

From Unlucky to Loved

BY ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Chhaina grew up hating the name of Jesus Christ. Chhaina belonged to a major world religion in Cambodia, and he and his family hated Christianity.

But then Chhaina's family began to hate him.

It all started when Chhaina's grandfather died suddenly. Chhaina loved his grandfather and had spent a lot of time with him. But in their religion, if you spend a lot of time with someone, and something bad happens, you are considered responsible. Chhaina's family wondered if the boy was unlucky.

Then Chhaina's uncle died suddenly. Chhaina had spent a lot of time with his uncle. Now his family really began to wonder if he was unlucky.

Then Chhaina's parents went bankrupt. They sold everything that they owned but, still deep in debt, moved across the border to Thailand to work at a television factory. Chhaina was told to stay behind.

"Your life has not brought peace but only destruction," one family member said.

"You should never have been born," said another.

Chhaina was 18. He felt very alone.

Then a friend invited him to guitar lessons at a Seventh-day Adventist church. Chhaina felt torn. He knew that Adventists loved Jesus. He hated Jesus. But he loved the guitar, and he really wanted to learn how to play.

He went to the Adventist church.

After that, he didn't miss a guitar lesson at the church. He immediately liked the pastor and his wife. They spoke about a Jesus who was very different from the Jesus whom he had heard about from his parents. They said Jesus didn't only love people who loved Him; Jesus also loved people who hated Him. His love was so big that He died so that even people who hated Him could live eternally.

Chhaina began to go to church every Sabbath. A love for Jesus grew in his heart, and he was baptized. He prayed to be reunited with his parents. He wanted them to accept him without worrying that he was unlucky. "I want my family back," he prayed every day. "I promise to serve You for the rest of my life and not serve any other god."

But Jesus seemed so silent. Chhaina didn't have a full understanding of the role of faith in the Christian life. His family's traditional religion put a major emphasis on works. So, as he prayed, he decided to prove through his works that he was worthy of a response. He volunteered for One Year in Mission, a church initiative in which he spent a year in mission service. Then he helped a French missionary distribute Bibles in Cambodia. He hoped that his church work would convince Jesus to answer his prayers. But Jesus seemed so silent. At times, Chhaina felt upset, and he prayed, "I'm doing so much for You. Why aren't You doing anything for me?"

After five years, Chhaina's parents returned to Cambodia. They had no choice. The authorities in Thailand didn't renew their work visas. With no land or home, they accepted an invitation from Chhaina to stay with him in his rented home. It no longer mattered if he was unlucky. They had nowhere else to go.

On Sabbath, Chhaina invited his parents to church. "You don't have any money, but we will find food for all of us there," he said.

The church members warmly welcomed his parents, and his parents enjoyed the fellowship meal. The next Sabbath, they returned for more food and fellowship, and their hearts began to soften. The Jesus whom they heard about at church was very different from the Jesus whom they had hated for so many years. A year passed, and Chhaina's parents were baptized.

It was the biggest miracle that Chhaina could have imagined. Jesus not only answered his prayer to bring his parents back to Cambodia, but He also won their hearts. Jesus had done much more than he had asked. With astonishment, he realized that Jesus had answered his prayers not because of anything that he had done but because of who Jesus is.

Today, Chhaina no longer feels unlucky. He feels loved. He has not forgotten his promise to serve Jesus for the rest of his life. Today, he is studying theology at Asia-Pacific International University in Thailand in preparation for a life of mission service.

Andrew McChesney is the editor for Adventist Mission. This testimony is shared with permission of Adventist Mission.

World Church Prayer Requests

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- Pray for the upcoming Annual Council meetings, as church leaders from around the world pray and make plans for the future. Pray that God will lead the agenda and discussions. Pray that He will also bless the many logistics involved.
- Pray for unity and an extra outpouring of the Holy Spirit to be poured out during the times of discussion. Pray for wisdom.
- Pray as plans are being finalized for the General Conference session that will take place in July 2025. Pray for the Holy Spirit to continue to guide our church through the waters to come.
- Pray for believers caught in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, and for refugees fleeing to Lebanon. Pray especially for our students and faculty at Middle East University in Beirut as they are now helping house refugees.
- Pray for the political tensions in the USA. Pray for God's will, and whatever would bring Him most glory, to be accomplished in the upcoming elections.
- Pray especially for those in Asheville, North Carolina struggling in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Many have lost loved ones. Some are still unaccounted for. Please support ongoing rescue efforts with your prayers and assistance, as you are able. (You can [donate here!](#)) Pray also for those in the path of Hurricane Milton in Florida.