

野地的花

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陌生的家

我出生於佛教背景的家庭中。父親是養子，他自小書未唸完就被帶到碼頭做苦力。我們家境清寒，因此幼時我被帶到鄉下與外婆同住，直到五歲。那時只覺得爸爸脾氣很壞，小孩一吵，他就打人，而且不到晚上十點見不到他，因為父親下班後，仍要到夜校進修。而母親染上嚴重的賭癮，為不使父親知道，總要在父親進門前一刻回家。每當回家前，媽媽會仔細的教我如何說謊欺騙父親。

一次我受不了，對父親說了實話，父親立刻重重地給母親一記耳光，於是在我面前兩人扭打成一團。為留住母親的心在家，父親同意在家裡開設兩桌賭桌。自此放學回家，我便負責到廟口買十幾個人的飯盒。每當我經過廟口，看到一座座的佛像坐著讓人膜拜，有黑臉、白臉、長鬍子的，身著金花閃閃的外衣。人家說，這些神明是保佑人平安，但對幼小的我而言，見了他們就像看見鬼一般的嚇人，反而使我感到不平安，於是側著頭飛奔而過。

這個惡運會臨到我嗎

為了博得父母更多的注意，我努力的做好每件事，小學畢業那天，我拿到了全校最高榮譽，也進了國際模範兒童榜。我興奮地拿著獎狀回到家，進門卻看到爸爸坐在那兒，面無表情地說：「妳媽媽走了，她不要你們了！」當時我好生氣，把獎狀扔在地上，任憑小狗咬爛它。命運像是被詛咒似的，母親的親人，大多不是離婚，便是單親家庭。自問：「人的情感為何如此善變和有限？這個惡運終會臨到我嗎？」於是我告訴自己：「往後絕不結婚。」

媽媽走後，我的夢魘開始。弟弟成了隨時會引爆的炸彈，動不動便要打我出氣。他有六尺之高，我只要一被他逮到，沒有不傷痕累累的。後來，又見到爸爸和弟弟吵架，甚至打架，最嚴重的一次，弟弟砸破電視，並用腳將一片一公分厚的玻璃桌踩碎，他像一頭受傷的野牛瘋了似地吼叫，又拾起玻璃碎片往我們身上扔。

這些事情在我心裡造成不可言喻的傷害。開始有了嚴重的失眠，早晨起來，枕頭落了一把把的頭髮。當時，連話也沒有辦法出口，一旦開口就是一串快的不得了，莫明其妙的話。有時，精神恍惚到一個程度，夜裡會聽到令人毛骨悚然的怪聲。甚至做出一些奇怪的事，爬到頂樓最靠外圍的牆上，走過來走過去，想著：「風兒把我吹走吧！」並且開始經常蹺課、蹺家、在外頭蕩著。

一個晚上，我又在外頭閒蕩，耳際突然傳來一陣美妙的歌聲，抬頭一看，聲音來自一座教堂，有著發光的十架在其頂上。循著歌聲我走了進去，注視歌唱人的表情，個個微笑甜美，猶如天使一般。印象十分深刻，當時他們正在唱「野地的花」這首詩歌：

「野地的花，穿著美麗的衣裳，

天空的鳥兒從來不為生活忙，
慈愛的天父天天都看顧，
祂更愛世上人，為他們預備永生的道路。」

當時，心中不明白誰是這位慈愛的天父？什麼是永生的道路？但我知道這個地方很安全，在這兒我有說不出的溫暖在心裡，像似在天堂，於是教會成了我的避難所。我知道主來尋找我、要醫治我。

神是最知心的朋友

上了大學，神差一位小天使進到我的生命中，使我對愛有新的體認。一日，有位不起眼的女同學走向我說：「星期日，我會在學校教堂彈奏管風琴，可否請妳來參加聚會？」為了保護自己，我回答她：「對不起，我有事。」之後她又問起我家人，因我最痛恨人問起家中事，於是我立刻對她起了很大的反感。

有次我得了重病，看著外面天色漸暗，連起床的力氣都沒有，心想今天我要死在這了。突然間，聽到電話聲響，過一會兒又有敲門聲。原來那彈管風琴的女同學來到我的住處，於是她匆忙帶我到醫院，並說：「神告訴她，我病了。」那天起，她成了我最知心的朋友，她常對我談起神的事。然而我不但聽不下去，還反問她：「難道妳與我做朋友，只為了讓我成為基督徒嗎？」她的單純使她急忙的說：「不只是這樣的。」

後來，我申請美國的研究院，她則準備去德國深造。畢業前夕，她伸出雙臂緊緊抱住我說：「妳知道嗎？多少個夜晚我跪在房裡為妳禱告。今後，即使我們不再相見，我還是要不斷地為妳禱告，相信妳會早日認識這位愛妳的主。」多少年來，不曾流過一滴淚的我，那天在她身上大哭，告訴她：「我一定會的。」

於是，抱著要認識神的信念來到美國，如同聖經上說到：「尋找的，就必尋見；叩門的，就給他開門。」果然主對我說話了。那是九五年冬天的清晨，我一個人坐在房門外走著，突然注意到路旁開著幾朵小野花，停下來看著看著，一首歌立刻進到我心中——「野地的花」。我嚇了一跳，心跳也隨之加快，有十年了我不曾聽過，不曾唱過這首歌。那天，歌詞竟一字不漏地印在心版上，好像神在對我說：「回家來吧！」我一路哭著，回到房間，跪在那兒想與神說話，但一句話也無法開口。於是，拿起大提琴一遍又一遍地拉著那首歌的旋律。

我想，年少時那些在教堂歌唱人的喜悅就是如此。慢慢的我學習依靠愛我的主，我發現在一切的事上都能得勝有餘。我也勝過了從前對婚姻的恐懼感，正如聖經上說：「在愛裡沒有懼怕，愛既完全就把懼怕除去。」我知道婚姻只要建立在主的愛中，主必保守到底。九八年的夏天，主的恩典臨到我們這個家，先生和我，我們的生命因主都有了奇妙的改變。

神的愛永不失望永無止息

因此，很多人問我：「當個基督徒後要改這個改那個，是不是十分痛苦嗎？」在這事上，更是讓我看到主的超凡智慧、聖潔與慈愛。有個故事可以來解釋：

有一個滿身污穢，家中凌亂骯髒的人，多少年來他已習慣自己的髒亂。直到有一天，好友送他一盆盛開的百合。當他把這盆花移入屋內時，才發現家中的髒亂，實在與這潔白脫俗的百合大不相襯，於是動手將一件件的垃圾丟掉。之後，又看自己身上有那麼多污點和髮垢，他就洗了澡，換套新衣。之後，全新的人和居所，因著這朵百合的移入，形成了何等美好的畫面。

實實在在靠著主，我們的改變是那麼的自然，並充滿喜樂。主將我從憂慮、易怒、偽善、缺乏自信、自私、沒有愛及種種罪的捆綁中，慢慢地帶回到祂的國度中，一個屬於真善美的生命。特別在我與家人的關係上，神醫治了我，釋放了我。在九八年夏天，我到拉斯維加斯看我的母親，一見她憔悴的樣子，我就不住流淚。這輩子我與母親從無相互擁抱過，那天我緊抱著她，告訴她我今是多麼思念她、愛她。那天，母親打開心門接受主，願意讓主帶她出黑暗入光明，她與我們做了接受主的禱告。感謝主，神在我們還不認識祂，甚至離棄祂時，就不斷地來尋找我們。祂不僅是創造宇宙萬有的主宰，也是與我緊密相連，時時傾聽我說話的父神，祂的愛永不失望，祂的愛永無止息。

LILIES OF THE FIELD

I was brought up in a Buddhist's family. My parents had three children. Our family's financial condition was deeply stressed. My brother, who was only one year younger than me, contracted the Measles right after birth. In the same year, our house was burned down. Because my mother was physically weak at that time, I was sent to stay with my grandmother who lived in the countryside. I did not return until at the age of five. Therefore, my home was quite a strange place to me. My first impression was that my father was a short-tempered person. He would beat up children if they became annoying. He studied at night school after work, so we did not see him until 10:00 P.M. every night. As far as my mother, she did not show up either until it was the time for my father's return, for she was indulged in gambling. Many times, she would take me to the gambling place and have me wait there for several hours. On the way home, in order to cover up her gambling behavior, she would always teach me how to lie to my father. I remember there was one time I could not help but tell my father the truth. Immediately he slapped her on the face, and two of them started to physically fight. Ever since that occurrence, I noticed that my mother avoid eye contact with me, as if she blamed me for the conflict between she and my father. From that time on, a great question mark was raised in my heart about truth and lie.

In order to keep my mother home, my father gave in by allowing gambling be held at our house. Therefore, my chore after school was to buy dinner for the gambling guests. I usually had to go to a night market in front of a local Buddha temple. I saw many statues

sitting inside. Some had white faces, and some black faces. Some had long beards, and most of them were dressed in shining golden clothes. People said that those statues brought good luck. However, their faces were as scary as devils to me. Hence, every time I passed by the temple, I had to turn my head and I tried to avoid looking at them. In order to get more of my parents' attention, I studied very hard in the grad school. I graduated with the highest honor and was enlisted as one of the international model students. Holding the award and certificate, I ran home with excitement. When I showed them to my father, he looked at me numbly and said: "Your mom just left. She does not want you anymore." Upon hearing that, I became very angry and tossed the certificate on the floor allowing our dog to tear it apart. My mother's leaving was like a confirmation of a curse in the family, for everyone in our family ended with divorce. I was convinced that this curse will also be my fate. Therefore, I swore that I would never get married.

Nightmares began after my mother's departure. Everyday I returned to a house full of darkness and sometimes my father's sobbing sound. My younger brother who had always been my mother's pet could not adjust to her sudden leaving. He became a loose time bomb which could go off anytime. He was over six feet tall and easily lost his temper. When in a bad mood, he would beat me up severely. Sometimes, I was so badly beaten that I could not even lie down on my back. He would often quarrel and even fight with my father. One time he broke our TV set and stepped on the broken pieces of glasses. Blood came down from his feet and onto the floor. He became wild and could not be controlled but throw those broken pieces toward us. Hence, my father had to call the police to take him away. Often time, in order to avoid his violence, I had to hide my self in the only lockable room, the restroom. Hearing the pounding sounds on the door, for several times, I made up my mind that once he broke in I would immediately jump out of the window from the fourth floor. My life was often at stake and could end at anytime.

These things had adverse impacts on me. I could not sleep at night. My hair was lost by bundles every morning. I talked with abnormally fast speed and often did not make any sense. I sometimes heard strange voices and liked to walk on the palm-size edge of the wall at the top of our building. While walking back and forth on the narrow edge, I imagined that the wind would be kind enough to take me away, away from all the unsolvable tragedies in my life.

One day when wondering around in the neighborhood, I suddenly heard a beautiful melody. Lifting my head, I saw a church with a shining cross on the top. I walked into that church and saw many people sitting and singing. They all had sweet and beautiful smiles on their faces. I remember they were singing a song titled "Lilies of the Field". The lyrics were: "Lilies of the field wear beautiful clothes, and birds in the sky never worry for their lives, for the loving heavenly Father takes care of them. He loves people even more and has prepared for them a way of eternal life." Although I did not know who that heavenly Father was and what the way of eternal life was about, I felt warmth surrounding my heart, as if I were in heaven. From that time on, that church became my hiding place for a while.

While staying there, I came to know a Christian lady who taught me how to play cello. At that time I did not know why, but now I know this is the instrument God has given to me with which I can praise Him. Six months later, I passed an examination and was accepted into a school in Taiwan as a Music major student. Even though I was happy to leave my home, I also left the home-like church.

On the first day of school, being totally alone in a new place and seeing many schoolmates being accompanied by their family members, I felt very much left out. Therefore, I swore to myself that I would live well in the future. Hence, before really having a chance to know the loving heavenly Father, I drifted away into the world again. The outcome was miserable. My nervousness returned, and nightmares reoccurred. Especially, I was weak in interpersonal skills. I used all my allowance on schoolmates in the hope that I might earn some friendship. However, that kind of friendship founded on sinking sand and collapsed easily. Again, I felt disappointed about the love of mankind, until one day God sent an angel into my life.

God later brought me to a Christian college. Right across our Music department building was the campus chapel, which reminded me of the prior hiding place. However, I was very different from other female students going to that college, especially in the way of talking and dressing. I felt out of place among them. One day, a very ordinary looking young lady approached me and invited me to go to the church meeting on the following Sunday. Out of pride, I immediately declined her invitation, but she continued to chat with me. I got very offensive when she asked me about my family, the most upsetting topic. Naturally, I disliked her right away and lost the interest of talking to her.

One day, I suddenly got sick. With high fever, I lay down in my bed and could not move. I thought I would die that night. Surprisingly, the phone suddenly rang, but I did not have strength to get it. Later, someone knocked on my door, yet I could open it either. Not too much time later, the ordinary looking young lady broke into my room and saw my condition. She rushed me to the hospital. Later on, she told me that God told her that I was sick. From that day on, she became my best friend.

After we graduated, we both applied for overseas advanced study. She received admission to go to Germany, but I was going to the U.S. We said good-bye in front of our department building. After looking at me deep into the eyes, she suddenly embraced me and said: "You know how many nights I knelt before the Lord and prayed for your soul?" "Even though we will not see each other again for a long time, I will continue to pray for you so that you can know this loving Lord one day!" I had not cried for many years, but that night I leaned on her and wept bitterly and promised her that I would soon find her loving Lord.

With that promise in mind, I came to the U.S. Just as God has promised in the Bible: "Those who seek shall find, and those who knock, the door should be open." The Lord indeed talked to me and found me. It happened in one winter morning in 1995. I was

taking a walk in the neighborhood. Suddenly, I noticed a few wild flowers standing by the roadside. I bent down and appreciated their beauty. All of a sudden, a melody arose in my heart. It was the melody of the song titled "Lilies of the Field". I had not heard that song for at least ten years by then, but the lyrics were clearly recited in my heart, as if God was calling me home. I was shocked and speechless. Tearfully, I ran home and knelt down by my bed. However, I could not say a word. Therefore, I got up and played my cello to the beautiful melody of that song. I experienced a joy beyond description.

Quickly after that, God arranged another angel into my life, my husband. We knew each other due to my toothache, and he was the dental school intern at UCLA. Later, I contracted a few kinds of skin diseases, which made me very unpresentable. However, it was God's perfect arrangement, for my husband did not lose his love or patience for me, but took very good care of me. He was also a Christian, but not a regular church goer. Nevertheless, on the Good Friday of that year, he felt compelled to go to church and insisted that I went with him. Reluctantly, I went and did not understand a word of the English speaking pastor's message. When the meeting almost ended, suddenly I heard clearly every word he said: "God loves you, and He wants to change you, as long as you're willing to give yourself to Him." That pastor wanted each one of us to write down on a piece of paper the thing we want to give to Jesus. After giving some thought, I put down "myself".

On that very night, I had a horrible dream. Although I had many bad dreams before, that was the worst one. I saw a pair of eyes looking at me in an orange fiery background. Those eyes were filled with anger, just like devil was looking at me. I woke up from that dream with great fear. I immediately asked the Lord for help for the first time. A great peace then entered into my heart, so I was able to go back to sleep. Then I woke up next morning, I decided to be baptized, for I knew the existence of evil spirits, and I knew only by trusting the loving Lord, I could have true peace.

We can overcome all things by trusting the loving Lord. I was gradually able to overcome the fear toward marriage. Just as said in the Bible: "In love, there is no fear. For the love is complete, the fear is taken away." I learned that as long as a marriage is established in the Lord, He will keep it all the way to the end. In the past two years, I truly witnessed how God changed my husband and me.

Many people asked me: "Isn't it troublesome to change yourself here and there after becoming a Christian?" In all the changes I have experienced in the Lord's hand, I only see God's love and wisdom. I may be able to illustrate it with the following story. It was like a man who was sloppy and messy. One day, his friend gave him a little pot of white lilies. Joyfully, he placed the pot in the middle of his living room. Immediately, he noticed the messiness of the room did not match with the beautiful and fragrant lilies. Therefore, he started cleaning his furniture, his room, his house, and even himself. After everything was done, he was happy and appreciated the overall clean environment. Our lord is just like that beautiful pot of lilies. After inviting Him to live in our heart, we

will gradually feel our filthiness does not match with His holiness. With His presence, we obtain strength and motivation to clean ourselves. Sometimes, we feel tired, but the Lord still patiently waits for us. Our faith is therefore strengthened and encourages us to go on. This cleansing process continues until one day we see that our little place becomes part of the heavenly home. The Lord is truly changing me, the one who was full of worry, easily angered, lack of self esteem, selfish, does not love and trapped in all kinds of bondage. He slowly brought me into His kingdom and healed me physically and spiritually.

My mother returned to my father a few years ago, but I could not forgive her. The unforgiveness became a heavy burden in my heart. One day through the word of the Lord that "He who labored and heavily burdened can come to me, and I will give you rest. Carry my yoke and follow my pattern, thus, you shall find peace." The Lord's pattern is patient, gracious, holy, righteous, forgiveness, and submission. He is love, which is proven through the death on the cross. Shouldn't I so-called Christian is the one who understands His love the most? Hence, I asked Him to help me forgive her. I also asked her to open her heart and invite Jesus in. After we prayed together, I truly felt the peace of the Lord.

Now, I can enjoy daily the joy, content ness and peace that I never experienced before accepting Jesus into my heart. The Lord I believe in is true and living, totally different from those idols who wait for fruits and sacrifices in the Buddha temple. Jesus is the one who came to seek me when I did not know Him. His love never ends!

-Jamie Cheng