

From Selling Tomatoes to Teaching the Gospel

In the village of Makwati, near the town of Kabwe, Zambia, Phoebe was a lost soul in desperate need of the saving love of Jesus Christ.

Taken from her mother as an infant by her grandmother, Phoebe grew up in the house of her father and stepmother—a stepmother who never loved her. She had stepsisters who would hide food from her. Eventually, after receiving his pension from teaching, Phoebe's father abandoned the family, leaving her even more vulnerable.

She had her first child, Jebulani, at age 16. When he was 4, Jebulani went to live with his father. He lives there to this day, and Phoebe is able to occasionally visit him. After Phoebe's father refused to pay for her high school education, the government welfare system stepped in.

One day at school, a worker came from the welfare system with a man she thought was her uncle on her mother's side. They took her to what she still believes is her mother's family. After looking at her, the family denied that she was theirs. "I guess I don't have a mother," assumed Phoebe after the heartbreaking experience.

Phoebe married in 1998, but due to the harassment of her stepmother, her husband left her. At that time she was pregnant, and on March 25, 1999, Phoebe gave birth to her second child, named Naomi.

Phoebe and Naomi moved into a tiny room that she could afford from selling popcorn and juice to local high school students. Later, she remarried a man named Richard, whom she is still married to today. Richard and Phoebe have a son, Chelson, who is now 4 years old.

While selling tomatoes at a stand next to the road, Phoebe met OM Zambia staff members Lazarous and Alfred. They told Phoebe of God's love for her. "What can God do for me?" Phoebe asked.

One day, Alfred told Phoebe, "You know this is not your job." He challenged her to do more with her life and education. He invited her to join the Discipleship Training Course and become a teacher at Makwati Community School, a school OM Zambia started at the request of local villagers to bring transformation to the community. "I'll give you a week to think about it," Alfred told her.

A week passed and Phoebe decided to take up the challenge. Through the Discipleship Training Course, the Lord radically altered her life. "That's how my heart started feeling good," she says of attending the course. Explaining the despair in her heart before the course, Phoebe comments, "Sometimes when I was alone I would just think, 'It is better to die than to go on living. Why did I have these children?'" Thankfully the Lord has rescued Phoebe from destructive thoughts like these. "Now I don't think that; I am just a happy person!"

Through the course, Phoebe learned about the love of God. The Father Heart of God is one of her favorite course topics. "God is with me. God loves me," she now proclaims.

After attending the Discipleship Training Course in Kabwe, Phoebe enrolled in and completed the OM Zambia Teachers Training Course, where she learned practical skills about educating children.

Today she is one of four teachers at Makwati Community School, and her son Chelson is in her class. Each day on the way to the classroom, Phoebe goes door to door encouraging parents to send their children to the school. And every morning, Phoebe and the other teachers tell the children of the love of Jesus Christ.

Please pray for Phoebe, Richard and their family. Please pray

for the transformation of the students, teachers, parents and other members of Makwati village through the gospel of Jesus Christ.