



Salvation Stories

SALVATION IS A "BEFORE AND AFTER" EVENT!

It is a privilege to share my story with you in order to show just how great and powerful our God is. I believe that the road I have traveled can be an encouragement to someone who might be going through the same thing or know someone who is.

My name is Sallye and I grew up in Atlanta, in a Southern Baptist church. I always joke that I should have been born on the altar. My Mother was the organist, my Granddaddy was the Chairman of the Deacons. He built the church I grew up in. My Mom got asked to sing at funerals, weddings, revivals, you name it. I went to funerals of people I didn't even know. SO, needless to say... I was IN church my ENTIRE childhood. I accepted Jesus as my lord and savior when I was 11 at a Billy Graham crusade and was baptized the next Sunday. I was never around alcohol until I was 14. I don't have many memories of my dad, my parents divorced when I was 8. Pop was never around much anyway so I didn't really miss him. I saw him on occasion until I was a teenager and started to visit him in Tennessee. That's where I had my 1st beer, it was nasty, but I thought it was cool to be drinking with my dad so...there's that. Also, I love old classic movies and always wanted to be the beautiful lady in a ball gown with a martini in one hand and a cigarette in the other. I guess that's what I set out to become.

It was there and the beginning of high school that I was introduced to the world outside of the bubble of my extremely strict upbringing. It was the 80's, so sex, drugs & rock n roll was the rule. I rebelled against my mother and started experimenting with pot and alcohol.

What I did not realize is that in this, I was rebelling against God as well. Fast forward 41 years later, I had become an alcoholic.

I was a functioning alcoholic for years and didn't realize it, in retrospect, throughout my twenties and my "white picket fence" marriage of 17 years, I can recall times when it was obvious, but it was all "acceptable" and any trouble was swept under the rug. My brother was an Atlanta City cop, so I got away with A LOT growing up.

My husband and daughters and I moved to Cape Coral after the death of my mom from dementia in 2003. We both got great jobs, a brand new house, our best friends moved down & bought the house right next door. We were living the dream at the beach!

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My brother died on my 40th birthday of Serosis, a work-related injury with my husband that kept him out of work for over a year, I had a miscarriage and almost bled to death. Then the economy tanked. I got laid off from my dream job. I went from making 80 grand a year to making \$8 an hour, working 11 hours a week. BY 2009, my life became a mess, with an uncontrollable dependency on alcohol. I left my family. Which out of ALL of the mistakes I've made in my life, that's the biggest and the one I regret the most. Praise God I have a great relationship with my daughter but my relationship with my step-daughter (who I raised since she was 2 and a half) is still strained.

I was called back to the job I had been laid off from but within a year, I got caught with alcohol in my coffee cup. My bosses and ex-husband were instrumental in getting me into a 28-day program. I decided that I was going to find a church.

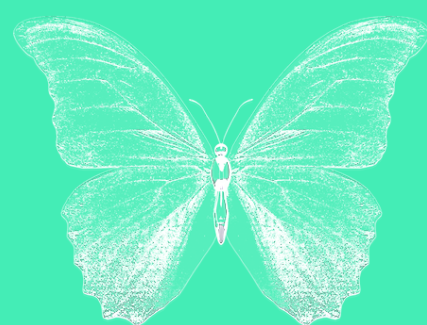
God knew what He was doing in planning me at that church because for the next 10 years, these people stuck by me through so many ups and downs, restarts and failures.

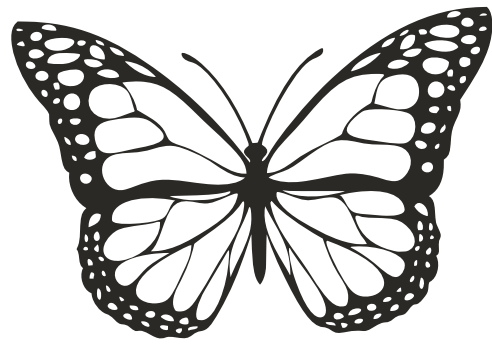
They showed me that the God of my understanding was not an angry, vengeful God but THE God of grace, mercy and forgiveness.

I wish I could say that the first rehab worked but my faith in God never faltered, His strength carried me through all my struggles one day, one moment at a time. During this time, I got into an extremely toxic relationship for 4 years. In 2015, I was running away from him, got in the car and pulled out in front of a car and got T-boned. 6 people, including children went to the hospital. I went to jail.

Shortly after that, before I went to court, I finally left that guy and my church got me into Teen Challenge. I was sentenced to that year long program but left after 6 months which in turn, violated my probation. I hid for 2 months scared to death of going to jail. I eventually got caught because of something stupid. They don't let you out when you violate so I ended up doing like 3 months. After I got out, I violated again within 17 days and back to jail I went for another 120 days. The CO's would tell me that I didn't belong there, that I was different than the other girls that came in and out of there. It was a revolving door. They saw something different in me. Both stints actually were the best thing that could have happened to me. I immersed myself in the Bible and spent all my quiet time with the Lord.

I think this is where my urge for jail ministry began. I saw these girls in there with only a life in drugs, prostitution and absolutely no hope. At least a fourth of them are now dead. I believe that God has given me my testimony that can and will change lives of others that are in this destructive pattern of addiction.





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I tried to do jail ministry a couple of times, but something always stopped it. I now know that I was still in a season of preparation because unfortunately, I relapsed after a couple of years of sobriety in 2018. I was engaged to be married. We both were strong in church and in our recovery or so we thought. We decided that it would be OK to have a couple of beers for the 4th of July, he was dead in a month and a half.

I struggled to stay sober for the next year. I think I was in detox 3 or 4 times that year.

Finally in late 2019, I audibly heard the voice of God saying that if I didn't stop drinking, I would also be dead in 2 weeks. I know that it was divine intervention because at that very moment, a friend had the intake coordinator from St. Matthews call me.

After spending 2020 at Jill's place, getting closer to God and working on issues of my past, I can confidently say that God has delivered me from alcohol. And I am breaking generational

curses that has held so many members of my family in bondage for years. I owe it all to God because I am a chosen, prodigal daughter of the Most High! He never let go of me. He lifted me up out the muck and mire and set my feet upon His rock of salvation and freedom. All the glory goes to Him!

After I graduated from St. Matt's program I moved to Naples. I am now planted in a wonderful church, I am about to graduate from the 2nd year of New Hope's school of ministries and I am going into the Collier County jail on a weekly basis. I am FINALLY learning who I am in Christ, my TRUE identity! I can't wait to see what He has in store next!

My life is so full now! I live in a wonderful recovery community with other graduates from St. Matt's, I got my license back after 6 long years and January 5th I celebrated 3 years sober & the blessings just keep coming!

I hope that my testimony has touched your heart. I know one thing, it sure proves that God can take a mess and turn it into a message! All the glory goes to Him!

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