

He Really Does Love Me

**Personal Testimony
of Elizabeth Mills Canard**

Saved June 23, 2005

My name is Elizabeth Mills, and this is how God came to me and showed me who I truly was, and that even me with all my sins, He loves me.

I was born June 1, 1989, to Jeff and Pat Mills, ever since I was born everyone in my family would always say, "She's such a good little girl." As I grew up, I considered myself a "good girl" too. I went to school from pre-k - 3rd grade, and from then until I graduated, I was home-schooled. That right there is the grace of God keeping me away from things; I needed to stay away from. I was too young to remember the church that my parents and I attended before we went to Arlington Baptist Church (which is now Lighthouse).

But I do remember being in services at Lighthouse when God would fall in and everyone would start shouting and thanking God. Even though I couldn't understand why they were thanking him for salvation and such, I just loved watching them. Being able to remember the days that my Mom and Dad got saved I'm so very thankful for having those memories. I know I didn't understand what had happened to my parents; I just knew I saw a difference in them and in our home life.

Packing up and heading to Mississippi Delta Camping Meeting in Arkansas or now Camp Liberty in Pontotoc, MS, was always a highlight in my year, and still is to this day! But then all I knew about it was I was going to see my friends from out of town and watching other men and women from other churches praising and worshipping God, I didn't have much understanding as to what camp was about or why we all met together. The older I got there were times during a service when people were weeping, or praising God, that I would find myself crying too, but I couldn't tell you why, I just believed it was God letting me feel his presence.

As the years started passing by this sweet, good girl's heart started changing. I was nice and sweet up front but if you said or did anything to upset me, I surely hated you when you turned to walk away. I never set out to do things I was told not to do, but I sure longed to do them and thought about how I could do them without getting caught.

In the 7th or 8th grade, I joined a home-school marching band at a local church here in Memphis, TN. We weren't a very large band, but it at least gave us home-schooled kids a chance to meet other home-schooled kids and learn music. Well during this time I got close to a handful of kids, and they were all "good Christian" kids by everyone's standards, they got to do things and listen to things that weren't horrible, but I was always told, "No, don't because it isn't good for you." At the time I didn't understand why they weren't good for me, I just knew I had a desire to do them because everyone else was and it wasn't "hurting" them, so I thought.

So, this is where I learned to be good at sneaking things around. Music was my main obsession, and now that I look back, I see and understand why my parents were trying to keep me away from those things because it kept my mind on all these worldly things and never helped me think about God, but at that time I thought I knew better. I'd have my friends sneak copies of cd's so I could take them home and listen to them, And like I said, it wasn't horrible things and it was so much that the music was bad or I was sinning because I was listening to music, but it was me! I was so sneaky, deceiving, and flat-out doing what I was told not to do, I had a bad attitude. It got to where I was acting up with my friends talking about things I shouldn't have been talked about and saying things I shouldn't

have. When I was with them, I was one kid, when I was with my church family and family, I was on my best behavior, but I longed to be with the others!

My heart started growing hard, I couldn't care less if I went to church or not, but I wouldn't have let you know that's how I felt, I just put up my front and smiled and went to church. It got to when there was crying and worshiping, I would just sit there and feel nothing, and I didn't even care that I wasn't feeling anything or care as to what was going on around me. I look back at that time now and I'm so thankful God didn't leave me there, but that he kept drawing me in and working in me to come along. I found myself at times turning on those CDs that my friends would make me, and I'd feel so guilty for listening to them and knowing I was going against my parents and my pastor. I'd then throw them away, telling myself I'm going to straighten up and do right. No more music and no more acting up and doing things I'm not supposed to be doing, and that would last all about two weeks at max then I'd find myself in the same place again and with more CDs. I couldn't change myself and I was still hurting people too. I was never mean to someone to their face, but if you made me mad or hurt me, I'd go to someone else and run that person down by talking so badly about them, trying to make myself look better. When honestly, I was just hateful and didn't care about others at all!

One Sunday night Bro. Greg had preached about taking heed, out of Hebrews 2:1 "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." And Mark 4:24 "And he said unto them, take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given."

Were we measuring His words important? The weight that hit me that service. I remember going home that night and getting into bed crying, knowing that I hadn't considered anything. Bro. Greg had been preaching important just honestly didn't care. I started asking God to put the weight on me of how important His word, His church, and everything make it that real to me. I woke up that next morning with this heaviness on me that I couldn't get off me, it's like I could just break down and cry. I was getting ready for work that morning and once I was ready for work that morning, I was waiting for my dad to take me, I pulled out my bible to where Bro. Greg had just preached the night before and God just started bringing back the weight on me how I didn't meet it important. Once I got to work, I couldn't get it off me, I tried playing with the kids, watching TV and everything, and nothing would get my mind off it or get that weight to go away. I even emailed my -youth pastor

Bro. Scott Smith asked him questions trying to figure it out, but it didn't help. Well, I called my mom explaining to her what was going on and she said, "I'm going to have Bro. Greg call you..." well I was waiting for him to call; I went into the back room and just fell out flat on my face asking God to help me. Just told God I couldn't do it and that he was the only one who could take away this burden and the next thing I knew it was gone. I felt so much better once that burden had been lifted, so much happier too. Well, Bro. Greg called me shortly after and I told him all about it and I was almost wanting to say God saved me and Bro. Greg just encouraged me to look at what had happened a little more and we'd talk later more about it. The more I thought about it, it didn't add up to be salvation, and when I called Bro. Greg that night he agreed, that God wasn't' dealing with me about who I was or about my sins but me, just seeing that God is the only one who can take away my burdens and that no one else could. He told me not to be upset or discouraged and that I should be thankful and glad that God was working on me!

After that, I was paying more attention at church wanting to hear what was being preached and wanting to be there but I was still my old self sneaky at times, mean and I couldn't stop myself. The bad part about it is, I wasn't even really sorry that I was like that, never felt bad if I hurt you, and was only sorry if I got caught doing something I shouldn't.

I never really saw the real me until February 2005, I had just gotten back from Camp Meeting in Mississippi not even remembering much about it.

After one Sunday Morning after service, I was so heavy-hearted, that I couldn't leave church. My mom came to me and asked if I was okay, and I said "No." and just started crying. She said, "Let's go pray, I'll go get Mrs. Janet and we'll go pray". As soon as I hit the altar I broke, and God just opened my eyes as to who I had been, how hateful I was, how I had hurt other people, I didn't care, and that I didn't love anyone!

He then started showing me when my parents or my pastor would guide me and tell me things I shouldn't be doing that it was God telling me what not to do and when I would disobey my parents and pastor because I thought I knew better, it was me going against God thinking I knew better than Him, and that just broke me. When I got up from the altar it seemed like everyone could see what God just showed me about myself, I was so ashamed!

I went to talk to Bro. Greg and told him what God had shown me and that I needed God to help me, but I didn't believe God would, because of everything God had just shown me about myself and

how I had been acting. And Bro. Greg told me “That’s not my God, he loves you.” But I didn’t believe him, why would God love me, someone, so disobedient.

For the next couple of months, God was still showing me myself and I felt like I couldn’t hide, I had a hard time at home too. At times it was like I was watching myself from a distance, I couldn’t change what ugliness I spoke, and I couldn’t change how I reacted I couldn’t change myself, that was the real me. I felt like my parents knew everything God was showing me and felt like no one would love me, because of who I was and how I acted. I’d go to bed and some nights just start crying asking God to change me, but then doubting that he really would.

Well, June rolled along, and it was time for choir tour, I was trying my best to not get caught up and act like the others or talk like them, but I got to think “What does it matter anyway?” I couldn’t change myself; I needed God to change me, and I would doubt that God would change me and help me. My thinking was off track! One evening we went to the mall, and I found this music store, I went in and found this Christian group and they had a song titled “I Need You” and it’s just about how a person is just way out here and in need of help and God is the only one that could. I just found myself crying while sitting on the bus headed back to the hotel.

When I got back, I remembered Bro. Scott Smith (my youth pastor) was teaching on the parable of the Sower, and we needed to examine to see which ground our heart was. Well, I knew my heart wasn’t rock hard and cold because God had been talking to me and dealing with me. But I couldn’t get any further; Bro. Scott said that some of us needed to check our hearts to see if our hearts were like the stony ground, things would stick but not very long, then would fade away and I wouldn’t get

any further. I went and talked to Bro. Greg once again to talk to him because I was in a mess again and thought God would just leave me there. He told me once again "Elizabeth, that's not my God and he loves you." I went away trying to convince myself that God loved me when I was thinking the whole time that God had only been good to me because he'd been good to my family and others when I should have been believing He loves me for Elizabeth not because I was just another person mixed in the crowd.

Well, the end of June rolled around, and it was time for Camp Liberty again in Mississippi, I went to camp in a mess not expecting anything to happen. Wednesday night rolled around and a few of us girls went back to the dorm, and I got a phone call from my mom saying, my best friend Stephen Moffitt had gotten saved. I was just speechless, the other girls started crying and thanking God, me on the other hand I just sat there. I didn't know what to say because I knew Stephen well and to know God saved him gave me the tiniest hope that God wanted to save me. But then thoughts would come into my head saying, "God won't save you, you're worse off than Stephen you flat out went against God in all kinds of ways and you don't love people." And I started agreeing to those thoughts saying, "You're right".

Well, Mrs. Janet Moffitt (my pastor's wife) and Mrs. Connie Owen came into the girl's dorm to talk to us. Mrs. Janet came to my bed and asked me if I was okay and I said, "No ma'am" Then she asked me what was wrong. All I could say was, I just need God, and she said, "Well, tell God that, tell Him you need him." And I tried but I felt it just felt like everything would shut down, I couldn't do it. Next thing I knew Bro. Greg and Bro. Terry came into the dorm and Bro. Greg came to me and asked me "What's going on? And I told him what him what I had just told Mrs. Janet, that I just needed

God and that I felt like God was holding his hand out to me and if I were to jump, he'd pull his hand back and let me fall, which he had every right to do so. And Bro. Greg was sitting there shaking his

head and said "Elizabeth, that's not my God!

You've got wrong thoughts about Him, and you aren't going to get anywhere with him till you start

thinking differently"

They all left the dorm and I crawled into bed and just started crying telling God that I was sorry for not believing him and sorry for my wrong thinking. And just agreeing with what Bro. Greg had said,

how I'm not going to get any further with God till I believed God loved me. I got up the next

morning still thinking about what Bro. Greg has told me, I went through the day in a

haze, hardly talking to anyone or remembering anything. I was just consumed with thinking about how I could I believe God, when I've been struggling all this time. That evening Bro. Tim Rutherford got up to preach and it's like God sat down right in front of me. Bro. Tim was preaching from James

4:8, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you", and he said "That maybe God is waiting for you to take the first step to him and you move to him first" and I just broke telling God I wanted to

come to him I just didn't know how!

Next thing I know Bro. Greg is up preaching and saying, "Getting saved is also like

marrying Christ" and Bro. Greg was saying, "He already has everything prepared, and that he's already said I do". I just started thinking, you must love someone if they've already prepared

everything and have already said I do, that Christ has made all things ready to have me! I found

myself just thanking God and telling him "I do too"!

I just rested and believed that God really does love me! All of a sudden that urgency to get to God and that weight was gone. I thought to myself, Man I missed God, and He left me and something started stirring in me, that I couldn't understand at first. He hadn't left me; He was still there with me!

We stood up to sing a song and I found myself crying, laughing, and smiling all at the same time while singing and I thought what is going on this isn't right?! Well before we dismissed, we sang, "Ring the bells of heaven" and then we sang "Jesus What a friend for Sinners" And when we got to the chorus "Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Hallelujah! What a Friend!

Saving, helping, keeping, loving,

He is with me to the end."

I couldn't contain it any longer, I just started crying, felt so full like it was just running out of me. Bro. Scott was sitting in front of me and turned around and asked me "Are you okay?" and I said, "I think God just saved me, and before I knew it, he was gone! Bro. Greg came over along with my mom and dad, Bro. Greg asked, "What's going on?" and I said, "He really does love me!" And Bro. Greg just smiled and said, "Yes, he does! Sounds good to me!" That's all I could think about for the rest of the evening was, God really does love me, even me with all my sins, couldn't help but just keep telling Him thank you! That's MY GOD!!