

Introduction



Growing up in a small, rural Midwest farming community in the heartland of America is what most families dream of, especially when you grow up in a Christian home with a family well grounded in faith that believes in wholesome Christian values and living. My mother, Mary Jeanette Lucas, was an amazing woman who was radically in love with Jesus Christ and had been for as long as I knew her and made that perfectly clear in everything she did. If you would have walked into our home in Stanberry, Missouri, you would have noticed two essential things that made that house a home: everyone was welcome, and Mom's home was covered in Bible scriptures, pictures of Bible characters, and basically anything and everything you could imagine that would scream: *"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord! (Joshua 24:15)."*

Mom was a true example of what it means to be a living and holy sacrifice unto the Lord, no longer conformed to this world but indeed transformed and renewed, always putting others before herself. She set the bar high for all her kids through her daily walk with Jesus Christ and expected our best in return; however, her example would not be an easy act to follow. She had a unique ability that few people ever do, to let her light so shine before people that anyone who ever knew her saw her good works and gave glory to God for how she lived her life (Matthew 5:16).

She had the heart of an evangelist and a Christ-centered love that was not only contagious but responsible for numerous individuals coming to know Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, including me, her very own son, the youngest of four children and the only boy. However, it was not until she had already gone home to be with the Lord that I became a true transformed believer in, and follower of, Jesus Christ. Without a doubt, my mother's consistent devotion left an eternal impression upon my heart that ultimately prevailed, leading me straight into the safe and loving arms of Jesus at age thirty-five, and I'm forever grateful to her for it! It was the memory of that persistent Christ-centered love lived out in her daily life that remained deeply embedded in my subconscious long after she was gone that somehow managed to transcend life

and death, seasons of joy and pain, countless trials and difficult circumstances, including years of drug and alcohol abuse, depression, divorce, the loss of my three children, and then ultimately complete hopelessness, a life so completely destroyed I had come to believe there was absolutely no hope of ever changing and all I had to look forward to was whatever awaited me beyond the grave—most likely judgment. That was until March 6, 1997, while locked up in the Clay County Missouri Jail, at the end of life as I knew it, when Jesus Christ stretched out His mighty hand of grace and showed Himself along with an astonishing revelation that changed my life forever. God loved me and had an amazing plan for my life if I would open my heart and receive Him that day. It was a remarkable experience that I have documented in detail in the pages of this book as a testimony to the love, power, and grace of God Almighty, and over time I came to understand there is no human life beyond God's infinite desire and passion to love and to know, and no situation, pain, sin, or failure beyond His desire to forgive, heal, and restore.

After reading my story, I believe that many hurting souls will discover, as I have, the true meaning of “Clay in the Potter's hands,” and how much the Master Craftsman cares for His creation! God knows, without my mother's love and sacrifice, I would have been gone for good, buried deep within the pit

of hopelessness, damned to an eternal conscious existence, forever separated from Him and family. But Jehovah God, “The Master Potter and creator of all things,” being rich in mercy, abounding in love, was determined to not let that happen, no matter how bad the vessel was broken or how filthy the jar had become. Amen! So before we begin this journey together, let me first offer up a short prayer for you, the readers, along with a very pertinent and appropriate passage from the Bible that I think explains it best according to what transpired in my life and is documented in the pages of this book. May God richly bless you all!

“Gracious heavenly Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus to petition Your throne of grace to use this testimony, the testimony that you gave me, to shine the light of your eternal hope and glory into the hearts, minds, and souls of whoever reads this book. Father, give strength to those having family troubles and power to the faint to keep trusting and believing Your Word as it pertains to their situations. Remind each one that there is Victory to overcome this current world as we are Your workmanship created in Christ Jesus for the magnificent purpose for which we were created (Ephesians 2:10)! Thank You for the lives this story will touch and I pray it all in Jesus’ name. Amen!

“Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.” Then I went down to

the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make (Jeremiah 18:2–4 NKJV)."