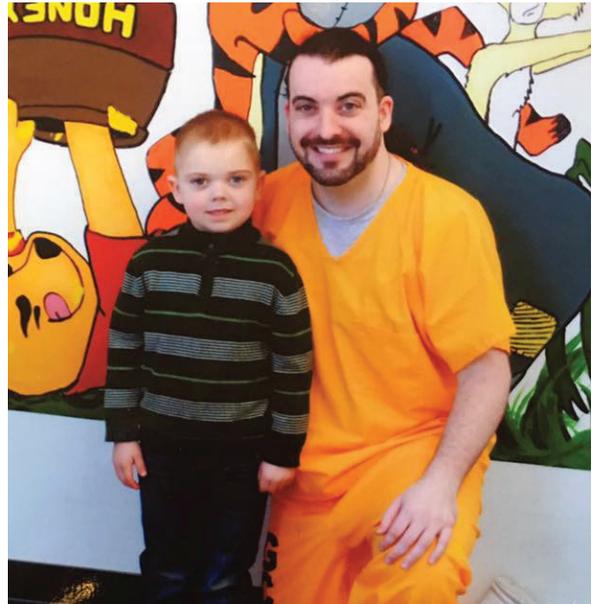


Dear Nick,

My name is Chris and I am an inmate at the Goose Creek Correctional Complex in Wasilla, Alaska. I have been incarcerated since January 2, 2011. It was on that same day that I finally broke and became a believer in and follower of Jesus Christ. I wanted to share an experience I had just a few days ago that involves you and God's perfect timing.



On September 29th, I had a hearing with the Alaska Board of Parole. I was denied and ordered to serve the remainder of my sentence. I had been eligible for parole this coming December 4th and had high hopes to spend Christmas with my family for the first time in six years ... especially with my soon-to-be-six-year-old son. My heart was broken, my immediate dreams were shattered, and I was wallowing in disbelief and despair. My family and friends were ready for me to come home. Having to serve another 25 months became a terrible and challenging reality.

Barely 24 hours later, I was on my bunk, hunkered down for the night (when the call went out) for church, a service I typically attend. I had no intentions of going. I was mad at the world (and) I was mad at God. Without knowing why or how, I found myself climbing down from my bunk, getting on my shoes, grabbing my jacket and leaving my cell. I literally spoke out loud to myself, "I don't want to go to church..." I sat in the back with my arms crossed and mind still questioning why I even bothered to go.

I sat through worship with my mind reliving the hearing; wondering what, if anything, I could have said or done differently to have changed the outcome. I was feeling overwhelmed and was on the verge of tears. The next thing I know, a man appeared on the screen. It was you, Nick. You were in a prison, speaking to the men.

I felt as if you were speaking directly to me, that your message, despite it being pre-recorded who knows how long ago, was for me and me alone. Just one day after my world had come crashing down (again), your words gave me hope and comfort when I was doubting God's plan for my life, or even if God loved me at all.

Words cannot begin to explain how motivating and inspiring you are. I admire your zest for life, the joy in which you reside...and your passion and love for the Lord was incredibly contagious that night. Not only did I “snap out of it,” but seven of my fellow inmates in attendance came forward during the altar call and accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

(You) helped me realize that God’s not done with me...that His plan is better than mine! I had been so focused on getting out, going home, reconciling relationships and finally becoming a father, that I never stopped to consider that maybe God still has a plan for me here.

Maybe I’m still here to learn a new skill that may ultimately provide for my family when I do get out? Perhaps I’m to keep utilizing the gifts He’s given me to keep directing our men’s choir to create a positive environment for others and use the power of music to heal? Or maybe my absence can be used to show my son courage, resilience and patience from a distance? Whatever it is, you helped me remember and trust that God’s plan is better than my immediate desires.

I’m willing to bet that had my parole been approved, your message and testimony wouldn’t have had the same impact on me that it did.... Please continue to let God use you to inspire and enrich lives and bring people to Jesus, and I promise to let God use me in whatever capacity He sees fit as well!

Your brother in Christ, Chris

(Excerpted from a letter from Chris dated October 16, 2016)



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