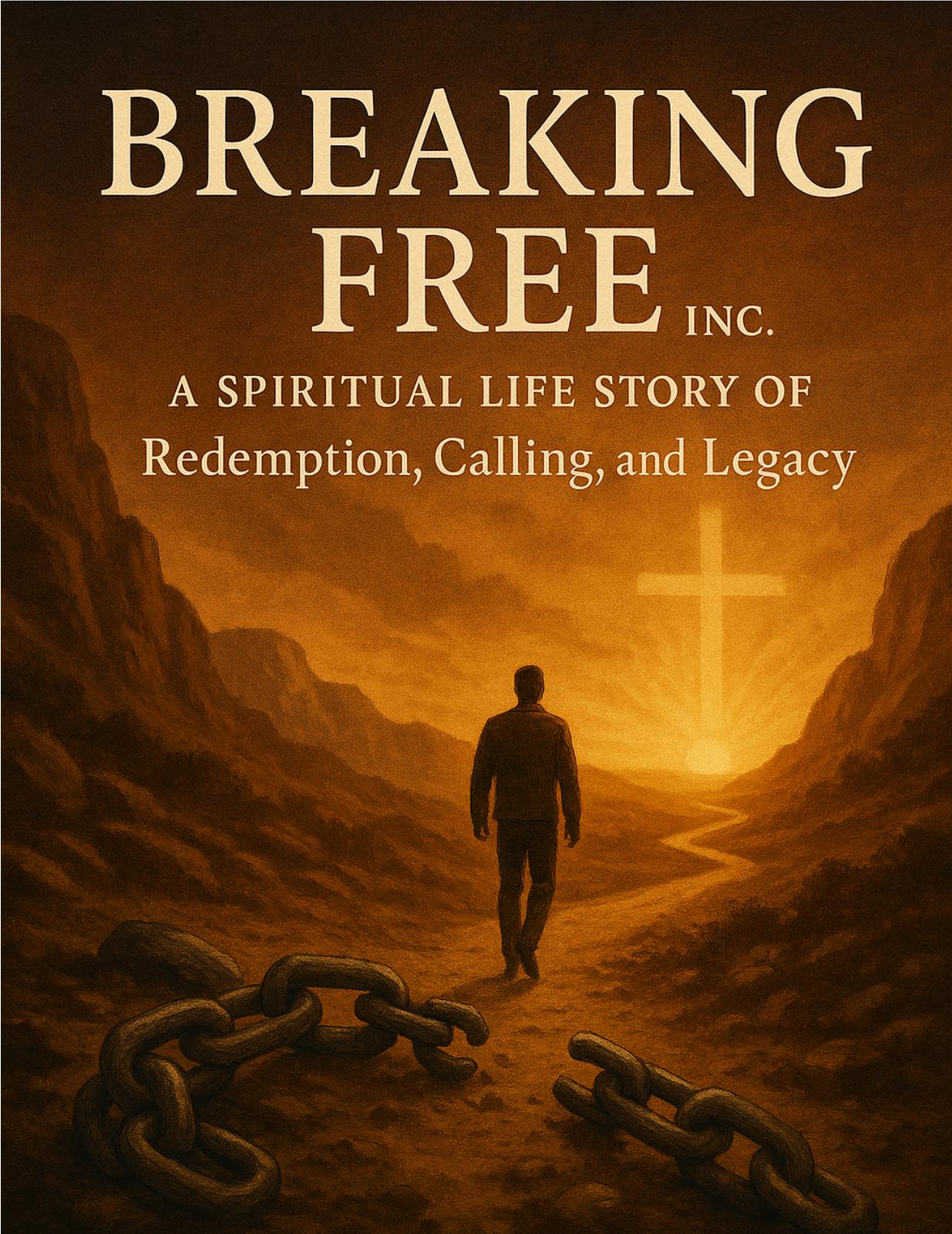


BREAKING FREE INC.

A SPIRITUAL LIFE STORY OF
Redemption, Calling, and Legacy



SCOTT MORMON

Breaking Free

**A Spiritual Life Story of Redemption, Calling, and Legacy
By Scott Mormon**

***“He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and
set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.”***

— Psalm 40:2

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Dedication

You Might Be the Reason This Book Was Written if....

It's for the hopeless, the forgotten, the addicted, and the downtrodden. It's for the one lying awake at night, wondering if change is even possible... for the one who's burned every bridge, wrecked every chance, and believes they've gone too far. It's for the one in prison—whether behind bars or trapped in the prison of shame. It's for the one with track marks, tear-streaked prayers, and a heart that can barely keep beating.

It's also for the parent crying over a prodigal child, the spouse praying for their addicted partner to come home, and the grandparent quietly interceding for the next generation caught in cycles of bondage. This is for you too.

You are not too lost. You are not too broken. And you are never beyond the reach of God's love.

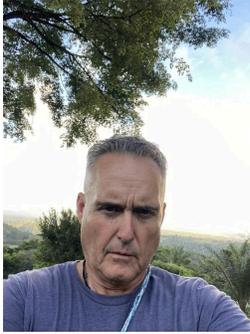
And to every servant-hearted soul who feels called to reach the broken—this book is also for you. Whether you're a former addict, a social worker, a volunteer, a single mom, a construction worker, a lay leader, a pastor, a counselor, a business owner, a teacher, or just someone who can't ignore the pain around you... this message is yours to carry.

God isn't looking for perfection. He's looking for availability.

All He needs is a willing you—surrendered and ready to serve the hurting.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sinner saved by His grace. Once lost in addiction, prison, and deep brokenness, everything changed when he encountered the living Jesus in 1988. That one divine encounter didn't just rescue him-it launched a lifelong mission.



Out of that transformation came Breaking Free Inc., a ministry devoted to reaching the addicted, the incarcerated, the chronically homeless, and those so often forgotten by society. For more than three decades, Scott has walked with others through their darkest valleys, always pointing them to the only true source of healing and freedom: Jesus Christ.

Though he has led residential recovery homes, planted churches, mentored leaders, and served internationally in prisons, refugee camps, and orphanages, Scott will be the first to tell you: none of it matters without the cross. The miracle isn't him-it's Jesus.

A grateful father to four biological children and seven adopted children from Costa Rica-and now a proud grandfather to thirteen-Scott's greatest joy is witnessing God's faithfulness unfold across generations.

His passion is simple: to love people back to life, lift high the name of Jesus, and keep serving in the dusty fields-where hope is needed most.

"So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free." - John 8:36

<https://www.bfservices.org/library>

Introduction: The Miracle That Sparked a Movement

I write to you not as someone above you, but as someone who once was you. I know what it feels like to be trapped in shame, to feel numb inside, and to believe the pain will never end. But I also know the power of being set free.

In 1988, after years of addiction and incarceration, Jesus Christ reached into my wreckage and pulled me out. He didn't clean me up to make me look good—He redeemed me so I could live for Him.

This isn't a polished memoir or a preacher's résumé. It's a testimony to the power of God's grace. Since 1988, I've watched God take shattered lives—mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters—and raise them up as bold, Spirit-filled leaders. And every transformation has started with one simple, surrendered prayer:

“Yes, here I am, Lord Jesus.”

That moment of surrender birthed *Breaking Free Inc.*—a global outreach ministry committed to going where others struggle to go. From recovery homes to prison blocks, from refugee camps to street corners, we carry one message:

Jesus is still redeeming lives.

Even though I have credentials and titles, they don't define who I am. At my core, I'm a sinner saved by His grace. I'm not after prestige or recognition—just proof that God uses the least likely to do the unimaginable. If He could transform me, He can transform you too. Your past doesn't disqualify you; His grace is greater than any failure.

This isn't my story—it's God's story, told through a life He refused to give up on.

“But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” — *Acts 20:24*

Prayer

Lord, As I continue writing these chapters, I need You—not just to help me remember the events, but to reveal the truth behind them: Your truth.

Guide my heart as I recount the pain, the joy, the breakthroughs, and the battles. Keep me connected to the hurting hearts who will one day read these pages.

Let this not be about me, but about what You've done—and what You're still doing through surrendered lives.

Give me clarity where memories are foggy, courage where wounds still sting, and grace to tell it all honestly, humbly, and with hope.

Make every word an arrow of Your love—pointed toward redemption.

I trust You to lead the way.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prelude: BC Days – The Road to Ruin

Before I ever encountered the love of Jesus Christ, my life was defined by darkness, danger, and destruction.

By the age of eleven, I was already carrying a pistol and running with a neighborhood gang. Childhood innocence wasn't something I lost—it was something I never knew. At twelve, I overdosed on Valium, an early sign that pain and brokenness were already consuming my soul.

At thirteen, I caught my first felony. While other kids were sitting in classrooms, I was learning in the streets—how to survive, how to hustle, and how to bury what I couldn't face.

By sixteen, I was moving from using drugs to selling them—not just on the street corner, but in large quantities. I figured out that the farther south you go, the cheaper the product gets. So I scraped together all the money I could and headed to the Rio Grande Valley near McAllen, Texas, just across the border from Mexico. Down there, drugs were plentiful—and profits were high. I began running large loads back to Dallas, building a reputation, expanding a crime network, and digging myself deeper into the pit with every trip.

Eventually, I got bolder. I started flying illegal products by commercial airlines, taking bigger risks, becoming more reckless and visible. One day, a weapons run went bad. I was moving firearms to the border, but the deal collapsed—and it wasn't long before the authorities got wind of our operation. Surveillance increased. Pressure mounted. One by one, they started picking off the crew. The noose was tightening.

By then, heroin had its claws deep in me. I was no longer a functioning dealer—I was a desperate, broken addict, spiraling out of control. The crime gang I built was crumbling. After a close friend got arrested, I shut everything down. The crew scattered. The money dried up. All I had left was wreckage.

Strung out and empty, I turned to armed robbery to feed my habit. Store after store, gun in hand, chasing quick cash and quicker destruction. Each robbery became more dangerous. I had no fear. No future. No purpose. Just pain.

Eventually, I got caught—stopped by a silent alarm and a fast police response. I was associated with 22 armed robberies. My bond was set at \$1.25 million in Dallas County. I remember finding a salvation tract on my bunk. I read it. But I was so far gone, so

numb, that the words barely registered. The same streets that once welcomed me now abandoned me. I wasn't feared or admired anymore—I was forgotten.

I was sentenced to seven years and thrown into the Texas penitentiary system. They sent me to the Ferguson Unit, a place known on the inside as “the gladiator farm”—a brutal environment where survival meant fighting daily. It wasn't a place for rehabilitation. It was a battlefield where the weak were prey and the ruthless rose to power.

In Ferguson, I didn't find redemption. I found deeper darkness. I became more violent, more lost, more hardened. Gangs. Corruption. Constant fear. I thought I was tough—but inside, I was empty. Hollow. Every day was a war—not just for survival, but for identity. I had become a young man I didn't even recognize.

Prison didn't break me—it forged me into someone darker. It stripped away whatever hope I had left and cemented the criminal mindset I had embraced. I was no longer pretending. I was the thing I once feared: just another lost soul, marching toward destruction.

But God had other plans.

In 1988, due to prison overcrowding, I was unexpectedly released early. I walked out the same broken man who had walked in—angry, addicted, and spiritually dead. But grace was already on my trail. I didn't know it yet, but the chase had begun.

Even in my worst condition—even as a strung-out, violent felon—Jesus had already made a way.

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” — *Romans 5:8*

I hadn't earned a second chance. I hadn't even asked for one. Yet, God was already moving. He wasn't waiting for me to get it together—He loved me right in the middle of my rebellion and sin.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you a future and a hope.” — *Jeremiah 29:11*

Chapter 1: From Destruction to Destiny – A Life Redeemed (1988)

When I walked out of the Ferguson Unit in 1988 due to prison overcrowding, I was anything but changed. I was angry, addicted, and emotionally bankrupt. I still had prison dust on my boots, heroin cravings in my mind, and violence in my heart. I didn't walk out redeemed—I walked out ruined.

But grace was already chasing me.

I wasn't searching for God. I wasn't even sorry. But in His mercy, God was searching for me.

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.— Romans 5:8

One night shortly after my release, I sat alone, planning my next robbery. The streets still whispered promises of fast money and false respect. A prison gang had contacted a relative in Dallas, looking to unload a large stash of drugs. Meanwhile, my parole officer was already questioning why I had left the maximum-security parole house and traveled to Dallas—clearly a violation of my parole conditions. Deep inside, I felt something crack—like the dam of denial and numbness I had built over the years was beginning to split. I was exhausted. Empty. Done. It was all or nothing now.

And in that moment, I muttered words I didn't even know I meant:

“God... if You can change me—get me out of this mess of a life—then I'm Yours. I've got nothing left but disaster ahead.”

It wasn't a pretty prayer, but it was desperate—straight from the soul. It wasn't polished, but it was real. And heaven listens to real, honest prayers.

Within days, a childhood friend—completely unaware of my cry for help—invited me to a church event. I didn't want to go. The last place a guy like me felt comfortable was in a church. But something tugged on me. I showed up... and I encountered Jesus Christ and the confirmation that He heard my prayer.

I didn't hear a choir of angels. But something real happened at that moment. I can only describe it as deliverance. Years of addiction, pain, hatred, shame—it all broke like chains snapping to the ground. The darkness lifted. It was as if I had been stumbling blind for years, and now, for the first time, I could see.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

— *2 Corinthians 5:17*

That night, I wasn't just forgiven. I was reborn within.

And that rebirth lit a fire inside me that's never gone out. I didn't want to just be free—I wanted others to experience it too. I couldn't stay silent. I grabbed a Bible, held tight to my testimony, and went straight back to the places I used to hang. Back to the streets, alleys, trap houses, and prison blocks. I preached where I once hustled. I told the truth in the very spots where I used to lie.

I didn't begin with a blueprint, a mission board, or a five-year plan. There were no strategy sessions, no funding campaigns, and definitely no polished ministry model. It started with a divine interruption—a rescue I didn't ask for, from a Savior I didn't yet believe in.

Jesus stepped into the wreckage of my life and lit a fire that couldn't be put out. I didn't walk away from that encounter with a résumé—I walked away with redemption. I wasn't trained, credentialed, or even cleaned up yet. But I had a story, and I had the Spirit of God. That was enough.

So I went. Raw, unpolished, still rough around the edges—I stepped into the streets, into the prisons, into the pain of others. My language was still street, and when I preached, people would sometimes look at me like I was speaking another language altogether. But then the Holy Spirit would move. Tears would begin to fall. Hearts would soften. People from all walks of life—addicts, business people, gang members, single moms, churchgoers—began receiving Christ or returning to Him with a renewed sense of purpose. It wasn't me. It was God, working through a broken vessel made new. I preached with tears. I preached with passion. I preached with urgency—because I knew what it felt like to be lost, and I had finally been found.

For the next three years, I hit the streets with another minister, forming a street team made up of young adults and youth. We hit the streets every week and all we had was the Word of God and a burning desire to reach the lost. We shared Scripture with teenagers hanging out on corners, spoke truth to gang members in alleyways, and even sought out satanists hidden in secluded areas that we heard were doing seances. I ministered to inmates through prison bars, reaching for the very hearts I once shared a lifestyle with.

I watched—again and again—as others surrendered just like I had. Hardened men dropped to their knees. Addicts, criminals, and forgotten souls were transformed into

Spirit-filled warriors, bold in their faith and unashamed of their past. God was doing in others what He had done in me—and it was undeniable.

And somewhere in the middle of all that, Breaking Free was born.
Not because I had a vision. Not because I set out to start a ministry.
But because God planted something eternal in the ashes of my past.

What began as one man's deliverance became a movement of mercy. Breaking Free Ministries wasn't the result of a board meeting, a church vote, or a slick ministry marketing strategy. It was birthed through surrender, fueled by gratitude, and carried forward by the power of the Holy Spirit.

It didn't begin in a boardroom. It began in a broken heart made whole.
It wasn't the product of ambition. It was the fruit of surrender.

What started as a spark became a flame. That flame became a wildfire.
And what God began that night in 1988... He's still doing it today—one life at a time.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

— 2 Corinthians 5:17

Chapter 2: The Boys' Ranch – Shepherding the Fatherless (1992)

After three life-changing years of street evangelism—marked by late nights, raw testimonies, and hundreds of teenagers surrendering their lives to Christ—I began to sense a shift. God was redirecting my path. My pastor encouraged me to go to Georgia to serve under a seasoned prison evangelist and his brother, who led a regeneration community. I didn't know exactly where the Lord was leading me, but I knew my season on the street corners was coming to an end.

That divine nudge eventually brought me to a boys' ranch in Davisboro, Georgia—a place that would radically transform the way I viewed ministry, leadership, and the very heart of God.

The ranch housed dozens of deeply wounded teenage boys—most placed in state custody after being torn from homes marked by abuse, neglect, and abandonment. These weren't just troubled kids. They were traumatized. They were angry, volatile, numb to affection—hardened not by choice, but by survival. Many had been failed by every adult they ever trusted. And in them, I saw myself. I remembered what it was like to be lost, addicted, angry, and drowning in pain with nowhere to turn.

I came to the ranch as a counselor, thinking I was there to help them heal. But what I quickly discovered was that I needed healing just as much as they did. I was still learning how to live free. Still walking out my own transformation. And in the tension of their outbursts, their silence, their suspicion, and their desperate need for love, God met me all over again—in deeper, more personal ways.

As I poured into their lives, God was pouring into mine.

“If you give yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.”—Isaiah 58:10

Their brokenness mirrored mine, and somewhere in that shared pain, divine love captured me in a new way and I began to grow. I went there to teach, but I became the student. I learned that healing doesn't just come through sermons—it comes through showing up, day after day, in the mess, in the struggle, in the silence. It comes through presence. These boys didn't need another authority figure shouting rules. They needed a spiritual father—someone who would stay. Someone who would love them the way Jesus had loved me.

That season forever reshaped my view of leadership. I realized that ministry isn't about standing above others—it's about standing beside them. True leadership isn't about position—it's about presence. It's about washing feet, not making spiritual demands. It's about fighting for the ones who've stopped fighting for themselves.

God began to entrust me with more. I moved from frontline counselor to administrator of the entire ranch. Suddenly, I was overseeing the care and rehabilitation of 65 high-risk boys. I was coordinating with judges, social workers, and probation officers across the state of Georgia, and leading a team of 32 staff members. The work was relentless. The needs were overwhelming. But it was sacred. Every moment, every tear, every breakthrough—it was all holy unto the Lord. I wasn't just running a facility. I was being formed—on sacred ground.

Every day brought new battles: fights, trauma, grief, flickers of hope. But in the chaos, God was shaping me—not just into a servant leader, but into a shepherd. A shepherd of the fatherless and the hurting.

It was in that season that I began to truly understand the ministry of Jesus. He was teaching me to lead with compassion, not control. With presence, not power. To set down the megaphone and pick up the towel. To wash the feet of the broken. To see the forgotten through the eyes of the Father. I learned to intercede for boys who had no voice. To believe for boys who had no hope. To love boys who had never been loved. *As Matthew 20:28 says, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

I'll never forget their faces—their rage, their sorrow, their laughter, and their moments of breakthrough. I carry them with me to this day. Because in those long days and sleepless nights, God was planting seeds—seeds of redemption in their hearts and in mine. And those seeds are still blooming.

That chapter of my life etched one truth into my soul: God never wastes pain. He redeems it. And when we say yes to His call, He doesn't lead us into comfort—He leads us into purpose. Into battle. Into love. Not to impress others, but to carry His heart to the wounded, the forgotten, and the fatherless.

"A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families..."

— Psalm 68:5–6

Chapter 3: Church Planting – A Church Without Walls (1993)

Even while carrying the weight of leadership at the boys' ranch, God began stirring something new in my spirit—another unexpected step of obedience. He was calling me to plant a *street church*, not in a polished suburb or a Bible Belt sanctuary, but in the heart of a nearby college town's bar district. It was a place most churches avoided—a hub of late-night parties, brokenness, addiction, and open rebellion. To many, it looked like a place of compromise. But to God, it was ripe for redemption. It didn't make sense by human standards. But obedience rarely does.

We named it Lasting Joy Community Church—a prophetic declaration over a neighborhood drowning in temporary pleasures. These college students didn't need more religion. They needed joy. Lasting joy. The kind that only comes from Jesus—the kind that satisfies what the world can never fill. As *Psalms 16:11* says, “*You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.*”

Our gatherings took place in an old theater—once home to performances, costumes, and dim lights. Now, that same stage became an altar of grace. Truth was proclaimed there. Chains were broken. Lives were transformed. But as sacred as that space became, we quickly realized our true sanctuary wasn't inside the walls. It was out there—on sidewalks, behind bars, in alleyways, and under flickering street lights where broken hearts searched for something real. Our church had no steeple.

Every Sunday morning, I'd show up early with a broom in hand, sweeping up beer bottles, broken glass, and the wreckage of the night before. It was messy, gritty, and far from glamorous—but it was *holy ground* to me. Every bottle I swept reminded me why we were there. Each shattered piece of glass was a symbol of a shattered life still within reach of God's grace. This was the mission field God had given us—not just to preach to, but to love, walk with, and never give up on.

To our amazement, the nearby state mental hospital began bringing residents to our services. Why? Because they felt safe. They felt seen. In a world that labeled them retarded, different or unstable, they found warmth, welcome, and the undeniable presence of God among us. They even approved me to come into the different wards and pastor their residents. We weren't polished. We weren't impressive. But we were real.

To our amazement, the nearby state mental hospital began bringing residents to our services. Why? Because they felt safe. They felt seen. In a world that labeled them

unstable or unworthy, they found warmth, welcome, and the undeniable presence of God among us. They even approved me to come into the different wards and pastor their residents. We weren't polished. We weren't impressive. But we were real. And Jesus was there. As *Matthew 25:40 (NLT)* reminds us, *"I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me."*

One story I'll never forget is Ms. Ruby—the oldest woman with Down Syndrome in the southeastern United States at the time. She was 84 years old, and she quickly became one of our most faithful attenders at Lasting Joy. Ms. Ruby had a little crush on me because I always made sure to show her kindness and attention. It was innocent, pure, and precious. Every Sunday, she would come get a chair and scoot it right next to me as I preached—smiling, nodding, just happy to be close.

What made this so special to me personally was that I had a little brother named Jeffery, born with special needs, whom I absolutely adored. Jeffery's tenderness, trust, and the purity of his heart taught me more about God's love than any sermon ever could. Before I ever stepped into full-time ministry, Jeffery showed me the beauty of childlike faith, unconditional love, and the sacred worth of every soul—especially those the world often overlooks.

So when I saw Ms. Ruby's smile or felt her hand on my arm, it reminded me of Jeffery. It reminded me why I do what I do.

But the truth is, while Ms. Ruby and others like her found family among us, not everyone could handle what God was doing. More than once, upstanding individuals from the community—curious about what they'd heard happening at Lasting Joy—came to visit. But when they saw our congregation filled with residents from the mental hospital, the homeless, addicts, and those society called "damaged," they couldn't reconcile to it. They didn't stay.

And in those moments, God was shaping something in me. He was forming the core of my philosophy of ministry—not just for that season, but for the rest of my life.

I chose Ms. Ruby over some very good church supporters. And I'd make the same choice again. Because the Gospel isn't about catering to the respectable. It's about making room at the table for the rejected. It's about seeing the unseen, loving the unlovable, and honoring the forgotten. That's where Jesus is.

We weren't trying to build a congregation; we were building a family. For five unforgettable years, I had the privilege of pastoring the curious, the broken, the forgotten, the outcast, and the spiritually hungry. We preached outside bars. We prayed on sidewalks and curbs. We baptized in a nearby river new believers who once mocked

the idea of God. We had pews, sure—but we spent most of our time outside the four walls, with the hurting. We didn't have stained glass—we had pavement, passion, an old building, and the power of the Holy Spirit. And over and over again, He showed up.

It was in that raw and sacred space that the vision for Breaking Free began to crystallize. What had begun years earlier on street corners and in alleyways was now maturing into a Spirit-led movement—one that refused to ignore the unreachable. One that believed nobody was too far gone. One that lived out the Gospel beyond buildings, beyond programs, and beyond comfort zones.

Breaking Free became a church without walls—ministering to the incarcerated, the addicted, the mentally ill, the homeless, and anyone the world had written off. It was never about building an organization or traditional church congregation. It was about building the *Kingdom of God*. And it still is.

And through it all—every soul reached, every life changed, every miracle seen—all the glory belongs to God.

“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.’”

—*Luke 14:23*

Chapter 4: Divine Blueprints – Structuring What God Birthed (2002)

With God's undeniable favor, a new chapter began to unfold—one marked by structure, legitimacy, and greater reach. For a while, I tried to fit the mold of a traditional pastor. I wore the title, preached the sermons, and shepherded the flock as best I could. But deep inside, I felt like a square peg trying to fit into a round hole. I wasn't called to simply maintain a pulpit—I was called to move freely, to go wherever brokenness cried out for hope, and to respond in the moment when the Spirit said, "Go." I would be called to go and, in the name of Jesus, set up spiritual systems of discipleship in dark and overlooked areas—places others often ignored but God never forgot.

I found myself outside the four walls more than inside them—on the streets, in jail pods, rehab centers, and halfway houses. I wasn't chasing titles anymore; I was chasing people who needed Jesus. And it was in those raw, unpolished places that *Breaking Free Ministries* took root—not as a plan, but as a calling lived out in real time.

After years of grassroots ministry and faithful obedience to God's call, Breaking Free Ministries was officially recognized by the United States government as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. But this wasn't just paperwork—it was a divine affirmation of what God had birthed through that act of surrender years earlier.

The process wasn't easy. In fact, it took more than a year to receive approval. Why? Because the government couldn't comprehend the idea of a church without walls. They kept pressing for traditional definitions—trying to fit what God was doing into their institutional boxes.

Finally, I turned the conversation around. I asked, "How is it that the church of Satan can be approved by you?" Then I followed up with, "What's your definition of a church?" Their answer was vague—uncertain at best. So I said, "Let me give you mine." I quoted the Great Commission—*Matthew 28:19–20*: "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you."

"That," I told them, "is the Church. That's our mission. That's our model." After a long pause, the official responded, "We can't argue with that." And with that, they granted us non-profit church status.

By His grace, our five-year ordination process and addiction counseling certification programs were fully approved. We also received authorization to start churches and drug and alcohol regeneration centers around the world. But these wouldn't be

programs crafted in a sterile office—they would be forged in the fire of real-life ministry. They were shaped in jail pods, on street corners, in recovery homes, and in the trenches of broken humanity. These weren't academic exercises—they were tools of transformation, built on one foundational truth: transformed people become transforming people.

As Romans 12:2 declares: "Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."

Now we had more than a name—we had a framework. We had tools to multiply—not just in number, but in spiritual depth, Kingdom responsibility, and eternal impact. What began with a broken young man taking Jesus to the hurting has grown into a movement touching nations, generations, and lives beyond what I ever imagined.

But let me be clear—this was never about building an institution. It was about advancing the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom that can't be confined by walls, stained glass, or denominational labels. It was about being the Church where pain still lingers, chains still bind, and hope still feels out of reach.

Ministries were being planted. Servant leaders were being raised up and sent out. Families were being restored. Addicts were being set free. And most importantly, the Gospel of Jesus Christ was reaching farther and deeper than I had ever dared to dream.

This was no longer my story—it was God's. And He was writing it with ink made of mercy and grace, on pages only He, the God of heaven, could turn. Every chapter revealed His power to redeem, restore, and rewrite even the darkest past into a hopeful future. "Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings." —*Isaiah 58:12*

Chapter 5: Equipped by Grace – Education, Certification, and Calling (2002)

Starting back in the early 1990s, while Breaking Free was still in its conception stage, the vision continued to grow, and more lives were being transformed by the power of the Gospel. During that same season, I remained fully committed to my role at the boys' ranch. It wasn't just a job—it was a sacred trust. But in order to continue serving as administrator, Georgia's Juvenile Child Care Licensing Regulations required me to obtain an advanced degree in a clinical field.

At first, it felt like a legal obstacle—or maybe even a spiritual attack. But in truth, it was a divine setup. God was pushing me into a season of deeper equipping. I had the fire, but I lacked the discipline that formal training would demand.

I used to say to others—especially those with seminary degrees—“All you need is the Holy Spirit.” And while that's absolutely true, I've since realized that my resistance to education was rooted in fear. Fear of failure. Fear of being exposed. Fear that my past disqualified me from the classroom, let alone the pulpit. It wasn't a spiritual conviction—it was pride cloaked in insecurity. I was blind to how much I still needed to grow.

But God, in His mercy, was about to educate me—not just through textbooks, but through a new deeper level of transformation.

Stepping into higher education felt like wading into deep, unfamiliar waters. I was nervous. The only academic credential I had was a GED I earned while in prison. Outside of that, the only schooling I had completed were about ten college classes I was required to take in order to be ordained into ministry. I'd made it to the twelfth grade before dropping out and diving headfirst into a life of crime.

Now, years later, the thought of full-time college stirred up every insecurity—though I never would've admitted it at the time. Could a former addict and ex-con really make it through a college curriculum? Could I keep up? Still, I held on to one truth: If God was calling me to it, He would carry me through it.

Philippians 1:6 declares: “And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.”

So I began—one class at a time. I started with the basics and leaned completely on God's grace. What I thought would be a short-term requirement turned into a nine-year journey of transformation, discipline, and spiritual growth. I earned an undergraduate

degree in Christian Education, and as I continued, something unexpected happened—I fell in love with learning.

By God’s grace, the State Licensing Board approved my master’s degree, and I was so motivated that I pressed on and completed a Ph.D. in Christian Psychology just two years later, graduating in 2002. What began as an obligation became a calling—and God used it to prepare me for the deeper healing work ahead.

But God wasn’t done. Because of the deep burden He had placed on my heart for the addicted and broken, I pursued and received multiple accredited certifications in addiction recovery, counseling, and trauma-informed care. These weren’t trophies for the wall—they were tools. Tools to serve better. Tools to fight smarter. Tools to reach deeper. I was being equipped for battles I couldn’t yet see.

In fact, when people call me “Doctor” or “Reverend,” I always respond, “*Just call me Scott.*” It’s my way of staying down to earth. Titles don’t define me—Jesus does. As 2 Corinthians 4:8–9 reminds us, it’s not the title, position, or degree that gives us worth—it’s God’s grace, and the One who empowers us for His service.

During those years, I often found myself sitting across from judges, social workers, probation officers, and medical professionals—people who had witnessed the darkest effects of addiction firsthand. But through Breaking Free, they also saw something different: real, lasting transformation. These weren’t theological debates—these were undeniable encounters with changed lives. Educated hearts began to soften as they witnessed the regenerating work of God. Cycles were broken. Families restored. Lives redeemed. You couldn’t deny the changed lives—they were the evidence.

I lost count of how many professionals renewed their faith—or came to faith for the first time—during what began as office meetings but ended as divine encounters. I remember one moment in the '90s, standing in front of thousands of law enforcement officers, feeling completely out of place. I was a man in his early thirties with a lengthy criminal record—but also with a redeemed heart—sharing the Gospel with the very system that once processed me. Only God could orchestrate that.

Through all of this, the Lord continued to teach me—not just through professors, but through the Holy Spirit, the Wonderful Counselor. He opened my eyes to the emotional and spiritual roots of addiction, trauma, and rebellion. I learned that cycles of bondage are often fueled by unhealed wounds—and only Jesus can bring the healing that breaks them.

The degrees were never the destination. They began as a requirement—but became part of God’s larger preparation plan. I wasn’t just earning credentials—I was being

formed into a vessel fit to serve. The most valuable education I've ever received came not from books, but from walking daily with the One who called me.

Here's what I know now: Education can inform, but only Jesus transforms. Information fills the mind—but transformation changes the life. And all the glory belongs to God, who takes what was broken, breathes on it, and turns it into a vessel for His Kingdom.

“Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant...”

—2 *Corinthians* 3:5–6

Chapter 6: Let's Pause and Reality Check – Dying Daily, Rising Again

Walking with God isn't a straight line of victories. It's not a sanitized highlight reel. It's a battle-tested, grace-soaked, mercy-laced journey—of falling, rising, repenting, and pressing on.

If there's one thing I've learned in over three decades of serving Jesus, it's this: it's not about perfection—it's about persistence. It's about refusing to quit, even when quitting feels easier than pressing forward.

I've failed—more times than I can count. I've made decisions I had to unmake. I've carried burdens I was never built to carry. I've run ahead of God, lagged behind Him, and wrestled with Him more than I can count. But by the grace of God, I've didn't quit.

There were seasons when the warfare—internal and external—was almost unbearable. Days I didn't feel spiritual. At Night I lay awake wondering, “Am I still the right man for this assignment?” And even darker nights when I cried out, “Where are You, God?”

When you've come from the pit, the enemy never stops whispering: “You're a failure. You'll end up right back there.” Even in leadership, I've had to face the lingering residue of my past—and the lies that came with it.

Let's be honest—this calling doesn't come with applause. You pour out your heart, and people still walk away. You invest in someone for years, and they relapse. You sacrifice sleep, time, money, and sanity to build something for God—only to be misunderstood, betrayed, or criticized.

But Jesus never said it would be easy. He said it would be narrow. He said we'd have to take up our cross daily. He said we'd have to die—to ego, pride, convenience, and control.

Luke 9:23 says: “Then he said to the crowd, ‘If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.’”

I used to think ministry meant standing strong all the time. But I've learned it often means falling forward—again and again. It means leaning into grace, depending on the Spirit, and remembering that my strength was never the source—He is.

2 Corinthians 12:9 says: “Each time he said, ‘My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.’ So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.”

Every time I stumbled, God met me. Every time I failed, He reminded me: His mercy is new. And every time I stood back up, I realized—He'd never left.

I often tell people, "If you don't quit, God will have His way." That's not just a quote—it's the story of my life. There were moments I came close to walking away. Times I cried out, "God, please—pick someone else. Just give me a normal life." But He didn't. And when I stayed—when I surrendered in the midst of my brokenness—He reshaped me once again.

People ask me all the time, especially in the middle of their own battles: "How can I get what you have? How did you make it through?" They're wrestling their demons—desperate for a way out. And I tell them this:

Don't quit. Stay in the fight. Keep coming back to Jesus. You don't earn this with perfection—you receive it by grace. If you fall, fall forward. If you're broken, give Him the pieces. God isn't looking for the qualified—He's looking for the surrendered. If you stay with Him, He'll finish what He started.

"...being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

—Philippians 1:6

That's the narrow road. It's not just doing great things for God—it's becoming more like Christ along the way.

This road has cost me:

- Comfort
- The approval of others
- Misunderstandings from people I loved
- Friendships
- My own ideas of success

But it gave me Jesus. And that's more than enough.

To anyone reading this who feels like they've blown it too much—you haven't. If you're still breathing, you're not disqualified. This road may be narrow, but it's paved in grace.

So if you fall—fall forward. Get up again. Keep walking. Don't quit. To God be the glory.

"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

—*Philippians 3:13–14*

Chapter 7: First Breaking Free Recovery Center – “Hope Without Walls” (2004)

Stepping out in faith, we launched the very first Breaking Free residential recovery home—a long-term, 13 to 24-month program—nestled in a quiet, rural area of Georgia. It wasn’t flashy or fancy, but to us, it was holy ground. This Christ-centered community was built for young men ages 17 to 25—those desperate to escape the grip of addiction, chaos, and hopelessness.

They weren’t just clients. They were sons. They were brothers. They were prodigals. They were future leaders. And what they needed wasn’t just sobriety—they needed the saving, restoring, resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

From the very beginning, we made a decision that still defines our DNA to this day: we would never charge a single dime for ministry. No hidden fees. No required donations. No price tag on the Gospel. We believed—and still believe—that freely we have received, so freely we must give. Ministry was never meant to be a transaction; it’s a calling to serve, to love, and to lay down our lives—no strings attached.

We also made another foundational commitment: we would never go into debt to do God’s work. If He was truly the Author, then He would also be the Finisher—and the Provider. We chose to trust Him fully, not credit lines, loans, or worldly safety nets. If the provision wasn’t there, we waited. If the doors weren’t open, we prayed. If the vision was bigger than our budget, we believed God would make a way.

Jesus never invoiced the hurting for healing. He never billed the broken for deliverance. If this was truly His work, then He would be our Provider. Period. And time and time again—through every storm, every setback, and every empty pantry—He showed Himself faithful. He moved mountains, stirred hearts, and opened the windows of heaven to provide for what He started. “Give as freely as you have received!”
— *Matthew 10:8*

That first house became sacred ground. It wasn’t just shelter—it was a sanctuary. It was safe. It was where hardened hearts were softened by worship, and tear-stained floors bore witness to countless moments of surrender. There, in the thick of spiritual warfare, young men encountered the living Christ—some for the very first time. They discovered that hope wasn’t just a word, and redemption wasn’t a fantasy. It was real. It was theirs. And it was paid for in full.

As God blessed the work, what began as a single, modest home blossomed into a vibrant, Spirit-filled community—a Kingdom ecosystem of grace, grit, and growth. It

wasn't built by contractors—it was built by the very hands of the men being healed, board by board, nail by nail. And every hammer swing was part of their healing.

Together with the Lord, we built:

- A full residential dormitory to house up to 16 men in recovery—offering not just a bed, but a brotherhood.
- On-site staff housing to ensure 24/7 leadership, accountability, and Christ-centered discipleship.
- A 5,000-square-foot carpentry and vocational workshop, where men learned not only how to build with their hands, but how to rebuild their lives on a firm foundation.
- A 4,000-square-foot worship center, where daily prayer, praise, teaching, and discipleship rose like incense to heaven.
- A fully equipped commercial kitchen and dining hall, where meals became moments of connection, healing, and shared joy.
- Dedicated housing for 20 servant leadership trainees—young men who weren't just being restored, but raised up to restore others.
- A thriving nursery and greenhouse business, where over a million plants and flowers were grown each year—becoming a living classroom where the principles of hard work and heart transformation took root.
- A 12-room guest lodge on-site, where visiting families could stay and work family recovery classes—reuniting with their sons, celebrating progress, and witnessing firsthand the redeeming power of God.

This nursery wasn't just about income—it was about identity. Each seed planted became a symbol of new beginnings. Each flower sold helped keep the lights on, food on the table, and the doors open wide for the next broken soul who hadn't arrived yet. We reminded the young men daily: "You're not just working—you're sowing into someone else's redemption."

We also taught them personal responsibility: *“Your parents or family didn’t make the choices that brought you here. They shouldn’t have to pay for them either. When you work in this nursery and the community purchases these flowers, you’re not just paying the bills—you’re paving the way for the next guy who hasn’t even arrived yet.”*

And something beautiful began to happen—they started to believe it. They began to take ownership, not just of their recovery, but of the ministry itself. Pride—not the kind that puffs up, but the kind that comes from purpose—began to replace shame. They started walking taller, speaking differently, and seeing themselves not as burdens to society but as contributors to the Kingdom of God.

Over time, many of these same young men stepped into servant leadership roles—mentoring newcomers, leading devotions, sharing their testimonies, and even staying after graduation to serve full-time. They went from the pit to the purpose, from addicts to advocates, from broken to building others. This model—freely given, freely sustained—became more than a method. It became our message. No fees. No manipulation. No guilt trips. Just Jesus, showing up through real work, real grace, and real transformation.

But we didn’t stop there. Addiction had torn families apart—so we knew true healing had to reach beyond just the individual. That’s why we built a 12-room guest lodge on-site, creating a space where families could come for weekends, participate in family recovery classes, worship together, and join their loved one on the journey of restoration. We didn’t just welcome families—we wove them in. They became part of the Breaking Free family, walking alongside their sons, brothers, and husbands as God rewrote their stories.

Through prayer, biblical counseling, forgiveness, and revived hope, generational curses began to break. Broken bonds were mended. New legacies were birthed. This wasn’t a rehab center. It was a resurrection center. We weren’t running a program. We were building a spiritual movement—one soul at a time. And every nail driven, every meal served, every bed offered, and every soul saved was made possible by His grace—freely received, and freely given.

“They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.” —*Isaiah 61:4*

Chapter 8: Walls Can't Stop Grace-Discipling the Incarcerated (2007)

Just one mile down the road from our young men's campus stood a state prison—an ever-present reminder of where many of our residents had once been, or easily could have ended up. That facility loomed like a shadow. But God didn't see a barrier. He saw an open door. And for me, it was personal—a constant reminder of where God had brought me from. The same road that once led me to a jail cell now led others to freedom. What the enemy meant for destruction, God was using for redemption—again and again.

As we poured into the lives of young men on our campus, correctional officers began to take notice. I'd run into many of them in the small town nearby and introduce myself. Most already knew about the boys' ranch and our young adult recovery campus—a mile apart, but spiritually united. Breaking Free's facility was so close to the prison, we could literally see it from our property. And apparently, they could see us too. Officers would slow down as they passed—some even stopped to watch. What they witnessed wasn't behavior control or forced compliance—they saw lives being restored. Not through punishment, but through purpose. Not through control, but through Christ.

Eventually, the question came that changed everything: “Can you do this in the prison too?”

I always believed some of the greatest God-given giftings were sitting behind those prison bars. And somehow, Satan knew it too. With a vengeance, he targeted these individuals—wounding their potential early and often. I used to tell people, “Demons and my selfishness used the gifts of God for destruction and pleasure—rather than for the God who gave them.” But God was reclaiming what the enemy had twisted. As the Word says, “God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another” 1 Peter 4:10. Now, those same gifts were being awakened—not for crime, but for Christ.

But even before the official invitation, something powerful had already begun: correctional officers started visiting our campus to speak directly with the young men. They brought with them the raw, unfiltered reality of prison life—not to scare, but to awaken. They described the hopelessness, the violence, the loss of identity and time. It wasn't a lecture—it was awakening mercy. A warning. A reality check. And in God's providence, it helped stirred many young hearts toward real, lasting change.

Their voices were heavy with frustration and desperation. They had witnessed the revolving door of incarceration—men coming and going with no true transformation.

They were weary of systems that only managed behavior but never healed the heart.

What they saw at Breaking Free wasn't a theory—it was the living Gospel. It was real power. It was a lasting change.

Through the help of a godly prison chaplain, God opened the door. But it didn't come without resistance. I met with the warden and laid out two non-negotiables:

First, we would never charge a fee—not one cent. That part he liked.

But second, and more importantly, correctional officers could not sit in on our classes. If the men were going to be honest, confess struggles, and encounter healing, they needed a space free of fear—no judgment, no retaliation.

At first, the warden said no. The inmates we wanted to reach were considered high-risk—it was simply too dangerous, he explained. But after persistent, prayer-covered conversations, something shifted. He finally agreed—on one condition:

We had to sign a waiver releasing the state from all liability.

It was a risk. But the greater risk was letting broken men stay bound. So we signed—and God moved. We knew Who called us. And we trusted that the One who opened the door would protect what He ordained.

We knew the importance of never asking for government funding— If we had, we might've been pressured to water down the Gospel, to compromise truth for compliance. Jesus never charged the hurting for healing—and neither would we.

Ironically, around that time, the state had cut many of its own recovery programs due to budget constraints. But God, in His sovereignty, used what once felt like a detour—my Ph.D., earned long after a GED in prison—to meet the state's credentialing requirements. That's just like God—turning former shame into holy strategy.

And from a political angle, it didn't hurt. In Atlanta, it looked good—a state prison offering free, faith-based counseling and recovery services at no cost to taxpayers. With so many programs slashed, this checked a box for the system.

But for me, it was never about optics or policy. I didn't care how it looked on paper. I just wanted access to the men. I wanted to bring them the Gospel, walk with them through their pain, and raise up servant leaders behind the razor wire. Because some of the most powerful Kingdom callings I've ever witnessed started in a cell.

And so we stepped into the prison—five days a week for five hours per day. We preach Christ—crucified for sin, risen from the grave, and soon returning. And we’ve never looked back.

What began as a simple invitation became a divine movement. Men encountered hope. They wept. They repented. They worshiped. Chains fell—not from their bodies, but from their hearts.

Within just a few years, we began raising servant leaders behind the walls. Men radically transformed by Jesus started discipling others in their cell blocks. They led Bible studies. They mentored the broken. They carried light into the darkest corners of the facility. Blocks were transformed into communities of grace—because inmates became ministers of the Gospel.

But make no mistake—it wasn’t always easy. Many wild, even dangerous, situations took place in those prison classrooms. Some men clung tightly to their rage and bitterness. You could feel the tension some days. But I always knew—we weren’t alone. There were men in those classes who had our backs. Men who had been changed by Christ and weren’t about to let anything disrupt what God was doing.

More than once, inmates themselves stepped in to calm situations down when others tried to stir up chaos. They stood between conflict and peace. They stood for righteousness. These weren’t just attendees—they were defenders of the Gospel. That’s when I knew: this wasn’t just ministry—it was brotherhood. A movement had been born, forged in the fire, and protected by the very men it had come to serve.

Breaking Free was no longer just a refuge for the addicted. It had become a bridge to the imprisoned—a living testimony that the Gospel moves through bars and beyond boundaries. It was more than a program; it was a Kingdom movement, a declaration that rang through cellblocks and recovery rooms alike: No wall is too thick. No past is too broken. No soul is too lost.

God was building something eternal—one transformed life at a time. The same Spirit that healed addicts was now igniting purpose in inmates. Chains were breaking, not just from addiction, but from shame, anger, and hopelessness. And as men encountered Christ in recovery and behind prison walls, they weren’t just being set free—they were being sent out. From ruins, He was raising up rebuilders. From ashes, He was calling out leaders.

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,

to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.”
— *Isaiah 61:1*

We learned a powerful truth: Jesus doesn't wait on the other side of freedom—He walks straight into the prison yard. He's not intimidated by razor wire, rap sheets, or reputations. Where man sees a convict, He sees a calling. Where the world gives up, Christ steps in. And He keeps showing up—day after day, cell by cell, heart by heart—bringing light into the darkest places.

He sits with the broken, speaks life to the forgotten, and calls forth purpose from the pit. Inmates became intercessors. Felons became followers. Wounds became testimonies. The Gospel didn't just visit the prison—it took up residence.

All glory to the One who sets captives free—not just from bars, but from bondage. And as long as there are locked doors and hurting hearts, we'll keep going—because He's already there.

Matthew 25:36: “I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you cared for me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

Chapter 9: Forged in the Field-*Training Servant Leaders (2007)*

As God was moving powerfully inside the prison walls just down the road, He was also stirring something equally miraculous on our own campus. A deeper layer of transformation began to take root—not just the kind that sets a man free from addiction, but the kind that calls him into purpose.

These young men, once shackled by addiction, abandonment, and despair, were no longer satisfied with simply surviving. They had been rescued, yes—but they wanted to become rescuers. They had been healed—but they longed to become vessels of healing. The chains had fallen off, and now they were asking, “Lord, how can You use my life?”

It became undeniable: God wasn’t just saving souls—He was raising-up servant leaders. These were not seminary-trained theologians or professional speakers. They were former addicts, ex-inmates, and once-forgotten sons who had been radically redeemed. They weren’t looking to impress anyone. They were looking to serve. They weren’t pursuing titles—they were picking up towels. They weren’t chasing platforms—they were following the cross.

We began to realize that what was happening wasn’t just emotional passion—it was spiritual preparation. The Lord was forging something deep, and we knew it required intentional cultivation. That’s when we launched one of the most defining expressions of our ministry: the Servant Leadership Training (SLT) School.

What started in 2007 has become a cornerstone of Breaking Free’s mission. SLT began as a three-year immersive discipleship journey—rooted in the Word, anchored in spiritual disciplines, and expressed through hands-on ministry. This wasn’t about producing charismatic personalities—it was about shaping Christlike leaders.

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.”

— *Ephesians 2:10*

We didn’t measure success by how well someone could preach or teach. We looked for humility, obedience, and a heart that said, “Here I am, Lord, send me.” It was gritty. It was real. It was transformative.

That same year, God gave us another burden: these young men needed a bigger vision—one that reached beyond the borders of their pain and even their nation. Many had never left the counties they were raised in. But when we began to talk about

missions, something miraculous happened. Without hesitation, they said: “If Jesus gave everything for us, how can we not give everything for others?”

That’s when we knew—it was time to send them out. What began as a grassroots leadership program on our ranch in Georgia quickly became a launching pad for global impact. The first team went to Texas, then to Costa Rica, where the vision expanded far beyond anything we had imagined. Soon, SLT graduates were leading outreaches and investing in the next generation of young leaders. They preached the Gospel in broken Spanish to youth groups in San Vito Costa Rica, served the poor with compassion, and ministered to the addicted with the same mercy they had once received. And in the process, they discovered a life they never knew existed—a life of joyful, sacrificial service, lived for the glory of God.

“Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.”
— *Mark 16:15 (NLT)*

The Gospel that rescued them was the same Gospel the world was starving for.

Today, SLT is offered both in-person and in real-time online. It’s a comprehensive, Spirit-led experience designed for those who are serious about the call—not the title—of leadership. The program requires a minimum one-year commitment, during which participants either live in or stay actively connected to our EGR (Extra Grace Required) community—a space where authenticity, accountability, and transformation collide. Here, leaders are shaped not in comfort but in commitment. Participants submit to godly mentorship, engage in daily discipleship, and live out real-world ministry one day at a time—learning to lead with humility, serve with joy, and grow through grace.

We make no apologies for the depth. Authentic leadership isn’t built overnight—it’s forged in the fire of daily surrender. It requires pruning, pressure, and perseverance.

“So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine.”
— *1 Peter 1:6–7*

At SLT, character formation is everything. We don’t celebrate hype—we honor humility. We don’t chase charisma—we cultivate Christlikeness. Because leadership without character always collapses. As we often say: “*Your gifting can take you farther than your character can sustain you—and when character is lacking, a fall is inevitable.*” That’s why our focus is on long-term fruit, not short-term flair.

We've learned through both triumph and failure that the best way to develop true servant leaders is by putting them in positions to serve—not on platforms to perform. Leadership isn't about being seen—it's about seeing others. It's not about climbing higher—it's about digging deeper. True influence is born in the trenches of compassion, not in the spotlight of applause.

We're not building celebrities—we're forming servants. Men who wash feet, not just raise voices. Leaders who carry towels, not titles. Because in the Kingdom of God, the strongest leaders are those who kneel the lowest—who lead not from pride but from posture, not from talent but from surrender.

Jesus said it best in Mark 10:43–45:

“Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant... For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

That is the heartbeat of SLT. That is the kind of leader we are committed to shaping.

Each SLT student is intentionally paired with a seasoned, Spirit-filled mentor—not just a teacher, but a spiritual guide. These mentors aren't chosen for their credentials; they're chosen for their character. They've walked through the fire of adversity and come out refined by grace. They've known the weight of failure and the wonder of redemption. And now, they walk beside their protegee—not above them—modeling what it means to lead with humility, to love with boldness, and to serve with joy.

These aren't one-way relationships. They're iron-sharpening-iron. Our mentors listen, challenge, pray, and pour out. They share their scars, their stories, and their strength—not to impress, but to invest. Through intentional discipleship, deep accountability, and shared ministry, a bond forms that is more than educational—it's transformational.

Our goal has never been to create polished professionals or spiritual experts. Our goal is to raise up servants who lead like Jesus—with a towel, not a title.

“The greatest among you must be a servant.” — Matthew 23:11

At SLT, we remind every student: the basin and the towel still matter more than the pulpit and the microphone. The ones who serve in secret often carry the most authority in heaven. That's why we emphasize presence over performance, obedience over ambition, and faithfulness over fame.

And just like everything else at Breaking Free, SLT is completely free of charge. No tuition. No hidden fees. No financial strings. Because the Gospel was never meant to be marketed—it was meant to be multiplied.

“Give as freely as you have received!”— *Matthew 10:8*

We have freely received God’s mercy, grace, and calling—and so we freely give it away. This is not just a mission for us; it’s a divine mandate. We are not here to build a mere institution or program. We are building a spiritual family—a movement—a generation of servant leaders who are willing to live out their faith by loving, serving, and stepping boldly wherever Jesus calls them to go.

To this day, I stand amazed as I watch these men and women—once drugged out, locked up, and written off by the world—now preaching the Gospel, discipling new believers, and leading others into the same freedom they themselves have found. Their lives are a living testimony of grace in motion.

Because this is the Kingdom way: Sons become fathers. Disciples become disciplers. The broken become builders of others.

“The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”
— *2 Timothy 2:2*

The field—the hard, unglamorous, sometimes painful place—is still where leaders are forged. The harvest is still plentiful, and the laborers are still few. But God continues to call ordinary men and women to serve—not for applause or position, but with humble hearts anointed by His Spirit.

Let us never forget: true leadership doesn’t climb ladders—it kneels in prayer. It’s not about titles or status, but about servant hearts willing to sacrifice and endure. And the greatest servant, the ultimate example of leadership, remains Jesus Christ Himself—the One who stooped to wash feet, who kept a towel in hand, who gave His life to redeem ours. May we follow in His footsteps, leading not to be served, but to serve—and in doing so, build a legacy that lasts beyond ourselves.

Chapter 10: Homecoming of Hope-Launching Recovery in Texas (2010)

The phone calls started coming—one after another. Desperate parents. Worn-out pastors. Old friends I hadn't heard from in years. Different voices, same cry:

“We need help. Addiction is destroying my loved one.”

But this time, the devastation had a new name: heroin. What once hid in shame-filled corners was now front-page news. A full-blown epidemic was sweeping through Texas—especially in the very communities where I had grown up. One of the hardest blows came close to home. At Plano Senior High School—a wave of fatal teenage overdoses rocked the community. Students were dying. Teenagers were slipping away in bedrooms, bathrooms, and school parking lots. Funeral after funeral. Lives cut short by a poison that didn't care how young, bright, or full of potential they were.

It wasn't abstract. It wasn't just statistics or headlines. These were sons and daughters. Friends and neighbors. This was my home community. The faces I saw reflected the same pain I once carried. The streets echoed stories I knew all too well. And deep in my spirit, a familiar stirring began to rise. It wouldn't leave me. I couldn't shake it.

God was calling me back.

After years of ministry in Georgia, and the development of the Servant Leadership Training (SLT) program, the Lord began to press a clear and heavy burden on my heart: It was time to plant a regeneration community right here—back in the same soil where my own brokenness had once bled out.

This wasn't about nostalgia or reliving the past. This was a divine commission. A sacred return.

“Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.”

— *Psalms 126:5*

It was about redemption—on both a personal and communal level.

God was asking me to sow back into the same ground that once held my shame. But now, with a new purpose: to raise up sons and daughters of hope. To create a place where the addicted, the broken, the overlooked, and the forgotten could encounter the same transforming love and truth that had set me free.

This was not a project. These were my people. And this time, I wasn't coming alone—I was bringing servant leaders forged through fire, filled with the Spirit, and ready to

rebuild what the enemy had tried to destroy.

“Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.”

— *Isaiah 58:12*

Because that’s the power of the Gospel: the same streets that once knew your bondage can become the very ground for your destiny.

But I refused to go alone. I gathered a small group of young men—some still in the program in Georgia, others SLT graduates and leaders. These weren’t just students—they were battle-tested brothers. Men who had been rescued and redeemed, now burning with the same passion to go and rescue others. They left their comfort. They left their families. They left the community that had brought them back to life. Why? Because the grace that saved them was too powerful to keep to themselves.

“Freely you have received; freely give.”

— *Matthew 10:8*

Most recovery efforts start with a building and then search for leaders. We did the opposite. We launched the Texas campus with nothing but a team of servant-hearted men—overflowing with humility, experience, and holy fire. We had become “top-heavy with SLT leaders” in the best sense—rich in character, deep in conviction. That became our foundation.

Then God did what only God can do. We were given a farm to use.

Not just a place to stay—but a place to grow. Spiritually and practically. That farm became our first Texas base of operations. We didn’t just live there—we cultivated the land, sowed the Word, and watched healing take root in the soil of both hearts and harvests.

By day, we worked with our hands. By night, we prayed under the stars. And somehow, the very dirt beneath our feet became sacred—a place where dead things came to life.

“Even the wilderness and desert will be glad in those days. The wasteland will rejoice and blossom with spring crocuses.” — *Isaiah 35:1*

There was no flashy marketing. No clever strategy. Just a farm, a few faithful men, and a whole lot of faith. We started taking in young men bound by heroin, meth, and every drug imaginable. We prayed with them. Discipled them. Worked alongside them. Wept beside them. And little by little, hope took root.

The launch of Breaking Free Texas wasn't just a program expansion—it was a rescue mission. A response to a cry I could no longer ignore. And like everything else we've done, it was birthed through obedience, fueled by faith, and sustained by grace.

Today, many of those early Texas residents are no longer just recovering—they're leading. They've become disciple-makers, mentors, and ministers. They're reaching back to the same streets they once came from, bringing freedom to the next wave of brokenness.

What began with a burden became a movement. What looked like a homecoming became a harvest.

“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony...”
— *Revelation 12:11*

Chapter 11: From Orphans to Servants – The Costa Rica Farm Story (2012)

None of what you're about to read—and what follows in the coming chapters—would have been possible without the faith, generosity, and obedience of those God called to walk with us. One brother, who had known me since my release from prison, helped make the land purchase possible. Another that I consider my best friend stood beside me in the trenches during those early days—shoulder to shoulder—praying, encouraging, and helping me navigate some of the hardest moments. Today, he serves as a senior leader within BFI, still helping to steer the ship as we follow where the Spirit leads.

But it wasn't just them.

In one of the most redemptive twists of this entire story, several of the same guys I used to run the streets with—my old gang from high school days—are now standing beside me in ministry. Men who once shared in my chaos now share in the calling. The same ones I partied with, fought with, and nearly died with are now leading others out of darkness, discipling others, and helping lead recovery efforts.

Only God could write a story like that.

It's living proof that no one is too far gone, and no past is beyond redemption. What the enemy meant for destruction, God is now using for His glory—and we get to do it together.

Over the years, a small, faithful band of brothers and sisters quietly showed up. Men and women who may never be known by the world—but are deeply known by heaven. They gave when no one was watching. They prayed when no one asked. They stayed when walking away would have been easier. Their fingerprints are on every brick, every prayer, every life transformed.

Even my own children played a quiet but vital role. In those early years, my son and one of my daughters were on the ground with me in Costa Rica, living alongside these orphaned young women—helping to lay the foundation not just with their hands, but with their presence, sacrifice, and love. Meanwhile, my other two daughters were in the States, standing in the gap—helping with communication, fundraising, and coordination so we had the resources and support to do what this chapter now recounts. None of them sought the spotlight, but their fingerprints are woven throughout this story—written in ways only family could understand. Their faithfulness, both seen and unseen, helped make the impossible possible.

This chapter isn't just my story—it's our story. A testimony of grace, built by the quiet faithfulness of many who simply said "yes" when God called.

Around that time, I began praying about where to take the next generation of servant leaders. I wanted to expose them to more than just ministry in the States. I was searching for an out-of-the-country place where they could catch a broader vision of the Kingdom—a glimpse of the world beyond their own broken neighborhoods and familiar struggles. They needed to see that the Gospel is global, and that servant leadership doesn't stop at state lines.

Doors opened—Brazil, Honduras—good options, passionate invitations. But as I prayed, something didn't sit right. The peace wasn't there. I've learned over the years to wait on that peace.

Meanwhile, a close friend had been spending time in southern Costa Rica. He hadn't bought land—he was just quietly scouting the area, considering a backup location in case things in the U.S. continued to deteriorate. But the more time he spent down there, the more he sensed something deeper. He began to urge me, "You need to come see this place. I don't know why, but I think you're supposed to do something here—maybe start an orphanage."

An orphanage? I wasn't thinking in that direction. My mind and heart were focused on launching another drug and alcohol regeneration community. That's where the need felt most urgent. That's what I understood. So I put it off. For a year.

But the nudge didn't go away. It just kept rising. Finally, I said what he'd been waiting to hear: "Alright. Let's go check it out."

What we found in those remote mountains of southern Costa Rica didn't look impressive on paper. No fancy buildings. No strategic advantages. Other properties had better infrastructure, more accessibility, greater return. But none of them had what this land had.

There was a peace there. A whisper of God's presence. A sense that something holy was waiting to unfold—if we were willing to obey. This wasn't just a visit. It was the beginning of something only God could have orchestrated.

Back in the States, I tried to learn more about the area, but there was surprisingly little information available. It was almost as if the region had been hidden—off the grid and untouched. Then, somehow, I stumbled across a series of research papers written by foreign interns who had studied the area under a local doctor. Most of them were

students from Spain, and through their notes, I began to grasp more about the region's culture, customs, and community dynamics than I could have found anywhere else.

As I dug deeper, I also read about a small boys' home tucked away in the mountains. What struck me wasn't just what I read—it was how every piece of information, every connection, every step felt divinely orchestrated. I wasn't chasing leads. God was leading me. And in an amazing confirmation, everyone I had read about or found through my research—I ended up meeting on that very first visit. It was as if the whole region was waiting for us to arrive, and God was already preparing the way.

By the time I set foot back in that region for a second visit, I knew in my spirit: this was it. So we began looking for farms.

My brother, who wanted property in the region, offered me the perfect launchpad. "You take care of the farm," he said, "and I'll give you a place to get started."

And that's how it began—not with a master plan or big budget, but with obedience, a plot of land, and a quiet conviction that God was up to something far bigger than we could yet see.

Let me pause the story for a moment to share something that still makes me smile in awe of God's faithfulness. Back home, several very successful businessmen from my community pulled me aside. They looked at me with puzzled expressions and asked, "Wait—you're just going to Costa Rica? With no money, no plan, no property, nothing? Just to check it out?" I could hear the concern in their voices—and maybe even a little disbelief.

I remember responding with a quiet but resolute faith: "Just like God provided a farm when we returned here, He will provide one there too." I didn't have all the answers. I couldn't map out the future. But I had learned not to lean on my own understanding. I had seen God move mountains before, and I believed He could do it again.

They chuckled. Not out of malice—but the kind of chuckle that comes when something sounds a little too risky, a little too idealistic, maybe even a little crazy. And to be honest, from a worldly perspective, it probably did sound crazy. But I wasn't relying on worldly wisdom. I was stepping out on a promise.

What they didn't know—and what I was about to find out—was that God was already moving in Costa Rica, preparing hearts, opening doors, and laying the groundwork for something far greater than I could imagine.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." *Proverbs 3:5-6*:

Now, let me take you back into the story...

We looked at this farm, and honestly, at first it felt more like a jungle than a place to build something new. We had just seen another property that was amazing by comparison—clear land, better infrastructure, everything you'd expect. But what caught my attention wasn't the land itself. It was something the seller casually mentioned during the visit.

He told us that across the dirt road, tucked into a crumbling jungle shack, lived a group of orphaned sisters—19 years old and younger—all from the same family. Their mother had died suddenly, and their father had disappeared. I couldn't believe it. I told my friend, "This can't be." I asked the seller to introduce me to them, but he refused. So, we parked down the road and quietly walked up to the house ourselves.

When they saw me, they freaked out. I was wearing a sleeveless shirt covered in tattoos, and my translator wasn't working. So I started saying "adopto, adopto," adding an "o" to everything, trying to communicate. I pointed to my tattoos—jail, prison, drugs—and then pointed upward to the sky, saying "Dios, Dios." and back to my heart, "Dios Dios saveo me". Somehow, the message got through.

I later learned that after my friend finalized the purchase of the farm, the sisters—except for the oldest—were told by her to hide. Their fear and mistrust were so deeply ingrained that even our presence was enough to send them into hiding. This fragile, first encounter was just the beginning, but even then, I could sense God's presence with us. It wasn't by accident or coincidence; He was weaving a divine plan that would forever alter the course of my life.

Looking back, I recognized a familiar pattern—one I had experienced before at the boys' ranch. I went there thinking I was the one who needed to bring healing and restoration to those broken, misunderstood boys. But in truth, it was I who was transformed by their courage, their struggles, and God's grace working through them. That experience humbled me, reshaped my heart, and deepened my faith.

This new chapter was no different. I came believing I was sent to rescue and rebuild the lives of these orphaned sisters and the impoverished children in the community. Yet, in the quiet and the hard moments, I realized it was God who had brought me here to be changed—to be broken, refined, and renewed through the very people I thought I would serve. Their stories, their pain, and their resilience would stretch me in ways I never anticipated. This wasn't just their story of redemption; it was mine as well. God was teaching me once again that true ministry is a two-way journey—one where we give, yes, but even more where we receive transformation from those we serve.

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” — *Isaiah 40:31*

The girls had no protection, no guidance—only each other and the instinct to survive. They gathered jungle vegetation to eat. Bathing in a river. They slept in fear. No one came checking on them. But they were never invisible to God.

Even in their suffering, something about them shone. I saw it the first time we met them—in the oldest sister’s eyes. A flicker of hope. A quiet resilience. They didn’t beg for help, but you could feel the ache for love, for belonging, for someone to say, “You matter, you are safe now.”

They weren’t just surviving. They were waiting. Waiting to be seen. Waiting to be chosen. Waiting for family. And despite having nothing, they radiated something I had rarely seen—even in my own home country: unmistakable joy in the middle of heartache.

So when that farm across the street became available, it wasn’t a hard decision. It was a divine appointment. We knew God wasn’t calling us to swoop in and rescue. He was calling us to move in and remain. To live among them. To plant roots. To build family.

That’s what we did. We brought in SLT leaders—young men who had once been broken but had encountered the Father’s love and redemption. My 18-year-old son and 22-year-old daughter and her husband came too, embracing this wild, unfamiliar land and pouring their hearts into the soil of ministry. We initially tried to start a drug and alcohol recovery program, but despite our efforts, it never really got off the ground. Looking back, I realize God knew all along that this place wasn’t primarily about addiction recovery—it was about caring for the children and the poor. It was about feeding the hungry, especially the indigenous children tucked away in the surrounding jungle, and planting seeds of hope through a future children’s church that would be started right on the farm.

This time, it wasn’t just about reaching sons caught in addiction—it was about walking alongside daughters who needed love, stability, and a sense of family. It was about becoming the hands and feet of Jesus to the least of these.

“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.” — Matthew 18:5

Girls who had never known the safety of a father’s embrace were now discovering the security of their Heavenly Father.

At first, the work was simple and slow. We grew food. Offer shelter. Built with what we had. There were days we wondered if it was enough. But God was never in a hurry. He wasn't just building a mission—He was building a family. And little by little, it happened.

The girls who once hid in the shadows began to step into the light. They led without demanding recognition. They served without expecting a return. They worshiped with tears and sang with joy. They disciplined younger children, fed hungry families, hosted youth Bible studies, and comforted the broken.

They weren't trained in seminaries. They were trained in the school of suffering, grace, and fire. They didn't carry credentials—but they carried scars. And those scars became their anointing.

They didn't need titles. They carried Kingdom authority.

Then came the moment that still brings me to tears.

My dear brother and I made the decision to give them the farm. It wasn't a reward. It wasn't a donation. It was an inheritance. They had laid down their lives for others. Now they had a place to call their own—not just to live, but to lead. Not just to survive, but to multiply. Not just to receive, but to give.

It was theirs—not just as owners, but as stewards. As daughters of the King. As shepherds of a legacy that was no longer ours to hold.

Today, that farm is alive. Feeding programs. Children's church. Discipleship gatherings. Community Care outreaches. Laughter echoing where there was once silence. Healing flowing where there was once hurt.

It is no longer just a piece of land. It's a lighthouse without walls. A launching pad. A legacy of redemption, family, and God's Kingdom.

Five out of the six original girls are now married, raising families just outside the farm's gates—a beautiful reflection of God's restoration and provision, especially in a region where there's very little buildable land. One of them—my daughter who serves as my translator—lives on the farm with her husband. She lovingly helps care for the efficiency apartment I occupy during my six months each year in Costa Rica. She also keeps a watchful eye on the livestock and the upkeep of the property, especially when the other girls are at their homes, tending to their families and daily responsibilities. Her heart of service and faithfulness continues the legacy we began—now multiplied.

I've stood on stages. I've witnessed powerful moves of God. But nothing compares to seeing these daughters—once abandoned and afraid—walk in boldness, wash feet, lead with authority, and live out the gospel with joy.

That farm is more than a story. It's a miracle that breathes.

And to think—it all began across the street. A farm. A few girls. And a simple *yes God*.

If you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
Then your light will rise in darkness and your gloom will become like midday. The Lord
will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, And give strength
to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose
waters do not fail.

Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; You will raise up the age-old
foundations; And you will be called the repairer of the breach, The restorer of the streets
in which to dwell.

— *Isaiah 58:10–12*

Chapter 12 Light in the Shadows – Prison & Refugee Ministry in Italy (2016)

Several people, in completely different circumstances, kept putting Italy on my heart. I began to wonder—could God be calling us there? The thought stayed with me, especially after one of our staff members in Costa Rica expressed a deep desire to lead a new work in Italy. The idea wouldn't let go.

Then I saw how Italy was in such a strategic location—a gateway connecting Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. Still, we didn't know exactly where in Italy God would plant us. But we did have a trusted friend from the north—the director of the boys' ranch in Costa Rica—so we began our journey there.

The day after arriving in Milan, we drove to La Spezia, planning to work our way south while praying for clarity and confirmation on where to establish Breaking Free Italy. We didn't have a fixed plan—just a deep burden and a willingness to go wherever God would lead.

That evening, something unexpected stirred. I had a brief conversation with our cook during the day—just a casual exchange that seemed ordinary on the surface. But something about his spirit stayed with me. So after his shift ended, I asked if we could talk again. We met outside the kitchen, away from the noise, and I began sharing my story—what Jesus had done for me. As I spoke, the atmosphere shifted. Tears welled up in his eyes, and right then and there, I led him to Jesus.

I didn't know at the time what was really going on in his life. It wasn't until later that I learned he had been battling heroin addiction, hiding his pain behind his quiet demeanor. He hadn't shared it with anyone. But God knew. And He orchestrated that divine moment for healing to begin—not just for him, but for me as well.

We continued our journey after that, traveling from city to city, praying and seeking confirmation. But no place felt right. Every town we visited left us unsettled. It was as if heaven itself was whispering, "Not here." Finally, the truth hit me with clarity—La Spezia, the very first place we stopped, was the place God had chosen. A soul had come to Christ. That alone was the confirmation I needed.

We returned to La Spezia, and I met with the young man again. I told him how God had used him to guide us. He broke down in tears. Through sobs, he shared that his father had once been a missionary to Brazil. He had grown up in the church but had run from God for years. And now, through this unexpected encounter, he was finally coming home.

Then he looked me in the eyes and admitted what he had never said before—“I’m a heroin addict.” That sealed it in my spirit. This wasn’t a coincidence. This was God, weaving redemption through pain and confirming His calling for us.

“Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, ‘This is the way you should go,’ whether to the right or to the left.” — *Isaiah 30:21*

We didn’t need a perfect location, a big launch, or a grand plan. We just needed one soul, one divine encounter, and one whisper from the Holy Spirit. That’s how we knew: La Spezia was the place.

That was the beginning. In yet another divine appointment, that same young man helped us find a home—rented to us by a local dentist who quickly became a trusted friend and protector. It was all confirmation: God had gone before us. He was already laying the foundation for what was to come in La Spezia.

None of us could have imagined what God had planned when Breaking Free expanded into La Spezia, Italy. It began with a burden—watching thousands of displaced people flood into Europe, seeking safety from war, terror, and religious persecution. They crossed borders desperate for peace but found themselves ensnared in a new kind of bondage: addiction, homelessness, and systemic neglect. They had escaped one nightmare only to awaken in another.

As always, we brought what God had entrusted to us—hot meals, legal advice, compassionate prayer, and the unshakable hope of Jesus Christ. At first, our focus was the streets—ministering to refugees in parks, alleys, and temporary shelters. But God soon opened a deeper door, one we hadn’t expected: there was a prison in La Spezia.

I was invited in to share my story of hope with the men, and before long, I found myself walking prison corridors—unescorted by guards—sitting face-to-face with inmates tied to the Sicilian Mafia, radical Islamic groups, and international crime syndicates. These weren’t petty criminals. These were men the world had written off—hardened, dangerous, and, in society’s eyes, beyond redemption.

But I didn’t come to condemn them—I came with a story of my own. I came to share the same mercy that had rescued me. These men didn’t need another lecture; they needed the truth of the Gospel.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

—John 3:16

I'll be honest—something felt different this time. I had been inside many prisons over the years—some where I walked out freely at the end of the day, and others where I stayed far longer than I ever planned. But never like this. This was Italy. This was a different kind of darkness.

The guards barely escorted me. They gave me clearance to walk unaccompanied, moving from one cell block to another, the heavy metal doors echoing behind me. No one followed. No one protected. Just me—and the presence of God. I could feel the tension in the air as I passed cell after cell. The eyes of radicalized Muslim inmates tracked my every move. I wasn't naïve. I knew what they were thinking—measuring the risk, calculating the value of striking a Christian on mission. You could sense it. The spiritual warfare wasn't hidden—it was thick, almost suffocating.

And yet, I was not afraid. Because God had gone before me, just as He always does. I wasn't walking those corridors alone—I was walking in obedience, wrapped in the covering of a God who doesn't just send us into darkness, but leads us through it with purpose. I was carrying light into a place thick with shadows. And I've learned something powerful over the years: wherever God sends us—even to the darkest corners of the earth—His light is always stronger. His truth still penetrates. His Spirit still breaks chains. His name still saves.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.” — *John 1:5*

What began as a moment of unease became a moment of conviction: this is exactly where we're called to go. Not where it's comfortable, but where it's necessary. Not where it's safe, but where souls are still waiting to be set free.

Amazingly, some of the first men to respond to the Gospel were Nigerian drug gang members—towering figures with hardened eyes and deep scars, both visible and hidden. They were fluent in English, their voices carrying the weight of street battles, betrayal, prison riots, and years of surviving a life fueled by violence and drugs. Yet when they heard the Word—truly heard it—you could see something break open inside them. They didn't resist. They didn't debate. They

embraced the Gospel with raw hunger and unexpected joy, like men who had been starving for truth and didn't even know it.

Before long, these same men—once feared and avoided—were walking beside me through the prison corridors. Not as bodyguards, though that's what many assumed. No, they walked with me as brothers in Christ. Their very presence in those cell blocks spoke volumes. Let's be honest—the other inmates didn't mess with them... so they

didn't mess with me. But that wasn't the point. The power wasn't in their size or reputation anymore—it was in their transformation.

They had been changed. And now, they were catalysts of change.

As we moved from one block to the next, they would quietly spread the word: "He's coming. The one who talks about Jesus. Come listen." By the time I stepped into a new unit, another recently converted Nigerian brother would already be waiting, ready to walk with me, ready to testify. It was like watching a kingdom chain reaction unfold before my eyes—one soul catching fire and igniting the next.

What I witnessed wasn't just revival—it was spiritual warfare being flipped on its head. The enemy had once used these men to destroy lives. Now God was using them to deliver life. And I got to walk right alongside them in that holy ground of redemption.

"Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. ... Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful." — 1 *Corinthians* 1:26–27

Everywhere I went in that prison, I preached the same simple, uncompromising message: Hope is real. Transformation is possible. Jesus still saves. I didn't sugarcoat my story. I didn't pretend to have it all together. I looked them in the eye and told them the truth:

"I wasn't always the preacher walking through these gates. Years ago, I wore shackles too."

And something powerful would happen in those moments. Hardened men—some of them murderers, some cartel soldiers, some who had never heard their own fathers say "I love you"—began to break. They cried out from their cells. Men known for violence whispered prayers of surrender. Killers chose forgiveness. Former gang leaders laid down their pride and picked up Bibles.

They weren't becoming religious.

They were becoming free.

Because only the Holy Spirit can write stories like that. Only the Spirit of God can step into a prison cell and make it holy ground. Only Jesus can take what the enemy meant for destruction and flip it into destiny.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." — 2 *Corinthians* 5:17 (NASB)

I didn't see criminals when I looked into their eyes.

I saw mirrors.

I saw my old self.

I saw the same crossroads I once faced—the same internal war, the same ache for something more.

And I told them what I wish someone had told me when I was locked up:

“You may be behind bars, but you're not beyond hope. You're not beyond healing. You have a choice. And Jesus is waiting on the other side of it.”

The Gospel doesn't just set us free someday—it sets us free now. In the darkest places. With the most unlikely people.

And that, to me, is the proof that God is still in the business of breaking chains.

Chapter 13: Hope for Her – A Place of Healing and Restoration (2014)

As the young men’s program in Texas took root and began to flourish, another cry began to rise—quiet, yet relentless. While we celebrated sons and brothers being restored, it became impossible to ignore the silence of the daughters. Beneath the surface of every breakthrough, a gap remained—mothers, sisters, and young women still battling addiction, abuse, trauma, and deep wounds of identity. Their pain wasn’t lesser. It was simply less visible. But God saw them.

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those whose spirits are crushed.”

— *Psalm 34:18*

Phone calls started pouring in from desperate families—mothers weeping over their daughters, fathers unsure where to turn. They weren’t just asking for a bed—they were pleading for a lifeline. Stories echoed one another: young women lost to drugs, trapped in self-harm and toxic cycles, numb from depression and shame. The kind of shame that doesn’t just hurt—it redefines how someone sees themselves.

These weren’t case numbers. These were daughters. These were souls Jesus bled for.

“For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”

— *Luke 19:10*

And we were being called to respond. We couldn’t call ourselves a ministry of freedom while ignoring half the battlefield. The burden for young women had been on my heart for years—unshakable, undeniable, and steadily intensifying. Everywhere we turned, we encountered broken daughters—abandoned by systems, misjudged by the religious, overlooked by society. Many had never had a safe place to process their pain, much less discover their God-given identity.

The question that haunted me wasn’t *if* we should respond. It was *when*. I wrestled with it in prayer, wrestled in planning meetings, and lay awake at night weighed down by the reality of their pain. How do you build something that reaches into the unique and complex pain of a woman’s soul? Pain often rooted not just in addiction or choices, but in violation, rejection, fatherlessness, abuse, or generational shame?

“He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.”

— *Psalm 147:3*

This couldn't be a carbon copy of what we built for the men. This needed to be something designed for ladies. Something safe. Something entirely shaped by the Father's heart for His daughters. And so, I waited on the Lord. I asked for wisdom. I listened to stories. I searched for insight. I was tempted to rush—but every time I questioned *how* it could be done, God gently reminded me *why* it must be done.

Many well-meaning ministers and ministries offered advice—some of it cautionary. They told me how difficult it could be to work with young women, how emotional the process could get, and how complex the trauma often was. More than one suggested I stick with young men. “*It’s simpler,*” they said. “*It’s safer.*” But to me, their warnings didn't discourage the vision—they confirmed it.

If the church avoids the hard places, who will bring the healing?

Their concern only stirred me more. It deepened my conviction. It pressed me to count the cost and then cover, from A to Z, what would be required—not just for recovery, but for complete restoration. These young women weren't projects. They were daughters. And the goal wasn't temporary change. It was lifelong discipleship.

I knew we couldn't offer a quick fix or an emotional moment. We had to build a pathway—a daily walk—where wounded girls could become whole women of God. Not just rescued, but raised. Not just healed, but sent. And that's what *Hope for Her* became—a training ground for identity, for purpose, for lasting freedom, and a legacy of discipleship rooted in Christ.

And so, what began as a burden eventually became a blueprint. A sanctuary of healing designed not just to treat addiction, but to restore identity. Not just to help women survive, but to help them rise.

From that holy place of burden and prayer, Hope for Her was born.

Hope for Her wasn't simply a “female version” of Breaking Free's men's program. It was a deeply intentional ministry, crafted to meet women in their deepest need with the redeeming truth of God's Word. It launched in the heart of Texas, but its impact reached far beyond. It became a space for:

- Healing trauma
- Breaking generational curses
- Reclaiming lost identity

- Restoring purity and purpose
- Rediscovering the love of the Father

We witnessed miracles, not just in recovery, but in identity restoration. Women arrived broken, addicted, afraid to speak, unsure of their worth. Many had never heard that they were daughters of the King. Now, they carry that truth with dignity. Not pride—but purpose.

“I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.” —
Ezekiel 36:26

We’ve watched God rewrite their stories—

- From addiction to anointing
- From trauma to testimony
- From shame to strength

And just as we’ve seen young men rise through servant leadership, we’ve watched young women rise too—healed, whole, equipped, and sent. Today, women who once couldn’t make eye contact now lead Bible studies, mentor others, and walk in boldness. They don’t just wear freedom. They carry it. They are no longer just recipients of hope. They’ve become carriers of it. What started as a whisper from the wounded has become a chorus of restored voices, singing over a new generation of women:

“You are not forgotten. You are not disqualified. You are His.”

“She is clothed with strength and dignity,
and she laughs without fear of the future.
When she speaks, her words are wise,
and she gives instructions with kindness.” — *Proverbs 31:25–26*

Chapter 14: Casting Nets – Fishers of Men in Costa Rica II (2019)

From the cobblestone alleys of Italy to the windswept shores of the Pacific, God redirected our steps once again—this time, back to Costa Rica. But not to the lush green mountains where our first international mission had taken root. This assignment was different. It was coastal, raw, and marked by both striking beauty and sobering danger.

We were sent to the Pacific side of Costa Rica—a region many imagine as a postcard paradise of turquoise waves and golden sands. But along the southern coast, that surface beauty is shadowed by a harsh and hidden reality: entrenched drug trafficking, generational poverty, gang violence, and a spiritual darkness that clings to the atmosphere like a suffocating fog. It's the kind of place where fear walks openly down the dirt roads, and hope feels like a foreign guest—rare, and never staying long. But that's exactly where the Gospel shines brightest.

We didn't arrive with fanfare—no stages, no slogans, no spotlights. We came with open hands and the name of Jesus. No hype. Just humility. Our goal wasn't to build a brand, but to create a refuge—a place where the hurting could be healed, and the broken could rise. We started with what we had in our hands: old boats.

This second work in Costa Rica didn't begin inside a chapel. It began by restoring broken fishing boats—tools of survival for desperate families. The initiative was sparked not by me, but by the heart of my adopted son—who, in God's intricate design, was the biological brother of the six young girls we had adopted years earlier from the jungles of Costa Rica.

One of those girls—now my daughter, translator, and fearless servant of Christ—approached me with a quiet but urgent plea. “Papi,” she said, “there's someone you need to meet.”

She didn't say much else, but the hope in her voice spoke volumes. She knew that if I saw him—really saw him—I would help. Maybe even adopt him. She later confessed she had been praying for that outcome.

She took me to a crumbling home on the side of a dangerous road, its walls leaning with fatigue and its roof patched with whatever scraps could be found. Standing outside was a young man—worn down from the weight of survival. His hands were calloused from labor that barely paid twenty dollars a day, if that. His eyes, heavy with exhaustion, still scanned the horizon with a flicker of hope. A fragile baby rested in his arms. Beside him

stood a young mother, just as weary—thin, silent, but strong in her own way. The poverty around them wasn't just material. It was generational. Cyclical. Oppressive.

Yet even in the shadows, there was a quiet dignity about him. Not pride—but perseverance. A resolve that hadn't been crushed yet. My heart broke.

And in that moment, as I stood on that dirt path surrounded by need I couldn't fix and pain I couldn't fully grasp, the Holy Spirit whispered,
“He's yours too.”

Not as a project. Not as a statistic. But as a soul. A son. A life worth pouring into.

That whisper shifted something in me. I had come expecting to minister to addicts, to the broken and bound—but God was reminding me: His Kingdom isn't limited to categories. It moves toward the overlooked. It calls out treasure in forgotten places. It sees fathers trying, mothers surviving, and children caught in the middle—and says, “They matter.”

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me.” — *Matthew 25:40*

That young man didn't ask for help that day. He didn't have to. God had already answered his unspoken prayer—by sending help. We brought him in. We adopted him. And with that simple, sacred yes, another chapter of redemption was written—not just in our family story, but in the eternal record of heaven. But the enemy doesn't surrender territory without a fight.

Shortly after we committed to planting deep roots in that region—laying the foundation for Breaking Free's next mission—I had an encounter that powerfully reminded me of the cost involved. I was walking down a quiet back road, taking in the simple beauty of wildflowers, when suddenly a motorcycle pulled up alongside me. The rider said nothing—not a word of greeting, no questions, no threats. Instead, he simply brandished a gun, his eyes cold and hollow, inked with tattoos from head to toe—each one seeming to carry the weight and stories of many lives lost. His bodyguard sat rigid behind him on the bike, equally silent and imposing. Then, without a single word, they revved the engine and disappeared down the sandy dirt road.

Later, my son pulled me aside and said quietly, “Papi... that man is a sicario. A hitman. He works with a narco gang out of Panama. He's here collecting money.” I asked him how he knew. His answer was simple but chilling: “Because he has fish from me.”

That moment didn't brand my soul with fear—it branded it with fire. It seared into me the reality that this mission was never meant to be safe or comfortable. It wasn't about

convenience or ease—it was about souls trapped deep in darkness, about stepping into God’s kingdom agenda, where His will—not mine—would be done.

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” — *Matthew 10:28*

This was a divine reminder that the call to ministry is often a call to courage—an invitation to walk faithfully through danger because the stakes are eternal.

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”— *2 Timothy 1:7*

I knew then that our mission was to carry light into the darkest corners, trusting that God’s protection and purpose would overshadow every threat.

So why do we do it? Why risk so much in places like this? Because broken and lost souls are everywhere. And when the light of Jesus walks into the shadows, yes—there will be resistance. But there will also be redemption. Every time.

God wasn’t simply planting a ministry on the coast—He was establishing His Kingdom in a land the world had long forgotten. This is the heartbeat of Breaking Free: to go where others won’t, to love those others fear, and to believe God for what others call impossible.

Today, a humble but powerful fishing industry feeds the poor and employs the desperate. This is *discipleship without walls*. This is *redemption in action*. This is *casting nets in deeper seas*.

“Come, follow Me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”
— *Matthew 4:19*

Chapter 15: The Jungle Sanctuary – Children’s Church Without Walls

In the heart of the jungle—where roads vanish into dirt trails and hope is often smothered by hunger—God gave us a new assignment: feed His children—body, soul, and spirit.

As always, it didn’t begin with a grand strategic plan. It began with empty bellies, barefoot little ones, and the unmistakable tug of compassion. Before we ever preached a sermon, we served a plate of food. Before we built a structure, we sat on logs and shared stories beneath the trees.

Every meal became a message. Every gathering, a glimpse of heaven breaking through the canopy of poverty. It started small—just a handful of children. We brought rice, beans, fruit, and a few donated clothes. They brought their hunger, their curiosity, and their wide, cautious smiles.

What we didn’t realize at the time was that we weren’t just launching a feeding program—we were planting a church. A church without walls, where the pulpit and pews were a wooden log, and the ministry team had muddy shoes. But Jesus was in our midst.

Week after week, more children came. Some walked miles along narrow jungle paths. Others arrived carrying younger siblings on their hips. We often walked the jungle trails ourselves, meeting them at key points where the path opened just enough to gather.

They didn’t come only for food—they came for love. For the safety of being seen. For the joy that, even if only for a moment, pushed back the weight of daily struggle. We told Bible stories in simple Spanish. We laughed. We cried. We prayed. And little by little, that jungle became a living sanctuary. Not made of bricks or stained glass—but of joy, faith, healing, and hope. A sanctuary built not from blueprints, but from brokenness and obedience.

“Give us today our daily bread.”
— *Matthew 6:11*

Through it all, the girls we once adopted from these very jungles became more than just daughters—they became partners in the mission, setting an example to the very community that once turned its back on them in their time of crisis. While many teenagers around the world are consumed by distractions, these young women walk out their calling with maturity and passion. They cook meals, prepare lessons, and pray for

the children by name—serving not from duty, but from a heart that remembers what it means to be the one in need.

And their ministry doesn't stop there. They help run the working farm that produces much of the food we serve. They serve faithfully every Saturday at our Children's and Youth Ark gatherings—and remain available throughout the week to respond as needs arise.

Whether it's delivering food and clothing to a remote family, checking in on a sick child, or sitting quietly beside someone who's hurting—they are present. Not out of obligation, but out of compassion. Because they remember. They remember what it felt like to be the one in need.

Their stories—once marked by abandonment and trauma—have become testimonies of healing, restoration, and spiritual authority. They are the fruit of this mission, and now, they are nurturing the next generation.

Today, that small beginning has grown into a thriving children's ministry. Every week, dozens of kids are fed—physically and spiritually. They know who Jesus is. They know they are loved. They know they have purpose. And now, many of their parents—once hardened by survival and skeptical of faith—are beginning to come too. Because when you feed a child, you often reach a family. What starts with a plate of food often leads to an open door, a softened heart, and eventually a surrendered life.

We didn't wait for perfect conditions, which there seldom is. We simply said, "Yes, Lord—we will go." And God brought the increase. Just like the loaves and fishes, He multiplied our little and made it much.

Eventually, we were able to build a small, open-air children's church on our working farm—capable of holding up to 175 children. That same farm now produces much of the food we serve. It's not just a building—it's a beacon. A place where laughter rings out, where worship rises from young hearts, and where healing flows freely.

About one-third of the children can walk to the farm each Saturday morning to attend what we now call The Children's and Youth Ark. The other two-thirds? We still go to them—deep into the jungle, where it all began. Because the mission has never stopped reaching outward.

"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done." — *Proverbs 19:17*

Chapter 16: Concrete Jungles – Love Without Walls in Plano (2022)

There's something sacred about returning to the place where your story began—but this time, not as a victim, but as a willing vessel. Plano, Texas, was once a city I tried desperately to escape. A place filled with memories I never wanted to revisit. The streets held shadows of who I used to be—pain I had buried, choices I regretted, people I had hurt.

Some wounds from that season run deep. Some memories, I wish I could erase. And some... I will never forget. But this is where the cross becomes more than a symbol. It becomes your anchor. Your only hope. Because when you return to your past, not to relive it, but to redeem it—you must cling to the cross like your life depends on it. Because it does.

I didn't come back to Plano to dwell in shame. I came back because God had a purpose for the regrets. What once marked my downfall is now a marker of His grace. The same streets where I once wandered in brokenness, I now walk with purpose—redeemed, restored, and repurposed.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” — 2 Corinthians 5:17

And as I walk them today—not as a prisoner of the past, but as a testimony of grace—I carry this truth in my spirit: God wastes nothing. Even our darkest moments can become doorways to ministry when we bring them to the foot of the cross.

But when God redeems a life, He often redeems geography too. What was once a pit of pain became a platform of purpose. The same streets that once witnessed my downfall are now the very ones where I declare His glory.

As I returned —I couldn't believe it—how a city long ranked among the top ten in the nation to live in could also have people sleeping on sidewalks and wandering in mental torment through pristine suburban neighborhoods. In plain sight were the broken, the forgotten, the addicted, and the mentally ill. The crisis was real.

And I couldn't look away.

So in 2022, we launched Love Without Walls—a boots-on-the-ground homeless outreach that meets people exactly where they are: under bridges, behind shopping centers, in alleys, along sidewalks, and beneath overpasses.

Long before the sun rises—often two hours before daylight—we hit the streets with backpacks full of food, hygiene kits, clean socks, water, and most importantly, prayer and the love of Jesus. We don't wait for the hurting to come to us—we go to them.

We stop. We look each person in the eyes. We introduce ourselves—or call them by name if we've met before. We offer them a “grace bag” filled with essentials, take time to talk with them, and build genuine relationships. We make sure they're aware of available resources, listen to their stories, and pray with them right there on the spot. And above all, we remind them of this unshakable truth: They are still image-bearers of God.

Some wrestle with addiction. Others are trapped in the silent torment of mental illness—often rooted in a traumatic breakdown they never fully recovered from. Many are simply worn down by life itself: divorced, bankrupt, betrayed, abandoned. Some have made painful decisions—mistakes that cost them everything—and in their shame, they surrendered, not to God, but to despair. They've given up on life, convinced there's no way back. Their battles don't always make the headlines, but they bleed in the quiet places—hidden behind weary eyes and forced smiles. Yet not one of them is beyond the reach of hope.

We've watched tears stream down weathered faces as we've prayed over dirty, calloused hands. We've heard confessions spoken in whispers—fragile words cracked by years of silence and shame. And we've seen hardened hearts begin to melt when reminded that someone still cares. Not because of our words or our presence, but because of His. That Someone is Jesus—the One who still leaves the ninety-nine to go after the one. The One who heals what the world says is beyond repair. The One who turns broken stories into living testimonies of grace.

“Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” — *Matthew 11:28*

This ministry is gritty. It's raw. It smells like stale clothing and broken dreams. But it's holy and precious to the Lord. It's where the Gospel breathes loudest—not in comfort, but in compassion. Not in stages and spotlights, but in silence and surrender. And what makes it all the more sacred is *where* it happens—Plano.

The very city where I once lost so much because of my rebellion is now the place where I find purpose and redemption every single morning. The streets where I once stumbled in shame are now the same streets where I pray, weep with the hurting, and proclaim God's hope and unshakable promises.

God doesn't waste a single scar. He repurposes pain. And sometimes, He sends us back to the place of our greatest failure to become messengers of His greatest mercy.

As ministries grow and leaders gain more influence, there's always a subtle temptation to drift toward ease—to go where the funding flows, where the applause is louder, and where the burden feels lighter. It's easy to be drawn to the platforms where the “atta boys” come often and the spotlights shine brighter. Comfort calls. Recognition appeals. The doors that open with prestige and praise can feel like divine promotion—but sometimes, they are distractions in disguise.

That's why we must be anchored in the call, not the crowd. Jesus didn't chase stages—He walked dusty roads. He didn't seek out the high places—He knelt in the low ones. And He calls us to do the same. True ministry isn't measured by social media followings or speaking invitations. It's measured in faithfulness. In how often we choose obedience over opportunity. In how willingly we walk away from convenience to step into the uncomfortable places where real transformation happens.

“If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.” — Mark 9:35

But the call of Jesus hasn't changed. He didn't send us to build platforms of convenience—He sends us to fields of sweat and dirt. To sidewalks soaked with tears. To forgotten neighborhoods and remote villages. To the places that demand both grit and grace. The places where your hands get dirty, your heart gets broken, and your faith gets tested.

True ministry still happens in the trenches—among the hurting. Where comfort is rare, but Christ is near. It's in the quiet moments after the crowds are gone, when you're sitting beside someone who has nothing left to give, and yet heaven draws close. It's in the whispered prayers, the uncelebrated sacrifices, the faithful “yes” when no one else is watching. That's where the kingdom is built—stone by stone, soul by soul.

Because Jesus never called us to be impressive. He called us to be present.

I truly believe one of the main reasons God continues to bless Breaking Free so abundantly is because—even now—I choose to remain in the grind. I still get up in those early morning hours, when every part of me would rather stay in bed. I spend the first hours in prayer—seeking His heart and direction—then pack up and step out into the dark, quiet streets while most of the city sleeps. Why? Because obedience in the unseen places still matters. Because faithfulness in the small, gritty moments still moves the heart of God.

Whether I'm deep in the jungles of Costa Rica or walking the streets of Plano five mornings a week, I intentionally stay where Jesus would be—among the overlooked, the broken, and the desperate. That's where His light shines brightest. That's where true ministry happens. Not in comfort, but in compassion. Not in applause, but in obedience.

I've done both—the platform and the pavement—and I've settled it in my soul: This is where I meet my Lord most intimately. In the secret place of surrender, I find His presence within—and then I see Him manifest through my life without. “The miracles flow not from striving for platforms, but from striving in the hidden place of obedience—not from striving to be seen, but from striving to stay faithful when no one's watching.”

It's not glamorous. It doesn't always make headlines. But I've come to believe that staying low and staying faithful is what sustains the favor of God. Because when you stay close to the suffering, you stay close to the Savior.

Love Without Walls is more than a program—it's a declaration. A declaration that no one is too far gone. That mercy wears worn-out boots and walks the streets. That Christ moves powerfully in alleys and behind dumpsters. That revival often begins—not inside buildings—but beside broken souls. That the Church truly belongs wherever the hurting are.

“Is this not the fast which I choose: to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free... Is it not to break your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him?”

— *Isaiah 58:6–7*

Chapter 17: Generation Redeemed – Breaking Cycles Before They Begin (2023)

As our ministry deepened—both on the streets and through *Breaking Free Chemical Dependency Services*—God began turning our hearts toward a new kind of mission field: the next generation. The same youth we were reaching through long-term recovery and crisis intervention, we also now felt called to reach through prevention. God was expanding our focus—from rescuing the broken to protecting the innocent. What began as a burden soon became a bold, God-given assignment.

In 2023, after years of consistent outreach and trust-building, I was officially approved as a volunteer to bring prevention education to over 180,000 students in Collin County’s public schools. This wasn’t just another program—it was a miracle. At a time when biblical truth is often silenced or pushed to the margins, God swung the doors wide open. He allowed us to enter public classrooms with compassion, truth, and the heart of Christ.

Students were free to ask any questions—and when they did, I was free to share who changed my life. Time and again, the Holy Spirit set the stage for my God-testimony. To God be the glory.

We didn’t bring religion—we brought hope through redemption. Students who had never stepped inside a church were now hearing life-giving messages about identity, purpose, boundaries, and hope. Yes, we spoke about addiction—but we also spoke of destiny. That’s the power of prevention: We reached them before the world could break them.

We constantly stay informed on what can legally be shared in public schools. The laws matter—and we honor them. In fact, many teachers and even administrators aren’t fully aware of what the Constitution actually allows regarding the separation of church and state. But here’s the truth: if a student asks me how I changed, I can legally and respectfully share that Jesus became my Savior and Redeemer. That’s not preaching—that’s answering a personal question with a personal story.

And when all is said and done, I will always respect the authority in the classroom and the school administration, even if they’re operating under an agenda—or simply out of ignorance of the law. Because the Holy Spirit is bigger than all of that. He doesn’t need a pulpit—just a willing vessel. It was a Kingdom strategy—cutting off the enemy’s plan before it could take root.

At the same time, God was expanding our reach internationally. In the rural hills and crowded barrios of Costa Rica, we launched youth prevention programs in schools,

churches, and even on soccer fields. In communities marked by generational poverty and despair, we planted seeds of resilience, truth, and courage. And across cultures and languages, the same message rang out: You matter. You are not a mistake. God has a plan for your life.

And God didn't stop there. From the earliest days of ministry, one thing always gripped my heart: The most desperate voices weren't always the addicts—they were the mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and spouses. Trembling hands. Breaking hearts. Pleading for help.

Many times, they were financially desperate—bankrupt from the countless amounts of money spent trying to save their loved one.

Then someone told them about our free programs, which had become known for their excellence, integrity, and spiritual impact. That simple word of mouth often became their lifeline—their lighthouse. A glimmer of hope in the middle of heartbreak.

I often told our team, “Your greatest ministry is to the one who calls.” More times than not, it wasn't the addict who reached out first—but a family member, often more broken, more open to the gospel, and more ready for God's healing than the addict themselves. When we love those family members back to life—offering grace, patience, hope, and direction—we create a foundation strong enough to support real change. Strengthen the family in Jesus, and the ripple effect extends far beyond the individual, touching generations yet to come. True transformation often begins where love meets the broken heart willing to receive it.

Even today, when an unknown number flashes across my phone screen—I pause. I think. I prioritize. Because I know—it could be someone's last hope, a divine appointment I cannot take the chance to miss. I can't count how many times over the years mothers—especially—have said, “Every time I called in panic and unbearable fear, you answered.”

That voice on the other end wasn't just mine—it was empathy, shaped by the memory of the pain I once caused my own family. It was availability in their hour of desperation. And more than anything, it was the presence of Jesus, showing up in the chaos, offering peace when nothing else made sense.

In 2023, as those cries grew louder, God led us to establish a 30–90 day Christ-centered recovery program specifically for youth and young adults. These weren't just “troubled teens”—they were sons and daughters under siege, battling addiction, trauma, confusion, and despair. Most were in the early stages of the cycle—desperate for intervention but not yet needing long-term inpatient care. What we offered wasn't just sobriety—it was a fresh start, built on structure, healing, and God-given purpose.

Many times, long-term program advocates questioned our short-term approach. But I've learned this: if I can have someone for any amount of time, and the Spirit of God touches them—if we can build relationships, speak life, and lay a foundation—then something shifts. The timeline becomes secondary. They no longer see it as a short stay, but a turning point toward a lifestyle of transformation. And when more extreme cases arise, we don't hesitate to connect them to long-term programs. We're not here to debate time frames—we're here to see lives changed. And we've witnessed time and time again that even a short window, surrendered to God, can lead to a lifetime of freedom.

But we quickly saw a deeper need: Young people don't suffer alone—their families are wounded too. So we built a comprehensive family restoration track alongside the adolescent program, offering spiritual care, biblical counseling, and practical tools to help rebuild households from the inside out. Because true transformation doesn't happen in a vacuum. It happens when Jesus enters a home and begins healing it—room by room.

Our outreach kept expanding—reaching at-risk children, single parents, and families in crisis. We brought hope, mentorship, meals, prayer, and presence. Sometimes it was inside a church. Other times, it was on a front porch. Often, it was in places no one else would go. But always with this message: “You are not forgotten. There is still hope.”

And here's what we've come to know with absolute certainty: Size is never the issue. It's not about how big the ministry is—It's about how faithful we are to the call. Whether it's one desperate parent or a hundred youth—Every soul matters. Every moment counts. Because in a world drowning in darkness, prevention is light. It's hope on the front lines. It's God whispering, “I see you—and I'm coming for you, before the enemy can.” And if we've learned one powerful truth along the way, it's this: There's no better time to reach a heart than before the pain begins.

And now, we're seeing this vision multiply. I always believed God was going to use the girls from Costa Rica in other nations—and now, we're seeing that vision come to life in a powerful way. It's nothing short of a miracle—one only God could orchestrate. Now, through the power of technology and their hard-earned drug and alcohol recovery certification, these young women—who were once rescued, healed, and disciplined—are ministering across borders.

They are now reaching into Spanish-speaking countries throughout South and Central America, as well as the United States, offering Christ-centered hope, wisdom, and

practical guidance to mothers, fathers, spouses, and individuals caught in the grip of addiction. Even more remarkable is the trust factor.

When someone hurting in the U.S. hears a story like theirs—raw, real, and redemptive—walls come down fast. There's something uniquely disarming and powerful when healing flows from across nations. It creates an instant connection. A trust that only God could build. What was once a remote discipleship farm is now a launching pad for global impact.

What the enemy meant for destruction, God is using for deliverance. These once-broken daughters are now messengers of restoration. They are answering the call—multiplying the mission. And something incredible happens when someone who's hurting in the U.S. sees one of these women from another country, carrying such a powerful story of redemption. There's an immediate trust—almost unexplainable. The barriers come down. The pain feels seen. The heart opens up. Because when someone who's been through the fire speaks with grace and power, people listen.

It's unbelievable how quickly trust is built when hope walks in from another land, carrying God's light. From being rescued... to becoming rescuers. From orphans... to servant leaders. From the jungle mountains of southern Costa Rica... to the nations—and back to the hurting hearts in America.

“Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation.”

—*Joel 1:3*

Chapter 18: Grace Without Limits – 24/7 Discipleship in Costa Rica

What began with a simple, “Yes, Lord, here I am,” on the streets of Plano has blossomed into a global movement. I never could have imagined that surrendering to God’s call would lead me across continents—but here we are, standing on the edge of something truly monumental.

In 2025, I was invited to help train the staff of a 100-bed rehabilitation center for teenage boys in the southern region of Costa Rica. This invitation didn’t come as a result of a crisis or a collapse—it was the fruit of a God-given vision. I had been building relationships with the senior leaders since my very first trips to Costa Rica, years before. Trust had been established over time, not just through conversations, but through shared burdens, prayer, and mutual passion for reaching the next generation. The leadership didn’t simply want to strengthen their program; they saw something deeper. They recognized the potential for long-term, Spirit-led transformation—not just for the boys, but for the entire community.

They weren’t just looking for outside expertise—they believed we were divinely called to walk alongside them. This wasn’t something that came through promotion or pressure. It didn’t come through a campaign or a crisis. It happened organically, as God wove our stories together. And in that divine unfolding, it became clear: this was more than a mission—it was a partnership in purpose.

I had walked this road for years, discipling young men through addiction, recovery, and restoration in Christ. These boys weren’t just “troubled”—many had been trapped in addiction since childhood. This two-year program wasn’t just about sobriety. It was about identity. It was about life-disciplines. It was about healing. It was about hope. For years, we had dreamed of launching a similar program in this region, but despite our efforts, we could never get one off the ground due to government restrictions and red tape. Yet now, in God’s perfect timing, He was opening the door—not by forcing a program into existence, but by blessing a partnership that had been years in the making. What we couldn’t build on our own, He was now building through relationship, obedience, and grace.

This wasn’t prevention. This was redemption. A second chance. A new story—written by the grace of God, one life at a time. They didn’t call us in to fix a mess. They invited us to help build futures—futures rooted in faith and formed in love. And that’s exactly what we set out to do.

Our first step was foundational: training the staff to understand the difference between leadership training and leadership development. Training gives you tools. Development shapes your character. One equips the hands—the other transforms the heart. We weren't just introducing systems. We were cultivating a culture of discipleship, where the Gospel would be lived out daily through authentic relationships.

Many of these boys—some orphaned, others abandoned or deeply wounded—had spent their lives under punishment, not pastoring. They had learned to survive the streets, but they had never experienced the guidance of spiritual fatherhood. Now, within a Christ-centered therapeutic community, they were finally encountering something different:

Unconditional love. A love that confronts, but also comforts. A love that doesn't enable broken behavior—but heals the brokenhearted. A love that doesn't just call them out—it calls them up. They were no longer being managed as problems. They were being restored as sons.

From early morning devotions to hard work on the farm, from academic instruction to biblical mentoring and leadership development. And something powerful is happening. Hope is rising like the dawn. Healing is taking root. Lives are being rewritten by the hand of God.

For many of these young men, it's the first time someone has looked them in the eye and said: "You matter. You are worth saving. You are worth fighting for."

In a country where opportunity is rare and trauma is common, some of these young men are now saying, "I want to give back. I want to help others the way God helped me." This is the fruit of redemption. Not just recovery—but legacy.

I often tell them, "Well begun is half done... but well *be-gone* means you're still only halfway done." Starting well is essential. But staying the course—that's what builds a new future. And that's where discipleship shines.

One of the most beautiful aspects of this center is its 24/7 community rhythm—a family-style atmosphere I've cherished since my early days working at a boys' ranch in the 1990s. Juvenile ministry is never easy. These boys are some of the most misunderstood and least prioritized in the recovery world.

I've heard it time and again: "They're not ready yet." But my response is always the same: "I don't want them to *get* ready—I want to meet them *right where they are.*"

These boys don't need another program. They need to be fathered. They need to be mothered. They need to be pastored—not processed.

That culture of care... the slow, faithful walk of real-life discipleship... the tangible presence of God woven into the ordinary rhythms of each day—it's all here again. This isn't just a program; it's a place where transformation breathes through consistency, love, and truth. And I am deeply humbled to be part of it. In His providence, God has positioned me just 30 minutes from the only center of its kind in Costa Rica—a Christ-centered refuge for teenage boys that feels like full-circle redemption. What I once longed to establish but couldn't due to years of closed doors and government resistance, God has now made possible through relationship, trust, and His perfect timing. It's not just happening around me—it's happening within me. Every visit, every prayer, every lesson shared is a reminder: God wastes nothing, and He is always working. This is active redemption.

I'm here supporting a dear friend and his wife, who have led this transformative work faithfully for two decades. With a blend of Italian precision and Christlike compassion, they've built one of the most remarkable juvenile rehabilitation communities I've ever seen—marked by dignity, discipline, and divine purpose. Soon, they'll be returning to Italy, and I've been asked to help carry the baton—to help steward this work into its next chapter.

We're not just continuing a program. We're carrying a legacy. Together, we're building not just for today—but for generations to come. Not just for the boys we serve—but for their future families. Not just for sobriety—but for purpose in God's Kingdom.

This work isn't glamorous. It's gritty. It's slow, steady, often hidden. It's filled with spiritual warfare and silent victories. But it is sacred. Because every time a young man stands up and says, "I want to follow Jesus," the kingdom of darkness loses ground. And through it all, this truth remains unshaken: God's plan never fails. And as long as He gives us breath, we'll keep building—one life at a time.

"They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor." — *Isaiah 61:3*

Chapter 19: Heavenly Downloads – Digital Discipleship (2025)

“Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever.” —*Daniel 12:3*

This chapter is longer than the others—and for good reason. What we’ve experienced in recent years is more than a new strategy; it’s been a paradigm shift and a divine addition to our mission. It hasn’t by no means replaced the work we’ve always done; it has enhanced and extended it exponentially. And for servant leaders—whether just getting started or knee-deep in the trenches—this truth is vital.

In 2025, the Lord made it unmistakably clear to me: technology isn’t just a tool—it’s a Kingdom harvest field waiting to be cultivated. While some still view the digital world as a distraction—or even a trap—we’ve learned to see it differently. For us at Breaking Free, it’s become a Kingdom platform. A place where redemption is streamed, truth is transmitted, and discipleship is downloaded—live and in real time.

It all began years ago with something simple—morning video calls to encourage our staff in Costa Rica. Using free apps like WhatsApp, Signal, Zoom, FaceTime, and Messenger, I would call in from wherever I was—Texas, Italy, or somewhere in between. We’d begin each day with prayer—separated by distance, yet united in Spirit. Even the children would join in. I’d check in on the ministry, share updates, and lead servant leadership training. Just me and a phone. No budget, no big setup—just a burden from the Lord and the technology He placed in our hands.

But then God expanded the vision: Why not reach families desperate for hope—right in their own living rooms? No church walls. No dress codes. Just raw grace—beamed through a camera, meeting people exactly where they were: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. And the Holy Spirit moved just the same—as if we were sitting face-to-face in a church office.

We quickly realized the need to become more structured and intentional in how we delivered these real-time classes. Using free cloud-based word processors like Google Docs and Dropbox, we began organizing lesson plans, translating recovery devotionals, and training teams across borders.

From street corners to classrooms, we’ve watched young hearts become captivated—not by worldly entertainment, but by the living Word being walked out in front of them. Even in classrooms, as their teachers approved live sessions with me from the streets, students would witness firsthand what ministry looks like in real time.

Sometimes, while a homeless man or woman we've known for years shares their fears or struggles in the background, the students sit in stunned silence. Live footage from back alleys reveals the raw reality: dumpsters becoming closets, doorways turning into beds, cardboard serving as blankets in the freezing cold. We speak plainly to them: "This is your community. Don't forget the downcast. Don't ignore the poor." And we challenge them to carry compassion—even while living in one of the wealthiest counties in the United States.

But the miracles didn't stop there. Parents who initially logged on just to check on their children or attend online family recovery classes soon found themselves weeping in prayer—crying out for deliverance, forgiveness, and hope. Entire families, from different cultures and continents, were united in one Spirit, fighting together for the freedom of their loved ones. We've seen it time and again: when families come together, there's a 60% greater chance that healing will not only come—but last. When families heal together, they stay together—free from the dysfunctional patterns and the bondage of addiction.

I watched in awe as my adopted Spanish daughters in Costa Rica ministered to frightened mothers in Collin County, Texas—mothers afraid they were losing their children to addiction. I've also seen the women staff from our Costa Rica program receive WhatsApp video calls from me while I was in Texas, reaching out to support broken, homeless, Spanish-speaking women in need of comfort and encouragement. Through those calls, they were able to build relationships and speak life into women who felt forgotten and alone. "The people on the screen talk about Jesus like He's in the room." And He is.

We've hosted live family recovery classes across continents using only phones, tablets, and free apps. Parents, spouses, and children have found hope. Prodigals have come home. This is digital, real-time discipleship. This is technology orchestrated for the King.

Soon, the Lord expanded the vision again. We began modeling this for leaders around the world—some praying to open regeneration A/D treatment centers, others desperate to reach the ones society had written off. We lovingly refer to them as EGRs—Extra Grace Required. And technology allowed us to show what that kind of grace looks like in real time. No passport. No packed bags. No sterile office. Just a cellular signal. Just obedience to the King. Just the Name of Jesus lifted high.

And what's beautiful? It can all be recorded and shared instantly through free cloud platforms. Families can replay the exact moment their lives were changed. Testimonies echo across borders. Truth gets downloaded. Freedom gets multiplied. These are families we've walked with—so they feel empowered to send those recordings to other

families they believe are trapped in silence and shame. That “don’t feel, don’t talk, don’t trust” mindset so common in households today gets broken in Jesus’ Name.

We’ve hosted global staff meetings over Zoom, Signal, FaceTime and WhatsApp that feel more like revivals than check-ins. Leaders from Italy, Costa Rica, Africa, and across the U.S. gather online to pray, plan, and prophesy the next steps—for the hurting and for those being trained in servant leadership. Leaders join live family recovery sessions (with permission), witnessing firsthand what gospel transformation really looks like.

I’ve learned to use technology for the King on TikTok. I manage three different accounts, rotating content and posting not only when the audience is most active, but also when the platform’s algorithms allow for the greatest outward flow. It’s about discerning the natural rhythms of technology—and trusting the supernatural guidance of the Spirit. Every post begins with the same declaration from Psalm 46:10: “Be still, and know that I am God.” Then I follow with a short spiritual truth—something like, “God hasn’t forgotten you,” or “There’s still grace for your story.” Many who come across the photo write to me personally to say how much they needed that message, how it spoke directly to their situation, or how it gave them strength to face another day. But here’s the real miracle: I may never meet the people watching, but I believe the Holy Spirit leads the right eyes to the right message at the right time. That’s the power of truth in the digital age—it travels through wires and waves, across borders and barriers, and lands in the heart where it’s needed most. God never said the weapons wouldn’t form; He said they wouldn’t prosper.” And every time I hit “post,” I’m believing that someone on the other end is being reminded of just that.

Even this very book you’re reading—whether on a screen or in your hands—was birthed through digital Kingdom grace. I wrote much of it in Google Docs, edited it around ten times until it felt right, collaborated in real time with our global team, translated it into four languages using free tools, and formatted it for print and e-book distribution—all using free resources. Only God could orchestrate that.

And here’s what we’ve discovered: Technology doesn’t limit the Holy Spirit—it gives Him a platform. He is not confined by buildings, borders, or bandwidth. “The Word of God is not bound.” —2 Timothy 2:9 And neither are we at Breaking Free. We know that one day, the grid may fail. The signal may vanish. The platforms might fall silent. But until that day comes, we’ll use every tool at our disposal to proclaim the gospel. If the internet goes down, we’ll preach in the streets that much more—just as we always have, and always will, in Jesus’ Name.

Right now, while this digital window remains open, we will livestream the gospel, disciple people through free apps, and send real-time encouragement across oceans. We don’t take that lightly. People once believed radio preachers were dangerous. Some

even claimed that broadcasting the gospel was “worldly,” “satanic,” or watered down. But God used those radio waves to reach prison cells, hospital beds, forgotten villages—and desperate families crying out for help. And He’s doing it again—this time through fiber optics, phone cameras, and data transmitted through the clouds.

Once someone connects, we do our best to plug them into a local EGR (Extra Grace Required) church. But if no such church is available, we take it upon ourselves to disciple them personally—because the call to make disciples doesn’t depend on location. It depends on love and obedience.

This is not a compromise. This is a commission with purpose. We’re not building a brand. We’re expanding His Kingdom—in the name of Jesus. And something surprising has happened along the way: Live streams and digital classes have actually produced more proactive discipleship than the over-dependence we often see inside the four walls of the traditional church. Instead of waiting to be fed, people are engaging. They’re setting their own spiritual dinner tables—with Jesus as the Chef and Host. They’re applying the Word of God in their homes. It’s raw. It’s real. And it’s bearing fruit that lasts.

At Breaking Free, let me be real clear—we will not trade relational discipleship for secondary approaches to face-to-face ministry. We never left the streets. We still walk daily with the hurting, feed hungry children abroad, and go into schools to teach about the real consequences of drug and alcohol abuse. We still cry with addicts, love their parents, encourage their spouses, and work side-by-side on the farm, growing food for the poor. We just carry a phone in our pocket—ready to pray, encourage, or share the next testimony.

Even now, as I write this chapter on my phone from the Breaking Free Costa Rica Ocean Mission, there’s no running water or electricity. A small solar system powers one refrigerator and charges a few phones. We pump water from a hand-dug well using a solar pump. I’m sitting in the only spot where I can catch a signal—just to edit this.

Last night, an older, rugged fisherman was watching our daily photo report on the Signal video and calling app—images from the mountain jungle mission showing women serving the poor, manually working in the farm. These daily reports are something we do for accountability and so all of our leaders—across countries—can stay connected and share what’s really going on in the field. That’s what we showed him. The women in the photos were my adopted daughters. My adopted son was the one showing him the images, and it opened the door for me to share why we do what we do. It was dark, hot,

and full of bugs. That man—who had already sized me up as just another rich gringo—was left speechless. Now, he’s questioning where he stands with God.

Today, another man from across the sand street just heard about “what’s going on.” I pulled out my phone and showed him photos—feeding children here, serving the homeless in Plano. Then I told him I used to be an armed robber, did time in prison—but God saved me. He stood there, speechless. No hype, no script—just a raw testimony and the Spirit of God moving. We talked, and the Spirit of the Lord was with us.

Here I am, just a few mornings later—sitting between an alligator lagoon and a primitive oceanfront—joining our street church in Plano, Texas via video call. I’m praying and talking with several of our homeless friends from afar.

They ask, “When are you coming back?” I smile and say, “One week—I can’t wait to see you!” Even from the jungle, the family of God stays connected. One phone call. One photo. One prayer at a time.

---I report all my movements daily—not just for accountability, but to invite a trusted circle of intercessors to cover every step with prayer. This daily rhythm of reporting isn’t about control; it’s about spiritual alignment. These faithful warriors help pave the path ahead of me with their intercession, asking God to guide my steps, guard my heart, and prepare the people and places I will encounter.

Every morning and throughout the day, I report faithfully on our signal work report page, where our board leaders, ministry team, and intercessory prayer warriors track every step I take—not only for oversight, but for alignment in the Spirit. Whether I’m walking into a prison, a village, a jungle, or a video call with a broken soul—I never go alone. The prayers of the saints go before me. They prepare the spiritual atmosphere, tear down strongholds, and make room for the Holy Spirit to move. This real-time connection between mission and intercession has become one of the most powerful tools in my journey. It’s more than just communication—it’s a lifeline. Because when God’s people pray, mountains move and hearts open.

If this speaks to your heart—if you feel the pull but don’t know where to start—we’d love to walk with you. Our contact information is listed at the end of this book. Don’t hesitate to reach out. We’d be glad to freely share any advice or resources we have to help you serve others right where you are.

Technology is just a tool—a powerful one—but it’s not the mission. And it’s not the end. The mission remains: love people where they are, and lead them to the One who saves by His grace and sets the captives free.

“I am sending you out like sheep surrounded by wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” —Matthew 10:16

Chapter 20: Beyond Borders – A Global Movement of Recovery (2025)

What began as a whisper in the heart of one desperate young man has become a global echo of redemption.

Breaking Free was never about building an empire—it was always about building people. It was forged in obscurity, born in the trenches of addiction recovery, street ministry, prison discipleship, and sacrificial service among the extreme poor. It started with one desperate “Yes, Lord,” and grew through a thousand more. Each surrendered moment, each step of obedience, became a stepping stone. And God, in His unfailing faithfulness, did what only He can do: He multiplied the mission beyond anything we could have imagined.

Today, the message of true freedom knows no borders. It’s crossing continents, breaking generational chains, and breathing life into some of the most desperate, forgotten, and spiritually barren corners of the world. But this story isn’t just about growth or global reach. It’s about purpose.

Why we go. Why we serve. Why we give it all away.

Because when Jesus sets someone free, it doesn’t stop with them—it ignites a holy fire for reproduction. Freedom, when truly understood, received, refuses to stay silent. It births a burden to see others experience the same healing, the same grace, the same transformation.

Our 1,200-hour, Christ-centered recovery curriculum—anchored in addiction recovery, family restoration, identity in Christ, and servant leadership—was not written in a classroom. It was birthed through spiritual warfare, real-life discipleship, and divine revelation from the Holy Spirit. Shaped in the trenches, tested by fire, and refined through years of ministry on the streets, recovery centers, and behind prison walls, this message is no longer confined to Texas.

It’s being translated, taught, and transferred across borders and cultures—becoming a tool of transformation in the hands of frontline addiction recovery servants across the globe.

I’ve said for decades: the most effective tool for reaching souls is not the open church door—it’s launching Christian regeneration centers that deal directly with addiction, followed by family recovery classes. When families get whole and healed, they don’t just settle down—they rise up. They become an evangelistic powerhouse. Because nothing preaches like a transformed life.

The truth is: addiction is rampant worldwide, but real help is almost nonexistent. Churches are often overwhelmed or under-equipped. Governments can't legislate healing. But when free Christ-centered recovery meets desperate need, revival begins.

From rural Africa to Italy, from Central America to the underground church in parts of Asia, local leaders are rising up—equipped with the same biblical tools and Spirit-led principles that helped rebuild broken lives back home.

Through translated manuals, real-time video training, virtual equipping sessions, and ongoing personal mentorship from afar, the message is spreading faster and reaching farther than we ever dreamed. What once seemed like isolated efforts are now becoming outposts of revival—each one carrying the DNA of redemption.

And now, at Breaking Free Costa Rica, we've opened up guest cottages—a place of both vision and rest for those called to the hurting. Whether you're a ministry leader, missionary, or just someone searching for God's next assignment, we invite you to come see it firsthand. Walk the jungle feeding the poor with us. Meet the boys at the farm. Witness the transformation. Or simply come away for a while to seek the Lord in a quiet, serene place where the Spirit speaks and fresh vision flows. Just show up—we'll take care of the rest. Pura Vida style. And at the heart of it all is a simple, powerful truth: Recovery is not just about getting free—it's about becoming who you were created to be.

Breaking free has always been drawn to the hard places—those regions and communities labeled *too far gone, too corrupt, too dangerous*. We call them EGR Zones: Extra Grace Required. But we've learned something in those places: the darker the setting, the brighter Jesus shines. Technology has become a divine bridge. What once was limited by geography is now multiplied by connection. Through online platforms, we are planting ministries, training leaders, and sharing the wisdom forged through years of frontline experience. What began as a quiet work in obscurity—one life changed at a time—has become a global Kingdom force, transforming lives, communities, and generations.

I remain fully in the work, rotating between Texas and Costa Rica two months at a time—fully present, fully committed. On paper, it doesn't make sense. But the Kingdom of God rarely does. The world measures success by structure, salaries, and scale. We measure it by surrender.

And here's something that still surprises people:

Breaking Free is 100% volunteer-run. Not a single staff member receives a paycheck.

That's not an oversight—it's by design. It's part of our DNA. We believe God is raising up leaders who burn for purpose, not for position. Our model attracts the called—not just the credentialed. It keeps our focus clear, our overhead low, and our dependence on God absolute. There is no room for ego—only space for grace.

Today, I often find myself sitting at the table with leaders of ministries that operate on multi million-dollar budgets. And more often than not, they're the ones asking us, "*How are you doing this?*" They're shocked to learn that every branch of Breaking Free—from administration to street outreach, from prison ministry to global missions—is sustained by volunteers who simply said "yes" to Jesus.

It's not built on money. It's built on faith. On sweat. On sacrifice. And on the unshakable belief that God always provides for what He ordains.

"Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations as Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth as Your possession."
— *Psalm 2:8*

This is more than a program. It's more than a model. It's a movement. A movement of sons and daughters rising up in freedom. A movement beyond borders, beyond fear, beyond what we ever thought possible. A movement fueled by grace, carried by the Spirit, and aimed at the heart of God's global purpose.

And our response—our only response—is this:

All glory to God. Amen and amen.

Chapter 21: The Chinese Lady God Used to Break My Love for Being Single

At that time in my life, I was completely content being single. I wasn't fighting loneliness, I wasn't looking for anything, and I wasn't missing what I didn't have. My life was full—full of purpose, full of movement, and full of the freedom to go wherever God called me at any given moment. I could step into the streets, the jails, or travel internationally without hesitation or restriction, and I truly cherished that. I understood what Paul meant when he spoke about being able to serve the Lord without distraction. My heart was fully given to the work. It wasn't that I had hardened myself against relationship—it just wasn't something I entertained. When you're walking in calling and rhythm, certain desires don't even have space to grow. You don't wrestle with them—you simply don't go there. The truth is, I didn't know what I didn't know.

One Sunday, we were out at our homeless church service like we are every Sunday morning. It was another morning of ministry—people coming in from all kinds of broken situations, heavy environments, and real-life struggles. The streets don't hide anything. You see everything out there. That particular week, different members from the church were coming out to serve alongside us, and that's when I saw her. She was a Chinese lady from the church, but to be honest, I had never really noticed her before. I would usually come in focused, do what needed to be done, and then head right back out into other areas of ministry. My life was always moving. But that day, I noticed her—not out of interest, but out of concern.

I saw her talking to a woman I had known from the streets for years, which in itself wasn't unusual. But what caught my attention was the man who was with her. He was dealing with serious mental health issues, and situations as well as her. Out there, you learn to read those things. You learn situations could turn at any moment. So I watched for a bit, and I remember thinking that she didn't fully understand what she was stepping into. Later on, when I saw her again at church with that same couple, I felt led to say something—not because of anything personal, but simply out of responsibility, wanting to look out for her. I told her she needed to be careful and explained a little about the situation so she could understand what she was dealing with. Then I gave her one of my cards, just in case anything ever came up and she needed help or guidance. There was no deeper thought behind it. No sense that anything significant had just happened. It was simply a moment of awareness, a word of caution, and then moving on—at least, that's what I thought at the time.

I believe it was the very next day when she called me. Her name was Tong, and she said she wanted to get involved with the street ministry and go out into the streets with me. To be honest, that wasn't something I allowed. The streets are unpredictable, and there's a level of danger that comes with that environment, especially during the hours we go out—usually between 5:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., often still dark. It's not a setting I would casually bring someone into, especially someone I didn't really know. But she was persistent. Somewhere in that conversation, either she asked to meet or I suggested it—I don't remember exactly—but we ended up meeting at a small coffee shop to talk it through.

As we sat there, she began to share her heart. She told me she had been reading the book I had written, up to that point of course, since this part of the story hadn't even happened yet. She

talked about how the message had impacted her and how strongly she felt led to be a part of what we were doing. She also shared about her background in ministry and the years she had already been serving. There was a sincerity in her, but also a steadiness—something that gave me a level of confidence I don't normally have when it comes to letting someone step into that environment. So I told her she could come out on a Sunday, which is usually the easiest day since we go straight from the streets into the park for church.

That first time out there, I watched closely. The streets will reveal quickly whether someone is ready or not. But she didn't shrink back, she didn't get overwhelmed, and she didn't carry herself in a way that created more risk. She moved with wisdom, with care, and with a genuine heart for the people. After that, she asked if she could keep going out, and normally that's where I would have drawn a line. But something was different. She had already shown she could handle it, and more than that, she belonged there in a way that's hard to explain unless you've seen it. So I said yes.

And from that point on, she kept coming—day after day, asking to go out again, showing up consistently, stepping into the same early mornings, the same environments, the same weight of ministry without hesitation.

Then it was like something shifted all at once. The light came on. I had already made it clear to her that I wasn't interested in a relationship and that I was completely content being single. But suddenly, I could see the handwriting on the wall. I remember thinking, *oh no...* It honestly caught me off guard to the point that it almost shut me down. I couldn't even process the idea of a relationship of any kind. My life was already fully given—day in and day out—to what God had called me to do. The streets were only a small part of it. There was no room, at least in my mind, for anything that could interfere with that. I had built my life around that freedom, and I guarded it.

So I made a decision. I thought, *I'll just show her how I live*. In my mind, that would settle everything. If there was any part of her that thought I was lacking something or needed a relationship, this would clear it up real quick. Now, one thing about me—I always wore a wedding ring. Not because I was married, but because it kept things simple. People assume what they see, and it avoids unnecessary conversations or attention. That had consistently worked just fine for me.

So I brought her to where I lived—a small efficiency, very simple, nothing impressive. Yes, she had read about Costa Rica, which might sound a little more appealing, but in reality, it was just a step above my efficiency bungalow, and not by much. In my mind, I thought, *this will do it*. This will be the moment where she realizes, *no way*. I figured she would look around and think, *this guy is completely committed to a life that doesn't include anything close to a normal relationship*.

But the exact opposite happened. She looked around and said, "I love it."

And I remember thinking, *oh my gosh*. I'm a pretty steady person, not easily shaken, but in that moment, it felt like my world was starting to turn upside down. What I thought would push her away didn't affect her at all. If anything, it seemed to draw her in even more.

By the end of it, my mind honestly went somewhere I hadn't been in years. I started thinking in an old-school way, trying to make sense of what was happening. And I'm just being straight—I actually had the thought, *is this a Chinese spy?* I know that sounds out there, but when something doesn't fit any category you've ever experienced, your mind starts reaching for anything that might explain it. You hear things, you see things in the news, and for a brief moment, that's where my thinking went.

Part of what fed that thought was something she had shared earlier that I hadn't really processed until that moment—she told me she was a PhD scientist. And that's when it really started messing with my head. I remember thinking, *why in the world would a PhD scientist want anything to do with me?* It just didn't add up in my mind. Our worlds didn't seem to match at all. The more I thought about it, the more it pushed me to try and figure out what was really going on.

But then just as quickly, I had to laugh at myself. I thought, *what in the world would someone be spying on me for?* I didn't have anything anyone would be trying to get. It didn't even make sense. Still, the situation was so unusual to me that I found myself trying to figure it out from every angle. I even started looking around, doing a little research, trying to find any kind of background information—LinkedIn, anything I could come across—just to see if I could make sense of what was going on here.

The truth is, it wasn't suspicion as much as it was unfamiliar territory. Nothing about this fit into how I had been living or thinking. My life had been so focused, so structured around the calling God had given me, that something like this didn't have a place in my framework. So instead of recognizing it for what it was, I tried to explain it away with what I knew.

But deep down, something else was happening—something I wasn't ready to fully admit yet.

It was in my quiet time, morning after morning, that everything began to shift. As I prayed consistently before the Lord, something started changing in my heart. It wasn't sudden or forced—it was steady, almost like God was gently but clearly redirecting something deep within me. Over time, I began to sense that this wasn't random, and it wasn't something I needed to figure out in the natural. God began to show me that He had brought this Chinese lady into my life as a helpmate.

At first, I resisted the thought. I remember thinking, *this can't be*. How in the world would this even fit into my life? I didn't understand how a relationship could work within everything I was already doing. My life had been built around movement, around responding to God at any moment, and I couldn't see how something like this would fit into that structure. It didn't make sense to me. The practical side of it, the relational side of it—it all felt completely outside of what I had known and what I had chosen.

But as I kept bringing it before the Lord, I found myself slowly opening my heart. It wasn't something I forced—it was something God was doing. There came a point where I had to be honest and say, *this must be You*. Not because I had it all figured out, but because I could see that something deeper was happening that I couldn't control or explain away. And in that place, I began to trust Him with it.

During that time, God was not just introducing something new into my life—He was working on me. He was changing me from the inside out. Areas of my heart that I hadn't needed to deal with before were being touched. The way I thought about control, about independence, about how I lived my life—it was all being gently confronted and reshaped. What I once saw as strength, God was now refining. What I once held tightly, He was asking me to trust Him with.

And little by little, what I had resisted began to soften.

Chapter 22: God Used Covenant to Call Me to the Chinese

It was during that time that both of us began to recognize something deeper than anything emotional or surface-level. I wouldn't even call it emotional infatuation—that wouldn't be the right word. What we were seeing in each other was the call of God, and there was something in both of us that wanted that above everything else. I remember her telling me very clearly, "This is all I want—to give my life to the Lord like this." And that's what connected us. It wasn't built on feelings—it was built on calling, surrender, and a shared desire to live fully for God.

I remember telling her—I may have even said it pretty directly—I don't believe in all the dating process and stretching things out. In my mind, it was simple: if this is truly from God, and if there is a real call to marriage, then let's step into it and walk it out. There wasn't a need to complicate it. So within a very short period of time—probably around two weeks or so—we made that decision. We committed to marriage and moved forward. It wasn't drawn out, and it wasn't built on uncertainty. It was a step of faith rooted in what we both believed God was doing.

I used to joke with her, and even with myself, that it was like the Lord had to send me a Chinese lady—someone who had spent twenty years of her life in Beijing, in a very restrictive and oppressive environment—to come alongside me in this calling. Almost like God knew exactly what it would take to reach parts of the world and people I had never even considered. But the truth is, we couldn't have been more aligned. What stood out so clearly was how naturally she carried a heart for evangelism among the Chinese people, even without fully realizing it herself.

And that's when another light came on.

As we continued walking this out together, I began to see something I had never seen before. Within the foundation of Breaking Free, which already had multiple pillars of ministry, God began to reveal something entirely new. It was like He blindsided me with it. A calling to the Chinese people. Not something I had pursued, not something I had planned, and definitely not something I had ever imagined for my life.

What I thought was simply God bringing a wife into my life was actually much more than that. First, He gave me a covenant I never knew I needed. And through that covenant, He opened a door to a people I had never known—but that He deeply loved. The blessing of marriage was only the beginning. What followed was an entirely new assignment—one that extended not only to Chinese believers, but also to those who had never heard or experienced the freedom found in Christ.

Looking back, I can see it clearly now. What I once resisted, God used to expand my life far beyond anything I could have planned. He didn't take away from the calling—He multiplied it.

Then came the fruit, and I couldn't deny what I was seeing. It seemed like every person Tong gave the book to—this very book—there was a response that went beyond anything I had expected. I'm talking about people who already knew the Lord and those who didn't know Him at all. There was a hunger there that was undeniable. Many of the people she was connected to

were individuals she had known for years—doctors, professionals, people well established and respected within the Chinese community. And yet, when they encountered the message, something stirred deeply within them.

I began to watch more closely—not just the response to the book, but her. I saw how she interacted, how naturally she would share the gospel, and how many people she had already led to the Lord. It wasn't forced, and it wasn't something she was trying to make happen. It was simply who she was. And in that, something became very clear to me. I remember thinking, *wait a minute... God is doing something here*. This wasn't just about one person or even just about our marriage anymore. There was a calling unfolding right in front of me.

At that time, we were already beginning to step into helping with a work in China, in an area that I'll just leave undisclosed. But beyond that, we also started to see a need here in the United States. There were many within the Chinese community—some who had been here for years, some married to Americans—and there seemed to be a gap when it came to real connection, real discipleship, and a place where they could grow in a genuine, Spirit-led environment. It wasn't that there weren't churches—it was that something deeper was missing.

Because of the response we were seeing from the book, and the hunger that was becoming more and more evident, we began moving forward with what God was putting in front of us. As I write this, we are in the process of launching a Friday night gathering specifically focused on reaching Chinese individuals—those from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and really anyone within the broader Asian community who feels drawn to what God is doing. This isn't about creating just another service. It's about building something that connects people into the life of what God is doing through Breaking Free—into real community, real discipleship, and real transformation.

The story doesn't end here—it's still being written.

And I'll be honest, I'm excited in a way that's hard to even put into words. I've seen God move in many different ways over the years. I've walked through a lot, learned a lot, and built up a lot of experience along the way. But this—this is different. This is something I never pursued, never planned, and never saw coming. God, in His own way and in His own timing, brought it all together—first through covenant, then through calling, and now through fruit.

And it's all by His grace, for His purpose, and for His kingdom.

Epilogue: A Personal Word About Family

Through every trial endured, every triumph celebrated, and every miracle witnessed, I thank God for the gift of family.

I am a grateful father of three beautiful daughters and one amazing son—each grown, each walking with Jesus, and each pursuing their unique calling with purpose and passion. Their lives are proof that God not only redeems the broken but restores generations.

I've also been blessed beyond words by my *adopted family in Costa Rica*—one son and six daughters—each one a living testimony of God's redemptive grace. They didn't just enter my home; they became part of my heart. Watching them heal, grow in faith, and rise into their God-given purpose has been one of the greatest honors of my life.

And now, God has also blessed me with a Chinese son and a Chinese daughter—both of whom love the Lord and carry a genuine heart for Him. My daughter is finishing college and stepping into the next season of her life, while my son is 13 years old and already showing the marks of a life being formed in Christ. They are both such a joy to my heart and a beautiful reflection of God's faithfulness across cultures and generations.

In addition to my biological and adopted children, I've had the privilege of spiritually fathering many others over the years—men and women who found hope, healing, and purpose in Christ and are now walking in freedom and servant leadership. Each one is a living stone in the spiritual house God continues to build.

And now, I'm the proud grandfather of thirteen amazing grandchildren—each one a precious reminder of God's generational faithfulness and favor. They are not just part of my story—They are God's legacy through my life.

"To the Waiting Parent, Faithful Spouse, or Praying Grandparent"

If you're reading this as a parent, grandparent, or loved one whose child isn't walking in the light right now—don't lose heart. Keep praying. Keep loving. Keep believing.

I am living proof that no one is too far gone, and no story is beyond redemption. God is faithful, even when we can't see it yet. Sometimes the greatest miracles are the ones that take the longest to unfold.

Hold on. Hope in Christ never disappoints.

Just don't quit believing.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."
— *Acts 16:31*

To the Ones Who Made This Possible

Finally, I want to express my deepest gratitude to every person who has helped make *Breaking Free* what it is today. To those who've donated time, resources, finances, and faithful prayers—you are the unseen foundation beneath every testimony shared in these pages.

You've helped carry this mission forward with love and sacrifice.

I may get to tell the story, but you are part of every chapter.

Thank you for walking with us, serving beside us, and believing in what God is doing.

Together, we are breaking chains, building lives, and raising up a legacy of freedom that will outlive us all.

The Story Continues — Still Breaking Free

Breaking Free is not finished. This little book remains open-ended—because God is still writing new chapters.

As long as chains remain... As long as addiction, despair, and darkness still grip hearts... As long as forgotten, hurting souls cry out for hope...
Breaking Free will go.

We'll keep showing up—in the hard places, the hidden places, the hopeless places—carrying the unshakable truth of the Gospel with boldness, compassion, and faith.

This isn't just a mission—it's a movement of mercy. A call to bring freedom where hell has tried to hold ground. And I believe, with all my heart—The best is yet to come. More lives to rescue. More leaders to raise up. More nations to reach. More miracles to witness. So don't close this book expecting a final page.

The real story is still unfolding—in prisons, on streets, across borders, and in hearts that dare to believe freedom is possible in Jesus.

From dark places to divine purpose, the mission continues: Reaching the lost. Raising the broken. Releasing the captive.

Every day, God writes new testimonies through surrendered lives. And we're not done. We press forward—still breaking chains, still breaking barriers.

This story may fill pages, but the real work continues. I'm still breaking free. Not from addiction, but from comfort. From fear. From anything trying to hold back what God wants to do through a willing life.

As long as there's breath in my lungs and grace in this mission, I'll keep saying yes Lord here I am. And for those reading this—you are part of the next chapter. God's not finished. The best is still ahead.

Still Breaking Free—one life, one soul, one miracle at a time.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

— 2 Corinthians 3:17

Need Help? Just Reach Out

If you ever find yourself struggling, in need of guidance, or simply needing someone to talk to, please don't hesitate to reach out. You're not alone.

I'd be honored to listen, pray with you, or help you take the next step toward healing and freedom.

You can call me directly at (972) 890-5290 or (214) 501-6000

email- scottmormon@gmail.com. Web-site- www.bfinc.org

No pressure. No judgment. Just grace.

we're here.

One Final Note

I've spent countless hours writing and praying through this. The Lord God, through His precious Holy Spirit, gave me the inspiration to do this on a recent Shabbat. Over the years, several publishers and writers have asked me to compile my story for them, but I always said no—I just didn't feel led.

I say all this to make something clear: what I've written here has been deeply personal. I've reviewed it over and over again, and I'm at peace with it. You may notice grammatical flaws or imperfect sentence structures. Please forgive me for that. I realize now this process was less about producing a perfect manuscript and more about reflecting on my own journey—seeing the many mistakes I've made over the years, yet also recognizing the God who rescued me through it all.

I believe He is preparing me for the fourth quarter of my life. And I sense that everything until now has simply been preparation for what's still ahead.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future and a hope.”

— Jeremiah 29:11

God bless you, **Scott, Tong**

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