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Sarea Kotze

FROM RESENTMENT TO RESTORATION

Sarea Kotze recalls the year everything fell apart.

“In one year, my Dad lost his job and nearly lost his life, my aunt was checked into a psychiatric ward on suicide watch, my grandmother died and my mom’s health was affected,” she tells *Challenge News*.

The outbreak of the COVID pandemic became the last straw and Sarea fell into depression and anxiety. “I struggled to cope. When COVID hit, I started falling into depression and anxiety and everything that previously happened had caught up to me. After a while, my faith grew weary and I started to resent God.”

Sarea had grown up in a Christian home and committed her life to Jesus

at a young age.

“My mom has a close relationship with God and her dedication and love for Jesus inspired me to pursue Him,” she recalls.

But she struggled with pornography and anger issues, which affected her relationship with Jesus.

“I tried to pursue a relationship with Jesus and I could to a certain measure, but my sins kept me from being close to Him because I condemned myself. I struggled to understand His mercy and grace [understood favour and kindness].”

After her family’s difficult season, Sarea distanced herself from God.

“It took me about two years to start a relationship with God again,” she adds. Sarea eventually joined Target Life, a Christian gap year programme. It was there that her relationship with Jesus was restored.

“So after those two years, I was delivered [set free by God] from my depression and my relationship with Jesus started to grow. A year after that, I got delivered from my struggle with sexual sin,” she says.

Growing in Jesus again, Sarea experienced healing and restoration in her identity.

“I could heal from past hurts and I could grow in my identity [as a child of God]. He changed my mind and my heart and broke down strongholds. Without Him, life is meaningless. Nothing makes sense. He is

the lover of my heart and I follow Him, not because of what He has done but because of who He is.”

Though she continues to face difficulties even after her gap year, Sarea decided to put her trust in Jesus. “I planned to study at university but wasn’t accepted for the course I applied for. After waiting, stressing and trying to trust Jesus, He made a way for me in a direction I didn’t think I could go. He is amazing!”

The Bible passage Psalm 116:5-9 illustrates her experience: “*Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful. The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. Return to your rest, O my soul, For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*”

Sarea reflects on who Jesus is in her life.

“He is a friend you never would have thought existed, a parent you never had, a Saviour you didn’t think you needed and your hope.

“He makes life so much better. He is not a God that is far. He is close to us and hears our whispers and catches our tears. [Christianity] is not a religion. It’s a relationship with [Jesus]. It’s Him knowing you and you knowing Him. Who wouldn’t want Jesus in their lives?”

MY EASTER JOY

When Champo Muyembe lost her father in her early teens, she felt confused and lost. The 37-year-old freelance journalist grew up in a Christian household where they did “everything that Christian families did.”

“We had Bible studies, prayed, and sang worship songs,” she tells *Challenge News*.

“But somehow, even as a young child, I felt an emptiness.”

But on one Easter Friday when Champo was 12, the emptiness was filled. “The message that day was one that I had never heard before [the Gospel message that Jesus came to Earth to die for our sins. It says in Romans 2:23-24: *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*] I gave my life to Jesus Christ.”

But Champo still had her struggles.

“My journey was not easy, especially in my younger years. I did not have proper guidance and also had a lot of questions about the doctrines that were taught at my church.

She was in a

dilemma when she found another church that she was interested in attending. “I was in between and had people from both sides talking to me. At the same time, I had lost my father so I was now in a state of confusion. So I ended up losing my footing and I stopped attending church.” But when Champo was 22, she decided to rededicate her life back to God.

“Thank God for his love and mercy, He welcomed me back home.”

Since coming back to Jesus, Champo developed a passion for guiding young people in their walk with God. For the last 15 years, she has been helping her church in Zambia to provide guidance for the youths and children in their walk with God.

“Life as a Christian is never an easy walk in the park,” she shares. “But it is worth it, and I would not trade it for anything.” Her favourite verse is Philippians 1:21, “*For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*”

Champo wants to tell others that, “No one should tell you otherwise but God is the only source of life now and after we die.”

Champo Muyembe



What’s all the fuss about?

BY RUSTY WRIGHT

AT EASTER, SOME might wonder what all the fuss is about. Who cares? What difference does it make if Jesus rose

from the dead? It makes all the difference in the world. If Christ did not rise, then thousands of believers have died as martyrs for a hoax. If he did rise, then he is still alive and can offer peace to troubled, hurting lives.

Let’s have a look at where the facts lead.

Paul, a first-century skeptic-turned-believer, wrote that “Christ died for our sins...he was buried...he was raised on the third day...he appeared to Cephas [Peter], and then to the Twelve [Disciples]. After that, he appeared to more than 500 ... at the same time, most of whom are still living.”



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Fun for Kids Pages 4,5



SOUL SURFER COREY COLAPINTO

BACK PAGE

I found my purpose

Samuel Haile describes his childhood in Ethiopia as “very beautiful”. But things became difficult when he moved to South Africa at 18.

“When I reached South Africa, I was disappointed and discouraged because I was not with my friends and family,” he shares with *Challenge News*.

“It was not a good feeling.”

Samuel had grown up in a Christian household where he learned about God and the Christian faith.

“I did well by being with my parents. I did everything that a Christian did.”

“But I didn’t know who God is.”

Samuel added that at that time, his relationship with God was based on his knowledge of Him, as opposed to having a close, personal relationship with Him.

When Samuel turned 15, he accepted Jesus Christ into his heart. After that, he wanted to know God not only in theory but on a more personal level.

“There was this hunger that was created in me. So I started to pray and read the Bible, and I continued for three years.”

However, the teenager found himself struggling to choose between spending time with his friends and spending time with God.

“Because I used to give more of my time to my friends, this hindered my time spent with God.”

That is until he was separated from everyone

when he moved to South Africa alone.

“But the Lord was working in me. I started having alone time with God for longer periods of time. I started knowing God on a more personal level.”

“So from that time, the Lord has been helping me to grow in my faith.”

Samuel admits that there are challenges to his journey, such as his struggle with anger management. However, he believes in ‘carrying his cross’ and dying to his old self, which means to turn away from his old life to become more like Jesus.

He says the best parts of being a Christian are having joy, peace, good relationships, living with God and discovering his identity as a child of God.

Samuel is currently in Bible College where he gets to learn more about God and the Bible.

His favourite verse is John 1:3: “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

He hopes to tell others about, “the love, the cross, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

“Jesus Christ is the truth, the way and the life. So whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. He will be

a child of God and he will not perish.

“I give my life to God, so for the rest of my life I will serve God. That’s my living purpose.”

Samuel Haile



SOMEWHERE TO BELONG

“I always felt like an outcast. In my own family, friend group and church,” says Franci Bibbey. “I had no place where I belonged.”

Franci grew up in a Christian home where her parents and siblings came to Christ at an early age. But she could never relate to them and she felt isolated.

“Their lives looked, from my perspective, so fulfilled and whole. My story is different.”

She started looking for approval from the people around her but felt like she never found it. Her insecurities began to grow, and she became stuck in a cycle of negative thought patterns about her looks and her self-worth. She eventually turned to alcohol as a way of coping.

“[I was] constantly telling myself that I have no worth. Slowly, I started believing these things about myself,” she tells *Challenge News*.

“Not long after, I started projecting these things to the people around me. For the rest of my school years, I was known as a bully.”

Growing up, the knowledge of who Jesus is and the emphasis on having a relationship with Him was not an uncommon teaching in her home.

“I knew I needed Jesus but I never had the courage to actually [pursue Him].”

In 2021, Franci enrolled into a Christian gap year programme. It was there that she had an encounter with Jesus.

“I had an experience where I met Jesus and His perfect love changed



Franci Bibbey

my heart of stone into a heart of flesh,” she shares.

“For the first time in four years, I truly cried and felt something other than hate for myself.”

Since then, Franci’s life has changed.

“I think the biggest change was first of all, starting to like myself and celebrate the way God created me.”

Franci finally felt like she belonged. She tells *Challenge News* that she now belongs to the Kingdom of God, knowing she was “bought with an expensive price, the precious price of Jesus’s blood.”

“The Lord led me on a repenting (turning away from wrongdoing) journey by showing me His goodness and love towards me and the people around me.”

Franci is now a helicopter pilot working in full-time ministry, preaching the good news about Jesus and sharing the love of Jesus everywhere she goes.

Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

- ACROSS**
- Fall sound
 - Went after
 - More than undercooked
 - People of the US
 - Christian scriptures
 - Twosome
 - Military body
 - Number of spider legs
 - Pilot’s bail-out gear
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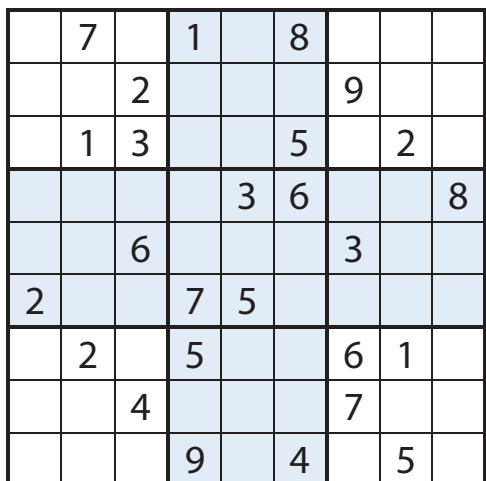


- DOWN**
- Metered vehicle
 - Nuclear ore
 - Three Gorges project
 - Locks
 - Ocean
 - Arid place
 - Water holes
 - Sports contestant
 - University ground
 - Computer woe
 - Canyon sound
 - Ringing thing
 - Faster than a walk
 - Spigot

SOLUTIONS PAGE 7



“Hold that insightful legal point until we’re back from commercial”



What is all the fuss about Easter?

● From page 1

Consider four pieces of evidence:

1. The explosive growth of the Christian movement.

Within a few weeks after Jesus was crucified, a movement arose which, by the later admission of its enemies, “upset the world.” What happened to ignite this movement shortly after its leader had been executed?

2. The disciples’ changed lives.

After Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion, most of the disciples fled in fear. Peter denied three times that he was a follower of Jesus. (The women were braver and stayed to the end.) Yet 10 of the 11 disciples (Judas committed suicide) were martyred for their faith. According to traditions, Peter was crucified upside down; Thomas was skewered; John was boiled in oil but survived. What turned these cowards into heroes? Each believed he had seen Jesus alive again.

3. The empty tomb.

Jesus’ corpse was removed from the cross, wrapped like a mummy and placed in a solid-rock tomb. A one-and-a-half to two-ton stone was rolled into a slightly depressed groove to seal the tomb’s entrance. A “Green Beret”-like unit of Roman soldiers guarded the grave. On Sunday morning, the stone was found rolled away, the body was gone but the graveclothes were still in place. What happened? Did Christ’s friends steal the body? Perhaps one of the women sweet-talked (karate-chopped?) the guards while the others moved the stone and tiptoed off with the body. Or maybe Peter (remember his bravery) or Thomas (Doubting Thomas) overpowered the guards, stole the body, then fabricated – and died for – a resurrection myth.

These theories hardly seem plausible. The guard was too powerful, the stone too heavy and the disciples too timid to attempt such a feat.

Did Christ’s enemies steal the body? If Romans or

Jewish religious leaders had the body, surely they would have exposed it publicly and Christianity would have died out. They didn’t, and it didn’t.

The “Swoon Theory” supposes that Jesus didn’t really die but was only unconscious. The expert Roman executioners merely thought he was dead. After a few days in the tomb without food or medicine, the cool air revived him.

He burst from the 100 pounds of graveclothes, rolled away the stone with his nail-pierced hands, scared the daylights out of the Roman soldiers, walked miles on wounded feet and convinced his disciples he’d been raised from the dead. This one is harder to believe than the resurrection itself.

4. The appearances of the risen Christ.

For 40 days after his death, many different people said they saw Jesus alive. Witnesses included a woman, a shrewd tax collector, several fishermen and over 500 people at once. These claims provide further eyewitness testimony for the resurrection.

As a sceptic, I realised that attempts to explain away the evidences run into a brick wall of facts that point to one conclusion: Christ is risen.

The above does not constitute an exhaustive proof, rather a reasoned examination of the evidence.

Each interested person should evaluate the evidence and decide if it makes sense. Of course, the truth or falsity of the resurrection is a matter of historical fact and is not dependent on anyone’s belief. If the facts support the claim, one can conclude that he arose. In any case, mere intellectual assent to the facts does little for one’s life.

A major evidence comes experientially, in personally receiving Jesus’ free gift of forgiveness. He said, “I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him [or her].”

Worth considering?

Rusty Wright is an author and lecturer who has spoken on six continents. He holds Bachelor of Science (psychology) and Master of Theology degrees from Duke and Oxford universities, respectively. www.RustyWright.com



A weight fell off my shoulders

Sarah Ndlovu lived like the weight of the world was on her shoulders. The 48-year-old South African tells Challenge News she faced many challenges growing up, not least of which was learning to live without her mother, who died in 1995, when Sarah was 20.



Sarah Ndlovu

Her world crumbled when that happened, and even though her father “tried all his best to take good care of us” she remembers it was very hard to get through each day.

“I was a very shy person; I could not stand and talk in public and I didn’t know where to go. I had so much weight on my shoulders.

“I also had unforgiveness in me. I could not forgive easily and had bad trauma from some experiences in my early life.”

Then Sarah accepted an invitation to attend church with a friend from high school and there she heard about the love of God and the gospel message (the good news that Jesus died to save us from our sins).

“That was where I accepted God as my personal Lord and Saviour.” She was 23.

Sarah had heard about God before. She used to stay over at her grandmother’s house when she was a child. “She prayed for us a lot when we were growing up,” Sarah says.

“She used to tell me about God but I didn’t understand

at that time because I was so young.”

Sarah is now married to a wonderful man and together they have four children. She is a pastor at a church in South Africa and says her life changed dramatically after she committed it to Christ.

“I was in the dark before receiving Christ, but now I am in the light.

“I have allowed God into every area of my life and I have God’s power living in me.

“The Holy Spirit [invisible presence of God] helps me to have faith and compassion. He guides me and is a source of direction in my life. I have been healed from anxiety and trauma and I am able to forgive.”

Sarah’s favourite Bible verse is Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and all are

justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

“Christ separates you from the things of the world. I am a living testimony that God has done wonders in my life. Receiving Him was the best decision I’ve ever made.”

Sarah completed Early Childhood Development (ECD) training with Roodepoort Inner City Outreach (RICO) because she has a passion for children and to help the community.

She says thanks to God’s grace [unmerited favour] she has opened a pre-school and is a principal. •

GRANDFATHER’S LEGACY

“I had no hope of life. I thought of suicide.”

These words of despair are hard to read coming from anyone but are even more heart-wrenching coming from a boy of seven. Yet this was exactly how Tanzanian Emmanuel Agisten, now 24, felt at that age. His twin brother had died and left him feeling very alone. He tells Challenge News: “After the death of my brother I lost confidence in everything as a child. I understood that once you die you are gone forever and that is the end of everything.



Emmanuel Agisten

“The world became hard to understand or process.”

Two things stopped the youngster from doing anything drastic: first of all, he says he had “a feeling the world would continue without me anyway.” The other thing that stopped him was his grandfather, who was a pastor, told him that if he gave his life to Jesus Christ he would see his brother again. “My grandfather helped me find comfort,” Emmanuel shares. “I prayed to commit my life to Jesus Christ and gave my life to the Lord at the age of seven. Many people doubted I could be saved at that age but I told them I remember the transformation in my life after my grandfather passed. I didn’t feel alone; I felt comfort in my prayers.”

Emmanuel’s beloved grandfather passed away a year later, but the lessons he taught his grandson have stood the test of time.

“He always taught me to ask the Lord for the Spirit of excellence, so that I could do what He asks of me. I also pray whenever I feel low, or when I need courage. I still do all this today.”

Emmanuel says his trust in the Lord has given him the confidence to ask his Heavenly Father for anything.

“I have never lacked for anything. Any desire I would ask in my heart, and He granted me through the Spirit.

“My grandfather told me there is nothing I cannot do. God has given me many gifts and talents so that I can boast in Him. I remember when I had no confidence because I didn’t have any talent. I prayed ‘Lord Jesus may Your Spirit of excellence make me excellent also’ and I began to excel.

“I prayed for my mother to be healed, and she was healed. I prayed to have the ability to play soccer, be wise, obedient and respectful. The Lord did all this for me; He saved me for His good use.

“Through the love and grace of God, Jesus has directed me to areas and places in my life where I can love others.”

His personal message of faith to others is that there is no other comforter or healer than Jesus. “If you seek a personal relationship with Jesus, He shapes you through circumstances, people, places and experiences in order for you to be ready and equipped for where He is taking you.

“In Jesus Christ alone is hope found. There’s no place in the world to find your identity or wholeness. We’ve heard of miracles of parting of seas and healing to the blind and lame, but the greatest miracle was the death of Jesus for mankind, which is me and you.”

Emmanuel’s favourite Bible verse is Romans 8:38 – “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” •

Sacrifice and salvation

BY HARRIET COOMBE

THE TRAGEDY OF the sinking of the Titanic is well-known across the world but you may not have heard about another ship, the Empress of Ireland, which sank two years later, in May 1914.



The Empress of Ireland. Photo: Getty Images.

The 1477 passengers on board were on their way from Canada to London in foggy conditions when it was struck by a Norwegian coal ship, creating a large hole in the middle of the ship. The Empress of Ireland sank rapidly, taking just 14 minutes to disappear beneath the water. Because of this, only a few lifeboats could be launched.

Sadly, many passengers were trapped below deck, asleep in their cabins, and had little chance to escape. Only 465 people survived, making it one of the worst peacetime maritime disasters.

Among the Empress of Ireland’s passengers were 167 members of the Canadian Salvation Army, who were on their way to a conference in London.

Their cabins were near where the lifejackets were stored so they were among the few who were able to quickly put them on.

But once they were in the water and saw so many people struggling to survive, they quickly gave up their lifejackets. It is understood that they swam through the freezing water, asking distressed passengers,

“Do you believe in Jesus?” If they said “No”, then, in an act of selfless love and sacrifice, the Salvation Army member would remove their lifejacket and give it to the other person. This came at a great cost – only eight of the Salvation Army members survived. But they chose

to die so that others could live and have the chance to find eternal salvation through Jesus.

The heart of Easter

I think this story mirrors the heart of Easter perfectly. Just as the Salvation Army members sacrificed their lives for others, Jesus Christ willingly laid down His life for humanity. His death on the cross was the ultimate

act of selfless love and sacrifice, ensuring that all who believe in Him could be saved from the consequences of sin [wrongdoing against God]. The Bible says in 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive

us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Good Friday is the day we remember Jesus’ death. The reason it is called “Good” is because of what it means for us – His death bought our forgiveness and eternal life. Three days later He rose again, demonstrating His victory over sin, death, and the grave, proving He is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Our response to Jesus’ sacrifice is simple. Romans 10:9 says: “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Answering the question

The question posed by those Salvation Army members in freezing waters in 1914 is as important today as it was over a century ago: “Do you know Jesus?” If you have not yet made the decision to follow Christ, today can be your moment of salvation. See the box on page 7 entitled *How do I Become a Christian* for more information. •

“They chose to die to that others could live.”

EASTER THOUGHTS

God proved His love on the Cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was God saying to the world, ‘I love you.’ - Billy Graham

Let the resurrection joy lift us from loneliness and weakness and despair to strength and beauty and happiness. - Floyd W. Tomkins

The resurrection is the central theme in every Christian sermon reported in the [Book of] Acts. The resurrection, and its consequences were the ‘gospel’ or good news which the Christians brought... The first fact in the history of Christendom is a number of people who say they have seen the resurrection. - C.S. Lewis

Because Christ lives I too shall live, Oh glorious truth divine, To think that resurrection life was His And shall be mine. Because Christ lives I too shall live, I’ll leave this lump of clay And lift my wings to higher heights

Few people seem to realize that the resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone to a worldview that provides the perspective to all of life. - Josh McDowell

On resurrection day. Because Christ lives I too shall live, With Him I’ll ever be Rejoicing that He broke death’s chains And set my spirit free. - Peter Sumner

Shona translation

Nzira itsva yekurarama

Mwana wegumi neshanu pavana gumi nevanhatu, Sarah Ndongodzai akakurira mumusha une mufaro.

“Vabereki vangu vaidanana, saka ndakakurira mumhuri yakanaka,” murume wemudyandigere ane makore makumi matanhatu nepfumbamwe (69) okuberekwa anoudza Challenge News.

Kunyange zvazvo ivo pachavo vakanga vasiri vaKristu, amai vake nababa vakakurudzira vana vavo kupinda Chikoro cheSvondo kucheche yavo yomuZimbabwe.

Sarah ane ndangariro dzakanaka dzemakirasi neshamwari dzaakaita kucheche, asi anoti achikura akasangana nezvinhu zvisingamufadzi izvo zvakaita kuti agare aine chigumbu nekugumbuka.

“Zvakanga zvakandiamera zvikuru kukanganwira zvimwe zvinhu,” anobvuma kudaro.

“Ndaienda kucheche neSandesikuru asi ndakanga ndisingaremekedzi zvaMwari panguva iyoyo.”

Zvisinei, muna 1968, paakanga ava nemakore gumi nemana(14) akapinda musangano weevhangeri uye ikoko akanzwa vhangeri [mashoko akanaka okuti Jesu Kristu akauya panyika kuzofira zvivi zvevanhu] achitsanangurirwa

zvajakajeka kekutanga. “Ndakaona kuti Mwari chete ndiye anogona kundibatsira pazvivi zvangu uye kuti hupenyu hwangu hwaizoshandurwa.

“Ndipo pandakasarudza kuva muKristu. Ndakakumbira Mwari kuti vabvise zvitadzo zvangu.”

Sarah akatarisana nedambudziko rehitano hwakadai seBP uye chirwere cheshuga mumakore apfuura, asi ane chivimbo chekuti Mwari “vachandipa simba rekukunda chero dambudziko”.

Vhesi remuBhaibheri raanonyanya kufarira riripana Mapisarema 23 pamusoro pekuti Ishe ndiye mufudzi wake. “Jesu ndiye mubatsiri wangu nomurapi nomupi wangu. Vanabhudhi nana sisi ngatitevere munzira Yake. Muna Jesu mune upenyu,” Sarah anorayira kudaro. •



English translation

A NEW WAY TO LIVE

The 15th child of 16 children, Sarah Ndongodzai grew up in a happy home. “My parents loved each other, so I grew up in a good family,” the 69-year-old pensioner tells Challenge News.

Although they were not Christians themselves, her mother and father encouraged their children to attend Sunday School at their local church in Zimbabwe. Sarah has good memories of the classes and the friends she made at church, but says that as she grew up she had unpleasant experiences that caused her to hold grudges and resentments.

“It was very difficult for me to forgive some things,” she admits.

“I attended church and Sunday school but I was not serious about God at that time.”

However, in 1968, when she was 14 she attended an evangelistic meeting and there she heard the gospel [the good news that Jesus Christ came to Earth to die for people’s sins] clearly explained for the first time.

“I realised only God can help me with my sins and that my life would be changed. That was when I decided to become a Christian. I asked God to take away my sins.”

Sarah has battled health issues such as high blood pressure and diabetes over the years, but is confident that God will “give me the strength to overcome any challenge”. Her favourite Bible verse is Psalm 23 about the Lord being her shepherd.

“Jesus is my helper and my healer and provider. Brothers and sisters, let us follow in His way. There is life in Jesus,” Sarah exhorts. •

Shona translation

Kubatwa netsitsi kumukadzi ari kubuda ropa

Zacharia Tnllam akange asvika pamharadzano huru muhupenyu hwake. Mugore ra1995 ari kuc hikoro chesekondari akacherechedza kuti ayaruka zvokuziva kuti chimwe chinhu chakanga chakanga chatyoka muupenyu hwake chaida kushandurwa.

“Pane zvinhu chaizvo zvandainetseka nazvo,” anodaro. “Kupindwa muropa, hashu dzakaipa uye kunyepa. Kunyange pandakaziva kuti ndakanga ndisina kururama mune mamwe mamiriro ezvinhu, ndaisagona kuzvibvuma. Pane kudaro, ndakasarudza kunyepa.”

Aiziva kuti zvisarudzo zvaaita muupenyu hwake zvaizova nemigumisiro. Akanga apinda Sunday School achiri mwana. Aiziva chakanaka nechakaipa. Kutaura idi, aifarira kuteerera nyaya pamusoro paMwari asi ndipo pakagumira kuzvipira kwake.

“Ndakanga ndisingazivi Mwari,” anobvuma kudaro. “Zvese dzaingova ngano nekutamba. Ndakanga ndisingazivi chokwadi chakadzama chezvareva kuva muKristu.”

Zvisinei, zvose izvozvo zvachinjira panguva apo Zacharia ari kuchikoro chesekondari. “Ndakanzwa zvakanzwa nezvaMwari ndokutanga kuperekedza vabereki vangu kucheche,” anoudza kudaro bepanhau reChallenge.

Rimwe zuva muna 1995, boka remamishinari rakaenda kuchikoro chaZacharia. Mumwe wevashumiri veboka racho akataura nezvavadzidzi nezvaJesu uye kuti akanga aporesa sei mumwe mukadzi

akanga achibuda ropa kwemakore gumibiri. (Nyaya inogona

kuwanikwa muna Mateo 9, Marko 5, naRuka 8).

Zakaria akashamiswa nenhau yacho uye akabayiwa mwoyo netsitsi norudo izvo Jesu akanga aratidza kumukadzi akanga akaraswa. “Ndakaziva kuti akanga ari Mwari uye Mwari wezvisikwa zvose.”

Zuva iroro chairo, Zacharia akaziva zvaaida muupenyu hwake uye akasarudza kuva muKristu: “Ndaida upenyu husingaperi pashure porufu. Saka, ndakagamuchira Kristu saIshe neMuponesi wangu uye ndikabhabhatidzwa nemvura [chiratidzo chekunze chekuzvipira kwake kwemukati].”

Anotsanangura kuti, “Ndakatanga ndareurura ndimene somutadzi, ndokureurura zvivi zvangu ndokunyengetera kuna Mwari kuti andikanganwire. Zvino, hupenyu hwangu hwava nani nekuti zvese zviri pamusoro paKristu. Ndinofarira kukurukura neshamwari dzangu itsva dzinoziva nezvaJesu.”

Iye zvino, anotarira shure uye anoziva kuti akaita sarudzo yakanaka.

Ndima yeBhaibheri yaZacharia yaanofarira inobva muna VaRoma 8 ndima 31-34, iyo inoti, “Kana Mwari ari kwatiri, ndiani ungarirwisa? Iye usina kuramba noMwanakomana wake, asi akamupa nokuda kwedu tose, ungarega seiko kutipapo zvose, pamwe chete naye? Ndiani uchapa mhosva avo vakasanangurwa naMwari? Mwari ndiye anoruramisa. Ndiani zvino unopa mhosva? Hapana. Kristu Jesu uyo akafa—kupfura izvozvo, akamutswa— ari kuruoko rworudzi rwaMwari uye ari kutirevererawo.”

Zacharia anobvuma kuti zvingava zvakaoma kuita chinhu chakanaka kana muedzo ukauya, asi anoziva kuti iye munhu akachinjira nemhaka yevakaitwa naJesu muupenyu hwake uye anoda kuudza vamwe izvi.

Zacharia anoshanda nevasungwa mumajeri uye ane mikana yakawanda yekutaura nevasungwa nezvaJesu uye nezveruponeso rwaanopa pachena. Achitora mashoko ari pana Johani 14:6, anoti, “Ndinogona kuvaudza nezvaJesu kuti ndiye chete Nzira, neChokwadi, uye ndiye tsime reUpenyu.” •

English translation

Touched by compassion to a bleeding woman

Zacharia Tnllam had come to a major crossroad in his life. It was 1995 and the high schooler was old enough to know something was broken in his life that needed to change.

“There were specific things which I struggled with,” he says. “Addictions, a bad temper and lying. Even when I knew I was wrong in certain situations, I could not admit it. Instead, I chose to lie.”

He knew the decisions he was making in his life would have consequences. He had attended Sunday School as a child. He knew right from wrong. In fact, he loved listening to the stories about God but that was where his commitment ended.

“I did not know God on a personal level,” he admits. “It was all just nice stories and games. I didn’t know the deeper truths of what it meant to be a Christian.”

All of that changed, though, during Zacharia’s time in high school.

“I heard more about God and started accompanying my parents to church,” he tells Challenge.

One day in 1995, a mission team went to Zacharia’s school. One of the ministers on the team talked to the students about Jesus and how He had healed a woman who had bled for 20 years. (The story can be found in Matthew 9, Mark 5, and Luke 8).

Zacharia was amazed by the story and touched by the compassion and love Jesus had shown for the outcast woman. “I knew that He was God and the God of all Creation.”

That very day, Zacharia realised what he needed in his life and decided to become a Christian: “I wanted eternal life after death. So, I received Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour and was baptised with water [an outward sign of his inner commitment].”

He explains, “I first confessed myself as a

sinner, confessed my sins and then prayed to God for His forgiveness. Now, my life is so much better because it’s all about Christ. I love interacting with my new friends who know about Jesus.”

Now, the 41-year-old looks back and knows that he made the right decision.

Zacharia’s favourite Bible passage comes from Romans 8 verses 31-34, which says, “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all - how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”

Zacharia admits it can be hard to do the right thing when temptation comes, yet he knows that he is a changed man because of what Jesus has done in his life and wants to share this with others.

Zacharia works as a prison officer and has many opportunities to talk to the inmates about Jesus and the salvation He freely offers. Quoting from John 14:6, he says, “I can tell them about Jesus being the only Way, the only Truth, and the only source of Life.” •



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My life has changed



“Since coming to God my life is not difficult anymore, I am no longer drug addicted and I pray all the time. You must believe in Jesus because Jesus is the Most High God.”

— Ben Miya Mpo

I feel hope for the first time

By the time Simoné Janse van Rensburg left high school, she had been in and out of the hospital twice for alcohol poisoning.

“I didn’t believe it at that time – but looking back I think I would say that I was an alcoholic,” she tells *Challenge News*.

“I slept around a lot... And I had way more sexual experiences apart from just sex. I was also hooked on porn.”

Simoné shares that her life was a mess. She was smoking and vaping, and started using marijuana. She felt insecure about herself and she had a habit of lying. “I lost all my relationships – especially with my family. I had no friends. I had a horrible idea of men. I hated a lot of people. I was popular and bullied a lot of people,” she recounts. “I was very suicidal. And I just kinda gave up.”

Growing up with loving Christian parents, Simoné says she followed Jesus when she was young. But when she found out that her father had an affair, she moved away from God and her faith.

“I moved away from Him and rejected Him because I was so



she says that for the first time, she feels hope.

“He restored my heart... He took my brokenness and loved me into a whole [person]. He changed my view of men and relationships and blessed me with a great man who loves me and accepts me. I have hope and love. I want to live and do His work.”

Another change that came about was her ability to forgive.

“I started to forgive those who hurt me and I came to forgive myself. I stopped using drugs. I am confident in myself and I started loving people around me. I started loving myself.”

However, Simoné admits that the Christian life is not always easy.

“Christianity is offering your will and your ways for God’s will and His ways. And that is a really hard thing to do, but I have tried it without God and failed miserably,” says Simoné. “It’s tough to not do life like the world does and most of the time

you will be swimming upstream.

“But my worst days with God in my life has still been way better than my best days without Him. When you give your life to the Lord, don’t expect your life to just be perfect. The devil [may try to] come for you (attack you or lead you into temptation) but you are also not alone. You are

doing life with someone who loves you unconditionally.

“[If] you fall out of God’s will and ways – you fall into His grace and He loves you.” Her life is illustrated by her favourite verse, Psalm 23:1: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

disappointed with [God]. I thought my life was going to continue down that path forever and after school I wanted to run away from everything I knew.”

After much convincing from her father, Simoné decided to enrol in Target Life, a Christian gap year programme. She began to learn about God as her Father and His heart for her, which inspired her love for God.

“I wanted to become a Christian because I couldn’t get enough of God and I was just drawn to His heart. He changed my whole life in such a short period of time and in my Target Life year, there wasn’t a moment where I didn’t feel His love,” she says.

Life for Simoné began to change. She stopped drinking and using drugs. She started attending church in 2023. While she says her relationship with her family is still in the process of healing and restoration,

“He took my brokenness and loved me into a whole person.”

HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ

We read in God’s word: “God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16)

OUR PROBLEM:	Separation from God “Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God’s standards are perfect” (Romans 3:23)	ADMIT
GOD’S REMEDY / SOLUTION:	Jesus died on the cross “God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8)	BELIEVE
OUR RESPONSE:	Trust Jesus by receiving Him “To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12)	COMMIT

Here is an example of how you can pray.

Dear Father in Heaven. I come to you now because I want to be saved. Please, forgive me of my sins. I believe that you sent your Son Jesus Christ to die for me and that you have raised him from the dead. I now ask Jesus Christ to come into my life as my Saviour and Lord. Take control of my life. Please make me the person You created me to be. In Jesus Christ’s name. Amen

The Lord Jesus says: “I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in me has eternal life.” (John 6:47).
He gives life of a wonderful quality that continues forever.

What now?

1. Tell someone - either a Christian that you know or email us at info@challengenews.org
2. Use the resources in the green box on this page to find a Bible to read and more information regarding Christianity.
3. Keep praying. Talk to God anywhere, about anything. He is always listening, and you don’t need a formula.
4. Reach out to the ministry that distributed this paper (see back page) and/or find a Bible-teaching church to attend.

AS A NEXT STEP: Please send me: Bible Some ‘starting off’ literature Information on a helpful church

I have prayed the prayer [ABOVE]

* Please tick and write clearly *

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Disciple Making Movement’s
C’o Methodist Church In Zimbabwe
111 JMN Nkomo ST & 11th Avenue, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
Contact: +263 713 619 000 +263 736 785 555

Want to explore more?

Here are some free, helpful, Christian online resources

Online Bible - Olive Tree app (we recommend that you start with an easy-to-read version like the ESV)	Audio Bible - Bible.is app, or Youversion Bible app
Christian radio stations - CBN radio app and Trans World Radio	Christian podcasts and sermons - Edifi app
Christian movies, serials and kids’ shows - Good. app	Daily thoughts and inspiration - Our Daily Bread app
Advice on specific issues, Bible reading plans and studies for new believers - Youversion Bible app.	The Bible explained with visual aides - Bible Project on YouTube.
Alpha Film Series on Youtube - an online introduction to Christianity	For kids - Superbook Kids Bible, videos and games app
Comic book Bible online- goodandevilbook.com	Manga Messiah app Christian comic with free games app, illustrated in Japanese-style art
YMI (meant to be read as “Why am I?”) Christian news outlet for young adults with various content, devotionals and resources. ymi.today	More inspiring faith stories - back issues of Challenge News at challengenews.online



Q: Are there contradictions in the Bible?

A: While some claim that the Bible is full of contradictions, this simply isn’t true. The number of apparent contradictions is actually remarkably small for a book of the Bible’s size and scope. What apparent discrepancies do exist are more of a curiosity than a calamity. They do not touch on any major event or article of faith.

Here is an example of a so-called contradiction. Pilate ordered that a sign be posted on the cross where Jesus hung. Three of the gospels record what was written on that sign:

In Matthew: “This is Jesus, the king of the Jews.” In Mark: “The king of the Jews.” In John: “Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.”

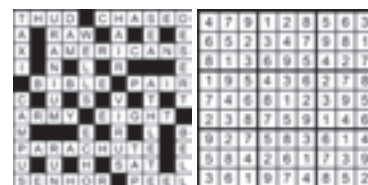
The wording is different, hence the apparent contradiction. The remarkable thing, though, is that all three writers describe the same event in such detail – Jesus was crucified. On this, they all agree. They even record that a sign was posted on the cross, and the meaning of the sign is the same in all three accounts!

What about the exact wording? The gospels were originally written in the Greek language, which didn’t use a quotation symbol as we do today to indicate a direct quote. The gospel writers were making an indirect quote, which would account for the subtle differences in the passages.

Here is another example of an apparent contradiction. Was Jesus in the tomb for two or three nights before His resurrection? Jesus said, prior to his crucifixion, “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40). Mark records another statement that Jesus made, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles, who will mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him. Three days later He will rise” (Mark 10:33,34).

Jesus was killed on Friday and the resurrection was discovered on Sunday. How can that be three days and nights in the tomb? It was a Jewish figure of speech in Jesus’ time to count any part of a day or night as a full day and night. So Friday, Saturday, and Sunday would be called three days and three nights in Jesus’ culture. This is typical of apparent contradictions in the Bible. Most are resolved by a closer examination of the text itself or through studying the historical background.

This article was first published on EveryStudent.com and is used with kind permission





SOUL SURFER



When his dad first took him surfing, Corey Colapinto was more interested in looking for sea creatures under rocks. Something changed when he was about 10. Surfing became his passion, and he began competing alongside his cousins Crosby and Griffin (currently ranked world No. 3).

Corey experienced early success at the Surfing America Championships, even defeating Griffin in the under-12 division.

However, when shortboard surfing stopped being fun and burnout set in, Corey stopped competing and started longboarding. Now a surfboard shaper and surfing coach, he shares with *The Surfer's Bible* about the biggest decision he ever made when he was 18.

"I had an injury that made me start questioning life... I was pretty depressed. I couldn't surf for six to nine months. I had a really bad knee injury.

"My buddy was inviting me to church and I kept saying, 'No, I don't know what that's about.' I kind of wanted to go because I had friends that were going, but I was stubborn and proud, and I just wanted to do things that I knew. Then one day after my buddy had asked a bunch of times and I said no a bunch of times, he asked me whether I believed in God, and I said, 'I have no idea. I don't even know, really.' I remember I was

going to say no; I wanted to fight. But then I remember I really thought about it and said, 'I have no idea.' I was a little embarrassed having to say that. Then I asked him, 'And you? Do you believe in God?' And he said, 'Yeah, I do.' And I was like, 'Wow. That's chill.'

"I didn't know you could just say that. I was raised in this school system where it's all about evolution, so I thought it went against science. Those were just the beliefs I was raised with.

"I started going to church and I was like, 'Whoa, this is really rad.'

"I still had a lot of questions, so I started reading and researching apologetics and other faith-related things. Because I said, 'If this is the truth, I want to know and I have a

lot of questions for it to answer.' So I read C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*. And it follows the argument from a moral side, how that points to God. I read a bit of the Bible too, but it was just a little confusing for me at the time. Then it started to make more and more sense, and eventually I became a Christian four or five months after going to church that first time.

"From the very first time I went to church, my heart was crying out to the Lord, being like, 'Lord, I need You to save me!'

"I didn't understand the concept of salvation, but I just knew I needed forgiveness, and I knew I needed to be saved from my own sin that was ruining my life. I remember crying out to the Lord and saying, 'You can have my whole life.' I was there offering my life and holding it out and coming before the Lord.

"It wasn't until later that I really understood it, but I don't think you need to understand a lot. You hear the Gospel, and you already know the truth – that we need a savior and we need forgiveness. Jesus died for that, and we can receive that by His grace through faith. I was just really curious after that, so I started digging into Christianity far more. And I remember being like, 'Whoa, this is so rad and so real. How did I not see it before?' All creation points to God."

When Corey shares about his

faith on Instagram, he occasionally receives negative comments.

"For a while it kind of shook me, or I was like, 'Oh, no! People don't like what I'm doing!' All that fear of man stuff. So I wouldn't respond. And all of a sudden I was like, 'Dude, what am I afraid of? I'm just going to respond and be loving and kind.'

"Sometimes people will come at me all hot and I'll just be like, 'Oh I'm sorry you feel that way. I really believe this is the truth that God has told us in his Word,' and I'll be like 'Well, why do you believe what you believe?' And I'll just try to turn it into a conversation.

"I've had a lot of good conversations come out of that, where people

are like, 'Wow, okay. I didn't know that's how you looked at it.'"

Corey refers to Matthew 16:26, which says, "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"

"Those are the words of Jesus. Asking, what good is it if you get everything you've wanted in this world? You know: pro surfing, the best waves, the best boards, you get all of it, but at the end of the day you lose your soul. The question is, is there anything more valuable than your soul?"

This story was first published by *The Surfer's Bible* and is used with kind permission. Scan the QR code to read Corey's story in its entirety.



Corey with his wife, Heidi.

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