

From Rejection to Redemption

by Karen Glassford



After yet another day of returning home from school and finding his mother yelling and his father drinking, Jhon wondered to himself, “Why can’t my family be like so many other families here in Mexico—where parents give their kids hugs and tell them they love them?”

By the time Jhon was a teenager, after so much abuse and neglect, he’d decided there was no hope for him. No one loved him except the many girls he’d been with, but he knew that wasn’t really love. Like his dad, Jhon drank and did drugs to escape the pain.

Years went by and Jhon never seemed to be able to keep a job for too long. His alcohol consumption interrupted his good inten-

tions. He tried to read the Bible from time to time, but it didn’t make much sense to him. And he was certain of one thing: God had rejected him as well. After all, how could a holy God accept someone who had messed up and done so many terrible things?

Eventually, Jhon found a job as a perfume and cologne seller and often sold his products at a nearby airport. One day, an Adventist pastor—Pastor Luis—was starting to regret purchasing a plane ticket that included a long layover. As he walked through the airport, a perfume salesman caught his attention. He seemed like a gregarious young man, but behind his smile, the pastor detected sadness and darkness.

Pastor Luis called him over and asked if he could look at his products. After Jhon eagerly showed him his perfumes, Pastor Luis invited him to sit down and rest a bit. Upon learning Pastor Luis’ profession, Jhon stated that he knew God would never accept him. Pastor Luis was surprised and asked him, “Why?”

Jhon, who was accustomed to just laughing off his pain and changing the subject, became very serious as he shared about the pain of his past and the reality of his many terrible decisions. When he was done, he sighed and said with great conviction, “So that’s why God would never want anything to do with me.”

Pastor Luis swallowed hard and prayed for wisdom. He said “Jhon, do you have a Bible app on your phone?”

Jhon said he did, but that the Bible didn’t really make much sense to him. Luis helped him find Romans 5:6-8, and Jhon read the words aloud and seemed especially touched by this part: “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly...but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Then the two of them looked up 2 Peter 3:9 followed by John 3:16. Pastor Luis said, “That ‘whosoever’ includes you, Jhon! He has plans for your life, and you can find Him if you seek Him with all your heart.”

Jhon looked at the pastor incredulously. Could this be true? Could God love him? On and on they talked. Pastor Luis even led the young man through some Bible studies on his phone. Jhon was amazed! He never knew the Bible could be understood like this. Hope began to spring into his heart. Maybe God would forgive him. Perhaps heaven was possible for him. Maybe he was loved after all! Tears rolled down his cheeks as he sobbed in relief and poured out his heart in prayer with Pastor Luis right beside him.

Suddenly, Jhon blurted out, “When does your flight leave?” When Pastor Luis assured him that he still had 90 minutes left, the young man leapt to his feet. “Please don’t move; I’ll be right back!”

Jhon made a mad dash down a long corridor and returned moments later followed by seven of his friends who looked at Pastor Luis curiously.

Two immigration officers scowled and moved closer, arms crossed, making it clear they did not approve of this sudden gathering. Pastor Luis chose to ignore them and focus on the young men. The friends knew that something out of the ordinary was happening, because Jhon had never been this excited about anything. He said, “Pastor! Tell them everything you told me, including how God loves us and wants to forgive us!”

The young men looked at Pastor Luis with great interest as he opened the Word of God. Time flew by as they too made it through many Bible studies. Every once in a while, Jhon would interrupt with an exclamation like, “Can you believe it? Did you ever know that before?”

Suddenly, Jhon noticed that a significant amount of time had passed, and he exclaimed, “Your flight leaves in five minutes, Pastor Luis! You’d better run! But, oh, how I want to know more!”

Pastor Luis promised to send them audio Bible study presentations via WhatsApp. They all quickly added his number then prayed in a circle—many openly crying. The immigration officers were also deeply moved. They had not only been listening but also wanted to receive the audio Bible studies.

Pastor Luis knew he had likely missed his plane, so he raced to his gate. Careening around the corner, he saw a welcome sight. The flight had been delayed and they were just now boarding. Smiling through his own tears, he said to himself, “He’s done it again! God is the master at arranging circumstances and schedules!”

Pastor Luis hears from that group of young men every day. They eagerly listen to the Bible messages and pepper him with questions. Jhon even shared that after they met, a lot of bad things befell him—he felt surrounded by evil spirits—but when he cried out to God, the evil spirits left him.

Please pray for Jhon, his friends and the immigration officers as they continue to listen to the evangelistic messages on their cell phones—that they might grow in their relationship with God and their commitment to His truth!

Karen Glassford is the former Director for Centers of Digital Evangelism with Adventist World Radio (AWR). AWR’s mission is to bring the gospel to the hardest-to-reach people of the world in their own languages through use of the most effective media in that region. This story has been shared with permission of AWR.

World Church Prayer Requests

SEPTEMBER 26 — OCTOBER 2, 2025

- **World Church:** Pray for the upcoming Annual Council meetings that take place in Maryland every fall where leaders gather together to pray and make plans for the continuing growth of the church. The new theme is “Mission Re-Focus.” Pray that the Holy Spirit would be poured out and that all in attendance would refocus their hearts on preparing for the soon coming of Jesus.
- **United States:** Pray for the start of a new church in Virginia. Pray that the local Adventists will be strengthened and guided as they seek to find a place to invite their friends and neighbors to worship our God and grow in the knowledge of His truth.
- **Nigeria:** Pray for the upcoming media evangelism series in the city of Lagos. Pray that God will bring unity between Hope Channel International, the union conference, and the local church members as they work together to make this dream a reality. Pray also that the Holy Spirit will be going ahead of the series to prepare hearts and homes for the Lord’s truth and hope.
- **Japan:** The Western Japan Conference has been hosting a nightly prayer meeting via Zoom for their members to seek revival and relationship with God. This has been happening since February 2025; in a few weeks, they plan to expand to the entire Japan Union and its members. Pray that as this Union bows its knees to God, He will rain the Holy Spirit and send a mighty revival to the entire country of Japan.
- **New Zealand:** Pray for the Hamilton Community Whanau SDA Church as they seek to establish and maintain a Centre of Influence in their city according to Christ’s methods. Pray that the church members will be dedicated to Jesus personally and that their lives will be a witness to their neighbors as they seek to work among them.
- **Uganda:** Pray for the SDA Church Kisangani as they host a music concert to mobilize funds for construction of a new church. Pray not only that God will reward their efforts but also that He will use their music to touch hearts for His glory.
- **United Kingdom:** Pray for the young people of the United Kingdom as they are discouraged and distracted away from Jesus. Pray that the church will fight on their knees for the young people and that God will work on each of their hearts and lead them to Him. Pray that they will be mighty missionaries for Him.