



Just an old

Raylene Pearce is a woman with a thousand stories. This story is just one of those many stories that she loves to share.

Once I thought I was an old stove.

You know the kind you see on the back veranda of old houses. There they stand, gathering cobwebs, rust and the neighbour's displeasure.

I remember just such a stove at a house on the main road into Coromandel Valley. As I drove past, I would quickly look to the left, and there it was for all to see – an old stove, plunked beside an old sofa with the stuffing falling out.

I used to think, 'Yes, there you are, just like me. I bet there's a new model where you once were. A shiny, clean, sparkling stove, probably fan-forced and...self-cleaning!'

This happened twenty-six years ago, at the time I was traded in for a new model wife. I truly thought I was like that old stove.

But I want to bear testimony to the One who is my Redeemer - Jesus. He rescues and reconditions old stoves. Not only that, but he restores them so completely that the inside is as sparkling clean as a brand-new model straight from the warehouse.

All he wants from us is a repentant heart and a willingness to be changed into something new, something the Father can use for his glory.

God never wastes anything. Nothing from the past is beyond restoration.

God cannot change the past, but he can change the way we respond to the past - now! We are not victims! We are Overcomers! How are we Overcomers? How do we overcome those things that torment us, that rise up and make us remember the dark things?

Three thousand years ago a young man called David sang a song and its recorded in Samuel 2 and I want to look at the opening verses.

'The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer.' I'd like to replace the four-letter word 'rock' with another four-letter word - 'love'.

'The Lord is my love, my place of safety and restoration.'

Because God is love, he brings us into his embrace and restores all the old stoves and all the young stoves whose shiny surfaces can be so easily scratched.

And who is this God of love, this loving 'Rock'?

THE GOD WHO IS LOVE. GOD DOES NOT HAVE LOVE, OR MAKE LOVE, OR DO LOVE LIKE A HOBBY - HE IS LOVE AND ACTS OUT HIS LOVE WITHIN HIS VERY BEING - BEING GOD.

I want to paint you a picture of perfect love. There never was a time when the Father was not the Father and there never was a time that the Son was not the Son. There was never a time when the Father did not love the Son and there was never a time when the Son did not love the Father. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is equally placed in that love relationship of the three in One: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all in the community of love. There is a continual dance of love between them. The whole reason for their being is to love.

What is absolutely wonderful about all this is that the Triune God - that is, the Holy Trinity - has chosen to include us all in this wonderful overflowing love relationship. So as we believe in Him we are taken up into this embrace.

That's what being a Christian means, being in relationship with God the Father, with Christ the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Perfect love.

Before the world came to be, the God of love had already set up the plan, the great rescue plan that would include every person.

stove



Two thousand years ago on a rock outside the city of Jerusalem, in the rubbish dump, no less, a young man of thirty-three years hung on a cross and took into himself all that separates us from God and separates us from living a totally fulfilling life in Jesus – now!

What happened on the cross, releases us from being tied to the dreadfulness of past things.

Jesus has taken into himself all the sin and suffering; all the abuse and loneliness, all the grief and sorrow. All that has hurt each one of us, all that has broken us and our families, all that continues to hurt us and keeps us from living the abundant life. All this Jesus has taken away.

Like a sponge he soaked up all the sin for all time, for all people, and declared it defeated, 'It is finished,' the young man cried out in triumph. He had completed the work he had been sent to do: to defeat the works of the evil one, who tries to have control of our lives. His completed work releases us all from the tyranny of the past, the present and the future.

Something else he does, once we have submitted to his loving hand. He remodels us, then sends us on our way.

It means that all old stoves can be restored and remodelled and that all young stoves can find the only safe place to grow in.

Let me close with the prayer of St Paul to the Ephesians: 3:20 ...

'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.'

Raylene Pearce, Coromandel Valley, S.A.

My Reason for Accepting Jesus



"Through the years I have come to value the thought - 'Because of Grace our mistakes can be stepping stones rather than stumbling blocks'. Our God is a God of second chances! Our mistakes become stepping stones."

Richard Jacka, Jamestown, S.A.



My reason for accepting Christ as saviour was because I heard what Jesus did for me. And I accepted it. I was just a kid at the time.

Pastor Bruce Leane, Port Augusta, S.A.



After listening to a sermon preached at a young people's meeting by my older brother, I literally ran home and knelt by my bedside as I had done since being a little boy and prayed for the first time a prayer in my own words in which I confessed to God I was a sinner.

I asked for forgiveness and invited the Lord Jesus Christ to come into my heart and life as my Lord and Saviour. I was 15 years and 6 months old.

Gordon Johnson