

**Jesus Came Looking
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**A BILLION STORIES
Who Will Look
After My Mother?**
Miss Ruth's Story



Nicky Cruz

Jesus Came Looking for Me —and He's Coming for You

by Nicky Cruz

I want to speak to you straight. No fancy introductions, no polished speeches. Just heart to heart.

Because when God interrupts your life, He doesn't always send an angel. Sometimes He sends a broken man who knows what it feels like to be lost, to be violent, to be hopeless, to be empty—and then to be found by the love of Jesus.

I am that man.

When I think back to the streets of New York, to the gangs, to the violence, to the darkness I lived in, I don't speak as a hero. I speak as someone who should have been dead a long time ago. I speak as someone who knows what it feels like to hate the world and believe the world hates you back. I speak as someone who ran from God, spit on God, cursed God—and yet... God ran after me.

He didn't run away from my mess. He ran straight into it.

And today, I want you to hear me:

The same Jesus who came after me is coming after you.

Not to punish you.

Not to crush you.

But to love you with a love so fierce, so relentless, it will break every chain inside you.

**He didn't run away
from my mess.
He ran straight into it.**

I Was Not Supposed to Be Saved

Let me tell you the truth about myself. I didn't grow up singing hymns or praying prayers. I grew up in witchcraft, Satanism, and fear. My mother told me I was a child of darkness. My father spoke death over me. I felt rejected from the moment I took my first breath.

By the time I came to New York City, I was

angry. I was violent. I was numb.

I joined a gang because I didn't believe in love. I only believed in power and fear. And I was good at fear. I knew how to make people shake when they saw me coming. I knew how to hurt people before they had a chance to hurt me. I became everything darkness wanted me to become.

People looked at me and saw a criminal.

God looked at me and saw a son.

People saw a troublemaker.

Jesus saw a treasure.

And while I was running the streets, fighting my enemies, carrying knives, craving violence, Jesus was chasing me.

That's the miracle.

I wasn't chasing Him.

He was chasing me.

And He's chasing you too—even if you don't know it yet.

Jesus Came Looking for Me— and He's Coming for You

(continued)

God Sends Unlikely Messengers

When God wants to reach someone, He doesn't need permission from the world. He doesn't care about your past, your reputation, your mistakes, or your sin. He knows how to cross every line and break every barrier.

For me, God sent a skinny little country preacher named David Wilkerson.

This man had no business standing in front of gang members. He didn't match our world. He didn't carry weapons. He didn't speak our language. He didn't understand our codes.

But he carried something we had never seen before—the love of Jesus that does not flinch.

When he told me, "Nicky, Jesus loves you," I cursed him out. I spit at him. I pushed him away.

You know what he told me?

"You can cut me into a thousand pieces, but every piece will still love you."

I had never in my life heard anything like that.

God's love.

The night David Wilkerson said those words, I couldn't sleep. It was the first time in my entire life that someone offered me love instead of fear.

And it shook me.

Because sometimes the thing we run from the most... is the thing we need the most.

Because sometimes
the thing we run from
the most... is the thing
we need the most.

You Can Run, But You Can't Hide from God's Love

I thought I had outrun God. I thought I had outrun hope. But there comes a moment—oh yes—when the Holy Spirit corners you. Not to destroy you, but to save you.

I remember standing in that meeting, surrounded by my gang, surrounded by enemies, surrounded by the streets that shaped me. My heart was pounding. My mind was racing. I felt like something was breaking

open inside me.

When David Wilkerson preached, it felt like he was reading my soul.

He talked about sin.

He talked about forgiveness.

He talked about a Savior who bleeds for the worst of us.

For the first time in my life, I felt God calling my name.

"Nicky."

"I love you."

"I want you."

"I died for you."

"You belong to Me."

I didn't understand it. I didn't know how to pray. I didn't even know how to cry.

But that night, Jesus took the heart of a gang leader and made it His own.

I surrendered everything.

The violence.

The rage.

The shame.

The identity I built in darkness.

And once Jesus claims you, the devil loses his hold.

Your Pain Is Not Too Heavy for God

Let me speak to you, the reader.

Maybe you didn't grow up in the ghetto.

Maybe you weren't in a gang.

Maybe your battle looks different.

But pain is pain.

Abandonment hurts no matter where you come from.

Addiction destroys no matter what your income is.

Fear controls whether you wear a suit or a hoodie.

Sin is sin—every one of us needs forgiveness.

I'm not speaking as a preacher right now. I'm speaking as a man who has lived through hell and found heaven.

There is no darkness in you that Jesus cannot outrun.

There is no sin He cannot forgive.

No family He cannot restore.

No heart He cannot heal.

No addiction He cannot break.

Give Him your past —
and He will rewrite
your future.

The Love of God Has No Fear

People always ask me, "Nicky, what changed the most in you after you got saved?"

Fear.

Fear was the first thing Jesus broke.

Fear made me violent.

Fear made me hard.

Fear made me push people away.

But Jesus drove that fear out of me with His love.

There is still power in the Blood of Jesus

The blood of Jesus still saves.

The cross still breaks chains.

The Holy Spirit still delivers.

God still transforms the worst of us into trophies of His grace.

Your Story Can Change —Starting Today

I don't care what you've done.

I don't care how far you've gone.

I don't care how dirty, ashamed, broken, or tired you feel.

Jesus is not intimidated by your sin.

Give Him your heart—and He will give you a new one.

Give Him your past—and He will rewrite your future.

Let Me Pray for You

"Jesus, reach this person reading these words. Break every chain. Heal every wound. Fill them with Your Spirit. Wash them clean. Amen."

God Chose a Gang Leader —And He Chose You

He chose me.

And today, He's choosing you.

Let Him save you.

Let Him heal you.

Let Him love you. ■

Grace and Peace in Times of Trials

by **Pastor Patrick Pierre**, *Associate Pastor*

If you're reading this today and walking through a difficult season, I want you to know something from the start: you are not alone. Trials are a part of life, and they often come without warning. They can shake us, stretch us, and sometimes leave us wondering where God is in the middle of it all. I want to encourage you with this truth — God is present, and He is faithful, even in the hardest moments.

One of the greatest gifts God gives us during times of trial is grace. Grace is not just God's kindness toward us; it is His strength working in us. When you feel weak, overwhelmed, or unsure how to take the next step, God's grace meets you right there. Scripture reminds us that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. That means you don't have to have it all together for God to work powerfully in your life. In fact, it's often in our weakest moments that we experience Him most deeply.

Grace doesn't always remove the trial, but it will sustain you through it. God gives you what you need for today — not always answers for tomorrow, but strength for the moment you're in. When you lean on Him, you'll find that His grace is sufficient, even when life feels heavy and uncertain.

Along with grace, God also offers us peace — a peace that doesn't make sense by human standards. This is not the kind of peace that depends on circumstances improving or problems disappearing.

It's a peace that comes from knowing that God is in control, even when everything around you feels unstable. The Bible tells us that this peace surpasses all understanding, and it guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

When anxiety begins to rise, I encourage you to bring everything to God in prayer. Speak to Him honestly. Lay your burdens at His feet. Spend time in His Word, allowing His promises to quiet your heart and refocus your thoughts. God's peace doesn't always change what's happening around you, but it will steady what's happening within you.

I also want to remind you that you were never meant to walk through trials alone. God has placed us in community for a reason. Sometimes His grace and peace come through the prayers, encouragement, and support of others. Allow someone to walk with you. Let the church be a place where you are strengthened and reminded of God's faithfulness.

As you move forward, remember this: God never wastes a trial. What you are walking through right now is not without purpose. He is shaping you, strengthening your faith, and drawing you closer to Himself. Hold on to His grace. Rest in His peace. Trust that God is with you — today, tomorrow, and every step ahead.





Just Voices Carried by the Wind

by **Treg McCoy**, *TSC Missions Director*

Recently, I traveled to Uganda to visit our ministry partner, Pastor Peter Namawa, to see firsthand the work many of you have been praying for and supporting. Peter is an alumnus of our Bible school, Summit International School of Ministry. Peter's ministry includes planting churches, ministering to street children and pastoring One Mission Ministries Church in Kampala.

There was one moment from that trip I can't shake.

On the third day of my visit, we left Kampala and drove for a while, leaving the noise of the city behind us, the traffic thinning, the terrain opening up. Eventually, we arrived at a hillside. It wasn't marked. No sign. No structure. Just land, bordered by a fence and surrounded by hundreds of long needle pine trees.

"Here," Peter said, "this is the land."

I stood there, taking it in. The view was stunning—quiet, expansive, untouched. I walked through the trees as a gentle breeze moved through them. In that moment, I remembered how I had questioned the purchase of the property, wondering how they could possibly build a church on the side

of a hill. I was so wrong. It was perfect.

The day before, I had met with the director of the school for the deaf in Kampala. He spoke with excitement about bringing his students out of the city to this hillside, to experience nature the way God created it. Now I understood why. It was peaceful. It was safe. It was exactly what they needed.

As we walked through the trees, Peter asked us to pray. Ahead of us, I began to hear the soft sound of worship. Then I saw them. A group of about fifteen people gathered together. Some sat on coats, blankets, and mats. Others stood. A few had walked a long distance just to be there.

There was no stage. No sound system. No walls to define the space. Just a group of people, drawn together by something deeper than anything visible. The presence of the Lord was tangible.

This was the church.

Not a building waiting to be constructed, but a community already alive.

They began to worship. No amplification—

just voices carried by the wind. There was a simplicity to it that felt almost unfamiliar, yet completely right. Nothing competed for attention. No distractions. Just faith, expressed in its purest form. I greeted the people, and Peter shared a word with them.

At one point, I looked out over the hillside—the people, the land, the open sky—and it hit me in a way I wasn't expecting.

We spend so much of our time thinking about what needs to be built.

But here, the church was already standing.

This wasn't a project waiting to begin. It had already begun. The foundation wasn't concrete—it was people. People who understood that the presence of God doesn't require a building, just them.

Treg McCoy is Missions Director at Times Square Church. Through trusted partners around the world, the Missions Ministry meets real needs, feeds hungry children, strengthens the church, and shares the hope of the gospel where it's needed most.



chapter
by chapter

A Daily Podcast with Tim Dilena

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua

Begins July 7

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the earth was created
and of one ⁸speech
to pass, as they jour-
neled, that they found
land of Shinar; and
one to another. Go
forth, and ³burn them
they had brick for
burning.



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Lord, **awaken** people to the fact that God is real

Lord, **awaken** people to the destructive power of sin

Lord, **awaken** people for their need of a Savior

Lord, **awaken** people to the purpose of the cross

Lord, **awaken** people to the voice of the Holy Spirit

Lord, **awaken** people for a desire to read the Bible

Lord, **awaken** people to conviction of sin

Lord, **awaken** your church to a fresh fire from heaven

Lord, **awaken** your pulpits to preach with an anointing

Acts 2:1–2 (NKJV)

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come,
they were all with one accord in one place.
And suddenly there came a sound from heaven,
as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the
whole house where they were sitting.



A BILLION STORIES

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Who Will Look After My Mother?

Miss Ruth's Story

Compassion and care—two things that fit together like a hand in a glove. Compassion is the heart, and care is that heart in action. That is what drives the volunteers who serve with the Compassion and Care Ministry at Times Square Church.

As a church positioned at the crossroads of the world, right in the heart of Times Square, the needs that come through our doors are as diverse as the people who make up this great city. When people reach out—whether a loved one is in the hospital, in a nursing home, or simply in need of prayer—the Compassion and Care team steps in to help those who, in that moment, may not be able to help themselves.

One such request came from a son living upstate who was about to be incarcerated. Before his sentencing, he had given his life to the Lord. Knowing he was going to prison, he asked his pastor if there was a church in New York City that would reach out to his 99-year-old mother, Ruth, who lived alone and did not yet know the Lord. He knew he would likely never see her again.

Valerie, a Compassion and Care volunteer, responded—and went to visit Miss Ruth.

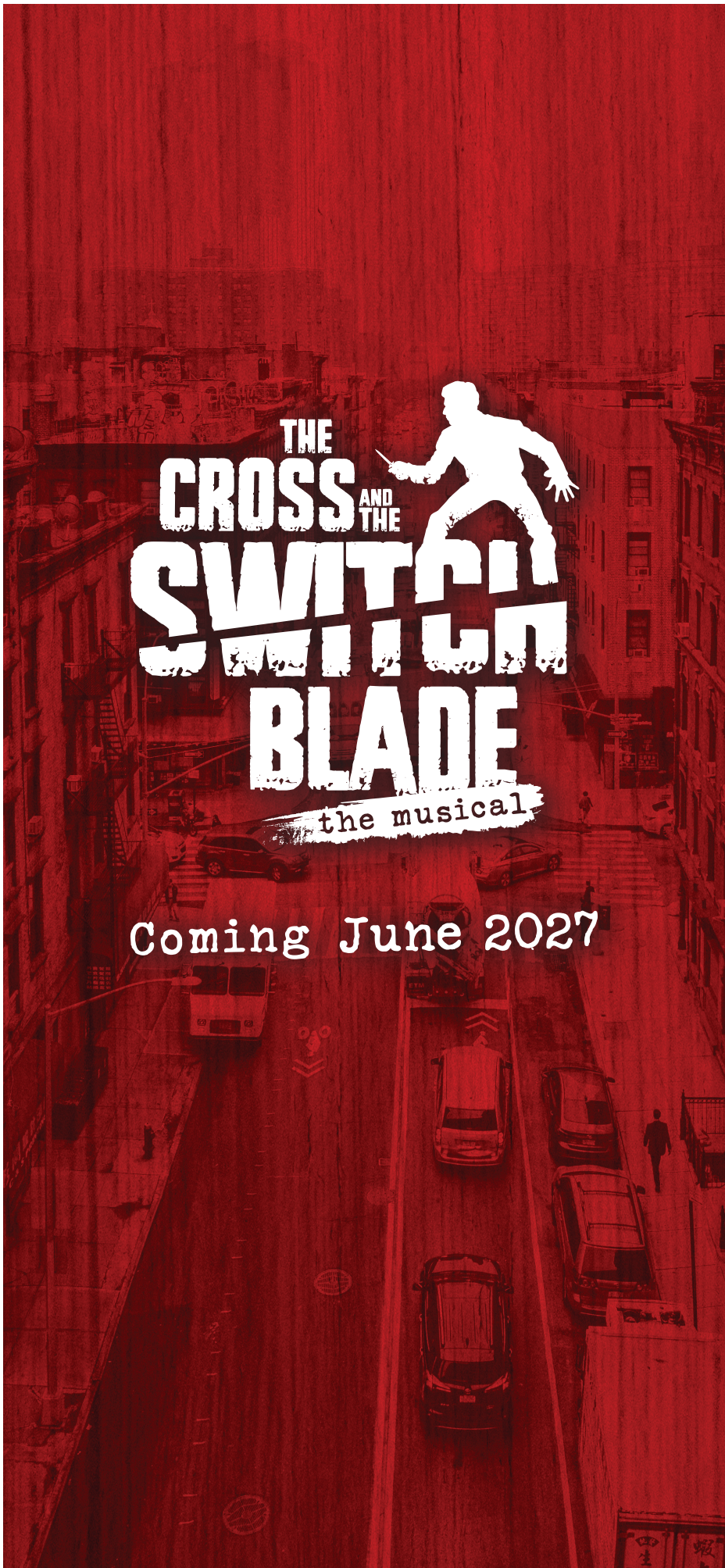
What began as a simple visit became a friendship that would last for years.

In time, Miss Ruth gave her heart to Jesus. The Compassion and Care team continued to walk alongside her—visiting, praying, and showing up for her, especially during her hospital stays.

During her final hospitalization, no one knew where Miss Ruth had been taken. After speaking with her neighbors, doormen, and friends, and searching through multiple hospitals and nursing homes, Valerie finally found her. Lying in her hospital bed, filled with gratitude, Miss Ruth gave glory to God. For her, it was a miracle that she had been found.

Miss Ruth never left that hospital. At 103 years old, she went home to the Lord.

Her son asked a simple question: Is there a church that will look after my mother? The answer was yes—and it changed the final years of her life forever. That is the Compassion and Care Ministry: volunteers who don't just visit and pray, but who pour into people's lives, sharing the love of Christ when it matters most. If you feel called to serve in this way, we invite you to join them.



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the musical

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TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of *The Cross and the Switchblade*. It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

CONTACT

212.541.6300 | info@tsc.nyc

CHURCH LOCATION

237 West 51st Street | NY, NY 10019

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