



January 2020

Dear Family and Friends,

“... When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile.”

Exodus 2:2b-3

This morning I took a young man to the bus stop, it was our final morning together. From the founding days of Casa De Mi Padre this boy has been with us. He experienced the opening days of our ministry in Guatemala and has been with us through everything. He has seen the victories and growth of the ministry and has been with us through the tough times. He very rarely faltered in his desire to be obedient to us and was always willing to receive and accept instructions and correction with a repentant heart. When he came to us he was prone to outbursts of frustration that would quickly turn into out-of-control anger, acquired over years of living with an abusive, alcoholic father.

Just a few days ago we experienced another child leaving our home. Elias came to us about four months ago. He came to us because he was being badly beaten by his father and step mother. He was sent to Casa De Mi Padre for his care and protection and for a time of healing. He was the second worst case of physical abuse we have seen in our nearly 10 years of helping children in need. The first few days with us, Elias was withdrawn and quiet. Very quickly a couple of our other children befriended him, and he began to change. After a couple weeks time, he couldn't wait to get home from school to throw himself at any one of the staff to get hugs and kisses. He became energetic and sweet, an absolute joy.

Elias' first court date finally came. Cole and Alex represented our home and Elias. The father admitted to the abuse and said it had only happened once, and he felt bad and would never do it again. Cole and Alex did their best to try and question sending the child back into the same situation just four months earlier that he had been rescued from. To our shock, the court sent him with his father and step-mother who were told to get psychological counseling. It was left to Cole to tell Elias he would be going back to his family. Elias was terrified and begged Cole not to let them take him back.

Cole took Elias to his parents' home. Knowing where he lives will allow us to check up on him. Cole called me with the news when they were in route. After telling me, Cole put Elias on the phone. Elias called out my name, "Papa Shane!" Then he began to cry, "I don't want to go." I told Elias, we are here and that we loved him. Cole took the phone back and began talking, trying to make some sense out of it all. Then he began to cry. I tried to encourage Cole but really didn't know what to say. What do you do when the authorities have made their decision?

The young man I recently took to the bus station and Elias have similar situations. But from our view, very different outcomes. As for Elias, we really don't know what will happen to him. The only hope I have is to put my trust in the Lord. I know God is the Sovereign King of the Universe. I know He is eternally loving, filled with justice, radiant with power, completely, and ultimately in control. But sometimes it is difficult to understand why things happen the way they do. I would ask you to pray for Elias. Pray our Sovereign King of the Universe will protect him from harm. Pray that in the short time he was with us, we made a difference in his life for Christ.

In the case of the first young man I wrote about it's the same sovereign God. But at least for now, the outcome is different. Ruben came to us in 2011, just a few months after we opened. He was also abused physically by his alcoholic father. And, he clearly had an anger problem. But with lots of love and boundaries, he has changed completely from who he was. Ruben's heart for the things of God are matched only by his older brother Peter, who grew up with us as well, Ruben was an excellent student, worker, and helper in our home. Ruben is now living in Xela, a city about two and a half hours from us, and will be working, finishing high school, and starting seminary classes. He will be living at a pastor's home, helping grow their church while being disciplined at the same time. It is a wonderful opportunity for him. It was difficult to send him on his way after caring for him all these years, but I know it is for his best. I believe he will do great things for the Lord.

Two situations. Same sovereign God. At this point, two very different outcomes. It was tough to let each of them go. It makes me think of Moses' mother, Jochebed. She did the best she could do in a difficult situation. The Pharaoh of Egypt had ordered all the male Hebrew babies drowned in the mighty Nile river upon their birth. With decisions made that were completely out of her control, she did the best she could. She coated a small basket with tar, placed her little boy in it, put him in



the Nile river and let him go. I can only imagine her emotional state. She had no guarantees. The child could have been found by an unsympathetic Egyptian, and simply pushed under. No matter what would happen, she knew she had to let Moses go. I think of the other Hebrew mothers who had seen their babies thrown into the river and lost. Same sovereign God in all situations. I certainly don't claim to understand it. All I can do is to try and trust. One thing is certain; we have to go on. We have a house full of precious kids who need love and care and need to know who God is.

As for other news, with the turn of a new year, another year of school has begun. The kids are always a little down because vacation is over and homework is coming. But once they actually get started, they enjoy having new teachers and meeting new friends. So things are going very well on the school front.

Speaking of new beginnings, we have made a big decision here at Casa De Mi Padre. We have been members of the same church since our inception. We decided that we needed to make a change. There was an overarching reason for this change. One of the most difficult things we face as a ministry is what do when the kids age out of our home. This is a huge challenge. If a young person returns to whatever family he came from, if any, his chances to remain on task for the Lord, and in life, are pretty slim. So we diligently search to find a Christian, Guatemalan family who would take them in and care for them.

The only way we know to see this happen on the scale we need now is to have a larger sphere of Christian people who have had contact with us and our kids as they grew up. We need a large pool of Christian people to fall in love with our ministry and kids who would be willing to consider taking in one of our older kids. The decision was complex, but it is that simple. We are not upset with anyone in any way, shape or form. The level of opportunities needed for this were just not at our former church. We still love all the people, especially the Lopez family. Ana Lucia works full time at Casa De Mi Padre, Rene helps when he can. Pastor David is still the director of our school. Julio still Bible Quizzes with us, and Loli is willing to help with anything she can. It was a tough choice, but we had a need that we had to address. As for our mission teams who love the Lopez family and would desire to continue to minister with their church, we will be thrilled to do this.

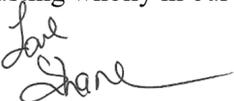
We are very excited to report our 2019 Children's Christmas Dinner went well. We shared several stories about our kids now in our home, as well as others who have transitioned up to greater heights, still going on for the Lord. We are also very excited to introduce our new children's book titled "Wylie—Finds Her Purpose." The book is written from Wylie, our family pet's prospective. The book is beautifully illustrated and is designed for parents or grandparents to read to their children and talk about God's purpose for them. It will be a book read over and over. You can get your copy for your children or give one as a gift to your grandchild by ordering on line at wyliebook.com. We promise that you will love it!

Since the dinner was such a success, I thought it best to shift gears and put in the foundation for our second children's cottage so we will not be digging and pouring concrete below ground in the mud during rainy season. Now we will have the two structures to work on no matter the weather. The building is going well. Keep praying that we make swift headway. It is very exciting to see the vision continue to take shape.

I want to thank everyone who helped make the dinner happen and came to help or just came to be with us. And thank all of you who gave so graciously. And thank you, Fawn, for all the work on the book. It is beautiful!

Just like the Scripture says, "When she (Jochebed) saw that he (Moses) was a fine child . . ." We see the Lord has given us a whole house full of "fine children." He wants to write them into His story for all the world and Heaven to see, and when He does it will be for His glory alone, for all eternity.

Trusting wholly in our Sovereign Lord,


Joseph Shane Sanderson

When I have no where else to go.
When I have no where else to turn,
When I see no other hope.
My Sovereign Lord will always be
enough.