

Testimony of Marie

by Gareth Evans

The sermon recounts Marie's journey from a painful childhood to reconciliation with her family through the power of forgiveness and faith in God.

Scripture: Matthew 6:14, Mark 11:25, Luke 6:37, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Reconciliation"

Description

Gareth Evans shares the powerful story of Marie, who struggled with deep depression and hatred towards her Jehovah's Witness parents due to a loveless childhood. Through counseling and prayer, Marie learns the importance of forgiveness and releasing her parents to God, leading to a miraculous reconciliation. By opening her heart to forgiveness and prayer, Marie experiences a transformation that restores her relationship with her family and leads her to serve the Lord on the mission field in Africa.

Transcript

I first met Marie when she was twenty six. Her counsellors were trying to place her under psychiatric care and she was deeply depressed and withdrawn. She told me of her sad childhood, having been brought up in a strict Jehovah's Witness home in Canada where they never celebrated any birthdays or Christmas. There were no memories of affection from either parent and she had never heard them tell of their love for her.

At sixteen she had run away from home. Several years later, she heard the Gospel and immediately gave her life to Christ. There was one occasion when she tried to reconcile with her family but it was a painful experience as arguments arose about their differing understandings of Scripture. The parting was acrimonious and Marie determined never to see her parents again. "I hate them," she said at our first meeting.

Over the next months, I spent several hours with Marie. She looked to me as her father and I saw in her the little girl who had never grown up. Though fluent in French and English and very competent at any task she was assigned to do, her emotions and attitudes were those of an insecure teenager.

I taught her the principle of release but, every time we mentioned her parents, a barrier grew between us. She readily agreed that they had sinned against her by not giving her many of the fruits of love, self-confidence, security, value, esteem, as well as the cuddles and kisses we all needed as children. However, she was not prepared to forgive as she hated them so much.

Finally I managed to persuade her to write a letter to her parents - a letter that would never be sent - expressing all her thoughts and memories of the way they had treated her. It took her three weeks to do so and, as she later read it to me (something I do not usually allow my counsellor to do) my heart ached for this little girl locked in a woman's body. I returned the letter to its envelope and sealed it there.

(The letter is simply a way of bringing to the surface all the hidden pain deep within. It also becomes a 'contract' when all the sins and wounds are released to the Lord.)

Marie was not prepared to release her parents even though I taught her that they were no different to many parents in their inability to express love, probably because of hurts they themselves carry. I also told her I could do nothing more for her as the key to the Kingdom of Heaven was now in her hand.

Some weeks later, she came quietly into my office and asked that I help her release her parents. She prayed the prayer of Stephen - 'Father, do not lay this sin to their charge' - and then we destroyed the letter she had written. All written therein was now in God's hands. She also committed herself to pray blessings upon her parents each day.

A few weeks later, as I saw Marie grow in confidence, I told her I wanted her to go home to visit her parents. She protested strongly, but finally agreed to write to see if they would receive her. It was two weeks later that she rushed into my office, full of excitement. She had received an envelope containing two letters, a brief one from her mum saying she was welcome, and a longer one from her dad. The latter was quite clinical and cold, telling her they had changed homes and that, if she came it would be a long journey.

She would need to leave Toronto early, change trains at Montreal and then would arrive at their home quite late at night. He wasn't sure if he would see her as he had much work to do! However, what excited Marie was that he had signed the letter with "Hugs and kisses, Dad"!

As I saw Marie onto the train at Toronto, I told her I would be praying for her and encouraged her not to get into any religious arguments. "Before you return," I said, "make sure you ask your dad for those hugs and kisses." She doubted she would have the courage but I assured her of my prayers towards that end.

Late that evening I received a telephone call. Marie was so excited as she told me what had happened. As she was changing platforms at Montreal, she suddenly noticed her mother and father standing there! They had journeyed some distance to meet her. Marie was walking slowly toward them when suddenly, her father stepped forward, threw his arms around her and kissed her! - and the angels sang!

What had happened? I believe that Marie had opened heaven for her father by her prayer of release. That morning, her heavenly Father had spoken through that open door to her earthly father, prompting him to take the day off work to take his wife on a trip to meet their daughter. Then, God had moved upon the father's heart, causing him to reach out in love to kiss Marie for the very first time. Of course, dad was unaware that his plans and actions were being directed by God.

Today, some years later, Marie is fully reconciled to her family. She is married to a very fine man and together, they are serving the Lord on the mission field in Africa. Many who knew her before, still find it hard to believe that this is the same girl for whom they sought psychiatric counsel.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gareth-evans/testimony-of-marie/>

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