

Champions for the Prisoner with Jay Harvey and Nick Vujicic

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Nick Vujicic>> Listen there's so many things, and one time inside the facility, this just came out. It had to be the Holy Spirit, but I said, "You know, I often refer to this as incarceration ministry because you can be incarcerated, but be free, but you can also be free on the outside, but be in prison.

[Champions for the Brokenhearted: Prison Ministry]
[Image of broken heart with Isaiah 61:1 in the center]

Hi, everyone! I'm Nick Vujicic, and what an honor it is that you've decided to join me here today for Champions for the Brokenhearted. I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart to each of you donors financially supporting us and have actually committed to us, praying, fasting, and holding us before the throne of grace as we continue to stand in front of the gates of hell and redirect traffic. We're so incredibly grateful for your partnership. We want you to know that we acknowledge you. We pray for you. We love you, and we are thankful for God's commissioning and your "yes" to that commission as an important role as you play in the ministry right here at the Nick Vujicic Ministries Life Without Limbs reaching millions of people.

Now listen we know that we have a God who has a heart for the lost, and we know that He wants everyone saved. Jesus died for everyone. Yet, sometimes even people who are saved still need their broken heart healed, and I want you, as you watch this, to just pray and say, "Hey, God, is there anyone that you want me to share this message or actually even join in the Circle of Champions through Life Without Limbs where they can together continue the strengthening and partnering in what God is doing through us

in this ministry? And I tell you right now, there's some really cool bonus content that if you are in the Circle of Champions, it's coming straight to you to. For why? To edify you, to encourage you, to let you see what we're seeing. This month. Champions for the Brokenhearted is highlighting an area of ministry that has been very close to my heart for many years. It's called our Life Without Limbs Prison Ministry.

Well, I'll tell you right now that I am so excited to introduce to you, maybe for the first time, maybe you've seen clips of me and Jay Harvey about Prison Ministry through Life Without Limbs, but Jay is now the full-time director of the Prison Ministry of Life Without Limbs, as well as an author, speaker, pastor, and trusted friend, also speaking behind pulpits of churches who have sponsored church plants in prison facilities through the prison ministry of Life Without Limbs that we'll get into later. I am so thankful and blown away by all the work that the Holy Spirit has done here. Jay, love you, love you.

Jay Harvey>> Love you, Nick. Thank you for having me.

Nick>> Fist bump.

Jay>> Yeah, fist bump.

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Nick>> Jay, I love you. Jay, share with us how you gave your life to Jesus Christ, and how He prepared you and called you into prison ministry.

Jay>> I'm so glad you asked that. I haven't shared that with anybody on the outside of the walls for a while, so it's nice, but you know, growing up I was a pretty normal kid, but I struggled with alcohol. I struggled with just being a worldly person. I had a grandmother who prayed for me obviously, but...

Nick>> God bless those praying grandmas out there! Come on. Just keep on praying!

Jay>> I reached a point in my life I think that so many people do, and it's this God saying, "This is an opportunity for you. You know that you're not right with Me." You don't have the relationship. It's just something in us, and somebody invited me to church. Now I had been to church before growing up but this was a different point in my life. I was married. I had two small children. I wasn't fulfilled in any way, still struggling with alcohol. I felt like I was a disappointment to my family, and this still works.

Somebody that I knew and trusted invited me to the local church, so going in expecting I knew what it was all about already. I heard something different at that point in my life. I heard Jim Lyon who was my pastor who presented the Gospel to me in a different way than I had heard before. My ears had been opened by the Holy Spirit because He loves us so much. He will continue to pursue.

And I heard that there might be hope for me. So I gave my life to Jesus Christ shortly thereafter, was baptized a week later, and three days after that, Nick, I knew tangibly in my in my whole spirit that I was never going to struggle with alcohol again. God had delivered me from that struggle. This was a dramatic change. A lot of people in town knew me, knew my past, new kind of my story, and just couldn't believe the change. Little did I know that God was setting me on a course, not just to have me free from that bondage and going to heaven, but to share my life with others.

And so, three weeks after I was baptized, a discipleship pastor called me. "So, would you like to go to the county jail and do ministry?" And I said, "Sure." I was a young Christian-- honeymoon phase--

I was saying "yes" to everything. I would have mowed the lawn. I would have done, you know, you remember! You are on fire for Christ, and I remember hanging up the phone, and then I went, "Wait a minute. Did he say jail? He wants me to go to jail to do ministry?" That was over 20 years ago. I remember doing three services at the county jail, listening to Pastor Mike. He allowed me to share my testimony and from that day forward, incarceration ministry has always been a thread in everything else that I've ever done: pastoring, speaking, writing I have always had a bent towards the incarcerated because so many of them--the first thing that happens is they lose hope.

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When they lose hope they surround themselves with people who also don't have hope, and a lot of times it puts them in a position where they end up in the judicial system, so and they are just looking for hope, so that's pretty much how I landed in that type of ministry and that's my faith story, so....

Nick>> You know, I've been to many countries in many places, and I've met a half a million people. And in that in the different ways or versions of ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit or or prison ministry itself, I remember the first time I went to prisons and facilities in correctional facilities, and I leave so discouraged many, many times, in that, ahh--there's just so much more need than we could ever imagine to help healing, restoration, reconnection with family, and I felt so burdened.

Sometimes when I feel burdened--a parallel to that was when I first saw poverty for the first time--and I'm so burdened and so discouraged and so disheartened. Did you ever feel that way? And how did you allow the Lord to help you to keep your eyes fixed and keep on serving while even though you may be feeling like, "Yes, thank you God for using me for these people, but I know there's a huge gap in what I know they really need."

How did the Lord teach you to keep yourself not drowning in the need--because, you know the need from a from a qualitative level and then we know the vastness of this in America and worldwide. Give us some wisdom because some of us need some encouragement even in ministry, whatever ministry you're in. How did God protect you from saying, "Okay, God, help me."

Jay>> Well, great question, and, you know, my answer is sometimes He doesn't protect me. He wants me to see. He wants me to feel, but not for any real length of time because it's overwhelming, You know, in the 1990s there were 325,000 inmates in the United States and 75-80 percent of them were violent offenders. We now have 2.4 million that are incarcerated in either county, state, or federal, but 75% of them are nonviolent.

So what we have had is this huge influx of law changes, minimal "3-strikes you're-out" drug charges that carry a minimum 5-year sentence, so what happens is you're locking up young men for these charges for a minimum of 5 years, and then everything that's put on them as they come out, it's easy for them to reoffend or not meet all the criteria for their parole and they end up back in, so it's the cycle.

That's the reason there's so many now, and the need is so great. Not being overwhelmed by that comes down to a couple things for me. I can't help them all, but I think the point where people usually miss the opportunity is this: They become overwhelmed when they do prison ministry. A church will go in, a group will go in. They will see what you just described, and they will be blessed. They will be a blessing to those that are there, but then when, they leave, they're not sure what to do next, and it's always easier to just kind of go back to what you know.

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I don't fault anybody for that. In fact, when I do training on behalf of Life Without Limbs and people want to go in and do prison ministry, I challenge them to truly pray first, and say, "Am I called to this because it is an overwhelming, emotional battle every time. When you see 19-20-year-olds who have never had a father figure, who don't even understand what forgiveness and grace and hope is all about, it can become overwhelming, but here's what God has taught me, and here's what I would say to anybody that is thinking about this type of ministry, You have to allow yourself to see those people as yourself.

And they don't want you to fix their poverty. They don't want you to fix their home situation. They want hope, and if we can give them hope and point them to Jesus, then that's exactly what they take and begin to build inside the walls, and take it out to other people. We have to trust the Holy Spirit to take all of that emotional burden, and sometimes we don't, because we think, "Well, He sent me in here, so I'm the one that has to take it," and I just don't last very long when I'm operating out of my own strength like that.

I tell my wife often one of the hardest things to do is to be in a facility and see what these men are doing on behalf of Christ in the Kingdom, knowing that they have had this moment with Christ and they're saved, and now they're a child of the King, but they are still trapped behind bars, and I have to leave, and I think about them often but then the Holy Spirit reminds me that, "Listen, I've got them, just like I had you," and so, but the key again is such a profound question that you asked.

We often don't see them as Christ would have us see them as ourselves, and we've got to get to that level when we go and we minister to inmates because if we think we're just bringing Jesus in a backpack and we're going to bless them with the Gospel because Jesus said, "You visited me in prison," it's not. That's not it because the same Holy Spirit that I have, many of them have, which means they are gifted, which means, they need equipping and affirming to help others, and that's what keeps them going. The same thing that keeps us going is what keeps them going. They are reaching out to other people. They become the hands and feet of Christ for other inmates and families, and so that is what I think Jesus had in mind when he said, you know, "When I was in prison, you visited Me."

Nick>> And I love that, you know, there's so many things that the Holy Spirit is just speaking to me about because, you know, "Free in My Faith" is what the curriculum is called, and we'll talk about that, and I love the sentence that you said, "I heard that there may be hope for me." I mean that that is a wonderful, incredible, beautiful sentence that could actually describe faith in a way that I've never heard it before. And it is true, like that is the beauty when you look at 8,000,000,000 souls to preach the Gospel to, we don't carry their brokenness. We point them to Him, and He carries them. "But how will they know that they have hope unless you tell them?" You know, what's so cool about, you know, what's so cool about actually meeting someone in the name of Jesus behind bars as if they are Jesus or ourselves having compassion in that?

You know what happens when you actually go visit Jesus? Jesus visits you! And that's the amazing thing, and so we're so excited about the position of Life Without Limbs ministry

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because what we are doing, everything we are doing, and how Pastor Jay is leading this in his title with us, is scaling this, and we're going to go beyond just translating this, but it's through denominational leaders who say, "You know what? Sure, our local church would love to help someone here.

We've actually had members of our church who want to start a prison ministry, but they don't know where to start, and this is the beautiful thing where we together, The Circle of Champions, can pray and be the hands and feet of this growing number of demographics and need in our country. Give us a little bit of the institutional statistics and the growing concern of what's happening in our country right now.

Jay>> Yeah, and I already mentioned, the explosion in in population of inmates, the fastest rising demographic is women who are used by men who are either dealing drugs or addicted to drugs as they are the person that, you know, steals and robs for them to get money to do this, so you see an explosion of growth in women and most of the women that we minister to have the same story which is not a very good home life, not a lot of direction, not a lot of moral direction, so they're latching on to relationships that aren't good for them, and then juveniles as well. Juveniles, again if you go back to the earlier statement that I made about young men being locked up, that means fathers are out of the home, and they might experience poverty so the kids themselves are more apt to find themselves incarcerated or in the juvenile system, and so it's....

Nick>> And many of them from the foster care as well.

Jay>> Absolutely! And it's just a perpetual thing that keeps happening--and what is so great about what God does though, is (and it's why in this program we decided about two years in) to shift into this "planting churches" mentality, as opposed to, "Let's go share the Gospel with them and then we've done our job." It's they hear the Gospel a lot in prison, but it doesn't connect, right? So, when we go in and identify quickly the leaders within the facilities, those who have been born again, who the chaplains kind of verify, "Yeah these, you know, this is if we had a prison pastor here, it would be this guy." We want to equip them with material so that they, in their language, can speak to their culture. We do that for the women as well. Oftentimes, we will take "lifers"

that are born again, go through this curriculum, and then they'll go speak to the juveniles because I can go in and preach the Gospel to a juvenile and even really connect with them, but they're going to listen at a different level to somebody who's been through what they've been through and so that's why I think our ministry is unique and is so fruitful. It is equipping those God has already called behind bars to be the hands and feet of Christ. So that's what we do. The effect on families, the numbers. There are some numbers I can share briefly that that would just blow you away. Fifty percent of African-American families have.... Fifty percent of children living in minority-driven neighborhoods, inner cities, have at least one parent incarcerated, so if you think about....

Nick Vujicic>> One in two.

Jay>> Right, one in two, and if you think about this, it is just the truth in your areas what you would maybe call the projects or inner cities—

Nick>> Very high, very rough.

Jay>> Fifty percent of those children have at least one parent in prison. Any minority, either Hispanic or African-American, born into that type of poverty today has a one in three chance themselves in being incarcerated for at least three years. So, this is a part of the system—no pointing fingers—it is just the culture in which they live, but they don't all want to make these choices. They want to make good choices. They want to make good choices, but it goes back to what you said. Somebody has to tell them about, not just Jesus, the hope of Jesus.

Nick>> And show them the love. Be the father. Be those hands and feet.

Jay>> Yes, they know about Jesus, but they have a hard time connecting what that means, what that looks like. the tangible relationship—what it should feel like, what it should look like, and the real hope that it provides that is sustainable, and behind bars a shot of hope for these men, women, and youth can sustain them for a long time. It's amazing! What they'll tell me is like, "You just bought me another six months today of hope," because you reminded me that Jesus still knows where I'm at, and that's huge for them because not many people are going in to tell them that.

Nick>> Do you know what really ripped my heart out? I imagine myself as incarcerated many, many times especially when you go into the facility or leaving the facility, I always picture myself when I'm driving there in the car (I'm not driving the car, but someone's driving me there) that that I'm going, and this is it, and I didn't get to say goodbye to my family. I put myself that way to to immerse myself in how I think they may feel and I ask God, "God give me the compassion and let me see them as You see them and what rips my heart out is one of the people, like a chaplain, who if they preach the Gospel, and if these people hear it, and if they come to chapel weekly. it ripped my heart out that most facilities force chaplains to move in a cycle from place to place to place to place to place to place to place. You know, that to me, I think that's actually designed stupidly designed, and I'm going to say, instigated by the enemy.

I'll tell you why--because if no one remains there to be the shepherd of the sheep, a someone that you can start talking to, and then as soon as you open up your heart, "Oh, you have got another one." What is the difference of a foster father than a chaplain if you're going from home to home to home to home to home to home? It doesn't make any sense, and so what I love about this program, Jay, is we come into obviously every facility is different, every age group's different, every demographics different, every state is different, every county.

We understand that, but we all know that there are some commonalities in how people have either have had people do something to them that then they react, or force them to do something,

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or that was the environment, and this is all they've known: pornography and drugs and poverty and fatherlessness and stealing being okay, or this being okay.

You have compassion upon them. When you come in, the father's heart as well, I'm sure there are many times where you look at this group of people, and you can already depict divisional lines. I mean God shows me the divisional lines in a public school. You know what I mean? Like I know how that is as a speaker. Tell me more context in your extensive experience of going from facility to facility how it is with the divisional lines and what causes the division, in however you want to describe it, and actually what really works well to unify, you know, breaking down those walls of division.

Jay>> You're exactly right. It is easy to spot. I've been, in this ministry alone, I've been in over 200 facilities. I have probably spoken face to face with now over 75,000 inmates and then what through the program and DVDs, and thousands of salvations.

It's amazing! Discipleship and all that, but what is key is what you said. It all starts with the chaplain, the administration of that particular state, that particular facility, because chaplains are--they are

just like anybody else--you may have a chaplain that loves the weekly, you know, shepherding. A new chaplain may come in that never leaves his office, Nick, because it's just overwhelming, and if you think about it, we need to pray for our chaplains and everybody else that works inside the walls, not just the inmates because the environment itself is so volatile, but when I can walk into a facility and see that there is a chaplain there that loves Christ and is doing everything possible to create an environment for a church to emerge and your administration is also allowing that to happen, then those divisional lines are harder to spot. What I see in those situations is the church because I can stand up and see different gang affiliations, different ethnicities under one roof, having to get along in the name of Jesus Christ, right?

Listen, they want to come to chapel because it's better than staying in their cell, but when they are there, if Christ is truly present and we've brought the hope or the chaplain has unlocked the hope, then what I see is the true representation of the body: brothers arm-in-arm from all different divisional lines on the outside, that this becomes their refuge, and they do understand the love and hope of Christ. In places where that's not so regularly noticed, it is still very cold, quiet. Faith is private, and I would say, "tempered" because when they leave that chapel area, Nick, they are going out into an environment where they are going to have to do some things that maybe they don't want to do.

If somebody finds out that they have become a Christian, that is a risk, so I walk into a facility, and I can tell before I even get to the chapel, is this a place where the love of God has infiltrated through the people that he has sent in over a period of time where the church is flourishing and men are being changed in a corporate level or is there somebody at the top here at this facility who's pushed back against having any faith-based programs? I can spot it a mile away, so I react differently. If I'm going into a full-fledged situation, for example, Everglades Correctional where we met Luther, and we end up making a movie about Luther, I walked into a room that was

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anointed already, and I just basically said, "Thanks for letting me come." [laughter] It was awesome, and I affirmed what they were doing and almost revival broke out. I've also been to places where nobody says a word when I walk in because they're so scared. They're so--they don't want to make one wrong move because they don't even want this part taken away even though they are allowing them to go to chapel, but the Holy Spirit, you know, there is just a an enemy present there. So we have to be able to to react in different ways. If I walk into that second situation, Nick, where it's cold and nothing much is happening yet, I try to identify one person--one person. I'll ask somebody, "If you had to name a pastor here at your chapel, who would it be?"

And they usually point to one or two guys, and I'll pull them aside, and I'll plead with them to go to their chaplain, just say, "Just start a small group with Free in My Faith, just 5 or 6 guys. Get the momentum started." and then God takes over! It's amazing what happens, but we see it all over the spectrum and you're right, we can we can see those divisional lines and the flexibility of this curriculum and program allows us to react differently wherever it is we show up, where so many don't! They come, a lot of people come in, with a canned presentation and as you well know, Nick, because you I heard you were a pretty good speaker, but just like when you're speaking to youth, when you're speaking to youth, you have about 17 seconds to establish credibility. Same with inmates. We know it. We've done it.

Nick>> We've probably been on 60 stages together?

Jay>> So, when I stand up in front of inmates, I have about 17 seconds to establish credibility, but that's why I always open with my brokenness because I'll say, "Hey, look, you know, this was what God helped me with, and all of a sudden, guys are leaning in. So, the ministry itself is dynamic. It's prison-centric, Christ-centric, flexible, and we are planting churches inside prisons, no matter what stage they're in, I'm going to get them to the point where with the Holy Spirit's help where they have a full-fledged church going on once a week there.

Nick>> Well, I have to say something really obvious. It's God! I mean it's miraculous! It's God! Can you imagine where God's using Jay to go in and other people nationwide even tuning in and some other ways that they connect with Life Without Limbs resources and videos and curriculum, without Jay, that's the scalable amazing way of how God is actually though come straight into a microscopic level to have the facility group point out who their Bible study leader is going to be! And then it's led by one of them which says so much about the love of God because, you know, and I know no matter when we're on stage who is in the audience. They are like, "Well, Jay is different than me.

Well, Nick is different than me." No, they have known that guy for quite some time, and he knows they know that they are special, like God can use anyone. That is the beauty of that incredible ministry, and so we have for some years had this dream that's birthed and exploded and grown. Explain to us more about the "Free in My Faith," and "Staying Free," the curriculum that we all have here at Life Without Limbs that has really exploded. I mean it is humbling and exciting.

Jay>> Very humbling, very humbling. The "Free in My Faith" curriculum itself, just so we cover this, was written based on some responses we received from inmates. So, you know, when we talked about a prison ministry together, I said, "Well, let's go find out what the inmates really want," because I knew that they struggle sometimes with not having a voice in that, and so the topics that were given, we poured over, that's why we came up with the curriculum that we did, and it's very basic. It starts with hope. There are nine topics. We go in. We show some videos of you. They break into this small group, and they talk about hope, but it's an open architecture. The Scriptures are at the back end of each chapter, not the front end, and that's by design.

Let's get them talking about their definition of hope, and then as they all pour in that--their voices out into what they think hope is--then we have inserted some Scriptures that talk about, that affirm, that definition, but in a Biblical way so what they come to realize is, "Oh my gosh, God is for me! God has been here the whole time. He knows that I need this kind of hope, and so then we move on to love and relationships and grace and forgiveness and these other topics. It allows them to almost self-disciple in a short amount of time to understand that God is so willing to help them grow where they're at and I think that's God's character. I think that's the Father's character.

If you're going to lock this many people up, I'll turn it into a seminary, and they can come out and help the church, which is what I also tell a lot of the inmates, and I'll just tell you before I flew out here, I interviewed a husband and a wife who both went through "Free in My Faith." She was in a women's prison. He was in a men's prison. Obviously, they both went through it, and here's the comment that he made to me as I interviewed him. "We have sat through countless other programs, and people would say to me, 'Jesus is the hope.'" And he would say, "I know that, but what does that mean?"

He said, "'Free in My Faith' was the first curriculum that got to a level in my heart, in my spirit, and in my emotions, that helped me put those pieces together," and he goes, "and as soon as that happens, I mean, really," he said, "we don't need you anymore." Like, you know, what I mean? We knew it. We had it, and so he has gone through it.

He has become one of our facilitators, and his wife, same thing, said, "It got to how does when somebody says, 'Well you need the hope of Christ,' and then they walk out, how do we do that?" And this is what is unlocked for them. The next curriculum "Staying Free" is just another series of topics that inmates gave us: fear and courage, regrets and healing, how to cope emotionally, loneliness, shame, forgiveness.

These things that you don't hear a lot about on Sundays, but they deal with every day, so I think it is very humbling. I think it was ordained by the Holy Spirit to truly reach inmates at a level that affirms what God is already doing there in their life, in their heart, and is trying to do in them, and gives them a way to voice that out.

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You know, I've got thousands of stories. One guy who went through the program and got to the very end of the last topic on prayer, which I know is big for you. Teach me how to pray. I always hear you say, "Teach me how to pray." When people come to Christ, you say, "Teach me how to pray," and it is

so powerful because this man was an alcoholic, remained an alcoholic in prison, which was a whole another show we could get into...

Nick>> [laughing] Sounds like a great reality show right there!

Jay>> and what's available to them. I went back for a second visit. He approached me and he said, "You know, I went through this material, and I was starting to warm up to God, and then I got to prayer and I got cautious because I've never been somebody who's able to pray, but the way you all unpacked it for me--because I started to have prayer time with God," and he goes, "I quit drinking. My family on the weekly call after 20 minutes said, 'What's wrong with you? You're different.' through the phone."

Nick>> Come on!

Jay>> He said, "I struggled with anger," which most alcoholics do, and he said, "I go well I've had some changes happen to me by God," and he goes and with tears in his eyes, Nick, he said, "My family doesn't know Christ, but now they've asked, 'What happened to you?' so he said...this again back to your first question, the burden...I have to leave people like that and I always wonder what has come, but I trust God that He's working it all out, so it's a very, very powerful tool, and I don't even like to call it a book.

Nick>> and simple, so simple. God is so simple!

Jay>> We make Him too hard. We make Him too complex.

Nick>> We do. We do. It is our disability. I want you to know that, you know, your pastor might be saying, "Oh, you know, we sponsored this local ministry or that local ministry." Let me tell you, Life Without Limbs is on the tip of the spear to bring a whole wave of church plants in prisons by inmates themselves who get saved or are already saved and actually appointed, and we have a mentoring, you know, programs, you know, how can we help them how can we encourage them in any way that we can help the chaplain and the people there in admin to continue to keep on going. There are some actual facilities that have multiple meetings going on, because they can't all fit in. Then they get saved, right?

And then they go through the discipleship and the curriculum, and then more people, like "We want more! We want more!" And it's just incredible. I want to know the "stats-ish" right now. How many prisons are we at or approximate inmates who have given the life to Jesus Christ and are facilitating, I mean these stats are just phenomenal!

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Jay>> Yeah, so 200 and some facilities that we've been in, I would say. Out of that, there are a lot of signature facilities that are main campus facilities that then go out into other ones. In person, like I said earlier, I think probably over 75,000 inmates face to face that have heard the Gospel, and more than that, been affirmed that they've already come back to Christ, which not many people affirm for them while they're there, which then unlocks them to go and evangelize the rest of the facility.

Nick>> And they watch me preach the Gospel in the prison that we recorded and they come forward to the screen and knell down and give their life to Jesus Christ. It's amazing!

Jay Harvey>> And I'm going to say upwards of 20,000 probably new decisions, but then thousands of multiple thousands, Nick, too many to count, of men who have rediscovered their hope in Christ because so many of them grew up in church and thought it was too late, and so I'm seeing this complex combination of new salvations, rebirths, recommitments, but really awakenings.

Nick>> That's so good.

Jay>> "I've got something to offer still, and even if I never get out," which many of them won't, this is their mission field, and they, you know, they put me to shame sometimes with their enthusiasm, and the hope and joy that they have, even when they get bad news, and I think that God is preparing to not just have them come out and be a part of the body of Christ, but I actually believe the next season of leadership, the voices that will ring true, are those who have come out of, not just prisons, but recovery, struggles, poverty. They know how to overcome, and so that will be the fresh voice and the question will be is, "Are the mature saints ready to hear that or not?"

Nick>> Right, right. So, you know my favorite story of all the testimonies that I've heard of the many is the man that said, "After giving my life to Jesus Christ through the "Free in My Faith" curriculum, I went back to my cell, and they shut the door, but I couldn't see the bars! Couldn't see the bars! I couldn't see the bars!"

It is so good!

Jay Harvey>> Listen, listen! There are so many things, and one time inside the facility this just came out. It had to be the Holy Spirit, but I said,

"You know, I often refer to this as Incarceration ministry because you can be incarcerated but be free, but you can also be free on the outside, but be in prison," and the place exploded because it's something that they have a hard time voicing to people, and it's something that people on the outside have a hard time understanding. But true freedom, when you really know it, your surroundings then don't matter anymore.

Nick>> That's right.

Jay>> And I get to experience that all the time, and I'm so thankful to you for allowing me to do that, but you're right,

I remember that man who said for years, because the reason he was there was because somebody ratted on him, right?

And we were talking about forgiveness, and he truly had a moment and came to Christ and began to understand this, and he said, "For the first time ever, I went back, and I turned around, and I couldn't see the bars anymore. I was free!" And we stand on that.

Nick>> That's awesome! Amen. Now, Jay, look some people do get out of incarceration. Explain to us the challenges that obviously these men and women face as they actually leave the facility.

Let me, I'll preface it this way to put it into context, I encountered a guy through a kind of a halfway house probably two years ago who had been incarcerated for a very, very long time, and had just made his way out. His first question to me, which you're going to find hilarious, was, "What happened to all the phone booths? Right? We never think about those things. He was wondering what happened to the phone booths on the corners of all the streets. So you're talking about men and women who may come out of a facility if they've been in more than 10-14 years, which is an average sentence length, may start out 5 or 7, but gets added because of things that they have to do to survive when they're in.

The world changes so quickly, so they have to get a driver's license. They have to get a Social Security card reestablished. That's hard for anybody, right? And they don't have advocates to help them do that. They need to find some type of work that will allow them to establish residence. Depending on their family situation which is usually not good, you know, maybe 50 years ago they would still have a family to come home to.

Now families are dispersed, and so the emotional, the traumatic, everything that follows them out or all the choices and all the work that they have to do, what truly helps these inmates is to have a community, whether that's the church or a parachurch ministry that is focused on building a community for these people with other ex-inmates, and all working together. It's like another step of freedom to go and get some of these things done, so that they don't have to worry about it as they slowly ease back into their life.

I've heard testimonies from guys who said, you know, the first visit or reunion they had with their children, they wanted to do something nice for them, and so they would go to like a Walmart, or a Big Box store and the level of anxiety that they experienced with all of the busyness and the choices almost sent them into, you know, a nervous breakdown.

So the church has to be mindful. They've paid their debt to society. We need to try to help remove the stigmas and love them. Keep it simple, but churches that that just say well we have a welcoming congregation, they need to be careful because they may think that they're welcoming,

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but you're assuming a lot. There's a very wounded person that maybe wants to come and be a part of your congregation. You need to go slow with them, and make sure that they're surrounded by a community that that's not going to back out on them, so I'm a part of a couple of different "landing spots" in my hometown for men who are coming out of incarceration, and it's a daily routine. They're free from prison, but it's a gradual introduction back into society, and I think that helps with recidivism greatly just to give them that support. So we will have resources, and we do now to help people understand what that looks like and if they want to know more, they can they can check that out.

Nick>> That's awesome. Jay, for Christians who are actually going into facilities to preach the Gospel, are there any blind spots that you just want to, you know, kind of educate. Anyone is kind of like, "Oh, I've done this, or my uncle did that, or you know, I might do it," and we have our own perceptions of what that could be, but what are some blind spots that are just like so obvious to you and your experience there that you want every Christian just to be aware of.

Jay>> Yeah, I would say right off the bat, don't assume anything. Don't assume anything. That's the one thing that gets a lot of us into trouble is assuming that, #1, like I said earlier, you're taking Jesus in with you to put Him out on the table and show everybody.

Don't assume that your denomination, which I'm sure everybody thinks theirs is the best, is going to translate well. You are talking to a diverse group of people who probably grew up in church and have different biases against whatever denomination you are, no matter what, so I try to keep it very, you know. I know that scattered throughout the crowd there are Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, Pentecostals, and so I keep it about Jesus, and I keep it about love, and I keep it simple, and then the biggest one, Nick, is this:

Don't assume that God didn't send you there to learn something about yourself from an inmate who has the Holy Spirit. Listen, if people get saved in prison, then they have the Holy Spirit, which means God is speaking to them, working through them, equipping them, and there has been more than once that I've gone into a facility and had a Christian man who is wearing blue, you know, come up to me and speak prophetically over my life.

If you go in with an attitude that, "They have nothing to offer me. I'm doing all of this for them," then you're going to miss out on the biggest blessing of your life, and that's what a lot of people do, and I'm not even criticizing them for that. That would be an obvious thing. We're going in to see inmates, right?

What could they possibly have to offer me? But if they are Christians now, then God might speak through them to heal a part of your heart. That is where pride comes in, and it happened to me a couple of times, and when I began to really allow God wherever He is at, and in whom He wants to speak to me, whether they are an inmate, a pastor, a parachurch leader, an evangelist, a speaker, you know, I would have no problem if Nick Vujicic wanted to speak something prophetically into my life, I mean that would be awesome, but what about a guy who committed

murder, but then has come back to know Jesus, and now has the gift, a prophetic gift, or intercessory prayer? Am I giving him credibility because that is where the rubber meets the road.

Do you believe the Gospel or not? Can God change a man's heart on the inside? What I see so many programs do is go in with that blinder up to say, "This is a one-way transaction," and God is so wanting to change parts of our heart through inmates who now have the Holy Spirit and have come back to Christ. That is the biggest blind spot, and you hear people come back, "Well, I was very blessed today because they really blessed me, when really what God is trying to do often is to change a part of you through them because that's what He does through the most unlikely of places and people, God speaks for the betterment of His Kingdom and to glorify Himself. So, go looking for that nugget that God wants to bless you with. And you'll have instant kinship with the inmate population.

Nick>> Well Jay, you know that we have so many hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of stories, thousands of witnessing of miracles and salvations, and just incredible, so even the guards giving their life to Jesus Christ, you know, and the chaplains, they're like wiping tears away. He's like, whoa, like I just.... I'm not saying chaplain's got saved, but man, they got really jolted and awakened, you know, and every story, you know, God watches and He's writing our history.

Our history is His story, and our history in our track record of evangelism and going to help broken-hearted who are incarcerated, who are lost right now, man, I tell you, there's so many stories, but there was actually this opportunity where Life Without Limbs in 2022 we were able to produce and release a short film called "Luther."

It has actually been shown in hundreds of facilities and the story portrays.... So, I want you to know it is amazing, if you haven't seen it, you have got to watch it. It is a story that portrays the purpose and value that someone can find hope, that purpose, even if they're still facing time, by a testimony of how God had an encounter or a man behind bars had an encounter with God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And that film has really made a huge difference, deeply convincing many people that there is hope for them. Men and women who have received this message of hope and love and joy and freedom. Tell us more about the fruit of this incredible story, that we were able to share. And yeah, I mean we got to meet him. We got to meet Luther, and Luther was at Everglades Correctional in Miami, Florida, and it was about two years into our Prison Ministry, and this is where kind of the shift started about affirming what God was doing, and being able to pivot to that and plant churches and equip men who could do a far better job in spreading the Gospel than we could because we only have a limited time.

So, meeting Luther and affirming what God was doing in him set off this chain of events where we learned more about his story. We had the resources then to make a short film that was put out on PureFlix, but also inside facilities because many facilities, Nick, have tablets for educational purposes for inmates. One of those apps can be a story like Luther's, and so we had it put on

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some of the prisons' tablets and made it available for 600,000 inmates to watch [whistle from Nick]. To date, we know that over 130,000 views of that, and again, it goes back to hope.

What happened to Luther was unfortunate. He takes full responsibility. He had a minimum sentence of 25 years, but in finding the hope of Christ became a pastor on the inside, and countless men have come to Christ because of him, and that's the story of hope that we captured in Luther's story that now is going out because of Life Without Limbs. It is going out across the nation and around the world, this 20-minute film. It has impacted so many people and so many prisoners. A funny story—I was actually with some of the staff. We were at a small facility in Texas, and I'm up talking about the program, and there was one inmate that just kept looking at me funny, and afterwards he was whispering to his buddy, and I said what are you guys talking about?

He goes, "Were you in that movie Luther?" and I said, "I did have like a 7-second role, and he said, "I told you that was him! I told you that was him!" So, that was like the first time somebody had, you know, noticed and I played a negotiating officer, you know. He did very well, thank you. That was 7 seconds, you know. It was great, memorized my lines, but I asked him right on the heels of that, "How do you like it? And they all just love the movie, and so it's something they can watch over and over again because what it does is, it tells the story that no matter what, God is so able, willing, ready to invade your heart and turn your life around and give you that hope and that new purpose. And Nick, that's what they all want.

That's what they all want.

Nick>> And God wants them to have that, freely, and we who have received freely can now actually go out there and also stand in there as an instrument of God in His hands saying, "Hey, He loves you, too! He has hope for you, too! I'm now talking to you. You're watching me. You're looking at me. I'm now talking to you, You know, it's one thing to keep on watching something, but then if you keep on watching something, and you don't do something different, then what difference is that going to be for you tomorrow if you don't act upon what you've seen?

And right now in this Holy Spirit moment, I want you to take a deep breath, in and out, and I want you to listen to my next question. And I want you to really ask God what Jay's about to say to the answer to this next question. Is this for you? Are you interested in possibly becoming a facilitator to get involved?

Because we need an army of people across America to go to the pastors at the church and say, "Hey, I've been inspired. I saw Pastor Jay and Nick Vujicic, the Prison Ministry, the 'Free in My Faith' curriculum. I feel like God wants me to do it. Can you pray for me, pastor? Can you send me with blessings? Can you just encourage me along the way? I want to do this. I feel God wanted me to do this."

I want you to know that God will absolutely bless you. If you hear Him calling you to this facilitator ministry through Life Without Limbs "Free in My Faith" curriculum, my question

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here, Jay, is if someone is interested and the Holy Spirit is now tapping them on the shoulder and say, “Hey, yeah, I think this is what you should try to do,” and give me a chance to use you in a way that you do feel unqualified, you do feel nervous, you don't know what you don't know, and you're going to have a lot of assumptions whether you like it or not the first time.

But if someone is watching and they feel called to become a facilitator, how and where do they go to learn more about getting involved?

Jay>> I'm so glad you asked me. The very first thing I would tell them to do is pray first and then go to their pastor. their church. Find out if there's anything going on already, but then come to our website LifeWithoutLimbs.org. We're excited about what a new podcast we will offer, actually one specifically geared towards prison ministry called “Free in My Faith” that, I'm telling you about maybe for the first time.

Nick>> Oh! Awesome! Yes! Come on!

that we will be launching the third week of April, and it will include....

Nick>> It's going to be huge!

Jay>> ways to get involved—testimonies. We had to figure out a way to capture these stories, and to tell the stories--families, ex-inmates, current inmates, legislators, you know, churches and so that will be probably the best way to stay involved, and

to get involved, but going to LifeWithoutLimbs.org, sending us an email saying, “I want to get involved in Prison Ministry.” We'll take it from there. We'll walk you through all the steps, and if you're called, I promise, I promise, I promise it will be the best decision you've ever made in your life. So, thanks for asking.

Nick>> No, I love that and, you know what? I think we're also going to get testimonies. I'm hearing of the testimonies, I believe the rest of the world needs to hear. The churches that actually decide to move forward, it actually is amazing! It's almost like, “Okay, when was the last time you've seen 10 people give their life to Jesus Christ at the pulpit on a Sunday morning? Like more people are getting saved through the chapters of the ministry outside the four walls. Fully exciting, fully exciting,

Jay>> Nick, I tell people that the obvious sometimes, which is there's so many people incarcerated right now, and again, a high percentage nonviolent want to change their life. Okay, 17,000 inmates get released on parole or out every year in the United States. If I'm a church planter or a young pastor, and I want a loyal congregation whose families have been suffering, who maybe has a patriarch inside the prison walls that wants to turn their life around and get a fresh start, I'm going after those people.

Champions for the Prisoner with Jay Harvey and Nick Vujicic

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It's a no-brainer, so we want to fill our local churches with people who have overcome their brokenness in the hope that Christ offers and have been saved because they will be the fiercest of your congregants who go out and share the love of Christ with your community. Promise. So they're coming out. They are looking for that place, and so we want to be kind of that in-between, that bridge, through the podcast and through the ministry. We want to connect with churches. We want to connect with new churches and we want to connect with the neighborhoods and the communities that are trying to better themselves, not just by doing better, but being a community that follows Christ together.

Nick>> I'm so pleased. I'm so excited.

Jay>> Ahh, that's awesome!

Nick>> Thank you for everything, Jay!

Jay>> Thank you, Nick!

Nick>> I'm really excited.

Jay>> Love you.

Nick>> Love you, too. We love to hear love you. Email us. Go to LifeWithoutLimbs.org and check it out. I want to thank you right now for watching, and I want to encourage you to visit the Champions for the Brokenhearted on the website LifeWithoutLimbs.org where you can find additional resources and information about anything and everything that we've talked about this month and all the other topics of the other months.

I want to also again invite anyone who's passionate about serving the brokenhearted to join our Circle of Champions where you can take part in our mission. Thank you again sincerely from the bottom of my heart for being with us today. I love you so much. God loves you so much. Take care. Cheers! See you next time.