

## My Story, In A Allegory

A young child was sitting in the grass by the side of the road, her parents had placed her there so mother could attend to the baby and father needed to change a flat tyre. While the child was young she could comprehend and understand what was going on around her. They were moving, she had said goodbye to her friends (that had been particularly hard), they had packed up their house. The removalist team had come the night before and taken all their stuff, they had all her precious toys except one. A long loved teddy bear was clasped in her arms, held tight as if the child was afraid of losing it. This bear had been through a lot with her and the child would not let it go for anything, mother had tried to pack it with their belongings but the young child would have nothing of it. Bear, as she called him, was staying with her. Seeing that they were not going anywhere fast the child lay down in the grass and with 'Bear' by her side she let her mind wander down memory lane, putting together the pieces as to how they ended up here in the first place.

Health hadn't been kind to Bear (Bear was her alias, she was in fact referring to herself), cancer coupled with septicaemia at a early age had almost claimed her life and Bear had seen and endured the most horrific scenes a hospital could offer especially to a seven year old. Closing her eyes tight, as if to shut 'it all' out the child couldn't help but remember 'those' days. She could still 'smell' the hot greasy food that was dinner, the whine of the linear radiation machine, the constant visits to clinic sessions, the endless fingerpicks for blood tests and having to lay still for the lumber punctures, yes she still remembered it all. She had given up making friends, after all what was the point, they all died. Doctors visits, hospitals, they only meant one thing for her, pain, pain and more pain. It was hard to get ahead, after all it was early days with cancer treatment (the treatment and medication given her is not used anymore, it is considered too toxic. Precious little comfort for her), life threatening drug reactions, drug side affects, she knew she would never be 'whole', yes, she knew it all.

Picking Bear up off the grass the young child searched him over, yes he was ok, yes he was still alive, hugging him closely to her chest the child knew Bear was a survivor. Looking him closely in the eye the child asked the ultimate question "how was he, really? And how did he do it?". Deep down the child knew the answers to both of these questions, after all she was Bear, the real question to be asked was "was Bear ready to talk about it?" Bear wasn't, she wasn't sure if Bear ever would, the pain ran too deep. Mother was calling, it was time to move on, picking Bear up the young girl tenderly placed him on the seat beside her and allowed her mother to fasten her seatbelt. Picking up Bear she held him close, only he knew her real pain, only he could understand, so she thought at the time.

Years rolled by, Bear became a long forgotten past time and the memory of his painful past was pushed to the back of the girl's mind, but as age caught up with the girl Bear's past came back to haunt her. Time spent crying over a family that never eventuated, intense crippling physical pain, organs vital for life failing - yes, she knew it was all Bear's fault. If only he hadn't survived (the other children didn't) she knew she wouldn't be in the pain she was in today. There was only one thing holding her, her faith in Jesus, after all Bear had a strong faith in Jesus, even as a cub Bear had loved Jesus. Now today the girl knew it was her love for Jesus and her desire to work for him that was holding her up. One aspect of her being still held strong and that was her mind. Throughout all her torturous treatment, meant to save her life, her mind had held steady. That again she credited to Bear, somehow through the black night, even as a small child, Bear had found Jesus and she had held on no matter what. Bear wasn't afraid of death like some of the other children had been, Bear knew heaven awaited her if she didn't make it. But during the night, throughout the storms Bear knew it was Jesus carrying her through, Jesus had given her the strength to 'keep going', Jesus had comforted her, Jesus had held her hand during every fingerpick (blood-test), every lumber puncture, Jesus had been with her all along. It was Jesus that gave her the strength to stand and she fully believed the only reason Bear was alive today was because of Jesus. She remembered the fear and terror those children and their parents had of death and wondered if anyone had told them of the love of Jesus.

Turning to face the mirror, the now aged girl knew that Bear was long gone. Pondering her reflection she knew her life had been one of trial and pain, but through it all Jesus had stood by her side. She knew her body was weak, battered and bruised, she had been through the fires of affliction and come out the other side shining like gold. The thought of those people not knowing about her loving Saviour weighed heavily upon her mind, she loved her Saviour dearly, He had always been there for her. Facing the mirror front on the now aged girl made a pledge, she would tell the world of her Saviour and Redeemer's love. Her body was broken and bruised but her mind was strong, years of pain had built a resolve deep within her that no-one could break. So with head held high, a resolve that could not be broken and her hand in the hand of her Saviour, the girl turned away from the mirror and entered the commission of her life, to show the world her loving, kind and compassionate Saviour.

Friends, it is very hard at the beginning of our trials why these things are permitted to pass. As I have outlined in many of my documents Jesus never causes pain, we are living in the usurped playground of Satan and as we know he is a tyrant. Satan's rule is death, pain and destruction, he delights in suffering and distress and all troubles stem from him. Jesus could at a word dispel him, but if Jesus did how would we learn to grow? It says in the Bible how Jesus moulds our character via the furnace of affliction. As the above allegory depicts it is trial by fire. So while Jesus, friends, never causes the affliction, He doesn't always shield us from it. Jesus uses it to teach us to lean on Him and strengthens our trust in Him. Friends, I would like to point out the obvious, you cannot have faith and trust in someone if you have never exercised the faith muscle. Faith and trust doesn't grow on trees, you can't just 'pluck it off' when you need to use it. Trust and faith comes by experience and believe me my friends, my life has strengthened my muscles immensely. I wouldn't be

standing here today without the guiding hand of my Saviour, my health alone would have destroyed me if my Redeemer hadn't walked with me through the fires of affliction and taught me to stand. Friends, I believe 'My Story, In A Allegory' coupled with 'Why I Chose The Path I Did' is the perfect example of why Jesus takes us through the furnaces of affliction. Never in a million years could I have seen the end from the beginning, often I wondered why my path was so rugged, but with each battle, each trial, I grew stronger, I learnt more and more to lean on Jesus and I know now for a certainty Jesus does save. Jesus and Jesus alone carried me through, I can see now from sight not by faith, the strength Jesus can and does impart. I never would have seen this at the beginning, what Jesus can do if you put your faith in Him. Friends, what about you? Are you traveling through 'the fires of affliction'? Friends, we may not 'see' right now what Jesus is doing but please friends, trust me, take a leaf out of my book, Jesus really does know what He is doing, I alone can vouch for the fact. While the night was dark and the seas stormy Jesus was my shining light all the way through. I felt His uplifting power and I have come through shining like gold. While I couldn't see at the very beginning what Jesus was doing I can see it now. He has installed in me a faith that will never be broken and He has shown me His strength and power to protect and uphold. Friends, you may be in the dark right now, you may be traveling through the fires of affliction, please rest in Jesus, He will carry you. Believe me I know for a fact that Jesus saves, you may not see the reasons now but trust in Jesus friends, He will carry you through.

Isaiah 48:10 "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."

### 23rd Psalm

"(A Psalm of David) The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

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