mind I had planned out the details of how I would seek God when He decided to deal with me. I had even planned out which altar that I wanted to seek at, but God was in control and that crowded Sunday Revival morning in July, the Lord decided to deal with me. I was burdened so badly and I knew that I was lost. I thought that I could push the pains away. My mom looked at me and asked if I was lost, and those few words were all it took to get me to move. I'm not sure how I made my way to the altar through all the people, but I did. I didn't worry about any of those things that I had planned out in my mind. My burden was so heavy and I needed relief. I ended up on the front bench of the Amen's section of the church during a crowded Sunday Revival meeting. I knelt at the altar and prayed and prayed, begging the Lord to save my lost soul. I felt like I was praying at Jesus' feet. I kept praying until I felt peace come into my soul, and that heavy burden was gone, and I knew the Lord had saved my soul. I stood up and told the church that He saved me. Years later I was led to join Lafayette Missionary Baptist Church and was baptized by Elder Benny Maggart. In 1991, I married Barry Armour and we moved to Hendersonville, Tennessee, and after visiting several churches, I started attending Victory Missionary Baptist Church. Years later I felt led to join this church. I remained a member at Victory Missionary Baptist Church until 2010, when the Lord led me to join Faith Missionary Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, where my husband, Barry, pastors.

Zach Armour

The Lord saved my soul when I was eleven years old. It was on April 6, 2008. It was a Sunday morning service when I felt convicted. Mrs. Sue Woodard came and asked me if I had been saved and I told her that I wasn't sure. I thought that I might have been saved before, so I prayed and asked God. It turns out that I wasn't actually saved. After that I knew I wasn't saved. I kept praying until He saved me. I stood up right there and told my mom what the Lord did for me.

Sonny Callis

As a small kid, I attended North End Baptist Church in North Nashville. Later our family moved to Florida and my teenage years were spent in Miami, FL. I had a friend there that was closer to me than my brother. One day he asked me, "What is all this about being saved that they talk about in these churches?" My reply was that I didn't know. We had only attended a Methodist Church for about a year and didn't hear anything that enlightened me there. I moved back to Nashville when I was about 20 years of age. I lived with my father and stepmother and they went to New Bethel. They told me I had to go to church if I lived with them and I agreed.

I went to New Bethel and liked the people. I recognized that these people had something that I didn't have and I wanted it. I went to the altar several times. In April of 1953, I was pricked in the heart and went to the altar. Bro. W.T. Russell was the pastor, and on that Sunday I was praying and I felt that something happened and apparently it was evident in my expression. I had raised my head and some say that my expression was clearly different. After the service I was approached by Sister Nell Massey and Sister Georgia Robinson. They asked me if I got saved. I said, "No, ma'm, I got a blessing but I didn't get saved." They said, "Well, Sonny, if you got a blessing, you got saved." I insisted that I hadn't gotten saved but just got a blessing. These two ladies left it to me and the Lord to work it out and it was soon to come to pass.

The next Sunday I went to Enon's Chapel with my parents and went to the altar again. I could not get concerned about myself in no way. I finally told my dad that I just couldn't pray. He asked me what was wrong and I said that I just didn't feel concerned. He asked me what happened to me the last Sunday. I told him that I got a blessing but didn't get saved. He told me that if I got a blessing, I could have gotten saved. It all came to me at that point, that I had peace instead of the burden that I had previously had. I realized that I had gotten saved at New Bethel the previous week. Since I had no experience in this kind of church, I just didn't recognize it. I joined the church on April 19, 1953, and was baptized in Mansker's Creek by Bro. W. T. Russell on August 30, 1953. (The baptizing was delayed because of the coming revival.)

Joyce Stockton Callis -

As a 10 year old, I attended church at River Road Missionary Baptist Church in West Nashville. Elder J. Frank Carr, the missionary, was pastor. I had a period of time that I was extremely fearful and I had thoughts of dying. My mother thought perhaps I should seek the Lord and there was a few days after she told me that I went to church on Sunday and was so upset over my fearful condition that I was crying all during the preaching service. I went to the mourner's bench and I don't know how long I was there. I remember someone telling me that in order for the Lord to save me I needed to give it all over to him, and not to hold on to my parents or anyone else. Very soon afterward I remember considering not holding on to my parents and the whole room seemed a flash of light and I was standing when I did not remember standing. I felt very light all over and my father and others were shouting. As soon as I got to my grandparents home, which was just up the road, the devil was telling me, "you didn't get saved—you didn't worry about yourself long enough." I always could go back to that bright light and know I had never had an experience like that before or since. The devil almost always tells a new convert that "you didn't get saved." Sometimes this causes people to have a lot of doubt about what the Lord has done for them. I joined the church and was baptized by Elder J. Frank Carr.

Billy Clemons

**_During revival in 1968, on Sunday, I was on the altar and the Lord saved my soul. I had been lost for a year or so, at least I thought I was. I had been to the altar several times before that with no success. I had prayed and begged and tried to make any kind of deal with the Lord that I could think of. I was only an eleven year old boy and I didn't know what to do. All I knew was, I felt like if I died right then, that hell would be my home. I can also remember those fire and brimstone sermons that Bro. Howard Taylor could preach. I can also remember Sister Taylor making her way back to where all of us young kids were sitting. Looking back, knowing what I know now, you could almost see the Spirit of the Lord in her as she made her way back to us. God sure blessed our church at that time with a lot of good Godly men and women who really cared about our souls. With the help of the Lord, He just kept drawing me and He helped me to get to that place where I realized there was nothing I could do to be saved. Once I got to that point and turned it all over to Him, He saved my soul. I don't know how long it took for the Lord to perform His operation on my heart, nor do I know exactly what took place, but when He was done, I looked up at Bro. Taylor and told him that the Lord just saved me. All my fear was gone and I felt like the Lord reached down and touched me on the head. I joined the church and was baptized in July of that year. I have forgotten a lot of things in my life, but I will never forget what the Lord did for me, and where He did it that Sunday morning in 1968 at Faith Missionary Baptist Church.
God Bless**

Billy Clemons

Cindy Mayo Clemons

In the winter of 1978 I met Billy Clemons, who I would later marry, who told me about his salvation. I was not raised to attend church so I had not heard much about God. I did believe in Him but never heard about salvation. I was 15 at the time. In the next few years I started attending Faith Missionary Baptist Church. I heard many people tell their testimonies during Sunday services. I knew they had something that I didn't and I wanted it! At the age of 17 during a sermon by Bro. Arnet Gregory I became lost, really lost, and the Lord was dealing with me in a great way. So I went to the altar. I was not saved during this service. I remained lost for several years to come. I spent a lot of time in my car praying. But I look back now and realize I don't really think I was praying with my heart. I think I was just going through the words. I know the right words to pray but I never really felt them in my heart.

Then one early morning on June 2 (Saturday) I was lying in the sun out in the back yard at my house on Colemont in Nashville, TN, where I finally did more than just say the words during my prayer. I remember I was really having a hard

week and trying to take some time to really look at myself. I know something just wasn't right with me, something was missing. I remember I took sometime to really look at myself. I am the type of person that has trouble staying focused on something because my mind wanders easily so I told myself not to close my eyes, to keep my eyes open and to really think about myself. I said to myself I have so much, I have a wonderful husband, a good job, and a really nice house. I have everything I should ever want, so "ALL I NEED IS YOU". That was my very short and very special prayer. At that very moment God saved my soul. I felt something touch my head and it moved all the way to my toes. For years I said God touched me on the head and I felt him all the way to my toes. I now know that what that was the sweetest peace that I have ever felt. It just washed all the way from the top of my head to my toes. I was later baptized in the Percy Priest Lake by Bro. Gregory and joined Faith MBC. Although, he has gone on to be with the Lord he will always hold a special place in my heart.

I thank God that as a 15-year-old girl he introduced me to a young man that told me about his salvation, and, in turn, a group of church members that were praying for me and later was blessed to be saved by my Lord! Thank you God!!!

One word of advice-- you never know whom you are telling your testimony to. It doesn't matter your age or who the person is, just tell them. I believe, just like me, the unsaved are missing something. Something is just not right in their lives and they cannot figure out what it is. Maybe just maybe if you tell them what the Lord has done for you they might get saved and their void will be filled! God Bless you all!

Dillon Clemons

When I was a ten year old, I felt conviction come upon me for the first time. I was at the Do Re Mi Gospel Music Academy. Before this time I had never really felt as if I was truly lost. The night before that I had a dream that the world had come to an end and I could see my family going away without me. Throughout the whole next day I had that thought on my mind, that God would end the world and I wouldn't have another opportunity to be saved. That night Bro. Kris Woodard preached on hell harder than I had ever heard it before, and it scared me so bad I collapsed to the ground and stayed there praying for hours. After a certain point, I finally spoke these words, "I give up, I have nothing else." That was all it took for me to be saved. Just a few words that were really so simple, but it was so difficult to get my heart to the place that it needed to be. That night on Tuesday, June 8, 2004, the Good Lord saved my soul.

Virginia Kemp Clemons

This was immediately after a Sycamore Valley Church revival around October of 1938. I was ten years old. I went to the altar with my friends during this revival meeting but I wasn't under conviction. In those days when a revival was in progress, school let out to let the children attend.

I attended a one-room school house. During lunchtime we played church. Some of the children preached, some sang, and some prayed. I got under

conviction and began to cry. My best friend got hold of my arm and led me into the school to the teacher and sat me down. They closed school and everyone began to pray for me. It seemed I was going in a dark hole. I asked the Lord to please save my soul and everything became light and bright and my best friend was shouting all over the house.

I joined Sycamore Valley immediately following my conversion and was baptized in January of 1939, with ice around the banks of the creek. Brother F. W. Lambert baptized me.

I thank the Lord for what He did for me that day and for that little one-room schoolhouse where they prayed for me that day.

Betty Oldham Coon – Written January, 2011

I was born in Hartsville, Tennessee, in 1950, the daughter of Marietta and Monroe Oldham. We attended East Main Missionary Baptist Church. The first pastor that I remember was Elder Howard Taylor. I believe that I went to the altar for the first time during an experience meeting, probably even before I was 'lost.' When I say 'lost' I am referring to the time when God takes away the protection He provides to all children for their souls, should they die before the time that they are capable of believing in Him with all the heart. The soul is at rest with God until this time of accountability to God and, therefore, has no worry or burden. When we reach the time and age that we are responsible to God, we lose the safe feeling. We are 'lost' to God unless we make our way back in repentance and faith. I went to the altar for five years, I believe. My mother took me to all the revivals in the area that she could manage to. I did not always feel conviction that comes with the lost condition, but I was never at ease. As time went on, I became frightened to go to sleep at night. I remember having the curtains in my room open and staring into the blackness of the sky. I was afraid that if I went to sleep I would not awaken and hell would be my eternal home. One night mother and I attended a revival at Salem Missionary Baptist Church in Gallatin. That night Bro. A.G. Gregory preached on why Baptists believe some of the things we believe. The burden had gotten so heavy that I finally could believe in Jesus with all my heart for salvation. I started out by sitting on the mourner's bench. Then I moved to my knees, then onto the floor. All this was an effort to get as low and humble as I could possibly get. What mattered was the condition of my heart rather than my body. There in the floor of the church I found the peace of salvation. I was saved the very first time that I was able to believe with all my heart that God would and could save my soul. At the time that I was saved the blackness of the night left and a scene of light and extreme beauty took its place. I did not realize at that moment that this was my salvation. The peace that filled my soul that night still lives in my heart today and forever. I told of my salvation the next year when an opportunity for members was given by Elder T.C. Jones, the pastor at East Main. He also baptized me in the lake near Hartsville. I did not know the month or day of my salvation for many years. During a conversation with my mother, she remembered when we had gone to the revival. I looked up the date on a calendar and found that I was saved on Sunday, November 3, 1963. My time and place was

in the floor of Salem Church, the exact date is good to know, but I was saved without knowing the day of the week or the day on the calendar. Salvation is best told when we can actually share the experience with others – we enjoy it even more.

Susan Coon

I got saved at Faith Missionary Baptist Church and joined Faith Missionary Baptist Church and I got baptized by Elder Leon White. I knew I was lost and I had to tell someone, so I told my mother that I was lost, so I went to the altar and felt peace in my heart. This was on Wednesday night, June 19, 1991. I was 16 years old. Bro. W.T. Russell was the pastor and Bro. Billy Moran was the helper.

Lisa Hicks Fortson

“Lisa was saved at age 9 in June, 1994, at home on a Friday afternoon. She joined Faith church during that revival and was baptized by Elder Ricky White.”

Larry Galloway

I was nine years old when I was saved. It was the last Sunday of July in 1969, about 7:00 p.m. I don't remember what the sermons were about, but after going to every revival service for three years, I finally got serious with God and Jesus.

I had a vision where I was on top of a tall mountain and God spoke to me, directing me to step out in faith and to physically jump off, and that God would catch me in His powerful Hand and would lift me up and save me and forgive me of my sins. I now know that this was spiritual faith/belief exercise, and I praise God for His wonderful salvation! I was saved on the altar at Old Union Missionary Baptist Church in Warren County, KY. I usually sat in the choir loft and sang during the song service. Then, when the invitation to sinners was given to come to the altar and seek my salvation, I would walk down out of the choir and go to the altar. That Sunday night I didn't immediately recognize that I was saved. I doubted my salvation because the devil told me I could NOT have been saved because basically nothing happened. I didn't see a great light or angels or hear music, or anything. But praise God, finally on Thursday night Jesus broke through and showed me that I was saved! I was in the choir singing as usual when the preacher gave the sinner's invitation. But that night they were singing, “When the Roll is Called Up Yonder, I'll Be There!” And suddenly I knew in my heart that (yes!) I was on my way to Heaven! I didn't have to come down and go to the altar again, because I had been saved! I started shouting and praising Jesus because I knew I was saved!

James Alan Gregory

Brother Arnett Gregory was talking with me. He asked me if I was happy. I was sitting behind Don and Jean Langford. I felt God's hand on my heart. God asked me to go up front. I didn't.

The next Sunday my dad got me to talk to the whole church. I told them how I was feeling, that I had been saved. Then I joined the church.

Ruth Sircy Hassell

When I was 10 years old, we moved from Smith County to Davidson County. Since there were no churches of our belief near us, our parents sent us to Mace's Hill to our grandmother's and our uncles' homes during the revival at Mace's Hill Church.

When I was 12 years old, one of my cousins asked me if I was lost. I went to the altar that day and for five more years. I wanted to be saved but I thought I had to find the way, depending upon myself. The night I was saved, I was troubled because I had to go home the next day and I was still lost. I was on the floor and my cousins, uncles, aunts and many others were praying for me. Two of my cousins, young men, were praying and rejoicing. I wanted so much to have what they had. The last thought I had before I was saved was that I had done everything I could and could not ever find the way. I cannot say what happened the instant I was saved, but when I came to myself, I was sitting up –HAPPY- people all around me were shouting. ("Joy unspeakable and full of glory!")

I went back to Mace's Hill last month. I stood in the very spot where I was saved 66 years ago. I can't describe the feeling that that swept over me.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE IN MY MEMORY

By Ruth Hassell

I went back to the country church, a place I love so well,
The people were not there that day, the house was warm and still.

But in my mind, I saw them there, the folks who once were there,
The faces of my friends and kin in memory linger near.

And as I stood it seemed I heard the songs of years gone by,
The singers now are silent, they have told this world goodbye.

Their prayers were said, their tears were shed, their testimonies heard,
Many times rejoicing, as they heard God's holy word.

I went into the altar, where I found the Lord one night,
I once was lost, but now I'm found – my heart was free and light.

There's no way I can thank the Lord for all He's done for me,
And I believe when I leave here, His Blessed Face I'll see.

Though I have known great sadness at times throughout the years,
When I look back at that dear night, my eyes shed HAPPY TEARS.

I never thanked the many folks who prayed for me that night, But what we
shared in that old church is always pure and bright

Alyssa Herlein

I was eleven years old when I got saved on a Wednesday night. A couple of hours before church we weren't planning to go, but I felt something was going to happen and dad knew it too, so we went. At that service someone was preaching on salvation and hell. I knew I didn't want to go there. I remember praying asking God how do I not go there. Right when Mrs. Cindy came and told me, "If the Lord is telling you to do something, you do it right then," it hit me that I have to give everything over to the Lord and ask Him to save me. Don't know if I fell to my knees or if I chose to get on my knees, but I was there, and I heard people praying with me, telling me they can't give it to me, I have to ask for it. I told God I would give everything to Him if He would save me. I even remember saying I would die if he would save me. Right then I felt peace wash over me. I wasn't sure if I was saved until they started singing the Days of the Week song. The Lord told me, "You need to stand up on Wednesday." So I did, and I felt peace and happy. That night I went to sleep and knew if I was to die that night, tomorrow, or the next day, or the next year, I wouldn't have to worry. I knew where I was going.

Jennifer Lanier Herlein

I was about eight years old sitting in the back of Harmony Missionary Baptist Church on East Trinity Lane. It was a regular Sunday Church service when my daddy came back to ask me if I was lost and did I want to go to the altar.

I told him no and he sat back down. A few minutes later Bro. Clay Grizzle came back to talk to me. I don't remember what he said, but next thing I knew I was walking behind him to the altar. I was on my knees praying, not really knowing what to say. Everyone was praying aloud and singing. All of a sudden all the sounds started to fade. It felt like I was in a dark tunnel. Then suddenly all the music and sounds came back. It was like I passed out or something. I didn't know at that time what had happened. I got off the altar and went straight to the bathroom. I never told anyone anything that day, and for several years when someone would ask if I was saved, I would quickly say no, but when someone asked if I was lost, I would say no. I never felt lost during those years, but didn't because I was already saved. When I was about ten years old, my mother was fixing my dress before church and asked me if I was saved! I knew at that time that I was and told mom YES. I was baptized a few weeks later. I have never forgotten that day that the Lord saved me.

Maranda Herlein

I was sixteen and Dillon was preaching about being saved or go down and all I thought about was that I wanted to be the one to go to heaven, and I prayed. I told God I would give up everything if I had to. And when I did, something inside me told me I was saved. I felt that everything bad disappeared. Peace was all I felt. It was all I wanted to feel. I felt a transition. The Lord had touched me, and I'm happy and free!

Jimmy Hicks

During Susan's grandfather's burial in August, 1988, Sister Juanita Taylor asked me had I ever been saved. I told her 'yes' just so she wouldn't stay after me, but I knew that wasn't true. That's when my conviction set in. We started coming to Faith in June, 1989, to hear Elder W.T. Russell's ministry. During many of his messages, the Lord was working on me. During the revival in June 1990, one night Elder Billy Moran's message was on a cleansing stream. It deeply troubled me and I thought, just a few more nights and this week will all be over. On Sunday morning my father-in-law, Charles Wright, gave his testimony and thanked the Lord for a Christian son-in-law. The Lord told me, 'you have the church and everyone else fooled, but you don't have me fooled.' During the Christian handshake of that service, I made it to the altar and told Bro. Russell I needed to pray. I remember many people praying with me but Sister Virginia Clemons and Sister Juanita Taylor stand out in my mind. It seemed only a few short minutes, then I felt peace and knew the Lord had saved my soul. What a wonderful service we had that day. I struggled for several months about joining the church, because of my father pastoring another church. I wanted to do what the Lord wanted me to do. In October, 1990, the Lord put that same feeling in my heart, and when Bro. Russell gave an invitation to join the church, I followed the leadership of the Lord

and joined the church. I was baptized at Mt. Juliet Church, because Faith didn't have a baptistery at that time, by Elder Leon White, due to Bro Russell's failing health. I want to thank all of those who have had an influence on my life and have prayed for me. Please continue to remember me in your prayers that I would be everything God would have me to be. Thank the Lord mostly for salvation.

Susan Wright Hicks

I was saved in December, 1971, at age 13 years old. I joined Faith Church in June, 1972, during the revival and was baptized by Elder Howard Taylor. During the 8th and 9th grades, I attended a small Christian private school. We had weekly chapel services on Fridays. I became under conviction during that chapel service and several of us asked our teacher if we could go back to the sanctuary to pray. I went to the choir loft and began to pray for the Lord to save me. It seemed like only a short few minutes and I felt peace and knew the Lord had saved my soul. I waited until the following revival to tell anyone about it - just to make sure that's what really happened. But anytime after that I tried to pray to be saved, I just kept going back to that afternoon chapel service. I am so very thankful for good Christian parents who took me to church and for this heritage I was born into. Please pray that I will always be found doing what God wants me to do. I can't thank Him enough for salvation, this church, my family, and all His many, many blessings."

Bert Lanier

On Mother's Day, May 10, 1953, two and a half months before my eighth birthday, I was sitting with several other kids my age on the front row seat at McFerrin Avenue Missionary Baptist Church. This was in the basement before they built the auditorium. The pastor, Bro. F. L. Ray, was preaching on the virtues of our mothers and asked the question - would you meet your mother one day when this life is over. For some reason, I suddenly felt that he had singled me out and was pointing his finger directly at my heart. At that very moment, the idyllic life that I had been living suddenly fell away and left me staring into the depths of hell itself. As scared as I had ever been in my life, I jumped up and ran to where my mother was seated and there I made my altar and there God saved my soul. This should be the finish of my experience to grace BUT SATAN SAW DIFFERENTLY.

I told no one about what God had done for me and for the next eight years I buried that day so deep I soon forgot it ever happened. Several years later, I was informed that on the afternoon of that day we went to visit the Children's Museum. At that time it was located behind Howard School off Second Avenue South. To this very day I have no recollection of that event. At age fifteen, on a Sunday morning at Pennsylvania Avenue Missionary Baptist Church in West Nashville, I found myself surrounded by church members, all praying that God would open

my eyes and let me know where I stood with Him. I can only relate what happened next to the story found in the 6th Chapter of II Kings where Isaiah and his servant were surrounded by the enemies of God and Isaiah prayed that the eyes of the servant would be opened and let him view the spiritual world around wherein angels tread. Somewhere during that prayer, God opened my eyes and revealed all that had transpired on that Mother's Day back in 1953, and even brought to my mind the very words I had used to plead for my situation; however, He never revealed to me our trip to the Museum. But those words, "Lord, Here I am," still resonate, to this day, in my mind and heart and connects me to the day the Lord saved my soul.

Many years later, I was asked by a good friend of mine, a deacon at McFerrin Church, if I would like to go with him to the church so he could pick something up before he had to turn the keys over to the new owners. They had sold the property and were rebuilding on Old Hickory Blvd. in Madison, TN. When we entered through the side door of the basement, I told him to go ahead, there was something I needed to do. The basement had surely changed. There were Sunday School rooms and a larger room I supposed they used as a Fellowship Hall. I stood for a time in the doorway of this room, surveyed the area, and, suddenly, there it stood out.—MY SPOT. With a lump in my throat and my heart about to beat out of my chest, I went and stood at the place where God had saved my soul. With bowed head, I thanked Him for what He did for me when I was just a small 7 year old boy, lost, and bound for hell. I realize that we may not all remember the date or the time, but we will never forget our spot, the place where we found God.

This is my experience, Lord. Here I am. Bless me this day and forgive me of my sins.

Brenda Trapp Lanier

Sunday, January 25, 1959, I was twelve years old and lost. My family and I went to Pennsylvania Avenue Missionary Baptist Church for a regular Sunday service. There I became convicted. After Elder Eugene Brooks preached the sermon, he called for a Christian handshake. I was crying and holding on to the pew in front of me. Preachers and my mother had always told me if I felt lost the altar was always open. The devil told me I couldn't go because Bro. Brooks did not give an altar call. I told God if He would send Aunt Rosie to talk to me, I would go. I looked up and here she came, but I still did not go. My daddy came to me, but the next thing I remember is being on the altar. I didn't remember how I got there. That didn't work, so I got on my knees. That didn't work either so I lay on the floor on my back. I then saw a bright light – I knew I was saved! I jumped up and hugged and jumped with my mother. I have never doubted my salvation, but I wonder, Why Me? Why am I so blessed!

Shelley Lanier

I came under conviction 33 years ago this past June. We attended Harmony Missionary Baptist Church and my family was members. The preacher was Bro. Edgar Copeland and the **helper** was Bro. Hillman Duncan who was the pastor of Gateway at the time. Revival at Harmony starts the last week in June. During the week leading up to revival, I just simply dreaded it because I knew I was lost and I didn't want anyone to come talk to me. Every night leading up to the beginning of revival, when I went to bed, I would put my hand over my heart to make sure it was still beating. I was afraid that if I had a heart attack and died, Hell would be my home. Why a 10 year old would think of a heart attack, I can't explain. It was the Lord's way of letting me know I was lost. Sunday, the first night of revival I got through okay because no one came to talk to me, but I still checked my heart before bed to make sure it was still beating. The next night, Monday, they had an alter call. My heart was beating fast and I knew I needed to be saved but the devil kept me stuck in the pew. My daddy (Bro. Bert Lanier) came to me and as I saw him walk towards me, the tears began. I knew he was going to ask me if I was lost. I don't think he had the words out of his mouth before I took off to the altar. It felt like I would never get there, but I believe he told me I was almost running. I knelt down on the mourner's bench (left side) and gave everything up to the Lord. I didn't hear any singing or praying or anyone talking to me. I was deaf to all that. Everything in my head and heart was with the Lord. I'm not sure how long I was on the altar, but the Lord let me know I was saved. I remember rising up and seeing the brightest light and I fell into the arms of the closest person there. It turns out it was my mother (Brenda Lanier). I didn't know at that moment it was her, the shining light was so blinding because I knew I was saved. The feeling that I had that night, I can find no words to describe it. I just knew without a shadow of doubt Heaven would one day be my home. In the 33 years of salvation, I have never once doubted that the Lord saved me.

Sharon Hassell Lester

The Lord saved my soul at Faith on a Sunday morning in November, 1959. I was 13 years old. Elder Robert Gregory had given the altar call, and what I dreaded most, Sister Ellen Callis came to each of us lost kids to ask us to the altar. At first, I wouldn't go, but knew if she returned to me, I desperately had to. She did. The congregation prayed with me in the altar for what seemed like hours. I was on the bench. Then I was up, instantly! I don't remember rising, but I do remember the joy that replaced such fear as I had ever known. I joined Faith Missionary Baptist Church the next week and was baptized in the chilly waters of Mill Creek in January, 1960.

Joyce Newton Parker

I was saved when I was 26 years old. As a young girl, I joined a modern Baptist church and was baptized. After James and I got married, we were going to a modern church out Nolensville Road. James heard a preacher on the radio mention Faith Missionary Baptist Church and wanted to go there. We had been going a short time when the pastor, Brother Howard Taylor, had a Christian

handshake one Sunday morning. I never had been in that kind of service. No one said a word to me about my condition, but it was as if someone asked me if I was a Christian, and I became troubled and didn't know what to do. Two weeks later on Sunday morning I called Brother Taylor and asked him to give an invitation. I found out I had to do more than shake the preacher's hand and accept Christ. I went to the altar that morning and again that night. On Tuesday morning about 9:00 a.m. at home, that burden left and I felt like I had nothing to worry about. I joined Faith and was baptized by Brother Taylor. I'm so thankful for Faith Missionary Baptist Church and to God for letting me hear the truth and for saving my soul. My prayer is that others who are being deceived will hear the truth and be saved.

James Parker

I was twenty-one years old when I got saved. It was a November night in 1958. I became accountable at age eleven. I sought the Lord for ten years. I had been to the altar in my teen years without any peace in my heart. I did not tell anyone until my dad asked me about three months later.

Kristy Parker

The night I got saved I was twelve years old and it was at revival. I went up the altar when the preacher called an altar call and I prayed hard. I didn't get saved right then, though, and I went back to my dad and just sat that night. Ashton Hester was down praying too. She got saved that night and I remember feeling so scared. I started praying again. I just kept thinking, "Lord, please save me." Then I remember not being able to pray anymore. As soon as I got up, I was reasoning with myself, thinking there was no way I could be saved. I hadn't tried hard enough. I started thinking, I'm just tired. I'll try again tomorrow. When I went to revival the next night I got down again. I wasn't praying though. I just felt guilty if I didn't. I thought I would let everyone down if I didn't. I went on like that for three years. In that three years I never prayed for salvation when I was by myself but just when other people were around. As soon as the 2010 revival came around, I started to believe I was saved. One night, probably twenty people stood up and said how they doubted their salvation and what the Lord had done to prove to them they were saved. I still doubted it, though. Then the next night Dillon Clemons brought a girl named Victoria to the revival. She got saved that night. I was so happy for her. I wasn't jealous like I was when Ashton got saved. I told people I was saved that night. I have never doubted that I'll spend eternity with God since. Thanks.

Lisa Parker

Growing up, my family did not attend church. My neighbor, Jan, who I babysat for, asked if I would like to go to church with them. I did. I was probably

12. I went to the Baptist Church in a neighboring town for a long time. They had a different kind of invitation. They would have everyone bow their heads and if anyone wanted to know the Lord for them to look up. Then they brought you to a room to pray. One day I wanted to know the Lord, more out of curiosity than a drawing that I know about now. I was asked to pray with Jan's sister. I told her I didn't know what to say so she said "then just repeat after me." Then she said, "That's it – you are saved." I felt happy because I had done something good. Awhile later I left that church and didn't go to church again until my 20's.

Since I thought I was "saved," it really surprised me when I would attend church and I would this feeling of heartache. It felt like someone was twisting my heart up like wringing a wash rag. There was always an invitation to come and pray and accept Jesus (which I also learned later was not correct.) I thought I already had so this confused me and I thought I must have done something terribly wrong and lost what I had. So every chance I got I would go up front and pray – usually begging God to tell me what I was doing wrong and vowing to "be better". Those vows wouldn't last even until I got to the parking lot most time.

It wasn't until I was in my early 30's after weeks, months, and years of searching, begging, vowing, and breaking every word I gave, that I finally went up on an invitation of a visiting preacher. I dropped to my knees, worn out, and said, "I give up, Lord." That was it. That was all I needed. The pain was gone. I felt happy and light as a feather – almost tingly inside. My statement was truer than I would have ever believed. I really didn't have anything to give – all I needed was Jesus.

Terry Parker

I told everyone that I got saved as a boy and I had joined Faith Church. I realized after joining Faith that I was not right in the sight of God, but I did not want to tell anyone. I believed that I could just work it out and no one would need to know. As years passed, it got easier to ignore the Holy Spirit when it would come upon me. Many times I would be working and the thought would come to me, "You better get things made right." I knew those thoughts did not come from within me. I eventually came to the realization that it was possible to go through my entire life and die lost, if that was what I wanted to do.

I began to ask God to bring me down to a point where I would be willing to let people know my condition. I knew at this point I would never be able to humble myself enough to seek salvation. I knew God was going to have to get me to a place that I would not be concerned about embarrassment or what people thought.

I was saved in 1995 at the age of 31, during revival. God brought me down as I asked him, and I told Faith Church that I was lost. I went to the altar a couple of nights and got saved between 10:30 and 11:00 pm one night. I was thinking, "how worthless I am; what about me is worth saving?" When the fear and trouble left, I did not understand at first what had happened. I did not want to tell everyone I was saved until I was sure, since I had gone so many years pretending. I tried to pray, but the words literally would not come to my mind. That is when I realized beyond any doubt I was SAVED! I have never doubted my salvation since that night in June.

If anyone reading this has told people they are saved but realized later that they are not, please ask God to get you to a place that you can seek Him with all your heart. He will remove all your obstacles just as He did for me.

Irene Quinn Patterson

I was raised on a farm in West Tennessee, in Decatur County. We went to Cedar Hill Missionary Baptist Church. We would also visit revivals in churches close around us. I was saved when I was 19, almost 20, years old. I was saved at home in bed one night. I had been under conviction for some time. That night I prayed when I went to bed, as I did lots of nights. Then I began praying for the Lord to show me what to do. I'd done everything I knew to do. I went to sleep and had a dream. In the dream it was so dark you couldn't see anything. I walked over to the edge of the cliff, looking down. Way down at the bottom, I saw fire burning. I knew that was hell. I woke up and all I remember saying was, "Lord, just take me now." That's when I felt the burden leave me all at once. I started laughing, but the devil said, 'You need to be sure. Wait till you know for sure.' I was 21 when at church one day the preacher preached right at me. When he said, "Is there anyone here who has been saved and hasn't let it be known," I was half way down the aisle to him before I knew it.

I thank the Lord for saving me, and for my parents who took me to church.

James Quinn

I was born and raised on a farm in Decatur County in West Tennessee. Sundays were a special day for us since no farm work was done on Sundays. This day was set aside for church, which we always looked forward to, and also a day of rest. Most of the time we had preaching every other Sunday, but we always had Sunday School every Sunday.

I was not accountable until I was around twelve years old. I knew as a small boy that this time would come and I knew that I would have to repent of my sins to be saved. When this time came I had thought it would be easy, but I found out that it was hard to get myself down to the point where the Lord would save me. I was convinced that if I died that I wouldn't go to Heaven. I went to the altar trying to seek the Lord for salvation for about two years. Until finally I asked the Lord for conviction, I had done all I knew to do. On a Wednesday night at Cedar Hill Missionary Baptist Church, nearly sixty years ago, God answered my prayer and gave me conviction and faith to repent to His satisfaction. There is a period of time I don't remember. I only know I had a great burden in my heart, then peace came into my heart.

Thank God for His wonderful joy that He gave me and I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT WHAT God did for me that night will take me to Heaven when God calls for me. Eph. 2:8 *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*

Mayrene Wooley Quinn - As a child, I attended Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church in West Tennessee. I was completely at ease and not at all concerned about my soul. When I was eleven years old, during a revival, a little lady on crutches made her way to me and asked me if I was lost. I said “no” because at that time I was still at ease. Shortly after that I realized I was lost and began going to the altar. I went the remainder of that year and the whole week of the next year. Going into the following year, I was still lost and it seemed I had done all I could do. I started going to the altar again and on Wednesday night of that revival, with nothing else to offer and nothing left to promise the Lord, I gave up and the Lord saved my soul.
Thank you, Lord.

Kyle Schichler

I don't remember exactly what age I was or what time it was, but I do remember every face around me and the exact place that Sunday where I was saved. I don't know exactly when I became lost. I never have. I just knew that a couple of times that year I had felt a little strange and my mom told me to pray about it. I was young, around the age of ten, and I didn't quite “know” what God was. But that one time He knocked real hard on my heart. I met Him. I didn't want to do anything about it. It was scary and it shouldn't have happened. In a kid's life things they can't see don't exist. I couldn't see God, but I could feel Him. Everyone from church was by me, giving me advice and praying for me, and I just used those experiences and that advice to say, “See, this isn't like what happened to them. It is not my time to be saved. I'm not lost~ God must not be a good listener, because He ignored my demands and, instead, gave me what I needed. I don't know how long it took, but it took a good bit out of me to tear down my armor. Manipulation was my best defense, and God pulled away every excuse I had until I had none left. Apologizing didn't work, bartering didn't work, deals didn't work. Pretending He wasn't there didn't work. God knew that my defenses were my most valuable possession. Once that was gone, the pain disappeared. The church was quiet. I looked up above the bench, and I don't know what I said. All I really remember is peace, and I didn't (have) my defenses to give it to me. I was saved! I doubted myself the day after that happened for a long time. I knew that I had been saved but I didn't feel saved. Eventually, I was able to trust God enough to know that I was saved and all of my guilt and doubt ran away. All it takes is faith. So simple, and, yet, it's the hardest gift to give.

Dalton Sharpe

I was ten years old and it was 2001 and I do not remember the month, but it was on a Sunday night. My granny and Uncle James and Aunt Mayrene stayed with me. I did realize it that instant because I couldn't breathe for a couple of seconds. I was saved in front of where my granny sits. Why would anyone doubt their salvation? If they do, then they should really need to consider therapy (ha ha). But, no, I do not doubt mine. I know that because now I don't have to worry about where I'm going. I know exactly where – Heaven!

Michelle Patterson Sharpe

I do not remember the exact day I was saved, but I know it was during a revival. The church records show I was baptized on July 9, 1978. I remember being baptized in Percy Priest Lake by Brother Gregory. I had been lost for a few years, but I didn't consider it lost because I didn't really understand all that. I just knew that I was fine all day until it was time to go to church. When begging my mom to let me stay home didn't work, my chest started hurting and did not stop until we left church that night. And it didn't start again until the next night when we went back to church. I dreaded going to church, especially during revival, because I knew that people would start walking down the aisle wanting to talk to me and I hated that. It went that way for a while.

One night during revival, my cousin got saved and he came back and was talking to me about it. I don't know how long after that, I went up to the mourner's bench, but I remember not really knowing what to do. I know there were a lot of people praying and talking to me, but I can hear today, as clear as that day, Mrs. Clemons saying to me, "THE LORD WANTS TO SAVE YOUR SOUL." I stayed there and just remember talking to God. Then, after a while, I couldn't think of anything else to say. I still didn't realize that GOD HAD SAVED ME. Then I noticed that my chest didn't hurt anymore, and I was still in church. It is hard to explain what it feels like to be saved until you have been lost.

Kari Sharpe

I believe I was ten. I believe it was Monday, June 20, 1999. It was right after church. We were shaking hands. I just had this pressing feeling on me that something was wrong, but, at first, I ignored it. But after a little while, I could hold it in no longer. I went up to the altar and just started praying. I'm not sure how long I was there, but, when the pressing feeling had finally left me, I knew what had happened. I have never once doubted what happened to me that day.

Barbara McCormack Shoulders

Written November 3, 2011

I was the youngest of seven children born to Benton & Belle McCormack of Hartsville (Trousdale County) TN and the last of those seven to be saved by the grace of God. I was taken to church all my life but church back then consisted of once a month and revival in the fall. Revival had just started at East Main Missionary Baptist Church when I was 10 or 11 years old. Bro. M. R. Drury preached on Sunday night and asked that anyone that wanted to be saved during the revival to come up and shake his hand. I did not go up at that time and neither did my cousin that was a few years younger but her mother got up and asked prayer for us. When my mother asked me if I was lost I knew in that instant that I was but I still wouldn't go to the altar. All that night and the next day I thought about dying and going to hell, I couldn't wait to get back to church (I thought you had to be in church and on the mourner's bench to be saved). As soon as they gave the altar call that night I ran to the altar and started praying. I don't know how long I was there but one minute I was sitting on that bench praying and the next I was standing up and my mother and several other people were shouting. I remember my Dad was there too and he gave me the biggest hug. I went to school the next day and tried to tell my teacher and friends that I had been saved but they didn't know what I was talking about. I decided then that I was "special" and if you have been saved by God's grace then you are special too. I joined the church that night and was baptized in the Cumberland River since the creeks were dry that year.

I can remember as child that older people would stand up and talk about being saved and how the light was getting brighter for them. I really didn't know what they were talking about but I now know for that light is a lot brighter to me. I'm so thankful that I can say that I'm "blood bought and heaven bound!"

Virgil Thomas Shoulders

Written November 24, 2011

I was born in 1940 in Dixon Springs, TN (Smith County) and was the youngest of nine children born to Jimmie and Flora Shoulders. About 2 miles NE of where we lived was Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church which was organized in 1917 (My mother was a charter member). Revival always started the third Sunday night in July and in those days we had no bathrooms or air conditioning in the church. The closest thing to a/c were hand held fans from Sanderson Funeral Home. In 1949 our revival started with Brother Calvin (Cal) Gregory as pastor and Brother F.

W. Lambert assisting, with services held day and night. About Thursday night my cousin Jack Wilburn came to me and asked if I was lost, the most awful feeling came over me and I knew at that very moment that I was lost. I went to the altar that night. About 2 days later Jack made a talk and said he had so many cousins and all of them were saved as far as he knew except one, and asked if everyone would pray for him. On Monday or Tuesday of the next week I was saved during a day service. I was baptized along with 16 others into Maces Hill Church.

Several years later Jack Wilburn became very sick, I had the opportunity to go see him and tell him how much I appreciated what he did in helping to lead me to the Lord.

As I get older I have trouble remembering from one day to the next but I remember when I was saved as if it happened only a few moments ago

Mary Jo Whaley

The community I lived in has three churches and we lived two doors from the Missionary Baptist Church that my family attended. All three were in walking distance and it was safe all those years ago. All the churches had altar services as we do at Faith.

The young people were friends, rode the bus to school, and went to revivals at all the churches, along with younger siblings.

The first Sunday night in September, 1951, a group of us went to revival at one church. I was seventeen years old and had been to the altar several times, but was still lost. This night I had no burden or concern.

We filled two pews and I was second from the wall which was not good a little later. All was well, I thought, as the song service and prayer meeting was carried out.

The young man who brought the message was a stranger and I vaguely remember his appearance. I now know God sent me a message. He used "Daniel 27:5, and he must have used much more scripture along with comments. I only remember very vividly, "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting." It fell like a pebble "rock" into my heart. I thought, "No, I can't go to the altar." My Baptist friends would not approve, and maybe my parents. Repeatedly "weighed in the balances and found wanting" kept the pebbles falling and, by the end of his message, my heart was so burdened that all I needed and wanted was God's help. I did not care who approved or disapproved.

I pushed past my friends to go to the altar. A lady that was very dear to me sat down, pulled me to her, and was praying. She couldn't fix my problem, and I turned away with my head near the floor. I don't know if I cried aloud, whispered, or just my troubled heart cried. My plea was, "Lord, mom and dad can't help me. If you don't help me, no one can." He heard and answered. There is a blank space. Then I remember sitting on the edge of the altar looking up, tears streaming down my face, but peace and joy in my heart. God called, convicted, and saved me in less than two hours. I can still be "weighed in God's balances and found wanting," but never again in the same way. I can never thank him enough for saving my soul.

I told the ones who asked that night, but not my family until later. The next revival in 1952, I went to the altar at our church. I joined the church and was baptized, but it had been almost a year since God had saved my soul.

The Thief on the Cross

Taken from Luke 23

And there were also two other malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Paul's Testimony To King Agrippa

Acts 26: 9-20 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priest; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, At Midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." And I said, Who art thou Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.