DEAD AN FALLING

JAMIE KIDD



THIS IS SOM





I'D JOINED THE ARMY AT 18 YEARS OLD WITH A CATALOGUE

The trouble started at a young age. My Father was a serving soldier and wasn't around much and by the time I was three my parents were divorced. My mother was from Singapore, but she remained in England and married again. It was a happy home, but at school I spent significant time standing outside the headmaster's office. A few years into secondary education my natural bent for mischief morphed into something darker and more personal.

I had become a prime target for bullying and racial abuse. The taunts hit hard and I began to resent my family, my background and my circumstances and hate myself.

I WAS STILL ONLY YOUNG

WHEN I BEGAN EXPERIMENTING WITH SELF-HARMING, CUTTING MYSELF WITH RAZOR BLADES. PHED INTO SOMETHING DARKER AND MORE

OF DISASTER AND A HUGE CHIP ON MY SHOUL-

I COULDN'T GET AWAY FROM THE BULLYING SO I BEGAN TO FIGHT BACK.

I used my fists whenever anyone gave me grief and soon earned a certain street-level respect. I began hanging around with gangs, drinking heavily and getting into trouble with the police for robbery and vandalism. At age 15 I left home. I had nowhere to go and ended up living in a friend's run-down barn. It was miserable. There was no hot water, only horse blankets to keep me warm and food was scarce. Deeply troubled, desperately lonely but too full of arrogance and pride to go home, I drank alcohol of any description to get to sleep.

My family kept reaching out to me and a couple of times I tried to go back to school but always I returned to a life of drugs, alcohol, vandalism and now promiscuity. I was expelled from school but turned up to take my GCSEs, both drunk and high on drugs.

Life spiralled downwards for the next two years until finally I took my father's advice and joined the Paras.

THE PARACHUTE REGIME THIRTY-THREE WEEKS OF



NT PUT ME THROUGH PSYCHOLOGICAL HELL, HAD NOTHING ELSE TO LIVE FOR

so I kept my head down and completed the training. A torturous ordeal lay ahead as I joined the unit. Initiation was cruel but I held my own until my tormentors became my family - men I could trust with my life. We lived fast and hard. Nights off barracks meant booze, prostitutes and a good fight with the locals. I had money in my pocket, good mates, an awesome job, plenty of women and finally a reason to live.

Life was good, but deep inside there was still something wrong. I had a strong sense of discontent, a constant itch that turned into an ache. There were men on the barracks much bigger and tougher than I ever was but that didn't stop me thriving on the energy of the fights. I knew it was all wrong but no matter how tough I talked I was growing more and more sick with myself. Guilt consumed me and sometimes I felt the relentless restlessness would overwhelm me.

MY FAMILY WERE GOD-LOVING PEOPLE AND I'D BEEN TO A CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL. I GUESS I'D HAVE SAID I BELIEVED IN THE IDEA OF GOD, SO EVENTUALLY, WEARY AND RESTLESS WITH EVERYTHING ELSE, I FOUND MYSELF LOOKING TOWARDS THE CHURCH. MAYBE HERE'S WHERE I'D FIND SOME SORT OF RESOLUTION? MAYBE HERE'I COULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE GUILT AND EASE MY AGITATED SOUL? IN TRUTH, IT DIDN'T DO MUCH FOR ME. THE PLACE WAS FULL OF WHAT I THOUGHT WERE FAKE SMILES AND DO-GOODERS. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A GIRL WHO CAUGHT MY EYE. SHE WAS SWEET, NOT LIKE THE WOMEN WHO USUALLY TURNED MY HEAD AND TOOK MY MONEY. THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT HER THAT MADE SUNDAY MORNING INTERESTING FOR A FEW WEEKS. . .



WE HAD BEEN TRAINED TO KILL AND I WASN'T ASHAMED TO ADMIT I CRAVED SOME PROPER ACTION. WE WERE ALL THERE WITH A JOB TO DO AND IF THAT MEANT LOOKING DEATH IN THE FACE THEN SO BE IT.







'I'm here for you, I'm watching over you. Don't worry!

THE NOTION THAT GOD MIGHT



Was it real? Maybe it was something to do with the intense heat and stress? The strange thing though, was the very strong sense of peace I had that night. It was a sense that stayed with me in many more situations during my time in Iraq.



...I TOOK UP WITH AMY, THE GIRL AT THE CHURCH.

I LIKED THE IDEA OF TURNING MY LIFE AROUND,
CREATING SOME STABILITY, PUTTING DOWN SOME ROOTS.
IT SEEMED RIGHT TO GET MARRIED. SHE WAS A NICE GIRL
AND I LOVED HER. IT WAS THE REAL THING, BUT WITHIN
MONTHS I BECAME RESTLESS WITH THE FAIRY TALE.

I WAS SOON BACK TO MY OLD WAYS

- THE FIGHTS, THE BOOZE AND THE WOMEN.
I BLEW IT, BIG STYLE.

BEFORE LONG OUR MARRIAGE WAS ON THE ROCKS, MY LIFE ONCE AGAIN SPIRALLING OUT OF CONTROL AND THE REASSURING VOICE IN THE WAR ZONE HAD LONG BLOWN AWAY WITH THE DESERT SAND.

BLACK BUT I HAD AN ESPECIALLY BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS ONE.

I was on a training course for specialised parachuting. 3000 feet up with an advanced steerable square parachute designed for precision landing in covert operations. Somehow I couldn't get myself properly psyched up for the jump.

It was as if I knew.



'I launched myself from the aircraft, as I had done hundreds of times before, but almost immediately something was wrong. My helmet covering came off and became wrapped around my face, jamming over my nose and mouth. Frantically I fought against the air pressure to release it but as soon as I was free I could see my parachute had a serious malfunction. I began spinning out of control, my legs flailing beneath me. Panic gripped me as I realised I had a life or death decision to make. Then the training kicked in.

'Release the reserve. Release the reserve!' I yelled at myself. I knew this would mean a fast and terrifying freefall as I pulled off the main parachute. It was a procedure I'd trained in, one I'd run over many times in my head, but never dealt with in reality.

In a split second I dropped between two other guys, almost knocking them off course in the speed of my unscheduled descent.

I yanked at the release chord ...

WHERE WAS IT? WHERE WAS THE RESERVE PARACHUTE? IDIDN'T HAVE TIME

TO PONDER THE ODDS OF DOUBLE PARACHUTE FAILURE.
FALLING THROUGH THE SKY I KNEW I HAD ONLY ONE OPTION: PRAY!

PLEASE GOD

With the ground approaching at unfathomable speed I cried out, over and over, 'Please God, no! Please God, no!' Somehow – though death was surely certain and imminent – I couldn't believe this really was it. My cries turned from a mantra of protest into a question, 'Please God, this isn't really going to happen is it?' A multitude of emotions swept over me, then suddenly a jolt. I was flung upwards as the reserve sprung out. Massive relief, but it wasn't over yet. Now I was coming down backwards and still way too fast. I might make it, but surely it would be with a broken back or legs...

IT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS SOME SORT OF MIRACLE. I LANDED SOFTLY, WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A SCRAPE. THEN THERE WAS THE VOICE - THE SAME VOICE I HAD HEARD IN THE DESERT.

'I AM WATCHING OVER YOU. DON'T WORRY. I AM WITH YOU.'

That was it. God finally had my attention. After such a terrifying 'near death' experience I was now beginning to recognise the worth of my life, how much I wanted to live, and how little control I had over when my life might be taken from me.



thought that troubled me deeply. Perhaps death just meant the end of everything? Perhaps it was just a big black unconscious nothing? That idea might be all right

for some, but I had a sense that there was more.

BUT WHAT? JUDGEMENT? HEAVEN? HELL?

I JUST SEEMED TO KNOW THAT THE SCRAPS OF INFORMATION I'D STORED IN MY UNCONSCIOUS MIND - SERMONS I'D HEARD PREACHED, CONVERSATIONS AT HOME, TEACHING AT SCHOOL - WERE SUDDENLY VITALLY IMPORTANT.

WHAT IF IT REALLY IS TRUE? WOULD I REALLY FACE SOME KIND OF JUDGEMENT?





SERIOUS, TERRIFYING CONSEQUENCES FOR ME.
THE REALITY OF A WAR ZONE IS EASILY DESCRIBED AS 'HELL ON EARTH' BUT NOW I HAD A VERY REAL FEAR THAT MY ETERNAL DESTINY MIGHT BE WORSE THAN THIS, WITH NO FLIGHT OUT!

THERE WAS ONLY ONE PLACE TO GO. IT WAS WITH A VERY NEW HUMILITY THAT I HEADED BACK TO THE CHURCH WHERE I HAD MET AMY, I BEGAN ASKING QUESTIONS NOW AND READING THE BIBLE I HAD BEEN GIVEN. PEOPLE TALKED A LOT ABOUT A 'RELATIONSHIP' WITH JESUS AND THE MORE I THOUGHT ABOUT IT AND LOOKED BACK AT WHAT I HAD BEEN THROUGH, THE MORE INTERESTED I BECAME. IF THE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE HAD INTERVENED IN MY LIFE IN THE WAY HE SEEMED TO HAVE DONE, SURELY I NEEDED TO TAKE NOTICE. IF THERE WAS A WAY OF KNOWING THIS GOD I NEEDED TO FIND THAT WAY. THE WORDS SEEMED TO FALL OFF THE PAGE AS I OPENED MY BIBLE:

Tam the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me' (John 14:6)

SOON AFTER THAT I DECIDED TO GIVE MY BROKEN, MESSED UP LIFE TO GOD. THERE WAS MUCH I DIDN'T YET UNDERSTAND, BUT I KNEW I HAD TO DO SOMETHING TO TURN MY LIFE AROUND. I KNEW IN MY INNER BEING THAT IF THIS WERE GOING TO BE POSSIBLE IT WOULD ONLY BE THROUGH THIS 'RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS' THAT I KEPT HEARING ABOUT. IT WAS EXPLAINED TO ME THAT SINCE GOD WAS AN ALMIGHTY AND PERFECT GOD THERE WAS A GREAT RIFT BETWEEN US

BECAUSE OF MY 'SIN'

ALL THE WRONG THINGS IN MY LIFE. BY DYING ON THE CROSS
JESUS – GOD'S PRECIOUS SON – HAD MADE THE ULTIMATE
SACRIFICE AND TAKEN THE PUNISHMENT I DESERVED. NOW
THE WAY WAS OPEN FOR ME TO BE RECONCILED WITH GOD
BY ACCEPTING THAT FORGIVENESS AS MY OWN.

WHAT DID THIS MEAN? IT WAS EXPLAINED TO ME THIS WAY ...
THERE ARE TWO THINGS WE MUST DO:

1. REPENT PUT SIMPLY. THIS MEANS TO SAY SORRY TO GOD FOR ALL THE WRONG THINGS IN OUR LIVES. IN MY CASE THERE WAS MUCH TO BE SORRY ABOUT: THE ROBBERIES, PORNOGRAPHY. DRUGS, VIOLENCE, I HAD NO PROBLEM ACCEPTING MYSELF AS WHAT THE BIBLE CALLS A 'SINNER'. THERE WERE THINGS IN MY LIFE THAT ANYONE WOULD SAY WAS 'WRONG', BUT BY GOD'S STANDARD IT'S NOT JUST BIG THINGS LIKE THESE THAT SEPARATE US FROM HIM. IF GOD IS HOLY OR 'PERFECT', THEN IN REALITY EVERYONE FALLS SHORT OF HIS STANDARD. EVEN THOSE WHO SEEM TO LIVE GOOD' LIVES ARE TO BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANGER LIES, STEALING, UNSAVOURY THOUGHTS, SELFISHNESS, USING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN. NOT GIVING GOD HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE AS LORD IN OUR LIFE... IN SHORT. NOBODY IS DESERVING OF RECONCILIATION WITH GOD ON HIS OR HER OWN MERIT. YET GOD'S MERCY IS IMMENSE AND HE EXTENDS THIS GIFT OF FORGIVENESS TO ALL WHO ARE TRULY SORRY BEFORE HIM.

I KNEW THIS WOULD BE A TOUGH CALL FOR ME. IT WAS EASY TO SAY I WAS SORRY. YES, I TRULY REGRETTED MANY THINGS IN MY LIFE THAT ANYONE WOULD SAY WERE WRONG, BUT I'D TRIED TO CHANGE MY WAYS BEFORE. I'D SAID SORRY TO AMY SO MANY TIMES, BUT THEN HURT HER AGAIN AND AGAIN BY GOING BACK TO MY OLD WAYS. I WAS WORRIED ABOUT DOING THE SAME BEFORE GOD, THIS TIME FACING ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES. YET IT WAS EXPLAINED TO ME:

BEING SORRY BEFORE GOD SIMPLY MEANS BEING 'WILLING'
TO TURN AWAY FROM THE WRONG-DOING. SOME THINGS I WOULD
NOT BE ABLE TO GIVE UP IN MY OWN STRENGTH BUT I WAS
MIGHTILY RELIEVED TO LEARN THAT WHEN I SURRENDERED
MY LIFE TO GOD, HE WOULD HELP ME DEAL WITH THOSE ISSUES.



2. Be Baptized

WHILST BAPTISM IS COMMANDED, IT'S NOT BAPTISM ITSELF THAT SAVES YOU, BUT WHAT IT SYMBOLISES - FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST ALONE AND A DYING TO YOURSELF. IT WAS BY FAITH, A GIFT FROM GOD THAT I CAME TO BELIEVE THAT JESUS COULD SAVE ME FROM THE WRATH OF GOD, HELL AND FROM MYSELF. AND IT WAS BY FAITH THAT I WAS NOW SURRENDERING MY BROKEN MESSED UP LIFE TO HIM, ASKING HIM TO TAKE CHARGE AND TO NOW FOLLOW HIS WAYS AND LIVE TO DO HIS WILL, NOT MY OWN SELFISH AND DESTRUCTIVE WAYS.

I WAS BAPTISED AS A CHILD, BUT MY PARENTS CHOSE THAT FOR ME, NOW I HAD HEARD THE CALL FOR MYSELF TO REPENT AND BE BAPTISED! BAPTISM WAS SYMBOLISING THIS DEATH, AS I WENT DOWN INTO THE WATERY GRAVE AND WAS RAISED TO NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.

What must we do? "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit..." Acts 2:38

SURRENDERING LIKE THIS WAS A **MIGHTY THING** FOR ME.

STILL NOW I AM OVERWHELMED WHEN I CONSIDER THAT GOD THE ALMIGHTY, THE MAKER OF THE HEAVENS AND EARTH CHOSE TO SAVE ME. NOT BECAUSE OF ANYTHING I HAVE DONE OR EVER COULD DO, BUT PURELY BECAUSE OF HIS GOODNESS, MERCY AND LOVE. THIS TO ME IS AMAZING GRACE. SURELY HE DESERVES TO BE MY 'EVERYTHING'!

AT THE TIME THESE WERE BIG THINGS THAT WERE HARD TO GRAPPLE WITH BUT IT WAS EXPLAINED TO ME THAT I SHOULD BEGIN BY SINCERELY PRAYING A PRAYER LIKE THIS...

Lord Jesus, I know that I have done wrong and that I need your forgiveness. Please forgive me now of every wrong thing I've ever done, I'm so sorry. I believe that You died for me and for my sin, please would you forgive me and be Lord of my life. Please change me. I want to trust and follow you for the rest of my life. Amen

I was reassured when I read the bible:

'EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAM SHALL BE SAVED' [ROMANS 10:1

I KNEW THAT I WAS NOW ON A NEW PATH AND OVER THE COMING DAYS, WEEKS AND MONTHS I BEGAN TO SEE THE FRUIT OF GOD'S PRESENCE IN ME. JESUS CHRIST CHANGED MY LIFE. HE HEALED ME MENTALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND PHYSICALLY. HE ALSO SAVED MY MARRIAGE. SOON AFTER I GAVE MYSELF TO HIM, I FELT GOD WAS ASKING ME TO LEAVE THE ARMY AND SPEND TIME WITH HIM AND WITH MY WIFE WHOM I HAD NEGLECTED SO MUCH. I HAD COMPLETED EIGHT YEARS SERVICE. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO WHEN I LEFT AND THE PROSPECT WAS VERY DAUNTING, BUT I HAD A DEEP TRUST THAT GOD WOULD MAKE A LEAD THE WAY FOR US.

I CAN'T CLAIM THAT EVERYTHING SINCE THEN HAS BEEN SMOOTH SAILING. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME TERRIBLY TESTING TIMES [ESPECIALLY THE LOSS OF OUR FIRST BABY, OTHERS CLOSE TO ME AND MY WIFES M.S.] BUT I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW I WOULD HAVE COPED WITHOUT MY FAITH IN JESUS TO HELP ME THROUGH. I COMPARE MY LIFE TO A BUILDING SITE, UNDER CONSTRUCTION. I AM BEING BUILT INTO THE PERSON THAT GOD WANTS ME TO BE. BUT NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE THAT DREADFUL 'RESTLESSNESS', THAT CONTINUAL LOOKING FOR THE NEXT HIGH, MY INSECURITIES HAVE GONE.

E OF THE LORD

3].



I NOW HAVE A SURE AND CERTAIN HOPE OF WHERE I AM GOING WHEN I FACE DEATH.

THE UNKNOWN NO LONGER TERRIFIES ME. NOW I HAVE A PROMISE OF ETERNITY IN HEAVEN WITH MY SAVIOUR. AND NOW IT PAINS ME TO SEE OTHERS GOING THROUGH STRUGGLES ALONE, WITHOUT GOD WHEN I KNOW WHAT HE HAS DONE AND THE TRUTH OF HIS PROMISES.

'For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.' John 3:16



MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE IN A VAGUE NOTION OF HEAVEN, MOST BELIEVE THAT BY BEING A 'GOOD PERSON' THEY WILL END UP THERE. BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES, MY LIFE WAS A TERRIBLE MESS AND I HAVE DONE SOME DREADFUL THINGS, MANY TIMES I TURNED MY BACK ON GOD BUT HE DIED FOR ME. HE WENT THROUGH HORRIFIC SUFFERING AND SHAME FOR EACH ONE OF US AND I CAN'T HELP BUT TAKE THAT VERY PERSONALLY. SO YES, THE BIBLE SHOWS ME THAT I AM FAR WORSE THAN I THINK I AM, BUT IT ALSO SHOWS ME, THAT NOW BECAUSE OF JESUS, I AM MUCH MORE LOVED THAN I COULD EVER POSSIBLY IMAGINE!



I CAN BARELY PUT INTO WORDS THE PEACE AND AS

YET MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM COMPELS ME TO SHOUT IN THE BEST WAY I CAN

IF ANYTHING IN MY STORY HAS MADE YOU EXAMINE YOUR OWN LIFE OR CONSIDER YOUR OWN ETERNITY, PLEASE, ASK GOD TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO YOU. ASK HIM TO SAVE YOU.



IF YOU PRAY, SINCERELY - FROM YOUR HEART, FROM YOUR GUT - THEN PLEASE REMEMBER, THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

I URGE YOU TO SEEK THE COMPANY AND COUNSEL OF OTHER CHRISTIANS WHO CAN HELP YOU AS YOU BEGIN YOUR WALK WITH GOD. READ YOUR BIBLE SO THAT YOU CAN GET TO KNOW CHRIST BETTER, TALK TO GOD EVERY DAY IN PRAYER, TELL OTHERS ABOUT CHRIST AND JOIN A CHURCH SO THAT YOU CAN MEET WITH OTHERS TO WORSHIP HIM AND LEARN MORE.

ETERNITY MIGHT BE THE NEXT BULLET, THE NEXT JUMP, THE NEXT BOMB BLAST, ROAD CROSSED, TRAIN RIDE, DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT . . . THE ONLY THING CERTAIN ABOUT LIFE IS ITS END. THEN WHAT?

QUESTIONS? NEED FURTHER
ADVICE, PRAYER OR WOULD LIKE
YOUR FIRST BIBLE? I WOULD LOVE TO
HEAR FROM YOU.

PLEASE CONTACT ME AT INFO@ALOHANANI.ORG
WWW.ALOHANANI.ORG
OR IF YOU'RE LOCAL COME ON OVER TO MY CHURCH OHANA THIS SUNDAY OR THE PERSONS CHURCH WHO GAVE YOU THIS BOOKLET. WE WOULD LOVE TO TELL YOU MORE ABOUT JESUS!

DETAILS:



