

Testimony of Betty Wood Tampa, Florida congregation

It was a cold autumn night in October of 1953 when two families assembled together in the basement of the church to support the commitment of 5 people who had chosen that evening to become disciples of Jesus Christ. The water was chilly, but that was not a concern for we had chosen to be baptized, and commit our lives to Jesus Christ.

I often remember that night. I don't remember a lot about everyone else, but I do remember how serious this event was for a young girl of 12, that girl being me. I remember how I vowed to read the whole Bible and that I would try never to sin. That was a nice dream for a 12 year old, a little naïve, but that was where I began my journey toward my discipleship. I never anticipated that, that event would take me on a journey of discipleship that has been wonderful and sometimes rough.

They say when you speak as a servant of the Lord Jesus from a church podium that the testimony within you becomes apparent, and I suspect this has been the case for me as a minister of the Lord Jesus over time as I've spoke of my convictions and to the promises he has given to each of us.

I have never forgotten where my journey began, and those who nurtured me along the way. I had a good foundation, a good home, and a dedicated family who served the Lord, and who are still faithfully serving.

As teens (my siblings and I) would sit through many a prayer service, and I would challenge myself with what my dedication would be to serving the Lord and his people, and I would argue with myself that it just always seemed too big.

I also remember when my husband and I found ourselves isolated from our church. It probably was there that my journey took on new meaning. I remember saying to my husband that we just had to do something about our situation. I just didn't think that I could live somewhere and not have my church. I had lost my comfortability with a church family.

I relate these events because they have had great meaning for me as I continue to question how much have I been listening to the Lord calling me on to serving his people in the place I reside. I know we need to continually stop and listen to his voice for he is the source that gives us strength to continue our discipleship, sometimes in places we are unsure we want to serve in. We are assured he will always walk with us in whatever paths we are lead to serve in and that is the thing I need to continually remember.

I am not a particularly brave person, but the spirit has touched my life enough that I can't deny what the Lord wants me to do. Walking to the edge of life is not easy for me, but there is so much joy when you walk with the lord and come through a situation and can say "wow we did it, and we did it together Lord", you and I. I never envisioned my life taking me where it has from that evening in October of 1953. It has been struggles at times, excitement at times, but it has been a good not easy for me, but there is so much joy when you walk with the lord and come through a situation and can say journey this far with lots of opportunities. It may have helped that a seventy resides with me, but we all start from somewhere.

My journey started in 1953. The foundation was laid then, and wherever I have gone the opportunities have been there, and I am grateful to my Lord that he has walked the valleys with me, and he has been there to rejoice with me when we have hit a mountain top experience. Pray that I will always find renewed strength when I feel the going is rough, and that I will listen for that Spirit of the Lord to move me out and take heed to the words spoken in Isaiah 40-31

They that wait upon the lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings as eagles;
they shall run, and not be weary;
and they shall walk, and not faint.