

Announcer

Welcome to Transformed by the Word, a podcast about discovering how to live your life with gratifying purpose. God created you for a reason and the Bible contains the keys to unlock your transformed life. Now, here's your host, Debora Barr

Debora 0:24

Thanks for joining me for episode 50 of Transformed by the Word. I am so excited to celebrate this milestone episode by bringing back a popular guest to the show. A woman who God used to come alongside me when I was just learning to trust Jesus, and to allow him to transform my life nearly 20 years ago. She is a dear dear friend, and a sister in Christ.

My guest for the show today is Clarise Ottley. And she has been with us twice before in Episode 14 praise as a weapon, which was just days before she had a tragic medical emergency. And then she came back on episode 19 for praise as a weapon part two. If you have not listened to Episode 14 and 19 of this podcast, I highly recommend that you do so.

Today I've asked Clarise to come so that she and I can have a discussion about how she interacted with my life when I was living as a lesbian. I want her to tell the story from her perspective. When myself and my partner Barb started attending a Bible study that Clarise was the leader of I want you to hear from her how God was working in her life as he was working in our lives. Stay tuned, we'll be back in just a moment.

<<MUSIC INTERLUDE>>

Debora

Hey, Clarise. It is so good to see you and have you back on the show.

Clarise 2:48

I am ecstatic to be a part of your show this morning. I can't hardly wait to have our viewers hear about our journeys together.

Debora 2:59

Absolutely. This is our 50th episode. It's a milestone and I couldn't think of anybody else that I would rather have on the show besides you. I've mentioned just a few moments ago how you how God used your life to intersect mine. And it was such an amazing thing. And God does great things when he intersects lives in both persons in both people's lives is not just one. And so I want that story to unfold today for our listeners. But before we get started with how our lives actually intersected, I would like you to share with our listeners a little bit about your own faith journey. How did you come to start a relationship with the Lord?

Clarise 3:47

I can't say that I can recount it as accurately as it happened. But I do believe that I was about 12 years old. And I was in my family's church. And there was a guest speaker I do remember that. And I can't remember the message. And to this day I have tried to recount what was said what was done all the events. All I know is that my heart was pricked. And God opened it. And he opened my ears of

understanding and he opened my eyes of understanding. And I could hear and I could see God drawing me and I was sitting in the pew I was just 12 and I was sitting in the pew and and I said I don't know what this feeling is I call it a feeling. I didn't know what to call it. I said but I started crying because I felt overwhelmed by his presence yet I didn't understand it.

And I remember I stood up. I said because in some of the black churches and maybe some of the white churches I don't know because I haven't visited that many to know, but they give an altar call. And he said, if there was anyone who needed to know Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, then you need to come down. And I kept sitting down, sitting down. And I kept hearing the call, I kept feeling the tug. And I'm crying even more, because now I'm scared, you know. And yet the presence never left me. And I just said, Lord, I don't know what I'm doing. But he said, if I want to give my life to Christ to come down, and, and that's what I wanted to do.

So I had to step across all these people, because I was sitting in it in a pew. And I know I went down, and I was crying. And I don't know what he said. But he said to repeat after me, and I repeated after him. And I guess, you know, what I repeated must have been the right thing because I, he said, You, you're saved. And then there was a baptism. And I remember getting baptized. And so I continue to grow in the church. But when I say grow, I'm sure the Lord was speaking to me through the sermons I'm sure he was speaking through me through daily well, not daily, but Sunday school, we had to prepare during the week for a Sunday school lesson. And I would do all of that. And, you know, as I grew, I believe I grew stronger in the Lord, I can't say, but when I went off to college, and join a gospel choir on campus, and continued to do what I felt the Lord was calling me to do, which was to serve Him. And it wasn't until I went to a church, moved to Washington, DC went to church in DC, that I realized that there was a difference between making Jesus my Savior, and making Jesus my Lord

Debora 6:49

can you talk about that? What is the difference? For those who don't know?

Clarise 6:53

Well, well, Savior, you, you say that you want Him to come into your life and to save you and make you a child of his, and that seals your, your salvation that seals your faith in Christ, you will go to heaven, if you don't do anything else. But making him my lord was, it means that he would guide me and I would follow. He would say, go left. And I would say, Lord, I don't want to go left. But I will go left, if that's the way that you want me to go. Kind of like you're kind of like a master, but not a slave master.

And, and so as a master, you do what the master says to do, because he knows what's best. And when I realized that that was different. I acted differently, the way that I thought became different because he no longer was just my savior, which I felt that that was enough and go to heaven, which I believe, but to live a life that's destined to be exceedingly abundantly beyond what I can ask if they depends upon how you serve your master.

Debora 8:06

Wow. Yeah, that's really profound. So you're in a church in Washington, DC. And I know when I met you, you were in West Virginia. So how in the world did you get what drew you from Washington, DC to West Virginia?

Clarise 8:24

Well, I have to say it was the Lord that drew but it didn't feel like it. My husband at the time said, we had moved out of Washington DC to the outskirts of Mitchellville, Maryland, where we were there for just a year, because the crime was encroaching upon where we lived. And we live two miles from Walter Reed Hospital. And we felt fairly safe there. But when people started to steal and started to break in homes all around us. Our said, We've got to get out of here. And I said, why? I mean, they're all my friends are here. My church families here, church family that I've had for 10 years, all of my support groups were there all of the, quote unquote, little sisters that helped me raise my children were there. I couldn't think of being anywhere else and said, So else's will. We're going to go I don't know where we're going. But we're going to go and I'm thinking, okay, Abraham, we're going to go somewhere that we don't know where we're going so.

And so one day he woke up and he said, The Lord told me that he is going to provide a place for us and I thought to myself, now he's that one for telling, telling that kind of story about the Lord told him because he used to, to downplay it when the people will say it in the church. And he said, The Lord told him that we were to leave and I'm saying, The Lord didn't tell me now. I've got as much faith and as much walk with the Lord actually If I felt man was better than he is stronger than his, his was Episcopalian background, I don't know about the Episcopalian. But I know what the Lord had done for me. And I know what he'd said, and he didn't say move.

So I, so he took a drive to a place that a man said to him, Hey, I see an advertisement for Vice President for Finance and Administration at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, outside, never heard of it, he says, but I'm going to take a ride, and he rolled up 34, which was windy and pretty, and all of the things that you want to see during the time of the year, and he said, Yep, we're moving and to Shepherdstown. And I said before it is Shepherdstown. And he said, in West Virginia, I said, Where is West Virginia? It was the West Virginia that I've heard about no fakes. Let's see, let's black people. Is myopic thinking, My myopic thinking, and I just couldn't broaden myself beyond stereotypical things that I had heard. And so anyway, that's how we get to West Virginia, because outside the job, and it, I'd say, I've been visiting here, I told him, I'd only visit I'd been visiting West Virginia for 32 years.

Debora 11:22

So a long visit.

Clarise 11:25

It's a lot. It's a long visit. And God has done some amazing things at Covenant Church, where I have been a member for all those 32 years. And so the story begins as to how I began to meet people, and wonderful people like you and Barb.

Debora 11:45

Well, I'm grateful that you were in West Virginia, because my life would have taken a completely different track if you weren't there. Because Barb and I, I had just moved up from Florida, in 2000. And my job was in Maryland, in the DC, just north of DC, for anybody who doesn't know this area, Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia, and even West Virginia are all very close together. And so I moved here, and I met Barb. And she and I entered a relationship, we actually entered into a civil union, which

was the precursor to gay marriage. We had bought property together, built a house, and the Lord was working on my heart to get me to go to a church. And I ended up at covenant Baptist Church, which is the one that you just mentioned. And this is where our lives intersected. So I am so grateful that you were there when I was there, because I know that God divinely placed you there for us.

Clarise 12:54

Yes, he did. And it was a sweet time, as I can remember. And there were so many levels of faith that led up to me being able to teach that class, that that was also a divine, a move of God because He knew that I needed to teach it. Because there were people who would come that would need to be a part of that.

Debora 13:19

And yes, so you were when I first really met you, Barb and I had gone through the 40 days of purpose. The church was doing that study. I actually surrendered my heart to the Lord, which was salvation. Yeah. Not the Lord part yet. Yeah. Cuz I didn't really know about that. And so I had my ticket to heaven. And Barbara and I started reading the Bible together. And I think Barr was the first one that actually came to your class, you were teaching. You had a women's Bible study group on Sunday night. And from what I understand you were teaching from Stormy O'Martin's book, a praying a praying woman. So the power of a praying woman?

And so Barb went to your class a couple of times before I ever did. And she kept coming home and telling me about it. And so she invited me. And my question to you, as the leader of this group, was, what? What were you thinking? When this lesbian couple showed up in your Bible study in a Baptist church?

Clarise 14:31

I was thinking to myself, we're good. They're here. And I'm sure the Word of God will drop on them as it drops on everybody else. And there is no sin that God can't deliver from and every woman who was there had some kind of sin. And you just happened to be the only one there that had that kind of sin. And I decided, well, I'm not going to change the way I teach the course because sin is sin. And I'm just gonna teach from the Word of God. And coupled with the most important fact I think outside of the Word of God was, I taught it with love. And that was a part of who I am.

And, and I did, I did all kinds of fun things and class I had instruments that I believe to this day was instruments of praise that cast out the evil spirits. When you praise God, it didn't matter what they sounded like, we'd get our instruments together, and I remember you, you and Bob getting you a little instruments together, and we'd sing songs, and you play your instruments. And I know, I know, one of your favorite instruments, but I won't reveal that now. But you didn't have that. But you played what was there. And we played musical games, but it also surrounded the message that I was to deliver that day, it wasn't just random, playing hopscotch, and, and forever, we played jump rope, musical chairs, hula hoop musical chairs, you know, it was just a time of fun. And I had a story to relate it to scripturally. And so it was, it was just one of those times where when I think back, it was probably one of the best times I think it was 12 years, one of the best 12 years of my life that I can say, there was connection, and there was deliverance. Even we had to remember we had Ron

Debora 16:41

our honorary member.

Clarise 16:43

we had Ron, come in. And we had, I think we even had, oh, what is his name? I can't think of his name. But that's irrelevant. But it was an older gentleman. He would come sometimes on Sundays, and he would come that class, and we would just welcome them to.

Debora 17:00

Yeah. And you know, it's interesting, because you were both an educator, because you were a professor as well. And a nurse, which I think is just the way that God created you and gave you that nurturing spirit is what I needed at that time. Because as I started interacting with the word, which is what you were teaching us, and you were teaching us how to read the Bible, you were teaching us how to praise God, you were teaching us the basic tenets of Christian faith. And I was practicing these things. And one of the things that you challenged me on was dancing. I was terrified of dancing, but we were doing liturgical praise, dance. Yes. And it was so powerful, because it was another form of worship, full body worship. And it was just during that time that the Lord was drawing me closer and closer, and he used you in a powerful way.

But I gotta ask, because a lot of Christians don't really know how to deal with people that are living lives different from theirs. How were other people in the class in the group, you know, saying anything to you about us? Or what what was happening? Because it couldn't just be that everybody was okay with this lesbian couple showing up every week.

Clarise 18:24

I did have several people and several meaning more than two. Who asked me, point blank, aren't you going to show them in the Bible where homosexuality is a sin? And I said, Nope. God didn't tell me to show them that he told me to love them and to teach the Word. If he shows me that, I'll do it. But until he does, I'm just going to continue to, to share with them just like I share with you all about what God says. And another person came in says, Well, I think I'd like to tell the group that we have two gay people in our class. And I said, this is my group. And you don't have the right to do that. And I wish that you not do that. And see didn't particularly like it, because he felt deceived, heard from God. You know, as Christians, we all feel like we hear certain things from God. And I believe that if we really sincerely believe that God has told us that we need to check it out, we need to check our spirit. It's a tribal spirit by the spirit. And I think we need to read God's word to confirm that that's what he wants to say or to do. And it didn't register with me what she was saying didn't register with me. So I immediately did notice that I said, No, I'm not going to do that.

Debora 19:54

Yeah, and it was so amazing. Because as if you read my book, *All Things New A former lesbians lifelong search for love*, you will see during this entire period of time that Clarise was working with me and with Barb, what was happening in my spirit and my heart. Because these, this, this book is essentially my journal entries over this period of time. And so as she was loving us unconditionally, and not convicting us not you know that that isn't a human's role to convict of sin as the Holy Spirit's job is. And you can

start to see if you read my book, that as Clarice was just loving us unconditionally, the Lord was doing the conviction. And it just took time. Another thing I know that you were doing during that time, is you rallied some folks to pray for me. And Barb, yes. Can you talk about that?

Clarise 20:48

Yes. Well, you know, I tell the few ladies that complain. And I told the whole group that instead of complaining, and instead of trying to Outcast you all, that what I had heard from the Lord was to pray. And I told them that this is what we're going to do, we're going to pray at seven o'clock in the morning. And we're going to pray at seven o'clock in the evening. And we will pray as long as we have to, I didn't have a timeframe, because I didn't know the timeframe. I just said, we'd pray forever until God made the change in them. And I remember, there were about eight women who joined in prayer, consistently. Sometimes we pray together. But I knew that at seven o'clock, I was on my knees. And I just figured those that wanted to commit to that they were on their knees, too. And I remember it took two years to turn that and I look around and I'd see you and you went to Egypt and you came back and I was just and just knew that was going to be the turning point. And you came back and you'd like was like, see it's the same. And I said, I don't I don't understand. And God said, Don't lean to your understanding. I'm at work here. And when I get ready, it's going to happen. Not not. Would it happen, for sure. But it's going to happen. And I said, God, I have to trust you. And so we just kept on praying, just kept on praying.

Debora 22:23

Yeah. And the really cool thing is the changes were happening on the inside. And Barb and I even in our relationship, things had changed. But nobody could see that on the outside. Because I had been a lesbian for 18 years. This I had dressed this way acted this way for a very long time. And even though things are changing on the inside, it doesn't always manifest on the outside right away. That takes time. And there was another thing that you did that was so eye amazing. As I looked back, you never seem to be embarrassed or ashamed to hang out with us even to come to our home. You even spent the night in our home. And you know, you didn't care what people thought of you. And that was such a healing thing for me.

Clarise 23:16

Yeah, I can imagine that it would be Deb anybody who has been stereotyped with think people don't want to be with you. And I think that God had his intentions for making me a black woman was so that I could feel stereotypical gazes, people sending me just because my skin was black, and it sensitized me. It made me really, really sensitive to other people, other people who were black other people who were other nationalities, other people who were different. And, and, and for me, it was like, This is what you do you want people to hang with me. I so wanted them to accept me. And I said, That's what I want to make my mission about accepting the people who other people don't accept, to not reject the people that other people have rejected. And it was a natural thing for me to love on you and Bob to spend time at your home. I have plenty pitches, our times together. The deacons, the elders, the pastor's would come over your house and they came over they are not at your house. If there was not love for you and Bob, they wouldn't have never come I wouldn't have never come and the love superseded that which you were living. Yeah. And it was easy.

Debora 4:50

It was a demonstration of Christ. This is exactly what Jesus did. But I don't know why Christians today have such a hard time with this.

Clarise 24:58

I don't either at think that they are grained and ingrained in tradition, the way they grew up what their parents did. And culture, changing a culture of people is a most difficult thing to do. It takes someone who is stronger than that culture, to maybe change a few. And it doesn't have to be 1020 or 100. Only, it really has to be one, as it was with you, one can put the forest ablaze, as you've done. And as you've demonstrated in your ministry, it only takes one and, and God had chosen me to be that one. And people looked up to me, and I guess they figured, Well, see, must know something. She's the leader of the group, she leads in church, you know, maybe we should follow her and emulate what she's doing. And, and I think it was easy for people to see that because they did have someone who was in leadership, who showed Christ who showed the way that you that he wanted you to be loved, and who was excited to be around you, and didn't feel embarrassed. You know, I could hold your hand I could hug you. And didn't, didn't have to worry about people feel it. Do they think I'm gay? Because I hugged you. It didn't matter. It didn't matter to me. I love to period.

Debora 26:32

Yeah, yeah. And you changed my life you truly, truly did. So, okay, let's go to the day when I came to you. Because now the Lord has been doing some things in my life. The Lord was convicting me of different areas of sin in my life, not homosexuality, by the way. But other things. You know, as I was first starting to learn to walk with Him into let him be Lord. And then there was a point where I wanted to come out to the group to let them know that Barb and I are gay, because I felt like nobody knew. Because y'all did such a great job, not condemning us and not pointing out certain scriptures. What was going through your mind when I said that?

Clarise 27:13

When you said that you and Barb were gay, I said, really? I know. And you looked at me, and I said, I know. And you said, you know, I said, Yes, I know. And the group knows. And, excuse me, and I think you were a little floored by that I was. But I had known all along, I had seen you in church. And I knew that it was, there was something about the way that you dressed and about your interaction with Barb, that, let me know that you were a couple. And you came to the class. And I said, well, there were a couple other class, there are a couple in class. So we just grow, we'll just roll with it.

Debora 28:07

Yeah. So I've got to ask once, you did start to see the changes in my life on the outside when I got rededicated, you know, as Scott and and of course, our pastor at the time, was instrumental in this period of time as well. He was an interim pastor that was there for just a short period of time, but it was the exact period of time that Barb and I needed. And the two of you sat and you talked with us, and you loved us, and and then after that, as Scott was getting ready to leave, I rededicated my life and Barb did too. And we got rebaptised and declared that we were leaving homosexuality behind. How did that feel for you? And what was going through your mind at that time?

Clarise 28:54

You know, to hear you say that you had been convicted, and that you were leaving homosexuality behind was almost like you would feel if you were a parent. And your child said to you, Mom, I'm no longer a drug addict, Mom, I'm no longer an alcoholic. Mom, I'm no longer a prostitute. I was overjoyed. And I was elated. I was so thankful that I didn't do it. God did it. And I thank God I said, God, you are true to your promises you cuz I would want I would pray us to God, you promised. I just would bring the promise before him. You promise God that you will change their lives and they would lead productive lives as women and encourage other women who may walk the same walk with them. I just believe that you're gonna do it. And when you did it, I was like, Oh my God. It's like you believe it, but you can't believe it did not mean you know God can do it. But when he does it, it's like, oh my God.

Debora 30:02

you can stop that 7am 7pm Prayer routine! That was such an amazing thing. And you know, it was quite a journey, it was very painful for me. And you were there with me every step of the way. Because when the Lord convicted Barb and I, we still loved each other, you know, that hadn't changed. But the Lord had us on a different path. And so we had to unravel our very entwined lives. And this was a process that took several years. And I don't know how many times I called you crying and upset and whatever, but you were always there for us. Yeah.

Clarise 30:41

And you know, that, that used that time when you were going through, almost like a divorce, a separation, and then it did become a divorce. But got used that time. And I've reflected on it many times over since my husband has that. And I, I feel that you helped me, just because I remember you going through that. And I remember, I don't remember the things that I told you, but I know I chose the things that were encouraging. And that I would be there for you. And went out that I felt so all alone, just like you do, if you divorce you been with this person for all these years, and now they're gone, whether they're gone physically, or they're gone, or physically, but the thing that is most definite is they are gone. They're not returning, and how do you move on with life?

And, and I remember telling you that God had you, he had you, and he has a purpose for you. And you will get through this. And so when you're telling people thing, when you're counseling people, you know, you've got to eat your own words, and, and it'll come back and you said to me, you're going to be okay, you're going to move forward, what's better for you, and your latter years will be more, more better if there's such a way to say it. But it was true. I've experienced the lows and the pain and the missings and the longings that kind of faded, as I told you, they would fade and you've moved on to bigger and better things. And I'm sure when you think back, you know, you were you were stuck in that place of, of devastation. And God is a he's a promise keeper. He promised that he would leave, he would leave us. And he would guide us if we trusted him. And that was, I think that was one of your favorite verses. Trust in the Lord with all that high. I mean that into your own understanding, and He will direct your path. That's what I, I quote it to you. And that's what I had to quote to me. So you were an inspiration to me as well.

Debora 32:55

Yeah. And did you ever imagine that Lord would take me where he has taken me when you first saw me across the room in church were in men's clothes with my lesbian partner all those years ago? Could you have ever ever imagined?

Clarise

You know, I couldn't have imagined, because part of me thinks things almost on a daily basis. I see on a daily basis much more than I do. futuristically. But I knew that it would happen. I just knew that God would do it. And one of the ladies in a Bible study group, I think it was Margaret, who, who gave you some clothes? Yes. And you said to me, I don't know how to dress. And then you would put on something and I'm sitting No, no, that doesn't go together. Not that I'm the fashion statement of the world. But I dress I said no, no, that that doesn't go there. And you'd put on makeup. And as the app, you get on too much makeup, you know what you say? I don't know how to wear this stuff. I said, Well, let me teach you. Because your desire was to be what God created you to be, which was a woman who loved him and a woman who was a heterosexual and heterosexual women. Most of the times, if not all the times I can't say Oh, women. But I will say that, that most I think I would be accurate and saying, you know, you want to look feminine. And you've had a hard time looking feminine because you didn't know how to do it.

Debora 34:30

Yeah, and it's just a blessing as I look back, and now I'm in ministry, and I'm serving other people and helping them walk away from a lifestyle of LGBT. And every time one of the people that I'm minister to is able to do that. I traced it back to you that if you hadn't done what you did in my life, I wouldn't be doing ministry to serve others, and so you have a great outcome. worrying of grandchildren. In the spirit realm,

Clarise 35:03

the legacy that I leave behind is wonderful because it's through you that they are being born for generations. And that legacy will live on. And just like your life touch one life that touched another life, that touch all have hundreds of lives that Deb has reached 1000s of lives. It keeps growing. And to know that, that played a part in that is so overwhelmingly wonderful that I said me, God to use me to do that for her. And I'm sure there are others who have touched. But you're the only one who has come back time after time after time. And thank me for that. And I'm just so grateful to you because we stay connected. And I see the movement. I see what you're doing. Your pastor Debora Barr, you have done great things and first Baptist with your ministry, you before you became pastor by you are already honest, on the set your sail as to what you want to do to help people. And you did it without having the title. And people whose people's lives have been changed because of you, even your ministry. That, that tells the people that they get a chance to tell people once a year, how your life changed their life and your life not only changed them from same sex attraction, but your life changed people in that they were going to commit suicide, because they were so troubled, and your life saved their life. And it's, you know, it's bigger than just the same sex attraction you save the life, and through what you went through through what you believe. And I know that people are grateful, I'm just so proud of you. Every time I hear it, I'm proud as I could be as if I were the parent, if I were your parent,

Debora 37:04

you are the parent, you're the spiritual parent. And I am so grateful that God used you I'm so grateful that he intersected our lives. I'm so grateful that your husband dragged you to a little place called Shepherdstown, West Virginia, so that you would be there when I got there. Yeah, yeah. Just the sweet spirit that he placed in you and all the work that he had done in your life up until that point, is just astonishing. Is there any final words that you want to share with our listeners about especially maybe Christians who are not sure that they know how to love people that are different than them?

Clarise 37:43

I would say jump in it with all feet and hands. You don't tiptoe into it. You just jump right in you just love. Love is the key element to changing a person's life. It was Jesus's love for the center that says the life it was Jesus love for me, that changed my life as at a young age, it was Jesus love for me, that kept me when I was an older person in the Lord is Jesus love that changes everything. And I would just said love a person. Don't walk timidly around them, you just go ahead and love them and for churches, all over the world who may hear this. They may not know either, how to reach the person, I would say, get into your journal, your books that you have written that gives point by point instructions. And to bathe it with love. The love of Christ is the love of Christ that helps change a person, not let me not the minister and let the pastor but it's the love of Christ flowing through that person that can change that person.

Debora 38:56

That is so true. Sometimes we just need to get out of the way and let Jesus do his work through a man a man he and he wants us.

Clarise

You know, I was reading the other day about dying to self and it never really kind of clicked until I was reading Tommy 10 his book called The God chaser for the second time you know when you read God's word and however is, is disseminated. You pick up pieces. But Tommy 10 It was saying that when you go to the altar, it is like you're going as a sacrifice. And you lay yourself on the altar, and you sacrifice what do you sacrifice for? And the priest sacrifice themselves for the people. So when I go to the altar is not, Lord give me this. Give me that please deliver me is going to the altar. Now with a different mindset. I'm going for the people who are lost for the people who are broken. For the people who are confused for the people who suicidal, because they need to know Christ and they need to know Him in His power. And I believe that if I do that, and if the people who are listening do that, if you can do that for a friend, if you can do that for a family member, I know God will change their lives. I just know it. You may not live to see it. But the prayers of the righteous of veils, and even though you may be gone, the prayer doesn't leave. The prayer doesn't die when we die. The prayer still avails. And if it wasn't so it, wouldn't it we wouldn't be living today because I know my grandmother, pray for me. I know my great grandmother prayed for me. I know thy enemy tried to take their lives. I know you're, I don't know what your mother pray for you. But I would imagine she did. And your grandmother, I don't know who she was. I just know that prayers. Prayers that have been prayed up for us didn't die when our ancestors died. They're still present today.

Debora 40:58

That's right. That's right. And with that, I'd ask for you to pray for all of our listeners today.

Clarise 41:05

Okay. Father in heaven, I thank you for everybody who is listening. I know that under the sound of my voice, that the word now has made itself flesh because you made yourself less to dwell among us. And God made you dwell in the hearts and the minds of the people who know you, and the people will who will come to know you. Even at this broadcast. Lord, I pray that you do something immeasurably more alive than they can ask or think. I believe that you can do it, Lord, if people just take the time to care, take the time to pray, be used by you, Lord, be your instrument, be your instrument of love that people feel the need to hug other people feel the need to share. Let them not be selfish enough to say, well, it can wait till later we don't know when later is later may never come to that person or the time is now. And so Lord, I ask that people take their rightful places, their right rightful positions, and do the purpose that you've called us. You've called us to lead centers back to Christ. You've called us to encourage the believers, you've called us to take the back slit and to gain their rightful places you have called us to a place of healing for all of your people. God, I know that you can do it, I know that you will do it. And I know that you have already done it in the past, in the present and in the future. I thank you for this and I counted in your name Jesus, amen.

Debora 42:34

Amen. Don't go away. We'll be right back after this short break.

<<MUSIC INTERLUDE>>

Debora 43:16

We have just heard from Clarise Ottley, who shared with us how God worked in her life, as my life intersected with hers. It is a powerful story of the love of Christ, working through a willing vessel. If you want to learn the whole story, you can get a copy of my book entitled all things new, a former lesbians lifelong search for love. It is available on amazon.com or through my website, DBarrministries.org. You can also find other resources that I've written. They're all on my website at DBarrministries.org. There's a Christian discipleship program for people who are experiencing unwanted same sex attraction, and also a discipleship program with workbook and facilitator guide for anyone who is desiring life transformation.

If you have never surrendered your heart to Jesus, you too can experience a new identity and have the assurance of overlap, lasting life. If you are feeling that tug in your heart that Clarice mentioned when she was about 12 years old in a church service, that Jesus wanted a personal relationship with her. You can pray a prayer of salvation. Something like this. Just follow after me.

God, I confess that I'm a sinner, and I need Jesus in my life. I repent of my sins and I turn to you. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins, He was buried and rose from the dead. And I accept this by faith, and invite Jesus to be Lord of my life, to reign and rule in my heart. And today, I surrender my life to you. Take control, and teach me how to live for you. Amen.

Now, if you are already saved, but you have not been allowing Jesus to be Lord of your life, where you allow him each and every day to guide and direct your steps, you can simply pray a prayer to surrender your heart to Him. And ask Him to be Lord of your life. And begin to be obedient to what He tells you to do each and every day. When you do that, you will experience abundant life, because God knows what's best for you.

Now, if you've made a decision to either accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, for the first time, are you rededicating your heart to Him? Would you go to my website at tBTWpodcast.com and record your decision for Christ. If you do that, I will reach back to you and celebrate with you and help you with your next steps in your faith.

My prayer for you today is that you will surrender every part of your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. That you will be guided and directed by the Holy Spirit in every decision that you make and everything that you do. Allow Him to guide and direct you. Try to center your life in the center of his will. And you will experience the abundant and amazing life that Jesus has for you. Allow his love to flow through you to other people. And you too can have an experience like Clarise and I did and be participants in the life transformation process.

Stay tuned for our next episode of transformed by the word where we will switch gears and explore some biblical personalities whose lives were transformed by God.

Announcer 47:40

Thank you for listening to transformed by the word with your host Debora Barr, be sure to subscribe to our podcast on iTunes or Google Play and connect with us at TBTWpodcast.com. Until next time, be blessed.