

## Julie Walter

Growing up, I thought that Christianity and how much God loved me, or whether or not I was going to Heaven was based on what family I was born into or how much I went to church or was able to understand the Bible. But when I was eight, I was struck with the reality that my sin was what separated me from God. A fear, deeper than I had ever known, gripped my heart as I realized that I was going to hell because of my sin. I frantically prayed for Jesus to forgive my sin, save me from hell, and come live in my heart.

But I didn't yet see the whole picture. I claimed Jesus as Savior, but not as Lord of my life. I still lived how I wanted regardless of what God had to say. And yet, through all of this, God was still pursuing my heart. I put on a mask of Christianity whenever I was at church or around my parents. A few pointed questions about the vast difference between what I said I believed and how I actually lived life, and anyone would have seen right through me.

Finally I came to a point where I just had to give up. My selfish life choices were creating a wedge between me and everyone (and everything) I valued around me. I was helpless, lonely, and completely worn out. My every attempt to just get through life was failing.

So I gave my life to God and chose to make Him the Lord AND Savior of my life. Christ has given each of us the choice of accept His free gift of salvation. God offers us the choice to stop trying to be perfect and make everyone happy, and instead to rest in His grace. And He offers this choice to you today. God is no longer just my ticket out of hell. He is my father, refuge, savior, comfort, and friend.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30