

When my husband came home that night, his face was shining. He told me, with tears running down his cheeks, “I am saved.” I knew in my heart it was true, although I had never experienced anything like it. I had joined the neighborhood church and accepted Christ. I even taught Sunday school and tried to live a good life. But that night, as I looked at my husband, I realized I had never had the peace that shone on his face.

In my stubborn way, though, I told him, “You go your way and I’ll go mine.” However, God did not leave me in that condition. He began to show me what was in my heart—the bitterness, pride, self-righteousness, and the criticism against this church and its people. A few nights later, I was out in the rose garden pruning. As I cut away the drooping blossoms, I felt I was snipping things out of my life. I would tell the Lord, “I don’t want this in my life anymore. If You will make me a Christian like my husband, I won’t do this anymore.”

A week later, I went to church with my husband. The Lord let me see that all my self-righteousness was as filthy rags in His sight. I saw all the criticism, hatred, and sin, and I wondered how God could love me. But He did! As I prayed that night, God put wonderful peace into my heart. He took away the condemnation and the love for worldly things

I thought I couldn’t get along without. My heart was filled with something far sweeter than anything I had ever known.

Through the years since then, God has shown me that He can use all the happenings of our lives for our good if we will let Him. We can look back and see God’s plan for us even in tragedy. Through the loss of our daughter, the value of the things we had held dear faded away, and the only thing that mattered was to be in His will.

Through grief and sorrow, through loneliness and pain, as well as in times of joy and blessing, the sustaining thought that Jesus is mine has been the foundation for my life.  
— Sally Barrett

*Six years after their daughter’s death, the Barretts made their first missionary trip to South Korea, and eventually lived there as missionaries for nearly twenty years. Sally served God faithfully until her passing in 1992.*

## **APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH**

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**T**he miles home seemed interminable as we ended our beach vacation that had begun so joyously. Our daughter Pammy had given her heart to the Lord during the camp meeting that had just concluded. The few weeks since then had been so precious! We had experienced a new feeling of closeness and harmony.

Now we were returning home without Pammy, for our coastal trip had ended in tragedy. Pammy had drowned. She had been our only daughter, so precious to my heart, and now she was no more.

It happened on a beautiful August day, the last part of our vacation. My husband and I were relaxing on the sand, enjoying the sunshine. Rob, our oldest son, was playing in the water with Pammy and our youngest son, ten-year-old Richie. A sudden shout startled us from our relaxation. Richie came running to us, sobbing: "Rob and Pammy are in the water. They can't get out!" I'll never forget the dagger of fear that struck my heart.

It was only God who sustained me through the next hours. The lifeguards went out, and after a time, they brought the limp form of our daughter to the shore. As they worked over her there on the sand, my heart cried out to the Lord. I wanted my Pammy to live, and yet even in that moment, I felt that she was His child.

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Rob was taken from the water, and he needed help too. He had swallowed much sand and water in his attempt to save his sister. As Rob and Pammy were rushed to the nearest hospital, I rode in the ambulance with them. I remember touching Pammy and realizing that she was not here with us any longer.

The ride back to our home in Portland without Pammy was the hardest thing I have ever had to face. Memories came back to me, one after another. But in all our grief, the Lord put a wondrous peace down into our hearts. Not once did a thought of questioning God come to us—only thankfulness that Pammy had been ready to go. We knew she was with the Lord, and there was unspeakable comfort in knowing that one day our family would be reunited.

Even though Pammy was gone, God was always with us. Nine years before this, He had prepared us to accept His plan when He changed our hearts and lives, and put His peace into our hearts.

My husband's mother had been a wonderful Christian. One day she and a group of other mothers had gathered to pray for their wayward children. Those prayers were answered in a dramatic way. First, the Lord permitted a near tragedy in our home. Relatives were at our home for a family get-together. While we were picnicking, we heard the screeching of a train braking on the tracks which ran along the back of our property. Suddenly I realized that Richie, our one-year-old baby, was missing. When we rushed to the tracks, the shaken conductor told us he had seen the baby on the rails. But there was Richie, sitting unharmed beside the tracks! The conductor couldn't believe that he was safe. He said there was no way he could have stopped the train in time to avoid hitting him. Oh, how God talked to me through that incident!

A few weeks later, sorrow came to our home when my mother-in-law went to be with the Lord. However, through the pain of that loss, my husband was saved. His father asked him to go to church with him one night, and out of respect for that Christian dad, he went.