

Dear Beloved Family in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ! It is with heartfelt warmth that I greet you today, rejoicing in the wonderful ways God is working through our community. May His love surround you, uplift you, and fill your hearts with hope and encouragement as I share this blessed testimony with you. It fills my heart with overwhelming happiness to share with you the beautiful story of Marcos and Melissa—a true testament of God’s amazing grace and faithfulness! From childhood friendships to life’s trials and triumphs, God’s hand has been ever present, guiding them closer to His abundant love.



I met Marcos back in 2002, just after the Lord saved me. His mom was a faithful member of our church, and Marcos, the middle child among five siblings, was just 11 years old when we formed a friendship at church. Week after week, I had the privilege to share the gospel with him and other junior highers, teaching them right from wrong, and seeing Marcos grow in the knowledge of Jesus was such a blessing.

As he grew older, I took on more responsibilities in the church—moving from junior high ministry to youth ministry and eventually becoming a pastor-teacher. It’s been amazing to watch these young men grow and face the important decisions that come with emerging adulthood. But when Marcos turned 17, things got tough. He was drawn into the dark world of cartel activity and even crossed illegally into the States. When he came to me, saddened and confused over his choices, I counseled him with love and prayed over him.

The choices presented to Marcos after he had made wrong decisions, including involvement with cartel activity and illegal border crossing, were clearly aimed at guiding him toward a new life aligned with Christ:

1. The first choice was to look unto Christ for salvation—to repent of his sins and allow the Lord to lead and transform his life. This option emphasized spiritual renewal and turning to God for guidance and hope.
2. The second choice was to physically leave his hometown, Eagle’s Nest, to escape the dangerous influences of the cartel. The idea was that by going somewhere far away, Marcos might start fresh, away from negative influences, and avoid potential severe consequences like prison or death.

I shared with him two options: turn to Christ and repent or get away from the dangerous influences in Eagle’s Nest. At 17, he chose to leave, and though I lost contact for years, I never stopped praying for him.





Fifteen years later, by God's grace, I ran into Marcos again! He was proud to tell me he had joined the Mexican Marines and was fighting criminal activity at sea. While his heart wasn't yet fully surrendered to Christ, I was overjoyed to see him walking on a right path and grateful for the continued chance to share the gospel. Shortly after, I had to say goodbye, because we came to Costa Rica. Before we left, he told me one day he was going to visit us in Costa Rica.

Last month Marcos came to Costa Rica with Melissa, it was such a joyful surprise! He had told me once that one day he would visit with his girlfriend, but I didn't know he was getting married so soon. Although he hoped to come, already married, the flight changes meant the wedding would happen just after they returned to Tijuana. Still, we had two wonderful weeks together, full of laughter and meaningful conversations.

During those days, the urgency I felt to share Christ with both Marcos and Melissa grew stronger. Melissa told me about her grandfather, who was a Christian and often shared the gospel with her. Marcos, because of his mom and our friendship, also had some understanding of Christ. So, for four days, our conversations were filled with the message of Christ—we prayed, shared, and talked deeply about faith.



Then the most amazing moment happened. After opening our hearts to them, I shared Hebrews 9:27-28, reminding them that time is precious and that their love story and future depend on having Christ in their hearts. I asked if they believed Jesus paid the price for our sins, died, rose again, ascended to heaven, and would one day return. Together, in unison, they said yes, expressing that they believed with all their hearts. They asked God to forgive their sins and shared their desire to live their lives fully for Christ.



It was wonderful to witness this transformation! After praying together, we planned their wedding and baptism right here in Costa Rica. I HAD THE BLESSING TO BAPTIZE MARCOS AND MELISSA AND MARRIED THEM ALSO! 23 years I had known Marcos, from little boy to young man, and now seeing him repent and fully accept Christ as Lord and Savior was a blessing beyond words. It

reminded me that salvation comes from God alone, and I was humbled and thankful to be part of this answered prayer.





It was a joy unlike any other to marry and baptize them. Now back in Tijuana, we continue to guide and encourage them in their walk with Christ, praying earnestly for their marriage and spiritual growth.

My beloved family in Christ, my heart is overflowing with joy as I share this incredible journey of faith and redemption with you. Seeing lives transformed, like Marcos and Melissa's, is a powerful reminder that our labor in the Lord is never in vain. God is at

work, drawing our friends and family closer to Him, even when we may not see it right away.



May we continue to share the gospel to the lost, let us keep praying earnestly, and to keep loving passionately those who are still searching. May God use our words and prayers to change hearts and bring souls into the glorious light of Christ. Never lose hope, because God's timing is perfect, and His grace is limitless.



Let us stand firm, united in faith, and continue to be shining lights in a world that desperately needs Jesus. Together, let's continue sharing the gospel to everyone that comes into our lives. Always remembering that salvation is God's gift alone, and that He is the author of every new

beginning. Praise God for His endless grace and love!

In Christ,

Pastor Fernando Rocha

