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DELIVERED FROM HELL, DESTINED FOR HEAVEN

Pastor Jean Lim's Testimony

*He has delivered us from the power of darkness and
conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.
(Col 1:13)*

I was born into a family of idol worshippers. My parents had come from Melaka where people generally believed in more than one religion. It was common to go to as many places of worship as possible in the belief that the more gods you prayed to, the more blessings would come your way.

In spite of this barrage of religious teachings, I had no real knowledge of God. My only exposure to the Christian faith was during my early years in a convent school where I regularly attended mass and religious knowledge classes. I also read Scripture but merely as another academic subject. I could recite many Bible verses but did not understand the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross.

Money became my security. I speculated in the stock market and visited the casino whenever I could. But when my father died of cancer in 1975, the reality of life and death hit

me. I began to question the meaning of life. Two of my close relatives, an aunt and a cousin, had recently drowned and I had not yet gotten over it. On top of this, my neighbour also passed away soon afterwards.

I felt surrounded by death and began to fear that it would soon be my turn. I saw that life was short and wanted to find the God Whom we were supposed to know. In my quest, I went from fortune teller to temple medium to bomoh and became involved in many types of occult practices. Nothing satisfied me.

The emptiness became acute when my husband was diagnosed as having cancer and the doctors gave up hope of saving him. The more I sought the help of mediums and bomohs, the more fearful and confused I became. They claimed that someone was attempting to cast a spell on me and advised me not to attend birthday parties, weddings or funerals. I grew increasingly frustrated with their superstitious notions and all the meaningless prayers I was asked to recite.

One day, in utter despair, I looked up to heaven and cried, "If there really is a God, please show Yourself to me." Praise God that He later answered this prayer.

I became heavily involved in the Japanese Gohonzon of the Nichirin Shoshu sect of Buddhism. So steeped was I in worshipping this false god that I would chant day and night. I opposed Christians and sought to convert them. I had heated arguments with my Christian colleagues and friends who witnessed to me. Nobody could get through to me although many tried. I taunted Christians by asking, "If Jesus is truly the Son of God, why did He have to die on the cross?" God answered this question years later when He showed me that on the cross, Jesus died for my sins.

It was not until I was saved that I came to know that **my Christian friends had faithfully continued to pray for me**

even though they could not win me over with their words. God even gave someone in Klang a vision of me and asked her to intercede for me although we had never met. I believe that because of these prayers, God responded and showed His mercy towards me, anti-Christ though I was.

Strangely, I did not entirely believe in the teachings of Buddhism. For one thing, I was sceptical about reincarnation. I just could not see how I, a human being, could be reborn as an animal, bird or insect. I felt that something was wrong but because the religious system provided me with a sense of belonging, I chose to ignore my doubts.

In 1977, after two years of illness, my husband died of cancer. I nevertheless stubbornly adhered to Buddhism.

One day, as I was chanting, I saw myself going down to hell. It dawned upon me that every good deed I thought I was doing to erase my sins – chanting, visiting old folks' homes yearly, bringing converts to my religion – was futile because I was slipping into hell anyway. It was as real as watching a scene on television. I felt oppressed and began to see all my sins played out before me daily. **I did not know at the time that it was really God convicting me of my sins because so much prayer had been made for me.**

From then onwards, I could not eat, drink or sleep well. My employers believed I had a nervous breakdown and allowed me to go on paid leave for almost a year. Praise God for His kindness towards me even while I was outside His Kingdom.

Everything I had worked for, all the money I had accumulated, could not help me then. The false basis of my security collapsed. Life was meaningless and not worth living. I underwent psychiatric treatment but the psychiatrist could only advise me to learn to cry. I kept telling him that I was a terrible sinner and begged him to show me the right God to pray to.

I was so desperately seeking the God Who could forgive me of my sins that the psychiatrist thought I was having a nervous breakdown. Since I was then a Buddhist, he encouraged me to pray to Buddha. He was a Christian but he did not lead me to receive Christ.

I tried chanting again. This time the thought came to me that I should become a Christian. When I told the leaders of the religious group of my intention, they were horrified. They warned me of the consequences of incurring curses upon my life. However, these threats did not deter me because I felt I was already cursed – I had lost my husband, my house was burgled, my new car met with a very bad accident and I was in a terrible state. I did not think any worse fate could befall me.

Humbly, I sought help from a Christian friend who then took me to church. There, in 1977, I received Jesus into my life.

However, the feeling of oppression did not leave me. I attended every revival meeting and responded to every altar call to be prayed for. This helped but the relief was temporary. I felt fine at the meetings but once I got home, I became miserable again and could not sleep.

This up-and-down swing went on for months. Fed up with taking pills that were of no help, I decided to save them up so that I could use them all at one go to end my life if I wanted to.

The thought of suicide was constantly on my mind. Once, while praying with my brother's friend, a young boy, at home in Klang, I felt an overpowering urge to kill myself. Rushing out of the house, I raced towards the Klang River near our house. The boy ran after me but a pack of dogs held him back.

Suddenly, I saw the figure of a man loom in front of me. I came to a quick stop and began to run backwards, desperate to get away. I was so afraid that the man would do something to me. Then, of all things, my youngest sister Janice drove by at

the time and so I went home with her. I believe God in His mercy and love had sent an angel to stop me.

I was in such a state that even Christian friends began to avoid me because they thought that I was merely craving for attention. They had exhausted their ability to minister to me.

Out of fear that I would end up in the mental ward, my younger sister Monica (a non-Christian at the time) accompanied me to Dr David Cho Yonggi's 1978 healing and evangelistic rally at Stadium Negara, Kuala Lumpur. It was the first time I witnessed the power of God. Dr Cho ministered by word of knowledge and prayed for people to be healed of specific illnesses. They would later go up to the stage to testify that they had been healed. I was sceptical. I thought he had surely planted those people in the crowd.

The next morning, I went to Jaya Puri Hotel (now PJ Hilton) to look for him. My initial joy at discovering that he was checked in there turned into disappointment when I was told that he had left for a meeting. To my surprise, I bumped into Dr Cho as he returned to take something he had left behind. It was indeed a visit completely led of the Holy Spirit. I had never met Dr Cho and I had not actually known where he was staying.

I told Dr Cho I was a great sinner. He said it was good that I realised this and quoted Isaiah 1:18 to me:

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

That day, for the first time, I knew that God could and would forgive me.

Dr Cho prayed for me and prophesied that God would raise me to be a prayer warrior and that I would travel. I did not even know that it was a word of prophecy. The only thing on my mind was for God to heal me and I was thankful to feel relief after his prayer.

That night, I went to the stadium again with Monica. To my surprise Dr Cho, through a word of knowledge, described my condition and what I was going through. **I felt the heavens open and fire falling on me.** Amazingly, my sister who was then an unbeliever said to me, **“He’s calling you. The Holy Spirit told me it’s you.”**

Resisting Dr Cho’s challenge to go forward and testify, I kept saying, “It’s not me. It’s not me.” I never imagined that God could ever forgive such a sinner as me, yet all I wanted was to be forgiven and set free from the hell that I was in.

I found myself running up to the front. I was trembling so much under the power of God that the counsellors asked me to sit down. Half an hour later, I found myself holding a microphone in front of the large stadium crowd, telling them how God had touched me that night. It was a tremendous experience.

Everyone who had been praying for me and who was also in the stadium at the time rejoiced. However, the excitement did not last long. On the way home, the devil put doubts into my mind. However hard my sister and her friends tried to convince me of the truth of my experience, I could not believe. I told them that Dr Cho must have known that I would be in the stadium since I had gone to see him earlier. I remembered feeling the fire but I still could not believe. I was back to square one.

In God’s sovereign grace, He met with me again in my desperation. I cried out to Him, asking why I was still sick despite His promise to me that I would be well if I received Him into my life.

He suddenly showed me Isaiah 59:1-2:

“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

I asked the Lord, “What sins do I still have? Ever since I accepted You, I have been regularly confessing and repenting of all my sins.” He revealed to me that the occult objects stored under my bed in my room were keeping me away from Him. No one had told me that I should get rid of them. Right away, I burned all my talisman and occult mementoes.

During my so-called illness, I had gone back to stay with my mother in Klang. That night, **God revealed to me that all the gods she had been praying to in her house were not gods but demons.** She was also worshipping ancestral stones. When I asked my mother to throw them away, she was so angry with me that she told me it would be better if I left her house. That night, I moved out and stayed with a friend. For the first time in almost a year, I slept well.

That was in 1978. I had been on medical leave almost nine months. Every week, I would faithfully make my way to the psychiatric ward. Two specialists attended to my case. All one did was talk to me. The other administered ECT treatment which provided only temporary relief. My condition was something they could not diagnose or cure because the real problem was that I had sinned against God by worshipping idols. This bound me and only God could forgive and set me free.

I realised that although God forgave me when I confessed my sins and repented, I could not be completely set free until I had personally renounced the idols and cast them out of my life forever.

“You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.

Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.” (Deut 7:25-26)

My family, church friends, bosses and colleagues had given up hope of my ever recovering. Thankfully, God was not done with me yet. What happened the day after I burned the occult objects and moved out of my mother's house changed my life forever.

As I was supposed to be on medication, I was not allowed to drive. That day, however, I felt so bored that I drove to work. Midway through the morning, I felt uneasy. A colleague suggested that what I needed was a good cry and took me to the restroom where another colleague was resting.

Suddenly, a great power came upon me and I fell to the floor. Shocked by what was happening, both my friends knelt down and began to cry. They thought I had collapsed and was dying. They tried to help me up but I could not get up at all. In their panic, they wanted to call for an ambulance but I managed to motion to them that I was alright.

I was aware of what was happening to me. **When I fell to the restroom floor, something had left my body. (God was delivering me.) I felt the fire of God fall on me. The blood of Jesus flowed down on me as God cleansed me of all my sins. I could see His blood all over me.**

As I struggled onto my knees, **I felt that oil was being poured over me.** I realised that someone in white was standing beside me holding a horn of oil over my head. I broke out in tongues (I had never spoken in tongues before that), singing in the Spirit and prophesying.

At that moment, I knew I was finally set free.

My encounter with God in that small room lasted from 11.00am to 4.00pm. When I walked out, I was totally changed. I knew I had met the true and living God and could serve no other.

I was so excited about God that I just had to share the gospel with everyone I met. I attended every Christian meeting I knew of. The whole Bible suddenly became alive to

me. **I believed every word and acted on it.** People were healed when I went to pray for them in the hospitals. My desire to spend more time alone with Him grew and in those special moments, He would fill me with His wonderful presence and love even as He revealed more and more of Himself to me.

During my illness, I had promised God that if He would deliver me, I would serve Him for the rest of my life. He challenged me to give up my job and every material thing I had. Although my mother and family had been so happy when Jesus healed and set me free, they opposed my decision to obey His call to forsake everything and follow Him. My employers also tried to discourage me from resigning. Everyone reminded me of my two young children (aged five and six at the time) whose education and future I had to consider.

But I was resolute and gloriously happy to be able to give up all for my Lord. God had given me a second chance. I knew that everything I had worked for in the past had not helped me. Finally, I understood what Paul meant in Phil 3:7-8:

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

More and more sure that God wanted me to go fulltime, I nevertheless sought confirmation. When Dr Cho returned to Malaysia in 1979 for a conference, I just knew he had a word from God for me but I had no way of getting in touch with him. I left it in the Lord's hands and He sovereignly arranged a meeting for me. Dr Cho told me to obey God, resign from my job and attend Bible college. He assured me that the Holy Spirit was speaking to me and prophesied that, like his mother-in-law, I would be a mighty woman of prayer.

In 1980, I resigned from a company I had served for 16 years and sold the last of my houses. My intention was to serve God fulltime. Observing the lives of some fulltime workers, I determined that when I went fulltime, I would not ask people for support. The Lord had given me a burden for the Prayer Centre at that time and I thought that going into business would provide for both the work of God and for me as I served Him.

Both the colour separation and the mini-market businesses that I got involved in failed. My Christian partners did not really share the same vision of making money for the Lord's work. Since I was in business for His glory, I had expected His blessings. However, I eventually ended up using all my savings trying to make the businesses viable.

Nevertheless, I was willing to bear the losses because I was enveloped in the love and security of His presence. **God was dealing with my character, humbling me because I had proudly refused to depend on what I considered charity from others.** I was being taught how to receive.

Although I was not legally responsible for the business losses, I wanted to pay off the debts for the sake of my testimony. God graciously enabled me to do so by blessing my new florist business. He even used the flowers to open doors for me to witness to the sick.

Through the years, God has never failed to look after my family and me. When, in 1983, I entered Life Ministry Bible College in Melbourne, Australia for two years, He made it possible for my children to go with me. He even provided them with places in a Christian school. His abundant grace towards us has moved my children to themselves be willing to dedicate their own lives to God.

By God's grace, my eldest daughter, Angelina and her husband, Eugene Hoe, desired and successfully completed a

year in Faith Bible College, New Zealand. They had even brought Samuel, their first-born, with them. Angelina was then already pregnant with their second child. On their return to Malaysia for their practical, Chloe was born.

Although their intention had been to go fulltime after graduation, their church elders advised them that they were, at 21, not only too young but also had two small children to take care of. It was during a recession and jobs were hard to come by especially when one had no working experience but, praise God, Eugene was offered a job even though he had not applied for it.

Over the years, it has always been God's gracious answer to prayer that has carried them and their growing family through every situation. Eugene and Angelina now live in Melbourne with their seven children: Samuel, Chloe, the twins Faith and Danielle, Elijah, Naomi and Emmanuel. Angelina is actively serving in children's ministry while Eugene is involved in the youth ministry.

My younger daughter, Emily, wanted to be a missionary and was thus advised by the church elders to take up nursing. She is now married to Goh Sing Hong, a medical doctor and they live in Singapore with their son, Daniel. They love the Lord and want to be used of Him. My prayer for them is that their desire to serve the Lord will be fulfilled.

I believe that every mother's wish is to see her children serve the Lord. My constant prayer is for Isaiah 8:18 to be fulfilled in my family:

Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion. (Is 8:18)

I thank God that He is faithful. It has not always been easy but I believe that once we come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, we will not want anything of this world anymore.

I am convinced that my own salvation was the result of the fervent and persistent prayer of saints who believed that if God could save the apostle Paul, He could save me despite my stubbornness and antagonism towards the gospel of Christ.

If God can change me, He can change anyone. But it needs Christians to come together to pray and tear down the strongholds of the enemy in the lives of the people.

Every day in my life is a miracle. What I have shared here is only a small part of the many wonderful things that God has done in my life. Prayer has always been the key. Over and over again, God has shown that He is a God Who initiates and answers prayer. When we pray, we truly move the hand of God.

All glory to Him.

After Bible College, Pastor Jean Lim joined Full Gospel Assembly, Kuala Lumpur as one of the pastors. She was then seconded to the National Evangelistic Christian Fellowship (NECF) as prayer secretary and began to travel throughout the nation, stirring up a greater awareness of prayer, raising intercessors and encouraging unity among the pastors.

During this time, God renewed the vision that He had given her many years before for a national prayer centre. He also directed her to pioneer a praying church.

All this has miraculously come to pass. Both the Glory Place Prayer Centre of Malaysia in Mantin and Semarak Revival Centre in Nilai have 24-hour prayer and intercession, praise and worship scheduled seven days a week.

God has also led Pastor Jean to set up the Jesus Heals ministry, bringing healing and salvation throughout Malaysia and overseas as well.