

All Things Made New

Barbara Swallow



Suddenly, I remembered everything. My uncle scooped me up and took me to the cellar where he molested me. Then he warned me, “Don’t you ever tell anyone what happened.”

After being molested, I decided it wasn’t safe to be me; it wasn’t even safe to be a girl. So I began to construct a new “Barbara” who wasn’t female at all.

Two years later, my mother began drawing me into her bed to molest me as well, until I was almost eight. She showed abhorrence for anything female.’ She hated housework and cooking, and she did not care to nurture her children.

I played with my brother and his friends, I and found some acceptance—or at least some attention—from my father whenever I showed any masculinity. He called me “Bob” and I worked hard to develop my strength. I began dressing in jeans and T-shirts. I quit thinking of myself as a girl and became a neutral person in my mind.

During my teens, I conformed outwardly—dating and participating in “girl talk.” The behavior kept me from looking, on the outside, as different as I felt on the inside. Boys were fascinating to other girls, but not to me. I knew what boys were like, but girls? Now **they** were intriguing! I did not understand what made them so soft and gentle. I did not give in to my growing attractions to women until after I married my husband, Ronald.

I had a new baby son, and found myself trapped in all the female responsibilities that I hated. Then along came a woman I’ll call Marla. She was full of attention for me and was quick to help with the cleaning and cooking. Before long we had slipped into a lesbian relationship, which we kept hidden for the next 16 years. Whenever I came out of the bedroom with Marla, I came away empty.

Marla began to dominate my life. I was becoming the victim of emotional blackmail. Her sexual abuse became so bad that eventually my doctor told me I’d have to undergo a hysterectomy. By this time, I’d had an emotional breakdown and had tried to commit suicide.

Anticipating the surgery, I was terrified of dying. Meanwhile, my 15-year-old son had

gone to a religious retreat and had come home “born again.” Bubbling over with the Spirit of God, Ron Jr. was aglow with joy and peace. He told me I had nothing to fear, even in death, if I had Jesus in my heart.

After the surgery, everything my son had been telling me came together in my heart. I let down the walls of fear and mistrust and gave Jesus permission to enter my innermost self.

In the following weeks, I was hungry for the Bible. Like a starving person, I feasted on its words and they filled a vast hole inside that nothing had ever filled.

For the first time, I read that God did not like homosexuality. These were shocking words to read. How could I change who I was? It took a year of prayer and support from a good friend before I had the courage to break off with Marla.

Even after our break-up, my desires did not change. My friend Jeanne was indispensable, supporting me as I fought waves of temptation, guilt, and disappointment.

Finally, in 1988, when I was 54, God appointed a day of deliverance for me. During a 24-hour prayer session with another Christian friend, God pulled out all the old ‘demons’ that had distorted my thoughts and emotions.

The change was evident the very next day. My friend and I went to the mall to relax after the intense time in prayer. Suddenly, I realized, in utter surprise, that for the first time I was noticing men!

From that day on, everything about me has been different. The old things have passed away, and everything has been made new (see Rev. 21:5). No longer do I struggle with the old temptations. My desires have been completely changed by a sovereign move of God.

It wasn’t until that day that I finally had the courage to tell my husband what I had gone through all those years. I thought I’d surely lose him; instead, Ronald opened his arms and forgave me. Now we minister as a team, helping others find their way out of homosexuality through the power and love of Jesus.

Since that wonderful day of deliverance, I have been busy discovering “Barbara.” And I have continued to discover—with growing awe—more about Jesus. Only He would reach down in the trash of my life to discover the real “Barbara.” Only His power could put the shattered pieces of my life back together again.