

A TRUE STORY OF FAITH, MIRACLES,  
AND GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

# I HAVE A STORY *to Tell*

HE CALLED ME.

HE PROTECTED ME.

HE RESTORED ME.

NOW, I TELL  
HIS FAITHFULNESS.

BECAUSE  
GOD'S POWER  
CAN TURN ANY  
STORY INTO A  
TESTIMONY.

## MICHAEL S. WHEELER

"THEY OVERCAME HIM BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB"  
AND BY THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY."

REVELATION 12:11

# **I Have A Story to Tell**

**By**

**Michael S. Wheeler**

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# Prologue

This is my story, a journey of faith that began with a direct calling. It's not a story I ever planned to tell, but one that was given to me by God, chapter by chapter, miracle by miracle. It all started with a simple, yet profound, command.

In 2012, a minister told me I had to write a book so people would believe in God. I have to admit, I struggled with the task at first. I didn't know how to start, and to be honest, I lacked the support I thought I needed. I had a lot on my plate at the time, and the idea of organizing my entire life into a coherent narrative felt overwhelming. I've always been more of a doer than a writer. But the words of that minister stuck with me, echoing in the back of my mind. It was a calling, and I knew deep down that I couldn't ignore it. I had to find a way to get it out of me, somehow.

For a while, I tried to get my thoughts down on paper, but the words wouldn't flow the way I wanted them to. I had the memories, the experiences, and the profound lessons, but they were a jumble in my head. I put it off, but I never forgot the feeling that I was meant to tell this story. A few years later, a friend gave me the encouragement that reignited my mission. They simply said, "You've got a story to tell." That was all I needed. It was like a light switch flipped on, and I knew I had to do "whatever it takes to get this out of me." Therefore, my words are a fulfillment of that calling, a testimony to God's power, and a narrative of my life.

I'm a man who has always been a little different. I grew up in Chicago, where my mother, Lois Wheeler, taught me from a very early age. I remember attending the St. Columbanus School, where my spiritual foundation was reinforced every day. But my faith wasn't just confined to a classroom or a church pew. It was something that lived and breathed inside of me.

My spiritual journey started early. As a child, I had a lot of spiritual dreams that I didn't fully understand at the time. They felt important, and I would share them with my grandmother, Mary Williams. She always listened intently and believed in them. She told me that my mother had also had dreams as a child and that this was a sign of my

"fear of God." My grandmother's words gave me comfort and made me feel like I was on the right path, even when I was too young to fully grasp what that meant.

Growing up, I was known as a "neighborhood child" because so many people trusted me. I ran errands for neighbors, helped them with their cars, and was always welcome in their homes. It was a time when trust was a currency, and I'm proud to say I was a wealthy kid. I remember one woman; a blind neighbor from the Caribbean named Mrs. Mary Johns. She trusted me completely, and I would clean her house, pay her bills at the currency exchange, and do her shopping for her. One time, I noticed a dollar bill she had given me was a ten-dollar bill, and I immediately pointed out her mistake. She told me to keep the ten, but I insisted on giving her the correct amount. Mrs. Johns was so moved by my honesty that she told everyone in the neighborhood, "Michael is the only child that never stole anything from me." That made my father very proud.

I also had a special bond with an old man named Mr. Owens, who was born around 1879. He would sit with me and tell me to "be a good boy" and to "always be obedient, and do that which is right." His words created a lasting impression on me, and I looked forward to our conversations every day until he passed away in 1939.

My faith was truly tested when I entered the United States Armed Forces on August 1, 1978. I started my basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and I made some close friends there. One of them, Joe Kramer, took me to his hometown in Attalla, Alabama. While we were at a nightclub, we ran into some trouble, and when we left, we were met by a group of people with shotguns. My friend Jim Sayers instinctively covered me with his body, and I escaped unharmed. When I called my father later that night, he told me that God had protected me and that I could have "become another Emmett Till."

Another profound experience happened while I was serving in Fulda, West Germany. I was only 19 years old, and I was driving a car at about 90 miles per hour when I wrecked it. As I was spinning out of control, I saw a cross right in front of my windshield, and my whole life "flashed right before my face." The car landed in a ditch, and a German man with a winch pulled me out. An officer, Lowell Barlow, saw the wrecked car and was supposed to give me an Article 15 write-up, but for some reason, he just looked away, and I wasn't punished. I knew right then

that I could have died. It was my first "real experience" with God's presence, a moment that shook me to my core. Despite the racism and abuse I faced as a wheel vehicle mechanic in the motor pool, I completed my two-and-a-half-year tour without a single incident or punishment, all because of God's protection.

In 2012, after returning to Chicago, my life took a turn. I got an infection that nearly killed me. The doctors, including Dr. Sunil Shah, told me there was nothing more they could do and that I should just go home and die. But I had a different plan. I cried out to the Lord and promised to name my child after a prophet if He helped me. A minister, a man of God, "cursed the sickness" for me, and after that, the doctors found the infection. They had to drain "bags of pus" from my body. But I survived, and the doctors were in awe. They told me, "You must know God because there's no way anybody can live with this."

The infection returned, and I went back to the emergency room, but once again, the Holy Spirit spoke to me, and I was able to get through it. My life has been filled with these miraculous moments. For 24 years, I have been on a kidney machine, and I have outlived every single person who started with me in 2001. I attribute my survival to God and the power of the tongue, and I tell people to "quit talking about sickness and disease."

My journey has been a testament to God's love and grace. My story is not meant to be a commodity, to make money. It's a testimony from an "anointed man of God" who wants people to know what God did for me, so they can believe that He can and will do the same for them. I want everyone to know that God is real, He is there, and He is working in our lives every day. I'm just here to tell my story so you can find the courage to tell yours.

# Chapter 1:

## The Boy Who Dreamed of Jesus

My name is Michael S. Wheeler, and I have a story to tell.

I grew up on the South Side of Chicago, where the streets could be loud and the winters could cut right through your coat. The wind howled down the alleys like it was chasing something, and the windows rattled in their frames like they were trying to hold on. But inside our house, there was a warmth that didn't come from a heater. It came from the name of Jesus spoken over a kitchen table, the kind of prayer that settles a child's heart before sleep and stands you back up when life tries to knock you down.

Our house wasn't big. The floors creaked and the pipes groaned, but it was full of something stronger than comfort, it was full of faith. My mother, Lois Wheeler, taught me the Word of God before I could make full sense of the world. She had a Bible that seemed to live in her hands. When she read it, her voice slowed, and the air in the room grew still, as if heaven itself leaned closer to listen. I didn't understand every verse, but I understood the look in her eyes, the softness in her tone, the way she said "Amen" like she was laying something down at God's feet and trusting Him to pick it up.

Even our meals carried faith. Before every bite, Mama would fold her hands, close her eyes, and thank God for what was on the table, no matter how simple it was. Sometimes it was soup stretched thin to feed us all, sometimes bread and beans, sometimes just rice and gravy, but Mama's gratitude made it feel like a feast. She always said, "Gratitude keeps the door open for more." I didn't fully understand that then. I do now.

### **The Women Who Prayed Me Up:**

My grandmother, Mary Williams, carried that same reverence. She often watched me while Mama worked. Her hands were soft, her back was straight, and her words carried weight. She told me stories about how Mama had dreamed spiritual dreams as a little girl, how the Spirit of God seemed to rest on her even then. I would tell Grandma about my own

dreams, bright, strange dreams where I saw Jesus, and she would listen without blinking, without brushing me off. I told her how peace stayed with me when I woke, how fear had no place in those dreams. She nodded, slow and certain, like I was telling her something she already knew.

“It went through Lois, and now it’s on Michael,” she said, meaning the spirit of God had passed from my mother to me. She spoke it like a fact, not a wish. And when a grandmother says a thing like that, it settles on you like a promise.

At St. Columbanus School, the sisters spoke often of Jesus, His life, His cross, His love for children. Their voices rose like bells through the halls. There were Crucifixes on the walls and Scripture verses above the chalkboard. I was one of those children trying to make sense of a big God and a big city at the same time. School gave me rules. Church gave me reverence. Home gave me faith.

### **The First Dreams:**

And in the quiet, I had dreams.

They weren’t like other dreams. They were heavier and brighter, the kind that left a feeling behind long after the pictures faded. Sometimes I saw only light. Sometimes I saw Jesus standing beside me. Sometimes He walked ahead and waited for me to follow. He didn’t speak. He didn’t have to. Peace poured off Him and settled on me like warm sunlight on cold skin. I would wake up and breathe slower, deeper, as if my heart had been reset. The fear that chased me through the day didn’t know how to enter those dreams.

One dream in particular stayed with me. I was walking down a long sidewalk lined with shadows. My small legs ached from running, though I didn’t know what from. Then He appeared, not rushing, not loud. Just steady. He reached down, took my arm, and walked beside me. No thunder. No sermon. Just His presence. We walked until the shadows melted into light. When I woke, my heart was calm. I didn’t feel small. I felt carried.

### **Life Outside the Door:**

But life outside our door was not gentle.

There were boys who proved themselves with their fists, and sometimes I was the one they chose. They carried anger like trophies, and they tested it on anyone within reach. I learned to keep my head down and my feet moving. I learned which corners to avoid and which alleys weren't worth the shortcut. I learned to pray with my lips closed and my heart wide open.

I remember one morning clearly. I knew a fight was waiting for me on the walk to school. I felt it in my stomach before I saw it. The night before, I had prayed the only way I knew how: simple words, eyes squeezed shut, asking God not just to protect me but to give me peace no matter what happened. That night I dreamed of Jesus walking me forward, hand on my arm. When I woke, that same peace stayed like armor on my skin. I walked to school with my heart steady, and for the first time, the boys who waited just watched me walk past. They didn't move. They didn't speak. And I kept walking. Fear didn't follow me that day.

### **Elders Who Carried Years Like Medals:**

God didn't only use dreams to raise me. He used people.

One of them was Mr. Owens, born back in 1879, a date that sounded like another world to a boy like me. He would pull a chair beside my father's garage, sit down, lift me onto his lap, and squeeze me like I was his own. "Sonny," he'd say, "be a good boy. Be obedient. Do that which is right. Be honorable." He said it steady, like a hammer shaping iron. He said it often enough that the words sank past my ears and into my bones.

He smelled of pipe tobacco and aftershave, and his voice was the sound of calm in a noisy world. When he passed in 1969, it felt like an anchor had been lifted from our block. The street was the same, but it felt different, emptier somehow. But his words stayed, working under the soil of my heart like a seed no one could see.

### **The Woman Who Called Me Honest:**

Neighbors began trusting me with small errands and then with bigger things, fetching groceries, sweeping porches, helping on cars, paying bills. Trust is a door that opens slow and slams fast. I learned to keep it open.

One neighbor marked me for life. Mrs. Mary Johns, a blind woman from the Caribbean born around 1889, trusted me to clean her home, shop for her, and handle her money. Her house smelled faintly of soap and tea. She showed me how she folded bills to tell them apart and how she listened to the sound of coins clinking together.

Once, she asked me to walk to the currency exchange and pay her electric bill. I was maybe nine. She placed the money carefully in my hands, her fingers lingering for a moment as if she could feel my character through my skin. I brought back the receipt and her change folded inside it. She nodded like she'd known the outcome all along.

Later, she told the neighbors, "Michael is the only child who never stole from me." I didn't think I had done anything special, but when she said it, I saw what honesty looks like through someone else's eyes. It looks like relief. It looks like rest. My father heard what she said, and his eyes showed pride. A boy never forgets that look.

### **How We Lived:**

My parents, Lois and Golden Wheeler, taught us not just to believe in Jesus but to honor Him. Belief is what you say. Honor is how you live. It was in how we spoke to elders, how we handled money that wasn't ours, how we thanked God for what came to the table even when it wasn't much. Honor made a small house feel like a sanctuary. It made hand-me-down coats feel like fine cloth because we wore them with dignity.

There were other lessons: gratitude for every blessing, even the ones too ordinary to notice. Respect, not as a performance, but as a posture. The Bible, not as a book on a shelf, but as a voice at the table. These lessons didn't arrive in sermons alone; they arrived in a grandmother's nod, in a mother's prayer, in a neighbor's trust, in the way Jesus walked me through my fear.

### **Trouble and Peace:**

People sometimes ask when I first knew God was real. I can't give you one day. I can give you a sequence:

- A school where Jesus' name felt familiar.
- A mother who taught Scripture like she was teaching a child to cross a street, hand in hand.

- A grandmother who heard my dreams and called them true.
- A neighbor who carried a century on his back and still had time to raise a boy.
- A blind woman who trusted me with her money and, without knowing it, gave me a reputation I still try to live up to.
- And those dreams, the light, the peace, the steady hand on my arm.

Those were the beginnings of my testimony before I knew I had one.

But trouble didn't stop coming. Fear didn't stop calling my name. There were nights when the air in my room felt heavy with what waited outside. I would lie in bed, knees pulled up, whispering prayers I didn't fully understand. And then I would sleep, and Jesus would come. Sometimes He said nothing. Sometimes He just walked with me. But His peace wrapped around me like a blanket no one could steal.

The next morning, I walked out the door taller than my frame should allow. I was still small, but I walked like someone had told me the ending and it was good.

### **Glimpses of the Storms:**

I didn't know it then, but the peace I carried was not just for playground fights or neighborhood bullies. It would have to be enough when the world grew darker.

I didn't know that one day I would ride in a car spinning out at ninety miles an hour, glass shattering like falling stars, and walk away without a scratch.

I didn't know that one night I would stare down the barrel of a gun, certain death had found me, and still live to tell about it.

I didn't know that someday doctors would stand at the end of my hospital bed, their faces drawn, and tell me quietly to go home and die, and that God would breathe life back into my body anyway.

I didn't know that the boy who dreamed of Jesus would grow into a man who would have to choose life when every voice around him said death. But God knew.

And He was planting seeds early.  
Where It All Began:

Looking back, I see it clearly now:  
God used elders, teachers, and neighbors to form the spine of my character.  
He used hunger to teach gratitude, fear to teach prayer, and trust to teach honor.  
He taught me that honesty is worship, respect is wisdom, and gratitude is armor.  
He taught me that faith can be as simple as taking the hand that is offered and walking forward.

This is why I tell my story.  
Not to impress anyone.  
Not to make money.  
But because I know what it is to be that boy, small, afraid, and still somehow held by peace.  
And I want someone listening to know: you can be held, too.

There would come a day when I would stand in rooms where doctors had no hope left to give, and lie in hospital beds where night felt too long. There would be seasons when the voices around me said death, and I had to choose to speak life.

But before I got there, God gave me these first gifts, childhood, church, family, elders, dreams, so that when the storm rose, I would know where to plant my feet.

My name is Michael S. Wheeler.  
I was a boy who dreamed of Jesus and woke up with peace.  
This is where my story begins.  
...and it will not end in fear.

# Chapter 2:

## God's Armor in the Army

I wasn't a church-going man when I enlisted. Not in the traditional sense, anyway. But revisiting my time in the Army, I can see now that I was walking in a suit of divine armor, woven from protection and grace. It wasn't the Kevlar vest or the steel helmet that shielded me; it was something far stronger. My time in the military was a testament to God's protective hand, a series of dangerous situations that reinforced my belief in a power greater than myself.

The journey began simply enough. On August 1, 1978, a fresh-faced young man, barely eighteen, I entered the United States Armed Forces. My boots, still stiff and unyielding, first touched the hallowed ground of Fort Knox, Kentucky, a place that would forever be etched in my memory. The air was thick with the scent of pine and freshly cut grass, a stark contrast to the overwhelming sense of discipline and order that permeated everything. The drill sergeants were an intimidating force, their voices like thunder, their presence demanding attention. We were no longer individuals but a collective, a unit forged in the fire of shared exhaustion and a relentless pursuit of perfection.

Basic training was a grueling, transformative experience. We ran, we crawled, we pushed our bodies to limits we never knew they had. But amidst the sweat and the shouted commands, something beautiful began to form. Bonds. We were a brotherhood of young men from all corners of the country, united by a common purpose. We had no rank, no title, just the shared discomfort and the unwavering support we offered one another. I remember nights in the barracks, the air heavy with the sounds of a hundred snoring soldiers, where we would whisper stories of home and family, of our hopes and fears. It was here that I met Joe Kramer, a lanky, good-natured kid from Alabama with a soft drawl and a heart of gold. We were inseparable, two peas in a pod, and he would soon play a role in one of the most terrifying moments of my life.

After graduation, during a brief period of leave, Joe invited me to his hometown in Attalla, Alabama. He painted a picture of southern hospitality, of sweet tea and long summer nights. I was excited for a

change of scenery, a taste of a life far removed from the strict regimen of military life. The Attalla night was warm and humid, the air thick with the scent of honeysuckle and the distant hum of crickets. We spent the evening at a small nightclub, a place filled with laughter and the rhythmic pulse of music. It was a perfect, carefree night, a brief moment of escape before returning to the duties of a soldier.

However, as we left the club, the night took a sinister turn. The carefree atmosphere was shattered by a chilling silence. We rounded a corner, our laughter dying on our lips, and were met by a sight that sent a jolt of ice through my veins. A group of people, their faces shrouded in the dim light, stood blocking our path. And in their hands, I saw the glint of steel—shotguns, aimed directly at us. My breath caught in my throat. My mind, usually a jumble of thoughts and anxieties, went completely blank. The world seemed to slow down, every sound muffled, every detail amplified. I could see the cold, unyielding barrels of the guns, the determined set of their faces. This wasn't a misunderstanding; this was a threat, a very real and very terrifying one.

Before I could even process what was happening, my friend Jim Sayers, and another soldier who was with us, moved. It was a reflex, an act of sheer, selfless courage. He stepped directly in front of me, his body becoming a shield, a living barrier between me and the barrels of those shotguns. I was stunned. In that moment, I understood the true meaning of brotherhood. He didn't hesitate. He didn't think. He simply acted, putting his life on the line for mine. The seconds stretched into an eternity. We stood there, frozen, until finally, for a reason I will never fully understand, the group simply backed away, their threat unspoken but powerfully felt. They disappeared into the shadows, leaving us trembling and silent in the deserted street.

Shaken, I found the nearest phone and called my father. His voice, usually so steady and reassuring, was laced with a deep and profound sadness as I recounted the story. He listened patiently, quietly, and then the full weight of his wisdom came crashing down on me. "Son," he said, his voice a low rumble, "you could have been another Emmett Till. The Lord was with you tonight. He was your armor." The words hit me like a physical blow. The specter of Emmett Till, the young boy whose brutal murder in the very same state had become a symbol of racial injustice, sent a shiver down my spine. My father's words were a wake-up call, a powerful reminder that the protection I had experienced was not of this

world. God had protected me. He had used my friend, Jim, as a vessel of his grace, but it was His hand that had truly saved me. I hung up the phone, a new understanding settling over me. My life, my very existence, was a gift.

After my time in Alabama, I was stationed in Fulda, West Germany. The change was disorienting but exhilarating. I was just nineteen, a young man with a newfound sense of invincibility, stationed in a foreign land. Life was a blur of duty and daring. My paycheck felt like a king's ransom, and I spent my free time exploring the autobahn, the open road a symbol of a freedom I had never known. The German countryside was a tapestry of rolling hills and ancient castles, and I took to the roads with a reckless abandon that only a young, untampered mind can muster.

One evening, my carelessness caught up with me. I was driving my car, a cheap, used vehicle, on the autobahn, pushing the speedometer to 90 miles per hour. The engine whined in protest, but I ignored it, the thrill of the speed blinding me to the danger. I was full of youthful bravado, convinced that nothing could touch me. Then, without warning, the car began to wobble. The steering wheel felt like it was fighting against me. I tried to correct it, but it was too late. The car hydroplaned, spinning out of control in a terrifying dance of metal and speed.

In that single, agonizing moment, the world dissolved into chaos. The screech of tires on asphalt, the frantic blare of a horn, the sickening grind of metal on metal. Time, which had been a blur of speed, slowed to a crawl. I saw a flash of my life, a rapid-fire montage of faces and memories. My family, my friends, my childhood. It was all there, a final goodbye in my mind's eye. Then, as the car spun, I saw it. A cross. It wasn't painted on the windshield or a reflection. It was a tangible, unmistakable symbol, a beacon of light in the swirling vortex of my impending doom. It seemed to be superimposed on the glass, a clear, brilliant image of a cross, and I knew, in that split second, that God was with me.

The car slammed into a ditch. The impact was violent, a bone-jarring, earth-shaking stop. The world went silent. I was a puppet, my body slumped against the seatbelt, the air thick with the smell of gasoline and burnt rubber. For a moment, I didn't move, afraid to find what was broken, what was lost. I took a deep, shuddering breath, my heart hammering against my ribs. Then, slowly, I began to take stock. Nothing. Not a single scratch. Not a broken bone. The car was a

mangled wreck, a twisted piece of junk, but I was miraculously unharmed. I stumbled out of the car, my legs wobbly, and my mind still reeling. I looked back at the wreckage, a testament to the sheer force of the crash, and I felt a wave of profound gratitude wash over me. The cross, a fleeting image in the chaos, had been a promise. God had kept it.

The next morning, I was brought to my commanding officer, Lowell Barlow. He was a stern, no-nonsense man, and I expected the worst. A write-up, a demotion, an Article 15, all the punishments I had so far managed to avoid. As I stood at attention, my heart pounding in my chest, I braced myself for the lecture, the punishment I knew I deserved. Officer Barlow walked around the car, his face a mask of disbelief. He ran his hand over the twisted metal, his eyes taking in the full extent of the damage. He came back, his face unreadable, and I waited for the hammer to fall. Instead, he simply looked at me, his gaze softening. He told me to come into his office, but he didn't give me a write-up. He didn't give me a punishment. He just looked at me, a silent understanding passing between us, and told me to be more careful.

I left his office in a daze, the full weight of the miracle finally sinking in. I should have been punished. I should have been injured, perhaps even killed. But I wasn't. I was a living testament to a grace I hadn't earned. I was a reckless young man, pushing the limits, but God had seen fit to protect me. I credit Him with protecting me from this and other potential punishments, noting that I never received an Article 15 or a counselman's statement during my entire tour in Germany. It was a powerful lesson, a humbling realization. I was not walking through life alone. I was shielded. I was guided. I was loved. My time in the military wasn't just a period of service; it was a journey of faith, a series of lessons that showed me that God's love is a powerful armor, one that can shield us from the most terrifying storms, even those of our own making. I walked away from the Army not just a soldier, but a believer, my faith strengthened and my heart forever changed by the grace I had found on the battlefield of life.

# Chapter 3:

## Balancing Life

Returning to Chicago in the summer of 1981 felt like coming full circle. The city greeted me with that familiar mix of energy and grit, the sound of buses hissing at the corners, the scent of street food blending with the industrial air, and the constant hum of people chasing their next opportunity. I had been away for a while, and although I was uncertain about what the future held, I was determined to start anew.

I began applying for jobs almost immediately. I didn't have the luxury of waiting around or being too selective, I needed steady work. After several applications and a handful of interviews, I finally landed a position with B&R Sugar Services. It wasn't glamorous work, but it was honest, and it offered me a sense of direction. The best part was that my godfather, Mr. Simon Broughton, was the warehouse foreman there. Working under his supervision gave me both comfort and motivation. I respected him deeply; he had a quiet strength about him, the kind that came from years of hard work and discipline.

At B&R, my days began early. The air inside the warehouse was thick with the smell of sugar, sweet but heavy. We loaded and unloaded hundred-pound bags of sugar from trucks, stacked pallets, and kept the place running smoothly. Sometimes we handled other supplies like poppy seeds, pastry fillings, and bakery ingredients destined for restaurants across the city. It was demanding physical work that left my muscles sore and my clothes coated in a fine layer of sugar dust by the end of the day. But there was pride in it. Every bag I lifted reminded me that I was earning an honest living, contributing to something larger than myself.

Under Mr. Broughton's guidance, I learned more than just the mechanics of warehouse work. He taught me about consistency, humility, and the value of doing your best even when no one was watching. I kept my head down and worked hard, taking notes, not just about the job, but about life.

I stayed with B&R Sugar until 1982, when the company downsized and I was let go. It was a tough moment, especially since I had come to see

that job as a small anchor in an unpredictable life. Losing it felt like the ground shifting beneath my feet again. But I wasn't one to stay idle. My father worked as a mechanic, and I began helping him in his shop. I had always been comfortable around tools and engines, and working with him gave me a sense of connection, to both him and the craft.

Still, the truth was that the money wasn't enough. We were barely scraping by. As much as I wanted to continue working with my dad, I knew I needed something more stable, something that could support the life I was trying to build. The struggle stretched into the next couple of years, a period of uncertainty and survival.

Then, in May of 1984, a new opportunity came my way, one that would change the trajectory of my life.

### **A New Path:**

On June 1, 1984, I started working for County Associates as a police vehicle mechanic trainee. The job title was "Trainee Adjuster," which sounded more official than it really was, but it was an important step forward. My work involved repairing and maintaining police vehicles, everything from squad cars to transport vans. I learned how to assess property damages, perform inspections, and keep detailed records.

The work environment was structured and professional. For the first time, I felt like I was part of something meaningful, something that served a public purpose. Each day brought new challenges, and I took pride in the trust that came with the job. I was learning not only mechanical skills but also responsibility, accuracy, and accountability.

Later that year, life took me to California. It was supposed to be a short-term move, but it ended up being one of the most formative experiences of my life. California was a world of its own, sunshine, endless highways, and a pace that seemed both relaxed and restless. I went there to continue my training and to explore new opportunities, but what I found was something far deeper.

During my time there, I became more involved in church and community activities. I started attending services regularly, connecting with people who were focused on faith, growth, and self-improvement. That spiritual environment began to shape me in ways I hadn't expected. It wasn't just about religion; it was about understanding life and my place

in it. I learned to appreciate stillness, reflection, and gratitude. For the first time in a long while, I felt centered.

But just as I was finding my footing, my health began to decline. It started with small things, fatigue, shortness of breath, lingering discomfort, but it grew serious enough that I had to make a hard decision. In May of 1985, I returned to Chicago to focus on my well-being. Leaving California was difficult; I had grown attached to the people and the spiritual growth I had found there. But my body needed rest, and I had to listen.

Back in Chicago, life wasn't easy. My health was fragile, and jobs were scarce. Still, I refused to give in to despair. I picked up various jobs, whatever I could find to stay afloat. Eventually, I found consistent work in the security industry, starting as a guard and gradually working my way up through persistence and reliability.

By the mid-1980s, I was promoted to Security Supervisor. That title might not have meant much to some, but to me, it symbolized progress. I had climbed my way out of uncertainty through hard work and patience. I took pride in mentoring younger guards, emphasizing professionalism and integrity.

### **Love and Family:**

Then came February 14, 1989, a day most people associate with love, and for me, it became one of the most important days of my life. On that Valentine's Day, I married Mary, the woman who would become my partner through every joy and hardship that followed.

Mary had a calm, steady spirit. She understood me, not just the version I showed the world, but the one I often kept hidden: the man who worried, who doubted, who wanted more for himself but didn't always know how to reach it. With her, I found peace. Our marriage wasn't perfect, but it was real. We shared laughter, long nights of conversation, and a sense of unity that carried us through tough times.

I already had a child from a previous relationship, and becoming a husband again meant strengthening my role as a father. Family became my anchor. Every decision I made, every long shift, every extra hour, was guided by the desire to provide stability and love for them.

Life during those years was demanding but fulfilling. My work in security deepened my sense of responsibility, and my home life taught me patience and compassion. Each role balanced the other.

### **A Moment Beyond Understanding:**

Then, in the summer of 1995, something happened that changed me forever. It's hard to describe even now, but it was my first out-of-body experience.

I remember it vividly. It was a quiet evening, and I had been feeling physically and emotionally drained. I lay down to rest, not expecting anything unusual. Suddenly, I felt a strange sensation, like I was rising above myself. My body was still there, motionless, but my awareness, my consciousness, had lifted free.

The room around me began to fade into light. Everything turned white and pure, a brightness that didn't hurt the eyes but soothed the soul. Then, I found myself standing in a place of indescribable beauty, vast, calm, and filled with peace. The people there glowed with light; they seemed weightless, serene, and almost angelic. I felt no fear, no pain, only love and belonging.

In that moment, I realized there was more to existence than the physical world. I didn't want to leave that place. It felt like home, more real than anything I had ever known. But before I could understand what was happening, I felt a sudden pull, like gravity reclaiming me. I fell — not physically, but spiritually, and then I was back. My body jolted awake, and I found myself gasping for breath, trembling with the weight of what I had experienced.

For days afterward, I couldn't stop thinking about it. Was it a dream? A vision? A glimpse of something divine? Whatever it was, it marked a turning point in my life.

After that night, my perception of the world shifted. I started to pay closer attention to everything, to the quiet moments, the subtle signs, the connections between people and events. It was as if a veil had lifted, revealing a deeper pattern that I had never noticed before.

That experience strengthened my faith and gave me a profound sense of peace. It reminded me that life isn't just about surviving, it's about awakening. Every challenge I had faced up to that point, every setback,

every layoff, every struggle, suddenly made sense. They were lessons, preparing me for understanding, for empathy, for growth.

By the time the 1990s came to a close, I had lived through enough change to fill several lifetimes. I had known hard labor and unemployment, sickness and renewal, love and revelation. Through it all, one truth remained constant: resilience.

When I think back to those early days in the warehouse at B&R Sugar, I see how far I had come. I had gone from loading trucks under my godfather's watchful eye to managing teams, raising a family, and finding spiritual clarity. Each step, no matter how difficult, led me toward becoming the person I was meant to be.

Life didn't always make sense in the moment, but in hindsight, I see a clear thread, a divine order guiding me through the chaos. My journey from 1981 through 1995 wasn't just about work and survival; it was about transformation. I learned that true success isn't measured by titles or paychecks. It's measured by growth, by how we respond to hardship, how we care for others, and how we keep faith even when the road turns dark.

That out-of-body experience didn't end when I woke up; in many ways, it began there. It opened my heart and spirit, reminding me that this life, for all its struggles, is a sacred opportunity to learn, to serve, and to love.

And so, as I stepped into the next chapter of my life, I carried with me everything those years had taught me: the value of work, the strength of faith, the power of love, and the unshakable belief that we are all part of something greater than ourselves.

# Chapter 4:

## The Gift and the Battle (1996 and Beyond)

In 1996, everything in my life began to shift again. I'd already come through a long way by then, from 1981 through 1995, the years that tested me, shaped me, and forced me to look at life beyond the surface. I had learned about survival, family, managing men, and myself. I'd gone from the warehouse floors at B&R Sugar to moments of spiritual clarity that jolted me to the core.

But nothing could have prepared me for what came next.

The same year, my pastor, Shirley Forrest, took our congregation to another church in Markham, Illinois. The pastor there was a woman named Bonita Alexander, a spirit-filled preacher with a discernment I could sense the moment I stepped inside that sanctuary. We'd just arrived when Pastor Alexander looked across the room and asked Pastor Shirley, "Who is that young man right there?"

Pastor Shirley replied, "Its Brother Wheeler."

Then, Pastor Alexander said something that made my heart skip a beat, "The Lord just spoke to me. He told me to have Brother Wheeler minister love this lady named Barbara. She's been through so much abuse by men."

At that point, I was still a baby in Christ. I didn't know how to minister to anyone, but I obeyed. I walked over to Barbara and did what I felt. I told her that she was fearfully and wonderfully made, that she was God's masterpiece. I said it over and over again, not from my mind but from my heart, from a place that didn't even feel like it was coming from me.

Then, something started to happen. Barbara began to shake. Her voice changed. She screamed and cried, and I could feel something dark coming to the surface. It wasn't just pain, it was torment. The demon inside her began to manifest, and suddenly, she was swinging at me with an unnatural strength, but I wasn't afraid. I just kept speaking what God asked me to speak. She screamed again, and then her voice broke. After

a few moments that felt like forever, she went still. Tears ran down her face, and she said, “Thank you. I love you.”

And she howled, and I knew the demons were gone.

That was the first time I ever cast a demon out of someone. I didn’t even know I had that kind of authority, but it happened, and after that, I was never the same again. Years later, around 2011, I saw Pastor Alexander again. She told me Barbara was still free, that she had stayed free from those demonic forces ever since that day. Hearing that filled my heart, and I thanked God then and there. That moment back in 1996 had been real. It had been divine.

That moment made me realize that I carried something within me, a gift may be that I didn’t fully understand then. Pastor Alexander told me the Lord had said I carried the *gift of love* that could cast out darkness. I didn’t even know what that meant at the time, but I would soon find out.

### **Spiritual Warfare at the VA:**

After that encounter, things around me began to change, especially at my job at the VA Medical Center. I started receiving threats, strange and unprovoked. People I had never met would look at me and say things like, “*The first chance I get, I’m going to kill you.*” I didn’t know them, but I understood what was happening. The demons knew me. They recognized something inside of me that they hated. One day, while walking through the triage area, a man tightened up his face and said those exact words, “*The first chance I get, I’m going to kill you.*” I kept walking, calm, because I knew what it was.

Moments later, the same man came up behind me with his fist drawn back, ready to hit me in the back of my head. But before he could, one of our officers, I didn’t even know he was behind me, tackled the man to the ground. He caught him right before the punch landed. That man had been ready to knock me out cold, but the officer stopped him.

He later told me he’d felt something wasn’t right and followed behind me. To this day, I thank God for protecting me, and that wasn’t the only incident. Another day, I was called down to the emergency room to deal with an unruly veteran. When I arrived, the man grabbed a cane and swung it straight at me, but right before it reached my face, the cane stopped midair. He froze. His eyes filled with tears.

I looked at him and said, “Jesus loves you.”

The moment I said the name *Jesus*, his face twisted in pain. His voice changed, and he said, “*Don’t ever mention that name to me.*”

That’s when I knew.

I told him, “Come with me.” I took him outside in the open air, and said, “I got you now, demon. You’re going to come out here in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.”

He started shaking, his mouth foamed, eyes fluttered and blinked rapidly, pupils expanded and shrunk. Then he fell to the ground, trembling all over. A few minutes later, he opened his eyes and said, “When I was in the emergency room, I wanted to hit you with that cane, but I couldn’t. You have too much power.”

I said, “Shut up, demon. I don’t talk to demons.”

I didn’t need to. The Lord had already done the work.

The Demon Chaser

After that, I began noticing these encounters more and more. The VA hospital became a battlefield of sorts, not just for the sick in body, but for those tormented in spirit. Many of the veterans carried darkness with them, the kind that comes from war and trauma, from death and guilt.

I recall, one man in particular who looked at me and said, “I know who you are, but you don’t know who I am.”

His voice didn’t sound human. I said to him, “You have no power over me.”

I called for backup, an officer named Keelan, and told him not to leave the room. I said, “One will put a thousand to flight, two will put ten thousand to flight.”

Keelan said, “I’m not going nowhere.”

Then, I looked at the man again and said, “Come out of here right now.”

I watched as his pupils began to contract, growing wide, then shrinking small again. His voice wavered. Then he said, “You’ve got the power.”

Just like that, it was over. His body relaxed, eyes softened, and the room felt lighter.

That's when I realized something, I had become a demon chaser. Not by title or desire, but by calling. Every time I turned around, there was another soul bound by darkness. Somehow, I kept being sent to them. It wasn't glamorous. It wasn't something I bragged about. But I understood it now that Pastor Alexander had spoken about power of love. It wasn't human strength, but divine authority, and I was meant to use it.

### **A Heavy Gift:**

However, that gift came with weight.

There were moments when my discernment was so sharp that my mouth would open and words would come out before I even thought about them. One night on the police shift, I approached a fellow officer named Mitchell Trask. He'd just come out of a bad relationship, and I told him, "If you're not careful, you're going to kill that woman or kill yourself."

He looked at me like I was crazy. "You don't know what you're talking about," he said.

A month later, he shot himself in the chest and died.

People started to fear me after that. They said, "That officer, Wheeler, he says things, and they come true." But it wasn't me. It was something that spoke through me. Something that *showed* me things before they happened.

I didn't ask for that. I just tried to be obedient.

### **The Second Out-of-Body Experience**

It was also in 1996, I can't remember the exact month or date, that I had another out-of-body experience. It came to me while I was in a deep sleep. I dreamed that Chicago had been bombed. There were bodies everywhere. I was in the back seat of a car, but I didn't know who was driving. The air was thick with smoke and grief.

Then, I heard a loud voice, saying, "*Don't be afraid. You have power.*"

The next moment, I was outside the car, standing under a lamppost near the house where I was born. I looked up, held out my hands, and

suddenly, I was rising, straight up into the air. Beneath me, I saw the city stretched out, bodies scattered all over. It was heartbreaking. Then, all at once, I was inside a massive room, a room that stretched and stretched, growing larger as I looked. The walls and the floors were pure gold, brighter than anything the eyes could endure. It was too beautiful to look at directly. Then, I heard the voice again: *“In my Father’s house are many mansions.”*

I recognized that voice, it was Jesus.

I remember thinking, *Man couldn’t have made this. No hands could build something like this.* The room kept expanding, never ending, never dimming, supernatural, and holy. Suddenly, I was back, back in my body, back in this world. But I was changed. I told my mother about it.

She’d had several out-of-body experiences herself, and she said something I’ll never forget: “Michael, wait until He takes you to the upper room.”

She had seen things most people never would. Pearly gates. Heaven itself. She and I both knew too, what I’d seen was real. You can’t fake that kind of glory.

## **Reflection**

That year, 1996, was when heaven and earth collided in my life. From casting out that first demon in Markham to fighting unseen battles in the halls of the VA hospital, I learned what true power meant. Not power over people, but power through faith.

It was the year I stopped being afraid. I realized then that love itself is a weapon, not the soft kind, but the kind that breaks chains, silences demons, and brings peace where there was torment. Sometimes, I still think about Barbara, and those veterans. I also think about Officer Trask, about what could have been different. But I also think about that golden room, that place beyond this world, and I know all of it, every battle and every vision, was preparing me for something higher. I didn’t ask for this gift. But I carry it with reverence. Because once you’ve seen darkness flee, once you’ve stood in the light and felt heaven break through, you can never go back to being ordinary again.

# Chapter 5:

## The Seer

I have seen people who talk about 1996 like it was just another year, new presidents, new songs on the radio, the world turning the way it always does. But for me, everything cracked open that year. Heaven and hell, the invisible and the ordinary, all collided in a way that pulled me out of the life I thought I understood, thrusting me into something far more dangerous, far more beautiful, and far more demanding than anything I had expected of myself.

Just when I thought I had reached the limit of what God was willing to show me, after the demon in Markham, after Officer Trask, after the strange visions in the VA hospital, He led me into another realm entirely. It started with my father, of all people, and a trip to Georgia. I didn't know then that I was walking straight into the arms of the woman who would shape the next twelve years of my life, prepare me for battles I didn't even know existed, and speak words over me that would come to pass long after she left this world.

Her name was Aunt Shugg, but people like her aren't really named, they are revealed.

My father told me we were going to visit someone, "Your aunt," he said, but not the biological kind. I didn't question him. My relationship with my father had always been firm and disciplined, like a brick wall. It shields you, but it also bruises you if you hit it too hard. Still, I trusted him enough to follow. We drove through stretches of Georgia highway, sun leaking through the windows, cicadas screaming outside as if the world was boiling. When we pulled up to her house—a simple place, quiet, almost too ordinary, I didn't feel anything special, not yet.

I stepped inside, and there she was, a woman of small stature, aging but alert, watching me like she had been expecting me long before I stepped out of that car. She didn't say "Hello" or "Nice to meet you." She didn't shake my hand either.

She just gave me one long, measuring look, and said, "Mm-hmm."

Then, she turned her head slightly, like she had already seen everything she needed to see.

I didn't know what to do with that. I didn't feel threatened, but I didn't feel comfortable either. I felt *seen* in a way I wasn't used to, exposed, like someone had cracked me open and read aloud what was inside. Later, she told me, "You thought I was crazy when you met me."

I tried to deny it, but she waved her hand.

"No. I was looking through your life. I saw you as an old man, with a great mustache on you."

I didn't understand it then. I barely understand it now. But that was my introduction to the woman who operated in a realm most people don't believe exists. She was a seer, not someone who guesses, not someone who senses, but someone who *sees*.

She saw directly into me.

The first sign that she was real came fast.

I had gone back to Chicago and, one afternoon, stopped by a mall to look at a three-quarter jacket. Nothing spiritual, nothing profound, just a piece of clothing I liked. Later that night, I called her.

Before I could even bring up the jacket, she said, "The Lord said you were at the mall today lookin' at that coat."

I froze.

That's when I realized: I was dealing with something real. Not church theatrics, not guesswork, not vague prophetic clichés, but someone with a real sight. She began guiding me from that moment forward. Sometimes gently, sometimes sharply, always with a purpose I couldn't yet grasp. Somehow, she could tell when something in my life was out of order before I even knew it. She warned me about people who wanted to use me in ministry. She knew things that happened in my church, conversations I never repeated, and struggles I kept buried.

She was the closest thing I ever had to a guardian angel, only she walked on two feet and called me on the phone.

Over time, her influence grew.

I brought her to Chicago in 2000, and she helped with a revival at a church my friend Jimmy took me. I watched her call out strangers one by one, speaking truths only they knew about their own lives. People collapsed under the weight of it, not because she pushed them, not because anyone performed for a crowd, but because truth has a way of striking the heart like lightning.

When she spoke, people wept.

When she laid hands on them, shackles broke.

I had seen preachers stir emotions. I had seen performers imitate power. But this was different. This was surgical. Precise. Divine. And she didn't limit that to others, she brought the same fire to me. She corrected me when I was wrong, even when I didn't want to hear it. She made me careful with my words, my dreams, my revelations.

“Not everything God shows you is for the world,” she would tell me.

“Some things are private. Don't reveal what isn't meant to be spoken.”

She sharpened my acumen like a blade on stone. But the deepest cut came in 2004. She visited Chicago again in 2004 for a two-week revival. By that time, my marriage was falling apart. I was carrying the pain I never spoke about, pain that had calcified deep inside me. She looked straight into the parts of me I hid from everybody else.

One evening she laid her hands on me, prayed in that soft but commanding voice of hers, and said:

“There's a suicide spirit sitting on you.”

I didn't argue.

I knew she was right. Life had been squeezing me, disappointment after disappointment, pressure after pressure. Between my marriage and my ministry and my own internal battles, I had felt myself slipping into a darkness I was too ashamed to admit aloud. She broke it off me that night. I felt something lift, heavy, slow, reluctant, like a shadow detached from my skin. I walked away from that prayer different. Lighter. Alive. She saved my life more times than I can count.

She wasn't the only vessel God placed around me during those years. There were others, Miss Shirley Vakimor, her sister Eve Bond Vakimor,

and Mr. Walter Gilliams. They were spiritual pillars, strong and stable. Years later, in 2020, they both called me unexpectedly on the very same day when tragedy struck, just like Aunt Shugg had predicted back in the early 2000s.

Her words never fell to the ground. Not one.

Even in the small things, she showed up.

When I came off my job in 2001 because of kidney dialysis, money dried up fast. Disability didn't stretch far enough. One day, with barely enough food for my family, Miss Shirley mailed me an envelope, with \$300 inside. I used it to buy groceries. She had no idea how bad things were, but God did, and He used her.

These people weren't acquaintances. They were lifelines.

Even as she helped guide my spiritual battles, my natural life was under fire too. My home in 2003 nearly went into foreclosure. I prayed harder than I had ever prayed. The Holy Spirit told me to make the bank an offer, something that made no sense because banks don't negotiate with people behind on payments.

But I did it anyway.

They accepted.

Months later, in 2005, it happened again. Foreclosure threatened my family, and fear crawled through my chest like something alive. That's when I turned to a verse in Nahum 1:9:

*“What do you imagine against the Lord?  
He will make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time.”*

I repeated it repeatedly until it wasn't just written on the page—but etched into me. I heard a voice say:

“Michael, do not fear.”

When I called the bank, a woman answered and said the same thing. Word for word.

“Do not fear. I'm going to help you.” And she did.

We kept the house another seven years until 2012. But the prophecy that shook me the most came from the person who loved me enough to tell me the truth even when it stabbed me in the heart.

It was 2007 when Aunt Shugg told me, “Michael, you’d better get a divorce. If you don’t, you’re going to wind up divorced. You married the wrong woman.”

I didn’t want to accept that word. I fought it. I pushed it aside. And for years, I held on, believing I could fix what was already broken.

But in November 2020, my wife left, exactly as Shugg had warned.

There’s nothing quite like knowing the truth ahead of time and still not being ready when it lands. June 5th carried a special weight between us. It was the day I came under her wing in 2005, and the day she left this earth in 2008. Three years to the day. It was as if heaven had written her timeline with precision, assigning her to me for a season that needed her voice and her vision. In those three years, she prepared me in ways I didn’t realize until much later. She taught me boldness, but also silence. She taught me to speak only when God spoke and to hold my peace when the enemy tried to bait me into chaos. She told me when to move and when to stand still. She warned me of attacks before they came. She gave language to dreams I couldn’t interpret. She was guidance, correction, protection, all wrapped into one woman who saw more than her natural eyes should have allowed.

One memory of her never left me. In August 2004, I played a videotape of Prophet Charles Buchanan for her. As she watched, she suddenly started dancing, soft at first, slow movements like she was feeling something in the spirit. Then she turned to me and said:

“Prophet Buchanan is going to play a role in your life. God is going to connect you two. And you’re going to be a blessing to him as well.”

At the time, it sounded impossible. I barely knew the man.

But in 2011, it happened, exactly as she said. Prophet Buchanan became one of the most instrumental figures in my spiritual journey. Through him, I received healing, breakthroughs, and prophetic insight I still rely on to this day.

He remains active even now, in 2025, still ministering in Alabama, still speaking into my life when God reveals something concerning me.

Her prophecy carried across decades.

My mother met Aunt Shugg too. I introduced them because I knew my mother was a woman who respected true spiritual authority. She had raised me in the Word, strict, disciplined, unwavering. I might not have appreciated her firmness when I was young, but at sixty-six, I see the way her prayers traced themselves over the years of my life. I see how she interceded for me long before I ever knew what intercession meant. Even before I surrendered my life to God in 1995, my mother was planting seeds. My father's friend, Mr. Golden Wheeler, prayed for me at two in the morning, prayed that I would turn my life around, prayed that I would follow Jesus. I didn't know it then, but those prayers were shaking loose the chains I carried into adulthood.

In 1993, I stopped drinking. Stopped going to clubs. Something inside me was shifting long before I had the language for it.

By 1995, I fell on my knees and cried out to God, and He answered. Everything changed from there.

Even after Shugg passed, her words followed me.

When my wife and I moved out of Chicago in November 2012, it took only ten months for her prophecy about my finances to manifest. In September 2013, my financial situation turned—dramatically. Bills became manageable. My credit began to rise. Stability settled into my home like a long-lost guest finally returning.

She had told me all of this would happen, and every word unfolded right on schedule.

One of the most vivid scenarios came in 2012. I had been praying for a new car, but had no money, not enough for a down payment, not enough for repairs. The car I had was crumbling, as it was held together by hope and habit. I called Prophet Buchanan's connection line and asked what offering I needed to sow. They told me \$112. I obeyed.

Later, Prophet Davis came on the line and said, "Get rid of that car and get what you want. I see you sitting up high."

Something inside me ignited. I couldn't explain it, but I knew that word was mine. The next week, I felt an unshakable urge to go to the dealership. I had no money, but I had faith. Sometimes, faith is louder than logic. We went to the dealership. They told me I didn't qualify for

the Trailblazer because I needed \$5,000 down. Then they said there was a “fight going on” over my application in the system. The moment they said it, I remembered Prophet Davis’ words: “The Holy Ghost is going to fight for you.”

Minutes later, they came back and said I *did* qualify, for the Trailblazer, with only \$500 down. I didn’t even have the \$500, but my wife stepped forward and said, “We’ll have it tomorrow,” and we did. We walked out with a 2007 Chevy Trailblazer, no credit, no savings.

Just faith, and obedience.

These years were infested with battles, miracles, warnings, rescues, and revelations, and threaded through all of it was Aunt Shugg, her voice, her vision, her unwavering presence. She shaped my understanding of God. She shaped my understanding of myself. She was the missing link between what I experienced and what I needed to understand. Some people walk into your life and leave footprints. She walked into mine and left a roadmap. Even now, decades later, I still hear her voice when I’m unsure. I still remember her warnings. I still honor the words she released into my life. She was the bridge between the man I was and the man God was calling me to become. Although she left this earth on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the ripples of her life continue to shape mine in ways I couldn’t have imagined on that hot Georgia afternoon when she first looked at me, said “Mm-hmm,” and saw straight through my soul.

She didn’t just guide me, but transformed me in a way no one else could.

# Chapter 6:

## The Weight of Anointing

There has always been a quiet thread of the spirituality woven through the fabric of my life. Even before I understood what it meant, I sensed that the unseen world leaned close to me, listening, nudging, and guiding. My aunt was often the first voice of that other realm. She interpreted dreams with a natural ease, as if she were reading a familiar language on a page the rest of us could not see. She did not simply interpret dreams, but could tell me what I had dreamed before I ever opened my mouth. More than once, she looked at me and said that she saw something stirring around my life. She particularly spoke about a pastor who kept appearing in my dreams. She said I would meet him soon and that God had a stronger anointing prepared for me that would demand courage.

I did not know what to make of her words. Many people in my life had spoken about anointing but usually in vague terms that floated above my head. My aunt spoke with clarity. When she said something, it was as if she tipped the future just enough for me to glimpse it before it arrived.

One afternoon, I dialed into a service and walked to my chair. The television had been left on all night, and there he was, the very pastor my aunt had mentioned. I had not turned the television to that channel. I tried to change it but the remote didn't respond. I tried to turn the screen off but it stayed on, almost as if held open for me. I sensed that this moment was not accidental. So I sat back and listened.

The pastor announced an old fashioned revival in Columbus. He spoke with a fire that stirred something ancient in me. He called for people to come from far and near. Bring your mother, he said. Bring your father, your grandparents. Come expecting God to move. Something inside me rose up. Before the day ended I told my wife that I felt compelled to go. She told me that if I felt compelled to go, then I should follow through. So I gathered my mother and drove to Columbus without hesitation.

From the moment I stepped into that sanctuary I felt a weight of glory that was almost physical. The air felt alive. The Spirit in a way I had never witnessed was moving upon children. They stood in small clusters,

tears running down their faces, their voices lifted in languages they had never learned. No one touched them. The presence of God simply moved from one child to the next. I felt humbled to be standing in the same room.

The next day I positioned myself near the front. The pastor began to speak about the anointing that rested on him. He said that when he entered a room, cancer cells had to dry up. His confidence was not arrogance. It was a conviction born from experience. He paused for a moment while speaking in tongues and then scanned the room. His eyes met mine. Before I could react, he reached out and took my hand. Something spread through me with such force that my knees nearly buckled. I had felt the presence of God before, but not like that. It was pure, unfiltered power. The moment he released my hand I knew I would never forget that encounter. It happened early in 2006, but its mark on me feels as fresh now as it did then.

When I returned home, life did not ease up for one moment. Only days later, while taking my dog for a walk, another dog attacked me. I fell and broke my left leg. The injury kept me still for many weeks. Recovering was slow and lonely. Yet during that time, something rooted deeper inside me. I began to believe that I did not need to seek out ministers as I once had. I could reach God myself. I could pray, fast, intercede and expect heaven to respond.

My mother had been diagnosed with cancer years before. I had taken her to services where evangelists proclaimed that people would never experience the illness again. My mother was one of them, yet she became ill again in 2007. That moment forced me to ask myself what I truly believed. Did I follow the proclamations of men or the promises of God? I chose the latter.

One Wednesday night I lay on my face in prayer. I prayed through the night until the early hours of the morning. Then I heard the Spirit speak clearly. Release her. I have her. The next day my sister took our mother to the hospital. The doctors removed a large cancerous mass from her abdomen. After that, she lived without further complications and reached the age of ninety one. I cannot explain the peace that settled over me when I saw her recover, except to say that God had honored my obedience.

These experiences taught me to listen. When the Spirit spoke, I learned not to hesitate. One day I felt a strong urging to visit the home of Mother Broadwater. The sense of urgency was so strong that I left immediately. I felt compelled to take money with me, though I did not know why. When I handed it to her, she asked what purpose it served. I could only tell her that God told me to come. Later she revealed that they had not had a single dollar in the house. She had prayed that God would show Himself faithful. I was simply the vessel He used.

On another instance, the Spirit sent me to the home of Lloyd Harris. As I approached his door, my throat tightened as if another voice was preparing to speak through me. When he answered the door, the words came out in a tone I barely recognized. I warned him with a seriousness that even startled me. If he continued ignoring the state of his health, he would die. He fell back onto the sofa and admitted that his doctor had told him something similar in less direct terms. I gave him a check to help him through his financial strain. He fought to refuse it, but I insisted. A blessing is meant to be received, not returned.

I spent years praying for my in laws. I prayed especially that they would come to know Christ before they left this world. My mother in law, Rena Mae, accepted Christ only two days before she passed. The timing was divine and unmistakable. My other mother in law, Geraldine, accepted Christ at ninety three. She passed away ten days before reaching one hundred. God honored every prayer I prayed for them. That knowledge strengthened my resolve to pray for anyone God placed on my heart.

Years later, my wife and I walked into a McDonalds on the South Side of Chicago. Three large men were speaking loudly and cursing. I asked them to be respectful because my wife was standing beside me. One of the men stepped toward me aggressively, but tears streamed from his eyes before he could speak. The Spirit gave me words to say. I told him that God had a plan for his life. I told him that he was valuable, that his life was not an accident. The other two men apologized and said they had just been released from prison. They embraced me before leaving. Months later, a prophet I spoke with in Alabama told me that those three men would come to Christ. God had not forgotten them.

There were also miracles that left me speechless. I once stood beside a pastor who prayed for people with dental issues. He asked a woman to open her mouth, revealing several cavities. He prayed over her gently and asked her to open her mouth again. Where the darkened spaces had

been, a shimmering material had formed. It was not the kind of filling a dentist would place. It had a pearly glow to it, almost heavenly. That moment stretched my understanding of what God could do. It made me believe that nothing was too small for His touch.

My own life shifted dramatically in 1995 when I reached a breaking point. My marriage was unraveling. My responsibilities felt impossible. I cried out to God and told Him I could not continue without His help. From that moment, my spiritual senses began to sharpen. I heard His voice more clearly. I saw visions that later unfolded exactly as I had seen them. I learned to trust the still, quiet voice that whispered guidance.

Yet, obedience remained the hardest lesson. In late 2000, the Spirit instructed me to leave my job and serve God fully. Fear held me back. I could not imagine explaining such a decision to my wife. I hesitated. By the following year, my kidneys failed. I have lived on dialysis for more than twenty four years. I do not consider it a punishment. I see it as a lesson carved into my life. When God speaks, obedience is not optional. It is the path of protection.

I have witnessed many strange and holy moments. One of the most unforgettable occurred when God instructed me to give my wife a van as a gift from Him. I drove from Chicago to Kentucky after dialysis, covering more than nine hundred miles. Hours vanished from my memory. My aunt later told me she had prayed for my safe and speedy arrival. I believe that God shorted the distance and carried me through time in a way beyond explanation.

The Lord told me clearly that it would not be so. In that moment I was filled with worry and ready to act out of fear, expecting everything to fall apart if I did not take control. Yet God spoke into my confusion with gentle firmness and reminded me that the blessing I held was not meant for my own grasp but for my husband. He sees beyond what my eyes can reach and His voice calmed the noise within me. I had to learn again that His words carry truth even when my heart is restless and my pride whispers that I should take charge. Through the years I have discovered that obedience often begins where comfort ends. Even when emotions rise up strong enough to make me feel justified in my reactions, God still asks me to listen to Him first. There is a lifelong lesson in trusting His direction even when I do not understand every part of His plan.

Marriage brought many moments of both joy and testing. Finances in particular have a way of pressing on the heart because money touches our sense of security. There were days when conversations about giving and spending brought out misunderstandings and frustration. My wife cared deeply for me and for our home. She wanted every decision to protect our future. She did not doubt God but she worried about the weight I carried and hoped to ease the burden by urging me to be careful. Her love spoke loudly even when her words sounded sharp. I can see how much she desired for us to be blessed and stable. I thank God for a woman who guarded our family with courage and who loved strongly enough to confront me when needed. Commitment is not made only in romance and affection but also in tension and disagreement where faithfulness proves its strength.

A particular trip continues to stand out in my memory. I was in Georgia for ministry and planned to continue traveling through Florida before returning home. That route seemed ordinary to me at the time yet someone close to me looked into my eyes with deep concern and said she did not believe I should take the long way. She felt a sense of urgency as if time itself was pressing against me. Her words reached into me in a way that made me pause. When someone tells you they fear you may not have much time left it forces you to think about the fragility of life and the possibility that every hour matters more than you realize. I knew then that I needed to pray and consider another path home.

We searched for flights that could bring me back faster. The costs made no sense at first. Routes stretched from city to city through airports that would add long delays and unnecessary distance. It felt as if I was being tested to decide whether I would take the easy familiar route or trust that God was urging me toward something different. My wife weighed heavily on my mind during that decision. I could imagine her pacing and watching the clock worried about where I might be. Her heart was always tied to my safety and I did not want to add even one extra ounce of fear to her shoulders. So I prayed quietly and waited for peace before choosing.

The Lord directed me to take the quicker way and I knew what I had to do. We drove to Atlanta together and although the miles stretched far, every inch of that road felt like obedience. The night air carried a quiet understanding that God was guiding us step by step. When I finally arrived home and saw my wife's relief the moment she laid her eyes on

me, I understood the reason for the change in plans. There is a joy that comes after obedience, a calm that settles the soul once you realize that God has protected you from danger you did not know existed. I felt embraced by grace the moment I crossed through that door and thanked God for watching over every detail of my journey.

There have been countless moments like that in my life where unexpected turns revealed His protection. I am grateful for every person who helped me along the way and for every voice that God used to guide my steps forward. I am especially grateful for my wife who carried a fierce loyalty toward me. She never allowed fear to silence her concern and never hesitated to stand up for what she believed was right for our family. At times, her care challenged me to trust God more deeply and reminded me that love does not always feel easy. Sometimes it pushes us toward wisdom and maturity even when we do not want to hear difficult truths. I have grown because she loved me enough to hold me accountable.

Through every season of my life God has shaped me with storms rather than comfort. Growth requires pressure. Faith demands trust when everything feels uncertain. I have known many valleys. Times of sickness that made me wonder if my strength would return. Times of disappointment where dreams seemed to fade. Times of fear where everything I depended on shook beneath my feet. Yet I have never once been abandoned. In the darkest hours when the world falls silent and the heart trembles, the presence of God remains. Even when I could not see it, He was carving away doubt and building resilience in me. Faith becomes real when you cannot rely on your own power anymore. I share these truths with anyone who crosses my path because I want people to understand that their lives hold immense purpose. Every person matters to God. He does not judge us by worldly measures but sees us through the lens of eternity and potential. The world can make people feel small, unnoticed, and unworthy, but in the hands of God every life carries calling and destiny. If you breathe then you are needed. If you rise after falling then your story is not finished. God listens when you call and He lifts those who turn toward Him. I have lived long enough to testify that restoration is always possible.

My life holds stories of miracles and mistakes, struggles and breakthroughs, grief and revelation. It has not always been easy but it has always been guided. God has equipped me when I felt unprepared. He

has carried me when I had no strength left and transformed parts of me that I did not believe could change. Every chapter of my journey is proof that God remains faithful even when I stumble along the way. So I continue walking one step at a time trusting that He is leading me forward. Each experience every moment and every breath belongs to the larger story that He continues to write within me. I breathe with gratitude knowing that His hand has never released mine. And as long as I live I will offer my life as evidence that God truly guides those who are willing to listen.

The years since have taught me that God develops us through storms, not through comfort. Faith grows roots when the soil is rough. I have faced disappointment, illness, loneliness and moments of fear, yet God has never abandoned me. I feel Him shaping me even now, carving away what does not belong, and strengthening what does. I have seen enough to know that He is real beyond question. I live to encourage others, whether young or old, wealthy or struggling, confident or lost. I tell everyone the same truth. You matter. Your life has purpose. God does not look at you through the eyes of the world. He looks at you through the eyes of eternity. You can call on Him. You can be changed. You can rise again. I know this because I have lived it. My entire life stands as proof that God meets people where they are and lifts them to where they were meant to be. My story is still unfolding, but this chapter is the testimony of how God shaped me through miracles, trials, revelations and grace. It is a story of obedience learned the hard way. A story of faith strengthened through storms. A story of a man who discovered that when God calls, He equips, sustains and transforms.

Therefore, I continue to walk with Him, one-step at a time, trusting that every experience, every moment, and every breath is part of the story He is still writing.

# Chapter 7:

## A Warning in the Night

After journeying South, I returned home, back to Chicago. The flight was peaceful and quiet. I kept thinking about how God had directed me home a different way, how He had spoken through people who cared, and how He had kept me safe. It felt like the Lord was still leading me carefully, step by step, even after I reached home. I moved quietly around the house with my bag still packed and my coat over my shoulders. The hours passed slowly. The clock edged past one in the morning and I tried to rest but sleep did not come easily. Something kept me awake, something I could not see but could feel. As the night stretched on toward four o'clock, a sudden crash shattered the silence. A violent sound like a thousand tiny pieces exploding across the floor. I jumped up shaken and confused. My heart felt as if it had been thrown against my chest. When I flipped on the light, I saw sharp glittering shards covering the ground like ice. The mirror had broken into countless pieces without anyone touching it. Glass lay scattered everywhere.

The Spirit told me to keep my socks on. I had jumped out of bed during a spiritual attack and landed on broken glass. Yet not a single shard cut me. The socks had become an unexpected shield. Had I removed them as I usually did, the outcome could have been disastrous. Someone was very angry on me for obeying God.

I did not feel any presence of anger or fear, but I understood deep inside that something spiritual had just happened. I knew the Holy Spirit had warned me for a reason. If I had removed my clothes and been standing there unaware, maybe I would have been cut badly, maybe worse. It was strange, almost unbelievable, but the truth stood there shining at my feet like slivers of danger that never reached me.

My wife had been resting but she woke up when she heard the noise. She came from the front of the house still holding a Christmas gift she had been packing earlier. I pointed to the mess on the floor and told her what the Holy Spirit had said to me when I walked in. We looked at each other with the same thought. God had prevented something from

harming me. He cared enough to warn me about even the smallest details of the night. There was no coincidence in it. It was protection in plain sight. I cleaned up the broken glass carefully, trying to piece together what God was trying to teach me. Later my wife called to me from another room. She said that the voice of the Lord was urging me to rest, to slow down, to stop working myself into exhaustion. But even with all of that warning, I ignored the other voice. I thought I would be fine. I thought I could push through it. I did what so many people do when God speaks. I tried to convince myself that I was strong enough without listening.

Not long after that night, I became very sick. It was not the kind of sickness that fades with a good night's sleep. This was heavy and frightening and it came upon me suddenly. My body felt weak. My breath shortened. My strength dissolved as if a rug had been pulled out from under me. At first I tried to deny how serious it was. I told myself it would pass, that I just needed to rest. But rest gave no relief. My wife saw my condition and insisted that I needed help immediately. By the time Sunday arrived I could no longer pretend that everything was alright. The date was April twentieth and I remember lying there thinking that something inside me was changing faster than I could understand. My wife rushed me to her house because she did not want me to be alone. She called for doctors and they tried to find answers. They told us to wait while they ran tests. The waiting itself felt like a trial. Every moment stretched out like a long unanswered prayer.

I did not know what was attacking my body. I only knew that it was serious. My wife stood by me every step of the way. She refused to leave me alone even for a moment. I remember her faith in that season. She prayed for me, believing God would intervene. She trusted that healing was possible even when the situation looked dark. I saw the tears she tried to hide from me so that I would not lose hope. I saw the fear she battled but refused to surrender. I saw the strength she borrowed from God so she could carry us both through that storm. As the doctors worked, I began to reflect on everything that had happened. The change in plans. The urgency to return home. The warning about not removing my clothes. The mirror shattering unexpectedly. The sickness that struck right after. It was as if heaven itself had been pulling me away from danger and guiding me step by step into a place where I could be cared for and prayed over and surrounded by love. God had been preparing

for what I could not see. He had seen the attack forming long before I ever could.

The nights were long. I carried pain in my body and questions in my mind. I wondered why God allowed me to face another battle when I had already come through so many. There were moments when the feeling of weakness humbled me deeply. A man who had always been strong and capable was suddenly dependent on others for the simplest things. It reminded me of how small we truly are without God sustaining our every breath. But in that weakness I also experienced the greatest comfort. In the quiet hours when fear tried to creep in, the presence of God wrapped around me like a warm blanket. He reminded me that the same God who warned me before the mirror shattered was still watching. The same God who brought me home safely was not finished with me. The same God who carried me through sickness before would carry me again. Even in pain, I felt purpose. Even in struggle, I felt loved.

My recovery did not happen instantly. God allowed the process to shape me. I learned patience in the waiting room. I learned humility when I needed help to stand. I learned trust when doctors could not explain everything. I learned that obedience to God's voice is never wasted. If He says something small, it is because He sees something big. His warnings are expressions of His love. During that time, I reflected on my entire journey with God. From the early days of discovering faith to the miraculous provisions and divine interventions, I had witnessed along the way. I thought about how many times God could have let me go my own way but instead stepped in and redirected my path. I realized that life is held together by so many moments we do not recognize until later. Tiny decisions. Quiet instructions. A whisper we barely notice but choose to obey. Those moments often become the turning points that save our lives. Days passed, my strength slowly began to return. My wife and family cared for me with unwavering devotion. Friends prayed for me faithfully. God breathed life back into me until I could walk again with confidence. I did not just recover physically. My spirit healed too. I saw everything around me with renewed clarity. Every breath felt like a gift. Every step reminded me that God had more for me to do. When I finally stood strong again, I thanked God not only for the healing but for the lesson. There is a cost to ignoring His voice. There is danger hidden in disobedience. And there is mercy in every warning He gives. I promised myself that I would listen to Him more carefully from then on.

I promised that if He told me to move, to stop, to stay, or to leave, I would obey without hesitation. He had proven once again that His guidance is always for my protection. Looking back on that season of sickness, fear, and recovery, I can see how much God was shaping me. He was teaching me to rely on Him completely. Not on my own strength. Not on my plans. Not on my understanding. He was building a deeper faith in me that could withstand even the most unpredictable storms.

He was preparing me for what would come next. It is about realizing that life can change in a moment and we need His voice to lead us through every hour. I continue to walk by faith, grateful for every second God has preserved me. I know now that as long as I stay close to Him, I will always be exactly where I am meant to be. I will always have the strength I need to rise again.

Realizing this, never have I disobeyed the Lord.

# Chapter 8:

## The Season I was Preserved

I began ministering people long before I ever thought of myself as a minister. It did not start in a church or behind a pulpit, there was no announcement that marked the beginning. It started quietly, and unexpectedly, seated among a group of people whose lives had been narrowed down to a schedule and a chair, a room filled with machines and the sound of blood moving through tubes. When my own dialysis treatment began in 2001, I was placed into a group with others who started around the same time. We were bound together not by choice but by circumstance, by kidneys that no longer functioned, as they should, by hours spent waiting, watching, enduring. From the beginning, I understood something that many around me did not yet grasp. If I was going to live, I could not live by constantly rehearsing sickness. I could not survive by letting disease become my language or my identity. Therefore, I began speaking, not as someone who had answers, but as someone who refused to surrender internally even while my body was compromised.

I told them to stop talking about sickness and disease. I told them plainly, sometimes gently and sometimes firmly, to stop centering every conversation on kidneys, numbers, lab results, and what the doctors said. I told them to pray, to thank God even when it felt unnatural, and to speak gratitude over their bodies instead of fear. I told them to take time for themselves, to make trips when they could, to enjoy life wherever enjoyment was still possible, and to stop dwelling mentally on dialysis as if it were the final word over who they were and how their lives would end. I could see how those words landed. Some listened and nodded. Some smiled politely but dismissed it. Some were already too tired to imagine anything beyond survival. Still, I spoke, because I knew that what we said mattered, and what we believed shaped how long we stood.

Years passed, and the room slowly emptied. Faces that had once been familiar disappeared one by one. Voices that had filled the space went silent. As of the time I reflect on this now, every person from that original group has passed away, except for a few who were much younger and joined later. The last man from that original group died in

2015. Before he passed, he looked at me and told me something that confirmed everything I had felt but never wanted to say aloud. He told me I had been right. He said he had listened when I spoke about dialysis, but no one else did. He said they all died. He told me there were only two left now, him and me. The conversation stayed with me, not as pride, but as weight. It was not satisfaction, but sorrow mixed with understanding. I realized that survival was not only physical, but also spiritual, mental, emotional, and many never made that crossing.

In the summer of 2015, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and told me to go to my own kidney dialysis unit in Chicago. There was no explanation attached, just a directive. When I walked in, I saw a notice posted, a loving delivery announcing the death of Dial Robbers. At that moment, I knew he was the last one, I personally knew that from beginning. I went to his service, and there his mother met me. She told me they had not known how to get in touch with me. What she did not know was that the Holy Spirit had already done that work. Because of that divine connection, I was able to attend the service in his own home, closing a chapter that began years earlier in shared chairs and shared hours. It felt like the end of a season that had defined my life more than most people would ever understand.

However, only ministry and loss did not define those years, an internal pressure that nearly crushed me also defined them. There was a season when the stress became unbearable. I was overwhelmed not just by illness, but by responsibility, expectation, exhaustion, and the constant effort required just to keep going. I began contemplating suicide. It was not a dramatic thought, but a quiet and persistent one. My mind was searching for an exit, a way to stop the pain without having to endure another day. I did not speak it aloud, but it lived inside me, forming plans, rehearsing outcomes, convincing me that my absence might be easier for everyone involved.

At that same time, my aunt received a word from the Lord. She told me that the Lord had said if she did not go to Chicago, her nephew Michael was going to kill himself. She said she would go. That was August 2, 2004. I drove down to Camilla, Georgia, to bring her back with me to Chicago. On the surface, the reason was to help my pastor with a two-week revival. However, the real reason was my life. While she stayed with us, she kept anointing me and praying over me. Again and again, she laid hands on me, speaking prayers that reached places I had sealed

off. I did not argue. I did not resist. Somewhere inside, I knew I needed what she was doing even if I could not articulate it.

By the time I was preparing to take her back to Georgia, something had changed. The heaviness that had pressed down on me had lifted. It did not disappear gradually. It broke. She sat me down and told me exactly what the Lord had shown her. She repeated it word for word, describing how I was planning to kill myself. She described the method, the thinking, the sequence. Then she told me that after deciding not to do it myself, I had considered paying someone else to kill me so that my wife could receive the insurance money. Every word was true. There was no exaggeration, no guessing. It was as though my private thoughts had been exposed and spoken aloud. Hearing them stripped of secrecy broke their power. What had lived in darkness could not survive being brought into the open.

On the day I was supposed to take her home, I slept only two hours. Then the Holy Spirit woke me with urgency. I heard my name, and I heard the word hurry repeated again and again. He told me to get anointing. He told me He was going to bless me on my way out the door. I did not understand what that meant, but I did not question it. We packed the van and headed toward the interstate. When we reached the Dan Ryan Expressway at 79.3, traffic was completely stopped, bumper to bumper. We were redirected off the expressway and sent through Chicago streets. It made no sense to me at the time, but I followed the directions anyway.

That same urgency rose again, pressing me forward. I rang the bell at one of the homes, and when the door opened, she told me I had almost missed them because they were getting ready to leave. The timing was exact. Nothing about it was accidental. Inside that home, words were spoken over me that would shape how I understood my life from that point forward. My uncle said that God had made a spiritual family for me. My aunt affirmed it, saying that people like them were my honor bearers. She named them. Her ex-husband Gilliam was part of it. Mr. Keelan was part of it. Ruth Sampson was named as my spiritual mother. She told me that if anything bad happened to me, she and Yvonne Rockymore would get in touch with me. These were not casual statements. They were declarations of belonging, responsibility, and covering.

When we were allowed to leave, Yvonne Rockymore followed us out and directed us toward the interstate, telling us to go to Camilla, Georgia, and that was that. There was no spectacle, just obedience layered upon obedience. Looking back now, I understand that my life was preserved not by chance, not by strength, but by intervention. By prayers spoken when I could not pray for myself. By warnings delivered before action could take form. By a God who refused to let the story end when I thought it should.

# Chapter 9:

## The Vow of My Survival

My existence was defined by a spiritual seal long before I understood the gravity of a divine mandate. In 1960, my father witnessed a moment that would set the trajectory of my entire life. His mother, a woman of deep conviction, laid her hands on me while I was still a baby. She looked at my small, helpless form and declared that I would serve the Lord. That word was a seed planted in the soil of my soul, though it remained dormant through the years of my youth and early adulthood. I lived as many men do, wandering through the distractions of the world and ignoring the quiet tugging at my spirit. I walked a path that led me away from that original blessing, yet the hand of God is not easily moved once it is placed upon a life.

By the year 1993, the world began to lose its luster. A change started to settle over me that I could not explain with human logic. I found myself losing interest in the things that used to occupy my nights. I quit drinking and I stopped going to the clubs. I was never what people would call a heavy drinker, but even the small amount I consumed felt like a barrier between me and the peace I sought. I felt a powerful pull toward the Lord. My heart was beginning to yearn for a life of purpose. I wanted to serve Him with everything I had and be a blessing to others, but the transition from the world to the kingdom is rarely a smooth journey. It requires a stripping away of the old self that is often painful and deeply humbling.

The year 1995 brought me to the end of my own strength. I reached a point where I could no longer sustain the life I had built. My marriage was in shambles, a source of constant heartache and tension. At the same time, my physical body began to fail me. I suffered from cervical issues that hindered my ability to perform the physical tasks I once handled with ease. I felt the weight of failure in every area of my life. I blamed myself for the brokenness of my home and the deterioration of my health. In a moment of absolute desperation, I cried out to the Lord. I asked Him to help me because I simply could not take any more. I promised that if He saved me, I would spend my days serving Him.

The response to my surrender was immediate and profound. As soon as I opened the door of my heart, I began to hear in the spirit realm. It was as if a new sense had been awakened within me. I would see things in the spirit, such as the image of digging, which I understood as the Lord excavating the wreckage of my past to build something new. My life started to transform, but I quickly learned that salvation is the beginning of a process, not the end of the struggle. I had to learn the discipline of the spirit and the necessity of total obedience.

In the year 2000, I received a clear instruction from the Holy Spirit. I was told to come off my job and stand before the Lord. This was a direct command, yet I found myself paralyzed by fear and a lack of faith. I did not know how I would provide for my family, and I was terrified to confront my wife with such a radical requirement. I knew she would not agree with me leaving my source of income to follow an invisible lead. I stayed on that job, choosing the security of a paycheck over the security of God's will. I tried to convince myself that I could wait for a better time, but God does not negotiate His timing.

The warning was echoed by my aunt Shug. She came to me with a word from the Lord, confirming exactly what I had heard in my own spirit. She told me that I needed to come off my job and warned me that if I did not obey, something bad would happen to me. Even with that confirmation, I remained stubborn. I kept thinking I had more time to make the transition. I stayed in that place of disobedience until the morning of April 22, 2001. That was the day the bill for my delay came due. I was struck down and rushed to the hospital, where I stayed for five straight days. I was dying. The doctors told my family that my survival was uncertain because the stress on my heart was too great. I lay in that hospital bed, hovering between life and death, and I realized the cost of my hesitation. I wept before the Lord and promised that if He gave me another chance at life, I would never disobey Him again. He was merciful. He raised me up from that bed, and I have spent every day since trying to live out that promise.

This experience taught me that real change only occurs when a person is truly honest with God. I noticed a shift in my reality only when I started to mean exactly what I was saying in my prayers. I want to share this truth to help anyone who is searching for a way out of their own darkness. If you want something from God, you cannot simply treat Him as a source of favors. You must ask Him what He wants from you.

You must ask what you can do to be pleasing in His sight. You have to put yourself and your desires on the altar first. I found the key in Matthew 6:33, which instructs us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness so that everything else can be added to us.

I also learned that the power to change does not come from human effort. I used to wonder how I would ever stop my old habits or change my character, but the answer is found in submission. The scripture teaches us to submit ourselves under the Lord, resist the devil, and he will flee from us. When you truly submit, the things that once held you captive lose their grip. I began to tighten up my life, focusing on the spiritual work that needed to be done.

During this season of my life, I encountered people who were sent to sharpen my understanding. One was a prophetess named Reverend Evelyn Davis. She carried a heavy anointing, and I remember how she shook my hand and told me that I had a beautiful spirit. I was surprised by her words because I still saw myself through the lens of my past mistakes. I did not realize then that she was discerning the work of the Holy Spirit within me. She encouraged me and told me that I was called to do a great work for the Lord. This led me to a deeper study of the prophetic, though I also had to learn the dangers of deception. The Bible warns that many false prophets have gone out into the world, and I met several who tried to lead me astray. I learned to talk to the Lord first. I learned to stay on my face in prayer and wait for the Holy Spirit to give me the truth. I practiced the discipline of PUSH, which is praying until something happens. I would stay in that place of prayer until I felt the witness of the Spirit.

Eventually, the Lord led me to my spiritual father, Prophet Charles Buchanan. He was the leader of the Greatest Showers of Blessing Church of God in Christ, located at 705 Telegraph Road in Prichard, Alabama. This man was instrumental in my spiritual development. He saw the calling on my life and began to help me understand the complexities of spiritual warfare. He taught me how to recognize the tactics of the enemy and how to stand firm in the face of spiritual attacks. Through his mentorship, I learned that the battle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. He helped me navigate the transition into full time service to the Lord.

I have been given up to die many times by the world and by the circumstances of life, but I am still here. My life is a testament to the fact

that God's grace is sufficient for even the most hesitant heart. From the prayers of my grandmother in 1960 to the life saving mercy I received in 2001, I have seen the hand of God at work. I have learned that the only way to live is to be completely real with God. You cannot hide your fears or your lack of faith from Him. You must bring everything into the light and trust that He is able to sustain you.

The journey has not been easy, and the lessons have often been hard, but I am grateful for every trial that brought me closer to the truth. I no longer look for the approval of the world or the safety of a traditional path. I look to the Lord and ask what He would have me do. I have seen my marriage restored, my health sustained, and my spirit awakened. I know now that when you seek Him with your whole heart, He will surely be found. My life is no longer my own; it belongs to the one who pulled me from the edge of the grave and gave me a new song to sing. I stand as a witness to His power and a servant of His will, forever committed to the path that was declared over me before I even knew His name.

This commitment requires a daily renewal of the mind and a constant checking of the heart. I have learned that the enemy never stops trying to pull a man back into the shadows, but the light of the Lord is always stronger. I continue to walk in the lessons I learned at the Greatest Showers of Blessing, applying the principles of spiritual warfare to every challenge I face. I am grateful for the leadership of Prophet Buchanan and the many ways he helped me grow. I am also grateful for the quiet moments of prayer where I simply sit in the presence of the Holy Spirit and listen. In those moments, I find the strength to keep going and the wisdom to know which way to turn. My story is still being written, but the foundation is firm. I am a child of God, a servant of the Most High, and a living example of what happens when a man finally decides to get real with his Creator.

I want to encourage anyone who feels like their life is in shambles. Do not give up on yourself, and certainly do not give up on God. He is able to take the broken pieces of your life and create something beautiful. He is able to heal your body, restore your marriage, and give you a peace that passes all understanding. All He requires is your total surrender and your honest heart. Stop trying to figure everything out on your own and start trusting the one who made you. Seek Him first, and you will find that everything else falls into place. The road may be narrow and the walk may be difficult, but the destination is worth every step. I am living

proof that God can save a man from himself and set him on a rock that will never be moved. I will continue to serve Him with all my heart, all my soul, and all my strength, for as long as I have breath in my body.

# Chapter 10:

## When Trust Replaced Control

For years, I had heard the words from Matthew about seeking the kingdom of God first, and how everything else would follow. I carried the scripture in my memory, but I did not carry it in my life. I believed I was faithful, yet I was still anchored to my own understanding of control, provision, and security. I wanted God involved, but I wanted money to remain my safety net. That divided loyalty shaped my decisions more than I cared to admit.

I thought obedience meant effort. I believed doing the right things, showing up, and trying harder would somehow align me with God's will. What I did not see was how deeply I was still negotiating with Him. I wanted blessings without surrender. I wanted direction without relinquishing authority over my own plans. I did not recognize how much money influenced my peace, my fear, and even my prayers.

Eventually, life exposed the truth. I reached moments where my own solutions failed me. I ran out of answers. I ran out of strength. I ran out of options. And in that place, stripped of illusion, I realized something important. God was not asking for improvement. He was asking for honesty. He was not interested in partial trust. He wanted all of it.

That was the beginning of a real transformation.

Letting go of control required humility, and humility did not come naturally to me. I had strong opinions and a quick tongue. I reacted before listening. I defended myself even when there was nothing to defend. Anger lived close to the surface, and I often mistook it for confidence. When I finally asked God to help me change, I did not ask for success or ease. I asked Him to soften me.

That prayer cost me more than I expected. Being softened meant becoming aware of my tone, my words, and my spirit. It meant learning when silence was wiser than speech. It meant listening without preparing a response. It meant acknowledging when I was wrong and letting go of the need to prove myself. That process exposed how often my pride disguised itself as strength.

I failed often. Growth was not a straight line. I said the wrong things. I made decisions I later regretted. But each failure taught me something valuable. Correction became instruction instead of condemnation. Over time, I noticed a shift in how I responded to pressure. I paused more. I listened longer. I spoke with greater care. God was changing me from the inside out.

The world around me was changing too, and not for the better. Everywhere I looked, there was unrest. People were anxious, overwhelmed, and exhausted. Struggle was not isolated to one place or one group. It stretched across borders and cultures. While wealth accumulated rapidly in some hands, others worked harder and fell further behind. It became impossible to ignore how uneven the scales had grown.

Fear thrives in that kind of environment. It whispers that you need to protect yourself at all costs. It tells you to hold tighter, trust less, and look out for your own interests first. I understood that voice well. I had listened to it for years. But faith demands a different response. Trusting God in unstable times requires releasing the illusion that you can secure your future on your own.

I learned what it meant to trust God when resources were limited. When you do not have excess, you learn discernment. You stop acting on impulse. Every decision carries weight. You evaluate what is necessary and what can wait. That kind of living teaches patience and discipline. It forces you to be intentional.

Some people have the ability to purchase whatever they want without hesitation. They rarely have to consider timing or consequence. But for those without that luxury, money becomes a teacher. It reveals priorities. It exposes motives. It shows you the difference between desire and necessity. I learned how to wait. I learned how to say no. I learned how to live without resentment.

I also learned that money does not equal wisdom. I have seen people receive large amounts only to lose it all because they lacked direction. Without discernment, abundance becomes reckless. Without purpose, wealth dissolves. Watching that reinforced something important for me. Provision without guidance is not a blessing. I stopped wishing for excess and started asking for wisdom.

Gratitude replaced ambition. Not ambition for growth, but ambition for accumulation. I no longer dreamed about how much easier life would be with more money. I focused on how faithfully my needs were being met. Sometimes provision arrived quietly. Sometimes it came unexpectedly. But it always came on time. That consistency built trust deeper than any paycheck ever could.

My relationship with others changed as well. I began to see generosity as responsibility rather than obligation. I stopped measuring what I gave against what I had. If someone needed help and I was able to offer it, I did. I no longer evaluated whether they deserved it. Mercy does not require a qualification process.

Giving shifted my perspective. It reminded me that nothing I possess truly belongs to me. Everything is temporary, entrusted rather than owned. When I shared what I had, I did not lose stability. I gained clarity. The fear of not having enough loosened its grip as I watched God replenish what I released.

Time with God became essential, not scheduled. I stopped approaching prayer as a task. I no longer worried about posture or language. I spoke honestly, sometimes sitting, sometimes kneeling, sometimes flat on the floor. What mattered was presence. Communication with God became a place of alignment rather than request.

I realized that faith is not proven by words alone. Hearing scripture without living it changes nothing. Loving others is not theoretical. It requires action. If someone lacked work and I could help connect them, I did. If someone was struggling and I could lighten the load, I stepped in. Service became a natural extension of belief rather than a performance of it.

Looking back, the most profound change was internal. My thinking shifted. My values reordered themselves. I no longer chased the same things or measured success the same way. Peace replaced striving. Trust replaced fear. I understood that seeking the kingdom first was not about sacrifice alone. It was about alignment. That alignment did not give me everything I wanted. It gave me what I needed. Stability without excess. Confidence without arrogance. Security without control. I learned that when God leads, nothing is wasted. Even the hard seasons carried purpose.

This chapter of my life taught me that surrender is not loss. It is freedom. When I released my grip on money, pride, and control, I gained clarity, peace, and direction. Seeking God first reordered everything else. And in that order, I finally found rest.

# Chapter 11:

## The Price of Faith

I learned early that when you speak openly about the Lord, you do not walk the same road with the same crowd for long. It is an inevitable consequence of true transformation. The moment I chose to live my faith aloud instead of keeping it tucked quietly inside a private corner of my soul, I saw a radical shift in the way people looked at me. Some of the very people who once laughed with me began to show a cold curiosity, as if something had gone wrong with me. I heard the whispers when they thought I was out of earshot. They said I had lost my grip on reality. They said I had changed into someone unrecognizable. They said I was no longer the man who fit into their world.

They were right about one thing, I was no longer the same man.

Following Christ carries a steep price that many are unwilling to pay before they begin the journey. Jesus Himself warned that the world hated Him first and would likewise hate those who choose to follow His footsteps. I had read those words many times in the quiet safety of my home, but reading words on a page and living them out in the heat of social rejection are two very different experiences. When that scriptural truth became a physical reality in my life, it was no longer a theoretical verse. It became a weight I had to carry every single day.

I remember one lonely evening when the silence in my house felt heavy. I heard the phone ring, but the ringing stopped before I could answer, and the follow up call never came. I sat in that quietness and recalled all the invitations to parties and gatherings that had suddenly ceased. It was a sobering realization to see that many of the relationships in my life were built entirely on what we did together rather than who we were as individuals. Many of those bonds were held together by habits that were not healthy, while others simply proved to be temporary fixtures meant for a version of me that no longer existed.

I went through long seasons where I lived with total carelessness. I had a rotation of drinking buddies who accompanied me through the nights, and I experienced many moments of indulgence that I was happy. In reality, those moments were designed to numb the pain instead of

healing it. When I finally made the choice to step away from those environments, I naively thought a few people might respect the discipline. Instead, many of them simply moved away from me as if my sobriety and faith were contagious diseases.

It is deeply uncomfortable for someone to stand next to you when you no longer participate in the same behaviors that once connected you. My decision to stop was a mirror they did not want to look into. Without me saying a single word of judgment, my change confronted their lack of change. Rather than pondering why I was moving in a new direction, they opted to distance themselves to protect their own comfort. Initially, I took this personally. I spent nights wondering what I had done wrong to lose friends I had known for years. I questioned if I was becoming too extreme or if I was losing my balance. However, the deeper I walked on this path of faith, the more I understood that this separation was not a punishment from God. It was pruning.

I realized that these people were being driven away from me for a reason that was bigger than my social life. Not everyone is meant to walk with you into the next season of your life. Some people accompany us as companions for a specific phase, but they are not intended to be there for the whole journey. To keep them would be to stay stagnant in the place where they are comfortable.

When I truly got serious about serving the Lord, every pillar of my life began to realign. For years, I had procrastinated with my soul. I would tell myself that I would get serious one day when life was less chaotic. I promised I would commit fully when things calmed down or when I had more time to settle down spiritually. I told the Lord I would dedicate myself as soon as I fixed issues on my own. But that day of self improvement never arrived. Instead, I reached a breaking point where the weight of my own strength was not enough to hold me up.

I found myself crying out in a way I never had before, pleading to the Lord to help me because I simply could not take the pressure anymore. I cried because I was exhausted. I was tired of living a halfway committed life that left me lukewarm and empty. I was weary of trying to manage the complexities of my existence with my own limited wisdom. At that time, I was walking through the wreckage of a failed marriage, and that failure sat on my chest like a lead weight.

I do not blame her for the end of that union. Instead, I take full responsibility for my part in the collapse. There were things I did wrong that I cannot take back. There were words I should have never let past my lips and attitudes I carried that caused lasting damage. The Bible teaches that you reap what you sow, and I experienced that harvest firsthand. The collapse of my marriage forced me to confront the man I had become in the dark. It would have been easy to point fingers and build a narrative where I was the victim of someone else's shortcomings, but deep inside, I knew I had contributed to the fracture. I had to sit with that reality and accept that the pain I felt was the fruit of the seeds I had planted in my own garden.

That realization humbled me in a way that success never could.

All this time, my relationship with the Lord grew deeply personal. It was no longer a theoretical exercise or a Sunday morning routine. My faith began to go deep, reaching parts of my heart that were previously hidden. I began to feel the nudge of correction in moments that seemed small but were actually pivotal. There were times when a sharp comment was on the tip of my tongue during a conflict, and I would feel a clear conviction rise within me. A firm instruction would tell me not to say it and to hold my tongue. It was no more than a whisper, firm and unmistakable.

Sometimes I listened to that warning, and sometimes I did not. When I ignored that inner check and spoke my mind anyway, the damage followed immediately. When I obeyed and stayed quiet, I saw how much destruction was averted by a simple act of restraint. I began to understand that obedience is often about the power of silence in the heat of emotion.

There were also moments when I felt the Lord revealed things to me that were meant for my heart alone. At first, I had the urge to share everything. When you feel you have gained a new insight, it is tempting to broadcast it to the world. But I sensed clearly that not everything given to you is meant for public consumption. Some revelations are private instructions. Some are corrections meant to adjust your course without public embarrassment. Some are simply gifts meant to help you mature in the quiet places. I had to learn the value of discretion.

Serving the Lord is not about talking loudly about Him while living a life of compromise. It is about a perfect alignment between your heart and

mouth. I understand that you can speak all the right spiritual words while your heart remains a thousand miles away. I could say the religious things, but inside I was unsettled and chaotic. I could talk about faith while privately wrestling with pride.

Real devotion required a level of honesty I had never practiced before. I realized that if I was going to serve God with my whole heart, it had to be exactly that, my whole heart. Not just the part that looked good in public or the part that could quote scripture from memory. I had to lay the flawed parts, the stubborn parts, and the wounded parts before Him as well.

Without a firm and daily determination, I would have easily drifted back to my old ways. It is easy to make big, emotional decisions in the middle of a crisis when you are desperate for relief. It is much harder to remain committed when the crisis passes and life becomes ordinary again. I had to decide that I would serve the Lord. I did not make this choice because my life was perfect or because I had a sudden influx of new friends. But, I knew that without Him, I would continue repeating the same broken cycles until there was nothing left of me.

That determination changed me from the inside out.

As I grew serious in my walk, I noticed that the fewer people I had to walk with, the more intimate my relationship with God became. Loneliness is a crossroads. Either it can drive you back to the comforts of your old life or it can push you deeper toward the Lord. I chose the latter. When Friday nights felt quiet and the memories of old gatherings surfaced, I went to my knees in prayer instead. When I felt misunderstood by family members who thought I had become an extremist, I reminded myself that obedience often looks like madness to those who do not share your conviction.

Some of my relatives questioned me openly. They would shake their heads and say I had gone too far this time. They preferred the version of me that was easier to predict and easier to influence. They liked the man who would join in activities that required no accountability and no moral standard. The new version of me made them deeply uncomfortable because my presence now served as a reminder of things they preferred to ignore. I was no longer available for certain conversations. I was no longer entertained by the humor that once made me laugh. I was no

longer willing to compromise my peace just to please the people around me.

At times, their comments hurt more than I wanted to admit. These people knew me my entire life, and their opinions carried a lot of weight. But I had to decide whose voice was going to shape my identity moving forward. If I allowed their skepticism to define me, I would eventually shrink back into the person I used to be. If I allowed the Lord to define me, I could continue moving forward even when I was completely misunderstood.

The deeper I walked with Him, the more I saw that true transformation is not a loud or sudden event. It is a steady, daily process found in the small choices we make when no one watches. It is choosing not to respond in anger when you are insulted. It is choosing not to revisit habits that once controlled your mind. It is choosing to pray when you would much rather complain to anyone who will listen. It is choosing to accept correction instead of defending your ego at all costs.

A refining process happens when you truly surrender your will. It is not a comfortable process because it exposes you to the truth of yourself. In the light of His presence, I saw my own impatience. I saw my pride. I saw how easily I justified behaviors that were destructive. Each revelation was an opportunity to change rather than an excuse to hide. I also learned that being serious about the Lord does not mean being perfect. I was now willing to admit when I was wrong, willing to repent, and to start again afresh every single morning. There were days when I felt strong in my faith and days when I felt incredibly fragile, but my commitment remained the same. I was not turning back.

Looking back at my failed marriage now, I see it as a turning point rather than just a tragedy. It was painful and humbling, but it forced me to examine my life in a way I never would have if things had remained comfortable. I could no longer blame my circumstances or other people. I had to take total ownership. In doing so, I experienced a level of growth that comfort could never have produced.

The more I surrendered, the more clarity I received for the road ahead. It was gradual, not sudden, as if Lord was preparing me for the plan he had for me. I realized, and stopped demanding God to show me the whole path. I began trusting Him with the single step in front of me.

When He corrected me, I listened attentively. When He nudged me to remain silent, I obeyed more readily.

When He impressed something on my heart that was meant only for me, I kept it sacred and did not share it. I began to see that trust is built through the small bricks of daily obedience. The more I obeyed, the more sensitive I became to His direction. It was not about hearing a voice in the wind. It was about cultivating a heart that recognized His guidance in the middle of a busy day. There were moments when I felt an overwhelming peace about a decision and other moments when I felt an inner check that prevented me from moving forward. Learning to discern that difference became the hallmark of my spiritual maturity.

It amazes me how far I have come from the man who used to say he would get serious one day. Today, my faith is not an afterthought or a hobby, but it is the central pillar of my existence. It cost me relationships. It cost me comfort. It cost me the approval of people I once valued deeply. But what I gained is worth far more than anything I lost in the process. I had a peace that does not depend on who stands beside me or who approves of my choices. I gained a clarity about who I am and, more importantly, who I am not. I gained a relationship with the Lord that is rooted in sincerity rather than a religious performance.

I learned that when your heart truly belongs to Him, your entire life eventually reflects that ownership. There are still many challenges, and moments when I must choose obedience over my own impulses. But the foundation has been laid in stone. I no longer serve Him halfway. I no longer delay my commitment for a future season that may never come. I have made up my mind. If that means I have fewer friends, so be it. If that means being misunderstood by my own family, so be it. If that means some people say I have lost my mind, so be it.

My journey was never about impressing anyone, but total surrender. It had been about allowing the Lord to reshape me through the seasons of loss, correction, isolation, and grace. Everything that once seemed like a subtraction from my life was in fact preparation for what was coming. I stand now more grounded than ever before. This is not because my life is flawless or because I have all the answers, but because my heart is finally settled.

I know whom I serve. I know why I serve Him, and I know that come rain or shine, applause or criticism, companionship or solitude, I will continue walking this path with my whole heart.

# I HAVE A STORY *to Tell*

## BOOK SUMMARY

He was told to go home and die.  
But God had other plans.

From the streets of Chicago to the battlefields of life and spirit, *I Have a Story to Tell* is a gripping testimony of one man's journey through danger, illness, and the unseen world of faith.

Michael S. Wheeler recounts the moments that should have ended his life, yet didn't and the divine encounters that changed him forever.

With vivid memories of childhood dreams, supernatural protection, and encounters that defy explanation, this memoir reveals a life shaped by calling, tested by suffering, and sustained by grace.

This is not just a story of survival.

It is a story of purpose.

A story of calling.

A story that will challenge what you believe about life, faith, and the power of God.