



“ONE RAINY SUNDAY”

By
Danny Ovalle

On a rainy Sunday, June 6, 1982, while attending the Billy Graham crusade by the urging of my two sisters, I “felt my Lord’s atoning blood, close to my soul applied. Me, me, He loved, the Son of God, for me, for me He died.”* Thus began my new life in the Christian faith. For the previous 20 years of my life, being in an unconverted state, I grew up thinking myself to be a good kid. And by all accounts of those around me, I was. That’s right. **Compared to those around me**, I was a good kid.

I was raised as a (nominal) Roman Catholic, being baptized as an infant and in time, receiving my first holy communion, confirmation and the coveted Pope Pius XII award by the time I was 13 years old. Perhaps I could more accurately be classified as a “*practical atheist*”, for my religious convictions had little association with the life I was living. The two, in my mind, were for occasions of their own. Me, myself and I owned 6 days and 23 hours of the week. Religion possessed a mere hour on Sunday mornings, if that. Besides all that, my reigning philosophy about religion was to pick any religion, then be the best person you can be and you’ll make it to heaven. In those days it never entered my mind that if you can make it to heaven by being a good person, then Jesus Christ died in vain! Not until that rainy day in June, as I sat in my seat listening to the preaching of Billy Graham, did it dawn on my soul that before God I am not so good. That’s right. **Compared to the Holy and Righteous God** how could I ever stand with my head held high? For the first time in my life I was measured up against One of Infinite Goodness, Holiness and Justice and immediately my badness was shown for what it really is...sin. Under the weight of this realization my heart was crushed. For the very first time in my entire life I realized that I was sinful to the very core of my being, as I tasted it and knew this was true of me as I was now standing before Almighty God and not anyone else. Previous to that evening I would admit to my sisters that “Yea, yea I’m a sinner, you’re a sinner, we’re all sinners”, but I never tasted the reality of it. You see, that night, as I sat in my seat, long before any choruses of “Just As I AM” were sung or any decisions were made, God revealed something to me, something of my sin before a Holy God. And I was granted to see myself as God truly sees me...and it was heavy! Well, while under this burden of conviction of sin and heaviness of heart, the preacher continued. God, in His sheer mercy, then revealed to me that even as sin-sick as I am, Jesus Christ loved me and gave Himself for me, took away my sin, forgave me, in order to bring me back to God! For the first time in my entire life this reality dawned upon my understanding and my soul! Such love melted my heart, with tears streaming down my face for hours afterward! Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who lived a sinless life, took on Himself the wrath of God due me, died on a cross, in my place, for my sin, rose from the grave three days later to give me new life...real life...Life by, in and for God!

...And on top of all that, beyond my greatest imagination, all this taking place while sitting next to my Dad, who was undergoing the very same conviction of sin and tasting for the first time the love of God in Jesus Christ too! Spiritual twins undergoing the new birth! Wow! What rarities: converted in a memorable point in time, side by side with my father and now possessing an audio copy of that particular message preached by Billy Graham on that rainy Sunday in June, 1982. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15)!

* Charles Wesley’s Hymn: “And Can It be”?