

DAMAGED GOODS

What If God's Purpose Comes From Teardrops?

Memoir

By Charlotte Hunt

PREFACE

"On June 14, 1996, a month after deciding to read through the entire bible again, I read a story in the gospel of Luke that hit me like a ton of bricks.

I read through the entire New Testament before so the story was familiar to me. However, on that day, something was different about that story. Every character, word, and situation suddenly was a personal realization I had not experienced in my first reading.

Somehow, that story caused me to stop with a piercing voice in my ears as though God was saying, "Hey baby girl, I didn't put that in my Word for you to gloss by. Read it again. Does that story sound familiar?"

I read the story again slowly. Then, I felt my legs weaken and buckle underneath me as though paralysis overcame my body. Yep, right then and there I fell to my knees and overwhelming tears flowed from my eyes for minutes that seemed like hours.

That story was not about a jacked-up woman long ago who approached Jesus despite her shame and feelings of worthlessness to wash his feet with her tears and hair.

Those in the room who judged her past and disqualified her based on their limitations were not high priests and officials.

That story was mine and those people were parents, pastors, church members, women, and others who knew my past and decided my future was hopeless like the woman in the story.

That account told in Luke 7:36 -50 was my tale. The first time I read that passage, I related to similar feelings and events. However, on that day, after the journey allowed by God to reveal fingerprints of His purpose in my life, I understood that it was not just events, but my story.

Why was I a different woman now from the bitter, foul-mouthed, cold, manipulative, jealous, controlling, "Get them before they get you" woman of years before? How could I cry so easily

and pour my heart into the broken, wounded, and outcast now when all my life I judged tears as weak and foolish?

How could I love so greatly and courageously move toward my pain now when before men, drugs, addiction, performance, and control were my idols to avoid love and pain?

I guess, because my sins, and they were many, were forgiven. Yet, while forgiven, I was seen, acknowledged, and told I had something to offer Jesus in who I was and what I could be not despite my past but because of my past.

I often think of that story in Luke and how the Lord used it to open my eyes to my identity in Him.

As far back as I can remember, I felt like damaged goods. I believed that the damage in my life labeled me as unusable, discounted, and somehow less valuable compared to those who had fewer scars, issues, and bruises in their life.

I felt my damage signaled I had little purpose and was limited to dreaming for less success, joy, and use by God. I felt the hurt of my past labeled me as something to be thrown out like dented, expired items in a store's damaged cart.

However, if God were to allow me to live my life over again, I would not change one sexual or physical abuser, betrayer, curse spoken over me, joy or painful experience, knowing what I know now and the overwhelming freedom I have in Christ and the love for others.

My life has been a mirror held up by His hands. My pain which was the shattered encounters in my life and the broken glasses of people that He placed in my path were not the scrapes, scratches, or cuts carved into the blurred mirror I viewed of myself. Instead, they were resources to wipe away the distorted image I saw when I peered in that mirror.

God used many shattered encounters to present a mirror image I could not see. Even more, He placed broken glasses of people, like my mother and my abusers in my life to turn my head to face the mirror correctly.

I can see His humorous handprint now. However, as a child, God was not funny, caring, or anything positive. He was a bigger and more powerful version of an unkind and uncaring mother.

Before seeing myself in that story of the woman who was a sinner in Luke 7:36, I believed the events of my life were random situations of pain only to be told to others as a warning and shame of my victimization. I believed the events were unusable moments to be hidden from unapproving eyes.

For much of my life, I felt He had no plan or concern, outside of pain. He made no sense to me. God had jokes but they were on me until that sunny November afternoon in Nashville, Tennessee years after reading that story.

Until that day I failed to understand that those damaging events and my damage were never the problem. They would be used to open doors of freedom and purpose and heal the broken glasses of people throughout my life.

Unexpected purposes and pieces of broken glass crossed my path to turn my head toward a mirror of God's humor and contrasting care. One of those broken pieces was a prostitute named, Victoria."