

What a Near-Death Experience Taught Alveda King About God's Power

I have experienced God's grace and mercy in my own life so many times. I remember one particular incident in the fall of 1968, just a few months after the assassination of my uncle Martin Luther King Jr.

I was in college, and my world seemed topsy-turvy. One night I was sitting on a bench under a tree with my boyfriend, and we were arguing about something. I can't remember what the fight was about; things were so out of order in the world, anything could set us off at any time. Before either of us could realize what we were doing, I was screaming and yelling at him, and he put his hands around my throat, yelling back and telling me to "just shut up." I remember feeling very warm, and then it seemed that I was floating away. My conscious awareness seemed to actually leave my body, and I floated away from the scene of him shaking my body and screaming, "Wake up! Wake up! Come back!"

I'm not sure how long it took, but for a while I kept floating up and away through the trees. I could see my body, and I could hear his voice from what seemed like a great distance away, yelling, "Come back!" Then I floated back into my body, and he was still shaking me. Then he was holding me. (Believe it or not, I remained in that relationship.)

My choices regarding relationships didn't get much better. By 1973 I had been married and divorced and had undergone two secret abortions and a miscarriage. I was at a low point in my life. I was living with the trauma of my uncle ML being shot and my daddy being discovered dead in our swimming pool. As if that weren't enough, in 1974 my paternal grandmother, Alberta

Williams King, was shot while playing "The Lord's Prayer" on the organ on a Sunday morning.

Shortly after, I was dating a man my grandmother had warned me about before her death. I had also taken to going to nightclubs, drinking with friends, and then driving home alone. I didn't know it at the time, but God's grace and mercy were upon my life, preserving me despite the choices I was making.

On another occasion I was leaving my favorite "watering hole" and got into my car. My friends begged me not to drive home alone. I ignored them. I remember saying something foolish like, "My car is like an old horse. It knows the way home." It was a rainy night in Georgia, and as I neared home, I heard a very loud thunder clap. There was a deluge of water pouring over the car, and a live electrical wire broke loose and fell across my car. I was still quite tipsy. I looked around and was about to reach for the door handle when I heard a voice say, straight out of Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God!"

Well, I can tell you two things: I was instantly sober, and I instantly obeyed. I dropped my hand away from the door handle and just sat there in the car, listening to the thunder rolling and the rain pouring down and watching the lightning flash. I promise you, if that song "Never Alone" hadn't already been written that night, I could have written it myself.

I don't know how long I sat there in the car. There was such a peace in my soul as I obeyed the voice of God. Finally the storm rescue team was on the street where I had rolled to a standstill. My car engine was still running. The crew approached the car, shining flashlights on my face. They pulled the live wire off the car and tapped on my window: "Hello, are you OK? Are you alive?"

In both instances, with the out-of-body experience and the audible voice of God saving my life by the power of His Word, I experienced the grace and mercy of God. His mercy and grace are amazing.

God's grace and mercy can be present in a life and experienced to a certain degree or measure. Yet if the believer is not conscious of what is available and operating in his or her affairs, then the divine key may never be fully turned to open the doors that wield maximum power in the believer's favor.
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