



## My Grandpa's Story

By Cherie Wagner



Have you ever prayed for something for a long time? For years? What about for decades? How's that going?

I was a young girl when I gave my life to Jesus. As hard as it can be for me at times to remember the events of yesterday, I remember the details of that day as if it were yesterday. I was five years old sitting on the bottom bunk bed in my room with my mom. I was raised in a Christian home and spent nearly every waking moment of my young life in the church, so this wasn't the first time I had heard about Jesus, but this was the time that it stuck.

As my mom explained the love of Jesus for me and how His sacrifice on the cross in my place forgave me of all my sins, I wholeheartedly surrendered my life to Him...as much as a five-year-old girl can do. What I knew of Jesus, I loved, and what I understood of the Gospel, I couldn't help but share with everyone I knew. I was that fiery, zealous new convert, telling friends and family alike all about the love of Jesus every chance I got. I was unashamed, bold, and quite frankly, probably a bit awkward and pushy at times.

Among the many friends I had who didn't know Jesus, I also had family members who didn't know the LORD, my grandfather being among them. I was raised by a single mom, and my dad was rarely in the picture. While my grandpa was not a fan of Jesus or anything having to do with Church, the Bible, or faith, he was the father figure I had growing up, and I adored him. Much of the time I spent up at my grandparents' house when I was a young girl was spent in his lap as he told me stories of when he was young, living through the Great Depression, his first job, his time in the military, and so many other things. I was fascinated with him and his stories, but I was also painfully aware of his disinterest in Jesus.

From the time I accepted Jesus as my Savior, I began telling my grandpa about Jesus. I would share the Gospel, even debate theology with him while trying to defend the faith, and for years was met with nothing but his rejection...not rejection of me, but worse...rejection of Jesus. He just wasn't interested. And for as much as he loved me, he wanted nothing to do with God.

His hard-heartedness didn't stop me. For years, I would sit and discuss faith, Jesus, the Bible, and theology with him, but more importantly, I would pray. This journey of prayer for my grandpa and conversations with him about faith would last for nearly 40 years, a length of time I couldn't have fathomed when I was that young, new believer sitting in my room with my mom.

I'm not sure how 40 years goes by so quickly, but it was an age that I never really thought I'd reach, and then all of a sudden, or so it seemed, I was there. And I was still waiting, still praying for my grandpa to accept the love, grace, and forgiveness that Jesus was offering to him. At times, I became deeply discouraged in the face of his cynicism and critique of my faith. Other times, I was hopeful, and would stand in confident faith that I would see the day when he accepted Jesus as his Savior. I even had a friend tell me that she had a dream about him accepting Jesus!

This past year for my family has been a tragic one. We lost my cousin to a massive heart attack, suddenly and very unexpectedly. He was my grandpa's oldest grandson. Just a little over a month after that devastating loss, my uncle died suddenly and unexpectedly from being stung by a bee. This was my grandpa's youngest son. Our hearts were shattered, and yet, I've seen throughout the course of my life how God uses grief like this to get our attention. While we were traveling to be with my family in Texas for my uncle's funeral, my grandpa was put on Hospice. And my heart sank.

At 93 years of age, he was finally being required to face the finiteness of life. I knew time was running out, and I was desperate to see him come to faith in Jesus. So, I hopped on another plane, and rushed to be by his side. And once again, I shared my faith. I prayed with and for him. I asked him to believe. I asked him why he didn't. And his response crushed me. Once again in more or less words, he said no. Tears streamed down my face as I walked out of his hospital room, knowing that this would probably be the last time I would see him. I wept all the way to the car. I cried on the drive home and all night. How could this be? How was it possible that even now, he would not receive this free gift of grace?

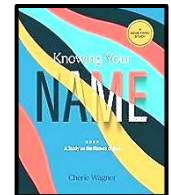
A few weeks later, I received a video message from my mom. I was driving home, so I just listened to her talk and kept my eyes on the road. She began to share the events of the last two weeks since I had been with her and my grandparents in Florida. They had moved my grandpa from the facility he was in to be at home with my grandma, and a chaplain from Hospice had started coming about once a week to visit with my grandpa. On one particular visit, this man laid out the Gospel message clearly for my grandpa and asked him if he believed it to be true. In typical grandpa fashion, my grandpa said, "Well, when you put it that way, yes I believe that!"

Nearly 40 years of praying, waiting, debating, sharing, hoping, and praying some more, and my grandpa finally professed faith in Jesus Christ. I wept as I finished my drive home. I sat in my car, parked in my driveway and just cried tears of joy, thanking the LORD for answering 40 years of prayers. Won't He do it!

I once heard a pastor say, "If there's breath in their lungs, there's hope for their soul." These words fueled my hope in prayer for my grandpa, and I pray they fuel your hope in whatever you have been praying for. Never stop praying for the lost, the wayward child, the faithless spouse. Our God is able. Won't He do it! – Cherie Wagner

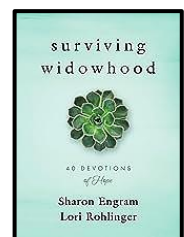


Cherie has been a sweet blessing in my life. I attended an event where she shared about her grandpa. Her persistent prayer for him touched my heart and encouraged me to keep praying for those I love! I hope you've been encouraged as well. Her life-long passion is two-fold: knowing Jesus Christ and making Him known., Cherie founded **Neue Thing**, a women's ministry that exists to **Encourage, Equip, and Empower** women with the Word of God. Her latest study: **Knowing Your Name – A Study on the Names of God** is available now on Amazon. Please check it out! Her website is: [neue thing.org](http://neue thing.org)



Sharon is another sweet blessing in my life. She became a widow four years ago and co-authored the book: **Surviving Widowhood: 40 Devotions of Hope** with her daughter Lori who lost her husband seven years ago. What an incredible resource!

Sharon was invited to speak at the Lake Havasu Christian Women's Connection Luncheon recently and asked if I would accompany her. The women were captivated by her testimony. I love spending time with Sharon, and we had so much fun together! We also had opportunities along the way to share the hope we have found in Jesus.



As we were checking out of our hotel, the LORD opened the opportunity to talk to Haily, who was working at the front desk, about Jesus. She shared some personal struggles she was going through, and I gave her the **Would You Like to Know God Personally?** booklet. She asked for our numbers, and we encouraged her to reach out to us if she had any questions. We are continuing to pray for her.



**Please Pray:** My dear friend and neighbor Sue recently lost her husband. I assured Sue that I would walk this journey with her. I have given Sharon's book to many other widows, and I am going to give one to Sue too. Please pray for Sue on this journey and ask the LORD to help me be an encouragement to her.

## Forgotten Prayers

“Have you ever felt as if the Lord had forgotten your prayers? I have. I am particularly prone to feel this way after I have prayed for something for a very long time and seen no apparent answer from the Lord.

The Bible reminds us in the Gospel of Luke 1:5-14: *“In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years.*

*Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth."*

There are a few things I think are very important for us to understand from this account:

1. Zechariah and Elizabeth were elderly and incapable of having children because Elizabeth was barren and both she and Zechariah were beyond their child-bearing years.
2. As the years rolled by, their dream of having a child slowly disappeared. Praying for a child seemed pointless as their bodies grew older.
3. When the angel announced that his prayer had been answered, I can imagine Zechariah asking himself what the angel was referring to. But before Zechariah could answer his own silent question, the angel stunned him with the news that he and Elizabeth were to finally have a child!
4. The Lord had not forgotten the years Zechariah and Elizabeth had prayed for a child. They may have forgotten all the praying they had done for a child, but God had not forgotten!
5. All along the Lord had intended to give this godly and faithful couple a child who would be a great joy and delight to them. But in addition to bringing them great personal joy, the Lord also had in mind to give them a son who would cause many to rejoice because of his birth. This very special child would announce the coming of the Lord Jesus! Had God answered their youthful prayers when and how they expected Him to, their son probably would have grown up to be a fine Jewish man who lived a good and productive life, but who would have been quickly forgotten by the world. By having to wait for God's perfect timing, Zechariah and Elizabeth were given the forerunner (John the Baptist) to the Savior of the world. The world has never forgotten John nor the Messiah he proclaimed!

We must not interpret God's silence to our prayers as divine forgetfulness. He has promised never to forget us or our prayers:

***"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!"*** Isaiah 49:15

Zephaniah 3:17 reminds us that: ***"He will take great delight in you, The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."***

Like Zechariah and Elizabeth, won't you discover anew that the Lord is with you; he is mighty to save you; he takes great delight in you; he quiets you with his love; he rejoices over you with singing regarding the many ways he will graciously, creatively, and unexpectedly answer the prayers you thought he had forgotten!" – Gene Beekman

I'm grateful . . . ***Our Prayers Never Expire!*** – Mark Batterson

## ***Munds Park Community Church Women's Retreat***

Thank you for praying for me. The Lord met with us in a marvelous way. I sensed the Lord's deep joy as I spoke about my wonderful Savior. He answered, and prepared hearts to receive the messages He had given me to share with the 60+ women who attended.



*When my pastor's wife asked me if I knew anyone who could be the speaker for our women's event, Sara came to mind. I've been with Sara for many years with Moms in Prayer. Her vivacious personality and her heart for telling others about God's kingdom are how God has gifted her. The women loved Sara and her examples of how she evangelizes. Down to earth, she gave us all a glimpse into her life of faith. – Diane Dion*



It takes a lot of preparation for an all-day retreat, and these women did an outstanding job! The tables were beautifully decorated, the food was delicious – served by the men of the church. This retreat was so much fun, and I loved the women and their precious hearts. What a blessing to be able to spend the day with them. Grateful the LORD allowed my path to cross with each woman who came!



What a delight to spend Friday evening with Pastor Steve and his wife Sara in their home for dinner. They have a calling, a heart, and a burden for their community and are intentionally and creatively reaching outside the walls of their church to include others. Steve told me that they are the largest church in Munds Park, and then with a twinkle in his eye he said, we are the ONLY church in Munds Park! 😊 What a fun couple! Their mission statement: Leading those close to us, closer to Christ. What an honor and privilege to partner with them in this strategic harvest field in Munds Park.

I am grateful for the opportunities the LORD gives me to serve Him and I give Him all the Glory! I spoke three times: Session # 1 – *Hope has a Name* Session # 2 – *Celebrating Friendship* Session #3 - *Becoming a Contagious Christian*

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*Your sessions were all so inspiring! Today the ladies at church could not stop talking about the message that touched them. It was wonderful! Thank you again for coming to our little slice of paradise to share your faith and experience. You are a true blessing!*  
-- Lynn Otlewski

*Sara is an incredible Christian speaker. She is full of humor and so down to earth which everyone can relate to. Through her own life experiences, which we all have, she shared from the heart her sad and happy times. Sara shared her stories with wonderful props to help us remember to keep our eyes on Jesus. She has a deep understanding and knowledge of the scriptures. Sara is a person that would be a true friend forever! – Chris Wallace*

*While getting a mani/pedi today, I asked my manicurist "Do you ever think about spiritual things?" and I thought she was going to faint! I have been known to powernap and not engage in meaningless chit-chat. She wanted to know whatever made me ask such a deep question. My response was Sara Beekman! After explaining about the retreat I attended on Saturday, it was amazing what came out of my mouth! Divine intervention, that's for sure! Lots of questions, even from the customer sitting next to me! To make a long story short, I am looking forward to having my hair cut this afternoon & asking more questions!! PS My hairdresser and I are now praying for each other! -- Jan Newman*

Hearing how Jan stepped out in faith to share Jesus with these women brought great JOY to my heart! Someone said: *The harvest is plentiful, and the observers are many.* Let's move from being observers to being laborers in His harvest field!



**September 29-30 in Sedona, Arizona**

I will be leading two breakout sessions entitled: ***The Joy of Becoming a Contagious Christian***

***Help me to keep my eyes and ears open so I can know Your heart for this world! Keep my heart tender so that I don't miss any opportunity to glorify You in and through my life.***

***Sara***