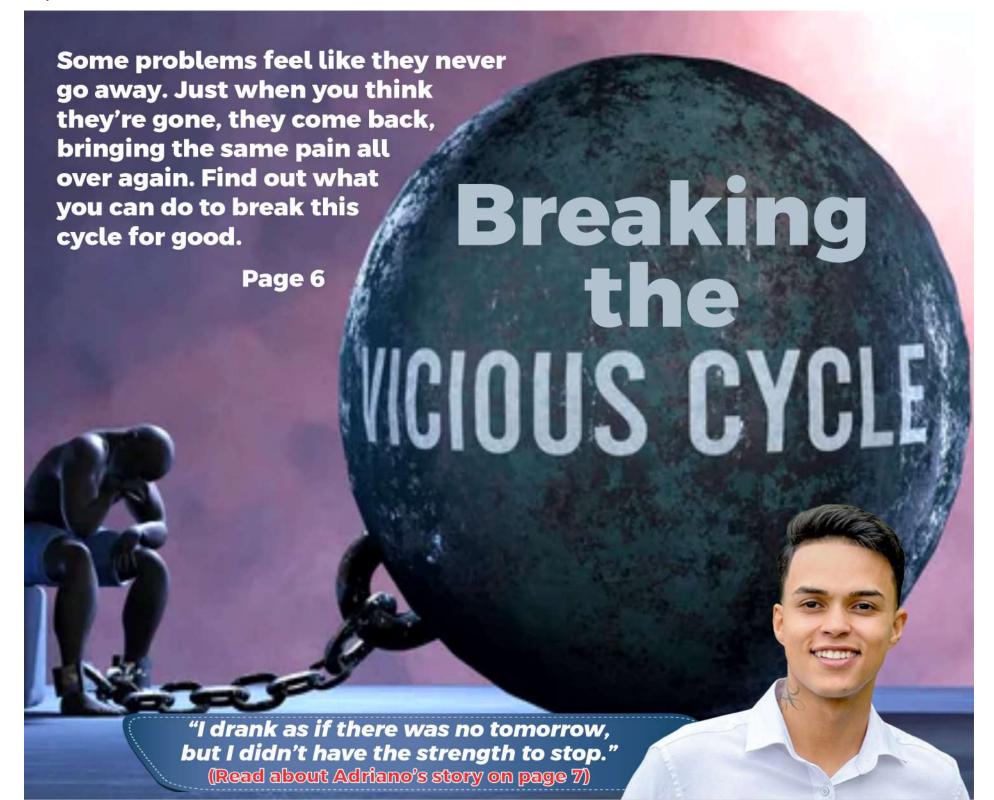
INTERSAL EWS



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Bishop Edir Macedo

When it's not about Faith



The time of Miracles hasn't passed away

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OPINIONS

IN THIS EDITION

Breaking the Vicious Cycle

Have you ever felt like certain problems in your life just won't go away? Just when you think they're finally gone, they somehow resurface, bringing back the same old pain and frustration. If this sounds familiar, you're not alone. Many people find themselves trapped in a cycle of problems. Things might get better for a while, but before they know it, the same issues return—often even worse than before. But why does this keep happening? The truth is, most people don't realize that if they don't eliminate the root of a problem, it will always come back, and usually stronger.

A cycle always has a starting point, but like a circle, it keeps going around and ends up right back where it began. That's exactly what happens in the lives of many people—they go through the same struggles over and over again. They keep making the same mistakes, and as long as that continues, nothing will ever change.

There are two main roots that can trap people in a vicious cycle:

The Human Root: This happens when people only follow what they've learned. To truly change their lives, they need to "unlearn" harmful habits, behaviors, and negative thought patterns. Breaking free means replacing the wrong ways with the right ones and putting them into practice.

The Spiritual Root: This occurs when someone is under the influence of negative spiritual forces. Even when they know what's right and want to change, they feel powerless to do so. Sometimes, no matter how much they try, failure and negativity seem to follow them everywhere.

Sadly, many people fall into the second category. Without spiritual protection, evil finds a way to work against them. So, how do you break free from spiritual problems? The only way is through the spiritual weapons of faith. When a person starts obeying God's Word and "plants" what is good, they will reap the good that comes from it. That's why we invite you to join us this Friday at a Universal Church near you. Learn how to break the negative cycles in your life once and for all.

BEATING DEPRESSION

Depression is more than just feeling sad—it's a deep, overwhelming sorrow that weighs down the soul. It brings feelings of hopelessness, drains motivation, and makes even the simplest tasks feel impossible. In severe cases, it can even rob people of their will to live. Depression isn't just a state of mind—it's a sickness of the soul. But who can heal the soul? Only the Savior, the Lord Jesus, has the power to restore a troubled heart.

Every Sunday, The Universal Church opens its doors to those who are battling depression. If you need support, we invite you to visit a nearby branch. Join a Chain of Prayer—a seven-week commitment where you'll receive spiritual strength through powerful prayers, practical guidance, and one-on-one counseling.

You are not alone in this battle. Thousands around the world have found hope and transformation through faith, proving that a Chain of Prayer can truly make a difference. You can be the next success story. You can overcome depression!





Bishop Edir Macedo



When it's not about faith



You've done something wrong, you cry about it, apologize, think of changes you need to input in your life, and then move on.

ow do people react when they've done something wrong? They cry, apologize, think about the changes they need to make in their lives, and then move on. That's the usual response for someone who lives by faith. But sometimes, there's something hidden between the lines that we completely miss.

The real problem that led to the mistake in the first place is still there. The mistake itself is just a consequence of a deeper issue—one that often goes unnoticed because it's invisible to the human eye. Only God can truly see it.

People tend to deal with deeper issues by filling their minds with distractions so they don't have to face them. But ignoring them doesn't make them disappear. In fact, the longer they're left unchecked, the bigger they grow.

Looking inward and reflecting on why we act the way we do can be uncomfortable—sometimes even frightening. That's why so many people choose to avoid it altogether, dealing only with surface-level problems and external consequences.

If I had to paint a picture of this hidden place inside us, it would be like a dark cave—the deeper you go, the darker it gets. Why? Because there are things about us that are shameful, hu-

miliating, even repulsive at times. It's part of human nature. These things build up over time—shaped by our childhood experiences, the things we've witnessed, the events that left a mark on us, and even past traumas. We carry all of this with us, every day, every hour, every second.

So just dealing with your mistakes—or even forgetting about them and moving on, thinking you've learned your lesson—won't truly change you. The only way to change is by going deep into that cave and confronting the root of the problem. Faith alone won't fix this—you have to do the work yourself. Otherwise, you'll keep going in circles. Sometimes up, sometimes down. Good days, bad days. Everything is going right, then suddenly everything falls apart.

Stop and reflect. Ask yourself why. Then deal with it. Don't move forward until you're sure you've faced those hidden struggles. God can help, but He won't do what only you can do. Friends can't do it for you either. The only way to truly get it right is to take action. God teaches us to turn away from our wrong ways. To truly convert means to change entirely—to make a full 180-degree turn, not just tweak a few things here and there. So, don't just change parts of yourself—change who you are from the inside out.



"My first relationship was a complete nightmare. There were constant fights, screaming, humiliation, and infidelity. After that relationship ended, I met the woman who is now my wife. In many ways, things were better—by her side, I felt at peace. We could talk openly, and I could share my problems with her. But at the same time, the nightmare from my past was repeating itself in my new relationship. I was still battling my

"Alcohol and drugs were destroying my love life"

addictions to alcohol, cigarettes, cocaine, and crystal meth.

I first came to the Universal Church because of her. I remember my first service—it shocked me because it was unlike anything I had ever experienced. After that first encounter, I felt lighter, as if a weight had been lifted. But despite that, our relationship didn't change because we hadn't truly committed ourselves to God.

Things eventually got so bad that physical fights started happening. We hit rock bottom. That's when we finally decided to draw closer to God. I was tired of going through the same painful cycle because of my ad-

dictions. If I wanted a different life, I needed to start from within. So, I let go of everything that was keeping me away from God. Through my faith, He began working in me until I was completely free—I overcame my addictions. As I kept seeking Him and desiring to be filled with the Holy Spirit, the day finally came when I received Him, and my life was transformed.

That inner transformation reflected in my love life. I married my wife, and today, we have a peaceful, blessed marriage. Life will always bring challenges, but with the Lord in our midst, we know He will give us victory over every battle."

— Christian Aviña

BLESSED WATER

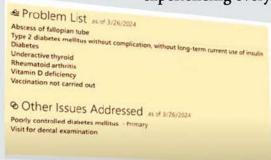
See what's happening on Sundays





"I was sick with the same illnesses my mother had."

After my mother passed away, I started getting sick too. It felt like a curse. She once joked, "I don't have much to leave you, but I'm leaving you my sicknesses." At the time, we laughed, but after she was gone, I began experiencing everything she had suffered.



Out of all my sisters, I was the only one who developed the same health issues. My mother was diabetic and anemic, and little by little, I became diabetic and anemic too. My anemia got so severe that during a blood transfusion, I developed an infection in my left ovary. I could no longer work and eventually became homeless.

When I found the Universal Church, I felt peace. I started attending every Sunday, drinking the blessed water, and persevering. Over time, I began to heal. My doctor told me I no longer need blood transfusions. I'm no longer depressed. My body and soul are free.



"I was given just five days to live because of cancer."

When I started feeling unwell, I went for medical tests. The doctor told me the cancer had spread throughout my body and that I had only five days to live. Soon, I lost the ability to speak, walk, or even shower. My stomach also began to swell.

A friend brought me to this ministry, where I learned to use my faith for healing. Now, I can shower on my own, cook, and do so much more. I've overcome cancer—God has healed me.



Ms. Vicky healed

Receive the healing waters this Sunday at your nearest Universal Church

"I don't have glaucoma—my eyes are completely clear now!"



Last July, I went to see my eye doctor for a checkup. After the exam, he told me I had glaucoma and that if I didn't have surgery, I could go blind in the future.

I started using blessed water every day, washing my eyes with it from July to December.

When I went for a second test with an eye specialist, the results came back completely clear—I was cured!

-Pauline



Trapped in negative cycles

et me paint a picture for you: Imagine someone who carefully plants an orange tree, investing years of hard work to nurture it, eagerly anticipating the day it will bear sweet, juicy fruit. But when that long-awaited moment finally arrives, they're disappointed—the oranges are bitter, nothing like what



they had hoped for.

That frustration is the same feeling many experience when they try to navigate life without surrendering to God. They find themselves stuck in negative cycles—solving one problem only

It's easy to feel

alone when life

keeps throwing

challenges your

way.

overwhelmed and

to have another take its place. It feels like an endless battle, like a tree that can only produce bad fruit no matter how much effort is put into it.

The Bible says in Matthew 7:17-18:

"Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit."

It's easy to feel overwhelmed and alone when life keeps throwing chal-

lenges your way. But here's the incredible truth: God never leaves us.

So, my friend, do you want to be a good tree—one that bears fruit filled with goodness and glorifies your Creator?

The key is surrendering your life to God. When you do, true transformation begins, and your life will bear abundant, lasting fruit.

May the God of the Bible bless you!

Feb 2025 Bible Reading						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						AÇTS
ACTS	ACTS	ACTS	ACTS	ACTS	ACTS	ACTS
9	10	11	12	13	14	T.
ACTS ~	ACTS 10	ACTS	ACTS	ACTS	ACTS 14	ACTS 15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
ACTS 16	ACTS 17	ACTS 18	ACTS 19	ACTS 20	ACTS 21	ACTS
23 ACTS 23	ACTS 24	ACTS 25	26 ACTS 26	27 ACTS 27	ACTS 28	

"Every time I got involved with someone, a bigger problem arose."



hen Gessica Avelar was just 12 years old, she was introduced to the party scene. Despite her young age, she began making choices that would have lasting consequences well into adulthood.

"There was always a void inside me, and in an attempt to fill it, I started smoking, drinking, and using drugs. But the more I explored the world, the emptier I felt, and I sank into depression. Even when I was surrounded by people, I felt alone. I cried for no reason and was always sad. Because of that, I became dependent on others. I always needed someone around to cheer me up because I couldn't do it myself," she recalls.

As the emptiness inside her grew, she looked for another way to escape—relationships.

"Every time I got involved with someone, a bigger problem arose. When things went wrong, I felt like a failure and blamed myself. That's when the thought of suicide first entered my mind," she reveals.

Gessica often questioned God about her suffering. "In my mind, I was a good person, so I kept asking God why I had to go through all of this," she says.

Unable to see that her choices were leading to these struggles, she continued living based on her emotions. Then, she met Henrique.

"Henrique lived the same way I did—jumping from one relationship to another, using drugs—but I believed I could change him into a family man," she says.

Henrique Silva, now 38, started drinking and using drugs at 13. His addiction led to fights with family and friends. Even when good job opportunities came his way, he lost them due to his unreliability and dishonesty.

"I never realized that my choic-

es had consequences. I was ruining myself, and with every loss, I became more frustrated. When I met Gessica, things weren't any different. Our home life was a nightmare," he admits.

Within the first few months of their relationship, Gessica became pregnant. She became even more dependent on Henrique, but he didn't return her love.

"He kept living like he was single, even seeing other people. It broke me. I spent eight years in that situation until one day, I saw a program from the Universal Church and decided to seek help," she shares.

That's when she realized she needed to focus on herself first.

"My suicidal thoughts disappeared, and I found the strength to fight for my marriage. For a year and a half, Henrique came to church meetings with me, but he didn't change. He kept living his old life, but I held on to my faith. I placed my marriage in God's hands and fully surrendered to Him. That's when Henrique finally started showing interest in changing," she says.

Henrique remembers what he felt during those meetings.

"I would feel remorse at church. I'd cry and ask for forgiveness, but as soon as I left, I went right back to my old ways. Then, I noticed that Gessica had changed. She started treating me differently—she was kind, patient. I realized that what I was doing wasn't fair. That's when I truly repented. I decided to give up everything that went against God and surrendered my life to Him."

Since then, the couple has faced challenges, but after years of suffering, they are finally seeing the results of their faith.

"Today, we love being together. God restored our marriage and our lives as a whole. We have peace, trust, and companionship," Gessica concludes.

What's happening at the Universal Church

"Trapped in addiction and failed relationships"



"Since childhood, my life had been extremely difficult. I felt unwanted in my own home. My mother was depressed and took her frustrations out on me. At school, I was bullied because of my appearance and my family's financial situation. I hated my parents, and I hated myself. I often asked, 'Why do I even exist?'

As I got older, I turned to alcohol and cigarettes to escape my pain. It got so bad that I was smoking a pack a day. I jumped from one relationship to another, looking for something to fill the emptiness inside me. That's when I started smoking marijuana, and eventually, I dropped out of school completely.

I moved in with some friends, and during that time, I was introduced to crystal meth and cocaine. I started using regularly, mixing different drugs. One night, I overdosed and was left lying in the

street. No one helped me. My life kept spiraling downward. I got involved with different partners just to have a place to stay, but I suffered both physical and emotional abuse. I thought about ending my life many times. I just couldn't see a reason to keep going.

At one point, I heard about the Universal Church and even visited. For a while, I stopped using drugs, but because I wasn't serious about giving my life to God, I eventually fell back into addiction. Then, one night, while I was living with a young man, he came home high and stabbed me in the chest, near my heart. In that moment, all the opportunities God had given me flashed before my eyes. I remembered everything I had heard at church. I cried out to God, asking for forgiveness and a second chance. I surrendered my life to Him. The doctors later told me it was a miracle that I survived.

Realizing that God had heard my prayer, I made a decision. I cut ties with bad friends. I distanced myself from all negative influences. I reconciled with my parents and asked them for forgiveness. I started going back to the Universal Church, but this time, I sought God with all my heart and strength. I wanted to be healed from the inside out. I even changed the way I dressed, my attitude, and how I reacted to things. I gave my life completely to God, and He filled my soul with His Spirit. Only through Him was I able to overcome addiction, insecurity, and depression. When I chose to sincerely seek Him and obey His Word, He became my source of life.

Now, I have peace. Even in difficult moments, I

don't feel hatred toward anyone, and I have learned to love myself. My life belongs to God. Today, I serve Him by helping other young people who are going through the same struggles I once faced. I tell them that no matter what they've suffered or done, God can erase their past and make them new. He heals the soul and can change everything."— Janeth Lopez

Do you feel like you're constantly searching for relief but never truly finding it? Are you exhausted—physically, emotionally, and spiritually? Do you feel like your life is stuck in a cycle you can't get out of no matter what you do?

If this sounds familiar, know that there is hope. No matter what you're going through or how long you've been struggling, a new beginning is possible.

Join us this Friday for the service for Deliverance at a Universal Church near you. Come experience the peace and transformation that only God can provide. There will be counselors to advise you and powerful prayers will be made for your spiritual freedom.

Come and learn how to overcome your problems once and for all. This invitation is for you—don't miss it!























SUCCESS STORY

Nailah Heyward's testimony

I used to carry a lot of anger and resentment toward my mother after she was in a car accident that left her unable to care for herself. As the one who had to step in and take care of her, I felt overwhelmed, frustrated, and afraid of losing her. The emotional burden took a toll on me—it affected my grades and led me to surround myself with the wrong crowd.

Everything changed when I became seriously ill with appendicitis and nearly died. In that moment, I was terrified that my soul might be condemned to hell. That fear sparked something in me, pushing me to start making small but meaningful changes in my relationship with Jesus. Now, instead of having to repeat a year of school, I'll be graduating six months early! I also attend the BFA meetings with Bishop Joshua every Sunday, both at the church and with the YPG. My life has completely transformed—I no longer hold resentment toward my mother, and I've found true peace in God's presence.









BE A PART OF SOMETHING GREAT!

JOIN US EVERY SUNDAY AT 1PM



This event was designed to equip young adults with practical financial skills to manage their money wisely, make smart investments, and build a strong financial foundation. The goal was to help them become pillars in their communities and in the YPG. Through this workshop, participants gained valuable knowledge to make informed financial decisions that will benefit them throughout their lives.

REACH OUT TO US: 1 888 332 4141

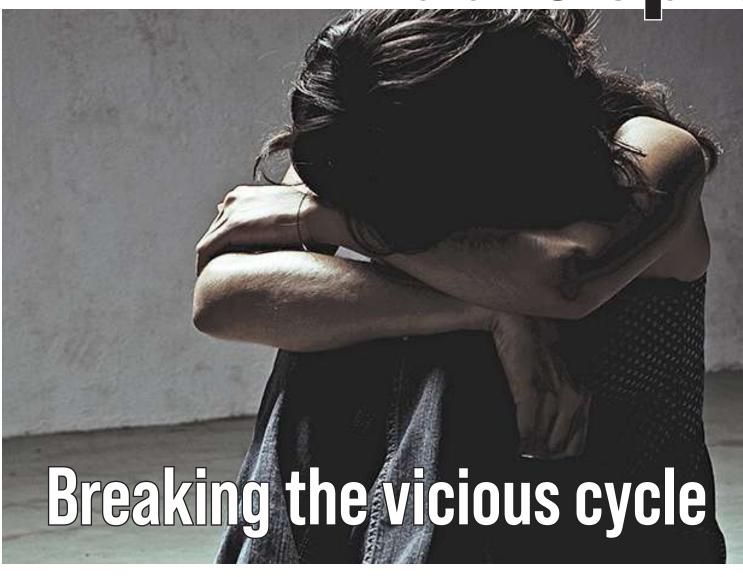
COVER STORY

middle spre

any people feel like they're going in circles—stuck in a cycle where life keeps repeating itself. No matter what they do, they find themselves facing the same problems, the same disappointments, over and over again. This is exactly what happened in Gideon's time—a seven-year cycle of misery.

People who suffer often suffer in cycles. Their lives keep repeating themselves. Just like in Gideon's time, when the Israelites endured enemy attacks every year at harvest time. The enemy would come, take everything, and the next year, the same thing would happen again. Even today, this same pattern plays out in different areas of life—professionally, romantically, and spiritually. Many people feel trapped in a never-ending loop of failure. But there is a way out.

Only holy revolt can break the cycle. You must hear the Word of God and have the courage to act on it. Put God's Word to the test—because His Word has the power to break every vicious cycle in your life!



"I self-harmed and struggled with dark thoughts."

From the moment I was in the womb, my life was marked by darkness. My mother had planned to abort me as part of a ritual, but in the end, she couldn't go through with it. Instead, after I was born, she gave me away to another family. I grew up facing serious health problems, seeing shadows, and hearing voices.

The only place I ever felt peace was at the Children's Biblical Center (CBC) at the Universal Church. But the moment I stepped outside, the torment returned. When my mother and brother left, things only got worse," Raissa recalls.

As she grew older, she began searching for identity and meaning in different ways.

"I was extremely feminist, anti-racist, and identified as demisexual and later pansexual. I drank in secret and pretended to be confident and happy, but behind it all, I was struggling. I self-harmed and had dark thoughts—thoughts about hurting my parents and people at school."

Her anxiety attacks became unbearable, and she saw no way out other than suicide. She tried to take her own life five times.

"On my last attempt, I looked in the mirror and saw something terrifying—a corpse staring back at me. That's when I realized this wasn't normal. I couldn't keep living like this."

One day, while on her way to school, Raissa passed by a Universal Church. At first, she ignored the volunteer offering her a Universal Newspaper and refused to give her name for prayer. But as she looked at the church, memories of CBC flooded her mind. Something inside her told her to go back.

She started attending services again, this time with her father.

"I remember hearing the words 'I am making all things new' (Revelation 21:5), and suddenly, I felt a spark of hope. 'Could there really be a way out for me? Could I stop being the worthless person I thought I was?' That



"I looked in the mirror and saw something terrifying—a corpse staring back at me."

night, I picked up a Bible and started reading. A note from Bishop Macedo caught my attention, and I decided to be completely honest with God. I made my bed an altar, poured out everything I was feeling, and prayed

like never before. When I finished and looked in the mirror, I didn't see a corpse anymore—I saw a new Raissa. That's when I decided to be baptized. As I put on the baptismal gown, I told myself, *'This is my wedding dress because today, I am marrying God."

She knew she needed the Holy Spirit and began seeking Him. But then, her father was diagnosed with cancer.

"My focus shifted. Instead of seeking God's presence, I became consumed with praying for my father's healing. It was like the people of Israel when they made the golden calf—I had made my father's healing my idol. But then, I heard a message from Matthew 6:33, 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things



will be added to you.' That's when I realized where my heart truly was. I turned back to God and used every moment I had left with my father to share about Jesus." final act was to speak to God.

course, heartbroken, but I wasn't At that moment, I began to alone. I prayed, 'Lord, I can worship Him, and God spoke bear this, but what about the next hardship? How will I handle it without Your Spirit? Before he passed, her father's I don't want to go back to my old life because I know where

that road leads.'

to me: 'Your earthly father is no longer with you, but from today on, I am your Father. I am with you.' And that's when I received His Spirit."

Today, Raissa knows what true peace feels like. She no longer carries the weight of the past, nor does she have to fake her happiness.

"As much as I loved my father, I now understand that everything that happened

gave both of us the chance to be saved. By prioritizing God's Kingdom, I found the life I had been searching for all along."

driano grew up on the outskirts of the city. "I wasn't much of a troublemaker," he says, but life threw challenges his way early on.

As a teenager, he developed a severe eye infection. "The doctors told me I was going to lose my vision in both eyes," he recalls. Faced with this terrifying news, his mother and aunt took him to a church, where a pastor prayed for him. "After the prayer, the pastor asked me, 'Adriano, do you believe you've been healed?' I said 'yes,' and the impossible happened—I was cured."

That moment shaped his view of faith, but it didn't stop him from falling into a destructive lifestyle.

Adriano got caught up in drinking, drugs, and partying. "I drank as if there was no tomorrow. But when tomorrow came, sadness took over me," he admits. His life became a vicious cycle—making money the wrong way, taking bribes, and committing fraud.

Despite knowing he was on the wrong

"I drank as if there was no tomorrow."



path, he couldn't stop. He spent a fortune on partying, only to return home feeling empty as he looked at his fiancée and daughter sleeping. "I knew I was messing up, but I didn't have the strength to change."

Everything shifted when he accepted an invitation to visit the Universal Church.

"I knew I was messing up, but I didn't have the strength to change."

"I resisted for a long time, but when I finally went, I felt a peace I had never experienced—not in any drug, drink, or friendship."

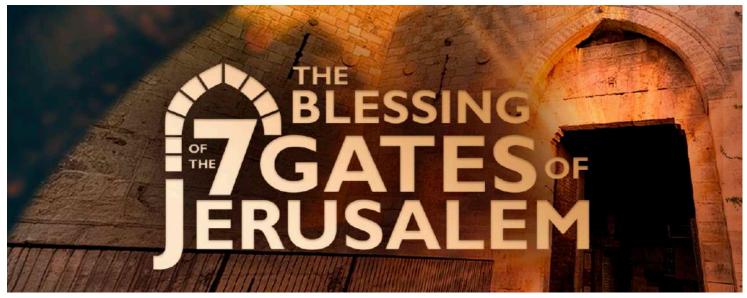
That moment was a turning point.

"I realized the life I was living was an illusion. I needed something real, something greater. That's when I made the decision to give my life to God," he says. He walked away from partying, dishonesty, and his reckless lifestyle.

"It wasn't easy. People criticized me, but deep down, I knew I was finally on the right path."

Today, Adriano is part of the Soul Winners Group, sharing his testimony with others. But for him, the greatest gift isn't the changes in his lifestyle it's receiving the Holy Spirit.

"My life has been completely transformed. I have peace, joy, and a blessed family. The Altar represents all of this to meholiness, transformation, and a deep connection with God."



The seven gates of Jerusalem: Their meaning and power For centuries, the seven gates of Jerusalem have been more than just entry points—they

spiritual pilgrimages. Each gate carries deep historical and symbolic significance.

the city's defense, trade, and holds great meaning, and we want to share significance with you."

Every Sunday, you'll have the have played a crucial role in "Each of Jerusalem's gates opportunity to uncover the meaning behind each gate and learn how to unlock the doors that may be closed in your life.

Don't miss this special purpose at your nearest **Universal Church!**

"Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, and I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter." (Psalm 118:19-20)

Universal Beyond Bars

You are NOT alone

I received another chance.

spent 18 years and six months behind bars. My life was consumed by gang affiliations, violence, assaults, drug use, and drug dealing. My mom visited me often, but I didn't value her visits. I was deep into the prison life—fighting with

the officers, using



and selling drugs,

and even having cell phones inside. Though I was physically locked up, I was even more imprisoned within myself.

Looking back, I realize it was because I had lost hope. I never thought I'd get out, so I stopped caring. What was the point of changing? I was angry, bitter, and reckless. Every time my mom visited, she would speak words of faith and encouragement. She even brought me a Bible once, but I threw it back at her—I didn't want to hear any of it.

I was a person that I would fight with the police in prison, I was using drugs and selling drugs in prison, I would have cell phones and although I was in prison I made myself to be more imprisoned within.

Still, she never gave up on me. No matter how many times I hurt her with my words and actions, she always showed me love. Her faith, though I rejected it, gave me strength deep down.

my mother's words were good, they got lost mind, "Show me that her words are true."

in my addictions, anger, and bad habits. I had already accepted that I would die in prison. I was surrounded by people who drank, used drugs, and I did the same. I attempted to overdose several times but failed.

I was so high that, during inmate roll calls, I



couldn't even remember my own number. I would hallucinate and lose myself completely.



Then came my breaking point. One day, I started thinking: If my mom truly believes I can get out But my cycle of failure continued. Even though of here, maybe she's right. So, I told God in my

That's when everything began to change. When my mother, sister, and the UBB pastors and volunteers visited, I finally started to listen—even when I was still under the influence. But this time, my heart was open. I asked God, "Speak to me, help me." And He did.

Little by little, I distanced myself from the people I used to get high with. I started attending services sober, and when I allowed God's Word to enter me, that's when my real transformation began.

Today, I am no longer imprisoned—not behind bars, not by addictions, not by anger, not by a criminal mentality. I have been set free.

I am now serving God as a helper in the UBB, working to save souls as an assistant in the church. I thank God for the chance He gave me.







"I cry out to God; yes, I shout. Oh, that God would listen to me! When I was in deep trouble, I searched for the Lord." Psalms 77:1–2

Speak out, I am all ears! If you want to be added to my E-Message list, send me a letter with the correct info to: 7075 SW. Fwu. Houston, TX 77074.

Include: Name/ID #, Facility, Complete Address, City/State, and the Zip code.

Jesus is calling you!



Surely, you've received an invitation to an event at some point in your life. It could have been for a wedding, a graduation, a funeral, or a celebration of success. Whatever the event, one thing is for sure—you've never received an invitation like the one I'm about to share with you.

Have you ever received an invitation to change your life? Not just a party, but an invitation to completely transform who you are, your circumstances, and your future? That's exactly what the Lord Jesus offers to everyone, without exception. Yes, everyone. No matter your background, your past mistakes, your circumstances, or how you feel about yourself, this invitation is for you.

Imagine for a moment you're hosting an event, and you have to decide who to invite. You might think of only those closest to you—friends, family, those who have been with you through thick and thin. But the invitation Jesus extends isn't exclusive—it's for everyone who's struggling, everyone who's searching for hope, for peace, for a way out of their burdens. Jesus doesn't discriminate. He isn't waiting for you to clean yourself up before inviting you to come. He isn't waiting for you to have everything figured out or for you to be "worthy." No. He invites anvone who

is ready to admit they're struggling. Anyone who says to themselves, "I'm hurting. I'm lost. I need help."

These words of Jesus are an invitation to rest—not just physical rest, but deep, soullevel rest. We all face burdens, whether it's

44

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

health issues, financial struggles, family problems, or the weight of emotional pain. Some burdens are obvious, but others, like anger, guilt, fear, or loneliness, can be invisible to the world but heavy on your heart. Maybe you've been carrying your burdens for so long that you feel as though they've defined you. Maybe you think, "I've tried everything, and nothing changes."

What has been your burden? Is it your health? The constant stress of financial instability? A relationship that's falling apart? Or is it something deeper—a burden so heavy within your soul that you feel like a miracle is the only way to be free? Maybe it's a cycle of bad habits or self-destructive behavior that seems impossible to break. This invitation is for you. And

just like any invitation, it requires a response. You don't have to stay where you are, stuck under the weight of your burdens. Jesus invites you to come, to bring your struggles and your pain to Him. To trust that He has the power to change your life. Many people think that they have to clean up their lives first, that they have to "get better" before God will accept them. But that's not how it works. Jesus invites you as you are. Whether you feel broken, lost, or defeated—whether you've been trying for years to fix yourself or you've given up trying altogether—this invitation is for you.

Responding to Jesus' invitation means trusting that He can help you, even in your darkest moments. You don't have to carry that weight any longer. No matter how long it's been, it's never too late to turn to God. It's never too

late to respond to His call.

You can do that right now. Call upon God. Ask Him for help. Ask Him to show you the way out. Ask Him to give you peace. He is waiting, arms wide open, ready to give you the rest you've been searching for.









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FIGHTING THE UNSEEN ENEMY **4pm** with Bishop David

TEN COMMANDMENTS | 5pm

GENESIS | 7pm

KINGS THE SERIES | 9pm

LET THERE BE LIGHT | 12am























Struggling with Financial and Personal Loss?

uri, a 42-year-old businessman, reflects on a childhood marked by hardship. "I grew up in poverty with a father who struggled with alcoholism," he recalls. "At 8 years old, I had to stop studying to help him work in the fields. I witnessed constant fights between my parents, including physical abuse, all because of his addiction."

Although Auri, as he is known, rejected alcohol as a child, he eventually began experimenting with it during his teenage years. As the years passed, he says he felt an overwhelming emptiness that nothing could fill. He got married and tried to find happiness, but his dependence on alcohol only deepened. Over time, this addiction led to others—cigarettes, pornography, and gambling. "I was trapped in this cycle for 18 years. I felt lost, and no matter how hard I tried, the emptiness remained," he explains.

Auri thought he could stop these behaviors whenever he chose, believing his life would improve if he did. But he soon realized it was all an illusion. "I thought I could quit, that the addictions didn't control me. But it only took one moment of weakness, one invitation, and I was right back where I started," he admits. As a result, he lost his credibility, his car, his money, and eventually, his family. "My 11-year marriage ended because of my addictions," he adds. During this dark time, he looked at his life and saw nothing but destruction. "I was exhausted, overwhelmed, and felt like change was impossible. I tried, but nothing ever worked."

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It was during this time that his mother, already attending the Universal Church, began praying for him and inviting him to join her for the meetings. "I had nothing left. I was broken, with an empty soul and the weight of all my losses. I didn't want to live that life anymore," he shares. One Friday, he decided to attend church, and in a heartfelt he surrendered prayer, everything to God. "I gave Him my addictions, my pain, and who I was. I completely surrendered. When I left that meeting, I knew Jesus was with me."

From that moment on, Auri attended the Universal Church and began to break free from

his addictions. He felt the Lord replace his heavy burden with one that was light. "My life changed from water to wine," he says. "I was baptized, received the Holy Spirit, and the emptiness and pain in my soul disappeared. Today, I am complete, especially because I have the Holy Spirit. God has blessed me with a wonderful marriage, two beautiful daughters, and we want for nothing. The life I thought was beyond saving has been completely restored."



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