

God's True Love  
By Noeli Hernandez

My name is Obed and I have sinned my whole life. As long as I can remember I have been bad. My whole life I waited for a sign of hope, a message of forgiveness, but the message never came. It seemed there was no hope. I would go to the Pharisees but they would always say, "It's too late, you can't be helped, choose your path." As the days slowly slipped by my heart kept sinking down toward sadness. I felt lonely, but I shouldn't have, because my friends were with me every day to do normal everyday chores. I was paralyzed. The punishment for my sins.

Finally, when it seemed like all my hope had been emptied to the final drop, my friends burst through the door and brought the news I had waited for. Apparently, a man named Jesus was preaching here in town, at the house of Peter. Jesus supposedly also helped people who had no hope. . . no hope like me. The news was like food after a long day of work. I was about to ask my friends to take me, but they knew my mind and were already picking me up. Before I could say a word, we were out of the house with new hope.

On our way, the streets were filled with sellers and buyers yelling and shouting, "Bread! Bread for sale!" or "Come here to find the most beautiful jewelry in the WORLD!" The warm aroma of freshly made food filled the air. But today, I was listening for different words, loving words, not words of greed. The shouts of sellers and buyers gradually stopped, and the whispers of a small crowd started. A man named Jesus was preaching! We made it! The house of Peter! But something was wrong.

Looking at every corner of the house, my friends moved the mat back and forth, up and down and round and round, like a bee going from flower to flower. Then, I heard something from my friends that shocked me to the core. "The crowds are too big; we can't get through. Maybe we won't see Jesus." Who knew that such simple words could hurt more than getting stabbed a million times? I closed my eyes and thought, there really is no hope for us sinners in the world.

We started again, I guessed it was back to my spot on the street, but when I opened my eyes, I saw that we were going to the roof and one friend was holding rope. They put me down. Two of my friends started taking apart the roof while the other two tied the rope to the ends of my mat handles. Then, they picked me up and slowly lowered me down. I closed my eyes, thinking that Jesus would hate me with all His heart for destroying the house of His friend.

The mat touched the floor and then I opened my eyes and saw a Man. His eyes were twinkling and were as beautiful as the calmest lake at night. His smile was warmer than a fire during the coldest of winters, and when He looked at me, I felt something. I felt a flickering fire of hope light up inside me. Then, Jesus spoke the words I longed for, He said with a calm, deep, soothing voice, "Your sins are forgiven." That's it, that's all I wanted to hear, my eyes filled with bursting tears of joy. I was so happy! I thought that was all He was going to do. But then, He looked to the Pharisees who were there, watching like a lion stalking its prey. He said, "Why do your hearts have such evil thoughts? What's easier to say? 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Get up and walk'?" He looked at me and said, "Get up, grab your mat, and go home."

Immediately I felt everything. The woven strings on my mat, the heat of the sun and the cool sand between my toes. I moved both of my feet, both of my arms, and then I did something I thought I would never do again. I got up! I jumped up and down. Picking up my own mat I hugged the Man who did the impossible.

A few days later, I was the talk of the town. But they were talking of how I could walk again. Only a few people got the true message, the one of God's love, that Jesus will accept anyone, even if they sinned their whole lives, just like me.