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Subject: A FRIEND'S TESTIMONY

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## A FRIEND'S TESTIMONY

### GOD'S SOVEREIGN GRACE

I heard the words. I didn't know where they came from. I didn't know they were Scripture, but I knew they were true. The voice said, "This day thy soul is required of thee."

It was 1986. I was 30 years old, and my life was wasted. I had been an alcoholic since a teenager. I was also a drug addict. I couldn't function without starting everyday by getting 'high' on marijuana. I had made a few vain attempts at religion, in treatment centers, or to escape troubles with parents or authorities, but always with selfish motives. Being raised in the "Bible-Belt," I had a smattering of the gospel, but I was never convinced enough to believe that it was anything except modern man's mythology. I often tried to bargain with God, and when He wouldn't meet me on my terms, the devil was always quick to accommodate me.

But the devil always left me with the feeling that one day I would have to pay for his favors. So when I heard this voice, I knew my day of reckoning had come. Since I was so miserable and didn't have anything to lose, it came as somewhat of a relief. I had been living in an old run-down house way out in the country in south Alabama, where I was growing marijuana. Ever so often I would drive to my old hometown, which had a college campus, and sell some "pot," or just party with old friends.

It was on one of these return trips to south Alabama when I heard the voice say that my soul was required. I was driving a small Honda Civic and decided to drive head-on into the first big 18-wheeler truck that came my way. I felt a "peace" about what I was doing, so firing up another joint (marijuana cigarette), I continued down the county road waiting for my opportunity to escape my miserable life. I hadn't gone but a couple of miles or so, when I looked and saw a little toddler {2 year girl} pushing a toy down the white stripe on the side of the highway. It startled me and I immediately pulled over and went to the child. It was a little girl. I couldn't see a house, and when I tried to ask the little girl some questions, she couldn't talk good enough to put a sentence together. I picked her up and walked back the way she had come, and came to a dirt driveway emerging through a thicket of pine trees. As I turned and walked down the driveway, I heard a man cry out, "Rachel, Rachel, O God, where's Rachel!" I saw him come running from the front of a house on the other side of the pine thicket.

For the first time in my life I felt like I had done something good. I felt like a hero, but God had a different purpose. The man and I met about halfway down the driveway. As we made eye contact, I began trembling. The father of the child was a person I had gone to high school with. He had

been one of those "Jesus Freaks," and had always been witnessing to me about salvation. In return, I always mocked him, or laughed him to scorn. He was always carrying a Bible and took advantage of every opportunity to pray or preach. I had thought he was ridiculous. This time was different. Suddenly I wasn't the hero I thought I was. He recognized me, and said my name as I handed him his child.

He sat the child down, turned, looked me right in the eye and asked, "How is your relationship with Jesus Christ?" I buckled at the knees as I told him, "I don't know Jesus. My life is wasted, and I had just been talking with the devil." He invited me in his house, but I declined. I told him I had to get back on the road. His last words to me as I turned to leave were, "Before you do anything, try Jesus."

I staggered back to my car, got in and sped away. I lit another joint but it had no effect. My mind was racing. I tried another joint but still no effect. Jesus was real. Jesus was greater. Jesus rescued me. He was my hero. I was certainly convinced, but I didn't know what to do with it. I was so flabbergasted at what had taken place; the hour and a half trip home seemed like five minutes. I went inside and lay across the bed and buried my head in the pillow. I began to talk to God. I said, "God, I've often called to you for help, and guess you always did, because I'm still alive. But I'm going to quit calling you God, because this man said to try Jesus." So instead of saying, "God help me," I cried out, "Jesus, please help me."

At that instant the Prince of Peace came to me and gently removed my old wicked selfish heart and gave me a new one. He took away all condemnation, and translated me from the power of Satan into His kingdom, an everlasting kingdom without end. At that moment I was born again, and when my feet hit the floor, I was walking in newness of life. I hadn't committed suicide that day, but I certainly died. Jesus, my Savior and Deliverer from suicide, was also my Creator, and He made me a new creation—old things passed away. He makes all things new simply because, "Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

I love you, Jesus. You're my Lord, my God and my Hero.

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