

A photograph of a man in a dark shirt standing at the front of a room with wood-paneled walls, addressing a group of people. Several audience members in the foreground have their hands raised, indicating an interactive session or a Q&A period. The lighting is warm and focused on the speaker.

FROM LOCK-UP TO LEGACY

FROM LOCKUP TO LEGACY

In Pursuit of Purpose

George Moore Jr.

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all the inmates of the Lake County Jail, former, present and unfortunately future. This is a reminder to you that you are more than your circumstances. That you like I have, can go from Lock-up to Legacy.

FORWARD

G.Mark McCorly

George Moore Jr. came to the Lake County Jail as a speaker from an invitation that I had extended to him while teaching in the Program Dormitory 2E. He had come and taught from a 31 day devotional that he had just finished. I remember that his devotional, *The Power of the Pen*, was not of the fine bound and published books that we have come to expect from George Moore Jr. Needless to say, his graphics, the covers and of course the content has only improved since his first publication in 2008.

From Lock-Up to Legacy is not only the triumph of George Moore Jr.'s ministry, which includes his writing, teaching, mentoring, leadership development, and the installation of faith and hope to those whose life has been affected by years of incarceration. *From Lock-Up to Legacy* is a testament of the overcoming power and presence of God.

While incarcerated George Moore Jr. had this scripture stick to his spirit "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world". John 4:4. George Moore Jr. is not only an overcomer, but in *Lock-Up to Legacy*, George lets everyone know that they are overcomers as well. This is the message of *Legacy*!

This is the message that George Moore Jr. has consistently brought to the Lake County Jail over and over from his introduction in 2007 through his big hit of a break, being escorted from housing unit to housing unit speaking to more than half of the inmate population at the Lake County Jail.

Mark McCorly
Program Director of Lake County Jail, Waukegan
Apostle of House of Prayer Church, Gurnee IL

Introduction

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

“With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”

Mark 10:27 (ESV)

Impossible – what kind of word is that? Let me just walk you through what impossible looks like. For several years, as a free man, I’ve walked into the same jail that I was once incarcerated in. Every week I teach a class in the Lake County Jail which allows me to creatively share a variety of topics helping returning citizens - get this: as a Jail Chaplain. Here’s another impossibility; I’ve also been cutting hair as a Licensed Barber in the same facility. Let’s just be honest – this could only be the personal intervention of God making all this possible - considering the fact that I was once an inmate in the same quarters. I am going to repeat that throughout this book several times because I am still overwhelmingly grateful to be given that opportunity. Basically, my life is an example that God has no problems with our impossibilities.

Unfortunately, I had to pay a price to come into this realization. Besides spending time in the Lake County Jail, I

spent over 2 years being detained in Illinois correctional facilities like Joliet, Graham and Menard. I know what it's like to have close family members die while grieving behind bars. I've felt the embarrassment of church & community rallying behind you in a case that you eventually lose. I've shed tears after hearing the apology of someone who admitted to fabricating some of the charges that landed me in the Department of Corrections. I also know what it's like to take ownership of the part that I played. I know what it's like to feel marginalized and disproportioned when I looked for opportunities after being released from the institution. I know what it feels like to be apart of "the system." However, I can honestly say that it was all worth it.

In a series of hardships, failures and triumphs – God led me to my purpose. After years of sketchy employment due to my background, I gathered up a countless number of "second chance" resources and contacts. Through many experiences with disenfranchisement in my own community – I developed a passion for the oppressed. Ultimately, from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and overcoming obstacles that I saw others succumb to, I was led to start a ministry to the formerly incarcerated. I never saw that coming.

Today, I am the Founder of Legacy Reentry Foundation NFP – a faith based, 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to helping the formerly incarcerated to reintegrate back into society with relevant resources. At this point, I'm truly convinced that there is nothing too hard for my God. However, there is somewhat of a darker side to this bright story.

Daily I am confronted with men and women who have experienced many of the hardships that I have – yet the outcome is not always positive. When you rejoice over someone gaining employment that you have referred them to - only to see that same person squander the opportunity – it can be discouraging. It can also be disheartening when you actually know how difficult it is for a returning citizen to find a job but they laugh at the notion of becoming an entrepreneur. It then becomes obvious that many of us are not just experiencing external barriers – a vast majority of us have been “locked up” on the inside.

The purpose of this book is to share the revelation of God's Word in a unique and practical way that liberates our way of thinking. You can travel through these stories from page to page - the end goal is for us to actually experience the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ in our minds – even while possibly being physically locked up. And, even if we're not

physically behind bars, all of us need to be liberated into our purpose.

Purpose has to be pursued. In 2008, I wrote a small 31 Day Devotional to encourage incarcerated people. God blessed me to gain the favor of the Reentry Specialist at that time (now Program Director) Mark McCorly at the Lake County Jail. He allowed me to come in and give that book out to around 40 to 50 inmates while I shared my story of redemption. I have been blessed to hear some of the testimonies of the men who were present on that day. This book marks the 10 year anniversary of that moment. There is so much nostalgia and purpose in all that has happened. Mark McCorly and I remain friends to this day and just in case you hadn't noticed, he has also written the forward to this book.

Even as I am currently preparing to share this publication in the Lake County Jail - God continues to show me the layers of my purpose. I believe that embracing the person and purpose that God originally intended for us ultimately frees our minds and takes us from bondage into our legacy. We are not living on this earth to face hardship and die; we're here to fulfill a calling – a mission – a vocation that God Himself has ordained for us, regardless of our past history. We're here to become one with

God and His Will for our lives. And that's the only mind state that will give us true freedom.

Now, before we begin this journey I have one small disclaimer. It's hard for me to communicate these truths to you like someone who has never been behind the wall. I can't talk to you like somebody who has never been processed according to their gang affiliation or discriminated against after being released from jail. At the same time, I will never hide the new me or hang my head low when proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ that created this story of redemption. In other words, the purpose of the book is to meet you right where you're at and to take you to where God says you belong.

I've seen too many *mental* shackles and the smell of internal confinement has become all too familiar. We can no longer mask the crisis of being Christ-less. It's time for us to embrace the true freedom that God has for us when we pursue God and his purpose for our lives. No matter what our current life circumstances are - we can chose to go from lock up to legacy, **“For all things are possible with God.”**

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From Lockup to Legacy

CHAPTER ONE

CELL WINDOW

Try to see what I saw. One of my cell windows in the Lake County Jail sat several stories in the air while overlooking Lake Michigan's colossal Great Lakes. At that time, I had a "one man" cell so I was able to gaze for hours without seeming deranged. This was my personal time of quiet meditation that allowed me to momentarily escape my present circumstances. I could look straight down and watch the moderate traffic on Water Street. Or, I could fixate my eyes on the Lakefront and become one with the waves. It's a view that I will never forget - considering where I was located.

Looking out of that cell window gave me a raw understanding about how I see and perceive things. There are times when I saw visions of my future self enjoying the lake breeze. Then, there are times that I envied the person that I could have been had I not ended up in this place called jail. I had some crazy mood swings based on my perception or what I saw looking out of that window. I'm sure that you're familiar with saying, "*Perception is everything.*"

All of us see something when we look out of the window of our current circumstances. The million dollar question is... "*What do we perceive?*"

Somebody reading this is probably already seeing his or herself living out their dream. Others can only focus on their current nightmare. Either way, no one's judging you for your perception or how you see things. Having a positive or a negative outlook on things is not what we're talking about here. I just want us to consider the outcome if we were to look at our current situation from a different perspective. What if we filtered our perception through a lense called faith? That's exactly what I had to do.

One day I can remember glancing outside when I saw a familiar car parked on Water Street. You tend to notice everything when you're locked-up. I witnessed a tall man exit the vehicle and, as he began to stride toward my direction, I realized that this man was my Pastor. At that point, my mind began to conform to the visit that I had already imagined in my mind. Instead of pain, condemnation or regret; I remember feeling a sense of joy and excitement.

You see, my Pastor and I had history. As a matter of fact, the evening before I initially turned myself into the jail, I had a life changing experience with him and the congregation. A group of men from our church got together and laid their hands on me while the Pastor prayed these words, "***He's going on a***

mission..” Those words stirred-up my soul and prepared me for a brief 2 year stay in the Department of Corrections.

From my vantage point, I wasn't coming into this place to be punished for my past crimes. Since I had already asked God for forgiveness , I believed that I was going to jail to fulfill God's purpose for my life. So, when my Pastor saw me on this crucial first time visit, I was happy to tell him how my “assignment” was going. That may sound crazy to you but that really was my perspective.

IF HE DID IT FOR ME...

When I consider how God changed my perspective before I had even encountered a “cell window” - that helps me to reflect on how God could do it for so many others. When I look at Chuck Coleson (*October 16, 1931 - April 21, 2012*) I get inspired. Many of us know him as the Founder of Prison Fellowship - the largest Christian non profit serving prisoners, former prisoners and their families - and a leading advocate for criminal justice reform. However, many of us do not know that he was formerly incarcerated. That's probably because his success outweighs his setbacks. He chose to dust himself off, get back up and perceive that his purpose was greater than his past.

In case you don't already know, Chuck Colson was the top aide to President Nixon in 1974 who voluntarily pleaded guilty to obstruction to justice on a Watergate related charge. However, he gave his life to Christ and turned himself in to serve seven months in Alabama's Maxwell Prison - as a new Christian. He is quoted as saying, ***“I found myself increasingly drawn to the idea that God had put me in prison for a purpose and that I should do something for those I had left behind.”***

It might also inspire you to know that the prison ministry he founded in 1976 is now the largest prison ministry in the world. Instead of looking at his circumstance as the greatest set-back that he had ever experienced (and I'm sure it was) he chose to spend the rest of his days fulfilling the great commission that he believed God had given him. The end result of his journey proves that he was truly on a mission from God. On Prison Fellowship's website you will find these words: ***“God used a prison sentence to change Chuck's heart 40 years ago, and He's doing the same for many men and women behind bars today.”***

In fact, I am just one of the many people who have been touched by Chuck Colson's ministry - while in jail. My experience of being told that I was “on a mission” prior to incarceration coupled with a Prison Fellowship class that I took

while behind bars gave me new outlook and perspective on my situation. That kind of exposure caused me to believe that I could do the supernatural - even though I still had the same cell view.

WHO SINGS IN JAIL?

Here's another event that changed my perspective. Two men had the faith to open-up their mouths even after they had been beaten and while they were incarcerated. I don't know what you're dealing with right now but scripture tells us that these men were shackled at their feet when they decided to sing in jail. It was the darkest hour of the day yet they sang loud enough for the other prisoners to hear them. I believe that they were pretty good singers too since scripture doesn't record anyone complaining (that's a joke). Anyway, something happened because of their perception. Acts 16:26 tells us that the ground shook to the point that the foundation of the prison was shaken, the doors opened and everyone's shackles fell off. In the midst of their circumstances the atmosphere changed - simply because their perception was filled with faith. These kinds of real life stories changed my cell view.

In all actuality, the current situation that we're facing right now is heavily based on how we view it. We might be

experiencing a miraculous change for good or perhaps something less tasteful but the totality of our experience hinges on our faith.

If we take a look back - we've all been affected by what we've believed up to this point. Consider how the jailer who detained Paul and Silas was affected and *infected* by his own perspective. He assumed that Paul, Silas and the rest of the crew had escaped. Since the sentence for allowing a prisoner to escape was death and because he knew that he was going to die, he drew his own sword to kill himself. Paul cried out with a loud voice and stopped the jailer from committing suicide. That simple act saved the jailer's life both naturally and spiritually because the jailer converted to Christ after that experience (Acts 16:34). The problem is that the prison guard was going to end it all over something that wasn't even true. His perception almost made him do something drastic. Our perception doesn't just affect our lives but it affects those around us too. It would be a sad thing to lose everything over for nothing. But that's what can happen in the absence of faith. Doubt can be a really unhealthy diet. This particular jail guard was feasting on doubt and fear to the point of suicidal thoughts.

Ironically, the passage also shows us that no man is above restoration - not even correctional officers. We often talk about

prisoners being restored but law enforcement are people too. Think about it. They have families, they have lives, they have good days & they have bad days - they also have a purpose. And, it wasn't another officer that restored this man and put him on the right path to destiny - it was a prisoner. Here's my point: *Our faith doesn't just work to get us out of a bad situation. Our faith also works to get "all of us" to our divine destination.*

That's why it's so important for us to feed our faith in God.

WE ARE FULL OF IT

Can we talk about that for a minute? Right now we are predominantly full of faith or doubt - either way we are full of something. God created us to have faith in Him - anything short of that goes against the purpose for which we were created. Of course we all fall short of that purpose at times but that's why we have Jesus. Because of His sacrifice, you and I presently have the privilege of changing our perception. I was taught a simple phrase when I was younger that helps me to remember how to change my perception: "*You are what you eat!*"

Case and point: I remember when my vision started to get blurry. I had a "one man" cell on the West side of the jail that had a nice window view of Martin Luther King Street below.

But, for some reason, my daily diet of prayer and meditation on God's Word wasn't as strong on this side of the jail and my mind began to wander. On a good clear night I would stare at people walking to their car and begin to envy the life that they were living. I was deeply agitated by the early morning wake ups and the cold bed that I slept in. The guards seemed different on this side of the jail and the food wasn't the greatest. I thought that the atmosphere had changed but it was actually my perspective that had changed my experience. My poor diet of devotion and prayer caused me to have an even poorer view of my surroundings.

Nugget: *You can only be what you see.*

Earlier I gave you an example of a great visit that I had with my Pastor - there was also another time that I cried as soon as I saw him. I was well off into my first year in prison and while I had fun on many occasions - there were also times that had wore me down. So when I saw him on this particular visit - I wasn't happy about my assignment. I was focused on the wrong things - my perception was full of gloom and despair.

Multiple cells, a variety of cell mates and a myriad of characters along the way began to change my view of things. You can't be spiritual 24/7 in jail - you have to come down off

the mountain and interact with the good, the bad and the ugly every now and then. Every day wasn't full of bad interactions but, you can't talk to the fellas all day in the yard in the "King James Version" or you will stand out for the wrong reasons. You have to adjust and adapt. And, there was a time when I started to adapt just a little bit too much. My faith was low and my perspective had changed.

Suddenly, I get informed that I have a visitor. Here's the culmination of everything that we've been talking about in this chapter. By this time I was at Graham Correctional Center and my cell window had changed considerably. The days were long and my soul was getting tired. Above all that, I had to take that long walk toward the visiting room knowing that the guards were going to strip me and do a body cavity search. I was frustrated, angry, tired and not feeling very spiritual. As soon as I sat down with the Pastor and his family, tears ran down my eyes. I wanted to go home. But that wouldn't happen for almost another year. This is where the rubber meets the road.

We can talk about the faith of Chuck Coleson, Paul, Silas and our faith in Jesus Christ to take us from lock up to legacy - but life has a funny way of measuring where our faith truly is. I'm not going to give you some Cinderella story - there are simply times that I lacked faith behind bars. But I'm sharing this

with you because these experiences are a benchmark that allow us to take a sneak peek into those pivotal moments. These are the kinds of stories that I wish I was hearing during those extreme situations in my life. And that's why I share them with you.

The view from your window may be different from the view that I had but you will always have a better experience than I did if you change your perspective. How you view your current situation matters. You don't have to wallow in despair. Remember that the next time you look out your cell window.

CHAPTER TWO

BACK WHERE YOU BELONG

As much as I hate to admit it - I ran from my purpose. That's right, the person that God intended for me to be wasn't always on my agenda. Often I hear people give these grand testimonies about how God persuaded them to follow Him with sweet whispers in the night. And, I do have some amazing God encounters in my journal, but my purpose didn't come to me like that. I think that's probably why it was so hard for me to embrace the person that He created me to be.

Fastforward. Now I walk around as a Jail Chaplain in the same quarters that once detained me. Every week I teach a class in the Program Pod educating people who wear the same jumpsuit that I once wore. How did that happen? Well I can tell you beyond a shadow of doubt that I didn't have too much to do with it. For years God had been grooming me and even allowing things to happen in my life (not always comfortable) that propelled me in this direction. Sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that we have so much control over our existence. Ultimately, we are here to please God and to serve His purpose - it doesn't get much more complicated than that. However, in

addition to that revelation, I found out that it's really bigger than us. Our purpose is connected to other people.

Nugget: God will often use people to help reveal our purpose.

I never saw that coming. Probably because not too many people get out of jail and then dream about going back to hang out with people in jail. That's not really a bucket list item once you've been incarcerated. Yet, even while I was behind the wall I always wondered if it was possible to do such an amazing thing - to be able to come back. I wasn't fascinated with imprisonment. It was just something about the people behind bars that grabbed my heart. At one point, we all shared the same "cell view." We all knew how to cook Ramen Noodles and most of us know what it means to go out on the yard and "*hit seven (reps) or better.*" Similar to how people who served in the military have a comradery that civilians may never be able to truly comprehend. Sometimes people who have been locked up have a chemistry that can not be manufactured. They just have something in common.

SOMETHING IN COMMON

*“I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit,
O LORD my God.”*

Jonah 2:6b ESV

As a child, I never understood the story of Jonah the way I do now. I'm not talking about biblical education or theological training - I'm talking about seeing myself as the person that I was reading about. When I read his story now it's as if we've been in the same boat - so to speak.

Jonah ran from the call or purpose that God had on his life. As a result, he ended up incarcerated in a big monster size fish. I think that's an accurate description of jail. That's why, when I read Jonah's prayer during his time of imprisonment, it sends chills up my spine, *“The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head,”* (v.5). I want to tell Jonah, *“Man, I feel you!”* Maybe that's the true purpose and intent of God. Many of the experiences that He has allowed us to go through are only meant to draw us closer to the God that we read about. Once that occurs in our lives, I believe that we become a reflection of Him

to other people. My comrade from North Chicago taught me that.

The person that taught me how to play chess in jail was a former gang-banging buddy of mine named David. When I saw him in the county I was both relieved and overjoyed. It's one thing to see a familiar face but it's an entirely different scenario when you know that face. We were like family in the streets. You couldn't get much closer than David, my cousin Wayne and myself. But this time something was different.

By the time I saw him in jail I was a changed man. David was always wild and uncontrollable so this is where you would expect the story to go downhill. Yet, we had no conflict. I simply learned a valuable lesson. People don't always relate to what God has done for you. But they can definitely experience what God is doing through you. Love is the key. The love of God destroyed all boundaries between us.

I didn't have to give David a thousand bible passages to explain my new life. There were no angels hovering over our chess games. The bible simply tells us that "***God is love***" (1 John 4:16b KJV) so I just showed him the love of God. That was the beginning of my journey in sharing the Gospel with people both in and out of jail. I learned pretty quickly that people need

to experience God as a person before you try to impress them with His power.

NEVER FORGET WHERE YOU CAME FROM

We all have an ugly side to us. Sometimes it can be easier to dislike a person than to love them. And that's another reason why I can relate to the story of Jonah. Brother Jonah had an ugly side too. He had a hard time forgiving people. But I can appreciate his humanity.

This revelation just hits me in the core of my being. When you first start reading the story of Jonah you see God calling him to share a message of repentance with the same people that had abused Jonah's people. When I say abused - I mean they were some wicked folk. Jonah wanted nothing to do with this mission. In fact, he ran.

The fact that Jonah ran from his calling is no surprise to many of us who have left our post. But it's "why" he ran that intrigues me. After seeing these wicked people turn from their evil ways Jonah got angry. He later admits that he knew God was, "*...a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.*" (Jonah 4:2b). That's why he ran away from what God was

calling him to do. He knew that God would forgive them - but he wasn't ready to.

Sometimes we forget who created us. God didn't create us to get even with the people who did us wrong. He called us to restore them until they get it right.

If we ever want to gauge our level of commitment to God all we have to do is check our level of forgiveness toward others. When we love, when we let it go, when we forgive - we become most like our creator. Forgiveness is in our spiritual DNA. However, I will be the first to admit, it's not easy to forgive and definitely not a walk in the park when you talk about forgetting - but that's what God does for every one of us daily. The problem is that we often forget His nature toward us when we deal with other people. As a child of God, we just have to remember where we come from.

LET GO AND LET GOD

My former cellmate Brother Stokes gave me a crash course on forgiveness. This brother was smooth and could talk his way out of anything. I first admired him when I heard him recite an entire Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speech verbatim in a Chapel service. Then, when he told me that he learned how to read by

memorizing the whole Bible, that was it for me. We instantly clicked because scripture memorization was my passion. We then decided that he should put in a request to transfer to my cell. That's where I messed up.

People warned me and told me that he was a con-artist but I didn't see it. I figured that anybody who knew that much scripture couldn't be anything less than solid. But when he moved into my cell I soon found out who he was.

He began to change his behavior. I guess that you really don't know a person until you live with them. He would play Louis Farrakhan tapes loudly to antagonize me, use the washroom graphically when they locked us down with nothing but a blanket to separate us, and he would even cuss me out after Bible Study. But there was one thing that he did that almost made me kill him. I told him everything about my family and where I lived. One day while we were arguing he suddenly threatened to do lewd things to my mother when he got out of jail - things that I can not mention. Saved or not, that is where he crossed the line. You don't ever talk about a man's Mama. That is a silent code, seldom broken. We got in each other's face talking loudly and it was about to go down. Fortunately, it didn't go any further than a shouting match.

For days I remember praying that God would remove this man from the earth or at the least from my cell. It was torture. I was teaching Bible Study to my little table of four so I couldn't just strangle him although I wanted to. I had to be an example. However, we all became increasingly aware that Brother Stokes and I could not coexist. I needed him to be gone and that's exactly what happened.

Eventually he was moved across that hall and replaced with a gang banger named Droopy - a far better cellmate than Brother Stokes. Imagine that, a known gang banger was a better cellie than a "so called" believer - but that's another story. Not too long after that he was transferred to different jails across the state and eventually returned to the same pod that we were in due to his fraudulent behavior. Tired and broke down - he finally came to me and apologized. I forgave him. How could I not, considering all the foolishness that God had forgiven me for? When I finally let it go that's when God was able to step in.

After a few weeks I remember Droopy coming to me and asking me to talk to Brother Stokes before the gang got to him. They all considered him to be a fake Christian and a con - something not tolerated in the joint. I had to tell Brother Stokes that he needed to transfer or the gang would make him disappear. He understood exactly what that meant, he

apologized to me several times and eventually transferred off the pod. God knew how to handle it far better than me putting my hands on him. That's why we have to let go and let God. I forgave him, he forgave me - we were able to forgive ourselves and just move on.

Nugget: It becomes easier to embrace the future when you're no longer holding on to the past.

Mark Wahlberg is a famous movie star (*The Perfect Storm 2000, Planet of The Apes 2001, Departed 2006, Deep Horizon 2016, Transformers 2014 & 2017 etc...*) yet, he was a highschool dropout, a former gang member, a drug dealer and he was formerly incarcerated in his past. I'm sure that he had to forgive himself for the person that he used to be in order to embrace the career that he has today.

Paul McCartney is known as a famous Bass Guitarist for The Beatles and he is considered one of the most successful composers and performers of all time - yet he was sentenced to 7 years in a Tokyo prison for trying to bring Marijuana into Japan. He only served 7 days on that particular sentence but that was not the first time he had been locked up. However, because he was able to move on - most people will never even take the time to look up his criminal history.

German Herman “Babe” Ruth Jr. is famous for his baseball accomplishments which landed him in the Baseball Hall of Fame and he is considered to be one of the best players in the history of the game. However, he was arrested for speeding and spent a short time in jail. I wonder what he would have become if he had refused to move on due to his brief encounter with the law.

Now, if these men can forgive themselves and move on with their lives (notice that I mentioned nothing about their spirituality) - how can a faith filled believer in Jesus Christ throw in the towel simply because of a few setbacks?

Brother Stokes could be somewhere today walking in his purpose and his past mistakes will only be apart of a successful testimony. God is so merciful - He just wants us to get back to the place where we belong. The place of love and forgiveness.

Jonah had a purpose to fulfill and he went astray but when he came to himself - God didn't give him a list of new plans. He simply told Jonah to go do what He had told him to do in the first place. I'm grateful that God doesn't give up on our purpose even though we may have stumbled in our past. Jonah was headed in the opposite direction of God's will and ended up

locked up in a monster fish that God had specifically prepared for Him. But here's what I call restoration and forgiveness. Jesus Himself wasn't ashamed to mention Jonah's encounter with incarceration and sites that experience when explaining His own purpose and mission.

“For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Matthew 12:40 ESV

Now that's what I call restoration. When the King uses your failure to describe His mission - that's major! You were not created to cave-in to condemnation or to hold on to anger and resentment. You were born to love, forgive and embrace your destiny.

CHAPTER THREE

HAIRY SITUATION

“Man, can you get that one hair right there for me bro?” It was always funny to me when I’d be trimming someone’s bald head in jail but they’d act as if they got all the hair in the world. They want you to move this hair over here or touch up that small grain over there. Sometimes I just wanted to say, *“Bruh - cut all this junk off and just be done with it!”* The funny thing about it is - I actually did say that to a few clients. Cutting hair in jail is a little bit different than what you might be used to. Yet and still - I loved it!

When I would walk into the pod with my cart the entire atmosphere changed - it never failed. Either they’d treat me like a celebrity and people would walk up asking if they’re on the list. Or, they’d be mad and hate to see me coming because they were all watching a program on television. Everybody had to go back to their cell when I came on the deck so you never really know what kind of reaction you were going to get. But believe me, you were going to get a reaction. That’s the life of a jailhouse barber.

People take their hair very seriously in the jail. Sometimes a little too serious.

GO THROUGH THE PROCESS

Lake County Jail's website says that there are a total of just under 600 people that inhabit the jail - as of last inspection. Word travels fast so almost everybody in the facility knew that I can cut hair pretty good. But, there's always that one new guy that doesn't know what you can do. As soon as they sit down, you already know that they're going to have to take them through the process.

Many of them had friends that tried to scare them by saying that something was wrong with the hair cut. Others shouted derogatory statements out of their cell that made the person getting his haircut nervous. Sometimes they'd talk about my client so bad that all of us had to laugh - but it was usually all in fun. The problem is - the person getting his haircut didn't always think so.

The process: You have to cut certain parts off to get a nice blend - but that's the mystery. It looks crazy when one side of the beard is done and the other side still needs work - but I

always knew where I was going with it. Sometimes it looked like a total mess - until I lined everything up. I don't remember being nervous at all because I always knew the end results. But I had to constantly encourage the client to go through the process and stop listening to the naysayers. When they got to the end of their haircut they were usually beyond satisfied, but the process was always a challenge for the guys that didn't know what I could do.

GOD KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING

We can respectfully consider God to be a Master Barber.

When I was going to Cain's Barber College on 51st Street in Chicago they taught us the word "envision." When you envision something you can see the end result internally before it actually happens externally. In other words, when somebody was headed to my chair for a haircut I could already see them with a Bald Fade, a beard line-up and/or a crispy hair lining before they even sat down. I had to some degree mastered the art of envisioning when it came to cutting hair. In a similar way, God is the master of envisioning when it comes to our purpose and destiny.

You know the Bible story about Samson and his long hair. Samson made some bad choices, got a bad haircut from his enemies and found himself in chains. But, regardless of all that turmoil, God envisioned a better future for him. In fact, before Samson was even born, God sent an angel to tell his parents that Samson was going to be a deliverer.

Now, if you're not familiar with how God works - you'd probably doubt Samson's future based on his turbulent lifestyle in Judges chapters 13-16. Samson had a taste for strange women. He got one woman and her father burned alive. He slept with a prostitute just because he saw her. And, he eventually hooked up with a woman named Delilah who snitched on him and got his eyes put out. Sounds like a bad combination but remember - God knows what He's doing. In each of these cases God used Samson to either confound or kill his enemies. Even though Samson went astray God still wouldn't let him leave his purpose.

Somebody looking from afar would probably say that Samson was a failure but Samson's bad behavior still had a way of fulfilling God's end goal. No matter what it looks like right now - God knows how to get glory out of your dilemma - if you trust Him. He may not condone your activities but He definitely

knows how to turn a bad situation into an expected end. Just surrender that hairy situation to the Master Barber.

Nugget: *Don't let today's failure rob you of tomorrow's success.*

When I first got the revelation that I should go back to the same jail that I was incarcerated in - I was refused. As a matter of fact, I was denied for several years because the Lake County Jail has some strict guidelines on people coming into the jail post incarceration. I never complained but I was heart broken. I knew that I was supposed to be in this place ministering. All I could do was keep trying until the time was right.

One day a friend of mine named Mark McCorly had a good idea. He was the Re-entry Specialist at that time and he figured out a way that I could come into the jail. He told me that I could come in as a guest speaker. So, I printed out my first book "*The Power of the Pen - Changing the Minds of Men*" at the Office Depot and passed it out to my new jail audience. I'll never forget that day. Rick Riddle was the Program Director and he also came down to witness that event. I had no idea what this initial speaking engagement would do for my future ministry in the jail - it did something amazing.

Fast forward to the year 2017. I was teaching a class at the jail and one of my new students said that he still had my book. It was his first time with us so when he introduced himself to the class he chose to remind me of the first time that we met. He stood up and turned to me, *“I remember when you first came and gave that speech several years ago. I still have the book that you bought in... It really encouraged me.”* My mouth dropped and my life was changed. Looking back, I can see the purpose behind my process. Your purpose has a way of speaking, and on that day it spoke through that young man.

But that’s not where the story ends.

Mark McCorly had another great idea. He suggested that I would tour the jail from pod to pod sharing my new book, *“The Reason I Give Him Praise - In the Midst of Madness”* along with a 30 minute speech. I’m sure that you already know what my response was.

Chief Witherspoon accompanied us as I prepared to do a tour of the jail. I can remember her saying that she probably wouldn’t be with us long considering how brutal some of the guys might be towards me. I was definitely encouraged by that statement. Chief ended up staying with us for the duration of the tour. At one point she even combined two pods because she felt

that they all needed to hear the presentation. That was truly a glorious day and every now and then somebody will ask me, “*Man, when are you going to do another one of those presentations?*” I usually tell them, “*Maybe with my next book From Lock Up to Legacy - In Pursuit of Purpose.*” Hint-Hint.

Until then, because God gave me favor with Apostle Mark McCorly, Chief Jennifer Witherspoon and Sheriff Mark Curran and because they really do care about the people in that jail - I can now tell them that they can just go check out my last published book in the jail library - because that’s where it’s kept. Keep in mind - this is the same jail that once detained me.

WATCH WHERE YOU’RE STANDING

“So they called Samson out of the prison, and he entertained them. They made him stand between the pillars.”

Judges 16:25b ESV

Our brother Samson endured a hard process. His enemies held him captive, got him drunk and humiliated him for sport. They thought that they were making a fool out of him but they were actually putting Samson in a position to fulfill his purpose. Brother Samson was born to deliver his people from their

enemies - and that's exactly what he did. The amazing thing about it is that his enemies made it possible.

That's a lot to chew on. Think about it. Maybe the place that we're in right now (bad as it may seem) is a perfect position for us to pursue our purpose. There's just too much revelation in that. Even when they cut Samson's hair (his strength) it grew back while his was laboring in prison. It grew back at the perfect time for him to destroy his opposition.

Samson destroyed more enemies in prison than he ever destroyed as a free man. Maybe we shouldn't complain about the hairy situation that we're currently experiencing. As crazy as it may seem, this process is probably exactly what you need to propel you into your purpose.

Hey, it may seem like a bad haircut right now but don't run from the process. The end results look far better than what you may be currently experiencing.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SLAVE MENTALITY

So there's this six foot tall brother trying to impress his girlfriend at a house party. The only problem is that he can't swim but he decides to jump into the pool anyway. Suddenly he starts to lose his cool and begins to flail his arms in distress. The D.J. turns the music down as the entire house casually moves towards the commotion to see if this man is serious.

Even the host makes his way to the scene only to find out that this "cool" brother is really about to drown in only three feet of water. So he makes a loud and embarrassing declaration: *"You're not in the deep end of the pool man - JUST STAND UP!"* Our cool brother didn't even realize that all he had to do was put his feet down. I think that we can safely assume that he was no longer the "coolest" brother at the party that night. He was just a tall man who almost drowned in shallow water.

Question: What would make this man jump into a pool anyway when he already knew that he couldn't swim? He could have at least asked somebody to give him a quick swimming lesson before he went kamikaze. But that's why I call it a slave

mentality. When you're too cool to ask for help - it's like being bound. His mentality was: It would be "cooler" to look good doing something that we don't know how to do – rather than to find out how to properly do what we're doing. We've all been there. At least I know I have.

After causing a lot of unnecessary waves, that's when the light bulb usually appears. That's when all the "cool" people find out that all they had to do was listen to somebody who knew better. Then they could have easily "stood up" and faced their fears. But slaves don't usually think for themselves - they just submit to whatever has overtaken them - even if that thing is an impulsive mindset or a slave mentality. It's deep.

DEEP WATER

Brace yourself. *"More than 650,000 ex-offenders are released from prison every year, and studies show that approximately two-thirds will likely be rearrested within three years of release."* - U.S. Department of Justice. Yes, there are many factors that contribute to recidivism. However, I believe that one of the worse contributing factors to criminal relapse is a slave mentality or a captive mind. It's when a person jumps into a relationship, an occupation or even a community already aware that they're not adequately equipped. There should be a

cry for assistance but there is none. And for that reason we witness a ripple effect.

It would be foolish for a returning citizen to plunge into a world that has these type of statistics and not ask for assistance. I'm not talking about leeching off people to get ahead. I'm talking about trusting someone to equip you to overcome this kind of opposition. After all, it wasn't the depth of water that almost drowned our cool brother - it was his way of thinking that almost got him killed.

Nugget: *You will never produce positive results from a negative mindset.*

I'll never forget the time that I literally saw a slave mentality while in jail. We were all in line and headed to the Chow-Hall at Graham Correctional Center. That's when I overheard a few guys yelling to each other as one of them was apparently headed home. The guards didn't pay them too much attention but I did. When you hear or see someone headed home you tend to try to live through their experience. Suddenly, one of them yelled, "*Man, you gettin' ready to get out of here and do yo' thang'.*" That's when the guy going home replied, "*Yeah, but don't trip - I'm comin' right back!*" If I was a car you could have heard my wheels coming to a screeching halt. He made this

statement so casually and with so much confidence that I still remember it to this day. It didn't really matter how deep or shallow the water was for him - he was diving in anyway. There was something wrong with his mentality.

THE BATTLEFIELD IS IN THE MIND

“It is impossible to get from wrong behavior to right behavior without first changing thoughts.” - Joyce Meyer. I don't like using the word impossible but this is one time that I have to agree. Especially when that statement comes out of a book that was part of a care package hand delivered to me in Graham Correctional (I'm biased). It was a gift that heavily influenced my thought process.

One day the guards started to knock on our cells and hand us bags full of hygiene items with a book called “Battlefield of the Mind” included. Now I never personally attended Joyce Meyer's church but I certainly did appreciate her ministry blessing all of us with these care packages. As a matter of fact, because of the way that I was impacted, it became my burden to one day do the same for people incarcerated in jails and in prisons.

Now the deodorant, dental items and soap were a blessing to all of us but I was particularly moved by the book they included. This publication was all about changing the mind. And let me just insert this shameless plug: I know that it's an old publication but if you ever get a chance - check out "Battlefield of the Mind" and how Joyce Meyers weaves personal life experience with scripture. Anyway, every example - every passage brought me back to one common theme: *Your mind is the mission! If you can control the way that you think - you can mandate the life that you live.*

"We are going to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery, for though others may free the body, none but ourselves can free the mind." - Marcus Garvey

Imagine being liberated from bondage only to want to go back into captivity. That's what happened to a whole nation. And how could I not share this story when talking about a slave's mentality?

We've all heard of the Promised Land and how God wanted to bless His people with some serious property. Unfortunately, like many of us have done in our respective journeys, they doubted their future and wanted to go back to their past. This is the equivalent of gaining freedom in your

mind to trust God and then suddenly forgetting that He exist when a new challenge arises.

Just when they thought that they were going to drown - God parted the waters for Israel and saved them from their enemies. Keep in mind, He had just performed 10 miracles to set them free in Egypt. But when it came time to walk into the land that He had promised them - they got amnesia and refused to believe that He could help them out.

“And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.” - Numbers 14:4 ESV

Isn't it amazing how we were designed to be subject to our Creator but when we lose faith in Him - we put faith in something or someone less qualified. Even if they had chosen a new leader - they would have chose him for the purpose of taking them back into bondage and not forward into legacy. All this negativity simply because they had no faith for a better place.

This is the same mentality that I witnessed in the Lake County Jail. Since the time that I arrived everyone of us seemed comfortable with our predicament. Of course nobody wants to be around a bunch of anarchy and savage activity. But none of

us seemed appalled enough to go against the grain of watching television all day to create a business plan. None of us, including myself, were talking about our future plans outside of jail. There was a lot of complaining about our current condition or reminiscing about the past. But there was no real sense of purpose or rallying to move forward. When I first came into the county jail, it's as if all of us were in shock or paralyzed by our current condition. Most people couldn't talk about a bright future because most people didn't believe that they actually had one.

When God's chosen people were told to go check out the Promised Land and to bring back a report - they gave into fear. Instead of seeing the vast riches of this new place that He had promised them - they could only talk about the giants and the opposition in the land. Their perception was off. It took two men out of twelve to stand up and go against the grain. Joshua and Caleb saw differently because their mentality was different. Slaves want to go back - conquerors have to move forward. Caleb heard the negative report that the others were giving and the bible says that he *"quieted the people."* His response was: *"Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it."* - Numbers 13:30b. They hadn't even begun to warfare for the land but this brother already saw victory in his

mind. However, not everybody could see what he and Joshua saw.

The other 10 people that went out to spy the land came back and said that they saw themselves as grasshoppers. What kind of perception is that? Interesting enough, because they saw themselves that way they assumed that the opposition also saw them like that as well. None of the giants had spoken to any of them up to this point. This negative perception was all in their mind. In other words, they were drowning in only 3 feet of water.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

The question is, “*How do we see ourselves?*” Do we focus on our current situation or do we meditate on the destiny that God has placed before us? All of us are most certain to flail around as if we’re drowning when we don’t recognize our ability to stand up. We all need someone to grab our attention and tell us that the situation is not as deep as it may seem.

Whenever I had a bad perspective of what I was going through - meditating on what God said as opposed to what I was feeling always worked. And that’s the key.

I told you about the book that I received in jail called “Battlefield of The Mind” - it focuses on meditating on the Bible. I shared with you the story of the “cool brother” and how he was only able to see properly after “the host” told him that the waters weren’t that deep. And, you probably felt the same anguish that I did when I told you about the guy that saw himself coming back to prison as soon as he got out. Stay with me, I’m going somewhere with all this.

I also used the example of Joshua and Caleb and how they believed that they were well equipped to conquer giants. They focused on what God had promised them as opposed to the adversity that they were facing. Let’s just stop right there... are you seeing a common thread throughout this chapter. You are only a slave if you “think” that you are. All these examples were used to point you in one direction - renewing the mind.

To renew the mind is to make it new again. This is something that we all need to do on a daily basis - especially in jail. It’s like taking a shower. Nobody takes a shower every now and then and expects to smell like flowers. Our minds work the same way. Many of us have had so many traumatic experiences, so many outlandish occurrences that our minds need some serious soap and water. Meditating on the Word of God (the

Bible) cleanses us and enables us to see the future that God has planned for us.

Let me just give you an example. Everyday in jail I would pause and calmly reflect on what I was reading in the Bible. Whether it was early in the morning or late at night. I wouldn't just read it like a newspaper - I would take some passages and say them over and over again until they were embedded in my heart. I would slowly digest the scriptures. That's called meditation. Then I would pray and ask God to grant me His Spirit so that I could hold on to everything that I consumed. Try it - I'm telling you it works.

You will find out - if you haven't already - that renewing the mind will ultimately break down a slave's mentality. Nobody wants to be in bondage to "stinking thinking" all day. In fact, there's something deep down on the inside of every last one of us that wants to be free. It's an inside job.

A wise King once told God, ***"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."*** - Psalm 119:11 ESV.

Much in the same way, whatever we choose to "store up" on the inside of us will soon be our window to the outside world.

We can either believe God for the inheritance that He placed before us or we can drown in 3 feet of water but it seems like an elementary choice to me.

CHAPTER FIVE

TUNNEL VISION

One day I asked my class one simple question, “*What is your purpose in life?*” And that’s when somebody blurted out, “*Getting out of here!*” We all laughed at the fact that I asked a bunch of people in jail that question rather than the irony of his answer. But looking back, I think that his answer deserves further observation.

WHAT DO WE REALLY WANT - RIGHT NOW?

We all want something. Some of us want to be married and have kids, others want to be rich. Some people want a new car and others want a new job. We all want something right now or we’re longing to have something in our immediate future. We all move around like ants on a mission to build a mound hill unaware of how feeble our lives really are. I’ve seen people get “stepped on” and it always made me wonder - what was the purpose of their existence? Are we all here just to want stuff? If not, then what should we really be focused on?

Tunnel Vision: constriction of the visual field resulting in loss of peripheral vision.

A person with tunnel vision can not see the things that are around them. They only see what they're focused on. And that can be a really bad thing depending on what the focus is. People who just want to get out of jail will sometimes do anything to make that happen - manipulate people, change a few bad habits temporarily or even become somebody that they're not. People who are fixated on a particular drug will sometimes sell their bodies for a temporary high. It is possible to do bad things just to get a better life. The problem is that when we focus on the wrong things - the right things tend to get blurred. I know because I've been that person and I know other people who exhibited the same symptoms.

This next story may be a little sensitive but bare with me. I had a small Bible study group one time at Graham Correctional. They allowed me to lead the study and I was grateful. Our little 5-7 member study was packed every time that we assembled. We were all close, not just because we studied the Bible together, but because we lived with each other every day for months. Then, I started to notice that one of our members was a little too needy. That's when everything started to go downhill.

He wasn't as frequent to our gatherings and started to inquire about getting some state issued gym shoes. He was young and told us that he was from Cabrini Green Projects - so we all understood that he wasn't used to having much. But nobody could imagine what would happen next.

One of the guys in our pod was willing to give our young friend his gym shoes if he did something in exchange. I won't go any further than that. I'll just say that what our brother gave up was worth far more than what he was focused on. While he was focused on gym shoes, somebody else was focused on him. That's the negative side of having tunnel and after that incident nothing was the same for any of us.

Now, one positive effects of tunnel vision is legacy, yes legacy. Most people think that I'm talking about stuff that you leave behind for other people when I mention that word. That's part of it. But the word legacy also describes something that you inherit. When I mention the word legacy I'm primarily talking about what we have inherited from God. My point is that tunnel vision can be a good thing when we focus on our Godly inheritance, our legacy.

LIKE FATHER LIKE SON

Most of the people that I know grew up without a father physically in the home. Every son or daughter has a father - even if they don't know who that man is. However, there can be some difficulty in relating to your Heavenly Father if you've never really had a good relationship with your earthly father. My natural father and I are like two peas in a pod but it wasn't always that way.

After my parents got divorced my mother and I moved to California - far away from my pops. And you know what happens when you become a teenager; you get taller than your mom and your desire for acceptance is heightened. I began to admire what I now call "surrogate fathers." I looked up to some of the guys in the neighborhood, the rappers that I listened to and the images that I saw on television. They were my gauge for approval. So, when I came back home to visit my father in Illinois - things began to change.

I had no idea that everything that I was doing - gang affiliation, drugs and loose girls - was done mainly to get his attention. Indirectly, I wanted his approval. In search of his acceptance, I decided to tell him who I thought I was one day on his back porch. Out of the blue, I felt the need to tell him that I was gang affiliated. I don't know why I did that but I do remember his response. He said, "*Son, there is nothing in the*

world that could hurt me worse than what you just told me.”

Then he walked away. Well, that certainly backfired. I was suddenly back to looking for approval again. Whether we want to admit it or not - every son wants the approval of a father, coach, or mentor of some sort. God created all men and women to long for that because we were all created in the image and likeness of God. It's in our DNA.

Many of us who have experienced solitary places have that God shaped void on the inside of us. We just want to be accepted by a loving father. Imagine what it would feel like to know that you have the approval of your “Heavenly” Father?

And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” - Mark 1:11 ESV

Jesus was simply doing what He was born to do - fulfilling God's will. God and Jesus are pretty close but He still wanted to speak directly to His son to confirm who He was and how He felt about Him. If God did that for Jesus right before He headed into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil - how much more do you think we need God's approval before we encounter today's challenges? We have to have His approval. When you know that you're truly accepted by God - you no longer crave

the approval of people. That's our inheritance. We have eternal acceptance - we have a Heavenly Father.

OUR FATHER

Most of the brothers that I talk to in jail are still trying to find themselves. That's not because they're in jail - it's usually because they don't have a father figure to emulate. And if they do; that person, place or thing is usually not a good role model for them. I have witnessed both father and son residing in the same prison. Who's to say what really happened to get them there. We just know that the entire family has been affected simply because of something that happened to the father.

“When most families in a neighborhood lose a father to prison, the distortion of family structure affects relationship norms between men and women as well as between parents and children, reshaping family and community across generations.”

- Invisible Punishment by Marc Mauer & Meda Chesney-Lind

Nugget: *Even the greatest athletes in the world need a coach.*

I don't care how great we think we are - we all need to be coached. Even Jesus had a role model and it wasn't his earthly father. When the disciple Philip asked Jesus to show him "The Father" Jesus replied with a powerful snapback: ***"Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works."*** - John 14:9b-10. We can find dozens of scriptures that show Jesus speaking directly about His relationship with His Heavenly Father. He in essence is telling us that everything He did was a direct model of what His Father would do and has done. He modeled His Father so much that you couldn't tell the difference between the two of them.

Maybe that's why He gave us a model of how to pray that first starts off with the words, ***"Our Father in Heaven..."*** - Matthew 6:9b ESV. He wants us to see things in their proper perspective so that we'll get the right results. He wants us to have good tunnel vision.

Imagine someone in jail praying to an angry Judge or a vindictive Father in the sky. What do you think their life would look like? What kind of image do you think that they would

have of themselves? I don't know if anybody would want that kind of legacy. Most often, people don't really have an intimate relationship with their Heavenly Father because they compare Him to an earthly one. If he was never there - they don't really expect God to show up. If he was always angry or indifferent - they won't feel too motivated to talk to God. And, to make things even worse, they'll have that same negative view of themselves because we were all created in the image and likeness of Our Father. Whatever a son possesses has been inherited.

FROM LOCKUP TO LEGACY

The majority of this book has been centered on view, perspective, vision or how we see things. Let me tell you why.

If someone deposited two million dollars into your bank account - I assume that you would go get that money. But, even without making a withdraw, your confidence level would probably get a boost. You would become a different person simply because of what you knew you possessed. But what if you didn't know that the money was sitting there. Regardless of where you're located - life would not be as fruitful as it could be.

God is trying to show us our heavenly bank statement.

“My story is a freedom song of struggle. It is about finding one's purpose, how to overcome fear and to stand up for causes bigger than one's self.”

- Coretta Scott King

Ultimately, God put us on this earth for a specific purpose. And that reason is bigger than us. Your testimony is not just for you. Your entire life has meaning. You were not just born to die. You were born to live and the life that you live is meant to be a beacon to others. Let your light shine!

You could have never told me that I would be the Founder of a faith based organization that helps the formerly incarcerated. 20 years ago I had other plans. Today I have tunnel vision. That vision and God's grace have opened the door for me to go back into the jail that once detained me - teach a class, become a Chaplain and give my books out to the inmates. That does not normally happen but we were created in the image of God. And our God is far from normal.

What is your vision? I'll never forget the time when I was doing processing and intake for a reentry organization similar to mine. A gentlemen came into the office and asked for a job. He

didn't want to know anything about what we did - he just wanted his needs met. He needed employment asap. I saw the hunger in his eyes and move passed all the preliminaries. He immediately handed me his resume and I couldn't believe my eyes. His education and experience level was off the charts in the field of construction. With his experience, he could literally start his own company or do some freelancing. I inquired about him being an entrepreneur, having people invest in his startup or doing some independent contracting. He got impatient and upset. "Man I need something right now. I can work for a warehouse or something at minimum wage." He couldn't see the wealth that he already possessed. He could only envision working for somebody else at far less his market value. That was his vision.

Your vision should cause you to walk on things that other people drown in. I want to share one last thought with you in this chapter. It's about a brother named Peter who walked on water in Matthew 14. It was early in the morning and dark when he and the other disciples thought that they saw a ghost. But it was Jesus and he told them not to be afraid. Brother Peter believed in the power of Jesus so he said, "***Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.***" - **Matthew 14:28b ESV**. Here's something to note: Jesus ain't scared! He said, "***Come.***"

Peter stepped out of the boat and was able to do what no other man could do. He walked on water as long as he had tunnel vision. But the bible says that he was afraid when “he saw” the wind. When’s the last time you “saw” the wind. You can’t see wind, you can only observe its effects. He became fearful and started to drown as soon as he observed something other than Jesus. Thank God he cried out for help as he was sinking and Jesus saved him. But the way that Jesus responded to Peter is what gets me everytime. He said, ***“O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”***.

My prayer is that we break any mental chains of doubt that might be holding us down today, and receive the inheritance that God has for us. No one has to be bound by the current elements in their life. God’s inheritance for us is that we would walk on and over the most unimaginable opposition. All we have to do is keep our eyes on Jesus.

Keep looking straight ahead and don’t look to the left or to the right. Regardless of what it may look like right now just remember - your legacy awaits you.

Also, a few more chapters await you in the physical copy of this book. We’ll let you know when they are released for

purchase but please feast on this e-book until then. Hope you enjoyed FROM LOCK UP TO LEGACY!