

Jesus Did It!

By: Maggie Confessore

I was born and grew up in Geelong, Victoria which is a small town on the Southern coast of Australia. My memories of my early childhood are mostly happy; I lived in a nice neighborhood with a mum and dad who loved me, had two sisters close in age to play with and an abundance of cousins, friends, and pets.

When I was in Fourth Grade at school, things at home began to change. My youngest sister had started school that year and mum decided to go out to work. Mum changed too. She was suddenly angry a lot of the time, and far too ready with a slap or a harsh word if we got in the way. My sisters and I quickly learned not to get in her way.

Often, I would be awoken late at night by the sound of my parents yelling at each other. It frightened and confused me, but I was too scared to say anything. Mum and dad were away from home more and more. Dad had always been my mainstay in life, I had been like his shadow following him around and asking him a million questions a minute, but now, with him away so much I began to withdraw into my own little world. I became a quiet, shy, loner. I was picked on at school and called nasty names, and had only one or two close friends. Somewhere during this time, I am not exactly sure when, one of mum's brothers, sexually molested me and later, one of my cousins did the same. This only added to my fear and confusion and I withdrew even further into myself.

When I was twelve, it seemed like the world blew apart at the seams. Mum left dad in the middle of a cold blustery Victorian night and took my sisters and I with her to live with a man we (my sisters and I) had never even seen before, in New Zealand. We stayed with this man in New Zealand for 6 months, but he became more and more abusive. Eventually mum decided to leave and return to Australia, where we settled in Northern Queensland.

When I was just 15, Dad came to Queensland and took my youngest sister and I back to live with him in Geelong. He was living with a woman whom I had always thought was my aunt, but who turned out to not be related to us at all. She had three of her children living in the house too and while she seemed to care about her children, she didn't have much time for my sister or I. Both of us were lonely, frightened and confused but we received nothing but abuse at her hands.

And dad? Well, dad was always away working. I remember one particularly cold winter morning, I had wet my bed and This "Aunt" sent me outside with the sheets in the icy weather and forced me to wash them by hand in a bucket of cold water. About this time, I met a girl named Helen at my school. Helen seemed different to the other kids I knew, there was something about her that made her seem very (for want of a better word) attractive. She and I became firm friends and over the first months of our friendship. She told me of how she was in foster care with one of the teachers from the school. This teacher owned a small hobby farm outside of town and on the weekends he would invite kids from the school out there to "get away from it all".

The only thing that was expected of any kid who went out there was to help out with the chores, follow the farm rules (which were nothing really compared to the rules at home) and go to church with his family on Sunday. I thought I could handle that and it would be nice to get away from the "Aunt" for a weekend. Helen said she would try to arrange an invitation for me and before I knew it, I was being dropped off at "The Farm" by my dad on Friday afternoons.

Time is too short here for me to go into everything that happened at the farm on the many visits I made there. But the end result of it was that one Sunday Evening, the Pastor at the little Baptist church the family attended spoke about Jesus in a way I had never heard before. Even though I had been raised in a family that believed in God, and even though I'd had an awareness of God and Jesus most of my life, I had never been brought face to face with the fact that Jesus Christ died for "me". And even if I had been the only person ever to exist, besides Him, even if I had killed Him

myself, He would have still died for me, and he would still love me. It was shattering! No one in all my life had told me they loved me enough to die for me! When the Preacher asked if anyone at the church that night wanted to accept Christ as Savior, my hand went straight up and I walked to that altar rail with tears streaming down my face.

After I had prayed, A young woman named Angie took me aside and showed me in the Bible all the places where Jesus said He loved me. I laughed with pure joy, especially when she turned to the book of Revelations and read: "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me!" (Revelation 3:20)

I opened the door to Jesus that night. I have walked with him since that time; not always perhaps as close as I should have, but I know He has never turned away from me once in all those years and I know He never will. I encourage you, if you are reading this and you have never opened that door and accepted Christ into your life, please do so right now, wherever you are. I can assure you that you will never regret it!