



Jane Tan's Testimony

"He has made everything beautiful in its time.

He has also set eternity in the hearts of men."

Ecclesiastes 3:11

Jane Tan's Testimony

I was born in the mid 70's in Taiwan to a family where both my parents were school teachers. They retired 12 years ago. My dad was a history teacher, and Mum taught English. Amy is my only sister. Generally speaking, we grew up in a good family that lived without any lack. We always had the things we needed. All four of us lived in a small town in a nice 3 level house with a garden. As children, our parents encouraged us to learn all sorts of things, like painting, dancing, and piano. We also had many opportunities to travel all around Taiwan every winter and summer vacation. When I was twelve, Mum also took us to Japan to see the ice sculptures. That was the first time that we went overseas, and it was our first time to see real snow. I will never forget how beautiful and pure the snow was. It was really a memorable holiday! On the other hand, my Dad was always focusing on his field of teaching, which was philosophy. He put so much effort into researching his interests and wrote more than 15 books, most of them about Chinese philosophers. Thus, apart from teaching in school, Dad spent almost all his time on reading and writing. In fact, he actually didn't pay too much attention to the family, and that became a big issue between Mum and him. They couldn't find a way to get along well. Arguments came one after another, day by day and year by year. Although I didn't realize it at the time, growing up in a strife filled home affected me a lot. In my memory, I can still hear their fighting even years after they separated. Now I know that the seeds of fear were planted and grew in my mind. I was always hoping they would stop their fighting, but finally their marriage ended after they had spent almost 30 years together.

In school, I didn't have any serious interests in studying, and in Taiwan, if you don't get good marks in school and get a university degree, that means your future will be miserable. This made mum worry about me a lot, and so she planned a better way for me to complete my education. Since I started to learn piano when I was little, Mum thought this would be a good direction for me to go in the university. She took me to the piano, flute and all kinds of music theory lessons every week, and she also spent lots of her own money on my good quality flute and piano. All she wanted was to help me to study music and be a teacher in school. Finally, I got my bachelor's degree in music and also the qualification to be a music teacher, even though I never really wanted to be a school teacher.

A major change came to my life at the age of 26, for I immigrated to New Zealand after both my parents moved here. Mum worried about my future again, but this time she was concerned about me getting married. She wanted to help me again, so she suggested that I show an interest in a young man she knew. To be compliant, I tried to spend time with the guy she suggested. After two years of developing a friendship relationship, he became my first boyfriend. What I couldn't see, however, was that he didn't really want to have a serious relationship. He didn't want to get married at all. For me, however, it was too late, because I had fallen in love with him so much. Because I had grown up in a strife-filled home, I put all my hope in him. I wanted to be loved and to have children because I had never found peace

in my own family. I convinced myself that if I treated him better, he would marry me one day. I told myself I just needed to wait. From 28 to 32 years old, I waited for 3 years for him to fall in love and ask me to marry him. All my friends didn't want me to keep waiting for him, even including Mum. They said I was too stubborn. But I just didn't want to give up. To have a family with my first and only boyfriend was my dream. I didn't want to live without him! Then I tried even harder to push him. I convinced myself that if I told him I was leaving him, he would change. However, that was the worst thing I did in my life. That made both of us fall into a hopeless situation. Even on a beautiful summer day at the beach, we couldn't say anything but could only cry together while other families around us were having BBQ's and enjoying it so much. Finally, we ended our relationship at the beginning of 2007. My life turned upside down from that day. I was in a terrible darkness of depression and nothing could stop my tears. I lived in a hopeless loneliness, and I didn't understand why I couldn't have a real love - the everlasting love every girl dreams of? Was I not good enough? Was I not worthy to be loved? After so many years of the pain in my own family, why couldn't I have a family with the one I loved? Hadn't I worked hard enough to make him happy? There were so many "why's" and so much self condemnation in my mind. I tried to be happy and tried to forget about him. I just couldn't.....

On the way to know God

When I was about 10, I knew there was a God from reading the books which were given to us by a Christian organization. The books said I could pray to the heavenly Father when I needed help. Once I did something wrong, so I prayed that no one would find out. "If you help me Lord, I won't do that again." It worked!

Besides, I had some Christian friends around me. They invited me to the church on Christmas Day. There was lots of singing and a drama about little Jesus, and lots of nice food was provided on that occasion. At last, they even gave each one of us a gift to take home. All these things made me think it's good to know God, but I didn't really feel I needed to be close to Him.

On the other hand, my Nana was a Christian, and she and my Grandfather looked after me for the first 3 years of my life. There was a strong love between Nana and I, and she always wanted me to become a Christian. I gave her a book called "Streams in the Desert" as her birthday gift years ago. I knew it must be a good book because otherwise Nana wouldn't have read it day by day for many years. But every time when I read it, I just couldn't understand what it meant or what was so wonderful about it. The Bible was even harder for me to understand. It was so strange. How could I know every word in it, but when I tried to read it for understanding, it was just like a book from another planet?

Walking into the church

I can remember very clearly the day of January 21, 2007. That was only a week after I broke up with my boyfriend. I felt I just had to go to church, even though my plane to Taiwan was to depart that afternoon. I just wanted to go to church to hear something. When I walked into the service, people greeted me and smiled at me. The singing was comforting, and the people seemed to be peaceful. When Pastor Jones did the preaching, I was attracted by his message, which was spoken through his calm voice. This made me feel very comfortable. But when I got to Taiwan, my good friends and non-Christian relatives took me to worship different kinds of idols when they knew I was in a deep sadness. They asked me to keep trying. If this idol doesn't help you, you just worship another one. So I did. But every time when I held the incense sticks to worship the wooden or golden idols, I felt so bad inside of my heart. I felt I was doing something wrong, but I didn't know what the reason was. I got no peace at all. I even prayed secretly in my heart to God and said please forgive me. I just don't know what I could do. Now I know that worshipping idols is a sinful thing which God hates. The Bible declares that "You shall have no other gods before me," Deuteronomy 5:7. Thank God that He is a merciful God. He still loved me when I was very wrong.

When I came back to New Zealand, I kept attending Sunday services at the church I went to. Nevertheless, every time I heard the music playing, I couldn't stop crying. I felt that God knew the pain in my heart. One day, Pastor Jones mentioned a verse which made me think about it over again and again. John 8:12 says, "When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." The light? That's what I wanted! I really wanted to change myself from living in the dark to living in a bright place. I didn't want to lock myself in my room and cry every single night. I knew I was getting sick when I couldn't escape the terrible sadness in my heart and mind, yet I was powerless to help myself stop the feelings that tormented and weighed down upon me. I had been trying hard for a long time.

Raise your hand

After three months, Easter Sunday came. They played the video which was about Jesus dying on the cross and rising again three days later. At the end, the Pastor asked people to close their eyes and said, "Jesus has no sin but He was willing to die for your sins. He overcame death and showed Himself to many people. If you want to have a new life, the Bible says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come." 2 Corinthians 5:17. Jesus is faithful. He is waiting for you to accept Him." At that moment, I knew it was time to raise my hand as a sign that I was accepting Jesus as my personal Lord and Saviour, and I did. I walked to the front to be prayed for. On May, 17, 2007, I got baptized in water in the Church of Christ, Auckland. I know I was given a new life spiritually when I accepted Christ, and when I got into the water to show that I identified with His death and resurrection, I experienced even more of the newness of His life the moment I got out of it. That was the most wonderful night of my life.

Going back to Taiwan

Though I started to join the fellowship every week and read lots of God's words, my heart was still in pain for weeks and months. I still hoped God would help me to get my boyfriend back, but things never went that way. A few months later, he decided to go to Taiwan to learn Mandarin. I was so excited about it. I thought this would be a good chance to have our relationship back if I went with him. But on the day he went, I was not ready to go with him. When the days passed, I couldn't stop thinking of him, and I wept more tears every day. I wanted so much to see him, even if I could see him only once. One day, I bought a ticket without telling anyone. I wanted to leave for Taiwan because I knew my feelings would not change where I was. On the night before I left, I explained my thoughts and feelings to Mum. She said she was not surprised, and she said I would come back soon when I understood the truth. Then I left everything behind and went to Taiwan with very little hope in my heart. I didn't know I would come back three years later.

Finally we met on the next day when I arrived in Taipei. I thought I would be over the moon, but it didn't happen in that way. Every time when I saw him, I didn't feel any joy in my heart any more. There were lots of times I had so much anger and was extremely upset in my mind. I thought he ruined my life, and I continued to blame both him and myself.

At the same time, my good friend Vivian invited me to go to her church. There was a bilingual service there. I liked to go there because it was similar to my church in Auckland. Vivian spent lots of time listening to me and even cried with me. She always prayed for me when I stayed at her place, and later on I found out that she had been praying for me to be a Christian for more than ten years.

Soon I got used to the Sunday service and even joined the worship team. I met many lovely sisters in the small group fellowship. They gave me such a great support, and the group leader, Wendy, shared her testimony with me and spent lots of time to help me to know God's Word. I was very touched by her friendship. One evening, when I told her that I still didn't want to give my boyfriend up, that I wanted to wait until he was changed by God, Wendy told me that God loves us so much, He is willing to give us the best. Otherwise why would He send His only son to die for your sin? God also wants us to know His heart. He has a perfect plan for each of us. But if there is anything between God and us, we can't see God's heart for us, and He will never force us to choose anything. He just waits for us until we want to listen to Him and be changed by Him. Then Wendy turned to Psalms 16:4. "The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods." Suddenly I realized that I didn't have God sitting in the most important place in my heart. I needed to focus on God Himself only. I made up my mind at that moment. I would let go and let God have His way in me. This verse has never left my heart since then.

Short term mission to Myanmar

A lot of times, Vivian shared with me about her experiences of a mission trip to Europe, China and Myanmar. (She met her husband on that mission trip!) When she knew I was interested to go on the trip, she said: "Great! You just go." But, after I went to one training session, I told them I couldn't go because I didn't think I could afford it, and I thought my 93 year-old Nana needed me to visit her every week. But the mission leader suggested that I pray more about it. One week later, I told him I still wouldn't go. However, the leader called me few days later and told me that if the money was the only thing I was worried about, they would provide everything for me if I wanted to go. So I told Nana about the trip. What a surprise! She said, "You should go if you know God wants you to go. Don't worry about me. I will be fine here." Then I knew God was leading me to go. That's the first time I experienced "Jehovah Jireh" - The Lord will provide. Since then, I received much more provision in every way from God.

The first healing

After more than 10 hours of traveling by bus from Mandalay to La siu, we started to have a training program for the young Christians there. Every morning, we got up early and had our morning devotion together. I learned to pray with verses from those church elders. They had been coming there to help the people build up the churches in that mountain area for more than 15 years.

We also prepared a drama to share with them in the camp. We practiced a lot once we got to Myanmar. The elder's wife was a faithful sister, and she worked very hard to help us to do the drama right. There were 2 or 3 practices during our breaks every day, and sometimes we didn't stop until midnight. At that time, I didn't know the story "The Image of God and the fiery furnace" found in Daniel chapter 3 too well because I was still a new Christian. I hadn't even read the Old Testament yet. I didn't realize the fourth person was God Himself in the fiery furnace until I was on the stage. Suddenly I knew when I went through the darkness and weeping of all my depression days, I was not alone. The Lord was just by my side day and night. He goes with me through every pain, and He is the one who wipes every tear from my eyes.

Receiving provision again and again

Six months later, I had another opportunity to join another short term mission to Chiang-Mai, Thailand. I was very keen to go because I knew it was wonderful to work with God. But I wanted to pay my own way this time. The problem was that if I went, I wouldn't have any money when I came back because I was trying to find a job at that time. But I just knew I needed to go. When I decided to go, an unexpected teaching job just came to me. I didn't know how it happened, but God did it! My group leader was so happy for me, and she

believed that I had just experienced the faithfulness of God and of His words written in Matthew 6:32-33 “.....your heavenly Father knows what you need. Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” God did know I needed a job!

Another provision came to me later on when I chose to be obedient to Him - to be a faithful servant in my group. When I was asked to be trained as a group leader, I had no confidence at all. I had just finished reading the Bible for the first time. I couldn't even memorize very many verses. Nevertheless, our Pastor and Wendy encouraged me a lot. She said, “God just wants to have your whole heart to help people. It is not about the things you can do and verses you can remember. You can do everything when you choose to do it for God because you are a vessel of God. Remember: “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13. I thought, okay, I will give it a go. But when I said yes to God, I didn't have a job again. I didn't feel right. Then all the brothers and sisters continually prayed for me. Two months later, this perfect job came to me without my searching at all. It was a newly opened music shop, owned by the couple in my church. Things went really well when I started, and I had such a great time working with them. We sometimes prayed and read the Bible together, and the shop was on the same street as my church. I could just walk from work to the meetings at church. I knew it couldn't happen without God's hand. God was building up my faith in Him day by day.

Working for God was not always easy though. I needed to spend time to wait upon God and prepare the right words for my sisters before the fellowship every week. In the small group, most of the people were great to me and supported me a lot. But also there were times that I needed to accept correction and instruction. I tried to care about everyone in the group, and I spent time to have dinner with them one by one after work. They prayed and read God's words with me, but I still had to face some complaints. I knew God was purifying me through those troubles. I praise God that I had the chance to let Him change my heart. I know God was helping me no matter what I needed to deal with. I believe “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13.

Oct. 14, 2010 was an important day for me because my loved one – Nana, went back to heaven at the age of 95. From the moment I got the call from the hospital, to the end of the funeral, my heart stayed deeply in peace. I was very sure God was in control. He took Nana to His kingdom in His time. And in His time, I will see Nana again in heaven. “...that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have the eternal life.” John 3:16. Heaven, that's a place without death or mourning or crying or pain. When I look back, I understand why God took me back to Taiwan in such a special way three years ago. If I had not been in Taipei, I wouldn't have had enough time to be with Nana during her last three years in this world. It makes me have no regret at all.

Know my God more and work for Him

Trusting in Jesus Christ is my richest blessing in my life.

I didn't believe I could be forgiven until I knew Jesus had paid the penalty for my sins, and "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. I didn't believe the pain in my heart could be healed until I heard: "Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them." Matthew 13:15. Now I know God is my creator. He has a perfect plan for me. He loves me and knew me before I knew Him. "Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast." Psalms 22:9. "And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Matthew 10:30. All I want to do now is to serve God as much as I can. I want to know Him through reading His words every day, because I know "the word of our God stands forever." Isaiah 40:10. I know if I want to be a workman approved by God, I need to turn away from my sins. "If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy and useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work." 2 Timothy 3:10.

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