

Rising from the **ASHES**

My Journey to Wholeness



Renee Highlander

“Renee, if it were not for the sovereign will of God, you would be in a mental hospital for the rest of your life!”

In *Rising from the Ashes*, Renee shares her personal testimony about the ongoing healing and restoration that is taking place in her as she learned how to allow God to work in her life. Struggling with depression, shame, PTSD, and no sense of personal identity or worth, she had only one place to turn. It was in and through Christ that she discovered who she really was and what God had created her to be. Now, to see that worked out in her life was the challenge.



From a dysfunctional childhood and broken marriage to the restoration of her soul, the journey continues. Though she received Christ at a young age, she had no model of what a normal Christian or family should be. Even the “Christianity” she knew was dysfunctional. It wasn’t until thirty years later she found Christ—or perhaps we should say Christ found her—broken, and nearly catatonic in a mental hospital. She would bounce in and out of mental health facilities for the next couple of years, but God started a work of healing and restoration.

Renee shares what she has learned over the last thirty years about herself, the reason she was the way she was, and the spiritual truths that God used to bring healing and restoration in her life.

Anyone with a traumatic past will find hope and encouragement in *Rising from the Ashes*.

Renee and her husband Steve live in Independence, MO and Pastor a Foursquare Church in Ottawa, Kansas. They got married on March 1, 2025, beginning a new phase of the journey together.

Rising from the Ashes

My Journey to Wholeness

A Sobering Realization

“Renee, if it were not for the sovereign will of God, you would be in a mental hospital for the rest of your life!”

My psychologist made this statement about 30 years ago during a counseling session. A few years earlier, I had a nervous breakdown, coming to the darkest point of my life. I had been in and out of mental health facilities several times. That day, the words hit me hard—in two ways. I’ll explain more in a minute.

First, I knew I had been broken because of the abuse I had suffered, but I did not realize that it was so severe until he made that statement. For me, it was just my life up to that point. I knew nothing else.

The second revelation would start me on the second part of my journey to wholeness. I knew in that moment that God had a plan for my life, and now I had a reason to work hard to recover.

Fast forward thirty years. Over the past three decades, God did—and continues to do—an amazing work in my life. Through faith in the name of Jesus, I have experienced spiritual and emotional healing. I have learned how to be “me.” I have learned more about who and what God is and how He wants to work in the lives of those who will let Him. The Journey is not finished, but I continue daily trying to walk in the grace and knowledge of God as He reveals Himself to me and grants me understanding and wisdom.

The Back Story

I grew up in a family that attended church whenever the doors were open. My father was the chairman of the deacons, and everyone looked to him for wisdom. The problem was that at home, he was a very quiet, withdrawn man who only spoke when angry—and that was most of the time. I was afraid of him most of my life.

The only positive thing from my early church experience was that I heard God’s Word preached at an early age—the thing that probably saved my life in more ways than one. Even though I was a Christian, nobody taught me how to make Jesus real in my life. A genuine Christian life was not something I saw modeled. Still, God was watching over me,

and the seeds would one day sprout into a vibrant faith for healing and restoration.

The Lost Child

Psychologists talk about the different roles children play in a dysfunctional family. There is the hero, the clown, the lost child, and the scapegoat. The lost child becomes invisible and gets lost in the shuffle. That was me, “The Lost Child.” I grew up in an emotional vacuum. I never remember getting hugs or kisses from anyone or hearing the words, “I love you.”

I didn’t know anything was wrong until I married at 20 years old. I began to see other couples who were affectionate and loving with each other. I started to wonder why my marriage was different. I had been married for several years when I realized something was very off between my husband and me. I knew I wasn’t happy but had no idea why.

I began to talk to a counselor at church, and the term “codependent” was discussed. I began to attend a class at the church that discussed healthy relationships. I started to realize how emotionally deprived I had been in my life and that what I had been living with was not what a healthy, happy family was supposed to be. I used to see people who were happy and doing well in life but didn’t understand why they were different. They seemed to be thriving even if they were not

Christians. I began to understand a healthy relationship and how emotionally healthy parents were supposed to raise their children. I saw the problem in my marriage. I also started to understand the brokenness in my life. The enormous emotional vacuum I was living in.

Spiders in the Night

When I was about five, I started having recurring night terrors that would cause me to wake up screaming and crying. Spiders as big as dogs with huge eyes came at me out of the closet in herds, wanting to devour me. I could see hatred in their eyes. This same nightmare happened over and over for about two years.

My mother would come to the door, turn the light on, and say, “There, maybe that will help,” and go back to bed. She did not even know how to comfort me. I was never held or comforted, even through the trauma of these nightmares. Instead, my family would be upset with me and make me feel ashamed for waking them up.

If I started crying for some reason when my dad was around, he would tell me to “Dry it up.” I was never asked what was wrong or why was upset. He just said, “Dry it up.”

When I was about seven, my older brother, my younger sister, and I were allowed to go to a Three Stooges movie—

which was a rare treat in those days. The movie had a giant spider as big as a warehouse running after the Three Stooges across the screen. There was my night terror on the big screen, only a hundred times bigger. I became hysterical. My brother had to take me out of the theater, and of course, he was mad that he didn't get to watch the rest of the movie.

I was shamed again and again because of this experience. No one asked me what was wrong or why I was so upset. I became the butt of the family joke, "Renee is afraid of the Three Stooges." Even as an adult, I was teased about that. No one ever asked why I was so afraid or why I got so hysterical. I was just made fun of by my siblings. My parents never asked what was going on or stopped the teasing.

The night terrors—then this experience at the movie and the shaming afterward—caused me to totally shut down emotionally as a child. I developed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a young child because of it. I had no one to work through my fears with. No one cared enough to ask me what was wrong.

As an adult, God revealed to me that my recurring dream was from the big brown jumping spiders in our house that would jump out of the closets or drawers when we opened them. There were also big black and yellow spiders in the tomato patch in the garden. They built their webs at eye level,

and when I picked tomatoes, they would be right in my face when I turned the corner. The eyes I saw in my dream were my father's eyes looking at me, and I could feel hatred and anger. I felt he wanted to hurt and punish me somehow for something I still don't understand. The terror I felt from the spiders and the anger from my father caused my night terrors.

An Affair Only Complicated Matters

Dysfunction ruled my life from an early age. Even though I was a Christian, I didn't know how to live as a Christian. The sin in my life finally took a toll. When I was around 40 years old, I had a complete nervous breakdown. I had been having an affair and had divorced my husband, thinking this would solve all my problems. Once I was single, I realized my baggage was much heavier than I had known. I stopped sleeping. Eventually, I checked myself into the psychiatric unit of the hospital because I could not even function at that point. Eventually, I made five trips to the hospital just to get to a place where I could stand on my own two feet mentally and emotionally.

The hospital staff helped me understand that I was struggling with severe depression and anxiety as well as severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. That is when my life began to make sense to me. God let me know that He wanted

to put me back together the way I was supposed to be in the first place. He was about to begin re-creating me into the person He saw in His mind's eye. That is where my journey with God truly began—at the lowest, most broken point in my life.

The Journey of Restoration

It has not been an easy or quick journey. I was on disability for several years. I couldn't get a good job because I was not able to function in a healthy way. However, God has been so faithful in continuing to work with me. He was there for me all the way. About ten years ago, I was able to get off of disability and get a good full-time job. God continues to restore me day by day. I have often told Him, "I want to become all You saw in Your mind when You were creating me."

Over time, I realized that I am a unique creation of God—just as much as a red bird or apple tree. A red bird doesn't have to be a swan, stork, or anything except a red bird. An apple tree doesn't have to work at producing apples; that is what God created it to do.

God revealed to me that I was like that, too. He created me to be "Renee," whatever that looks like. I can just be myself. I don't have to strive to do things God did not create me to do. I can live out my destiny with God's giftings, becoming the

unique creation He made me to be. I can enjoy and love being myself. God made me the way I am because He wanted me to be the person I am—and He loves me for who I am.

God has revealed Himself to me through my healing in so many ways, mostly by showing me scripture promises and then telling me to trust Him to fulfill them in my life.

The Penny That Made a Difference

I had heard a story about a rich man who always stopped to pick up pennies. It always reminded him to trust God. I started to notice an odd pattern. I would find a penny or small change on the ground when I was struggling with something. It reminded me that God was right there in the midst of the struggle with me. It became a tangible way for God to comfort me with His presence in the middle of the situation. The penny says, “In God we trust,” and at that moment, I had a reminder: He’s got this—and me. I was again encouraged to trust Him—no matter what happened, I was going to be okay.

God also reminded me that the Bible says, “When your mother and father forsake you, the Lord will take you up.” This promise meant that He wanted to be to me what my parents couldn’t. Being adopted as a child of God is very literal to me because He has become my Father and taken me under His wing to allow me to thrive. I finally had someone who truly

loved me and was taking care of me. He promised that He would restore the years the locusts had eaten in my life.

At one point, God showed me the scripture: “Unless you become as a little child, you will not inherit the Kingdom of God.” He began to take me back to the broken pieces of my childhood and my life. I started to understand myself in a way I never had before. God began to restore it all. We are still working on that today.

One time, God showed me a picture of myself looking into a shattered mirror. Like that mirror, I had been broken into a million pieces. That helped me understand myself better and helped me to be patient with myself and God. I understood the broken parts had to be put back together before I would know who I really was. Only then would I know wholeness.

A Pitch Black House

Around this time, I had a vision. God showed me what He was doing in my life.

In my vision, I realized I had been sitting in a pitch-black house with no light anywhere. I then became aware of a noise outside the window and a light coming in around the edges of the window shade. I had never seen this light before. Outside, I heard people laughing, so I lifted the shade and saw a crowd

of people around Jesus. They were all having a wonderful time hanging out with Him and walking down the road.

I realized that even though Jesus was with all those people, He was looking over at me. I could tell He wanted to come inside where I was—in the dark. I opened the door, and He came inside with me, sat on the floor where I was, and spent time with me. As we sat there, I began to realize how filthy the whole house was inside, and I was embarrassed, but Jesus told me it was okay because He wanted to clean it up for me if I would let Him. I could feel His unconditional acceptance. He took away my shame by accepting me right where I was.

He proceeded to clean the dirt off the walls, floors, and every surface of the room. As He did, I realized there were doors to rooms I had closed off and didn't even know they were there.

One by one, we opened each door. Each room was the same—full of filth and grime. Every time a door opened, I was embarrassed. However, each time, He graciously offered to fix and clean the room for me. I was glad He wanted to take on those major jobs. I was so overwhelmed, I didn't even know where to begin. Gradually, I began to realize these rooms were the parts of myself that had been shattered through the years of abuse and neglect that I had lived

through. Each time He worked on an area, I was able to receive healing and restoration in that part of my soul.

My sin and the sin of others against me along the way had forced me to shut down parts of myself where I could not tolerate any more hurt. Subconsciously, I protected myself by shutting off those parts of myself. I became an empty shell—existing only to make sure those around me were happy. Life had programmed me to believe if they were happy with me, I wouldn't be hurt anymore by their angry responses or hurtful looks of disappointment.

At the end of my vision, Jesus and I were sitting inside that same house. It was actually made of glass, and His light was shining out now and everyone could see inside where He and I were living in the house that represented my life.

“Help Me!” Help Me!”

One night, I was hurting very deeply. I started crying out to Jesus, “Help ME! Help ME!”

When I cried out, I could feel that part of me that had shut down as a child at the movie theater crying out from somewhere deep inside me. She finally felt safe enough to call out to Jesus for help.

I realized that the little girl inside of me never had the chance to thrive, grow up, or enjoy just being a child. She had

been hidden away deep inside me all those many years. The person I had become as an adult was an identity that was safe for me. I was a people pleaser, never risking the chance to disappoint anyone for fear of their reaction.

After Jesus showed me that the real me was hiding deep inside. He began to lead that part of me into wholeness and healing. God and I worked to allow that lost little girl to come out, find her voice, and be able to set boundaries. A counselor told me I needed to give myself permission to start doing things I had always wanted to do but didn't think I could—or had never had permission to.

I began to sense myself becoming more and more whole. The freedom of Christ was becoming my reality. He said, "Whom the Son sets free is free indeed." That freedom includes both liberty from bondage and freedom to do things you could not do before.

Jesus also said, "The thief comes not but to steal, kill, and destroy, but I have come that you might have life and that MORE abundantly." At some point, I realized that the enemy had stolen my very identity and that Jesus had so much life for me. I would say, "God, you promised me abundant life, and this isn't it, so where is it? I am not giving up until I know what you are talking about. I want all there is to have in Jesus."

That is still my prayer today. It would be a shame that Jesus died, and I didn't experience all that His death had purchased for me.

The Locusts Won't Win

As I began to heal, God reminded me of a promise from the Old Testament. "I will restore the years that the locusts have eaten." As He began to restore the years that had been stolen from me, I had to start making hard choices about my family—restoration required revisiting those years to understand what "the locusts" had eaten up.

Once I identified the pain and shame that my family had caused, I had to make a choice. I could continue playing the role that they wanted to keep from causing waves with the family or be true to the person God was creating me to be.

I had come a long way and was not about to go backward or throw myself away again for anyone else—not even my family members. I began to spend less time with my family.

They all watched as I had my breakdown and knew I was in counseling, but no one knew what to do with all of that. One year, I decided I would not be a part of our traditional family Thanksgiving dinner. My sister was very upset with me because my mom always expected us to all be there. I could

no longer pretend I was okay with ignoring my needs to please others, even my family.

There came a time about ten years ago when I wanted to move to Kansas to be near my oldest daughter. There were things I wanted to do. Living near her and her family would make it easier. My counselor told me to take some time when I got there to decide what still fit into my life and what didn't. I finally had the freedom to create the life I wanted to live.

My family couldn't understand why I was distancing myself from the family unit. I was too hurt to try to explain something I knew they wouldn't understand, so I stopped communicating with them. It was easier for me that way.

Eventually, my brother did realize, after we talked, how deeply I had been hurt as a child by the hurtful shaming that had come from my siblings. They didn't understand what they were doing at the time, but he apologized for what had happened.

Less than a year ago, God helped me let go of the wall I had put up between myself and my past with my family. I was not about to open up to that kind of hurt again unless something had changed on their part.

My younger sister was persistent: she wanted a relationship with me. I made it clear that I had to be able to explain why I had cut them off and that I needed to be heard,

or else I did not want a relationship. I had moved on with my new life and I wasn't going back.

When she agreed to listen and let me explain, God melted the hardness in my heart, and there was no need for that conversation. The bitterness and fear were gone. The "Lost Child" was no longer being ignored. Someone was finally willing to listen. Today, my sister and I love each other very much, and God has done great work in her, too. We have an amazing relationship now.

Dry Bones and Reckless Love

At one point in my healing journey I heard a sermon about the dry bones in the book of Ezekiel. God spoke to me, "You are like those dry bones. You are emotionally beyond death, but I have plans to recreate you just like those dry bones became men again."

He also showed me I was like Abraham. He was beyond the years of having children, but God still wanted to work through Abraham because he believed and acted on what God had promised him.

A song by Micheal W. Smith called "Reckless Love" talks about the "overwhelming, never ending reckless love of God that chases me down, fights until I'm found, and leaves the 99. There's no mountain He won't climb up, darkness He won't

light up coming after me.” I listened to this song repeatedly until I knew in my heart that God would leave nothing in the way of me understanding how much He loved me and that He was recklessly pursuing me. No one had ever done that before.

In the third chapter of Ephesians, Paul prayed that the Christians at Ephesus would be “Rooted and grounded in love so that they might know the height, the depth, the breath, and the width of God’s love.”

I realized I didn’t know love—I had been rooted and grounded in fear and shame my whole life. I have been praying this prayer for myself for a long time. I want to know the greatness of God’s love for ME. Not just in the general sense that “God loves the world.”

Growing up, I learned very quickly from my father that my needs and wants were not important. His canned answer was always, “You don’t have any business wanting that,” no matter what it was we asked for. He didn’t even think about what we were asking for. He automatically gave us that same answer, so the lesson I learned was that it made me a bad person if I wanted or needed something. I never expected anything to happen that I wanted.

I imported that life experience into my relationship with God as well. I am just now realizing that it is not only okay to

want and need things; God WANTS me to come to Him freely. He wants to do more for me than I can even ask or think. He is uprooting those deep, terrible lies from the pit of hell that have kept me from knowing the love of the Father. I am slowly learning that He is for me, not against me. He truly wants to bless me and restore the years the locusts have eaten, as it says in the second chapter of Joel.

I am being rooted and grounded in His love rather than rejection, shame, and condemnation.

Jesus With Skin On

A story is told of a young girl who was scared because of a terrible storm one night. She cried and called for her mother. The mother came and prayed for the little girl saying, “It’s okay, honey, Jesus is with you.” A short while later, the girl called for her mother again. The mother said the same thing, “Jesus is right here with you.” The child cried out a third time. This time, the little girl said, “Yes, mommy, but sometimes I need Jesus with skin on.”

I had come to realize that I needed “Jesus with skin on” at that point in my Christian journey. The lessons and truths I had learned along the way, and the healing I had experienced could only take me so far. The next step was to live those things out in the context of a real relationship.

Earlier in my life, I believed God had told me I would marry a pastor and be in the ministry. Last year, God led me into a wonderful relationship with the man I would marry. Yes, he is a pastor, and we were married on March 1, 2025. God's vision and promises for our lives are sure—our job is to believe what He tells us.

Having a man who truly loves and supports me has led a to a huge leap forward in my understanding and experience of healing and wholeness. He is “Jesus with skin on” to me.

Giants in the Land:

The Size of the Problem isn't the Problem.

I attended Celebrate Recovery for about ten years in Springfield, MO, and Salina, KS. I also went to Christian therapists for many years. God has given me the tenacity to to want to pursue all He has for me. As I mentioned earlier, what I have experienced in my past life was not the abundant life He promised.

God showed me that we each have our own promised land, our souls. Like the ancient people of Israel, we choose to face the giants in faith and take the land promised to us or cower in fear, declaring, “We are like grasshoppers in our own sight.”

I have been facing the giants of Fear and Terror as well as Toxic Shame and PTSD for many years. God has used His Word, with the help of CR and therapists, to help me to begin to enjoy the life He has created me to live. He has caused so much of the scripture to become my reality. God has enabled me to accept His Word as a personal promise to me.

In 2 Corinthians 1:20, Paul says, “All the promises of God are YES and AMEN in Jesus.” If He says it is available, I can claim it because I am in Jesus. Another way to read that verse is, “God has already said YES to every promise He made; we speak the AMEN (so be it).”

In a Bible study one day, the teacher made a statement that changed my life. That truth allowed me to trust the Word of God to come to reality in my life. When I would hear a verse or promise I wanted to see become a reality, I struggled with how to make that happen. That day, the teacher said, “Trust the seed,” referring to God’s Word.

God showed me that if I received the Word as a seed planted in me as I listened, the Holy Spirit would nurture the Word. God would cause the life contained in that seed to produce the fruit of that Word in me at the right time. God was watching over His Word to perform it in my life (Jeremiah 29:10). God spoke the world into existence. I started to be able to believe what His Word—spoken into my life—could do.

Celebrate Recovery follows a twelve-step recovery program similar to most of the other recovery programs. However, this program is different because the steps are based on scripture. The first step is realizing that your life has become unmanageable—in your own power and ability.

Whenever I realize that I am dealing with something in my life that I have no idea how to resolve, I go back to that first step and accept that I cannot manage the situation. I am powerless over it. It is beyond my ability to fix or resolve it. I must surrender it.

The second step states that “a Power greater than myself can restore me to sanity.” That tells me that if I surrender it to God, He will work things out in His way and time—if I continue to keep my hands off the situation, pray, and be obedient to what He shows me my part is in the process.

The Serenity Prayer says, “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” I do have a part, even if it means changing how I think about the situation. Surrendering it to Him allows Him to work in me and change me into the person He wants me to be. Meanwhile, He is working things out with the best solution possible. It is a win-win situation.

There is a line in the full Serenity Prayer that says, “Trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will.”

The Spirit of the Lord God is Upon Me.

When Jesus began His ministry, He quoted a portion of Isaiah in chapter 61. He told us that he came to fulfill this scripture. He has been doing so in my life for many years and will do it for anyone who lets Him. We often think of Jesus as Savior only in terms of spiritual things, such as the forgiveness of sin and eternal life. However, this passage presents a different aspect of Jesus’ ministry. It is this truth that many Christians fail to realize and struggle their entire lives. What did the prophecy tell us Jesus is anointed to do?

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
Because He has anointed me to bring good news to the
poor;
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
To comfort all who mourn;
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of gladness instead of mourning,

The garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
That they shall be called oaks of righteousness,
The planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.
They shall build up the ancient ruins;
They shall raise up the former devastations;
They shall repair the ruined cities and the devastations of
many generations (repair the ruins of the sins of the
fathers).
You shall be called priests of the Lord;
They shall speak of you as the ministers of our God;
Instead of dishonor, you shall rejoice in your lot;
Therefore, in your land, you shall receive a double portion;
You shall have everlasting joy.”

There are so many promises God has made to us as His children. No matter what we face, His Word assures us that we will overcome and be more than conquerors if we trust Him through it. Though Satan means harm, God will turn it around and make something good come of it.

The Phoenix: Rising from the Ashes

Several years ago, I learned the story of the Phoenix. The Phoenix is a mythological bird that rises from its own ashes

and soars into the heavens. After all I had been through, I realized that it was a good analogy of my life.

I now have a Phoenix tattooed on my arm. I try to share with anyone I can. I explain that it represents my life, and I share what Jesus has done for me. Recently, I have realized that my relationship with the Lord protects me from the evil one and truly brings peace and rest, if I will, like Paul said, “Labor to enter into the rest God has for me.”

I am working toward learning to lean on and trust Jesus in all things. He promised that the evil one CANNOT touch me.

Some of the Promises that are Becoming Reality in My Life

These are some of the promises I have been claiming for myself lately, and they are slowly but surely coming to reality in my life.

- I am united with the Lord and one with Him in Spirit.
- I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.
- I am complete in Christ.
- I am truly Christ’s Friend.
- I am free from condemnation.
- I cannot be separated from the Love of God.

- I can always find grace and mercy from God in a time of need.
- NOW THAT I AM BORN OF GOD, THE EVIL ONE CANNOT TOUCH ME.
- I can approach God with freedom and confidence.
- I am to put on my new nature and be renewed as I learn to know my Creator and become like him.

I ask God:

- to give me complete knowledge of His will and spiritual understanding. Then, the way I live will always honor, and please the Lord, and my life will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, I will grow as I learn to know God better and better.
- that I will be strengthened with all His glorious power so I will have all the endurance and patience I need.
- that I may be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled me to share in the inheritance that belongs to His people, who live in the light. For He has rescued me from the kingdom of darkness and transferred me into the Kingdom of His dear Son, who purchased my freedom and forgave my sins.

- to understand that it is for freedom that I have been set free. I don't have to return to a yoke of bondage to sin and go back to the past.
- to believe with all my heart that whoever the Son sets free is free INDEED. I want to stand fast in that freedom.
- to help me let the Spirit control my mind, leading me to life and peace.

Dwelling in the Land of Goshen

Genesis 45:10-11 promises that I will dwell in the land of Goshen, and I will be near to God...and there He will provide for me.

Goshen means a place of nearness to God. It is a revelation of a restored relationship with our Heavenly Father. That understanding brings me near to God and into an intimacy with Him that I never dreamed possible.

Out of that intimacy, barrenness will give way to fruitfulness. Lack is being replaced by abundance. Sadness and sickness with joy and life. Love replaces fear. Confusion and insecurity yield to peace and assurance. Defeat turns to victory and aimlessness to divine purpose.

God said I could dwell in the land of Goshen (a place of nearness to Him) and there He will provide for me.

I am learning that part of entering that rest is to stop entertaining thoughts that the enemy wants me to feed on that will drag me into sin. Situations come up that He wants to influence, but I am learning that my response is to not entertain the thoughts. I am learning to submit to God and resist the devil, and I am gaining ground in my soul over the dark and sinful thoughts that Satan throws at me. As Paul said, “Take up the shield of faith with which can quench all the fiery darts of the enemy.”

I continually pray to grow in the revelation that I have been brought near to my Heavenly Father. I will continue to grow in the revelation that this is a place of intimacy, abundance, and rest because of the righteous standing that I have been given in Jesus Christ.

I believe—that in this place of nearness—I have nothing to fear anymore. I believe I am gaining victory over everything holding me back from fulfilling everything My Father has in store for me.

There is a song by Big Daddy Weave that I have adopted for myself.

“If I told you my story, you would hear hope that wouldn’t let go.

If I told you my story, you would hear love that never gave up.

And if I told you my story, you would hear life, but it wasn't mine.

If I should speak, then let it be of the grace that is greater than all my sin, of when justice was served and when mercy wins, of the Kindness of Jesus that draws me in.

Oh to tell you my story is to tell of Him.

If I told you my story You would hear victory over the enemy, and you would hear freedom that was won for me.

If I told you my story you would hear life overcome the grave.

If I should speak then let it be of the grace that is greater than all my sin, of when Justice was served and when mercy wins, of the kindness of Jesus that draws me in.

Oh to tell you my story is to tell of Him.

Thank you for letting me share my story. What is yours? Healing begins when you share the pain and the journey with someone else. I am available if you want to share your story in a safe place and start—or continue—your personal journey to freedom and peace that only God can provide. Contact me at zoeyneed04@gmail.com.