

## **MY LIFE STORY – Masoud** (January 2015)

I was born in Iran in 1965 into a Muslim family. From an early age, I noticed the injustice between social classes and the rich and poor. As a teenager in high school, I met others who struggled with these thoughts. They were Muslim political participants in the mojahedin and I joined them in their mission.

After a few years, the Iranian intelligence discovered my activities, I was arrested and sent to jail for two years. Prison was very unpleasant and unbearable.

I decided to use my prison time to deepen my roots in Islam. I studied the Qur'an. With all my being, I desired to follow the law and teachings to draw closer to Allah and have a personal relationship with him. All my efforts were worth nothing. I couldn't do anything about the injustice in society. I couldn't have a relationship with Allah.

After jail, I came to a dead end in my life. I thought of myself as a failure and that my life was worthless. To soothe my pain, I smoked and abused alcohol and drugs. Many years went by before I learned that they are not the answer. They did not free me from my pain but took me to a deeper enslavement that I could not be freed from on my own.

When I was 35, my sister invited me to come visit her and her family in Thailand. I was completely hopeless and lost. I accepted her invitation. A few days after my arrival, my sister started to talk to me about Jesus. She repeatedly asked me to pray to Jesus with her but I kept rejecting her offer.

I thought that if there was a God, I would not have ended up in the situation I was in. I told my sister that I prayed so many times a day and read the Qur'an and tried with all my heart to follow his law and this is how Allah has answered me. If Allah, Mohammad and the Qur'an could not do anything for me, then what could Jesus do. But my sister was relentless. Finally, in order to stop her repeated pleading, I gave in and agreed to do a short prayer with her.

I agreed to let her pray for me for 5 minutes, if she would stop badgering me. After a few minutes of praying, I felt somebody touch me and I fell on my knees. I started to give thanks and praise God. I saw a vision and was in the spirit of worship and prayer for about an hour. I was feeling that God was making

changes in me. I was feeling freedom and healing. After that time of prayer I was certain that God spoke to me in a personal way. This feeling of intimacy with the Almighty was my greatest desire so I surrendered my life to Him and asked Him to change my life.

I remember the prayer which I said to God, "I am 35 years old and all the days of my life have been empty and meaningless. My life is wasted and I have no hope. I want to know that you hear my prayer and have accepted me. That is why I am going to offer you three and a half years of my life. If you change my life in that period then you can have the rest of it."

It was not even three and a half months before I started to see great changes happening in my life. Soon I began to serve God and saw great miracles and transformations as I was growing in my faith in Jesus Christ. My experience made me grasp the great difference between Allah and our Lord Jesus, the living God who created us and wants to have a personal relationship with us. My experience with Allah was totally opposite. I experienced the difference between the possible and the impossible, between truth and a lie, between the gospel of Jesus and the Qur'an of Mohammad.

Before, my life was all about condemnation and punishment by Allah and now, it is all about forgiveness, love and mercy from Christ. Before, I thought I could only enter into heaven if I performed a lot of good works but now, it is by my faith in the blood of Jesus who died for our sins. Before, it was not possible to hear the voice of Allah and now, it is impossible not to hear from God. Before, hating somebody who was considered against Allah, was pleasing to Allah. But now, when I love an enemy, our Lord Jesus is pleased. Before, I was trying my best to get to heaven so that I could meet Allah close and personal. Now, I know Jesus came down to earth so I could be close and personal to God right now.

My hope and prayer is to obey the commandment Jesus taught, recorded in Matthew 22:37:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."