

What I Learned From 13 Months in My Personal Noah's Ark

I'll always remember my time in Noah's ark. It was one of the most miserable seasons of my life. I entered Noah's ark after a 40-day spiritual flood swept away everything I had—my home, my car, my job, my dog, my savings.

I was stripped of everything I thought I needed. I had to start all over again—and God sent me to the backside of nowhere to do it. In Noah's Ark, I learned to walk with Him and Him alone. I learned to pray. I learned to worship. I learned to study the Bible. I did quite a lot of dying to self. God reprogrammed my life in Noah's ark.

Of course, I wasn't literally on Noah's ark. I'm old but not that old! I'm actually talking about Ozark, Alabama. When my daughter was 3 years old, she thought Ozark was called "Noah's Ark." I didn't realize until 13 years later the prophetic implications of that cute misunderstanding.

How I Landed on Noah's Ark

Let me back up. I landed in Noah's ark a few weeks after I got saved. If you know anything of my testimony, you know I was put in jail for a crime I didn't commit a few months after my husband abandoned me with our then-2-year-old daughter. Traveling evangelists rolled through the jail preaching Jesus and, having descended far below rock bottom, I gave my heart to Christ.

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As the story goes, the district attorney wanted to put me away for 5 years. Thank God, He vindicated me completely for the injustice but when I was finally released I had lost my apartment, my job, my friends, my money, and my dog. Yes, I

know. It sounds like a sad country song. And I am not a fan of country songs.

Again, God sent me to the backside of the desert, to Noah's ark, Alabama, to start a new life. I'm a city girl. Noah's ark is a rural community with about 13,000 people. There's not even a McDonald's, and only one sit-down restaurant. There's not even a brand name grocery store or pharmacy. Don't get me wrong. It's a lovely little town in many respects but it was like living in a foreign city where nobody spoke my language.

Misery With No Company

I was miserable. I imagine Noah and those with him in the ark were also miserable. Think about it for a minute. They were crammed into a big boat with two of every living creature. I've heard of cruise ships getting stuck out at sea and the stench was so horrid that people were vomiting from the smell. Noah's ark had to smell worse.

You might say I was in a crappy situation. I still had no friends, no money, no husband, and no job. After making over \$3,000 a week at the height of the dot-com bubble I had to swallow my pride and apply for government assistance just to put food on the table. Everything I once had was stripped from me and I hated Noah's Ark, Alabama.

In fact, I was so miserable that I used to walk down the street to the street drain, sit down and bawl right in the middle of the neighborhood—then get up and walk back home and cry some more. I wasn't sure if I was shipwrecked or floating in a great flood of trial and tribulation. Either way, I could not see a light at the end of the tunnel. As a new believer, I could not see how God was ordering my steps or fulfilling Romans 8:28 in my life.

Learning to Surrender

I hated just about every minute of my time in Noah's Ark.

After 13 months passed, my daughter was 5 years old and it was time to enroll her in elementary school. I dreaded the day because I knew it meant putting down roots in this dreaded place.

I prayed. I cried. I worried and wondered. Finally, I surrendered. I said something like this to God, "OK, fine. If you want me to stay here in stinky, smelly Noah's Ark for the rest of my life, I'll do it. You win. I give up."

Would you believe it wasn't a week later when I got a call from an aviation magazine in South Florida with a job offer to serve as editor? It was one of my best freelance clients and the current editor was leaving for a new position. The only catch: I had to report for duty in two weeks. This was my way of escape!

Rewards for Obedience

I drove down to South Florida, got a realtor, and started looking for apartments. The realtor took me to the 11th floor of a condo on the beach, which I told her I could not afford. When I stepped out onto the balcony and looked at the ocean view, the Holy Spirit said three words to me that changed my life forever: "This is yours."

I had the gall to argue with the Holy Spirit, telling Him I could not afford the \$1,000 a month rent (my rent in Noah's Ark was only \$450). He told me He could afford it.

I signed the lease, moved everything I had down south, and my daughter started elementary school in Hollywood, Florida a couple of weeks later. Today, I live in the Promised Land. I own two condos debt-free with ocean views—but I don't think I ever would have come this far without passing through Noah's Ark, Alabama.

I don't know what your Noah's ark looks like (or smells like) but here's the lesson: You have to find contentment in the ark

before God will deliver you to your Promised Land. Consider the words of the apostle Paul when he was in his Noah's Ark—knee deep in sewage in a jail.

“I have learned in whatever state I am to be content. I know both how to face humble circumstances and how to have abundance. Everywhere and in all things I have learned the secret, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things because of Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:11-13). Amen.

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