

# My Spiritual Journey

by Alan Hung

As a Christian during my university days in the United States, I had very little in terms of worldly possessions and accolades, but I would boldly witness to my classmates about Christ, debate with followers of other religions about the truth of Christianity, and travel to many places to sit under notable ministers of the gospel. I would read books and listen to sermon recordings for hours upon hours, and still I hungered for more of Christ. I was not very mature, and I did not know his way very well, and I often performed actions without considering their consequences, but I was zealous and had only Christ on my mind. Because of my convictions, I lost most of my friends, but I was willing to pay any price for Christ. It was undoubtedly the most peaceful time of my life. I experienced God's blessings in many areas. I worried about nothing, as I knew that God would take care of me.

Originally, I planned to stay in the United States, but God called me back to Hong Kong and China, and so I returned. That was about ten years ago. However, after returning to Hong Kong, I gradually began to lose the passion – the fearlessness and the willingness to do anything for Christ – that I had when I was in the United States. During the initial period back in Hong Kong, the church that I had served wholeheartedly was led astray by false doctrine. So extreme was the error that it practically became a cult, and I had no choice but to leave the church. This was a major blow to my young Christian life.

When I left the church, I also lost my best friend. He was the one who brought me to Christ. At this I was plunged into spiritual destitution, as this was the first time that I did not have a church or other believers to depend on. Those who labored with me during my university days left their first love one by one, and moved away from God. And I, too, began to succumb to the pressure and materialism in Hong Kong, and surrendered myself to the world. I knew the right path to take, but I was tempted by the lust of this world. I began to covet worldly success, and was drawn away from Christ, the love of my life. Yet, despite my unfaithfulness, God continued to preserve me, so that I did not entirely fall away.

Since then, I had met another person who became my best friend and dearest companion. But recently, I lost her as well. I had relied on her, shared my life with her, and would have given up anything for her. However, she was finally overcome by her unbelief, her disrespect for God, and her love of this world, and so she left me.

When it happened, I wept and wept, until I ran out of tears. She raised many questions about the path that I was taking: Why do we have to take such a lonely road? Why could we not lower God's standard? Why do we need to believe and obey every word in the Bible? If we take the easy way and relax God's standard, we would be able to live peacefully with other people who call themselves Christians, and also with unbelievers, since God will forgive any sin.

At first I was tempted to think whether I had lived my life in vain. Should I still remain in this narrow way instead of taking an easier path, which everyone else has chosen? But God rescued me from the road to destruction, so that after careful consideration, I came to the conclusion that these people simply refused to deny themselves and to follow Christ, as he said that all his disciples must do. And I thanked God for his mercy, as he has never departed from me. Her disdain for God's word betrayed the fact that she did not love God. But God used the occasion to revive my faith and renew my reliance on him. There is nothing in this world that I can depend on, except every word that comes from God in the Bible – this is the only reliable and immutable foundation.

When I first came to Christ, I promised God that I would follow him at all cost. But I had become weak after many years of setbacks and discouragement, so that I wanted to live an uneventful life just like everyone else. I lost my desire to work for God's kingdom – I was spiritual fatigued, and had not the strength to continue the race. I could no longer fulfill God's calling on my life, and would have gladly allowed someone else to do it.

It was at this point that a dear Christian brother challenged me to take up my cross and return to the service of Christ. Like Moses before the burning bush, I had lost all my passion and confidence to fulfill my calling. But God made me realize that it had never been annulled. I had sinned. I was tired. I had departed from him. But just when it appeared that all was lost, God picked me up from this spiritual abyss and gave me strength again.

At the moment, I have nothing, yet I feel free. I have cast "all my cares unto the Lord" (Psalm 55:22), and as Jesus said, his yoke is easy and his burden is light (Matthew 11:30). I have returned to the purity that I had when I first came to Christ – a spirit that is free from envy and competitiveness, and a willingness to love God with all my heart and all my soul.

When I become confused, I would look to the spiritual giants in Hebrews 11. Many of them also led lonely lives, but they held on to their faith, and maintained their hope against all difficulties. The life and psalms of David give me much encouragement. He had times of weakness, and endured hardships for long periods of time. He was frequently tempted, and committed grievous sins. But whenever he stumbled, he would immediately seek God for forgiveness and strength to stand again. As Proverbs 24:16 says, "For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity."

Now I see that my old self has died, and a dead person has no lusts or desires. Then, it is God's love that brought me to life in Christ, and since I have been saved by the blood of Jesus, I should no longer live for myself, but for Christ. I put my hope in Christ, and my life's purpose is to witness to his love.

*Lord, please give me strength to overcome my weakness, so that I can love you with a pure heart, to finish my spiritual journey and receive my eternal reward.*