

He **TURNED** my
MOURNING into
Dancing

SOLAPE MARK-OBABA

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the Lord God Almighty who has made all things beautiful in my life in His own time and also to all widows especially the young ones.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to give glory to God Almighty for the life of sister Esther Oluyide who, incidentally, is the publisher of this book and my other book RTTB. She did the bulk of the job on this book by typesetting, editing, proof reading and publishing. May the Lord bless her and her family abundantly. Amen.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of sister Funto Oyeleye and sister Bimbo Emmanuel who stood by me in prayers and fasting. May the Lord perfect that which concerns them. Amen.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of all my children Akinwande, Omowale, Remi and David and all my siblings and friends, who encouraged me and gave counsel and support when called upon. May the good Lord continue to spare their lives for His own glory. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years people have been telling me to write a book about myself, especially about my life as a woman who became a widow at the very tender age of thirty. I never gave it serious thought until two or three weeks before the 25th anniversary of my late husband's demise.

As I got up that morning, thinking about how to celebrate God's faithfulness in my life and the lives of my children in the past 25 years, I got a nudge from the Holy Spirit to write a book about my 25 years of widowhood as part of the celebration. For the first time in many years of pressure from people, I came to understand that it is something the Lord wants me to do and here I am, doing the Lord's bidding.

This book, to the glory of God, spans fifty five years of my sojourn on this earth so far with more emphasis on the last 25 years in which I was a widow.

It includes great and outstanding testimonies of God's faithfulness in my life as a widow and the lives of my children who have been without an earthly father for almost all their lives.

In this book you will also read about the ministry God has watched over His word to perform in my life and you will discover that when God gives a vision, He will always make the provision.

The book highlights the goodness, the mercy and the faithfulness of God not only in the lives of widows and the fatherless but also in the lives of all those who will dilligently seek after Him, for God is no respector of persons.

My prayer is that, as you read this book, the Lord God Almighty will reach you at your own point of need, be it spiritual, physical, financial, material, emotional or mental in Jesus Name. Amen.

For those who have not accepted the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, I pray that this book will help you to stretch out your hand to receive the salvation that is freely given to us all. And for those who have received the Lord, my prayer is that, this book will encourage you to a life of more commitment and total dedication to your Lord and Saviour, He who stands in the present and knows your future. The Alpha and the Omega. He who is the same yesterday, today and forever. Amen.

Solape Mark-Obaba

Chapter One

My Background

I was born some five and a half decades ago into a large family by my own standard. Ours was a closely knit family and I grew up in the midst of wonderful parents, Prince and Mrs. F.A. Roberts and my lovely siblings Kofo, Seyi, Debola, Kayode and Yinka.

As a young child, my older sister, Kofo and I lived with our paternal grandmother in Ondo town because our parents had to travel abroad to study. My paternal grandmother of blessed memory, was a devout Christian, who brought us up in the way of the Lord.

At a very tender age, I learnt to wake up early to pray and to attend all Church meetings including getting the Church ready for services. We would go there on Saturdays to sweep, to dust and to do general cleaning with my grandmother. My sister and I were members of the choir of the Church (All Saints Anglican Church, Ogbonkowo in Ondo town). My grandmother would never allow us to miss any choir meeting. She was a good disciplinarian and a moralist. At that tender age, she taught us how to cook and how to keep the house clean. In fact I owe her a lot for the success of my early childhood and the way my sister and I turned out in life. I thank God for the life of this lovely Christian grandmother of mine.

I started primary education in Ondo and later had to move to Ibadan to live with my parents when I was in primary five. However, I finished my primary school there and went to Yejide Girl's Grammar School in Ibadan for my secondary education. After secondary school, I spent another year in St. Anne's School, Molete, Ibadan to study science subjects because my former school was not offering science subjects, we only had General Science.

After one year of Post Science as we called it then, I went to Adeyemi College of Education in Ondo where I obtained my National Certificate in Education (N.C.E.) in science subjects. I taught at Mount Olivet Grammar School, Bodija, Ibadan for a period of about one and a half years and then proceeded to the University of Lagos to do a degree course and obtained from there a B.Sc. in Education. It was in my first year in the University of Lagos that I met this dashing, young man, so full of life, whose name was Samuel Kayode Akinwande Mark-Obaba who, at that time, was one of the first set of Nigerian graduates employed by the Nigerian Bottling Company, producers of Coca Cola. He was the Quality Control Manager at the time we met. It was a chance meeting. I had just broken up with a boyfriend and had to go to a party with my older sister and her husband. Ours was love at first sight!

The young man insisted on dancing with me all night. My brother-in-law and my sister had known him previously at the University of Ibadan and they were not sure of his sincerity. They didn't want me to be hurt so they tried to *'fence'* him from me. But to their amazement, this man decided to be serious and loyal to me. We eventually got married during my final year at the university after a very romantic and beautiful courtship. He was always around me. We went everywhere together. The only thing he did not do with me then was to attend lectures with me but after every lecture he was there waiting to pick me up. I was the envy of all my classmates because he would carry my books into the car and out of the car, something very unusual with our men. He pampered me, almost treating me like an egg that could break. It was wonderful!

You would imagine that the pampering would stop after we got married but no! There was more pampering when I became pregnant. He would help me with almost all my chores in the house including washing up the dishes in the kitchen. He would take me to dinner almost every night so I would not have to do much cooking.

He was generous to a fault. He would want to buy everything in sight for me. He didn't care about clothes for himself, he was satisfied with his jeans and t-shirts but would buy the best for me and the children.

When our first child Akinwande was born, he was elated and started pampering him like he did me. He was one man I knew who would carry a three or four month old baby in his car to visit friends so I could get enough rest at home.

I had my first child just before my final exams in Unilag, and as busy as he was then at the Coca-Cola factory, he would take this three month old baby with him to the factory occasionally so I could have time to study. He was kind and very special to me.

I was the envy of my neighbours in our home in Apapa because unlike most men, my husband would come back from work in the evening and would still take our eleven month old child to the recreation garden in front of our home, to play with him so I could have some rest because I was then heavily pregnant with our second child Omowale. To me, my husband was like a man born out of time. He did things that was not common amongst the men of our time. He showed so much love and kindness not only to me and the children but to almost all who came across his path. He actually lived as if he knew his life was going to be short.

He made a mark not only in his family life but also in his chosen career. At the age of 33 years, on the same day he died, 1st April 1980, he was promoted to the post of Production and Technical Manager of Nigerian Bottling Company, thereby becoming the first Nigerian to be given that post. However the cold hands of death did not allow him to function in that post, not even for one day!

Chapter Two

The Accident

It was a Wednesday evening on the 26th of March 1980, when my husband got back from work that we decided to visit my sister and her husband in LUTH. My sister and her husband Kayode (who incidentally, bears the same name as my own husband), were both doctors in the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) and they also lived within the premises of the hospital.

We had earlier planned a little celebration at my sister's house that evening. My brother-in-law's birthday had been only a few days before, so we just decided to gather together to have fun. My immediate younger brother Seyi, also a doctor in LUTH, lived there too. We were all very close and we loved to gather and have fun. We enjoy each other's company a lot. Whatever party you found my sister and her husband Kayode at, you would also find my immediate younger brother Seyi and his wife. So it was on this fateful day that they all gathered there and were waiting for my husband and I to come from Apapa to join them for the celebration.

That day, my husband, Kayode, was delayed at work. He came home at about 7.30 p.m. We had planned to take our two children with us, but they had changed and were ready for bed by the time he came home. He almost persuaded me to allow the children to come with us; you see, he loved taking them everywhere. But that day, I refused. I told him it was a bit too late, to carry them around in their pyjamas at 8p.m., or to try hurrying to change their clothes again. So it was that we did not take them along with us. Only God knows what would have happened to those lovely children when the accident occurred had they been with us in the car. Thank God for His mercies. He indeed is in the present and knows the future, which we don't.

We left the house that evening, and it was not quite two or three minutes after that the accident occurred. As we drove out of the house and entered the major road, a 'Molue' bus appeared out of nowhere and rammed into us with great force because his brakes had failed and he had lost control! Our car was hit on the driver's side and I believe my husband must have hit his head on the steering wheel, because he became unconscious almost immediately. The impact was so great that I myself was not spared from the force of it; I broke some ribs as well.

As soon as I got over the shock of the impact I noticed my husband's head on the steering wheel as if he was resting on it and then I noticed he was unconscious. I started screaming and shouting to the extent that our house helps and neighbours heard my screaming and came out to the street junction to help. We were that close to the house when it happened. It was like the 'Molue' bus was just waiting for us to come out that day. The neighbours then alerted my sister and her husband as they were taking us to the hospital, LUTH. It was a day of joy turned sour for everyone. All I could remember that evening was that I was shouting that people should please help my husband. I didn't even notice that some of my ribs were broken. Yes, I felt the pain but the pain was nothing compared to the pain of seeing my very lovely, active husband lying lifeless on a stretcher. I kept screaming in the hospital until they took me away for treatment.

There were no obvious physical injuries on my husband but he remained unconscious for four days because he had hit his head on the steering and had concussion. My brother-in-law, my sister and my immediate younger brother Seyi were all doctors in LUTH. They kept vigil day and night, rotating the shifts in the intensive care unit. They were all devastated and troubled. I wasn't so sure whether any of them slept in their houses for those four days. They were taking turns between looking after me in the hospital ward and my husband in the intensive care unit. The few times they wheeled me to the intensive care unit to see him, I would find my brother or my sister or my brother-in-law by his bedside waiting for him to wake up from the coma.

It is worthy to note that during this time the whole family, both mine and my husband's were all thrown into chaos and confusion. You see, like I said earlier, Kayode was very dearly loved by both families. He was very kind and generous almost to a fault

and he had this sense of humour that you could not but be happy around him. He was also very popular amongst his friends and his co-workers especially the junior workers who he always gave a helping hand.

After four days of being comatose, my husband eventually regained consciousness. It happened on the Palm Sunday of that year and many people who heard about his recovery came from Church that day with palm leaves in their hands to rejoice with us all. There was so much jubilation in the air. He was transferred from the intensive care unit to the ward and I was wheeled there to visit him. I was overjoyed to see him with his cigarette and looking so well and alive. We talked together for a long time. The only problem was that he had a temporary loss of memory of what had happened, but he could recognize everybody quite well. To the doctors then, it was not a serious problem. They were so sure his memory would come back after sometime. According to them the loss of memory was due to the head injury (concussion).

From the X-rays, the doctors noticed that he also had some broken ribs like I had but they could not do anything about it at the time since he was still in a coma and could not move around. That Palm Sunday was celebrations galore for the whole family because we believed that the real danger was over.

Chapter Three

The Death and The Burial

On that same Palm Sunday as I was wheeled back to my ward from seeing my husband alive and active, except for the temporary loss of memory, I was so thankful to God for His mercies.

For many years, before the accident, I had not been serious with God. Even though I had been brought up by a very religious grandmother, who had taught us to pray and attend Church regularly, I had relaxed when I grew up. I wanted to enjoy life. I would only go to Church when I felt like it and the only time I prayed was when there was a very big problem.

So it was that after so many years of careless living, that is, a life without Christ, this accident happened. For the first time in many years, I prayed to God fervently asking Him not to allow my husband to die and I made a promise, that I would begin to go to Church if God would spare my husband's life. You see, I was so desperate that I could do anything, if only my husband would live. That was why I was so thankful to God when my husband regained consciousness and I prayed fervently again that God would bring back his memory quickly. That evening, for the first time in about five days I ate my meal with relish and I remember how my sister and her husband, who were visiting, commented on the special diet the hospital had placed me on.

However, the joy of seeing my husband conscious and alive was short-lived. By midnight that day he started gasping for air. Another panic started. Doctors and nurses were running around, trying to put him on oxygen but it was too late, my loving, kind and generous husband gave up the ghost in the early hours of that day, 1st of April 1980.

Being the 1st of April, many people who heard about his death thought it was an expensive April fool joke! Many of them had visited him in the hospital hours before then, when he had become conscious. They had chatted with him, they had rejoiced

with him and also with me. What had gone wrong? What had happened? These were some of the questions asked by family members and friends. The doctors however discovered later that when he had become conscious and started moving around, the sharp edge of one of his broken ribs had pierced his lungs which had led to his gasping for air that night and the eventual death of my beloved husband.

The following morning, they hurriedly discharged me from the hospital without telling me what had happened overnight. I was told that it would be better for me to recuperate in my sister's house in LUTH since my husband had come out of the coma and that it would give me easy access to my children who I had not seen for days.

I remember asking my sister who came to pick me, to allow me to visit my husband in his ward before leaving but she cleverly denied me my request. As soon as I entered her house, I noticed some people sitting in her living room, all looking serious and as I started looking at their faces wondering what was happening, they rushed me into the bedroom and they were about to give me an injection when I started screaming and shouting demanding to know what had happened. Then somebody in a quiet voice started talking to me telling me to take heart and that something terrible had happened. That was all I could remember hearing. I started screaming, shouting and I completely forgot about my broken ribs. They were telling me to take it easy because of my ribs but all I wanted to do at that time was to die.

After sometime, I told them I wanted to see his body and that they should take me to see his body. They insisted it was better for me not to see his dead body and I started another round of screaming and shouting and insisted I was not going to stop unless they took me to see his dead body. I think it was at this point that somebody gave me a shot to calm me down. After I had calmed down a bit, they then explained to me that it would be better for me to remember him as he had been the day before, when he had come out of the coma and was chatting and laughing with me. So it was that I was not allowed to see his body. I was devastated, I was lost and totally uncontrollable for hours and for days.

Two or three days after my husband's death, the family started talking about the burial. They said that according to custom he had to be buried quickly since his mother was still alive and because he had died young. He was thirty-three years old, with two little children aged three and four. They said when young people like that die, you don't keep the body for long. His family said he had to be buried within a few days.

Then, came the controversy between my family and his family. His family was not only insisting that he be buried within a few days but also that he had to be buried in his home town, Mopa, according to their tradition.

Here was I with broken ribs that was just healing, now expected to travel across the country from Lagos to Mopa in Kogi State to bury my husband. This idea of course did not go down well with the members of my family. They were very concerned about my state of health and could not imagine me travelling with broken ribs for six to seven hours to bury my husband. There was so much controversy to the extent that people were suggesting to me not to go for the burial if his family insisted that he should be buried in his home town. Of course I would not hear of such a thing; how could they bury my husband without me being there? So it was that my sister, her husband and my brother who were all doctors made proper arrangements for me medically so that I could travel to Mopa in Kogi State with broken ribs and with my two little children for the burial.

Looking back after some years, I knew that the controversy ensued because of the trauma, the chaos and confusion that my late husband's death brought to the two families. There was so much pain and confusion, that people could not think properly at that time. I thank God that he was buried without any animosity between the two families in the end.

The burial took place a week after he died in his home town Mopa, in Kogi State with members of the two families in attendance. I was there with my two children and my brothers and sisters. His own brothers and sisters and other members of the two families and friends were there also, sharing each other's grief at the graveyard.

And so it was that we all travelled to Mopa in Kogi State to pay our last respects to a wonderful, loving, caring and generous husband, father, brother, brother-in-law, friend and colleague. It was really a time of mourning for us all because we had indeed lost a gem in the family.

Chapter Four

Sorrowing, Like Them That Had No Hope

I had now become a widow at the age of thirty years, having been married for less than five years, with two children of ages three and four who were now fatherless.

After the burial I moved back to our house in Apapa. Actually the house belonged to my late husband's company, so I knew that my days in that house were limited. My mother came from Ibadan to stay with me and my sister also shifted base from her house in LUTH to stay with me in Apapa. Members of my family were wonderful as they all stood by me, ministering to me, comforting me, trying hard to make me happy but the blow was just too much for me to bear. I was devastated, anxious and confused. I was feeling so sorry for myself and my children, wondering what would happen to us now that we had been left alone. I was without hope in this world and I just wanted to die. For weeks people tramped in and out of the house, trying to console me and trying to help but I just would not be comforted.

I wept day and night for weeks and hardly ate any food. I started losing weight steadily because I just could not sleep more than an hour or two a day and that was with the help of sleeping tablets. I refused to go outside the house. To go to the hospital for medical check-up was a problem. My sister and her husband would beg and beg before I would go with them to the hospital. I became so afraid of entering any vehicle and going on the road. I kept re-living the accident over and over again in my heart and became more and more afraid of riding in a car. I also refused to go back to work. At that time, I was teaching in a secondary commercial college in Apapa, very close to my house.

The Principal of the school and all the teachers were wonderful. They saw my plight and understood what I was going through. They arranged to share my lessons amongst themselves and took over my work load. They knew how close my husband

and I had been and how kind and generous he was, not only to me but to all of them as well. In one way or the other he had touched their lives individually and collectively. He would distribute his personal allocation of Coca-Cola from the factory amongst my colleagues in the school every month until he died. They were all witnesses to the way he always treated me like an egg that must not be broken. I had been the envy of all in that school.

I graduated from fear and anxiety, to self-pity. I wanted everyone around me to feel the way I was feeling. If you smiled too much, I felt you were wicked and that you didn't pity me and that you were not sorry for me. I was grieving and sorrowing like a person without hope. I became so selfish and so self-centered in my sorrow, that I could not see other people's problems.

A typical example was when my mother, who had been staying with me, had to go to Ibadan for medical check-up at the University College Hospital (UCH). She was admitted into the hospital because they discovered she had a serious problem with her eyes. After some days, my sister wanted to visit her in Ibadan and asked if I would seize that opportunity to come out of the house after so many weeks of hibernating and go with her to visit our mother. You would have imagined that she had just dropped a bombshell the way I reacted! I started shouting at her, telling her that she was very selfish for asking me to travel after loosing my husband. It was a real fight that day.

For once, after so many weeks of petting and begging, my sister snapped at me, telling me to snap out of my self-pity and be real and begin to show consideration for people who had shown me love in the time of my greatest need! I was so afraid of travelling that I refused to go with her to Ibadan. I just thank God, that they did not give up on me, maybe I would have died of self-pity and sorrow and I would not have been alive twenty-five years later, writing this story that others might be helped.

Because I refused to stop grieving and sorrowing, my family decided I should change location and move to Ibadan where my parents live. They got a job for me at the International School, University of Ibadan (U.I.) as a teacher and arranged for my children to start at the Staff School there. So, a few months after my husband died, I moved to Ibadan with my children.

Incidentally, my mother-in-law and the older sister of my late husband also lived in Ibadan and they all rallied round me making it easy for me to move. My in-laws were very kind and very understanding. Kayode was their son and was a gem in their family, because of his kindness and generosity. They understood my grief, just as I could understand theirs. Kayode's death was a terrible loss to us all, no doubt about that.

I stayed with my parents when I moved to Ibadan and started work at I.S.I, barely a month after I got to Ibadan and my children also started school. People had gone out of their way to make all this happen.

By this time I looked like a broomstick, I had lost so much weight that people could hardly recognise me. I still could not eat properly or sleep properly. I was permanently on sleeping pills and after sometime they no longer had any effect on me, I was just taking them.

My children and I lived with my parents when we first moved to Ibadan. They were very good to us. They pampered us, cooking all sorts of food for our sakes, giving us all sorts of things to make us happy but I continued grieving and sorrowing. Many people told me later, that they had been afraid I was going to die.

My sister and her husband arranged with their friends in Ibadan to keep checking on me and to take me out, but I refused their gestures. I made it plain to all who tried to get me out of my grief that I would not budge and that they were not welcome. After sometime, people stopped trying and by the time I moved to my own rented apartment three months later, I was totally alone with my children; they were all I had left, or so I thought.

I remained in the house, refusing to go anywhere except to and from school. Even in school, I hardly interacted with anyone and I was into myself and my children. They became my life; I would do anything to make them safe and happy. I was so over-protective of them that even when I started going out, I would take them with me. I would not just let them out of my sight for a moment. What bondage!

I refused to stop mourning. I wore jet black clothes everywhere I went for well over one year until members of my family and some friends intervened and bought me brighter coloured clothes. Even then I only graduated from wearing black to grey and other dull colours. I couldn't smile or laugh in those days. There was nothing to smile or laugh about, so I thought. I was a living corpse. Nothing was alive in me except that my heart was still beating. I was behaving like someone who had nothing to live for. As a matter of fact, at that time I thought I had nothing to live for; I was so much into myself that I could not think of other people and how they would feel if something happened to me. I had my father and my mother, my children, such wonderful in-laws and my brothers and sisters who cared so much for me, yet to me I had nothing because my husband had died. What an error! What a life! A life without Christ is a life of bondage indeed.

After about a year or two, even though I was still mourning, I started going to church once in a while, not for my sake but mainly for the sake of my children. I believed they needed to have some special outings apart from school. I started from the former Anglican Church I used to attend before leaving for the university. To me the services were boring and more like social gatherings and I was not ready for any social anything at that time. I didn't want to be seen alone without my husband. I felt very bad when I saw all my friends with their husbands. When they see me without my loving husband I would feel very bad, so I refused to go to any social function including weddings. A number of my younger cousins got married around the first two or three years after my husband's demise and I did not attend any of their weddings. That was how bad my grief was.

A year later, I travelled abroad with my children at the invitation of one of our friends who had been close to my husband and I. People thought going on holiday abroad would take care of my grief but it didn't and I came back still grieving and still into myself. My children, on the other hand, had such a wonderful time travelling from one country to another. The fact that the children had a good time and were happy made me happy but it did not stop the sorrow in my heart.

For almost three years I mourned and grieved and refused to see anything good in life. Then about a week or two before the third anniversary of my late husband's demise, I met a man when I went to put in an advert in the newspaper for the third year memorial and this man helped me with the advert and we later became friends. In a way he was so very much like my late husband. He was kind, generous and considerate and very helpful. For the first time in three years I was able to relax and smile a little. He saw my grief and felt sorry for me and did all he could to make me and my children comfortable without making too many demands on us, unlike most of the men who had tried to take advantage of me because they thought I was lonely being without a husband. He was ready to help me get over my grief and my sorrow and did not take advantage of my being alone.

The relationship which followed was beautiful but did not last more than two and a half years because I got born again and knew I could not continue with such a relationship. Looking back over the years, I know the man was God-sent at that time even though I did not know God the way I know him now.

A life without Christ, is a life without hope and it is a meaningless life. As a widow without Christ I suffered a lot and almost lost my life. People took advantage of me; all sorts of men would come promising heaven on earth and all they wanted was to get me into bed. House helps would cheat me because there was no man around to discipline them. Mechanics, electricians and all their likes would swindle me because I was a single woman and hardly knew little or nothing about their trade. A lot of people in the world are so wicked that instead of helping widows, they cheat them and take advantage of them because they are alone and seemingly helpless.

When, after three years of excessive grief, I decided to begin to live a normal life, I discovered that life as a widow was like hell in the midst of this perverse world. I could not afford to get too close to a man who is married even if he was married to my friend as people would start suspecting me and accusing me of having an affair with such a man. Even friends would suspect me and would not want me to get too close to their husbands. What a life! No wonder the scripture calls it 'the reproach of thy widowhood' (Isaiah 54:4).

It was almost impossible for me to make friends at that time, especially with married couples. Any man, married or unmarried, who got close to me was my lover according to people's opinion. I became afraid of making friends because of what people would say. Glory be to God who pulled me out of the miry clay.

Chapter Five

He Pulled Me Out Of The Miry Clay

After three years of excessive grieving and mourning, I decided to give life a chance when I met this married man who became my very close friend after helping me with the third year memorial advert in the newspaper. I also started going to church daily with my children. I tried two or three places of worship but I was not satisfied. They were more of social gatherings with all sorts of societies, one of which you must join to be able to be a full-fledged member. I wanted something more serious and fulfilling so I finally settled for a place where they had early morning services between 7am and 8am on Sundays. The services were usually brief and to the point with few people in attendance.

I also started playing squash regularly especially with this married friend of mine. It was like I was beginning to have a life again. Then on my way from squash one day, I had another serious accident in which the car was badly smashed up though I was not injured. This accident brought fear and anxiety back to me again and I refused to get the car repaired because I did not want to drive that same car again. It was a brand new one of about nine months old and a family car. I left it with the insurance people and got some little money from them, which was just enough to buy a smaller car. It took some time though, before I could buy it because I was afraid of driving again.

For more than one year after the three years of mourning, I tried to live again even though as a single parent, it was not very easy for me. There was pressure from friends and relations for me to remarry. There were a lot of suitors, married and unmarried, all of them wanting to marry me. It was not very easy for me in those days. It was like hell on earth.

I thank God, however that in the midst of this confusion, the Lord came and pulled me out of the hell I was in.

My deliverance came during the summer holiday of 1984. Prior to this particular holiday, I had started travelling abroad every summer from the year after my husband died and I would travel with my children.

On this particular occasion in 1984, as I was planning this trip, my older sister's husband, Kayode came to visit us in Ibadan. He insisted that I should not travel with the children that year. He said he had been watching me over the years and had noticed how I would not allow my children to play with other children their age particularly their cousins in Lagos who were the same age with them. Incidentally, my older sister and I had both had our first two children at the same time. She had her first child three weeks before I had my first and the second child a year after, again three weeks before I had my second child. The four of them were like quadruplets at that time.

My brother-in-law insisted I travelled alone so I could enjoy myself without the burden of having to take care of two little children. It was very hard for me but I took his advice because of the respect I had for him. He and my sister had always been so kind and so gentle with me ever since I lost my husband. They knew how close my husband and I had been and I guess, in a way, they were able to identify with me in my grief, but they wanted me to be happy again since my husband was no more. I just thank God for this brother and sister of mine.

So I made my plans and went to London without my children for the first time in four years. I left them with my sister and her family in Lagos. This particular holiday, I decided to stay with a childhood friend of mine who, at that time, was studying for her law degree at Buckingham University. Incidentally, this friend of mine is now the Deputy Governor of Osun State, Nigeria, Erelu Olusola Obada. I was staying in her flat in London and she would come from Buckingham every weekend and sometimes during the week to keep me company and I too would go with her to school and spend one or two days with her.

It was during this particular trip that I gave my life totally and completely to God and I got born again. I was alone most of the time so I guess, out of loneliness I spent more time in reading the small Gideon Bible that had been given to me. This Bible contained only the New Testament, the Psalms and the Proverbs and I read from the first page to the last page of this Bible where the message of salvation was written. I read it. After I had read that salvation message for the first time, I knew I wanted to do what it said, so I read it again, confessing those words and believing them in my heart.

After this, something miraculous happened to me. It was like a burden was lifted off me and that I had just found what I had been searching for in all my misery. Since then, which was almost twenty and a half years ago, my life has not been the same.

The fear and anxiety that had plagued my life disappeared and I started sleeping again without using sleeping pills. Indeed, since that summer, I became a new person just like it says in God's word, that when you are in Christ (born again), old things are passed away, behold all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

So it was that in September 1984, four and a half years after my husband died, that the Lord pulled me out of the miry clay that I was in. Indeed, the Lord pulled me out of hell and began to establish my feet on the rock to stay, I became born again and heavenly bound and my life has not been the same ever since.

Chapter Six

He Established My Feet On The Rock To Stay

By the time I came back from that memorable trip in September 1984, my face started glowing, my heart started yearning for more of God and I started reading the Bible again with a renewed heart and zeal. Things I read started making sense to me. I began going to Church again with renewed vigor and I even started going to evening meetings at the Anglican Church I was initially attending. I wanted more and more of God and I wanted to occupy my time with the things of God. By this time I had almost become a recluse with no social life so I had plenty of time on my hands and I just made up my mind to spend it with God and with the things of God.

When we resumed school after that summer holiday, everybody knew that something had happened to me even though I was still into myself but this time, I was not consumed with self pity but with Bible reading. Anytime I was not teaching, I was reading the Bible in the laboratory, where I had my office as a science teacher. I was still very alone, but this time, I was alone with my God not with my grief.

Something very significant happened here. An elderly colleague of mine in the school who happened to be my closest friend at that time, also got born again during that summer holiday. This woman, Mrs. Theresa Luck Akinwale, used to take a very special interest in me. I guess she was sorry for me. She too had been a single mother for some time. She was much older than I was. She must have known what it meant to be without a husband. In fact, before I travelled abroad that summer, she had insisted on taking me to somebody to pray for me. I remember how I ran away from that person's office when he started prophesying and telling me to do some things. Of course, I did not wait to listen because I was not brought up to listen to any self-styled prophet even though I was not born again. Then on this particular summer, both of us got born again. She in Nigeria and I in London.

By the time I came back, she was ready to share her faith with me which was very usual of her so I told her I too had met the Lord and given my life to Him. By then, I was not satisfied with where I was worshipping. I started hoping and praying that I would get to know where else to worship. One day, this sister, Mrs. Luck Akinwale came and told me about a brother who had a fellowship in his house and that I would love to hear the brother's preaching.

One evening, my two children and I went with her to the fellowship. There were very few of us at the fellowship, about twelve to fifteen including my children and Mrs. Akinwale's children. After listening to the brother preach, I knew I had found my place of worship.

The name of that brother is Olubi Johnson, the founder and setman of Scripture Pasture Christian Centre, Ibadan up till date. He was preaching about perfection of the saints (Ephesians 4:11-16). He said Christianity is all about becoming like Christ and that God wants to have many more sons like His first son, the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). His main message at that time was how to become like Christ. Today, I keep thanking God for allowing me to hear such messages at the beginning of my Christian life, for becoming like Christ has been my vision ever since.

God leading me to this man of God and this place of worship was the beginning of His work in me, to establish me on a good foundation where God is the beginning and the end of all things. God started teaching me through this man that Christianity is not all about what I get from God but, what I can be for God.

Every teaching, preaching, sermon, prayer at that time was directed at becoming like Christ. We were made to understand from the onset that the receiving comes as a result of becoming like Christ. I learnt right from the beginning of my Christian life that if I seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all the things that the Gentiles are seeking for would be added unto me (Matthew 6: 25-31, 1Kings 3:7-14).

From this teaching, I learnt that if I put all I have into seeking God's Kingdom and His righteousness, I would not have to be anxious about what to eat, wear or what would happen to me and my children in future. I learnt to leave all these things in the

hands of God. By God's grace and mercy, I learnt early that the Word of God never fails and His promises are ever so sure. If He says He will add all the things we need to us, if we seek Him first, then, that settles it for me. (Numbers 23:19).

Other things I learnt then is that God's thoughts towards me are of good and not of evil, even to bring me to an expected end (Jeremiah 29) and that all things work together for good to them that love God and to them that are called according to His purpose (Romans 8: 28). Armed with such wonderful knowledge and understanding of the Word of God, I hardly got worried or anxious over material things and when things were not going my way, because my confidence was in the Lord who was in total control of my situation and circumstances according to the scriptures and who would make all things work together for my good.

God, by His mercy, established me on a solid foundation at the early stage of my Christian walk by letting me know through the Scriptures that "a curse that is causeless will not stand" (Proverbs. 26:2) and that if my ways pleases the Lord, He will make even my enemies to be at peace with me (Proverbs 16:7). So instead of fighting flesh and blood like a lot of Christians do. I learnt to pray more for God to help me please Him and also to help me not to give cause for curses to prevail against me.

Another thing that God used to establish me on the rock of His salvation was the fact that He allowed me to see the danger in hurts, bitterness and unforgiveness in our lives. He made me understand from His Word that if I do not forgive others, He would not forgive me (Matthew 6:14-15). That really scared me because without God's forgiveness, we are doomed and our prayers would not be answered and we can never have the blessings of the Lord that makes rich and adds no sorrow (Proverbs 10:22). The Bible also says that if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me (Psalm 66:18), so if God will not hear me because I am harbouring bitterness, hurts and unforgiveness in my heart, how then can He bless me? So I labour more in prayer against unforgiveness.

By God's grace, I also learnt early that Christianity is all about love and relationship. For God so loved us that He gave His best, that is His Son, Jesus Christ, so if I want to be like Him, I must learn to love like Him. This understanding made my prayers to be more of asking Him to help me love Him with all my heart and with all of my mind and with all of my soul and to love all men as He wants me to.

One other important thing that the Lord used to establish me on the rock of His salvation was teaching me the importance of reading the scriptures daily. I came to understand by God's grace that the best way to know God's character and what He expects of us is to hear Him speak to us directly from His Word, for faith cometh by hearing and hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). I also learnt from the scriptures that without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:17). So if I want to please God which is my own heart's desire, I have to hear His Word over and over again by reading the scriptures.

Thank God for the word we hear from other people and from preachers of the Word of God but the only undiluted Word of God is the one we read from the scriptures ourselves. Reading the scriptures ourselves, helps us to balance what we hear from other people. The Bible also says that we shall know the truth and the truth will make us free (John 8:32). The undiluted Word of God is the truth, so we need to read the Bible on a daily, constant and systematic basis as individuals to find out the truth by ourselves in order not to be deceived by what people say about the Word and about the God of the Word.

So it was that when God started establishing me on the rock of His salvation, through the daily reading of His word, I had to take some major steps in my life at that time. One major step I took was to cut off all unholy alliances in my life.

I broke up with the rich, caring but married boyfriend of mine. This was to the amazement of a lot of people who knew about the relationship. Friends and family alike thought I was carrying my being born again too far. They felt I needed the comfort the man was providing for my children and me and the companionship he was giving me.

It was one of the most difficult decisions I had to make in the early years of my Christianity. Prior to this decision, my heart cry had been for God to remove from my life anything that would stand between me and Him. I had already made up my mind by this time, to serve God and follow Him no matter what it would cost me (Luke 14 :26-27). So, difficult as it was at that time, I had to give up the relationship because I knew from the Word of God that the relationship was not God's will.

Looking back today, I just thank God for the grace He gave me at that time to deny myself of the comfort and the companionship the man was giving me. That comfort and companionship I thought I had lost, God gave back to me in His own person, glory be to His Name!

I must add also that the same man I thought I had lost at that time, later became my very good friend. In fact, God has used the same man to be a channel of blessing to me on many occasions without my soliciting it. If we decide to walk in the path of the Lord, His path indeed drops fatness and there is nothing we give up for God's sake that He is not able to give back in manifold ways in His own time (Luke 18:29-30).

I also learnt in my early years as a Christian that prayer is the master key to a successful Christian life. I discovered from the scriptures that we have not because we ask not (James 4:2) and that we ask and receive not because we ask amiss so that we may consume it upon our lusts (James 4:3). As a young Christian, I just wanted to please the Lord that had pulled me out of the miry clay and so I turned my desire for pleasing God into daily prayer. I know it is impossible to please God without faith and so I turned to God in prayer to show me how to have faith in Him. In fact, at that early stage, I prayed about every little thing especially the things that will make me please God and be like Him. By turning every little thing into prayer, I became a praying person. Prayer became my life-style and I found, after sometime, that I could not but pray. I discovered from the scriptures that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James.5:16-17), so I started praying and asking God to teach me more about prayer so that my prayers would be fervent and effectual and will avail much. The Bible says ask and it shall be given, seek and you shall find and if you knock, it shall be opened unto

you (Luke 11:9). So, armed with this Scripture, I could not stop asking and seeking and knocking at God's door. The more I prayed, the more I loved to pray and to thank God for His help in this area of my life because I later became an intercessor and a praying woman by calling. Glory be to God on high!

Chapter Seven

He Put A Song In My Mouth To Sing

This heavenly Father who had pulled me out of hell and established me on the rock to stay, then put a song in my mouth to sing by giving me a ministry.

As I said earlier, as a very young Christian, I loved to pray especially for other people. I would turn every little thing into prayer, especially other people's problems, the ones they tell me and the ones I perceive.

I found that many people would come to me to tell me about their problems and as they finish talking, I would get into serious prayer with them. I would fix days and hours for prayers and intercession with different people to pray about their problems. I discovered that I spent the whole of my free time in this way. I had no idle time in those days as my days were filled with one prayer appointment or the other and many times, it was conducted over the telephone.

I thank God for those times because there were many testimonies of one answered prayer or the other. In this way, as a young Christian, I learnt from experience that God answers prayers and that the fervent and effectual prayer of the righteous indeed avails much (James 5:16).

Early on too, I started gathering people together in my house for prayers, especially for other people. We would also consistently pray for the Church where we attended fellowship. By this time, I was a full-fledged member of Scripture Pasture Christian Centre, one of the first Pentecostal Churches in Ibadan. I can say definitely that, many of the people pastoring some of the big Churches today, especially in Ibadan, have passed through that Church.

In 1985, when the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, Ibadan Chapter started, I was one of the foundation members and later became a very active member of the fellowship for about two or three years. This only ceased when my duties and involvement in the Church where I was worshipping, would not permit me to continue. I was also a very serious and regular though quiet member of the Senior Staff Fellowship in the University of Ibadan. This fellowship was then being held in Professor Aboaba's house even though we had to move to Staff School, U.I. when the membership increased. At least once a month, Pastor Enoch Adeboye, who is now the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, would come as our Bible teacher.

One thing I am grateful to God for at that time is that my children, though very young, had both received Christ into their lives and all of us would attend all these meetings together. In fact, when the Lord told me to start going about an hour earlier to pray for the meetings, we would go and pray together. I recall how my children and I would get to the Church early to pray for the meeting and to the Premier Hotel where the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship used to hold their Monday meetings, to pray for God's anointing upon the meetings. After some time, both at the Church and Premier Hotel, other people began coming along to join us in these pre-meeting prayers! These prayer meetings later became the norm and part of the schedule for such meetings.

With this background of prayer and intercession, it was not surprising that sometime in 1986, while I was interceding for the Church I was attending then (SPCC), and for the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, the Lord spoke to me and what He told me that day was the basis for the ministry that I am in today. He said, *"The devil cannot get to a man who is anointed by God except through a woman"*.

As I was pondering on this, He took me through the Scriptures (thank God for the little Word I had been able to read). He started from how Eve was able to get to Adam, the first man. See Genesis 3:1-24. He showed me how Sarah was able to get to Abraham, the father of faith and how she caused him to miss God by asking him to go in to Hagar, which led to the birth of Ishmael. Ishmael later became the arch enemy of Isaac, the child of promise and his descendants, up to the present day. (Genesis 16:2-

16). God also showed me how, even the man after His own heart, David, sinned against Him with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite (2 Samuel 11:1-27). He then showed me from the Scriptures how women had turned the heart of Solomon from serving God with a perfect heart (Kings 11:1-16 and Nehemiah 13:26). The case of Samson was also shown to me, how he lost his anointing through the woman, Delilah. Also that of Ahab and Jezebel. He made me see how a lot of men were destroyed through one woman or the other in the Old Testament.

God then took me to the New Testament and showed me how three of the most important men never married, that is, Jesus, John the Baptist and Paul the apostle. As I was wondering whether God was trying to tell me that men should not marry if they don't want to miss Him, He quickly reminded me of Peter and other men of God in the New Testament who were married and did not miss God through women. In fact, he pointed out to me the case of Priscilla and Aquilla, both husband and wife, together doing the work of God successfully (Acts 18:24-26). In fact there was a Church in their house (1 Corinthians 16:19).

At this point, I relaxed and asked God what He was trying to teach me. He then gave me a mission to start praying and interceding for all men and women who are genuinely anointed by Him that the enemy, whether through a woman or a man, would not have an inroad into their lives and ministries. God also told me to start interceding for His Church, that is, the Body of Christ, on a regular and consistent basis. He commissioned me to begin to stand in the gap and pray for my nation, Nigeria and for other nations as well. He revealed to me that He is looking for men and women who would stand in the gap for His people that He bought with His blood (Ezekiel 22:30). By the grace of God, I am still in that ministry till today.

However, over the years, God added some other responsibilities to this ministry of intercession. This may have been due to what I myself had been through in life. He gave me a mission to begin comforting others with the comfort with which I had been comforted by Him (2 Corinthians 1:4). This ministry includes counselling people who are hurting, people who are bitter and people who are confused. He also asked me to

extend this ministry to widows, especially young widows, one on one, in twos and in groups as He directs.

As God continued teaching me His ways and instructing me in His paths through the daily, consistent reading of the Bible, which I have, by His grace, been doing dilligently, He instructed me about three years ago, to produce a small booklet that contains a daily Bible reading plan from Genesis to Revelation so that at the end of one year, one would have read right through the whole Bible. This booklet, RTTB ([Read Through the Bible](#)) is available and is distributed free by His grace. You can obtain a copy from me or the publisher of this book.

The Lord impressed it on me that Christians should be encouraged to read the Word themselves. I have discovered from my years of counselling that a lot of our knowledge of God is based on what somebody else has told us, perhaps the pastor or other ministers of God. No wonder there is a lot of confusion and deception going on in the Church. People are just following ministers of God and have not taken time themselves to know the God they are serving.

The Bible says, ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free (John 8:31,31). The undiluted Word of God that we read from the Bible ourselves is the truth. If we do not want to be tossed to and fro' by every wind of doctrine and by the sleight of men and their cunning craftiness, we need to start reading the Holy Bible daily and discover God for ourselves and at our own level. When God speaks to us daily through His word, that is the only way we can know Him better. As we continue to read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation regularly, yearly, we will come to understand the character of the God we are serving. We will also get to know His will for our lives and His commandments.

The more we get to know God personally, the more we will trust Him, for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). By hearing God speak to us daily through His word, we also get to develop a very deep, personal

relationship with Him and so we are able to trust Him more. Our faith in Him will then be based on our personal knowledge of Him and not only on what anyone else has said.

Over the years, God placed a serious burden upon me concerning His children who are seriously labouring for him but have forgotten their first love (Revelations 2:1-7). I have felt God impress on me the need to gather people together in small groups or individually and teach them His ways and His paths for therein lie our blessings both spiritual and physical (Psalm 65:11; Proverbs 8:32).

I must add, however, that this ministry has caused me to pass through the waters of affliction but God has been with me and the rivers have not drowned me. I have also walked through the fire of persecution and of being misunderstood but I have not been burned and neither has the flame kindled upon me (Isaiah 43:1-2). He who has called me is faithful. He gave me a mission and went ahead to make the provision for the execution of the mission. Blessed be His name for ever and ever, amen!

So today, by God's grace, I am still singing the song He has given me and even if many do not understand the song, He who has given me the song, will perfect it in His own time. The Bible says that straight is the gate and narrow the way which leads to life and few there be that find it; and wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there be which go thereby (Matthew 7:13-14). I am not too concerned however, that the song I am singing may be different from what many others are singing because I know that if my ministry is of the Lord, He will watch over His word to perform it. Halleluyah!

Chapter Eight

Now I Can Shout, Halleluyah!

He who pulled me out of the miry clay and set my feet on the rock to stay and has put a new song in my mouth to sing, has also filled my mouth with laughter so I can shout, Halleluyah!

The essence of this book is to let people know the Almightyness of God and His faithfulness in the lives of those who will dilligently seek Him. Therefore it will not be complete without my sharing some specific testimonies in my life and the lives of my children. God is a miracle worker and with Him, nothing shall be impossible.

As a young Christian and a young widow with two little children, I was under a lot of pressure especially from without, as to how to make ends meet. I was advised to go in for a Master's degree or for a Ph.D. while I was teaching at the International School, University of Ibadan. At that time, it was easy for us to combine our teaching job with a post graduate programme, so many people wanted me to take advantage of this so as to enhance my earning opportunities in later years. Others counselled me to go into business in order to increase my income since two people's responsibilities had become mine alone.

I sought the Lord's face concerning what He would have me do and I thank God for my intimacy with Him. He specifically told me that He had not called me to be both father and mother to my children. He said that He had not given anybody that grace and that it would be a futile effort if I tried it. He said I should just be a good mother to my children. Then He showed me from the Scriptures (thank God for His Word) that He is the Father of the fatherless and the Judge of widows!

I remember God asking me that if my husband (Kayode) had been alive, would I be trying to make more money because of the children? Of course, the answer was no! God then told me to relax and that He would be Father to my children and He would be

my Judge. To His glory, I never had to do any extra work to earn more money because of my children and He single-handedly saw my children through primary, secondary and university education. Not one single person can boast of paying my children's school fees, not even me!

My salary was far below what was needed but God miraculously, through people known and unknown, met us at our points of need. God did not allow me to beg or even to ask for assistance before sending help. He was so faithful and always on time. He never failed me once.

I came to realise over the years that God did not allow specific people to help in specific areas because He did not want to share His glory with any man (Isaiah 42:8). Besides, *"Has He said, shall He not do it or has He spoken and shall He not make it good?"* (Numbers 23:19). God has always been so quick to remove anything and everything that would want to share His glory in my life.

I remember that at the end of 1988 I had to leave the teaching job because I had problems with my vocal chord and the doctors advised me not to continue teaching to avoid another occurrence of the problem. Immediately I left teaching, the Lord got me a job in a bank to prove His Almightyness. It was a much better job which paid a whole lot more. By this time, the children were in secondary school and my niece-in-law, Remi Ajayi had started living with us and was preparing for university. The increase in my income was very timely, so I imagined at the time.

A bomb blast came when in my second year at the bank, the Lord told me to leave because the bank job was taking up too much of my time. He reminded me that He had called me to a life of intercession which I could not do effectively while working in the bank. He wanted me to work full time as an intercessor and counsellor!

You can imagine how difficult it was for me to leave the bank job but I had come to know His voice and when He gives an order, you had better obey, because obedience is the keyword for success in the Christian life (Isaiah 1:19). Many people counselled against my decision to leave the bank job, including some ministers of God, but I know

the Master's voice, I had heard it and so I left and went to work full time as an intercessor and a counsellor in the Church where I was attending fellowship (SPCC). Even then, the Lord continued to provide for my children's education. This meant there would be no regular monthly salary, no matter how small! The Lord said He was the one who had given me the mission (vision) and that He wanted to be in total control of how I did the job. He said, "He who pays the piper, dictates the tune." He said that if other people paid me a salary, then they would have the right to tell me how to do the job He had given me. So I left the job in the Church in 1995 and have been on my own, under God ever since, doing the job He has called me to do. In fact, leaving that job in 1995 was a great deliverance because ever since I left it, things became much better for me and my children both spiritually and financially.

Looking back, I discovered that God wanted me out of all paid employment so He could prove to me that He was responsible for even the little I had been earning and He it was that had been sustaining us all along. He obviously did not want me to start looking up to any man or for any paid employment for sustenance for myself and the children. He wanted me to look up to Him for everything. To His glory alone, I have been out of employment since 1995 and have not had to beg for bread till date. I have remained in my house faithfully doing what God has called me to do as He directs.

God has been so faithful to His word concerning me and the children. He has always supplied all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. In fact, He has blessed us so much that we have also become channels of blessing to others around us, by His grace.

I would also like to testify about the wonderful children God has given me. Akinwande, my son and Omowale my daughter and also Oluremilekun who is actually my late husband's niece. She came to live with us a few years after my husband died. I keep thanking God daily for the privilege He has given me to raise these children with His help. I must acknowledge here that these children are wonderful and I thank God for His mercies over them. They gave me little or no problem at all. God was so good to me concerning them. They were hardly ever ill in their growing up years. Ever since

their father died, I cannot recollect any time any of them was admitted in the hospital for one night. Hardly, over the years, did I have to rush them to hospital for one injury or the other. God protected them from all such things that could have caused anxiety for me as a single parent. I need to point this out because I know what was happening to other children their age at that time. I just cannot but appreciate the Lord's doing in this matter also which is marvelous in my sight.

Furthermore, these my wonderful children did so well both academically and morally in school that hardly did any teacher need to ask to see me except to commend them to me for their good work and behaviour. I give God the glory for this. He indeed, is the Father of the fatherless and the Judge of the widow who will not allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13).

God had mercy on us concerning their admissions into the various schools they attended. They got admissions into secondary schools of their choices without any problem and entered university without any stress at all. They all came out of the university with excellent results which enabled them to get good jobs. In fact, one of my children had a first class degree in Economics from the University of Ibadan. It was smooth sailing for the children and also for me. I am grateful to God.

One other thing I would like to say about them is that they had quickly learnt to be abased and to abound, like Paul said in Philippians 4:12. They had, by the mercy of God, been instructed and learnt both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. They would joyfully deny themselves of so many things they knew I could not afford. Most times, even when they were still very young, they would not ask me for things I could not afford. I just thank God for them. They were very considerate.

This book will not be complete without the personal testimonies of the children themselves so I have given room for their own testimonies of God's mercy, faithfulness and goodness in their lives and growing up without their earthly father. Other specific testimonies concerning some of the mighty deliverances that God has wrought in our lives are stated here:

In April 1989, when I started working at the bank, I had to go to Lagos to undergo some training the very week I started work in Ibadan. It lasted one month. After the first two weeks of training, I came to Ibadan for the weekend to see my children and discovered that some people were angry with me in the Church I was attending then. As I was driving back to Lagos at the end of the weekend, God gave me a Scripture, Psalm 27, to be precise. When I got to the house in Lagos, I read the Scripture and the following morning, during my time with the Lord, I read it again. By this time, I picked in my spirit that God wanted me to meditate on the Scripture and confess it regularly. So, for the last two weeks of my four weeks training, I kept reading and confessing this Scripture. The part that really appealed to me most was the fourth verse, *"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple."* I read the Scripture over so many times that I knew almost every verse by heart, not knowing that there was a real purpose for it. God was preparing me for what was about to happen.

On the last day of my training, my colleagues in the central office in Lagos bought me presents and had a small send-off party for me. The following morning was environmental sanitation day when movement was not allowed till 10 am., so I spent a long time in the presence of God, rejoicing in the fact that the training was over and I could return to my children and my Church duties. I was elated that morning and was like a little child going back home from boarding school! I had a lot of plans for the prayer group in my house, The Travellers' Band as we called it.

I left my friend's house after 10 am all by myself, driving back to Ibadan. When I got to the toll gate at Shagamu, I had to unbuckle my seat belt for my hand to reach the toll fee collector and after paying, I drove off without buckling my seat belt again.

After driving for about three minutes, I got a prompting to stop and use my seat belt but I ignored it. A second time the prompting came, still I ignored it. When after

about ten minutes I got another prompting, I quickly parked the car and fastened my seat belt. Thank God I did, because not long after that I had a lone accident with the car tumbling and tumbling until it landed in a very deep ditch upside down with the four tyres spinning in the air! The car was a total wreck. Trees had fallen on it inside the ditch. The people coming behind me said they just saw the car flying, banging into all sorts of things including a large anthill. The miracle was that I came out of the wreck unhurt! (Psalm 27:5-6). Unbelievable but true. However, the car was a total write off. I just thank God for the promptings of the Holy Spirit to fasten my seat belt, otherwise I would have been flung out of the car when it somersaulted. The ditch into which the car had fallen was very deep and it took some time before rescuers could locate the car in the bush. By the time they got down to the wreck, I was out of the car, dancing and singing praises to my God who had not delivered me over unto the will of my enemy, the devil and his cohorts. (Psalm 27:12).

Indeed, my rescuers could not believe I had been in the car. It was then that I looked closely at the wreck and saw the car was upside down with the four tyres up in the air. It was a great deliverance and many of the people who witnessed the accident and saw the wreck went down on their knees praising God with me. It was a real celebration of the miraculous power of Jesus. And so, what the enemy meant for bad, God turned around for His own glory.

Another miracle was the way God delivered my son and my car from the wicked hands of armed robbers. My son had just turned twenty-one a few months before. He, my daughter and myself left the house together in the car with my son driving. Incidentally, I had just bought the car a couple of months earlier. They dropped me off at a friend's house and my son was to drop his sister off in school, repair the tyre of my other car and come back to pick me up. They dropped me off at about 6pm at my friend's place and after about an hour, I started wondering why he had not come back for me. It was very much unlike him to keep me waiting. When after two hours I did not see him, I knew something serious must have happened. At first, I thought he might have had problems with the car, then I thought it was out of character for him not to quickly find a way of informing me. I concluded he must have had an accident.

By 8pm, my friend, another friend (who was also there visiting) and I, went searching for him. After driving round for sometimes and not seeing any signs of an accident nor the car, by 10pm., we reported the case at a few police stations around but the police did not take the matter seriously. They suggested that my son must have taken the opportunity of having the car to himself to play around a bit which I knew was impossible because I know him so well.

During the search, I found I was well composed, which was a miracle. I had no anxiety and was so calm that my friends could not believe it and they commented on it. But I was so sure that nothing bad would happen to him and so I had peace, the peace which passes all understanding.

By 1am., we decided to go to Iyaganku Central Police Station to make a report. We tried to persuade the police there to please send a radio message to their patrols. It was after this radio message had gone out that one of the police patrols came on the radio to report that they had found the car with my son locked in the boot of the car, that they had brought him out and most importantly, that he had suffered no harm apart from the heat in the boot that had caused him to sweat so much. In fact, by the time they were making the report, they were very close to my house in Bodija, bringing my son home, safe and sound!

We went to meet them by the gate leading to my street. The patrol officers took us to where the robbers had abandoned the car on the outskirts of Ibadan because they had run out of petrol and couldn't get any to buy as there was fuel scarcity. They told us how a night watchman passing by had heard my son banging the boot of the car from inside and stopped to find out what was happening. It was the night guard who had called the police patrol team who forced the boot open to release my son. To the glory of God, by that morning, I already had both my son and the car back in the house. Shame to the devil!

And so, once again, what the enemy meant for bad, God turned to a beautiful testimony of His faithfulness and care. How my son survived six hours in the locked

boot of a car was God's marvelous work and His divine protection over them that put their trust in Him. The Bible says that they that put their trust in the Lord shall not be put to shame.

The Lord God Almighty did not allow the devil to prevail over us. When people heard what had happened, they came in their numbers to my house to give glory to God for His faithfulness and His Almightyness. Thanks be to Him who is able to deliver His own from the counsel of the wicked.

Chapter Nine

My Children's Testimonies

Akinwande:

'Hold On, He's Got A Plan For Your Life!'

Growing up without an earthly father is probably one of the toughest things a young boy of four could possibly experience. I remember my years in primary school when all the boys would come to school and say, "Oh, my dad dropped me off." I used to think life had dealt me a mighty blow. My days in boarding school were not spared either. I remember vividly my first day in Form 1 when a senior boy pulled me to a corner and asked me who my father was and where we lived. I just burst into tears telling him he had died sometime before.

One thing I believe very strongly is that when it seems like doors have shut one way, our heavenly Father has apparently opened two other doors on the other side! I say this because as a young teenager, I never really lacked the things a teenager should have. The Lord blessed me with many earthly fathers in my uncles who saw me as their own, cousins who treated me like their brother and who blessed me in every way they could. I look back and I cannot begin to mention the many beautiful things I enjoyed as a young boy growing up without an earthly father in the home. I vividly remember how a few of our friends would argue at length saying that my family was extremely wealthy and we just wanted to keep a low profile. I would laugh at those comments and I just couldn't understand where they got that impression. Little did I know that it was God in us that had brought out that beauty and that wealth for the world to see.

The one person I thank God for every day of my life is my mother who was a great encouragement to me from childhood. I remember when I was about to get into secondary school, how she encouraged me to read very hard, because I had the tendency of slipping up on my studies, probably because I was always in a hurry to do things. I passed my exams into secondary school with flying colours. I had always wanted to become an engineer right from when I was a child and my mum encouraged me all the way till I got into university.

There's a passage in the Bible which says, "Tribulation will come, but be of good cheer for you shall overcome them." I quote this because at some stage in my life, when it seemed like everything was moving fine, a little test came my way and this was going to exalt the Lord even more in my life.

I'd like to share a major testimony which reassured me of the goodness of God in my life. It was a beautiful and divine Sunday evening on the 3rd day of August, 1997, I had just dropped my mother off at a family friend's place then to the University of Ibadan to drop my sister off and finally to repair the tyre of my own car. Unknown to me, God was about to perform one of His great miracles in my life. I dropped off the tyre of my car for repairs and rather than wait on the roadside while it was being fixed, decided to check up on a few friends nearby. Strangely enough, all the people I looked up were not in and just as I got back into the car and started the engine, I looked up and behold, I saw four thickset guys all armed with sophisticated guns! We wrestled a bit before I let go of the steering, by which time the others had forced their way into the car. At this point I gave up and I was thrown to the back seat to sit in between two of them with their guns resting on my thigh.

All I could do at this point was to cry to my Father in heaven. I kept praying silently as they drove around asking me questions. I had been instructed to close my eyes and not to open them while the interrogations were going on. Eventually, I felt a loud bang on my face; it was a heavy slap from one of the guys, instructing me to get out of the car. I looked out and saw that we were right in the middle of the bush; I knew God had to do something at this point and you bet He did. I was told to jump into the

boot of the car (a Mercedes Benz 200E). As soon as I got into the boot, it was slammed shut and locked and then they started driving through the bush, playing the radio in the car so loud that I could feel the vibrations in my innermost being. While in the boot, I immediately asked God for direction and a way of escape and He immediately showed me a survival strategy. I checked under the extra tyre compartment and there were two holes for water drainage; it was through these points I was able to get air supply to breathe.

At a stage, breathing was becoming extremely difficult and so I started praying and committed myself to Him who is able to save and protect. I gradually fell asleep and after a while, I felt the car stop and doors open and close. I kept quiet and did not make a single sound and I heard them say, *"Tomorrow's another day."* I confessed that for myself knowing that I would live to see that tomorrow.

They disappeared into the night and I was left alone in the boot of the car. After a while I started banging on the boot carefully and eventually someone heard the loud bang. Unknown to me, the car had been abandoned in a trailer park somewhere in the outskirts of Ibadan.

Someone who heard the banging tried to ask me some questions; I answered a few and tried not to give out too much information. He eventually deflated the tyres of the car and after sometime again, I heard the sound of a car approaching and out jumped some people who started asking me more questions.

Eventually, the boot of the car was forced open by these men who turned out to be the police. They had been contacted by the first fellow who had deflated the tyres; apparently he was a night guard in the trailer park where the car had been abandoned. I stepped out into life again after being locked up in that boot for about six and a half hours. I was discovered at about 1am.

I once heard a song which said many of us would have been dead if not for the "prayers of a crying mother". May the Lord continue to bless the praying mothers? I am alive today, not because I chose to be, but because my Father (the one who is a Father

to the fatherless) had laid out a plan for my life and He still needs me to complete the job He planned for me.

The greatest fear any young man just graduating from the university in the present day Nigeria is the fear of the unknown; how much more when you don't have a father there to pull all the strings and talk to all the 'big boys' in the society. Just when I left the university, I talked to an uncle of mine who spoke to me about telecommunications in Nigeria and how it was going to be the next big thing. I remember I pondered on it for months hoping that when it did arrive in Nigeria, I would be able to get a job with them. Little did I know then that I was going to eventually start a beautiful experience in that industry. To God be the glory!

Finally, I stand today as a testimony of the Almighty God; a professional engineer working with one of the biggest telecommunications companies in Nigeria and the interesting thing is that the Lord has barely started His work with me. I look forward to many more miracles in my life. My prayer is that everyone reading this testimony would tap into the message which is, "God has a very huge plan for all His creation, just tap into it and remain focused on Him."

Omowale:

My testimony of growing up without a father is not a one-off event that can be captured in a few pages. Indeed it is every day of my life and every step I have taken. At the age of four, I was admitted into primary school in Ibadan. I was always ashamed when other children spoke about their mummies and daddies and I would tell them my daddy had travelled (how does a child ever really understand what death is?). To me it was a sign that I was less than the others, it was like a strange illness that my family had, it was a stigma. After a while, I learned the word "deceased" and it always seemed more mature to describe my father that way...especially since many people had no idea what it meant and of course the 'average' human being never wants to admit the things or words they don't know!

By the time I was in secondary school, the stigma of coming from a single parent home still stung me deeper than many people could ever know. It didn't help matters that my mum worked for a Church and didn't have all the exotic things that my classmate's parents seemed to have. I had read somewhere that statistics showed that children raised in a single parent home were more likely to be dysfunctional and become delinquent...so I waited patiently for this fate that society had unknowingly cast upon me to manifest. I would silently pray for my mum to meet some nice, rich man who would marry her and move me up the social strata to become someone who had a 'dad'. For years, I would focus on everything I didn't have because my father had died when I was a child.

Through the years though, from my mother's deeply prayerful life-style and the lessons of faith she instilled in me, I realized that the one thing I did have which everyone else didn't seem to have was a heavenly Father that seemed to give me everything I asked for, and that knowledge became the wind beneath my wings. The Bible says in Psalms 68:5, "A Father of the fatherless and a Judge of the widow is God in His holy habitation". The Scriptures do not lie. I know this because God has given me everything an earthly father could have given and more.

I remember asking this heavenly 'Dad' many times for a bar of chocolate or some mundane thing like that and in a way I can only look back at now and describe as miraculous, someone would come up to me barely five minutes after my naive prayer and give me a bar of chocolate! Till date, I don't know any earthly father who would have been able to meet my every need like that.

When I didn't have provisions I would ask Him, when I didn't know the answers to my tests, I would ask Him when I wanted pretty clothes, I would ask Him, when I wanted to get admission into the University, I asked Him, when I wanted to graduate with a 1st Class and the odds were stacked against me, I asked Him, when I wanted a job with one of the foremost consulting companies in the world, I asked Him, when I had been single for some years and suitors had come, stayed and left and no husband seemed to be in sight, I asked Him and when I yearned to conceive and be a mother, I

asked Him - and you know what? He granted every one of these seemingly unattainable requests!

It has been a long and somewhat unusual journey but sometime in between (I can't quote a day or time), I became undeniably hooked on my heavenly Father for life. The statistics have been proven wrong. I have survived and become a responsible and successful young woman and so even if I could live all over again and have an earthly father (I know now that I was never meant to have one), that doesn't really matter to me because my heavenly Father and I are an item nobody can ever break. He will always be my 'Daddy' and I will forever remain "*Daddy's little girl!*"

Oluremi:

I started staying with my aunt in October 1988. It was not a planned thing. The practice before then was that I go to my aunt's place weekends or during the holidays. It was on one of such visits that it became a permanent thing.

I stayed with her through my university days and even after. Many people assume she's my mum and that my cousins are my sister and brother. I learnt a whole lot and have a lot to thank her for all through my stay with her. I learnt to abound and abase. The most important lesson is concerning my relationship with God. The major turning point in my relations with God came when I was about to get into the University of Ibadan. I applied to study Agric. Economics and scored above the cut-off point. On getting to the admission's office, I was given my admission letter and instructed to go to the department. On getting there, I was told I could not be admitted as I had not taken the biology examination. It was stated in the prospectus that you could sit for either Agricultural Science or Biology and I had opted for Agricultural Science.

I was distraught and very disappointed. I called mum (my aunt) immediately to tell her what I had been told at the department. She came over at once and met me at the admissions office and we went to see the admissions officer. He told her that I should write a change of course letter which he could not guarantee was going to be approved. He also further advised that I quickly go to the JAMB office and re-apply in case my

change of course is not approved. I was left with the option of either believing God for my admission or taking the easy way out (reapplying for JAMB).

Mum, who is a strong believer, asked me what I wanted to do as submission of JAMB applications was closing the next morning (by the way, the verdict for the change of course was not going to come out until three days later, by which time, JAMB would have closed!). I just told her I dared to believe that God was going to sort out the admission and she told me she would believe God along with me because she was sure God will not let me down. She will never force a decision on you when it comes to faith issues! She made us all realize that we always have to make our decisions where God is concerned.

Three days later, I got the approval for my change of course. I had learnt from her from an early age to trust God. I had learnt the 'if I perish, I perish' attitude. And you know what? With God, you never have to perish! It's just about daring to trust God. The problem with most of us is that we are always afraid God will fail us. He has never failed anyone yet! The Bible says, I was young, but now I am old I have never seen the righteous forsaken or his seed beg for bread. I am very sure that if I had applied for another JAMB examination, my change of course would not have been approved and I would have lost another year waiting at home!

There were a lot of other things I learnt - prayer, patience and Oh, I learnt faith! I learnt that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well. I learnt a whole lot that the pages of a book cannot contain. I learnt character and these things I would not trade for the whole world. I will forever be grateful to God for the opportunity He has given me to be raised as I was. We grew up faster than most of our peers! We were raised by a strict, God-fearing woman.

In life, your faith will always be tested. Service year came, i was posted to Jigawa State. We had to buy a map to find out where that was! Everybody said I should re-deploy because the place was too far and that was the practice then, but I did not because I had learnt at an early age that if God allows anything to happen to you, it's because He

has supplied you with the grace to bear it and it is now left for you to receive this grace. He is the one that stands in the present and sees the future. Nothing happens to a child of God without His permission. Even when we seemingly cannot make sense of what is happening, we should learn to say, *"Whatever my lot, You have taught me to say, it is well with my soul!"* Halleluyah!

I went to Jigawa for a year and thank God. The worry then was that when you don't serve in Lagos or down South generally, you loose touch and getting a job will be difficult. I finished service in May and I started working in June. It was not my dream job but I got something! God says if you are faithful in little, He will make you ruler over much. I worked like I had the best job in the world and God repaid me *"in due season"*.

I stayed at my first job for a year and a half even though I was praying and believing God for another one. At the end of 1999, I had a very strong urge to leave the job. I did not have another one I was looking at getting but I just knew within me that my time was up and I was very tired of that one. I had lost the zeal to put in my best so I resigned at the end of the year (23rd of December to be precise).

On 27th December, I got a call from a friend of mine who said her uncle said he would like to have a chat with me and would want me to work for him. My friend's uncle then came to see me at home and conducted an interview for me in my house! I was sceptical at first but I agreed and started in January. I also told him I was not going to be with him for long as I was sure it was almost time for me to move out of home.

Mum did not agree with me about resigning before getting another job but as her practice was, she let me make my decision and stood by me on it. I remember her asking me if God had told me to resign and I had said no but that the way I was feeling then, if God came down with a placard telling me not to resign that I probably would not hear. I also told her that I was just tired of the job and that I was not putting in my best anymore and something I had learnt is never to be afraid to make mistakes because if

you do make a mistake in the sincerity of your heart, God will always turn it into a stepping stone for His glory.

I started the new job in January but the agreement I had with God was that by June that year, I would have landed my dream job. The job did come. And you know what? My letter for the job said I should start in July, and I was thinking to myself that I had told God, June. But as the practice was, in everything give thanks, I did rejoice and give thanks to God for doing it once again.

A couple of days later, the Head of Human Resources called and asked me if I could start in June as he really did not see why I should wait till July! So I started in June. God is faithful. It was not because I was a 'good girl'. It was just because He had chosen us to be the object of His mercy and favour. The job I got was paying me more than five times what I had been getting and it was indeed the Lord's doing.

Chapter Ten

Why I Have Not Remarried

I cannot conclude this book without talking about the most asked question in the past twenty five years of my life.

Over the years, a lot of people have asked me why I have not remarried. I was just thirty years old when my husband died. I was young and beautiful and of marriageable age. There were lots of pressures from family, friends and well-wishers, all of them encouraging me to get married again and settle down. There were also pressures from suitors and these suitors came in different forms ranging from married men who were ready to dump their wives for me, to unmarried ones, many of them younger than me.

In the early years of my widowhood, it was tough for me being a single parent and it was lonely too. There were quite a number of rich men ready to spoil me with money which I knew they could afford. Some of these suitors were sincere but many of them were phonies who promised my children and me heaven on earth which I knew was all a lie.

However, I tried out a couple of them but it was almost impossible for me to settle for any of them because I kept comparing them with my late husband and they did not measure up to him. The few I could have considered were already married and I was not sure then, whether I wanted to be a second wife or mistress to any man, even though at that time, I was still in the world and had not yet been born again. I found that my conscience would not allow me snatch another woman's husband even though I could have if I had wanted to. The only man I went out with constantly for about two and a half years, I had to let go of when I got serious with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Over the years, I have been asked frequently whether I had entered a covenant with my late husband before or after we were married and could that have been the reason why I had refused to remarry. I told them, No! Even if I had entered into a covenant knowingly or unknowingly, such a covenant would have been broken when I gave my life to Christ. The Word of God says that when we are in Christ, old things are passed away, behold, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). Also Paul, while admonishing the Corinthians about marriage, clearly declares that when someone's husband dies, the wife is not bound by any law to him anymore, she is at liberty to remarry to who she wills, but only in the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:39, Romans 7:2-3).

Some other people have also asked me whether God had told me not to remarry or whether I had made a vow to God not to remarry. The answer is No! God did not at any time tell me not to remarry. In fact, with what I know about God, He will never tell anyone such a thing categorically because He said in His Word that two are better than one (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). He instituted marriage so why would He tell anyone not to marry? God always leaves such decisions to each individual. Paul who never married, in his letter to the Corinthians said, it is better to marry than to burn, even though he said marriage may bring distractions. Paul also recognises that marriage is a matter of choice that each individual has to make.

As for my making a vow to God not to remarry, I would never make such a vow. I was married once and I enjoyed my marriage to the fullest. I know that the institution of marriage is of God and can be very beautiful if it is God-ordained. I had no regrets for getting married once so why should I vow never to remarry because my husband had died?

One thing I know is that I cannot afford to compromise my Christianity because of marriage. If I have to remarry, it must be only in the Lord like Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:39. Some have wondered why I hardly ask people to join me in praying for a life partner and why I behave as if marriage is not important and not for me. I have had to share the reason for this attitude from the two Scriptures that God planted in my heart as a very young Christian. These are Matthew 6:25-34 which says, "*Therefore I*

say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?... but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things including a husband (my interpretation), shall be added unto you..."

Paul says that widows indeed should be honoured (1 Timothy 5:3) and widows indeed are those who are serious with the things of God (1 Timothy 5:5). He continues in 1 Timothy 5:6 that a widow who lives in pleasure (going from one man to the other - my interpretation) is dead while she lives.

From these Scriptures, I made up my mind as a young widow, to be a widow indeed not the one that lives in pleasure and I also made up my mind that I would seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and allow God to add all other things including a husband if He wished. One thing I know is that God's Word is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:8a).

The Word of God also says that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, he will grant us our heart's desire (Psalm 37:4). So I decided to delight myself in the Lord and not in any other thing including searching for a husband.

You see, my confidence is based on the word of God which can never fail. The Bible says that God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man that He should repent; has He said, shall He not do it? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good? (Numbers 23:19). With this confidence in the Word of the Lord, I believe that if God still wants to add a husband to me, even at the age that I am now, He can do it, for there is nothing impossible with God and I will definitely accept the gift, for the blessing of the Lord maketh rich and addeth no sorrow with it (Proverbs 10:22). There is nothing impossible with God and nothing is too difficult for Him. He is the One who stands in the present and knows the future which we don't. He knows what is best for each and every child of His and He always makes things beautiful in His own time.

For those who have been asking or wondering how I have been able to cope without a man in my life for so many years, my answer to them is that God's grace has been sufficient for me. Had it not been for His grace and mercy, I would have been consumed! I give Him all the glory!

Chapter Eleven

Taste And See That The Lord Is Good!

This book will not fulfill its full purpose, if I fail to invite you good people, who have taken time to read it this far, to come and partake of the Almightyness and the goodness of the Lord.

If you have been reading this book and you are not sure whether you are born again, that is, if you have not at any time deliberately accepted the Lord Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour, I plead with you that you do so now, so that the joy and peace that attends the salvation of our souls will be yours.

You need to believe in your heart and confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus died for you and God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9). The Bible says that with the heart, man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:10). This is what is meant by being born again.

Jesus Himself in John 3:1-3 was speaking to a very religious dignitary of His time, Nicodemus, when He said that except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Jesus explained to him further, that a man must be born again before he can enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Jesus in Romans 3:7 says "*...ye must be born again.*" So my prayer at this time of writing is that everyone reading this book will pause for a moment and ask Jesus to come into his or her heart so that he or she can be born again into the Kingdom of God. Settle that score once and for all and receive the salvation which is freely given through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For those of us who are already born again, my prayer is that we will remain rooted and grounded in God's love and that our eyes of understanding will be further enlightened that we may know the hope of God's calling upon our lives. God's calling and purpose upon our lives, however, is for us to become like His son, Jesus Christ,

who is the first born among brethren (Romans 8:29). God wants us Christians to be like our big brother Jesus, who is the image of God the Father Himself. God is far more interested in our becoming like Him than what we are doing for Him. He wants us to be kind and gentle like Him. He wants us to be meek and lowly in heart, to be faithful, to be patient, to be long suffering, to be temperate in all things. See Galatians 5:22-23. May all the above fruits of the Spirit be our vision and our heart desire as we continue in our Christian journey, amen.

In conclusion, God indeed has turned for me my mourning into dancing and has put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praises to Him and not be silent (Psalm 30:11-12). My life that I thought had ended when my husband died twenty-five years ago has now become a life that speaks hope and courage into other people's lives, especially young widows and hurting individuals.

My children, whose future I was so afraid for, are now grown up and are very successful in their chosen careers. They have good jobs and are very comfortable to the glory of God. All of them are born again and are serving the Lord and my daughter is married to a beautiful Christian husband who is very devoted to her. What more could I have asked for? God has been so good to me. These children indeed have been taught of the Lord and great has been my peace and their peace also. The way they have turned out, no one could have imagined that they grew up without an earthly father!

It's the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our sight. God has watched over His Word to perform it in my life. He has given me a peace that passeth all understanding and joy that radiates through the whole of my being. He has also given me a heart of contentment and an inheritance in Him that cannot be taken away.

As a young Christian, God gave me promises based on Isaiah 54:1-17 and over the years I have seen God fulfil those promises in my life. God indeed has not put me to shame. He has made me forget the shame of my youth and has helped me not to remember the reproach of my widowhood anymore (Isaiah 54:4). The mountains indeed have departed and the hills have been removed, but God's kindness has not departed

neither has the covenant of His peace been removed from me because He has had mercy on me (Isaiah 54:10).

I was indeed afflicted and tossed with tempests and not comforted, but God in His mercy has laid my clothes with fair colours and has laid my foundation with sapphires. He has made my windows of agate and my gates of carbuncles and my children have been taught of the Lord and great has been their peace (Isaiah 54:11-13). God indeed has turned my mourning into dancing. Who could have imagined that a widow who had not earned a salary for the past ten years can be as comfortable as I am, but because God has said for me to stay at home and minister to Him and to others in twos and threes and to intercede for His Church and for the nations, He was faithful in bringing the ravens to supply me food and water even in the time of famine. Praise ye the Lord!

I will end this book with the words of a song I love to sing on occasions where I have to publicly testify of the faithfulness of God in my life. The song goes thus:

He pulled me out of the miry clay,

He set my feet on the rock to stay,

He put a song in my mouth to sing,

And now I can shout Halleluyah!

Halleluyah! Halleluyah!

Jesus lifted me!

Oh, Glory, Halleluyah!

Jesus lifted me!

TO OUR READERS:

At the present time the following writings are available:

1. Read Through The Bible In One Year (R.T.T.B.)
2. He Turned My Mourning Into Dancing.

We choose to send out these writings free of charge, as time and finances would permit. Any contributions sent in to help defray printing costs will be gratefully received.

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