“I once was lost...”

Melissa, a woman who found faith through difficult times, shares her story.

As Melissa grew up, she was never told that she was of value. Her grandfather was verbally abusive, and her grandmother was good to her, but it was her grandparents who raised Melissa. They taught her a strong work ethic. She was verbally abused, bullied, and used drugs and physically abused, but Melissa never knew she was loved. This lack of love and attention led to Melissa feeling alone.

At the age of 13, Melissa was sexually abused. At 15, she turned to meth. Being an outcast made it hard for her to make friends. In fact, she only had two friends as she grew up. "I felt alone. I knew God was there, but I still felt like a puppet on a string being controlled by everyone else."

Melissa said, "I have encountered so much pain, heartache, and sorrow in my life. It's a wonder I even made it out alive."

Melissa's life spiraled out of control. Melissa's way to cope was smoking weed and drinking. She was pregnant with her first child. She was married at 18. Melissa and her husband both loved her. They wanted her to know that they loved her, but she only saw that as an expectation. She never knew that she was loved for just her. They wanted her to love Christ, and she was on the verge of losing her relationship with her Savior, Jesus Christ, because of her addiction and the control she had over her life.

By 16, Melissa was pregnant with her first child. She was at the point where she was expecting baby number six. Her husband was arrested. She went to jail for the third time. She cracked because that would push people away so they couldn't hurt her or get close to those she loved, and Melissa would expect a person to do any less.

Melissa's life was being restored, but she still had a lot of issues to face. She was never taught how to protect herself. She had a judge and worked it out for her to stay in a program. She was a place to overcome her drug addiction and to learn more about God. Melissa started to cry out to God, "I need help. Save me." God opened a Bible and began to read. God stirred within her soul. She cracked the book and began to read. Melissa's attorney spoke to the judge and worked it out for her to go to the program.

Melissa's story is one of hope. She used drugs and physically abused her second child. She arrested her husband while he was with her second child. Melissa never imagined that God would use her story to impact others. Melissa's attorney spoke to the judge and worked it out for her to go to the program. She went to the program at Wichita Falls Faith Mission, the more I am convinced that God works through our faithfulness in ways we could never imagine. That is why we are here.

Melissa graduated from Faith Refuge's addiction recovery program and the job readiness program. Currently, she is working at a job and rebuilding family relationships.

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Melissa has been in recovery for five months being spent in lockdown. She has been saved by God and has been saved by my family. Currently, she is working on a plan for the future. She has a relationship with her Savior, Jesus Christ, and is now able to spend time with her children. She is working on rebuilding family relationships.

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THE OLDER WE GET, the more Pam and I think about leaving something behind when we leave this world. **We have worked in the ministry for over 40 years,** and we know that God will be faithful to complete the work He has begun through us. But when we are finished on this earth, we still want the blessings we have received to continue the work.

We used to think that leaving a gift in our will was only for the wealthy. But the more I see God at work here at Wichita Falls Faith Mission, the more I am convinced that God works through our faithfulness in ways we could never imagine.

**You don’t have to own glass slippers to leave a gift in your will.** You only have to be faithful and let God do the rest. All of us have people and causes that are dear to our hearts. Our families, for instance. We are taught in the Bible that we should take care of our families. No one would expect a person to do any less.

The question then becomes, “**How do I want my blessings to bless others.**” I think we would all agree we don’t want our resources to go for attorney fees and taxes. This is where thoughtful, deliberate planning pays off.

Pam and I pray that the money we leave behind will increase God’s Kingdom. That has been our life’s work, and we hope it will continue after we are gone. We don’t need our names on a plaque, but **we do want to leave this world better than when we found it.** To us, that includes leaving our money in the hands of someone that will continue that work.

May God Bless you as you serve Him.
AS I WAS GROWING UP, my aunts and uncles would say, "Nobody loves you. That's why your mom left you,"” stated Melissa. She was raised by her grandparents, who had already raised 12 children. Melissa's grandmother was good to her and taught her a strong work ethic. Her grandfather was verbally abusive. The verbal abuse started coming from other relatives and older children. As a child and teenager, Melissa never knew she was of value or worthy of love.

She was verbally abused, bullied, told lies to by herself and others, and sexually abused. At the age of 13, smoking weed and drinking became Melissa's way to cope. When she was 15, she turned to meth. Being an outcast made it hard for her to make friends. In fact, she only had two friends as she grew up. "I felt alone. I knew God was there, but I still felt like a puppet on a string being controlled by everyone else," said Melissa.

By 16 Melissa was pregnant with her first child. She was married at 18. Melissa and her husband both used drugs and physically abused each other. "I never knew what love really was, much less what peace looked like," said Melissa. She could make things chaotic in a heartbeat because that would push people away so they couldn’t hurt her or get to know her true self.

Melissa's life spiraled out of control. Melissa started to cry out to God, "I need help. Save me." God saved Melissa and her children by her being arrested. She went to jail for five months with two of the five months being spent in lockdown. While in lockdown, something stirred within her soul. She cracked open a Bible and began to read. God brought Melissa to jail so she could face all of her issues and prepare her for her next stop — Faith Refuge.

A lady named Ms. Althea told Melissa about a place called Faith Refuge. Ms. Althea explained it was a place to overcome her drug addiction and to learn more about God. Melissa's attorney spoke to the judge and worked it out for her to join the New Beginnings program at Faith Refuge.

In February 2019, Melissa graduated from the New Beginnings Addiction Recovery Program. She also graduated from Faith Refuge’s Career Academy in April 2019. As she reflected on her time at Faith Refuge, Melissa said, "I have encountered so much love and peace here. Before I came to Faith Refuge, no one could love me for just me. They wanted me for what I could do for them."

Melissa's life is being restored by God's mercy. Melissa has a relationship with her Savior, Jesus Christ, and is now able to spend time with her children. She is working and waiting for a letter of acceptance to a local college.
WE ALL HAVE STORIES. Circumstances and our response have taken us all in different directions. But directions can change. It may sound simple, but the truth is, we are only lost until we are found.

The message of the Gospel is good news because our lives don't have to be defined by our lostness. Rather, our lives are defined by what we decide to do with God's gift of salvation. “I once was lost, but now, I’m found.”

At Wichita Falls Faith Mission, we see men and women’s lives forever changed by God’s Amazing Grace. In this issue, you’ll meet Melissa and Raymundo. You’ll see how their lostness overwhelmed them and shaped almost every decision they made. In some ways, they didn’t know anything different. It was what they were used to. It seemed hopeless.

BUT GOD!

What Melissa and Raymundo found in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ didn’t change previous chapters of their stories. BUT GOD! certainly turned the page. They are both writing new chapters with God’s help.

Steve Sparks
CEO

“I don’t know whether he is a sinner,” the man replied [speaking about Jesus].
“But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!”
John 9:25, NLT

CURRENT STATS

Because of you, we are able to help rewrite stories of the homeless. Statistics provided are for January through April 2019.
WE COUNT ON regular support from faithful friends to support our mission, allowing us to serve the homeless in countless ways. I would like to invite you to join our monthly giving club called *Friends of Faith*.

*Friends of Faith* provides strong and steady funding that allows Wichita Falls Faith Mission to deliver a lasting impact to individuals and families experiencing homelessness in our community. **By reducing the amount of mail sent to you, Wichita Falls Faith Mission can dedicate more resources to providing shelter, meals, clothing, and one-on-one case management to the homeless and less to raising funds.**

One donation each month adds up to a world of difference for our homeless neighbors. **Here’s the difference you can make each month:**

- **$19.36** = Helps feed & care for 11 people
- **$47.64** = Helps provide 6 nights of shelter for a child, woman, or man
- **$70.40** = Helps feed & care for 40 people
- **$103.22** = Helps provide 13 nights of shelter for a child, woman, or man

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**How joining *Friends of Faith* benefits you?**

- **It’s simple and automatic.** You choose the dollar amount.
- **It’s flexible and secure.** You can increase, decrease, pause or stop your donations at any time.
- **It’s tailored to your preferences.** Communications are tailored to you. You will receive less mail throughout the year, which helps provide more resources to programs and services for the homeless. We will periodically mail or email updates on how your gifts are transforming lives.

**How do I join *Friends of Faith*?**

- **Sign up by completing the enclosed form OR**
- **Enroll on our secure website, www.FaithMissionWF.org**, by clicking the “Donate” button. Choose *Friends of Faith*. If you sign up online, we will call or email you to find out how we can tailor communications to you.

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**Faith Resale and Donation Center**

[Expiry date: 8/31/19. MUST PRESENT this coupon for the sale. This coupon has no cash value. This coupon must be used in one visit. There will be no change back from the coupon or returns. Originals only of the coupon. Photocopies of the coupon will not be accepted.]

- $5 OFF ANY $10 PURCHASE
- OR -
- $10 OFF ANY $20 PURCHASE
AT THE AGE OF 16, Reymundo married and dropped out of school. He and his young bride had three boys. His drug habit started at the age of 19 when both of his parents passed away in the same year. Reymundo’s father was a violent man and was murdered. His mother became sick two days after his father died. She died in an ambulance on her way to the hospital. Reymundo did not know how to handle grief, so his usage spiraled out of control.

“I couldn’t forget what happened. Drugs helped me forget a lot of things,” said Reymundo. His addiction exposed him to a lot of worse things than grief. He lost his wife, kids, relationship with his siblings, and friends. He became involved with drug dealers and became violent. “You have to be when you’re running around with drug dealers,” said Reymundo.

The more he used drugs, the less he slept, and the more he hallucinated. The hallucinations became worse and would cause Reymundo to lose control of himself during that stage of his life. “I have seen evil,” Reymundo said with a distraught facial expression.

He could not keep a job. Reymundo picked up the habit of stealing from family and friends to pay for his drug addiction. He was living in his car because no one would allow him in their homes.

His lifestyle caused him to go to prison. While there, Reymundo tried to commit suicide three times. He was released from prison and continued to drift. “It’s time to get clean, but how do I do it?” Reymundo asked himself. He had been to several rehabs and hospitals but had no success through those programs.

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One morning he woke up in Mineral Wells, Texas after being sober for two days. He started walking to a church. The pastor was there and counseled Reymundo. “You are very lost,” the pastor told Reymundo. “God is the only one that can heal you. I’m going to send you to a friend of mine named Pete Corrales at Faith Mission.”

When Reymundo arrived at Faith Mission, he was severely depressed, had terrible anxiety, was suicidal – he was a broken man. The staff at the Mission contacted several local agencies that helped him get the right things and medication he needed. They also told him about God.

“Praying to God a lot has helped me the most. I lay on my bed every night and talk to God. He answers me back. He healed me from my addiction,” said Reymundo.

Since being at Faith Mission, he has been drug-free for nearly two years, and Reymundo’s relationships with two of his sons have been restored. Also, the Wichita County D.A. has worked with another county to get warrants cleared and a payment schedule set up to pay Reymundo’s fines. When talking with his sons, he says, “Look what God is doing with your dad.” With grateful hearts to God, the staff of Faith Mission looks at Reymundo’s restored life and smiles.