



August 2023

...from prison to praise... Psalm 142:7

Rescued \* Redeemed \* Restored



## **I hear His whisper - You are my Warrior!**

Written by Brian Simmons & Gretchen Rodriguez

*"My armies are battle-ready and prepared to fight on your behalf. Step out in faith and watch the miracles break forth. Have I not equipped you? All who rise against you will fall, and those who disgrace my name will be set aside. But your calling is to move forward in faith and bring defeat to the forces of darkness.*

*Give yourself to me with wholehearted devotion, and the glory within you will shine so brightly, darkness will tremble. Your radical obedience will catapult you into my strategic plans that release your breakthrough. You are unstoppable. You have the backing of heaven and the favor only a child can have. If you could see the angels that have been released to you, you would never be intimidated by the enemy. I have given you everything you need to overcome.*

*Beautiful one, you are my warrior. You are strong and courageous, anointed and treasured, cared for. You are capable of more than you know. You are surrounded by angels who are ready to slay the giants with you."*

Dear CPM Family,

We are in a difficult season currently, and the above devotion is an avid reminder precisely that the God we serve is active, present, and fully in control. Our assignment is to trust, to be obedient, to let go (of comfort, of the known, of anything artificial or superficial), and to wait on Him. His grace is like balm to a sunburn, and His encouragement, a gracious reminder of His purpose in our lives and for this ministry.

During this season, we are being prompted to get back to the basics and primarily spend our focus on the foundational needs CPM was built on for the people we are called to serve: Rescue \* Redeem \* Restore. At the very heart of God is the pulse that beats for the humanity He desires to bring to Himself. To us, that means, those not only who are lost, but those who are incarcerated and in need of hope and someone who will actively be involved in their lives; especially the many who are

needing resources as they re-enter society, as well as those greatly struggling with addiction and what the future holds. We have the Answer, the Hope, and the ability to help, and there are so many who have needs and concerns not being met.

For those of you who have donated to this ministry, thank you. Please find enclosed your year-to-date Giving Statement. For all of you who have supported us in prayer, please don't stop now! We desperately need your support and prayers as we step forward where the Lord is leading. The men and women, many of them brothers and sisters in Christ, need your support and prayers as well. Enclosed are some updates and stories from some of the guys and gals we are walking with so you can know more about what your involvement in this ministry is accomplishing and how effective you are in all our lives.

In the first seven months of this year, we have been blessed to be a part of some **beautiful** but **real** experiences. Here are just a few that we hope will encourage you, break your heart for people and prompt you to pray!

\*One of our guys was very likely being returned to prison because he was not finding work and therefore floundering to pay his rent and was going to be evicted, and per his parole requirements - couldn't be homeless. We were asked if we could help him, and in less than a week, we were able to get his parole transferred to El Paso County and we found him a room in a safe transitional home, a good job (where he remains a permanent employee), and enrolled him in several programs, including 7 Habits, that would greatly benefit his future. He just bought

his first vehicle after getting a driver's license for the first time in thirty years and he is living what he calls his "best life".

\*A beautiful girl who has become so dear to us is also loving her new life. She has a good job where she was made the manager, has successfully completed her sober-living requirements, and, thus, was able to get into her own two-bedroom apartment. She bought a car and now is in the process of having her child reintegrated into her life.

\*That's not how the story is supposed to end! But it sometimes does. We met him while he was still incarcerated, ninety-days out from his release date. Not soon enough, because everywhere we turned to assist to develop a parole plan; we hit a dead end. This kid who had been playing with drugs, while some kids are still playing kickball and building forts in the backyard, was told his drug problem wasn't bad enough to warrant sober living. I think his cry for help said, 'I'll show them.'

He overdosed the first night he was out, between the parole office and the rescue mission. He had no ability to get a bus ticket or a phone to ask for help, he groped his way amongst the homeless camps on his walk across town in the cold and the dark of a late-winter evening. There, they spot one another, down on their luck. They offer what they have, a hit of this, a pill of that, momentary deliverance. It's all they know. Sad to think those who have nothing are more generous with what little they have than those of us who have so much. Misery loves company.

He made it through that one. It was a close call. It impacted him. And us. We wanted to be a part of what saved him. We saw great worth inside of him. He wanted help. He wanted a new life. For himself and his little boy. He was learning about Jesus, and he knew that freedom was available, he said, 'even for someone like me'. He brought his son to meet us. He began checking in almost daily. When he stuttered and had a hiccup in his recovery, he called and asked for prayer, advice, for us to listen. He was so grateful for the help, the attention, the friendship, the kindness. We all have so much to give away every day just in the little things, the kind words, the patient listening, and we as humans simply don't. We don't take the time, and it means so much to someone who may not have had a nice thing spoken to them, a gentle touch, something genuine and sincere. He was growing, desiring wellness, seeking sobriety, rebuilding time with his son, living wholesome, taking little sips of the grace of Jesus, feeling loved. We took him shopping. We not only bought him several sacks of clothing as an incentive and reward for all he was doing well, but we also bought him some clothing, size 5T for his son. So, Daddy had some things to give his boy, to dress him in when they got to hang out.

When they found his body near the tracks, his hand clasped around Narcan, I am certain he was whispering, 'Oh, no! Oh, no! Oh, no! Just one more chance. Oh, please, God, just one more chance.' I'm pretty sure an image of his son flashed before his eyes, because he had so much hope for their future together, for being a good dad and making up for all the lost

time. We don't believe for one moment, he was thinking this stumble would cost him his life. In fact, the officials think he might have been trying to get to detox. He knew he needed help, and he knew he didn't want this life of addiction any longer; he just didn't know how to fully overcome, a moment by moment hurdle every day in the life of someone who struggles with addiction. And in this age, even one tiny blue pill can be fatal. That's not how the story is supposed to end. But it sometimes does.

For me, I will never forget him. We will pray for his little boy always; as he grows up, as he becomes a man - we will pray he doesn't succumb to enticements this world offers. We will pray he is told his dad loved him so much, that he was trying really hard to get help and get well so he could be a good dad. His life and his death impacted us greatly. We believe he is finally set free from the bondage he fought for more years than he didn't fight it. I believe Jesus received him, forgave him and loved on him. The question isn't where our friend will spend eternity. The question is, how do we help so many others who have the same struggles, especially those who haven't met Jesus...yet.

\*You met "Q" in our last letter who accomplished so much in his first couple months of release. Quinton continues to excel and has been able to increase his hours at work to a full-time position. He recently went to Texas to attend his son's graduation. His kids and family were so impacted by the changes in his life, they have fully invited him back into their lives as he earns back their trust.

\*Another gentleman released four months ago; we got to know his parents when they helped him move into the address we'd gotten for him. We have formed a deep bond with these folks who have watched their son struggle in previous releases from prison. He is doing great, having received several promotions at work, and he and his parents are now desiring to help others just like him to have a chance at success and freedom.

\*Huge tears dribbled down his cheeks and made rain droplets on the tabletop next to where his chin was perched in his palms. His mouth quivered and the natural blue of his eyes turned stormy, navy, like dinghies on white-capped seas. When he spoke, his words shuddered, like a child trying to confess. 'I don't have a birth certificate.' I had to strain to hear him; he whispered. 'I was **that** kid. I don't know...maybe you heard about me,' he sighed. His grief was snacking on the memories.

'What? Wait a minute! Huh?' I heard myself ask. The truth hovered on the words that next fell from his lips. I wanted to pull him into a momma-heart hug; his vulnerability diminished him to the size of a very small boy.

'I was kidnapped when I was little.' He said it like a confession. 'They caught my kidnapper eventually. He went to prison. I went to foster care.' He sighed again; like a chasm, it was so big and deep, I could've gotten lost in it. I repeated to myself, 'What? Wait a minute! Why didn't you go home? Where were your parents?' The questions fell out before I could stop them. Best thing to do now is just go with it, I thought to myself. I asked innocently, wincing at my lack of tact. 'Why did you go to foster care instead of going home?'

He shrugged and turned aside; I felt him slip away. He was done talking. 'I don't know. I don't know who my real parents are. I grew up in the system. It's okay,' he added quickly, swiping at unspent tears. 'I had some really good people care for me; do things for me they didn't have to. I wasn't their responsibility, after all.' What he didn't mention were all the things done to him by bad people, things he didn't have to endure, but he did all the same. He was quickly becoming my hero. He had great grit, a knack for stamina and stick-to-itiveness. He cleared his throat and stood up abruptly like he was heading out. I wanted to hang on to this moment perhaps forever.

'Wait!' I shouted, then thought better of it. Quieter, I murmured, 'Wait. I have some stuff for you that might help you.' I started reaching for all my resources I had at my fingertips; things that would help him get on his feet since I was one of the first faces he saw since he had walked off the prison bus. He held up a hand, and a smile. 'I'm okay, ma'am,' he said silently. 'I'm sure there are plenty who need this far more than me. You've already helped so much. Thanks for helping me get a place to stay. I won't let you guys down. I promise.' I wanted to grab his hand. I didn't want him to go just yet. Before me, stood solitary solidarity in the shadow where once a forgotten child had been discarded. A bucket of tears welled up in my soul, un-shed, un-cried like sand on the shore. I entwined my hands behind my back because I didn't trust them.

His eyes were huge as he turned to say good-bye. 'I don't like asking for help,' he admitted quietly. 'I don't think it's anyone else's job to help me.' No, I wanted to reply, but I held my tongue, so I just heard my words in my head. You don't think anyone will show up for you. Why would you think someone would since no one has before? If you don't have any hope or expectation, then you can't be let down. You can't be left again. Don't put yourself there and you won't be thrown away. Instead, I nodded, my hands still caught behind me. We'll show him, I thought to myself.

I reached into my drawer and grabbed a backpack, quickly adding any additional resources I could grab that would fit. I'd earn his trust...someday. It might take a while, but I would, we would. We'd show him what it was like to be cared for by people who wanted nothing in return. Break my heart for what breaks Yours, Lord, I whispered inside, tasting my tears. When I looked up, he was smiling. He had a great smile, like he was used to using it. He had a lot to give away too.

He is just one of hundreds of thousands who get abandoned by someone they should have been able to trust. The longevity of the bitter lesson one faces after having been left sometimes leaves scars for lifetimes. It can catapult a future of addiction and incarceration, neglect of self and feeling unworthy and undeserving of decent things in life, like finding hope in the saving grace of Jesus, that Jesus truly loves 'someone like me'.

Your help in this ministry supports guys and gals like we shared about in this letter. Your prayer support, your financial support, your interest in what this ministry is doing and involved in helping people like this and so many more.

We could go on and on, truly. These are just a few kernels of hope of the many we care for, the many who you support with your prayers and giving. God bless you and your families.

As always, please reach out if there is anything we can do for you including praying for a specific need. You are more than partners in ministry...you are family!

**Prayer Partners Needed...interested in partnering in prayer with someone on the inside?**

**You can join the CPM Prayer TEAM (Together Each Accomplishing More).**

**Just let us know and we will get you partnered up for prayer!**

**Connections Prison Ministry 501c3**

PO Box #64261

Colorado Springs, CO 80962

[pjkim@connectionsprisonministry.org](mailto:pjkim@connectionsprisonministry.org)

[mekim@connectionsprisonministry.org](mailto:mekim@connectionsprisonministry.org)

720.579.5122

All gifts are tax-deductible.