

Abundance in My New Life by Sandra Sii

Before I came to know the Lord Jesus, I had no self-control during my youth, but yielded to peer-pressure. I liked street racing and the thrill of winning races. Whenever I felt bored and empty, I would ask my friends for a street race. As I did not abide to traffic law, I simply did not care of other people's safety. Although I had a few car accidents, had scratched other cars, and even had been reported to the police station, these did not stop my ego of unsafe driving.

I enjoyed late night gatherings with my friends after supper despite my whole family's worries about my safety at late night. Whenever a major festival came, I joined and stayed at wild parties until 4 or 5 in the morning and came home with a pungent smell of cigarette. In the parties, I watched my friends smoke heavily, get drunk, and have short-term affairs with partners.

People often believed that my life was filled with excitement; but such excitement disappeared quickly again and I felt empty and lonesome as soon as I returned home. Trying to get rid of such unpleasant feelings, I seek people's attention by spending time and money to beautify myself. I made use of school and church as a place to show off myself and my accomplishments. Not only that, I used the internet to make friends. I could talk overnight to strangers on phone or through internet and had the illusion that I was living in a perfect world. In reality, my parents harshly scolded me about my bad behaviours and were ready to disown me as their only daughter. My well-being was not my priority; yet I was overwhelmed with self-pity. As a result, I had attempted to commit suicide a few times. My life was helpless trapped in the darkness.

After a two-year post-graduate studies in my home country, I completed my degree overseas at Oxford Brookes University in England for a year. In the beginning of the journey, my grandpa and uncle accompanied me to go to England. Their main concern was my church life in England. They came across the Oxford Chinese Church in the city of Oxford. I began to attend their Sunday worships and fellowships. A Christian brother I met who initially led me to the church youth fellowship gatherings later became my husband.

I came to know the Lord Jesus in the youth fellowship. I then realized that the Creator of the Universe, who gives lives to all living things, had descended, became a human being and died for our sins. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, I was able to conquer my sins. Numerous Christmases, New Years, Good Fridays and Easters had gone by; yet I did not even know that Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross for our sins and he was risen after three days. What did Jesus mean to me? I didn't even know the fact that the righteous God will put judge all non-believers, according to their evil thoughts and their wrong doings. Therefore no one could stand before God in the judgment. But our merciful God does not want to condemn our transgression which will lead to eternal death punishment. We would be separated from God forever and be thrown into the eternal fire. God's holy wrath is appeased by the crucifixion of our Saviour Jesus; so that all believers in Christ have been "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed." (Romans 3:24-25) Therefore those who believe will be saved and reconcile with God. God would provide the guidance throughout our lives since we are children of God. In Him, we will have abundance in our new lives. His resurrection demonstrates the conquering of death and the victory over sins. We do not need to fear anymore.

My true repentance to the Lord was in May of 2003 when I was greatly distressed. Whenever I thought of the darkest moments of my life, it seemed like going through a movie with each scene displacing to me. I had sinned against God by being disobedient and hurtful to other people. The worst burden of my

sin was recalling the hurts of my own parents and the rest of my family. Once I thought of that, I went to my own room and painfully cried. I kneeled down before God and prayed for forgiveness. After that, I made a long distance telephone call back home to say sorry for my disobedience and asked for their forgiveness.

This experience had completely changed me. During the time I returned home for holiday, my family was astonished about the change in me. Their prayers for me have been answered! I began to enthusiastically attend church functions, such as fellowships, prayer meetings, cell groups, worships, evangelical meetings, etc. Before then, I was hardly moved by any church function invitation. Customarily I followed my family to Sunday worships. However, the sermons and the biblical teaching had no effect on me.

Gradually the thrills of car racing, watching overnight movies, internet chatting, late night events, wild parties, unjustified weight loss, crazy shopping, disrespecting to my family and any of my interests which were not pleasing God disappeared from me. This happened to me just a miracle since Jesus had changed me. By reading the Bible, I understood that I had invited Jesus into my life as my saviour by faith. Jesus provides the power to me to overcome temptation and sin. The Holly Spirit leads my choice to the right path.

Having the church gatherings, Bible studies, prayers, and my serving at church to experience my new life in Christ, my spirituality was growing with fulfilment and happiness. Whenever I disobeyed God and did not let go of my doubt and anger, Satan would take the opportunity to attack me, putting me in the miserable and hopeless conditions. I must repent to God. With His forgiveness, I was released and regained the strength in God. Both the Old and New Testaments tell me that my God is a merciful God. He would forgive those who are humble, repent before Him and are willing to reconcile with Him.

I've come to realize that we have lost our peace due to our habit of unrighteousness and the pride in not allowing God to handle our difficulties. We just let our own sinful nature to handle the problems. As a result, we could not solve the problem, rather damaging the relationship with other people, hurting both ourselves and others. If we please God and love others as God love us, we will have the peace and joy from God. Moreover, God's blessing and assured salvation will be restored on us. We will live in our heavenly home where there is no tear, but everlasting peace.

On the Christmas Day of 2004, I was baptized in my hometown church. A week later, I then got married to the brother who led me to the church in Oxford. The wedding ceremony was held in my hometown before God and my family. After our wedding, the Lord led us to Sydney, Australia, where I began another overseas study for two years to complete my second master degree. During these years, I experienced God's love, grace and care through the study, workplace, serving the Lord at church, and our marriage. From my experience, I would like to share with you the following (translated from a Chinese hymn):

When I am under pressure, I make it peacefully;
When I am busy in my work, I pass it restfully;
When I fail in my life, I pass it with laughter;
When I face harassment, I treat it with steadfasting;
How much blessings can God's children have?

When I am despaired, I have hope to live for;
When I am lonely, I have someone to care;
When I am in difficult, I have guidance to lead me;
When I die in sin, I have a new life to live for.
How much blessings can God's children have?

May you also receive these abundant blessings!