

## ***God Is Faithful: The FORWARD***

I struggled with the Lord in writing this book, mostly because I didn't want to drag up memories of the past, especially bad ones. I had grown up as a believer to ***"forget the former things, don't dwell on the past." (Isaiah 43:18)***. Until I finally surrendered my desires and set my eyes on what I was born to do, I didn't fully understand that I was missing the whole point of what the Lord was trying to convey through the prophet Isaiah. I had been taught all of my born-again life, to place the emphasis on verse 18, and assume that God would follow through with verse 19, ***"(God is) doing a new thing, now it springs up, do you not perceive it?"***. I was taught to live under the legalism of that verse, because I learned it under a different gospel. I learned the hard way, that any time you find yourself in legalism, you cannot receive the fullness of God's grace, and you will never be able to acknowledge, much less comprehend the meaning behind what God has so lovingly laid out for your life. The enemy will place you on a spiritual merry-go-round, give you one good push, and you will propel yourself through the momentum of works, pleasing people, and trying to be perfect. For some, that merry-go-round

never stops, unless they truly tire of the chaos and call upon the Name of The Lord, and His Spirit of Truth. When they do, God will be faithful to stop the spinning. Unfortunately, like real merry-go-rounds, when it finally comes to a halt, we will be dizzy, disoriented, perhaps nauseous, and some even might hurl chunks. These are all good things, because even though we stumble at first to regain our balance, our Comforter will be there to walk alongside to help us recover and walk uprightly in God's Righteousness. If we really want it, we will find it. That's the way it happened for me. God stopped the chaotic spinning, but not without my suffering whiplash. I had to change the way I saw things if I were ever going to overcome.

Forgetting the former things of the past has never come easy for me. And as I struggled with the writing of this book, God took me through His Word and I read the entirety of Isaiah 43. I learned some very important things.

God created us, and He has summoned us by name. We will pass through the waters (troubles) in life, but they will not sweep over us. We may walk through the fires (of affliction), but the flames will not consume us. We are not to be afraid, because God is calling us to be His Witness. We are to faithfully

carry out our commission by leading out those who have eyes, but are blind; those who have ears, but are deaf. We are His Servants to proclaim that God is God, and there is no other. We are told that we will be persecuted for our testimony, but God reminds us of how He delivered our ancestors from bondage. He reminds us that He takes vengeance on our behalf. THEN God tells us to "forget the former things and not dwell on the past". He promises that He is in the process of doing a new thing in our lives; that He will make a way in our respective deserts. God admonishes us to come to Him, with our grievances, and not continue in our rebelliousness. In verse 26, Isaiah tries to convey the importance of "reviewing the past". I believe that this is no mistake. God knows that we must remember, and get to the point of remembering circumstances without the pain; that we must be allowed to heal and grieve, and see things through the eyes of Righteousness. We must do these things before we can be a truly effective witness for Christ.

We have to be careful, though, that we don't look back on the past with wrong motives. It's all about the condition of our hearts, and where we are in our respective walks with the Lord. An example would be Lot and his wife. God cautioned both of them to not "look back", and the reason He said that was

because God knew that if they looked back, they wouldn't be able to move forward to the future He had mapped out for them. God was looking for an obedient heart, for them to trust Him, even though they didn't understand. Looking back for the purpose of correcting our futures is a good thing; but if we dwell on them – that is, live inside them, holding onto the pain of their memory – it will only serve to undermine the work of redemption and prolong the healing process. Lot didn't look back, but his wife did. Lot and his daughters survived, but his wife's body turned into a pillar of hardened salt, because her heart was disobedient. God brought them into another city, answering the prayer of Lot, and God stayed his judgment until they fled to safety. He only required that they never look back. Scripture doesn't speak much of the character of Lot's wife; but we know she was disobedient and therefore held contempt in her heart against the Lord. We know that because, if she didn't, she would've done exactly what she was told to do. Lot's wife didn't want to give up what she had been accustomed to, even though the city she dwelt in was pure evil in the eyes of the Lord. She wanted to cling to her luxurious life in Sodom, and because she disobeyed God, she was destroyed in the city's overthrow, right along with everyone else. There is a lesson to be learned for all of us in this story.

It is for this reason, we must be careful to allow God to examine the motives of our hearts before we delve into things of the past, lest we fall prey to the same mentality Lot's wife held. We need to seek God's wisdom to know the difference between "reviewing our past" for the purpose of God's restoration, and that of "dwelling in it" for the purpose of our own self-destruction. Obedience costs much, but disobedience, as Lot's wife discovered, costs much, much more. A friend of mine put it aptly: *"when we look back on our pasts with the wrong motives, Satan will create an emotional war within us. We need to choose our battles wisely, because there is a greater battle that is coming, and we need to stay strong and alert, lest we become deceived, fatigued and inevitably overthrown."*

As I pondered Isaiah 43, I asked the Lord what a True Witness was. His reply was simple. A True and Faithful witness is not afraid to honestly face their failures. They are not corpses walking around just mimicking Life. They are disciples who dare to discipline themselves and find joy in the midst of their obedience. They are not "Christoholics" who try to escape reality by living in denial, constantly looking for a short cut to peace and prosperity. A True

Witness does not reduce the precious Blood of our Savior to floor cleaner. We simply cannot make a mess, splash “Mr. Clean” over it, and expect God to come with His Heavenly Mop to deodorize and disinfect. We cannot cover our sins with the Blood of The Lamb, without first repenting of them, and turning from them. Anything less is contempt. A True Witness does not let the fear of men dictate their level of obedience. They do not tickle ears, they tell the truth, even if it hurts.

A True Witness understands that Jesus Christ is their High Priest Who understands every motive behind every action. That He makes ***intercession***, standing before God in prayer and supplication on our behalf when we mess up. They understand that Jesus ***intervenes*** on our behalf, that He provided an example in serving others that we need to follow. A True Witness understands that the God of all creation offers ***inspection*** in our lives, which serves to bring correction and conviction before His ultimate judgment. He walks within the midst of His "lamp stands" to make sure that we are not just smoldering wicks. He wants us to be a bright light to the world, having fresh oil in our lamps that we will be able to hold out the candle of hope to the hopeless.

Finally, a True Witness understands that they must do three things to help others come back to their First Love. They must **remember** where they came from, in the depths of their own despair. They must **repent** for mistakes made in the past and change the way they see their circumstances so that the enemy has no further foothold. And they must **return** to the Lord, back to their own First Love, who created them to testify to God's Love and Faithfulness in their lives. One cannot do those things, if they are under the legality of "forgetting the former things". God is a God of order, and He knows we're mere flesh. He's laid out a pattern for us to follow, and it is up to us to decide whether or not we will accept His Charge.

***A wise man once said, "We should not seek the approval of men, for what God tells us to write. Approval is part of our human condition, but we ensnare ourselves in delusion when we seek the approval of man, in place of the approval of God. No one can correct a person's testimony. It is a personal event between you and God. We can correct grammar and spelling, but we (humans) cannot and should not correct or approve a testimony: it is God ordained. We would not tell Matthew, Mark, Luke,***

***Daniel or any other witness what we wanted to read so it would fit our life. That would be laughable. The Bible and the testimonies of old are not written for the purpose of correction to fit our lives, but for our lives to conform to God's Word, period."***

It is with this thought that I pen the words of this book.

I tearfully struggled with each page you will read because I felt I was under-qualified to effectively complete the task with any semblance of order. After all, as single mother and your average Jane Doe Christian, I felt ill-equipped. Then that sweet, still little voice the Lord uses to get ones attention, spoke to my heart this simple phrase: ***"I don't choose those who are equipped, I equip those who are chosen."***

I was believing God for a great deal in my life at the time, and God knew that I needed encouragement so He added a little incentive. The thought He burned into my mind was simply this: ***"How can I grant the desires of your heart, if you won't put yourself into a position to receive them."***

That didn't leave much room for argument. I knew what He meant. He reminded me that while my current station in life is as a single mom, raising two teenagers that I, indeed, had all the training I needed. I had survived

one devastating trial after the other over the years, which made me determined to find answers. I didn't just seek out counsel, I became the counselor. My personality was very much the perfectionist, (which is not always a good thing), but I wasn't content to simply put salve on my open wounds. I wanted to find the cure... and the root cause of all the trauma. So I sought answers, and I found them, even though they weren't easy ones. After I got saved, (radically, I might add), I served in the paraprofessional community volunteering my time offering Christ-centered counseling for battered women, and those finding themselves overwhelmed with the consequences of bad choices. I specialized in one particular field: helping those come out of deep occult situations, where the web of deception is so thick you need the Hand of God Himself to escape. And at that time, I saw the Hand of God move - many times. Because I was one, (before accepting Christ), who "escaped as one coming out of the flames", God burned a desire for me to help others follow His lead. I had taken time off from that ministry when I had children, because the burden was so great, and I began to become torn by that realm as I concentrated on all that motherhood requires. I needed time off, and God provided it.

In retrospect of the last decade, however, it wasn't just "time off" that God gave me. It was more like Spiritual Boot Camp. Never would I have guessed what would transpire in my marriage, with my children and ministry in the years that would follow what I felt was the perfect life. I had a husband, 2 miracle babies, I was part of the dance and worship team at church, I used the creative skills God gave me to create powerful witnessing tools that helped many come to a deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ, and who they are in Him. And as the Lord willed, He would pull from my counseling experience from time to time, and use my personal testimony to help deliver those from the pits of quicksand they were drowning in. I thought I would live out the rest of my life continuing to do just that.

Then, one day it all fell apart. I found myself in Abraham's shoes, having to lay it all down and surrender everything I was, and everything I'd become, at the Altar of Sacrifice - for the umpteenth time, or so it seemed. Laying down all I had accomplished in my life to that point was, by far, the most painful experience I've ever had to endure, but I learned that my obedience was crucial to survive - and to help others survive - the days in

which we live.

I started to write again because I found it next to impossible to squirm out from under God's Thumb. I had almost allowed apathy to kill off what little there was left of me. I knew I was setting myself up for defeat by allowing circumstances to swallow me up, but felt helpless to change my situation, even knowing all I know about God and His promises. God was silent; all there seemed to be was chaos round about me, and everyone I knew. Knowing God and not being able to affect my own life by His promises only made me feel worse, because I had become my own worst enemy: a hypocrite. God apprehended me one day as I awaited test results from a biopsy, after my gynecologist discovered an ovarian cyst and a 3 centimeter tumor nestled in the left side of my uterus just days prior. I had been ill for a long time, but financial circumstances didn't allow for me to take care of things sooner. Wallowing in depression for several months, struggling to hold onto my last nerve ending, I made diligent plans to exit this life, because fatigue had finally caught up with me. I had no desire to live another day. Suicide was not an option, but I vowed if an opportunity presented itself, that I wouldn't fight to live. I was just too tired. I loved the

Lord with all my heart, but there comes a time in everyone's walk, no matter how strong a Christian you profess yourself to be - if you are honest with yourself - that you would rather just put down your Sword, stop fighting and run Home, hoping to hear the words, "well done, good and faithful servant". I told a friend who was trying to help when he asked me what I wanted most of all. I told him that my priorities had changed drastically. From having a husband to love, to a home I could raise my children in to something very simple. I just wanted to close my eyes, draw my last breath, and wake up on the right side of eternity. God didn't even have to say "well done". I just wanted a hug and a reassuring smile that said, "I know you tried."

It just seemed so much easier than fighting through another day. In my opinion, "easy" is a four-letter word when it comes to Christianity, and the "abundant life" that many man-made doctrines teach is so askew that it becomes a precursor to spiritual death, more than it promotes the real Abundant Life that God intended for us to have. I swallowed the "easy pills" for years with various false doctrines, (although I didn't know they were false at the time), and like consuming little bits of arsenic over a long

period of time, it doesn't seem to be all that harmful, until you realize that it's too late... and you're on the road to a slow, very painful death. Coming to the realization of the futility of the promises false doctrines make only netted one thing for me... despair that rose from the ever-recycling works of the flesh. I didn't realize that that they were works of the flesh, of course, but... the enemy did. And he laughed all the way to the bank. All the deposits he made in my account over the years collected interest, and every time I'd make a debit, it was never enough to meet my needs. Futility nearly consumed me, and one day, I found my spiritual reserve to be completely bankrupt - or so it seemed.

My heart cried out to God with this one verse: ***Hope deferred makes the heart sick. (Proverbs 13:12)*** My hope had been deferred so many times, I've lost count, and I felt that God had forsaken me. So, I did what I felt was the only responsible thing I could do. Get my life in order and prepare to die. But while I was in the process of making my own plans, God was using the latest trial in my life to fulfill HIS plans for my life. It was then, precisely at that moment, when I had no strength of my own, that My Father intervened. ***He wanted to prove that His grace was sufficient;***

***that in my worst weakness, HIS power would manifest perfect, (2 Corinthians 12:9).*** With each chapter you read, you will see that one verse clearly evident.

These pages are the personal account of my life. They outline my trials, my tribulations, my triumphs and my victories. God gets all the glory for the great things He has done in my life. Where I failed, He extended His mercy. My life is the epitome of this one verse, if I could only get to pick one: ***God is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor harbor His anger forever. He does not treat us as our sins deserve, or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; as far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:8-12)***

The only thing I hope this book accomplishes is that scripture will become alive for you; that you won't just see it as religious hype. I hope it changes the way you see your own circumstances and that it causes you to become

closer to the One Who created you. It is an overwhelming thought to think I could impact thousands by what I say, so I am choosing to focus on the only two people I hope will be the most profoundly affected by it. They are my two children: Caleb and Gabriel. Whoever else may benefit from what I share, will be just icing on the cake. I am hoping God will allow it to become my legacy; something I can leave to my children, in hopes that the wisdom inside these pages might spare them from the pitfalls I fell into; from the endless stream of doctrines of demons that are so prevalent these days. While our children inevitably will make their own choices to discover who they are to become, my hope is that they will learn from my mistakes. We are commanded by scripture to train up our children in the ways they should go, and this is one way I chose to do that. My hope is that they will listen intently to the Voice of the Lord and Him only, and so that they can fulfill their calling in the days which they were born to serve in.

I have chosen nine distinct chapters to comprise this volume. Each chapter is what I like to refer to as a stand-alone testimony, but when read in order; they paint a picture of what it means to follow Christ. Each chapter proves that God is Faithful, no matter what circumstance we find ourselves in. It is my

hope to convey the heart of God that proves ***it is not a walk of perfection God desires, so much as it is a walk of submission that He needs.*** I have shared many personal experiences within this book, some quite painful, but God has used the time I spent reviewing my life through His eyes, and my obedience to journal His thoughts to help me to grieve over the things I've lost in life, or have never experienced, over the things I thought I desired, only to find there was greater joy in not getting them; and He has faithfully sealed the doors to my past with the Blood of His Son, that I can stand before Him in the Righteousness of Christ, without spot or wrinkle. I have attempted to pen, what I believe, are the most important aspects of the Christian walk, from a position of humility and brokenness.

**Dance Before Me** is a depiction of simple faith. When everything inside you wants to worship, but you don't know what to do, and you don't know how to do it, or you simply have obstacles presented in your path that prevent you from it, God will find a way to intercept your thoughts, and even provide miracles in your midst. All He is looking for is child-like faith coming from a broken and contrite heart, and a willingness to praise Him in the midst of personal pain.

**Call Upon Me** portrays a life that is struggling to find Truth. It is a picture of one who entertains rebellion, and of one who calls out in despair to the God of all creation, hoping He exists. It outlines a life of many trials and afflictions, yet it displays the awesome power of a Holy God who comes to the rescue. It is a picture of redemption, of deep calling unto deep from the depths of the soul.

**Amazing Grace** is one of my favorite chapters. It is a picture of Who God really is, and why His Grace is so powerful. We can do nothing without His Grace and Mercy. Many of us think that we know God, yet we will never truly know Him until we see Him face to face, beholding His Glory. On this earth, we can only see a glimpse, but He tells us how we can know Him by Name. And when we know Him, we will understand His Wisdom. When we have heart-knowledge, instead of just head-knowledge of Who God is, we will be able to discern the error round about us, and be protected by His Revealed Truth.

**The Door of Hope** speaks of the doors we all tend to walk through in life. We live in a fast-paced society that demands quick fixes for everything we encounter in life. This chapter outlines the pitfalls of false doctrines. It gives a clear picture of "our" version of what Christianity should be like, versus the

reality that it is. It is a story of redemption and destiny for every Christian who find themselves struggling in the middle of works.

**Shelter From The Storm** speaks of a True Witness and the emotional roller-coaster every Christian faces as they try to convey the message of Truth to a world in need of a Savior. It addresses how important it is to recognize apathy before it gains a foothold, and how to become a faithful witness, declaring the Truth without fear, but of power, of love, and a disciplined mind.

**Forget-Me-Not** addresses the area of relationships and forgiveness; what they are according to the Bible, and the myths of forgiveness that have mislead so many into error, and put them into bondage. Forgiveness is, perhaps, the most powerful weapon available in our arsenal against the enemy. The correct application can move mountains; the incorrect application can bring about destruction.

**Unto The Least Of These** speaks of The Great Commission to which we are all called. How important it is that we know how to serve others so that the work of Christ can continue. We need to consider the helpless and the hopeless and we need to rise to intervention on their behalf, as Christ intervenes on our behalf. This chapter deals with hard issues, but is essential in understanding the true meaning behind service with humility, as Christ

commands.

**Joy Unceasing** deals with what we will all have to face one day: death. Where do we go when our bodies die? For those who serve The Lord, what Joy awaits us? For those who don't, what is their recompense. This chapter deals with many issues related to physical death, as well as spiritual death. God desires that not one perish, but all come to Everlasting Life.

**God Is Faithful** when all is said and done, God remains faithful. This is the culmination of my testimony, and reflects back on the life I was given stewardship over. It is a picture of how God can take two disparate forces - human nature and His Nature, and bring them into harmony. Understanding this harmony is what will help you become a True Witness for Christ.

By the time you finish reading this book, I hope that you will have an up-close and personal understanding that ***God's Word will never return empty to Him, but that it will accomplish what HE desires and it will achieve the very purpose that He sent it, (Isaiah 55:11).*** That you will have a new appreciation for whatever you go through in life, whatever pain this world might hand you...that it will not fully consume you. ***That you will become one who is more than an over-comer, by***

***the Blood of the Lamb and the words of your testimony, (Rev 12:11).***

***I hope that my testimony will prove that you have a High Priest, Who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, that He was tempted in every way, yet was without sin. He came, so that we could confidently come before the Throne of Grace, to obtain mercy in our time of need. (Heb 4:14-16). Remember that nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is laid bare before the One to Whom we must give our account. (Heb 4:13). He watches your coming and going, and He is able to do exceedingly abundant, more than we can ever ask, think or imagine, according to the work that is within us, (Ephesians 3:20)***

***Today, if you hear His Voice, do not harden your heart, (Heb 4:7). Rather, call to Him, and He will tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know, (Jeremiah 33:3). If you seek The Lord, He will answer you, and deliver you from all your fears, (Psalm 34:4).***

- Cynthia B. Rahn.

