

MY GLORIOUS JOURNEY

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Being the first daughter born to a typical American family in the sixties, I had a wonderful childhood. Growing up going to Lagoon's 1,000,000-gallon pool, boating trips and visits to Grandma's house in Idaho are a few of the many great memories of my early childhood. My dad was fun-loving and very kind. Dad loved to work and loved to play. He could ride a bicycle backwards, ice skate and fix anything. Dad loved me and would often say, "*Janet, you remind me of my mother.... She's the picture of my mother, isn't she Helen?*" I would think I was his favorite knowing he loved us all. Mother was the typical 60's mom wearing stirrup stretch pants, teasing her blonde hair and serving three square meals a day. Mom is a generous, well-groomed, pretty lady who has a great sense of humor. We rode bikes, owned dogs, played night games, and enjoyed life.

My earliest memories of Mormon Church were walking to Primary after school. We would walk to the old rock chapel on Main Street in Farmington, UT. It was where Aurelia Spencer Rogers organized the

first Primary. I can still remember the mural of the First Primary in the front of the chapel. I would dread Primary because I just wanted to go home after school. Sometimes I would forget to walk to Primary and as soon as I got home, Mom would drive me over to the church. We lived in Farmington, Utah until I was in the 8th grade and then my father bought a ranch in Thatcher, Idaho and we became farm kids. I made new friends in Idaho and was warmly received by all. Our new church was in the middle of a pasture! I loved the people in our new ward. Two of my mom's uncles, Pete and Freeman lived in the ward and always made us feel special. The ward members were hard working, kind and loving people. I remember once finding chewing tobacco in the drinking fountain at church. The good old boys cussed right in church and I liked the informal, laid back atmosphere of the country ward.

Life was good as I was active in school, drill team, seminary, choir, etc. We got our driver's licenses at 14, worked in the potatoes in the fall and moved sprinkler pipe in the summer. With only 50 or so in our graduating class, we were friends with everyone. The LDS Church wasn't just the dominant religion; it was the *only* religion of the Grace,

Idaho valley also known as the *Gem Valley*. Most of the kids I went to school with could trace their heritage back to early Mormon pioneers who settled the valley. If you weren't related to your schoolmates, you knew to which family they belonged —and who their relatives were. I have wonderful memories of life in the small farming community of Grace, Idaho, and I'm still very close to friends from Grace. One friend writes cowboy poetry, and always sends me his latest and greatest poems.

A certain memory I have that the Mormon Church "might not have it right" was on a beautiful Easter Sunday. I was living in Salt Lake City, going to school and working. I had gone home to be with my family for the weekend, and I remember driving home from church with my mother. She was giving us a recap of the Easter Service and she said, *"I don't know what you would have to do around here to get a decent Easter message, but having a talk about not letting your children sharpen their teeth on the church pews is NOT Easter-worthy!"* She was thoroughly disgusted! She proceeded to give us the Resurrection Sunday message on the way home right where you cross the Bear River and pass the Thatcher Elementary School.

My next wake up call came when I went through the Logan, Utah temple a week before I was to be married. I was in the temple with all the men on one side and the women on the other. I was trying to make sense of my new name —which I had never heard before and *hated*. I was on the aisle and watching the men as they said their words in unison. I vividly remember having a fear come over me that made my face flush. I was thinking, "*we belong to a cult... We belong to a cult.... why didn't anyone tell me we belong to a cult..*"? In a state of shock, my eyes rested on the men's hands and I noticed their hands were calloused —hardworking hands. I consoled myself that these were good men and I just had to overcome my fears. I thought, "*These men are honorable, decent folk —they wouldn't be involved in something creepy...., if this temple experience is good enough for them, it's good enough for me*". After all, they were older and wiser in the ways of God than I was, so it was up to me to learn and understand the secrets of the temple. Everyone told me that I would grasp little in my first visit but to keep coming back and I would learn more each time I came to the "House of the Lord". My husband

Homer and I didn't revisit the temple for quite some time after we were married. Neither of us felt a sense of urgency to hurry back. Even though Homer was a returned missionary, he rarely talked about the temple, except to say, "*I know it's a little weird, but don't worry about it.*"

Now when I think of the temple ceremony, I wonder why **fear** is used in the image of satan. Fear is used to force people into silence. **Fear is not of God**, and satan is a liar and the truth is not in him. The Bible tells us 365 times not to fear! Why then would God send us to temples using fear and intimidation as a means of control?

2 Timothy 1:7—*For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.* (KJV) I am not the least bit interested in obeying satan when during the temple ceremony he says, "*See, you are naked. Take some fig leaves and make you aprons. Father will see your nakedness.*"

John 8:44b tells us...*when he (the devil) speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it.* (KJV)

John 10:10 —*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly...*(NIV) Therefore how could I accept satan's threat against me in the temple ceremony because the truth is not in him. I WILL NOT accept his threat —It is a lie. **I don't need a temple —I have Christ.**

Colossians 2:3 —*In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge...* (NIV)

John 8:36— *He whom the Son sets free is free indeed!* (NIV)

I was ecstatic when I learned we were going to have twins! What was better than a new baby? Two babies, right? Our beautiful girls, Kate and Anne were born premature but healthy. However, when they were less than a week old, Kate was diagnosed with *Necrotizing Enterocolitis* and became gravely ill. The Doctors were honest and told us she had less than a 5 percent chance of survival. I can honestly say this was by far the most heart wrenching trial of my life. I prayed day and night for Kate. I pled with the Lord promising Him I would live for Him and teach the girls the LDS Gospel. I pressed into

Him—crying out in anguish for Kate’s life. Kate spent four long months at Primary Children’s Hospital. God answered my prayers and gave me strength to care for the girls. Kate came home with a central line for intravenous feedings, lots of pumps and a nasal feeding tube. I became a full time nurse overseeing every detail of Kate’s care.

During this time, my husband, Homer was a rock. He had the total financial burden of our little family. We had piles of hospital bills and he methodically organized them. After the insurance paid we had a very large debt we were responsible to pay. Homer worked day and night and Saturdays to pay the total medical bill. I’ve always been proud that Homer is a man of integrity. He’s always paid his debts as they are presented to him. Not only did he work hard at the job, he worked hard at home. At night when it was time to hook Kate up to her intravenous feedings, he was my right hand man and held tubes as I directed him. My parents lived in Idaho and Homer’s mother suffered from MS, so we really relied on each other. We would put the girls in their twin stroller walking them up to Seven-Eleven almost every night. We wore the wheels off of that stroller. My mother often

tells me, “*You are so lucky to have Homer—he is such a gentleman.*”

I remember God’s mercy and provision for me during this difficult time. I loved Him and wanted to please Him, and I felt His favor and love always. He is so wonderful and I wish to convey His goodness to me throughout my life.

Kate and Anne were Daddy’s girls! They would run to greet their daddy when he came home from work. He would throw them up in the air; the higher, the better. Kate had no fear! They brought us so much joy. Kate was feisty and Anne was sweet. Actually, they were both very sweet. Eventually, Kate was completely well and they were adventurous girls always bringing home stray cats and dogs.

Max joined our family a little over three and a half years later. He was so healthy. I loved him so much! Homer didn’t want to make the girls feel bad so he gave Max attention when they weren’t looking. Our older next door neighbor was amazed by Homer’s devotion to his girls. She would whisper to me, “*He’s just sick about those girls*”. Max was a momma’s boy. I went to Girl’s Camp with the church when Max was 18 months. Homer called me and said “*Max is missing you. He*

won't eat and just stares into space." Max had white hair, green eyes and an olive complexion. He was an industrious little boy who was always old for his age. He was always playing with kids up to 4 or 5 years older than himself. He was the baby for 5 1/2 years. We affectionately called him our "Max Tash" or "baby Max Paul".

Will was our beautiful caboose with dark hair and deep blue eyes. He was our cautious child. The first three were fearless but Will was reserved. We were worried when we couldn't get him off the swimming pool stairs for three years in a row. He wore a batman-superman cape season after season —year after year. When he was just a baby, someone gave him the nickname "Hernandez" and it stuck! Once, during a dentist visit, the Dentist asked Will where he got the name Hernandez. Will proceeded to tell him with all authority that "it was a German name because he is half German". Our Dentist who speaks fluent Spanish just laughed. Will would still rather give you the wrong answer than admit he doesn't know the answer!

Life was good! I never took our family's health for granted. I thanked God for healthy children, a good husband, the privilege of being a mother for the "true gospel", and loving parents. We were active in

our church in every way. I was Primary President, Young Women's Counselor, Camp Director and much more. Homer was always taking the Young Men boating, hiking, camping, etc. Our lives were busy, and we loved our church and our neighbors! We belonged and we were accepted. We were blessed beyond measure during these years. Homer's business prospered as he worked very hard for our family. Little League, river trips, boating trips, school programs, and church activity kept us living the American Dream. Of course, we had heartache in life too. My father died suddenly 12 years ago, and don't forget the fun of raising kids with all their shenanigans that try our patience.

Friendships that had begun as we all built homes in the same subdivision flourished. We were bonded by our belief system along with our love for each other. As neighbors, we faced triumph and tragedy together, and I felt God's love during both the difficult and joyful times of our lives, and although I knew God was aware of me and had blessed me abundantly, I always craved a closer connection with Him but couldn't find it. I would think of the scripture, ..." *Behold I*

stand at the door and knock, if any man opens the door...." I'd think to myself, *"How do I open the door? Has He come in and I'm not sure He's here"*? I wanted more. The way I explain my longing for God is like going to the hospital and looking through the glass at the new babies. I could see the babies but I wanted to hold them and experience them. I prayed to God, and knew He heard me but I knew I was missing something. I felt lonely for God. I loved Him and wanted more of Him.

Fast forwarding to the fall of 2011, Homer was teaching the Gospel Essential Class and I had a Stake calling in the Special Needs Young Women's Presidency for the city of South Jordan, UT. It was at this time my faith in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints began to crumble. I attended the Sunday school class my husband was team teaching and the doctrine that was being taught repulsed me. I couldn't understand my distaste for everything they were teaching: *three different heavens, spirit prison, polygamy in the early church...*,etc. The doctrine I absolutely COULD NOT tolerate was the famous Mormon quote, *"As man now is —God once was, and as God is —man may become."* **I believed God was the only God!**

I thought of **Revelations 1:8** —*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty...*" (KJV). God cannot lie. If He said He is the ending, I believe Him. There are no other Gods. I believe the Bible. I believe God. I trust God to tell me the **truth about who He is.**

Here are some of my favorite scriptures that powerfully tell of our wonderful God and a (very limited) list of scriptures that testify of one God: (in KJV)

Deuteronomy 6:4 — *Hear, O Israel: The LORD thy God is one LORD.*

2 Samuel 7:22 — *Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God; for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.*

1 Kings 8:60 — *That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else.*

1 Chronicles 17:20 — *O LORD, there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.*

Psalm 18:31 — *For who is God save the LORD? Or who is a rock save our God?*

Psalm 86:10 — *For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.*

Isaiah 43:10,11 — *Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am He: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no savior.*

Isaiah 44: 6–8 — *Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and His redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. Fear ye not, neither be afraid; have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? Ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any.*

Isaiah 45:21 — *Tell ye, and bring them near; yea let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time: who hath told it from that time? Have not I the LORD? And there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior, there is none beside me.*

Isaiah 46:9 — *For I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.*

Hosea 13:4 — *Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me; for there is no savior beside me...*

Joel 2:27 — *And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed...*

John 17:3 — *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

1 Corinthians 8:4-6 — *As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

Galatians 3:20 — *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.*

Ephesians 4:6 — *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

I had a desire put on my heart to visit a Christian Church. I called the only Christian I knew and told her I wanted to visit a Christian church. She said, "Find an Assembly of God Church. You can't go wrong if you visit an Assembly." I let my fingers do the walking and found the nearest church. On a Sunday morning in November, 2011— I believe it was Veteran's Day, I told my husband I had a meeting. I dressed up in my Sunday best and paid a local Christian church a visit. I was alone as I walked in and sat down on the fourth row. I remember looking at others and thought, "*I think I'm overdressed* "!

Everyone was singing worship songs to Jesus. I listened and knew that this is what I longed to do. It was a worship service for 40 minutes and then a sermon. The whole worship service was praising God! It was all about Jesus! After the service, I came home and went to Sacrament Meeting with my husband and youngest son. I did this for three weeks in a row. By the third week, I belonged to the Lord. I accepted Jesus into my life as my personal Lord and Savior.

I became Born Again. My old self as I knew her was gone and I was a new creation. **2 Corinthians 5:17** —*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* I began reading the Bible. The Lord opened my eyes and I understood scripture as never before. The words jumped off the pages and into my heart. **Ezekiel 36:26** —*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord.* (ESV). This was a beautiful, glorious time as the Lord walked with me. I was filled with the joy of the Lord. I looked forward to Sundays. I had never understood the doctrine of adoption. I thought I was a child of God. I became a child of God. Scripture became alive to me.

John 1:12-13—*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* (NIV)

Galatians 4:1–7 —*I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is*

under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.
(ESV)

This was a very difficult time for my dear husband. You can imagine his pain as I left the Mormon church. He was devastated as I told him I no longer believed in the church nor it's doctrine. I tried to tell him why I didn't believe the church to be true. He didn't want to hear it! He felt like 27 years of temple marriage, living the gospel, working toward the same dreams and goals were thwarted! His dream of an eternal family was on shaky ground. Complete heartbreak doesn't do justice to the way he felt and feels. I feel guilt for being the cause of so much pain. I tried to lighten the mood by telling him "If you get to the Celestial Kingdom without a wife, just

borrow one of Joseph's or Brigham's." He did NOT find this humorous. I love my husband! He has been a wonderful father, husband, provider, and he loves me in spite of my decision to leave the church. I love him because he is just the best man I know. He is my husband and I believe in the sanctity of marriage. We enjoy each other's company. As long as we don't talk about the church, we get along great! God's timing is perfect, and I trust God with my Homer, and I believe as Spurgeon did that,

*"moral people must be saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—"saved, even as they the outcasts and wanderers. They will not, they cannot be saved in any other way. They will not be permitted to enter heaven, good as they think they themselves to be, unless they come down to terms and conditions that sovereign grace has laid down—namely that they should trust Christ, and be saved by grace, 'even as they.' We are all alike: we are born in sin —**Psalm 51:5**, and alike we are "dead in trespasses and sins.... children of wrath even as others"— **Ephesians 2:1–3**. If we have been outwardly moral, we should be thankful for it; but do not trust in it for justification, seeing that we must be saved, even as the worst criminals are saved, because in heart, if not in life, we have been as bad as they."*

Continuing quoting Charles Spurgeon:

“If you moralists are to be washed, where must you find the purifying bath? I have never discovered a fountain with the capacity except this one...’There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel’s veins.’ There is a robe of righteousness that is to cover the best among the living who profess Christ; that same robe of righteousness covered Paul of Tarsus, the bloody persecutor. If you of unspotted outward character are ever to have a robe of righteousness, you must wear the same one he wore. There cannot be another nor a better one! You who are conscious of outward innocence, humble yourselves at the foot of the cross, and come to Jesus just as empty-handed, just as brokenhearted, as if you had been the vilest of the vile, and through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be saved even as they. May the Holy Spirit bring you to this...”

I put my trust in Jesus! Jesus is the only one who can forgive and transform us, thereby delivering us from the power and penalty of sin.

Acts 4:12 —*There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved...*

Many people assume there are many paths to God and that each religion represents an aspect of truth. But Jesus said, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me"* **John 14:6** (NIV). He didn't claim to be one of many equally

legitimate paths to God, or the way to God for His day only. He claimed to be the only way to God —**then and forever**. I desire Him above all things. I esteem Him above all things. I have stopped fighting against God and stopped attempting to gain my salvation through my own works. I flee from the wrath and into the city of refuge, which is Jesus Christ our Lord. *"Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling..."* My standing before God is 100% based and founded upon the perfect work and merit of Jesus Christ. I come to Him knowing **all** my sins have been atoned for, and I am righteous in Christ.

Let me tell you about my Jesus! Let me tell you how much I love Him! He has reached down to me while I was yet a sinner and saved me. Can you imagine the King of Kings and Lord of Lords saving me? He didn't say, *"Janet, as soon as you get yourself cleaned up a little and do all you can do, I'll save you"*. NO! He said, *"Just as you are, come to me!"* My God is "mighty to save". He is so good! I will praise His Holy name forever. I know Him. I love Him. I long to worship Him. He is mine and I am His. No man can pluck me from His hand. I love the cross. I will glory in the cross! I love His precious blood that

was freely spilt for me and washed me clean. I love His righteousness. I love my Savior. I love my Friend! I worship His Holy Name.

You may ask what happened that I questioned the Mormon religion. I don't know exactly what happened but I know it is a miracle. I know I memorized a verse from the Bible and would repeat it in my mind and think about it:

Jude 24-25—*Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior be all glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, amen. (KJV)*

I know God's word is "*quick, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*". **Hebrews 4:12** (KJV). **I know** His word "*does not return to Him void*". —**Isaiah 55:11** (KJV)

I know my husband's distant Cousin Hilde, a devout Christian, would call and we would talk about God. I would tell her about the Mormon Church so she would know the church that meant so much to me. She

would always say in love, “*Well, you know the Bible says.....*” **I know** Hilde prayed for me for over 10 years. **I know** Jesus knows my name, and has no need to give me a new name. **I know** He knows when a sparrow falls to the ground. **I know** He has the hairs on my head numbered. **I know** God never gave up on me. **I know** He loves me and pursued me, and **I know** He loves you too. I thank God everyday for touching my heart and giving me the faith to believe. I long to worship Him. This psalm describes my longing to worship the one true God.

Psalms 42:1-2—*As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for God, the living God.*

The following is a prayer my favorite pastor from a small church in Pocatello, Idaho said at the end of one of his sermons:

*"Lord, I thank You... I thank You for Your marvelous salvation.
Thank You for saving us when we were dead in our trespasses.
Thank You for loving us when we yet sinners...
Thank You for giving us a place with You.
Oh God, Oh the love and the devotion
that's due to you for your great love.
Thank You for intervening on our behalf Lord..."*

*Thank You for being the Savior, the Lord, the Master. Hallelujah!
I bless You Jesus. Thank You for saving me. Thank You for
saving me out of my bitterness, my sorrow, my bad attitude.
Thank You Lord. Lord, thank You. You came to take away our sins,
and clothe us with your own righteousness.
What a privilege. What a joy.
And here we stand in Your presence.
We stand in Your presence. Praise God."*

It is my sincere desire to praise and honor our glorious God because
He has truly saved me.

All my love,

Janet



