**A TESTIMONY OF HOPE**

Today in prayer, I felt led of the Spirit to share with you some of what my life before Christ was like.  Hopefully this story of my life will help someone else who is now struggling like I once was.

    I used to believe that I was a worthless person, unable to be loved by anyone, that I was useless in this world.  Circumstances like the death of my mother when I was 8 years old, and a life of severe clinical depression following for 13 years caused me to have these feelings and beliefs about myself.  Many days, I did not want to get out of bed, did not want to experience another day.  There were many ways I tried to deal with the pain in my life like cutting, overdoses, and other forms of self-harm.  While trying to numb the pain in my heart at the same times these gestures were cries and pleas for help.  I was unable to believe in myself or that life was worth living.  I was without a purpose, lost, alone and unable to feel like I belonged with anyone.  This was my life from the time I was 8 years old until the age of 32.  I am 38 years old now.

 At the age of 32, my life as I had known it changed forever.  God sent someone into my life who shared the message of His unconditional love and healing with me.  One evening in particular, I was very suicidal and wanted to end my life by crashing my car into a tree.  This person that God sent into my life met with my husband and me at the river where my husband and I loved spending time together.  This person, sent into our lives by God alone told me that I was a butterfly fighting to emerge from the cocoon of misery and that Jesus loved me so very much and wanted to set me free from this place of misery and torture

 The next Sunday in church, this same person sent from God preached a message about God's healing - to believe in Him and His ability to heal, to receive that healing, and to give thanks to God always for His healing in our lives.   I went up for prayer after the sermon was over, believed that Jesus wanted to heal me, received the gift of His healing, and have thanked Him for my healing ever since that day and for almost 6 years now, I have been living in that healing.  Accepting that Jesus loves me unconditionally with an everlasting love and that He would never leave me or forsake me, and opening up my heart to that love and letting Him into my heart are all steps that were necessary for Jesus to come into my heart and my life.  It is the enemy of our souls that want us to believe that we are unworthy of any love and that we are useless to the world.  But there is a way to be free from the devil and His name is Jesus.

  I have been where many are today, living in misery, torment of mind, severely depressed with no hope for tomorrow and the pain of living like this is hard for those who do not go through this daily to understand, but I have been there and it is a very lonely and sad place to be.  But there is a better place, a place of acceptance, joy and peace and that is in Christ.  When we open our hearts to Him and renew our minds with His Word,  He helps us to see the true beauty that He created in us.  If you have anyone in your life who is strong in Christ and who cares about you and loves you in His love, hold on to that person with all your might because sometimes when we are going through horrific battles in our minds, Jesus shows Himself to us through others that He has put in our lives.  You are a priceless treasure to God, His beloved child...do not let the enemy separate you from what Jesus died to give you, His love that is everlasting and a place of refuge and safety in Him that will never fail you, always forgive you and will never let you go.

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