

# 2005 Missions Conference - Session 5

by Michael Beene

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*Michael Beene's sermon highlights the importance of faith, community support, and the willingness to serve in the face of challenges in missions work.*

**Duration:** 1:08:08

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:10, Matthew 5:16, Matthew 7:7-8, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 6:8-15, Hebrews 13:5, James 1:27

**Topics:** "Faithfulness", "Divine Protection"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares about a family who has faced a difficult year but has remained faithful to God. They emphasize that walking with God does not guarantee an easy life, but it does promise victory. The speaker also expresses gratitude for the prayers and intercession of the church, acknowledging that it has played a significant role in their journey. The sermon concludes with a story about how the speaker and his wife met and the miraculous protection they experienced in a dangerous situation.

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## Transcript

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It's about 21 years ago now, is it, Michael? Michael Bean was two years saved and he was at a missions conference. He heard about the need in Central America. He grabbed his toolbox and his suitcase and left.

And he's been there ever since, traveling throughout that part of the world. The Lord has used him very, very powerfully. He gave no thought to his own future, to the needs of young men, his own life.

He just left and said, I'm going there. The area was at war at the time that he left. And it's quite exciting stories of how God spared his life time and time again.

When he really should have been killed, the Lord spared his life. Went into areas where there was fighting going on and sat in places where people were intent on killing him and tried to share with them the gospel of Jesus Christ. And time and again, he was miraculously delivered.

There was also a young lady who had a call of God in her life and headed over to the same area of the world. And neither of them really thinking that they're going to meet a life partner. You know, when you follow God, you'd be amazed what the Lord will do.

And one night Rocky was ministering in a little village and it was raining out and in on a donkey wearing a poncho came this man. It's like a heavenly romance novel, it really is. And he rode into the village and they set eyes on one another and they knew, this is my husband, this is my wife, they've been together ever since.

They have three fine, lovely children who are all following. Four, you have four children, sorry. Three girls and one boy, I forgot Travis.

How could I forget Travis? At least because three were here recently. They have four lovely children all following in their footsteps, all with a passion and a heart for God. God has tremendously blessed this family.

You're going to find tonight that this last year has been a very hard year for them. There's no promise that when you walk with God that it's going to be easy. But the promise is that it will be victorious.

It may not be easy, but you will know the victory. You're going to hear that story tonight, I'm sure. We are so happy to be here.

Alive. Amen. As we prayed when we were asked to come here and share from God's heart a message for you, we realized that the message that God wanted us to share is you.

You are the message. Times Square Church is the message. The people are the message.

And I want my wife to share. She wants to thank you because if it wasn't for your intercession and if it wasn't for your prayers, we would not be here. And I asked my wife to come up and share.

Just a minute. Just for a minute. No, I really want to say to you, when I went down as a single girl, I faced death, and I had my trials.

As married, we faced death, and the guerrillas came looking to kill us, and we had our trials. But the biggest trial of my life was when I had my babies, and we faced death. You know, like the song saying, come on, let's go to heaven, the song that was being sung.

You know, you feel like that. You want to see heaven. You're ready to go home.

You're ready to pour your life out. You know that this life is going by too quickly to do nothing for eternity. But when you have the children in your arms, it was a very hard thing for me to put them on the altar.

And I want you to know that when the drug lords came looking to kill us because the marijuana fields were burned after they killed one of our precious brothers in our little village. And these drug lords wanted to kill us. It was so hard for me.

My children, I asked them, I said, we can leave. We've been here 17 years. If I were to die, or if Daddy was to die, and you were to think Mommy and Daddy loved the ministry more than they loved me, then we will leave.

We'll leave right now. And my little Chelsea, the little blondie that you saw up there, she said, Mommy, if we die, we just go to heaven. And then Tiffany, she said, Mom, if we leave them, who will be there for them? We can't leave them, Mom.

Let's just go back. And it was so hard for me. But I want you to know that the strength that I had in my darkest hour is because I knew I did not walk alone in my dark.

That you were right there with me. You guys were praying for me. I could not, in my mind's eye, when I was all alone in that mountain village, I couldn't look back across the border and think of any church that would really be outside of themselves and would grab my broken, fear-stricken heart and carry it to the throne room of God like Times Square Church.

And I want to thank you. I want to thank you. When I was there at the prayer meeting Thursday, I felt like the army was with me.

I felt like the family of God carried me. You guys leave this church with your hearts and your passion, and you're going across the borders, and you're going to the nations, and you're pulling down strongholds. And if it wasn't for you, I don't know how I could have obeyed God.

So I just want to thank you so much for carrying us in your hearts and praying for us. Your prayers did mightily for us. Amen.

Amen. Well, we're not from Wall Street. More like Wal-Mart.

When we went to Guatemala, we didn't know they spoke Spanish, but when we got there, we learned real quick we had to learn another language. And I've learned something. When you go to a foreign country at age 20 and you spend the rest of your life there, you don't become bilingual.

You become illiterate in two languages. So please forgive me while I butcher the English language. There's a scripture that Paul says, But if I am even being poured out as a drink offering, upon the sacrifice and service of your faith.

Being poured out as a drink offering, as a sacrifice and service of your faith. Tonight, I hope that God would help me articulate in some manner, and by His Holy Spirit, the gratitude that Rocky and I have, and my children have, of the privilege of knowing you. The honor of being part of your body.

Like Pastor Carter said, this has been the hardest time of our entire life. And our testimonies are not of the thousands that have come to the Lord. It's not of how many churches we've planted.

How many nations we've touched the gospel with. On the contrary, we feel like soldiers that have been drug off the battlefield, still in their suit of armor. Beat and battered with spear holes in it.

Ripped and torn. And drug up on this platform. But if you open the little eyepiece, I'll scream out with every atom in my body, we've got the victory and we're winning the battle.

We are winning the battle. We are not losing. A long time ago, when we first moved in that village, I was pacing back and forth after two natives pinned me against the wall with machetes and were going to kill me.

And I'm shaking so hard, I have a gallon of gasoline I siphoned out for the generator. I'm shaking so hard it's going everywhere. But I'm trying to look them in the eyes and say, Guys, let's go in the house and have a cup of coffee.

And I will kill you. And after that, I went in the house and for days I worried and I fretted over losing my life. And I'm pacing back and forth saying, God, God, what's going to happen to your work? What's going to happen to the mission if they kill me? What's going to happen to the gospel? And God comforted me by a few words.

He said, Don't worry, son. If they kill you, I'll send somebody else. It was about the 10th year that we were there.

We had two churches started. And some of the elders that we raised up and brought to the second church to start leading there, we asked them to share. And one of the elders is pacing, you know, talking, sharing a testimony.

Everybody in the mountains held that no one speaks. And he's up there giving a testimony. But he kept looking at Rocky and I sitting there on the front row.

And he kept looking down at us and kind of like excusing himself. And he finally leaned over and said, You've never heard this. I'm sorry, but I've got to share this testimony.

I said, Go ahead, brother. And he's up there. He said church to the congregation.

He said that he was from the other village from the other mountaintop. He said when the missionaries first came here, they pitched a tent on top of the mountain. We were scared to death of them.

We just knew they had come here to kill our children and make soap out of them or to eat them or to do us harm. We didn't trust them. And for three years.

The men of the village would get together and plan and come up with ideas on how to kill us and how to get rid of us before we started killing them. For three years, the men would plan on how to kill us. And every single time that they came up with a plan, one of their children would be deathly sick or their wives.

And they'd say, Guys, guys, wait, wait, wait. Let's let's see. Maybe they can help just a minute.

Let's don't kill them tonight. Let's wait. And they would bring their kids.

We walked in this one little church and this guy was trembling and shaking and a little home meeting. And he was saying, My wife had twins, Jeremiah and Isaiah, and Jeremiah's home sick. He's going to die.

He'll probably be dead before we get there. We walked into this little hut and sat down on the log to hear this testimony. God gave us twins because he's taken Jeremiah home, he said.

And we walked up and we said, Can we say something? And they said, Sure. We said, You don't know us. We're like Martians from another planet.

We live in another country far, far away from you. But God touched our hearts and he said, Go. He said, Go.

As ambassadors, go to Guatemala. And then we prayed and we sought God to this mountaintop. And then we stumbled and tripped down this trail for four hours to get here just in time to hear your story.

And if you will trust us and you will give us Jeremiah, we will do everything we can to save your child. They went home and got him. He was so sick that in our baby's car seat, I was listening to him breathe.

I'm driving in the middle of the night, four-wheeling off the mountain all the way to the capital, trying to find a hospital that would take this kid who was so bad. And he would stop breathing. And I'd reach over my shoulder and shake the car chair, shake the baby chair.

And he would gasp for air and breathe some more. I went from hospital to hospital and they said, No, we cannot accept a baby that's sick in the middle of the night. If he dies, we'll be fired.

We can't. The doctors are gone. We cannot do it.

The fourth hospital, I said, Lady, if you send this baby home, it will die because you are sending it away. And this lady knew what to do. She knew what this baby needed, oxygen and IV and everything that it needed.

So she took it in. Six weeks later, six weeks later, with a brand new pair of jeans and rubber boots and a new little baseball cap, we brought him back to that village. But little by little, God started confirming his words with signs and wonders.

I love to preach. I love to preach the gospel. When I first got there, I got ready.

I'm ready to hit the door and preach. And I had everything I needed. I was ready to go from hut to hut and share Jesus.

And just before I left, God said, Put your Bible away. I'm like, God, put my Bible away. I'm here to preach.

He said, You're going to preach. But like Pastor Carter says, sometimes your life is the only gospel they will ever read. Sometimes your life is the only gospel.

And that's what God told us to do. And for three years, we just helped the widows. And they would ask us why.

And we would say, Because God loves you. God hears your prayers. God sees your needs.

There's a little comparative story in the Bible, a parable, but it's a comparative of the mustard seed. The mustard seed is the primary focus of the parable, is that the mustard seed is like the kingdom of God. So we're comparing the mustard seed to the kingdom of God.

And the Lord is showing us that the mustard seed, in spite of how small and insignificant it is, if that seed is planted, if that seed dies, if that seed is buried, then the fruit of that, something brand new, something totally different, something completely new, a huge, beautiful tree it will produce. But it has to be buried. The kingdom of God, the gospel message is about you and me receiving the free gift.

Not based on what you did or didn't do. Not because of the great talents and gifts that you might have. Not because of what you can do for God.

But because you're willing to allow God to plant your life in a lost and dying world. If you're willing to allow God to spend you, if you're willing to lay down your agendas, if you're willing to be planted for God, you will be used in great and mighty ways. The story is the mustard seed.

The story is about baptism. The baptism of going under the water and coming up a brand new life is the story of the kingdom of God and the advancement of the kingdom of God. That it's really not about my ministry.

In fact, it has nothing to do with my ministry. It has everything to do with my willingness to be planted in God's kingdom. It's you and I willing to lay down our lives.

It's not about, and believe me, God heals. God heals. God has healed me so many times, I don't even pray for healing and God heals me.

I don't even ask him to heal me and he heals me. Why? Because he wants me to get up and go and serve him and carry his message. It's amazing the miracles that God will do.

God wants us to lay down our lives like in baptism. You know, back in the old days of the crusades and stuff like that, the people would get baptized. The soldiers, they would baptize them, but they carried their sword.

They would pull their sword, walk into the water and be baptized and they would keep their sword out of the water. They wanted their whole being to be baptized and be given over to God, but not their sword. But not their sword.

Sometimes in America, we hold on to things. Sometimes in America, we might walk into the waters of baptism. We might step into the kingdom of God.

But there's something that we want to hold out of the water. There's something we want to keep in our hand and grip like our billfold. Maybe it's not a sword.

Maybe it's our billfold. Maybe it's our job. Maybe it's our retirement.

Maybe it's the right of what we want to do and how we want to minister to God. Maybe it's where our ministry. We don't know.

And we want to share with you tonight, because you are the ministry. You are the message. We want to share with you tonight of all that you mean to us.

All that this leadership means to us. You have no idea. But these missionaries, they look polished.

And you know, Peter is doing a fantastic and glorious work. And Sherry and Roger. But we go through fierce, fierce battles all the time.

Pastor Dave has suffered the loss of his family, the sicknesses and diseases. What if we decide that's enough? We don't deserve this. Look what we're doing for you, God.

Why me? What if we decided to say that? We have no rights on this earth. We have no guarantees. The missionary evangelist, Stephen, steps up right after Pentecost and has a glorious ministry.

Preaching under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And is standing there. Before you know it, the crowds begin to feel accusations and feel condemnation and feel the conviction of the word.

And they say, let's drag them out of town. To get out of town, it wasn't from here to yonder. Oh, you know, let's step over here and stone them.

No, they took him out of town. They beat him. They kicked him.

They mocked him. They spit on him. They drug him.

Until they got out of their town. And then they began to stone him. And with his gaze focused on God.

And with his heart focused on God. His last words as the rocks came crashing into his body. Was Lord, do not hold this against them.

And standing in the crowd and receiving honor. Was the man Saul. The king of murderers.

That left there. And ravaged the church. Running from house to house.

Dragging out mothers. And fathers. To beat them and kill them.

I ask you, did Stephen live less of a life than myself? Was he less of a Christian because he died? Or was his blood and his soul so precious. That God called him home. To be by his throne.

And to experience the paradigm shift in history. When the gospel began going out from that day forth to the Gentiles. Because they were not considered worthy of the messengers that were being sent to them.

Or Paul rotting in prison. Paul in jail. Lonely.

Cold. Rejected. Having just walked past people and people being healed.

Miracles on every side. Philip in jail. Miraculously delivered.

He said he was beaten. And he was in there singing praises unto God. Would I be singing praises unto God? Or would I be saying, God, I don't deserve this.

I don't deserve this. I want you to know, I'm a baby. I'm going to tell you, reality is.

If I even hit my thumb, I scream. I am so spoiled. God has blessed me so much.

One time we were building the house and the very last nail of the whole house. The last nail. I'm reaching over on the ladder, reaching over and trying to nail this nail and holding onto the beam with my hand.

Wham! I hit my thumb. And I came off of that ladder. Screaming.

You thought I was a pagan in the street. God, I can't believe this. Look at this thumb.

I can't believe this. Screaming and throwing a fit. Like God picked a hammer up and nailed my hand to the wall.

Blaming God. It's like my father, when I was a kid, my father would get so mad. He'd start cussing and yelling at the motor of the car.

Hitting the motor and calling it names like he can hear them. And here I am acting the same way. And God just sitting there watching me like a little spoiled brat.

So I know what it feels like when things bad happen. But I want you to know that it happens to all of us. All of us.

All the time. And the gospel that's being sent out of here. The gospel from Mount Zion.

You don't think Sister Catherine suffers attack? She's raising up mighty young men and women of God. And sending them to the nations. Equipped and ready for battle.

Her whole passion is that when they go out they know the voice of God. That they know the voice of God. You don't think she suffers attack? Spiritually? Physically? All the time? The loss of your loved ones? Why God? Why? Brothers and sisters, sometimes I wonder if maybe our doctrine.

Maybe our gospel in America. Maybe our gospel is a little bit off. Maybe in China.

Or when they sit there. Or in countries where there's Islam. Where when they stand up they're rejected.

They're prisoned. They're killed. My concern is how many people did they lead to the Lord? Knowing that they're leading them to their death.

Knowing that they're sending them out to be martyrs. Maybe our gospels. My gospel.

Maybe it was just a little off. God heals. God saves.

God delivers. Through our faith and the word of our testimony. As we stand.

Rocky and I, like Rocky was sharing. We raised up for 17 years leaders. This one young man.

I led him to Jesus. An ex-soldier. I led him to Jesus.

He was drinking and wild and terrorizing the village. Literally. Went to stop him one night at a family's home.

Because he had his 9mm out shooting holes all through the roof. And one of the family members ran down to me. Carlos is going wild.

Go over there and stop him. Go stop him. And I'm like.

Amen. Where is he? But by the time I got there, thank God he was gone. Thank God.

But eventually I caught up with him when he was sober. And I led him to the Lord. He accepted Jesus.

We baptized him down in the river. A year later he married a wonderful, wonderful sweet sister. In the church.

A year later. I started discipling him to be a pastor. Training him.

To baptize with me. To preach. To the point to where he preached more than I preached.

He was my prominent leader. But four years later we noticed he was showing up late. He started turning cold.

He still came to all the services but late. He wasn't the leader that he used to be. We kept going.

Carlos, is something wrong? Is there something wrong? No. No, I'm fine. My other best friend.

Pablo. Wonderful family. You couldn't sit down with them without laughing and hooting and hollering.

Just a wonderful, wonderful family. My best friend. My best friend.

A series of events happened where all my workers. I have a whole bunch of workers that do construction. And the accountant that we hired and trained.

Went down and couldn't deposit my money into the account to write all the checks for the workers. And he was fearful of the workers. So he gave them all checks.

And one day I'm walking around and they're all walking around with my check. I said, who gave you that check? Oh, Antonio. I said, well give it back.

There's no money in that account. Give me that check. Anybody else? They all held the checks.

I picked up all their checks. I said, guys, there's no money in the account. I don't know why he gave you those checks.

He knows better than that. So the workers started getting upset with me. Thinking I'm hitting them in the head or something.

And I'm like, I will go down and deposit money and you will get your check as soon as there's money. So that when you walk four hours to town, there'll be money there. But they didn't understand.

They got a little upset. They didn't come to work. So along comes my best friend.

He goes, that's all right, Michael. I can grab, I can get workers. There's no problem.

Let me get my brother and let me get so and so and so and so. So we grabbed 20 other men and put them all to work. Well, Carlos, which also worked for me, he pastored, but he also did special jobs like welding and different stuff.

And he didn't, he didn't show up. He didn't come. He wasn't even one of the group.

But somehow the devil convinced him that I fired him. Now, how am I going to fire my pastor when I'm providing him income and he's ministering? He wasn't even a part of the system. But somehow the devil convinced him that he was fired.

So he didn't come. He didn't come. And he thought it was because of Pablo.

So about three days later, he preached. He preached this wonderful message. And he went home.

He put his Bible away. And him and his brother got their nine millimeters and got their machetes that are four feet long. Sharpen them up.

And went to Pablo's house. And the only reason I'm sharing this is because we know that you love us. And that you're a family.

And that you've been interceding for us. So excuse me. They called him out.

Come outside. Pablo, the police are here to see you. Come outside.

And when he walked out, they started shooting around. And he fell to the ground. And when he did, both of them jumped on top of him and started hacking him with their machetes.

I was 200 yards away unloading my pickup. It was dark. And I heard the shots.

I jumped out of the back of my truck. And I ran to where the gate is of the mission. And I could hear people wailing and screaming.

I thought they were laughing. And I thought maybe it was fireworks. So I went and got back in the truck.

And one of the local men were helping me. He said, Michael, that wasn't fireworks. That was gunshots.

So I jumped back out of the truck and started running down the road. And I met his son. He's screaming.

And I ran with him as fast as I could. And there is his mom and dad, his wife, his three kids, and his brothers and sisters that all live around him, wailing and screaming. And he's sitting in a heap with his arm laying on the floor next to him.

He's screaming. Blood is going everywhere. And I reached down and grabbed him by the face.

And I said, Pablo, who did this to you? And with all the sadness and pain of deception and disbelief, he said, Pastor Carlos and his brother. I said, no, there's no way. There's no way.

There's no way he could do this to you. Michael, he called me out by his voices. They called me out.

I knew who they were. They talked to me face to face. We picked him up and held him together and put him in the back of the truck to take him to town.

We held his bleeding spots and stopped the bleeding and got him all the way to the hospital. But he died. And when we took his body in a regular box out of wood boards, not a casket like we use, but a box.

I took him in the back of my truck. When I tied in his casket, because he went everywhere with me, he taught me to tie the loads on my truck. He taught me knots.

He taught me everything about the mountains. I thought, Pablo, this is our last trip together. And I brought him back up that mountains to a whaling community, to a whaling family.

And at the viewing at the family, his old father, his mom, first house I ever went to when I went there, gave me tortillas every single time I went there. And I sat down on the ground outside of the house and he wept and he said, Michael, I'll tell you why they did this. And I said, why? Why? He said, because they're growing marijuana.

And I'm like, not my pastor, not my pastor. Not the man that is leading the last 17 years of my life. Not the man that I've married and baptized and disciplined.

Not the man that I put in leadership. He said, I'll show you. So the next day, he took me up the mountains.

Not him, but his other son. And we walked into a big field of marijuana. And I was so mad.

I was so hurt. I pulled up one of those marijuana trees, shook the dirt off, put it under my coat with just the roots sticking up, and went back to the funeral. The box was just lowered down into the hole.

The whole community was there. And I said, I will tell you why Pablo's dead. And I pulled out the marijuana tree.

And I said, because you did not stand against this. You did not make a stand. Pablo, which we all love, is not the last person.

He's the first. And if you don't make a stand with me, they will kill you one by one. They will kill every man and woman and child if we don't stand.

And I threw the marijuana plant on top of his casket. And I said, village, you have to make a decision. You have to make a decision.

I went back to the mission house, and we managed to get a cell phone call out. We called the embassy. We called the DEA.

The DEA said, we don't want nothing to do with this. This is not our field. It's not our department.

And, you know, I didn't know what to do. Rocky picked up the phone and said, we know senators. We know senators.

We know governors. We know people. Isn't there something you can do? Well, they said, well, as a matter of fact, we can.

We can. So they managed from the top of the top of the whole situation, because we couldn't go to the locals. We couldn't go to the police department.

In fact, when I went down with Pablo and brought the police up, we got Carlos from his house. We said, you get here right now. Rocky kept him in the mission house and said, you've got some explaining to do.

Everybody's accusing you of this. And Michael's coming back. And we need to know if you did this.

So you're going to stay here until the police get here. The policeman that I brought up stood right in front of him. And Pablo's children said, this man killed my father.

This man cut him with his machete and killed him. And I said, isn't that enough? Can't you take him to jail on that? The policeman didn't even take him to jail. And when the policeman finally left, he told the brothers and everybody else there, he said, you better shut up.

I know people in the police. I know people in government. I know everybody.

You better just go back to your houses and keep your mouths quiet. So all of a sudden, the spirit of fear came on that village and they all just shut up. The son cowered and asked forgiveness from the guy that killed him.

So we went over everybody into the police department and we told them what happened. Eventually, the local police department came up and they removed the whole drug field. They removed it, eradicated the whole thing.

But that was like flicking a wasp nest. It's like poking your hand in a honeybee. And Rocky put out a little email to everybody here.

And that's when you began to pray. That's when you began to intercede. I managed to get them on a phone call.

And they were going to Canada or something and I shared with them and y'all started interceding and praying. Lo and behold, one day, Jason Conlin called. He was an ex-Marine.

He called, what's going on down there? I told him. He said, what do you need? What can I do? I said, I don't know. You just have to pray.

Well, we hung up and then 20 minutes later he calls back. He says, nope. He says, I'm coming down there.

I'm coming down. He flew down. We picked up a day, a dental team.

We picked a dental team and took them up there. Jason went along with us. The very night that we arrived, we did dentistry until 11 o'clock at night, until we finished the last patient.

And 11 o'clock at night, two truckload of policemen pulled up. Some with uniforms, some without, with machine guns and all kinds of heavy guns. And the guy that was with them was the policeman that let Carlos go.

And Jason's running all through there and they're getting scared. Here's an American Marine running all behind them and looking in the flashlights and radios and talking and stuff. And we need you to go up the mountains with us, Michael.

We need you to go up and check into something that happened, a situation up there. And Jason says, this is a setup. This is an ambush.

They're going to kill us. They're going to kill you. You can't go up there.

And Jason, come here for a minute. Come here for a minute. And we go around behind the building.

And I gave Jason a 9mm that I had when he arrived. So he had this 9mm, but, you know, we didn't really think about anything. And so he says, what do you think? And I said, I don't know.

And he pulls his 9mm and pops the clip out. And there's only two bullets. And he goes, two bullets? Two bullets? And I said, man, you're a Marine with two bullets.

I'm a missionary with God. We got the victory. And, you know, Jason, he just shook his head and laughed and said, all right, let's go.

Of course, I went in to pass that by my wife, and she didn't agree with that plan. We were going to go up in the mountains with these guys and find out what was going to happen, what their intentions were. But Rocky said, no, that's not a good idea.

So I came back and I said, guys, I said, this is a total ambush. I said, I'm not going to go out into the mountains with you. I'm not going to go up in there.

So the dentist and the family and the whole village, by then the whole village was there. So they were, like, getting scared. So they backed off.

They stopped. Well, Jason called back to this church and talked to Pastor Carter. And Pastor Carter said, hire a security company.

And we don't know what to do. We're walking around in a daze. We don't know what to do.

So all of a sudden, Jason's flying in with helicopters and they're landing on top of the mountains. And here comes truckloads of people with uniforms and machine guns and helmets. And I'm in this chopper.

We step out and here's the brother-in-law of the drug lord running up to me. And I grab him and turn around. And he goes, what is this all about? He's thinking there's war on the horizon against the drug lords.

And I said, no. I said, we Americans don't do real well when you try to kill us. We don't want war.

We want peace. But now on the other side, in our hearts, I'm crawling around the floor at night. Every little noise, I'm crawling through the house.

I'm looking through the window. I leave the windows open so that I can crawl through the dark house and look out and see who's coming up. I take a bath with a nine millimeter on the bathtub.

And I'm reluctant to go under and wash my hair because I'm thinking they're going to come barging through my bedroom door. But the spirit came on me. And I want you to know that in spite of all of that, when we would fall in doubt and despair, and we would take a knee behind a rock or behind a log in battle, and we would shake with every atom in our body, we would hear the rumble.

We would feel the vibration. And we would look back and see the cloud of dust over the horizon of the prayers of the saints, of the army of God of intercession from your church, from your leadership. And it would be like a mighty wind that would come and encourage us to stand up and fight the fight and stay the course.

We never let, we never lowered the flag. We never lowered the flag. Three weeks later, we had a change of government, a new president, a new elected chief of police, a spirit-filled man that had long hair and a Harley.

His first day on the job, he fired 85 policemen that were involved in drug lord dealings. A week later, Rumsfeld comes to Guatemala to talk about the problem with drugs in Guatemala and how much they wanted to help Guatemala if they'd straighten up their country. The whole police department was recycled overnight.

And after it was all said and done and the storm passed, we're so glad that we didn't lower the flag. We're so glad that we didn't tell the church, sorry, but we're out of here. I can go somewhere else and preach.

Not long after that, we're doing a fireworks display, and I don't even like fireworks. And we start handing little fireworks, phosphate fireworks that fly through the air to all the kids. And we don't give them very many.

We don't want them to hurt themselves. So I go in the house every now and then and load my whole shirt up with them and go out. We're talking about hundreds of them.

And I hand them to the kids. And I walk out of the house fully loaded, and bam, one of them lands in my front pocket. Phosphorus.

And they all lit up together. And I'm pulling and trying to get out from under this thing. And the flame is so hot, I put my hand to stop the flames from getting in my face.

And Tiffany, my oldest daughter, is standing there. Nobody knows what to do. The natives are standing there.

And just when I'm about to fall and pass out, my daughter says, Help them to the locals. And 20 natives grabbed me from every side and jerked the fire off of my body. And my whole chest, there's a big hole all the way through to the muscle in my chest.

My hand split from my thumb all the way to here. It looked like a sausage that you left on the grill too long. It split.

My fingernails buckled up. My whole hand, all of the skin, all layers peeled up. And the pain was so intense that I would shudder.

I would shake. And I couldn't stand the pain. And it would come in 45 seconds like a woman going through contractions.

And then it would release for 15 seconds. And then the same contraction would hit me 45 intense seconds. And we're on a mountain four hours from civilization.

And I look in the eyes of my wife and I grit my teeth and I just shake to keep from screaming. And she said, I'll drive you right now. I said, No.

Sit next to me. Michael Gonzalez, you drive me. Drive me off this mountain.

And we started for the first hour and a half to civilization. It was like my hand was in the fire and I couldn't pull it out. 45 seconds.

And then it would release and I would say something to my wife. It's okay. It's all right.

It's all right. Michael's okay. Don't drive fast, Michael.

Just be careful. Just be careful. And then 45 seconds of severe pain.

It was so bad I couldn't stand it. I couldn't bear it. Do you know the one thing that set me free? The one thing that gave me comfort? The one thing that helped me survive that? Through those 45 seconds, I had

to choose to leave my body.

I had to choose to focus on something. Do you know what I focused on? And I'm not making this up. I focused on Greg.

And I interceded over him. I could feel his face. I prayed over his ministry, his life.

And then I would go to Todd. And I know his son. I know his wife.

And I would pray, God, touch them. Oh, God, bless them. I started going through the choir and touching them, embracing them through these contractions.

And it gave me life. It helped me survive the pain. We've been through the worst time of our lives.

We walked in to come to this conference. And I walked back to Pastor Neal's office. And he was saying, hey, how's it going? I'm like, I'm doing great.

How are you doing? And as we talked, behind his desk, there was a picture on the wall of a blazing storm in the open seas, and a dark sky, and a shift that the sails were so full that they were almost ripping. And as I talked, I never even said to Pastor Neal anything about it. But God began the ministry of restoring my heart and my soul.

And God started saying, your sails are ripped. Your sails are torn. Your sails are down.

And the storms are blazing and blowing. But I brought you here to mend your sails. I brought you home to fix your sails.

And God began a ministry through that picture. And one by one, our times with your pastors, one by one, they began to mend us, to speak life into us, and to speak hope into us, and to say, well done, to encourage us. We go to Pastor P's house.

He opens his Bible. He says, God is speaking to me. God has given me life.

And you know what it makes me want to do? If I fall off of the wood that's stacked around my martyr's cross, my prayer is that I can crawl back up that wood pile, that they don't break my arm so I can embrace that cross, and that God gives me the privilege one day of dying for Him. And I'm here to tell you that when or if that happens, my spirit will be gazed at my Lord and Savior. And He will be standing at the right hand of the Father.

And He will be reaching out His hand and saying, Come, that is what you mean to us. Church, that is what you mean to us in the battles. And that's what you mean to Dr. Albee.

That's what you mean to Peter. To all the rest of us. It's our joy to be here.

But God brought us here to be healed through you. Through you. Through your commitment.

So let's receive a gospel. Let's receive the gospel. Let's allow God, like the mustard seed, to plant our lives in His kingdom.

Thank you for the privilege of being here. Hallelujah. Let's stand together.

Let's give God thanks. Give Him thanks. Give Jesus thanks tonight.

He's an awesome God. He keeps us. Hallelujah.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Just remain standing with me.

Don't move. It's such a holy moment right now in the house. As God, who knows what God is speaking to so many hearts and lives tonight.

A message like this. God at multiple levels is speaking hope into you. You may not be on a mission field in Guatemala.

You may be getting on an A train or the C train or the E train and going on into Queens. And knowing that you've got to get off and go into some place where drug lords are standing on your corner. You may not be facing it in Guatemala.

You may be facing it in Queens. In the tenement building you live. You might be facing it when you go on the street down back into Jersey or Connecticut.

Who knows at the multiple levels that God is speaking hope into you. That if He can keep a missionary in the severest conditions in Guatemala, He can keep you in the Bronx. He can keep you in Manhattan.

He can keep you in Queens and Brooklyn and Staten Island, Connecticut, New Jersey. Beloved tonight, you need to. This is a simple altar call.

You need to get out of your place where you're standing right now. And you need to come to this altar. And you need to say, Jesus, keep my life.

I give it to you. Keep it in the palm of your hand. Step right out.

Right now. Just get out of your seats. And you come to this altar right now.

In the annex, we'll wait for you. Just get out of your seats. Just step out.

You come to this altar. You need. You may be facing marital, financial, who knows what difficulties.

And you think you're going down. The message is singular tonight. God will keep you.

God alone will keep you. He'll hold you in the palm of his hand. And the promise of Hebrews will be true to you.

I will never leave you nor forsake you. I'll never leave you. If you don't know Jesus Christ as your Savior, just step right to this altar.

Step out of your seats. If you don't know Jesus, just come to this altar. I'm going to pray for you tonight.

Let's sing a song. Come real tight. There's going to be a lot of people coming to this altar that need Jesus to keep them.

Step out of your seats. If you don't know Jesus, we're going to pray for you tonight. If you need God to keep you, you come.

How many of you here tonight would say, Pastor Neal, I don't know Jesus. I've heard of him. I was even maybe raised in a religious environment.

But never, never have I received Jesus into my life to be my Lord and Savior. If that is you tonight and you want to do that, I'm going to pray for every person here who wants God just to keep them. Because that's the altar call.

But I want to ask you tonight, if you've never said, Jesus, I might have been raised a Catholic, a Methodist, a Presbyterian, a Jewish person, Muslim. It doesn't matter. But I've never said, Jesus, come into my life.

Take control of my heart. But I want to do that tonight. I'm going to ask you to do one simple thing.

If that is you and won't embarrass you, all I ask you tonight, just put your hands straight up and keep it up. Just put it straight up. If that's you.

See those hands going. Put your hands straight up. Keep it up.

If you want Jesus in your heart, put your hands straight up. Don't be ashamed. Put it straight up.

Keep your hand up. We're going to pray. I'm going to pray for you.

The balcony. Just put your hands straight up. See those hands? Yeah.

Okay. Let's pray with these who want to receive Jesus into their life. Pray the simple prayer with me and Jesus will come into your life.

Lord Jesus, I acknowledge tonight I am a sinner. If I die tonight, I go to hell. Because I don't have you in my life.

But I ask you to forgive me of my sin. And now, Lord Jesus, I invite you to come into my life and live in me and be my God. Tonight, I am a forgiven person and I have Jesus in my life.

I receive you and I believe and I confess with my mouth that Jesus Christ is my Lord. And I am saved and on my way to heaven right now. And I give you thanks in Jesus' name.

Amen. Give him thanks for that now, beloved. Amen.

For the rest of you at this altar call, raise your hand to Jesus. You want God to keep you. Lord Jesus, let me pray for you.

Lord Jesus, these are men and women here tonight who have responded to a very powerful story. But it's not a story. It is just simply a testimony of the keeping power of God.

And that, Lord, these are men and women here tonight that need you to keep them in the palm of your hand. Lord, their situation is not Guatemala, but it's the Bronx. It's Manhattan.

It's Queens, Brooklyn. It's Staten Island. It's difficulties.

It's hurts. It's pains. It's marriages that are breaking down.

It's drugs in the community. Lord, it's a multiplicity of fears and concerns that they have. But this night, they place their self into the hand of God.

The one who made them is the one who will keep them from this night onwards. Give them that assurance in Jesus' name. Amen.

Hallelujah. Don't move. Now that you've got a touch from God, we're going to invite Michael and Rocky Bean to come stand here.

Pastor Carter, our elders, we're going to anoint them with oil. God told me, I'm sending you that painting. I give it to you this night.

It's going to Guatemala. It's going on your wall. Florida.

It's going to Florida. Wherever you want it. You can sail in that thing.

Just put it on the water. You can sit on it. It's yours.

A remembrance of your healing tonight. In Jesus' name. Father, with the anointing of this oil and the laying on of our hands, Lord, we acknowledge you to be the God of restoration.

Oh, the one who pours in when we've poured out. And you promised to be an everlasting supply. You said out of our inward parts would flow a river of living water.

God, thank you. I feel in my heart, we all feel it, that you are speaking. Well done, my faithful son, my faithful daughter.

Father, we just thank you that by the simple act of prayer and anointing and laying on our hands that you are restoring everything that the enemy has tried to take away. And, God, you're going to give them a brand new vision, a brand new heart, a brand new understanding, a brand new authority. Lord, you're going to take them into a deeper understanding of the realm of the Holy Spirit, and you're going to give their words authority when they speak, oh, God, of your name.

Father, I thank you for this with all my heart. God, we praise you tonight that you brought Michael and Rocky here to bless us, but that they might be restored. We ask you to put your hand tonight, Jesus, on their children, and thank you for these children that have stood in the faith of their parents.

Thank you for this village that saw how you divinely protect your children and were encouraged, oh, God, at the display of your power. Lord, we thank you for this in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

Amen. Hallelujah. Folks, you have to know something.

I've got to tell you this. I've just got to tell you this before we sing again. Those villagers had never seen a helicopter, and Michael and Rocky were telling them that God will protect those who stand for truth, and they needed a visible display, and when those helicopters came up the mountain and those soldiers got off, they saw how God protects his children.

Hallelujah. Oh, give God a shout of glory tonight. Give him a shout of glory.

Oh, God, we lift our hearts to you. We offer you our lives that you might use us to care for those this world has cast aside. You've invited us to serve you, but you command us to be clean and to take your call to purity for what it really means to be uncolluded by this world and to seek your holy face, to be a people of compassion, vessels of your grace.

Oh, religion. Oh, religion. Unleashed by you, before you.

Lord, is this. To love me you're fine And to help the widow in distress God will lift our hearts to you We offer you our lives That you might use us And to care for a ghost whose soul has cast aside Sometimes your word confronts me Sometimes it gives me peace Sometimes it's so convicting It brings me to my knees

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