***The Big Fish Story***

*I have to start this story by saying that I wish everyone could have experienced the joy and personal pride like I did in having a daughter like my Melina.*

*She had a very difficult life and that is her testimony to give so just suffice it to say that she found herself in over her head and had become addicted to crack-cocaine.  We were living together at the time and she had weekly visitations with her son which I was mandated by the court to supervise. It was a very trying time for everyone concerned.*

*Often, she would go out and not come home, but she would always call me.  I was emphatic about the call because she was getting the stuff from let’s face it, “bad guys” and I needed her to respect that I love and care about her.  Even though I couldn’t stop her from going down this path, I had to continue to let her know I love her and need her in my life.*

*--So, imagine my feelings when she went missing for 5 days!  FIVE DAYS!!*

*After the 2nd day my friends that I confided in said that I should call the police and make a report.  However, after praying I felt not to.*

*On the third day, her dealer called the house!  He had the audacity to phone my home!  I told him to never call my number again, and I said I was going to start praying for him. He retorted, “Lady, if I don’t know where she is, you better start praying for her.”  Click.*

*I was feeling physically ill like the Hulk must feel when he is about to turn into the green monster! My body released all this adrenaline and my breathing was so fast that it became labored gasps.  I almost passed out.*

*I PRAYED HARD.*

*On the morning of the fifth day it was Sunday, and I awoke and said to the Lord, “I have many choices today, I can be miserable and stay home or I can get to church and PRAISE You!”*

*So that is what I did. I dressed in a long flowing skirt, took a shawl and went to praising the Lord with all my might.  I was in the back of the church and I was feeling so grateful.  I knew that I knew that God had my daughter in His hands…and I told Him, that even if she was dead, I believed that she went to heaven due to repentance at the last minute.  I mean, she had asked Jesus into her heart and spoke in a heavenly language.  She was just away from God right now.  But He never left her nor forsaked her.  I knew it!*

*When the service was over I just didn’t want to stop praising Him.  I got into my car and put on a tape and went driving around on the back roads Praising the Lord!*

*I stopped at a STOP sign and there was no one around in any direction, so I took the opportunity to ask God a question.*

*“God, You know my heart and I trust You and am at peace in my soul.  But I don’t understand why this has happened.  Can you tell me?  I just don’t understand it, my beautiful daughter…”*

*Suddenly, my windshield disappeared and Jesus was standing there on a cloud.  He was so glorious I immediately bowed my head and cried, “Lord, Jesus!”*

*He smiled at me and looked into my eyes as though He was imparting knowledge right into my soul…* ***“Linda, your daughter is a preacher”—***

*I think I sort of interrupted Him with, “I know, Lord, You showed me that before.”*

*He closed Hes eyes and half shook His head, and using His hands for emphasis, continued,* ***“who runs from My presence.”****He paused here and looked into my eyes again.*

*Then He resumed His explanation,* ***“So, I have made a big fish for her and she is in the belly of the fish that I have made.  When she determines to do my bidding, the fish will spew her out of its mouth and she will become the powerful instrument that I have purposed her to be.  Now go.  Tell everyone the Big Fish Story for there are many who are in the belly of a fish that I have made for them."***

*I bowed, saying, “Yes Lord.”   When I looked back up, He was gone and someone honked at me to move through the intersection.*

*When I got home, my daughter called and asked if she could come home.*

*I was so happy!  In with all the anger of her disappearance, the joy of my soul overwhelmed me.*