




My name is Maria and today  
I want to tell you how my  
story and the Easter story  
belong together...

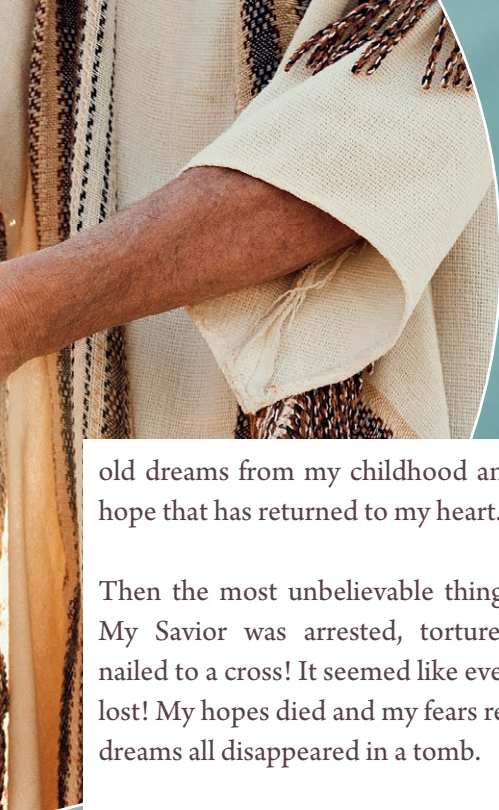


When I was a little girl, I had so many dreams. I wanted to help other people; especially older people who had no one. I dreamed about having a husband, lots of children, and a little house that we would all live in. My husband would often appear in my dreams as a prince. I was so happy when I thought about it.

But my reality was very different. When I was nine years old, my uncle, who was suppose to take care of me, raped me. I was afraid to say anything. He threatened me that if I told anyone, he would do the same thing to my little sister. He raped me over and over until I was 14 years old. Other men also raped me and had sex with me – a neighbor, a teacher and a complete stranger. With the stranger it wasn't so traumatic. When I was 14, I ran away from home and went to the city of Jerusalem. When I got there, I even started getting money when people used my body. I really didn't care anymore because I was already feeling worthless, used and dirty. I thought that in this way I could at least bring home a bit of money for my sister's dowry.



Then a day came when everything changed. A man came to our city and spoke words that touched me deep down in my heart. His name was Jesus and he told of a new kingdom and a new government where all people are treated the same and where you can be called a child of God. I kept trying to get closer and closer to Him, and one day it happened: He looked at me! His look and the words that He spoke changed everything. Something very dark inside of me left and I felt like I had just been born all over again. I was clean just like a little child. From that day on, I never again went to the house where men came to buy me. I stayed with Him. I no longer cared that most of the people here in this city despised me, and found it strange that I hung out close to this religious leader. I was just dirty scum in their eyes. Now when I lay in bed at night, I again dream the



old dreams from my childhood and I feel the hope that has returned to my heart.

Then the most unbelievable thing happened. My Savior was arrested, tortured and was nailed to a cross! It seemed like everything was lost! My hopes died and my fears returned. My dreams all disappeared in a tomb.

Perhaps you can sense inside of you that my story doesn't end here. You are right! Three days after His crucifixion, I went to the garden where they had buried Him. I was still completely traumatized. There was only chaos inside of me: the blood, the wounds, His disfigured face and His final battle against death. My whole body was numb. I couldn't feel anything. I went to His grave in order to say my final goodbye, but instead I experienced a shock. The grave was open! Defiled? Violated? No, an angel was there and declared that He was no longer there. He was risen! I ran to His friends as if I were in a trance, and then back again to the garden. What happened? Was it only a hallucination? I couldn't stop crying. I cried from the depths of my soul.

Suddenly I heard a voice and turned around. "Why are you crying?" At first I thought it must be the gardener and perhaps he had removed the body. But then He said my name: "Maria!" He stood right there in front of me, alive and full of light. My Savior was alive and had even defeated death. As soon as He said my name, I knew that He knew me through and through. He knew everything about me and yet He loved me unconditionally. There was no condemnation in His words, only acceptance, forgiveness, love and deep comfort. His presence filled the deepest parts of me and surrounded me with an unbelievable sense of peace. I was able to give Him all the pain and suffering that I had experienced in my life and could take the courageous step of trusting Him completely.

Dear friend! I want to tell you today, it doesn't matter what you have done or what has been done to you. Perhaps your dreams are still buried and you don't see any hope. You feel as if you are worthless and nothing matters anymore.





There is hope! He promised that anyone who calls upon the name of Jesus, will be saved. He can make your life new, and I know that whatever happens, the door to Heaven is open to me and I am welcome by God!

This is my story and perhaps a bit of yours as well.  
This is Easter!

*Maria*



[www.jewelsinthedarkness.com](http://www.jewelsinthedarkness.com)  
[jewelsinthedarkness@gmail.com](mailto:jewelsinthedarkness@gmail.com)