

Annie Lee

God's Grace to Me through Missionary Sarah Barry
and God's Calling to Me to be Her Assistant

I AM THE LORD'S SERVANT

Luke 1:38

Feb 1, 2021

*"'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered. 'May your word to me be fulfilled.'
Then the angel left her."*

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for the grace of forgiveness of all my sins through the precious blood of Jesus. Thank you for calling me to live a most blessed life as your servant. Thank you for the grace you have shown me through your servant Missionary Sarah Barry, and now thank you for calling me to her personal assistant to serve her until you call her to heaven. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

I first met Missionary Sarah Barry when I was 21-years-old, when I attended the second Russian Summer Bible Conference in 1992. I had met Jesus through Genesis Bible study during the beginning of my junior year in college at Columbia University in New York, and my Bible teacher, M. Ruth Shin, had told me so many wonderful stories about Mother Barry--a beautiful American princess who sacrificed the opportunity to marry in order to serve college students in Korea with the gospel. When I finally met her, I felt so privileged to meet such a beautiful and sacrificial woman of God, and was awed by her powerful prayer.

The next time I met Mother Barry in person was in the summer of 1995, at the MSU International Summer Bible Conference. Because my family misunderstood my calling and desire to serve God in UBF ministry, I almost didn't make it to this conference as they had taken me against my will two weeks prior to the conference and had me talk with people who planted doubt about my faith in my heart. But God led me on eagles' wings to the opening night of the conference. After the conference, Dr. Samuel Lee invited me to Chicago to get some rest and find direction for my life. Upon arriving in Chicago, Dr. Lee gave me a choice to stay at his house or to stay at Mother Barry's house. I said I would like to stay with Mother Barry. This was the beginning of my love relationship with Mother Barry.

Because of the hurtful event I had experienced before coming to Chicago, I suffered from anxiety, doubt and nightmares. But Msn. Sarah Barry gently took care of me. She fed me delicious food, and taught me the Bible everyday beginning with Genesis, Romans and John's gospel. She patiently listened to all my questions and doubts, and

encouraged me in the word of God. Through Romans study with Msn. Sarah, I received Ro 8:1, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." When I struggled to know what my future direction would be--whether to go back to New York, to remain in Chicago or even to go to Korea, Mother Barry encouraged me to trust in God's Sovereignty. I could accept Ro 8:28 through her counsel: "²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Through life together with Msn. Sarah Barry, I observed her simple child-like faith, and daily discipline. Each morning at the crack of dawn, she went swimming at the YMCA, then went to the church to pray, came home to have a cup of coffee and went straight to writing the Daily Bread study guide. She did this without fail, day in and day out. I observed that she simply obeyed the word of God, so that her life was a display of God's word in action. I remember praying one day on my knees in Mother Barry's room, as I was preparing my Bible study material using her computer, "Lord, please help me grow to be a great Bible scholar like Msn Sarah Barry!"

While I lived with Mother Barry she also drove me to visit different ministries in the Chicago area. One day she drove me to the Northwestern Bible house, and introduced me to ministry, saying "I think you'll like it here." She knew me so well because I felt very much at home in the Northwestern Bible house.

In 1997, after I had moved out of Mother Barry's house and moved into common life with several sister missionaries, Dr. Lee handed me a big yellow envelope during the Friday meeting at the church. When I looked inside, it was a copy of my husband's life testimony, his college transcript, and a small headshot attached to the corner of the paper file. When I went back home that evening and read Msn. Hosea's humorous life testimony, I felt as though he was my good friend whom I had known for many years though I had never met him. When I asked one of my roommates what she thought about his picture, she said, "I think for a Korean, he looks pretty good!" So I told Dr. Lee after the Sunday worship service, "OK, I will accept your recommendation!" To my shock, he said, "Go to Korea tomorrow and marry him." I had just started a new job at Northwestern, and didn't have any vacation time. In confusion, I went to visit Mother Barry to ask her advice, saying, "I think Dr. Samuel Lee was kidding when he told me to go to Korea tomorrow. What do you think I should do?" She said, "Dr. Lee doesn't kid like that. Pray about it and let me know what you decide." So the next day, I found myself on a plane to go to Korea. In my head, I thought I was doing something really crazy, but in my heart I had an unfathomable sense of peace, which gave me conviction that I must be following the will of God.

When I landed in Korea, Dr. Mark and Msn. Anna Yang greeted me at the airport with big smiles together with Hosea who gave me a bouquet of roses. We got married one week later, and then I returned to Chicago. When I had landed at O'Hare, Mother Barry came to pick me up like my mother. I was so thankful to all of God's servants who helped me to establish a house church with the best husband for me. When Mother Barry's mother went to heaven, and I sensed Msn. Sarah's sorrow, I remember thinking to myself that I wanted to take care of her when she got older and weaker, since she didn't have any biological children.

Some years ago, I felt burned out and despaired over Northwestern ministry, and cried to Mother Barry saying that I hated Northwestern ministry. Then through 1 Kings study with her, I could hear the gentle whisper of God who spoke to Elijah, who had also felt burned out in the course of serving God. 1 Kings 19:12 says, "¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper..." Verse 18 continues, "¹⁸ Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him." When I cried some more to Mother Barry complaining that I couldn't sense Jesus' presence at Northwestern, she gently encouraged me, "Annie, if Jesus is in your heart and you are at Northwestern, then Jesus is at Northwestern too."

When I struggled with hatred and anger due to coworking issues, again Mother Barry reminded me of the importance to forgive and to love one another. When I asked her, "How many times should I forgive?!" She said, "Jesus says even up to 70 times 7." Sometimes her counsel made me very mad. But I could not deny the truth behind her words of counsel, and eventually submitted to the word of God. I thank God for using Mother Barry so preciously to give me His word at opportune times in my life of faith. Her prayers, Bible study and love for me have been the driving force behind my spiritual formation.

She has been there for me in my darkest hours of need, and somehow, I also seem to have been there for her in some of her moments of need. When Mother Barry's mother passed away, I slept with her in her room every night for some time. When I received news that my father had passed away after a difficult battle with cancer, I happened to be with Mother Barry. When Mother Barry's brother Tom passed onto glory, and she received a text from her nephew Frank Barry, I happened to be studying the Bible with her. When I was visiting with Mother Barry one-night last November, it happened to be the day that Msn. Anna Yang had been taken to the emergency room due to a dire health problem. I sensed that the time had come for Msn. Anna Yang to step down from her role as Mother Barry's personal assistant. That evening when I came home, I could not sleep all night concerned about Msn. Anna Yang and also about Mother Barry's future. As I prayed about

it over the next several days, I had a dream where Msn. Anna appeared to me looking very weak, and she took hold of my arm, and said with a smile, "Thank you so much Annie for your sacrificial decision to take care of Mother Barry." Then a week later, on the day it was my turn to serve dinner to Msn. Anna Yang, she asked if I would consider being Mother Barry's personal assistant. I remembered Mary's decision of faith before the angel Gabriel upon learning of God's mission and calling for her. She did not consult with Joseph first, but said, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled." (Lk 1:38) So I answered Msn. Anna Yang, "Yes, I will do it! Please pray for Hosea, but I believe he will be OK."

Since Christmas time, and throughout the month of January, I have been spending time at Mother Barry's house getting acquainted with her daily routine. I also resumed Bible study with her. I consider it to be a privilege to be with God's precious servant and to learn from her as I also help her out. As I take on the role of being Missionary Sarah Barry's personal assistant, I do it not only out of my love for her but as my obedience to God who has called me to this mission in this season of my life. When I observed how whole-heartedly Msn. Anna Yang served Mother Barry, I am not confident at all that I can follow in her footsteps. But I put my trust in the Lord who has called me to this task, and I trust that he will help me fulfill my mission before Him.

One Word: I am the Lord's servant.