

Simone Arnold Liebster

Imagine yourself in this scenario. Your parents had just been taken away from you, and you're far away from the rest of your family and friends. You're living miserably but in hope of one day being reunited with your loved ones. You are given hardly any food to eat and being forced every day to work hard in the fields but with nothing in return. If you believed in something and decided to stand up and defend your belief so strongly, would you have made the decision to not stand down and as a result be forced to live in these conditions, or would you have just forgot about it and stay in your nice warm bed and wake up to find all the advantages that you already have and care about so deeply.

In 1930, Simone Arnold was born but what does she have to do about this scenario? Well in 1939, Adolf Hitler took parts of France, this included Alsace, Lorraine where Simone and her family lived. From birth, Simone and her father, Adolphe Arnold and her mother Emma Arnold lived in a cute apartment on a street called ``Rue de la mer Rouge``.

Months before Adolf Hitler took over Alsace, the Arnold family were witnessed to by Jehovah's Witnesses,(which is a religion for those that may not know). After a few weeks, they started to attending their meetings. After a few months, the Arnold family, including Simone had made the decision to join the organization. This meant the step of water baptism. Water baptism is a big step.

To become baptised, it's a personal decision, if you feel that you are ready to devote your life to God and you truly love God and you show the basic Knowledge of the bible then you may get baptised. No one can force it on you, it's when you're ready.

These are decisions that Adolphe and Emma made, they took the step toward baptism, not at the same time but they still did not force this on Simone, Simone did not feel it was time yet, but as a family they read the bible daily and also taking interest in the publications provided by the organization.

Late 1939, Hitler banned the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses. This meant that there would be no more public meetings anymore which would make learning about God be difficult. But interesting thee enough, Hitler did not stop the zealous attitude their beliefs, in fact the organization went into action, Jehovah's Witnesses were divided into smaller audiences so that they could assemble in secret meetings. Also, underground tunnels were made so that bibles and literature could be distributed to those in need of it.

Why though would Hitler ban such a thriving religion? The answer is simple! Hitler was a man who thought very highly of himself. He hated Jehovah's Witnesses with a bitter passion. He did not just want to get rid of them but he wanted to annihilate them. Many went to concentration camps for not saying Hail Hitler. Hail Hitler meant salvation belongs to Hitler. But in the bible, it says that salvation does not belong to man but belongs to God. It would be wrong to say it. So when Simone was in school, she would have to hide behind the tall girls in the schoolyard at recess time to avoid the teachers when they would say Hail Hitler. When she was in the class, she would kind of hide herself when the teacher would say Hail Hitler. To Simone, hiding where ever you go and being very precocious when talking to people but her parents was hard and a little frightening.

In 1941, when Simone was 11 years old, Simone made the decision and got baptised. Making Adolphe and Emma very proud! Not too long after that, Simone`s father, Adolphe was arrested at the factory where he worked because he was one of Jehovah`s Witnesses and sent to a Mulhouse Prison and was there for 2 months, a quote from Adolphe says `` I was sent to Dachau concentration camp after where I was beaten by the SS and then subjected to medical experiments for Malaria. My sister in-law was able to smuggle to me some of Jehovah`s Witnesses literature hidden in some cookies.

In 1943, when Simone was 13 years old, a teacher approached her and said the German greeting. Simone refused to say it back. The teacher said it again but Simone instead told the teacher that salvation does not belong to man but belongs to God for he was the one that created the heavens and the Earth. Simone was later was expelled from school. Only a month or so went by when a letter came in the mail that said that Simone could come back to school if she no longer was a one of Jehovah`s Witnesses. Simone loved the bible and loved God very much and did not want to disappoint him so she said that she would not be going to school then, the Nazi government mailed back saying that they had no choice but to take her away and put her in what is called a Penitentiary home which was a place of imprisonment, punishment, and discipline. Emma was also arrested in 1943 and she was put into a place called Vorbruck- Schirmeck concentration camp. A quote from Emma says “Despite the pressure, nothing broke my faith”.

Simone only 13 years old, she has been taken away from her family and is living miserably. Do you think that Simone regrets the decision that she made, would you? Well she may have been very lonely at times but she prayed to God and asked him for hope and to look after her.

Emma was released in the year 1945. Simone was also released in 1945 to the custody of her mother, at the time she was 15 years old. Adolphe was also released in 1945 but was released with very bad health conditions. The war ended in 1945. The Arnold family resumed their spiritual schedule and bible reading habits. These trials that this whole family went through did not break their integrity to God. What makes Simone such an extraordinary person? Her courage to stand up for what she believed in, even if it had unbearable consequences and her determination to stay faithful and strong through opposition, that is what makes her an extraordinary person.