

INTRODUCTION

This story is about a little mouse called Charlie who found that living in a Church building opened his eyes to many different things that he never knew before.

I know many of you can relate to Charlie and his friends and their experiences.

NEVER GIVE UP!

Charlie – The Church Mouse



It all began one day when mommy and daddy sat me down on the couch of our old home and told me it was time for me to explore the world and to go out on my own. They said I was getting older now and had to face life a different way and to look at it as a journey I would be going on. They said that I would be fine and that I could always come back to their house to visit. I knew they loved me a lot and that what they were saying was really for my own good. I had been protected so much by them and now it was time to go out into the world and see what it was like. I didn't want to leave but knew that it was time and I did want to see what life was all about outside this safe surrounding called "HOME"

I grabbed my duffel bag and a few clothes and kissed mom and dad on the cheek and scrambled out into the world. I looked at mom and a little tear started to fall from her eyes and even dad had that funny look on his face like he even might want to cry but they wished me well and I opened the door to start on my journey. It was cold outside and the sky was so gray, all these clouds were floating by and the wind was blowing a lot. I was so glad I had brought my sweater and cap that mom had crocheted for me, I sure needed them. I was getting hungry, tired and honestly very scared.

I had never been alone in my whole life and now for some reason I have no one to be with me. "What will I do?" "Where will I go?" "Who will help me with my food?" All these questions kept going thru my mind and I was so tired. My thoughts went back to my safe home where mom and dad were and I thought maybe I should just go back there and start on my new journey in the morning, but I knew that I couldn't. It was time for me to be

a man or should I say a grown mouse, and I was determined that I would succeed at life on the outside of the comfort zone.

I decided to walk around the streets but found out very soon that, that was not a good idea. People screamed when they saw me and children cried. Most of them ran away from me. One man got a broom and started to chase me down the street. A teenager even tried to step on my head. All this abuse opened my eyes to the fact that this world that I had entered wasn't a real nice world. There was a lot of hate in my new surroundings and I was so scared. I needed to find a home of my own so I started to look around. There were so many buildings, big and tall...short and small... where would I go?

The streets were so busy, buses, cars, and people all around me but as I looked across the street I saw a church. Well, mom used to go to a church once in awhile to pray so I thought I may be safe there. I hurried across the street dodging between cars, trucks and the people and I finally made it to the other side. Mom and Dad loved the Lord and we used to have Bible Study often and we prayed a lot too. So I knew that a church would be the best place and safest place to live in. I knew that the people there would accept me just as I was. Now I felt a sense of peace as I came near the big church.

I hurried up the alley and looked for a big hole to crawl into so I could get warm and safe. I found a little hole but I was able to squeeze thru it and managed to make my way thru the dark to the inside of the church. The church was empty and so big. To the right was a beautiful picture of this man with a beard and long hair. I wanted to get a good look at him so I went up close. I didn't know him and couldn't understand why he had nails in his hands and feet and was hanging on two pieces of wood that were placed like a cross. "Who could he be?" I wondered, then I remembered my mom tell me about this man, His name was Jesus the Son of God. Wow, this picture really showed me how he had suffered. My mind left the picture and wandered over to the other side of the church, a big piano. I had often heard my mom say that she loved to go to church and listen to the music. This must of been what she was talking about. I wondered what it

sounded like and jumped up on the white keyboard. Bang, clang, thump, didn't really sound nice to me, but I knew that this place was going to be my home. I just felt such a peace there so I decided to stay.

It wasn't long before I found a nice little corner behind some flowers that smelled so good and with it being quiet I knew that I would get a well needed rest there. I slept all night and as morning came I got hungry.

I decided to go a look for some food,

Well, I found a kitchen.... Stove, fridge and a table and a few chairs. But not a lot of food and my stomach was so empty. "What would I do?"

Not much time had went by when I heard people talking. "Take the cookies to the kitchen for me and don't eat any" that sounded like people who had food and I knew that if I waited a little I may be able to eat something. Hidden behind the stove I heard some talking. We could take just one cookie, no one would ever know it was gone" said a little boy with curly black hair and a few teeth missing. "OK" said this other little boy with red hair and freckles. I watched them as they grabbed the cookies and ran out of the kitchen laughing.

I remembered that somewhere I was told it wasn't right to steal and yet these two little boys had stolen. I didn't care much cause I was going to do the same thing and I climbed up on the table grabbed the biggest piece of cookie I could find that would last me all day and scampered back to my new home behind the flower pot.

I ate and ate so much. My stomach started to swell but I felt so good and full. For some reason I felt this funny feeling inside of me as if I really shouldn't have taken that cookie because it didn't belong to me. But it was too late now I had already taken and eaten it too. So I decided to take another nap at least that is what I thought.

My eyes were closing and I was getting ready to dose off when I heard voices. Being in my new home and feeling secure I really wanted to meet those people who came to church. It was like I was on a new journey and I knew there was going to be a lot of adventures in store for me.

Wait, is that people coming in? Now this is cool it isn't even Sunday and people are coming into the church so I knew I would be able to see them as I hid behind the flowers on the platform.

It wasn't long when I heard a woman called Mrs. Babs speaking to this other woman "I really don't like Mrs. Fran, she is always around the Pastor and that makes me sick, she thinks she can sing too" My ears perked up and I thought (Why is this lady talking about someone like that). The other lady with her agreed at every nasty thing that was said and I watched them go and get ready to sing, I guess this was choir practice. Now, I didn't know a lot about church and how you should act, but I did know that what those ladies said was not very nice at all. I wondered what would happen next. I wasn't sure what Choir was, but it didn't take me long to see what a "Choir" was. I ran in the back room making sure that no one saw me and watched all these people getting big fancy robes on. They looked so nice..."WHAT" I saw Mrs. Babs talking to Mrs. Fran.. I just had to listen and hope they didn't get arguing. To my surprise I heard Mrs. Babs say "Hi Mrs. Fran, what a lovely dress you have on and I love your new hairdo." Did I hear right? I was so confused. How could you talk nasty about a person and then when you see them face to face you smile and compliment them. Is this the way life is supposed to be. It kind of made me sick so I decided to leave the Choir room and go back for a nap.

I closed my eyes and started to sleep again when I heard the sound of music. It was beautiful, I thought to myself this must be the piano that my mom used to talk about. I just had to listen. This music made me so relaxed and happy. I just loved that piano. I leaned back on my pillow and thought how lucky I was to be living here in this nice warm church with such beautiful music.

Shortly I looked from around the flowers and saw people coming in and sitting down. This was going to be fun I thought. Music, food, and heat. I was all set to enjoy a good day at least that is what I thought. Turn to page 100 I heard this lady say. She was standing behind this big box on the platform. She held something in her hand that made her voice really loud. Why would she need that when there were only about 15 people

sitting in the audience. I didn't know and figured it wasn't any of my business but I was interested in what was happening. The people all stood and started to sing. Soft voices, loud voices and some who didn't even open their mouths. I tried to listen to what they were singing about and only could understand a few words. Something about a cross and it was old and rugged and it was up on a hill. I couldn't make out the rest of the words as no one sang real loud, but I did think the song must be about the man I had saw in the picture when I first moved into the church.

A few songs later and this man got up to speak. It caught my attention again and I wondered what he was going to say. "REPENT YOU SINNERS" was the first words that came out of his mouth. He sure could yell and he yelled and yelled for almost an hour. I didn't understand a lot of what he said but did hear about Hell and how I was going there because I was so bad. My mind was so confused. How could I be bad, he didn't tell me what made me bad, he didn't even tell me why I had to repent or how .. He just kept yelling and it made me feel like I was so bad and yet it also confused me.

The church slowly emptied and I was left alone. I didn't feel that good anymore and it wasn't cause I was hungry. I felt so sick in my stomach and just wanted to lay down and pull my little covers over my head. Why was I bad? What did I do to make myself so bad? Why hadn't that man who spoke tell me more. Hell? What was that? And why was I going to go because I was so bad? None of it made sense but I did know that now I felt awful. How could a church with such beautiful music make me feel so sick. I didn't know but just went to bed and tried to sleep.

Later that day I heard a noise again and I looked up to see this little old lady with a broom and dustpan. She was singing so sweet and could barely even walk. She swept the floors, dusted and sang the whole time. I wanted to speak with her so much but didn't want to scare her away. I just sat behind the flower pot and listened to her sing. "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, oh there is something about that name" It was beautiful and I was so happy that she had come in to the church. I felt so much better when I heard her sing. There was something about her that was so different from all the rest

of the people. I saw her go into another room and followed her to see where she was going. It was the bathroom. What could she be doing. “What” she was washing the toilet out and still singing. What a dear lady. I didn’t know her name but I called her “Angel” she was so frail and yet so happy. My Angel left after about two hours of hard work, singing all the time. I was glad she had come because it made me feel good inside to hear her lovely frail voice sing such beautiful songs. It is late now so I better get some sleep.

Waking up as the sun comes in the window, that is what I like. I still have a little cookie left so I should be fine for awhile. I hear voices coming from the office. I am a little nosey so I thought I would go and see what was going on. It was Mrs. Babs talking. “Oh Pastor, I think I am a great singer and should be asked to sing more. Please have me sing every Sunday and I need a microphone too” I couldn’t hear what the Pastor answered but thought it best if I left before they came out of the office and found me.

Down to the kitchen I went but sadly there were no cookies around, I did find some crumbs on the floor that I ate and figured that would fill my little belly for the rest of the day.

Wandering outside for some fresh air I noticed that no one had cut the Church’s grass and the weeds were all over. There were papers laying under trees and bushes and it looked such a mess. I wish I could clean up. This was my home and I wanted it to look nice. Then I started to wonder what church was all about and why there was a “Church” I run over to the library and got a few books on the early church and realized as I read that the man in the picture was the Son of God and His name was Jesus, I was right. He was nailed to the cross for my sins and all the others on the earth.

How wonderful that this man wanted to die instead of me and shed His blood to set me free. I read “John 3:16 = For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life” I was so impressed and the “Church” was started so we could all meet in one house to sing and speak to

God and that the Church was God's home. WOW, I was living in a very special place. "God's House" It made me so happy to realize that, and I scampered home finding an old bread crust on the side of the road to eat for supper.

After supper I sat on my bed with this great big smile on my face. Wow, God's House how special that was. As I sat for awhile smiling at the new things I had learned I started to wonder why God's House had grass growing so high and why was all the papers laying all over and why was it so messy. I wanted to clean it up but I just couldn't work that lawnmower, it was just too heavy for me. But, I had seen some pretty strong men sitting in the church the day before. Oh well, I guess it wasn't my business so I just went to bed. Tomorrow would be another day.

As I awoke the sun was shining in the little crack by my bed, it was so warm as it streamed into my room and onto my face. I was so happy to think that now my new home was God's house.

I got up got dressed and ate a good breakfast of some toast and a little drink of milk that I had found the night before....What could I do to help around here I wondered.... I heard noises coming from the front of the church. It was a family who I knew didn't have a lot. The father had lost his job and mommy and the two kids were so poor looking, but I wanted to see what they were doing here so early. I stayed behind my flower pot and watched. WHAT! They are starting to clean the church... I followed them outside and watched as they picked up all the papers and the dad had this old lawnmower and started to mow the lawn. It was looking so nice and clean. Now this is what is should have looked like all along.

I overheard the father say to the kids...."This is GOD'S HOUSE and we have to take care of it" when we do things for others we always have that good feeling inside. I thought (And they sure proved it to me as I watched them work so hard and the two kids did a great job too.)

It wasn't long before I saw the Pastor pull up in her big car. "Hey" she yelled..."What are you doing?" The father looked up and smiled "We are just helping clean up the church yard" he said. The pastor had this

happy look on her face and smiled at them. When you are finished please come inside and get something to eat. I looked at the kids faces and they were smiling too...The little boy turned to his sister and mom and said “This is great, I am so hungry.”

I went back inside and thought about what they must be going through. Dad not having a job and mom and the kids looking so hungry and yet they wanted to help others. What a nice thing to do. I was really impressed.

My day was a happy one after that for I started to see that not all people were complainers, lazy and didn't care. I started to see that there were many people who loved to help others and didn't expect anything in return..

I went to the kitchen because I knew that maybe the kids when they finished cleaning would come in to eat and probably drop some food on the floor, so I was ready to get my next meal. I waited and waited and couldn't understand why no one was coming to give them a meal, so I decided to go to the pastor's office and see if they were there. I wish I had never done that, here was the pastor on the phone to her friend complaining that she had to feed some poor people that had cleaned up the yard. Their conversation went on for a long time and I started to feel a little sick again. What was a church for I thought? If it was the real house of God why were people so nasty towards others?

A few minutes later the family came in and I really wanted to see what would happen next. Well, the pastor handed them a bag with peanut butter and a loaf of bread and said “Thanks for all your help” and showed them to the door. She didn't even invite them to church, I couldn't believe it and she didn't even ask them how they were all she wanted to do was get rid of them as quickly as possible. The pastor made her way back to her desk and called her friend again, “Hi Donna, I am so glad those people are gone, they smell funny and you should have seen the clothes they wore, it was disgusting... Oh sure, I can go to Red Lobster for lunch, I will be right there” they she hung up the phone. My mind was in a turmoil, what was really

going on here in the Lord's house? I didn't know but I did know that I was going to find out.

My journey in the world was now opening my eyes to so many different things than I had experienced at home. My parents loved me and really showed love to others too, so I knew that there was definitely something wrong in the world.

The next morning the sun was shining again and I woke up feeling real good inside. I was so happy to be living in God's house and knowing that He was there. I even prayed last night and thanked God for sending His Son, Jesus to save this world, I didn't understand all about heaven and hell but I did know that for a Father to send His only Son somewhere to die was pretty special and God must have had a lot of love for me and others, so I was grateful for that.

It wasn't long before I heard the pastor walk through the church and right to her office. I had heard that a lady was coming to start a day a month where people could come and get clothing and food. Wow, this was great so many needed the help and I knew that it would be a good thing.

A few weeks later I saw this lady and her friends and they were decorating the hall with flowers and large tables and then putting all these clothes out. There was another table that had cans of food on it too and there was a man in the downstairs kitchen making something good on the stove, it smelled so good and I knew I just had to have some of that for my supper.

Soon many people started to come to the door and go to the hall and I was so surprised, some smelled funny and others looked so hungry but they were welcomed so much and I could tell that they were happy just by their faces. The kids that came could play with the toys and everyone got to eat, even me. See I knew if I went by the kids table I would surely get some food. What a wonderful day, it was great and I went to bed that night so happy and thanking God for another great meal that I had been given.

Another day and I feel good but I did wonder what would happen that day as I was finding that in this church there was a lot of things that just

didn't seem right, but I try always to think positive so I got dressed and decided to go for a little walk outside in the sunshine.

When I came back home, I overheard the pastor talking again mentioning that there was only 14 people who came to her service and yet when the Clothes giveaway was on there was almost 150 people there and she didn't like it. I wasn't sure who she was talking too, but I knew both of the ladies were certainly saying a lot of nasty things and it sure didn't make me feel too good. But, it wasn't any of my business so I just went off to take a little rest

Well, I have now lived at the church for about 2 years and have seen so much going on here that I am so discouraged and sad. The only good thing that has happened here at this church is that I have friends here. Some that don't even know that they are my friends but I have watched them come faithfully every Sunday and many times they gave a lot of money to help pay the bills at God's House. I have one friend too who is a good friend to me, yes another little mouse just like me and we talk a lot and pray a lot too. I am not so lonely anymore as I was and my friend Brian and I do a lot of little things around town to help other little mice just like us. Sometimes when we find a lot of food in the dumpster we take it to our friends and we share. Life is pretty good with us, but things in this church aren't. We have watched for the past year many leave the church because the pastor is just so high and mighty and the sermons are always condemning people, it just isn't what I think a house of Jesus should be, so we are leaving soon. Even the lady who came to help people and had given all those clothes and food away was told to leave, what a mess that was, so it is time for us to leave too and let them play at church.

Now I have learned a little about Jesus and how we should live so I have decided that we need to live in a church, only we have to find a good one that really follows the word of God. The first church didn't but I am sure my friend and I will find one that knows God and knows what He requires of us. So we say goodbye to these last few years and once again are thankful for the lessons I have learned even though they weren't that good.

A few blocks away we find this little church, it wasn't as big as the last one but it looks real cozy. I loved living in behind the flower pots so I tried to find a little spot near the artificial flowers that were on the stage. My friend Brian found a nice little cubby hole about four feet away from me and he was happy too. We settled in and was looking forward to the Sunday service and all the nice music that I was sure we would hear.

Sunday came and we got all dressed up, I had visited my parents on Saturday and they were so happy to see me doing so well. Mom said she had been praying every day for me and dad gave me a big hug and told me how proud he was of me.

Oh, here comes the pastor and his wife so I better be quiet and get ready for church. Brian and I are sitting waiting for the music but it sounds more like I am in a bar, what is going on. I remember once wandering into a bar one night when I was out looking for food and the music was loud and the the words were not that great so I left pretty quick. Now here I am listening to the same music, but in a church? Something is far wrong here too. Well I will try not to judge as that is wrong and I will listen to the sermon and see what it is like.

I couldn't believe my ears all I hear from the pastors mouth is the word "Money". We need money, We need money, We need money. My mind right now is so messed up, I came to live here to be in the house of God and yet all I hear is how the pastor needs money and that if the people in the congregation don't start to pay their tithes it is a sin. Am I hearing right? Yes, I am hearing right and it breaks my heart. I only wish I could tell those poor people that Jesus loves them and He understands that they don't have any money to give. Jesus knows how we feel, He cares about us and here is this preacher beating them over the head and making them feel guilty because they have no money. What a shame. Maybe I read the sign wrong outside when it said that it was a church, maybe it isn't. It sure didn't have any love shown to anyone. Now I have lived two places and both places have not followed the Bible teachings. One spent money on foolish things and always wanted the very best for herself as a pastor and yet there was only 14 people there and now here I am in another place

where the pastor thinks that telling people they have to pay him money is what God is all about. Many are leaving and I think I better leave too as this sure isn't my idea of what a church should be. I really wonder if I will ever find a place that is called a CHURH really be a meeting place where Jesus is uplifted and there is so much love there that everyone is in one accord.

Many times I had went to the wild side of town as many call it and went into some pretty bad places but I learned a lot there too, I learned that the people in those places were searching for something and trying to fill that emptiness inside of them. So I sure couldn't judge them for trying to find peace, and I was glad that I had found a peace within that I found in Jesus. Now I wondered how I would I be able to help these people find what I had found. Maybe my friend Brian could help me, he was always coming up with some good ideas. Where did he go anyway? Oh now I remember he said he was going to the back alley behind the restaurant and would bring home some supper and I was hungry too. One thing I knew I could not take tell these people to go to the last two churches I had lived in because I knew they would not be accepted there. The first pastor was just above everyone and wouldn't accept them as they may be a little dirty and wear old clothes so they just wouldn't fit in there and the second pastor wouldn't want them because they had no money to give him. I sure hope I find a place that will accept these people and let them know that God's House is a House of Love.

It wasn't too long till Brian came back with some real good food. Those expensive restaurants always throw away lots of food that the rich people just leave on their plates. Brian and I ate so good but now I am so full I just want to lay down and sleep. Oh wait, I wanted to ask Brian how we could reach those people in need. "Hey Brian, I need some help here as I am so bothered about the people who are on the wrong side of the tracts and really need to find some happiness." "Brian, Brian, Brian" Oh no he has fallen asleep on the couch, so I better wait until he wakes up, which won't be long as he never sleeps too long anyway.

A short time went by and Brian woke up so we did a lot of talking, he said I should meet his brother Jon, as Jon too wants to help people and once had been in this big church but overheard one christian man tell this lady off. He told her she was going to hell for some things that another lady had told him. Jon said that lady was so hurt as it was all lies that she left the church and never went back, so John too had seen some pretty messy churches and was so concerned with some people who had been hurt in church and had just never went back. I decided to talk with John too.

Jon came over the next night and it was so nice to meet him, in fact the three of us Brian, Jon and me all took a couch and lay there and laughed and talked about some funny things that had happened years back. What a wonderful evening we had. It is always good to laugh and have fun and the three of us sure enjoyed ourselves. Of course we had lots of food from the day before so we were real happy too.

Here is a little picture of the three of us, I thought you may want to see my friends too.



I am the first on the left and then there is Brian and Jon. It is so nice to have some good friends like these guys.

OK, now fun is over and we got to get serious here. What can be done with the many churches who chase people away. “Well,” said Jon “It just isn’t the churches, it is the people who go to church that think they are better than everyone else”. “True” Brian said. Now that is true too. Here I am looking at the pastors and yet there are so many sitting in the pews that chase others away. Mom told me once that she went into church and went

and sat in a pew and this lady came up to her and told her to move because that was her seat. Mom did move but she didn't think much of that lady and I remember when she came home telling us the story, but she also told us to take that as an example and not be like that woman.

Mom used to tell us so many stories. Once there was an old stinky man who lived in a barn and he was always hungry and cold, so she invited him to come to church. Well he showed up and walked right up to the front seat. Some people got up and moved back and away from him, of course not that many sat in the front row anyway most liked to be in the back. Mom watched this happen and then she went and sat with him, she told me he did smell a little but then she thought about what the Bible says to do and she knew sitting there was what Jesus would do. After church a few people came up to her and told her that she shouldn't be sitting with him but she told them that it was the right thing to do. I always admired my mom because she lived the Bible and loved people and really didn't care what anyone thought. I sure wish I could be more like her all I can do is try.

OK, Brian and Jon what can we do to help these people. John and Brian sat there scratching their fur and then all of a sudden came up with the idea of giving out sandwiches and a soda or milk. What a great idea and then we all thought we could add a gospel of St. John in the bag too. So we decided to get some food and do just that, we didn't have to preach at them but just love them by meeting their needs. We all sat back and started to tell stories again and laughed some more. We had made up our minds we were going to start helping others and it made us so happy too. Life was great.

That night was a turning point in all our lives, we had made plans to help others and it felt so good. We also decided to all live together and then we could do more to help others. So now we have to go find a place where we all can move into.

Brian went one way on the street and Jon went the other. In my heart I was really wanting to move into a church again, even though I had had some terrible experiences I knew that a church was the House of God and I wanted to live there. Maybe I could find a pastor of a church who really

cared for his congregation and others in the world. I just had those thoughts and there right in front of me was this big church. Wow, was it big I knew there was lots of room for Brian and Jon and me to live and to help others. I decided to go inside and take a look around. It was wonderful and there was even a statue of Mary, Jesus mom. See, I have been reading a lot since I first left home and now I know all about Jesus family. I loved it there. At the front of the church was Jesus hanging on the cross, it brought me back to what I had heard in the other churches that I lived, they were talking about Jesus shouldn't be on the cross and anyone that wore a cross with Jesus on it was not a true christian. I looked up at that cross with Jesus hanging there (now don't get me wrong I know He arose from the grave and isn't on the cross anymore) but I saw what Jesus had done for us by hanging on that cross and I was so grateful, tears started to run down my face and all I could say was "THANK YOU FATHER".

I never thought that leaving home with my mom and dad would bring me so many places and teach me so many things. I truly was blessed and here I was just a little mouse.

I couldn't wait to meet with Brian and Jon again to tell them of our new home and hoped they wouldn't mind moving there.

Brian, Jon and I were to meet in the alley behind this fancy restaurant so I better hurry and get there. Oh good there they are waiting for me and I can see they are already finding good things for us to eat. "Hey" I yelled and they told me to be quiet so no one would know we were there. They said that they had seen this big black cat and they sure didn't want to catch his attention. Wow that could be a disaster for us. We gathered a lot of things and all I could do was tell them about this big church I had found, both Brian and Jon were excited too and off we went munching on our goodies as we hurried to the new church.

No one was around so we walked all over the place, it had a beautiful big organ with pipes and it had a nursery too for the little kids. My heart was pounding as we walked through this lovely church and then I started to

wonder who the pastor was and would I get disappointed again. Brian could tell what I was thinking and told me to only think positive and that if God wanted us to live there everything would work out. I have to tell you about Brian, he is always saying things that are so wise, I prayed for a friend like Brian and God certainly answered my prayers. Jon too is always doing things for others, John has so much patience and love in his heart. I am truly blessed to have met them and now we are all going to work for the Lord together and reach those people who really need help.

Brian and Jon were so happy too at this new church, we just couldn't stop looking around at all the nice things that there was to see. But we had better find our own corner to live in. I of course wanted to live on the platform where the pastor speaks from. Let me see if I can find a good spot. Oh here is a wonderful place and there are flowers close by too. "Brian, Jon please come and look there is plenty of room for all of us and look at the flowers" I yelled to my two friends and they both agreed that this was the spot. We were well hidden and we even had a nice little hole that we could move our things into and have privacy. It was great and I couldn't wait to move in and hear our new Pastor.

We got settled pretty quickly as we didn't have a lot of things to bring with us. Sunday was the next day so we decided to go to bed early that night. I loved sleeping on this old couch and Brian had his favorite couch too. Jon he liked to sleep in a nice sleeping bag he had found on the floor. We all were happy and content and drifting off. "YIKES" what is that noise I said. Brian was awake and he heard it too, then we both started to laugh it was Jon, he was snoring. How much fun this is even if Jon snores, we were a team and we knew that working together we had unity and would be able to help a lot of people. Boy I sure hope I can sleep with that snoring.. haha I did get to sleep and I thanked God for bringing me friends like Jon and Brian, they were wonderful mice that loved others way more than anyone I had ever met.

Sunday morning is here and I am so excited. It is early so I have lots of time to get washed up and dressed. My mind is racing with so many thoughts of what it will be like here today at church and mostly I wanted to

meet the Pastor, well as best as I could anyway because I was just a little mouse and I don't want to scare anyone.

Here he comes, "Brian, Jon, come here I see the Pastor coming." He has long robes on. I had never seen that before but I thought it was cool. We were all shaking as we watched some people coming into the building. They were smiling and welcoming each other, now this was so different from what I was used to seeing, this is going to be a good day I can just feel it.

The pipe organ began to play and the music was so reverent and holy, I loved it so much and then everyone sang so softly and so sweet. I felt like I was already in heaven, just like mom used to tell me about heaven and how the music would be. Now, here I was in a place with beautiful music.

The pastor got up to speak. My eyes popped wide open, he started to read right from the Bible and read a whole chapter it was great. Then he started to speak. He spoke on the love of Jesus and how we are supposed to be like Jesus and act just like Him showing others the love that Jesus has as it flows through us. I was so impressed, here I was in a different kind of church than what I had lived in and I saw love, real love like nothing else I had felt except when I lived with my mom and dad. Wow, things were changing now and I felt real good. I wanted to talk to the pastor so much but I knew I couldn't, see mice sometimes scare people so we have to stay hidden.

For weeks I watched this pastor, many called him "Father Bill" and he sure impressed me. His manner was so calm and as he spoke he showed so much concern for others. I had never seen this before in anyone that preached and I was happy that I had found this church.

There wasn't a lot of people who came but there sure were a lot of people who were friends with the Pastor and he with them. See, when you show people love they are drawn to you, but when you judge people you give that impression that you are better than them and make them want to stay away from you. Now some people who judge do say that they just don't want to hear the truth but that isn't always the way. Mom told me once of a

lady who had been pushed right out of church because of the way people kept treating her and her family. They didn't have a lot of money and so the children and herself had to wear second hand clothes and many wouldn't even talk to them. Once there was a big church dinner and the pastor had told her to bring her kids afterwards and they could get some sandwiches to take home to her husband and her other child. After the meeting she went to the kitchen and her was the pastors kids sitting stuffing their face. The meeting had ended and all the left overs had been taken down to the basement to the pastors apartment. This lady smiled sweetly as the pastor said "Oh, I forgot I was going to give you some food" Now this lady had her two daughters with her and one daughter felt so inferior at what she saw. Here was the pastors two daughters grabbing all the cookies and when their mother wanted to give some to this dear lady, they started yelling saying that they could use those sandwiches for lunch at school and that the cookies they should keep. The pastor just made up a small bag and handed it to this lady who smiled and said thank you and they walked away. Mom said she heard the one little girl say "Mom, I feel awful for taking this food and the way they talked like we were nothing" Her mom answered "Honey, it is ok, see we need a little food right now and God sees what we go through, lets just be thankful and not judge them and she took her girls hand and walked out the church door. Mom told me she was hurting inside when she saw the pastors children act that way and the pastor did nothing to correct them. Mom told me though that it showed her that Jesus is not in every church or every person who says they are His followers.

I loved living in that church, it brought me so much happiness. Now don't get me wrong it wasn't all perfect but it was sure a place where I could invite anyone to go too as the Pastor loved the Lord and he loved people too. I was truly blessed. Now I am much older and have said goodbye to my parents as they passed away many years ago. I still have my friends Brian and Jon and we still laugh many times and have fun, even during the times when Jon snores we just love it. Life is grand and I have learned not to look at people like I used too. See, everyone is different. The Bible even tells us that there are people who say they are followers of Jesus and they are not. The Bible tells us that we will know them by their fruits, and the fruits are found in Galatians Chapters 5 and 6

Galatians 5

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

CHAPTER 6

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Our life is pretty well summed up with these two chapters and if we could follow them we would be just fine.

If you have been hurt by someone in church or by someone who wears the shirt of a Christian then just take a few minutes and think about the person who has hurt you. It sure wasn't a person who was walking close to the Lord or they never would have done that. Don't let their actions ruin your walk with the Savior. Hey I am only a mouse but I do know someone that can help me here. Her name is Anne, now let's hear what she has to say.

Hi, my name is Anne and author of this book. Yes Charlie and I have been friends for a while. He is a great little mouse. This book was written to help others who have been hurt by people. Especially those who have come to church and wanted to serve God but got so discouraged by people or the pastor and now feel like giving up.

I have been in churches most of my life and years back used to think that the Pastor was so close to God that I had to listen to everything he or she said. I found out the hard way that they are only people and some are wolves in sheep's clothing. Now don't get me wrong, some are dedicated people who really have the call of God on their life and really want to see people helped. Many are not and the only way we will know the real from the fake is to watch how they treat people, how they act and what they say. Many are put behind the pulpit only because they have a connection to someone who has put them there, others have went to Bible College with good intentions and then it all went to their head and they became better than others in their own mind.

Many years ago I went to a little church where the pastor was so kind, he picked people up for church and many times he purchased food with his own money to help those less fortunate. He was a wonderful man, who lived a true Christian lifestyle. He never had many material goods but he sure had the love of Jesus and he showed it.

When we get to the place where we think “WE” are pretty good or “WE” have finally made it in the Christian world, then we better take another look at ourselves. Being a servant is what we are to be and that means dying to self. Yes, I said self. Our desires .. Our wishes .. and Our Wants are put on the back shelf and we are to live in a way that we want to please the Lord in every way and that is doing for others. Showing the love of Jesus is really easy when we forget about “US”. Charlie the Church mouse had a wonderful advantage, he saw what many others couldn’t see because he was in hiding. ☺

I urge you today to not look to people or churches for the answer as they don’t have the answer only Jesus does. He has given us the Bible to follow that will help us in every situation there is that we come in contact with. If we pray and read the Bible we will find that our lives will change. The Bible says that if we draw close to God He will draw close to us and we will find our lives will change. The Holy Spirit will make us stronger each day and we will get to the place in our lives where we feel the presence of God alive in us and when we look at others we will start to feel the hurt they feel and be able to help them.

Once I sang in a Gospel Group, I wasn’t the greatest but I could follow a tune and loved to sing. We were to sing at this big convention and the man in charge I respected so much as I knew he was a real good Christian and I sure hadn’t been that great at least I thought. One lady in town found out that I was going to be singing and playing piano for this night and she wanted to play piano instead of me. The leader of the group that I sang in was a good friend of mine and he came over to tell me about this woman. I suggested that she play and sing and I would take a night off. To me it didn’t really matter much if I sang there or not and I sure didn’t want her to feel left out. My friend in charge said that would be nice and that he would

get hold of her to do the singing. It was a few hours later and then I started to think of my friend who organized the convention so I thought I would call him up and tell him not to worry about me, I really thought he would be upset cause I wasn't playing or singing. I picked up the phone and said Hi like I normally did and all of a sudden he says "Anne, you know what you have done and you are going to burn in hell, the wages of sin is death" well I was shocked. I tried to tell him I didn't know what he was talking about and that I had only called to tell him about not playing. He wouldn't listen and slammed the phone down. I started to cry, I couldn't believe what I had just heard coming out of his mouth. See, he and his wife were good friends of mine and I had spent many times there having dinner and fellowship and yet here he was accusing me of something but not telling me what and telling me I was on my way to HELL.. Wow, it blew my mind and my heart was really hurt. I had really just came back to the Lord after a long time of serving myself and the devil and here I was now getting told I was on my way to Hell and yet not evening knowing why. I called my friend who was in charge of our music and he just said that the lady who wanted to play the night of the convention had started spreading these rumors around about me, and of course he went into all these details, then he said it might be good if I just laid low for a while until some of the Christians could get over all this. I just hung the phone up and then started to cry some more. How could people who said they were my friend not trust me enough to know that this woman was telling lies and they were Christians. I called my mom, bless her soul and she started to tell me that not everyone who says they love the Lord do and she told me to let it go and give this over to the Lord. She went on to tell me that there are many wolves in sheep's clothing and that one day the truth will come out. I loved my mom and she helped me so much, but I decided that if Christians were like this I wanted nothing to do with them and I stopped church and reading the Bible for five years. Deep inside my heart I loved the Lord and yet didn't understand those who served Him. After all those years I finally started to read my Bible again and pray, it was the beginning of a new life all over for me serving the Lord. I knew God was not like that and the His Son had come to give us life and life more abundantly so I carried on just trusting God.

As time went by I realized more and more that our journey with the Lord is full of lessons and teachings that we learn as we follow Him. We are taught by our experiences and I found out that my experience with these people showed me that at any time I could be just like them if I wasn't careful. I had to live close to God at all times and trust Him more than what I had ever done. I started doing that but then of course more tests came along and I found that I was growing more and more and all the time learning that Jesus was real and not just a man in a book called the Bible.

When you decide to give your life over to Christ and make that commitment you will find that many things will cause you hurt, usually it is the people that you least expect like family, friends and people in the church. Pastors are one of them too so be prepared. One thing I will tell you is to not give up no matter how they treat you, no matter what they say about you and no matter how they act. They are only people on a journey too that is just like yours. God will take care of them at the right time. Your job is to treat them with love and if that means to walk away then do it.

Don't find yourself sitting in a church for years knowing that the person who is in charge is not living like the Lord tells us too. Since I founded Hannah House most of my problems came from churches and Pastors, especially the pastors. Where I am right now there are around 103 churches in this City. I have contacted them regarding reaching out to help those in need. I have emailed them and out of the 103 I got two emails back saying to take them off my mailing list. The two churches that Charlie lived in at the beginning of this book are real experiences of mine. Sadly many of the churches today do not care about lost souls and those dying and going to hell. They care about if the people who come to their Sunday morning service will like the new flowers they just got, or if the carpet was newly cleaned the Saturday before. Everything is material to them. The one church I mention only has a few old people who have went there for years and the Pastor chases all the new people who show up at a service out by giving the better than thou attitude. It is really sad, I was hurt when I experienced my time in both these churches but not for me.. I learned a long time ago about this. I was sad for those who came because they wanted to learn about Jesus and saw a whole different lifestyle than what

Love describes. Be careful please when you go to any church. Be sure they are teaching the Bible and doing what the Bible tells us to do. If they don't then have the guts to get up and leave. God is faithful and will lead you to the right place. It might just be a home group, or maybe just two or three of you will get together and pray and study the Word. We never know what just two or three people will amount to one day, everything starts off small.

There are many more stories I could tell but they all boil down to the same thing. Let's just let them play at church and move forward in our own lives, don't let them affect our life in any way except to better us in our walk with the Lord.

For the past 17 years I have served the Lord in Ministry and know that when I am in need HE is there, HE answers prayer and HE has a plan for each of our lives. We are only working for Him, we are His servants and when we read in scripture to seek His kingdom and His righteousness then it will all work out.

Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

If we follow Matthew 6:33 and do what it tells us to do ALL will be ok with us. The most important thing to do is keep God first in our life, no matter how disappointed we get when we look at others. Remember He will never let you down nor leave us.

Hebrews 13:5

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

We serve an awesome God that will prove to you who He is if you only give Him a chance.

God has a plan for your life that is unique, He will guide you and show you many things as you walk along this pathway of Christianity, the real Christianity. It is a Journey that you will never regret taking and after years of falling and picking yourself back up and moving forward you will know without a shadow of a doubt that the God of the Bible is alive. That Jesus Christ born of a virgin and died on a Cross at Calvary and rose again on the third day is ALIVE. I get so excited when I think that God has a plan for my life, even all the terrible things I have done are under the blood of Jesus and He has forgiven me, I am washed in the Blood of Jesus and looking forward to the many years ahead serving My Lord. You too will experience the same feeling as I do as you walk this road. Remember that all that comes your way is not all from God, and that those that hurt you must be pitied as they are so messed up they don't even realize what they are doing. Remember back to Stephen when we was being stoned. Here let me find the scripture..

Acts 7:60

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

And we read in Luke where Jesus when hanging on the Cross, spoke to the Father asking Him to forgive them.

Luke 23:34

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

We must be like this too, when others hurt us or talk about us or try to ruin our reputation we are to forgive. Forgiveness is so important in order for us to continue our walk with the Lord. Unforgiveness will only hurt us. Remember now also to set yourself apart from those who continually cause problems and bring you down. If someone is from the Lord you will be encouraged and blessed.

50. Matthew 6:14

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

51. Matthew 6:15

But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Keep looking for a good fellowship and everything will work out for you. Get your true friends to keep you in prayer and read, read and read the

Bible and you will see changes take place in your life. Jesus will become a good friend and those who have hurt you will be long gone.

Well, I guess I better go and make sure Charlie, Brian and Jon are doing ok. Sometimes I leave out some cookies and treats for them so they hang around, even though they are just little mice ... haha



Rev. Anne J.B. Skinner

Hannah House

MPO Box 2813,

Niagara Falls, New York

14302

<http://hannahhouse2002.org>

hannahhouse2002@gmail.com

P.S. If you ever come to church please look behind the flowers and you may see me sitting there watching you and listening to the music.



Charlie (The Church Mouse)

