

## **The Man with Rock Foundation**

Banker Tim Sully was leading the perfect American dream. He had a big, mortgage free home, in a pleasant suburb of a major city, and a beautiful wife, Dona, who was a teacher at the local elementary. When little baby Jo came to their lives, the mother decided to stay home and look after the baby. Tim's income was more than enough to sustain them in all the luxuries they already had. Soon after Tim and Dona became parents to the sweet wonder Lisa.

But things changed when Dona was diagnosed with the final stage of Ovarian Cancer. All the physicians consulted, expressed helplessness in treating Dona to health. Tim's home, which once sparkled with heavenly laughter, was now clouded in mortifying grief.

At a local coffee shop Tim came across a flyer announcing a Revival Conference in the City. A speaker was coming from a different city, who claimed healing by the Holy Spirit. Tim never believed in healing, and found them a trick to hoodwink people. But now he was willing to go for this meeting, he couldn't bear imagine his children motherless, and was ready to try every method that promised any hope of his wife being healed.

Dona felt God's healing hand that evening, and she returned home as healthy as before. Tim and Dona realized that Jesus was the true Lord and Savior, and this had made them a church going family.

Tim had a cousin, Alisa, a single mother; her husband left her when her son was only two years old. Alisa never pursued a college education, hence to fill her and her son's stomach she used to work between jobs at a local WAWA, a Subway and a mail-sorting place. An unemployed neighbor looked after her baby for 50\$ a day, but this neighbor was usually drunk and never took proper care of her child. Her parents refused to help her because she had disrespected them by dropping out of college and running away with her boyfriend, whom she later married. Alisa's life was one of deep sorrow, and she was planning to end it all on a suicide note by taking excessive sleeping pills. On coming to know what happened in the life of her cousin's wife, Alisa went to visit them, where Tim asked her to come for an evening fasting prayer at their Church. Alisa decided to go; she had no more to loose.

All the noise caused by the worship in the church was making Alisa uneasy. "What I need is some peace of mind, not a bunch of eccentrics straining my eardrums." Such thoughts occupied her heart while she was seated in the backseat in the church. Suddenly the preacher screamed in a loud voice, "To the woman seated in the back of this congregation God proclaims". Alisa was startled, "Is it me", she thought. "I know you are at the brink of ending your life on sleeping pills to end the misery that your life is. Come to me, I am still worthy to help you." The message had pierced Alisa's heart and soul, she realized that Lord was really all-knowing. Nothing stopped Alisa from being convinced to lead a Christian life. Gradually her financial situation started getting better as she got a full time job at a hotel and she also started taking evening classes at the community

college. She knew that her God was faithful.

The deacon of the church was a Godly man named Mr. Derrick Madison. He headed a private bank downtown. He used to tell every customer coming to his office about the good news in his life, and how his savior Jesus sustains him. He used to preach both in churches and in public meetings.

It was Mr. Derrick's persona that influenced Brian to the church he attended. Brian was a veteran from the Iraq war. Now he had a plumbing firm with a lot of business in his neighborhood. It was Mr. Derrick who had advised Brian to buy stocks of a certain small firm. Brian believed the financial expertise of Mr. Derrick and also his goodwill and invested in the said firm. Brian was totally happy that he was able to get closer to Jesus through the wonderful persona of Mr. Derrick.

Pete was another member attending the same church. He was deeply in love with this girl Sheryl. But Sheryl's parents were deeply religious and regular churchgoers and were not convinced of having a son-in-law who didn't give religion much space in his life. Sheryl convinced him to come to the church and later he even got baptized to persuade Sheryl's parents towards his and their daughter's wedding. Pete turned out to be a wonderful asset to the church, as he was a great drummer and soon manned the drums in the Church. Gradually Pete started loving the worship of his Church and found great joy in it.

Tim, Dona, Alisa, Brian and Pete sensed a great change in their life when they started attending this Church. Even when their old friends used to despise for what they thought of this as an unwanted attachment towards a non-existent God, they found relief to this reproach in the peace they got in the Church. Just one service with the congregation used to fill their heart with joy and thanksgiving.

But soon a series of events happened in this church that changed everything upside down.

Dona's elder son Jo met an accident while crossing the street after being dropped by the school bus, and even after proper medical care the doctors couldn't save him. Tim and Dona were shell shocked by this. Their thoughts started challenging them. 'Why didn't God take care of their kid when they tried their best to obey and worship Him?' They started hating God for this unfaithfulness, 'How could God be bad to us, when we were so good to Him?' When Tim came back to work he could sense that darkness that was clouding his office. "Things are getting bad" he overheard a conversation in the cafeteria "...economists predict an eminent financial recession, our bank could undergo a rigorous oversizing." it was the managing director. Tim was afraid about the oversizing, but the loss of his son, still topped his list of grief and worry. But soon the bubble burst, as series of financial downturns in Europe and America finally lead to the closure of the bank that Tim worked for. Tim lost his job, and the family it's only source of income. This was the final blow to their faith. Tim's family ceased going to Church, and their life turned into one of gloom and despair.

Alisa started to heavily depend on prophets. She used to attend every meeting in the

town where a prophet was invited to and she even started personally calling many prophets to ask for their guidance every time she did something. Once at such a meeting a prophet stood up talked to her: "I can see you sinful state. Throw away your burden of desires and pursue the path of righteousness. I am a devouring fire." Alisa couldn't take this. Even when her husband left her for another woman, she stayed pure by not even thinking about other men, but working to take care of his kid. She couldn't understand a spirit that pictured her as a sinner in public while she was so determined to live a life of obedience and worship to God. The worse thing was people at Church now hesitated in communicating with her. They had decided after this oracle from the prophet that she sure was committing some grave sin in her life and many circles of women from the church even talked about keeping their husbands safe from her. All this hurt Alisa and she stopped going to the Church. Her faith in God was no more and she again started thinking about ending her life.

The company that Brian had invested in broke apart during the recession. Government investigations revealed that it was intentionally brought by its owning partners, to cheat the people out of their money. What came as a surprise for Brian was that Mr. Derrick Madison was a partner at this very firm. Now Mr. Madison had fled away with the money of all the investors including Brian's and he was no more to be found at the Church either. Brian fell into a disarray. His faith was built on the persona of Mr. Madison. He started thinking are all those who profess this faith similar foxes in sheep's dressing. Brian stopped going to Church. Now faith had no place in his life.

Pete was deeply hurt to know about an extra-marital affair of Sheryl's. He couldn't understand why his perfect married life was destroyed by God. Pete's love for Sheryl was deep. And the realization that all this time Sheryl was cheating on him made him a remorseful person. Pete stopped going to church. He became addicted to alcohol and burned up his life with it. He could never again lead a normal life.

Why did Tim, Dona, Alisa, Brian and Pete turn back from their faith. Wasn't their faith true. Wasn't their worship true. Sure they were dishonest either in their faith or worship. But the problem was that the foundational reasoning of their faith was simply their experience. Miraculous healing brought Tim and Dona to faith. Alisa was appalled by the words of the prophets. Brian was inspired by the faith of a person he looked up to as a gentleman. And Pete came in so that he could live with Sheryl.

Many of us might have come to faith through such experiences. Whatever be the experience we should mostly be thankful to God that through those experiences he brought us to this faith. But if the foundational reasoning of our faith is just an experience, another experience that falsifies this faith can completely tear us apart from this wonderful faith.

Remember the parable of our Lord about this:

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the

winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

“The one who heeds to these words and walks on them...” he is the man with the rock foundation. His stability and his foundational reasoning are based on the words of our Lord Jesus. One who has strengthened his faith through the words of our master won't be discouraged by the strong rain, or the streams of a wild river or the turbulent wind. The one who doesn't do so is like a person who builds his house on the sand. The house will be build fast but its foundation will be weak, a time of pestilence will bring it down.

Lord Jesus' words are clear that whatever be the experience that brings us to the banks of faith if we don't lay down our faith on the foundation of His words, destruction comes soon. We should become those who deeply know and obey the word of God.

-Saju J. Mathew