

My Friend Luis

Episode 10 — “A Change in the Wind”

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LUIS: What am I doing here? I said, "You're not happy with me. You said you want to find somebody else. Go ahead and find somebody else." I said, "My job here, it's done." So after cleaning my mess, I left there to pick up my stuff and start walking. That was actually the last day I worked there.

WAYNE: Hi, I'm Wayne Jacobsen, and this is My Friend Luis — the story of one of the most engaging men I've ever met, and of the friendship that developed between us. It has transformed both of our lives and left us in grateful awe at the adventure of life on this little planet.

Despite the friendship he had with Jesus in the last episode, his night job cleaning the church and school continues to deteriorate. Knowing he doesn't have a valid green card, his supervisors increase their unreasonable demands. This weighs deeply on Luis's soul as they continue to hold his lack of immigration status like a knife to his throat. They threaten to report him to immigration if he doesn't do whatever they want.

The fallout begins to affect his daughters' education as well. The staff begins to treat them differently than the other kids, and when the other students pick up on that, they turn on them too. His daughters want to quit and go to public school, but Luis is told they won't release his daughters' transcripts if they don't complete their education there.

Once you see someone as less human than yourself, it gets easier and easier to take advantage of them and to ignore their concerns. And because many immigrants don't always know what the law allows, they become easy targets. I could feel the growing pain in his heart and often encouraged him to quit the job and leave the school. They were treating him unfairly and couldn't make good on their threats. But Luis felt trapped. How can he leave the job that provides the bulk of his income? Many nights, the conflict leaves Luis in tears at the end of the day.

LUIS: Again, I was very upset when I finished cleaning the entire church and school. I went to my truck and I started crying. I started thinking, I said, if I had a work permit — not even a green card, a work permit — you know, I can go and apply anywhere. Right now, in my case, if I go and apply anywhere, I have to lie. And if I lie, then I don't qualify anymore. So I can't do that. I felt like powerless, like really weak. I wanted to do all these things, but I can't. I felt like being — my hands were tied. So I started crying.

And then I went outside the truck, and then I took down the lift gate — or the tailgate — on my truck, and I sit in there. And I remember sitting on the right hand, on the right side. For some reason, I don't know why. It didn't make any sense anyways. I said, "Oh Lord," I said, "Jesus, the word of God says that you're sitting at the right hand of the Father." And I said this out loud. I said — what, I'm talking, I'm talking to Him like

I'm talking to you right now — I said, "What was I thinking? Let me sit down at the left so you can sit down at the right hand, because that's what you're supposed to be." I don't even know why I said that. And I start talking to Him. I start saying, "Look, it's really unfair, all these things happening." I said, "I don't know for how long I can take this. I know there's better things out there." But I said, "If I lose this job, what else am I gonna do?" And I started crying out to God.

After crying out and venting, I went back on the truck and I started driving home. So I was coming home. There's a church, On the Way — that's the name of the church — it's on my way home. There's usually a light pole there. And when I drove by, there was a police officer there. He was doing paperwork or something — I don't know what he was doing, but he was just there. And as I drove by, he looked at me, and there was no other cars. It was really late in the morning — it was like 2 a.m. And then I looked over to look at him, and he looked at me, and I just waved. And then he looked at me, and I noticed that he kept looking at me with his eyes like this. As I kept driving — I was there like 30, 35 miles per hour — I got this thought on my mind, and I thought, hmm, it'll be funny if he pulls me over. As soon as I'm thinking that, I look on my rearview mirror, and he's turning around and right behind me. And I'm like, oh, really? I was like, well, like I said, it'll be funny if he pulls me over. I haven't done anything wrong. Then I'm gonna make a left turn to go to my house. As soon as I start turning, he turns on his lights and pulled me over.

So I got pulled over, and I started laughing at the situation. I don't try to pull my wallet before anything, because I don't want them to see me, you know, reaching for something. I just waited. I even rolled the window down and put my hands on the steering wheel. And then he says, "Good morning." I said, "Good morning, officer." My eyes are red from crying, you know? My eyes are like really puffy from crying. He says, "Where you coming from?" I said, "Oh, I'm coming from work." He says, "Really?" I said, "Really. Who works at this time? I do." I said, "And as we speak, there's a lot of people working right now." He says, "Really?" I said, "You're working right now, right?" He didn't like that. He says, "I ask the questions here." I said, "I'm sorry, officer."

So he just looked at me and looks inside with his flashlight. He walks around the truck, looks on the other side. He comes back. The first thing he says: "Did you know that it is illegal in California to have people on the back of your truck?" And then I looked at him and I said, "Yes, sir, I am well aware of that law." And I was really off when he asked me that question. He says, "Driver's license, registration, please, proof of insurance." I provide everything. Then he goes back. Then, after like five minutes, he comes back from his cruiser after checking everything. He says, "Okay, where's the other guy?" I said, "What other guy?" He says, "When I looked, there was a guy with a white t-shirt sitting on the right side of the tailgate. Where is he?"

When he said that, I burst in tears. I started crying. And he was really shocked to see me crying. And he says, "What is going on?" And I composed myself, and I start telling him the story of what happened. I said, "Look, listen, I was crying out to God. And then I sit on the left, on the left side of the tailgate. And I said, 'Lord, you're the right hand of the Father, so you're sitting at the right hand.'" And I said, "He was there. He was listening to me." And all of a sudden I paused. I was trying to swallow; I was trying to get my composure. He looked at me on the eyes and he says, "Have you been drinking?" And then I looked at

him and I said, "Officer, I'm the one telling the story, but yet you saw Him. I'm the one you say I'm drinking, but yet you saw Him. I didn't see Him. You did. You tell me." He says, "What?" He says, "What's going on?" I said, "What's really happening? I'm telling you the truth. This is what happened. I've been crying." That's why he says, "Really? You been crying?" So he didn't believe me.

So he gave me a breathalyzer test, whatever — I have to blow on this thing. So I blew on it. And then he says, "Okay." And then he says, "All right, let's see. Follow my finger." And then he would go on like this, back and forth with his finger. Follow my finger with your eyes only — that's all he asked for. And then, after he gave me that, he says, "Okay, here's your papers back, okay?" He says, "Just go. Go." He said that, but he said it with this tone. And I said, "Okay, officer. Okay, thanks."

As I started driving, on the next stoplight I reached over and I put the papers on my glove compartment. But then I kind of looked really quick — my driver's license wasn't there. Then I pulled over on the side of the street to look for my driver's license; it wasn't there. So I turned around, drove — he was still there. And I didn't park behind him, because I didn't want him to feel threatened. So I parked in front of him, in a safe place, where he pulled me over. I parked right there, and then I walked to him. And I startled him, because he was looking down — he never noticed I was there and I parked. So I knocked on the window. He looked up really startled — like, it's scary; you can see I startled him. He rolled down the window and he says, "You?" I said, "You again." He said, "What is it with you people?" I kind of took it — not personal, but I was like, kind of weird. So I said, okay. I said, "Officer," I said, "when you gave me my papers, should they give my driver's license?" He was like, "Oh, okay — here, here." And I noticed that he was cleaning his eyes. He's all, "Here, here, here it is." He says, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry." He apologized twice. And then he says, "Seriously, what is it with you people?" And I said, "What do you mean by 'you people'?" He says, "Yeah, you don't leave me alone. Yesterday somebody told me about God — that God loves me. This morning somebody else told me, and now you're telling me this story."

And then I started talking to him and I said, "I know why did this happen, officer." I said, "He has your number. This happens for God to show me that He's with me. He listens and He's with me. He cares. And He says — He's letting you know — that He's calling you home. Come home. Come back home to Jesus." And then he says, "Really?" He says, "Would He fix my family? My wife gave me the divorce papers this morning. My girls hate me because they think it's my fault. And now this." I said, "Give it a shot. You have nothing else to lose." At the end, he gave me his business card. I went home.

Two days later, I call him. I know that one week they work a 12-hour schedule, so try to call during the day. I say, hopefully he's not sleeping. And he picked up. He first say, "Who's this?" I said, "Oh, this is Luis. Remember? You pulled me over the other day at 2 a.m." He says, "Who?" I said, "Jesus, dude." "Oh, Jesus dude! Hey, hey, how are you, man?" "Good, good." He says, "Hey, listen, listen, listen." He says, "You're not gonna believe this." He says, "I started talking to God, so we went back to church." He said, "I surprised my wife at church. We went there and I sit right next to them. We started talking." He says, "And we're gonna go through a—" they stopped the proceedings of the divorce. "We're going — not therapy — couples counseling. And it's working great." I said, "Dude, that's great. Cause I just talked to you two days ago." He says, "I know, I know."

So that was on Saturday. So they went on Sunday, and on Monday — that's pretty much when I called them. And he says they were gonna go to couples therapy. I called them again a week later. He says, "Yeah, yeah." He says, "We're going to church right now, and we're doing amazing."

WAYNE: Experiences like this one are great encouragements to Luis. They remind him that God is with him, even unseen, in some of his more painful stretches of the journey. The abuse continues to grow, however, as Luis is increasingly forced to choose between the health of his family and the lure of an income he so desperately needs. It all came to a head one night after Luis had been battling a case of shingles all week long and faces an angry boss when he wasn't available to his every whim.

LUIS: At the end of my career there, we used to get into a lot of conflicts, because they just wanted me out. They want to push me out. They were trying to find the smallest thing just to kick me out. Remember the time when I had shingles? I got so stressed out. Later on, I learned that you can — if you get really stressed out or your immune system goes down, I guess — the chicken pox or whatever, they come back in a form of shingles. I was really sick, and I couldn't work for like four days. And I should have been out longer than that. So when I told them, "Look, I can't go to work because I have this" — so they didn't believe me. So I went to the doctor and I got a doctor's note, and then I went and give it to them. And they said they still didn't believe me. They wanted to take a picture of the affected area. So I went back, and they look at it, and they did actually took a picture. I didn't mind. I was like, oh, okay — maybe I thought it was like protocol, right?

I came back — like, let's just say that happened on Monday. By Friday, I was already going back, because they will keep texting me: How do you do this? How do you do that? Where's this? Where's that? So I went back, like four or five days later. And when I got there, actually on that day — the kids do plug the toilets all the time. They throw toys in there. They do all kinds of stuff. And he didn't have anybody to do it, to unplug them, so he did it himself. When I came in — it was during the summer — and he saw me coming in, and he had this shop vacuum, and he was sucking up water from the toilets, and he was very upset. And he says, "Where were you? I've been texting you. I've been trying to call you." Truth was that I took the medication and I slept all day. I was still really sick with the shingles. I apologize. I said, "I'm so sorry, Pastor. Please forgive me. I've been really sick." And I'm not saying that to present myself as a victim — that's what happened. He said, "Excuses, excuses," and he shook his head. And I said, "I'm so sorry, Pastor, but I'm here now. Let me help you." He says, "Look, if you cannot perform on your job, just tell me, and I'll find somebody who can." I said, "Pastor—" I changed my voice, and I said, "Pastor, like I said, I apologize already. There's nothing else I can do for the past, but here I am in the present." And then he looked at me and he says, "Don't you ever forget who I am. I am the pastor of this church. I am in command, okay? I am the one who calls the shots."

When I looked at him — and I was really sick, and I was seeing kind of like this tunnel vision, kind of; I was like taking all this medication for the shingles — all of a sudden I got closer to him, and of course he got really defensive, go like, "Oh, stay away from me." He thought I was gonna fight, I guess. So I put my hands behind my back and I said, "Look, you are a pastor here, yes. You are in charge, yes. But it's a different level. The end of the day, in God's kingdom, it's just a different level of service. You're the pastor

and you're in charge, yes, but it's a level of service — you serve. And the Bible says that in the kingdom of heaven, the one who wants to be higher, you have to be the lowest. Which means that you should be washing my feet right now."

Oh man, he didn't like that. He approached me and he said, "What did you just say?" He was pointing me with the — he was screaming so loud that two of the secretaries — they're still working, even though it was late — they came out to see what was going on. When he approached me, I was so sick that all I did was puke by his feet. And so I spent the rest of the day trying to clean that up. He kept going, walking back and forth: "I can't believe you're talking to me like this. How disrespectful." And he tried to compare me to Judas. He said, "You know what Judas did to Jesus? He betrayed him. That's who you are. You're Judas." I was so sick that I was like — I could hear him on the background, kind of like mumbling, just mumbling, mumbling, mumbling, mumbling. And I was so sick. I looked at him every now and then and I said, "Okay, Pastor. Okay, Pastor."

And all of a sudden, something clicked in there. And I was like — wait. A moment of clarity came in right there. And I said, what am I doing here? What? And I said — my daughter, that's when she was about to graduate; that was in 2016 — so I said, "What am I doing here?" I said, "You're not happy with me. You said you wanna find somebody else. Go ahead and find somebody else." I said, "My job here, it's done." So after cleaning my mess, I left there to pick up my stuff and start walking. And he runs behind me, and he changed. He says, "No, no, no, no. Look, look, look. No, here—" He says, "Let me pray for you. Let me pray for you." And he says, "You will always have a job here. You will always have a job here." Later I learned that he talked to somebody; he said that he was concerned about me suing them. So that's why. I said, "Oh, okay." So when he said, "Let me pray for you," I didn't stop. I said, "I apologize. Just pray for me. Just pray for me. I don't have to be here. I gotta go home." I don't know how I even went home on that day. I should've just called somebody to drive me home. That was actually the last day I worked there.

WAYNE: I remember you and I talked about this for months, because you would tell me what they were saying to you and doing to you. And I would say, "Dude, you got to get out of there." And you would say, "I can't, man. It's — my girls are going there, and the money." Because even though they're not paying you a fair wage — and my heart was, you know what? I'll find work for you. I will put your card out. I will find other people to replace this thing, because this is wrong, what this church was doing to you, and doing it in God's name. And you know, I just felt it was so wrong — both to your girls, who were being punished at the school, because of the ways they were trying to manipulate you to do more work for less money. And even then not wanting you to leave — at the moment, maybe because of a lawsuit, but also, you're a good, hard worker. You're not easy to replace.

LUIS: At the end, they ended up hiring three people to do the work I was doing, because I was cutting the grass — I was doing everything.

WAYNE: And probably paying them three times as much as they paid you.

LUIS: Probably, yes.

WAYNE: As is commonly said, when God closes the door, He opens another. True. Someone else added that it can be hell in the hallway. Also true. Change is never easy, especially when uncertainty is involved. Eventually, Luis and I were able to find enough new clients to replace the income he lost from his biggest one. It helped his family in so many ways, getting his daughters away from the school and removing a major source of added stress. It also meant Luis could be home in the evenings with his family and get to sleep at a more reasonable hour.

At the same time, we were still pursuing a way to resolve Luis's immigration status in the country. And that gave us lots of opportunity to talk about immigration policies of the US and how they impact him. Obviously, his views are skewed by his own situation, but he's not oblivious to the problems it can cause on both sides of the border. In fact, he surprised me one morning as he spoke in support of President Trump's policies to secure the border. "They will never deal honestly with us until they can control the flow of people into the country," he said. "If they make us legal here, there are five million more ready to cross the border if they think they can get a chance to live here." His views are surprising, given the stereotypes that media often gives us of people like him.

We didn't record this story to make a point about immigration policy. It is so incredibly complex, which makes it even more tragic that our national leaders cannot come up with a comprehensive approach that will give clarity to the 11 million undocumented immigrants who live in the US, many for multiple decades. We did think, however, that you might find it interesting to see how Luis wrestles with his situation and the hopes he harbors for his future.

You are such an honest person in the way you deal with your life, even not being able to check a form — but you came here illegally; you stay here illegally. Talk about that a little bit. What does that do in your conscience? Cause you're honest to a fault with everything else. How have you worked that through in your own mind?

LUIS: Well, because I know for a fact that this is the land that flows milk and honey to us. The Lord brought us here. And I know that's undeniable. I know that as a fact. A lot of people can say the same, right? But I can say with certainty that He called me in from this side — literally. Literally, He called me in and say, "Come to me." He didn't say, "Come to the US." He said, "Come to me."

WAYNE: What rules should we have? I mean, I know you love the United States. Would you be an open borders guy? We should just open the border — anybody from Mexico ought to be able to come?

LUIS: No.

WAYNE: Why not?

LUIS: The same way you take care of your household — you just don't let anybody in, because you don't know their intentions. You don't know what's on their heart. I think that we should have a system where you check backgrounds. That's a way of waiting in line patiently and respectfully. You have to be able to control your borders and see who goes out. It's not because you're — it's not out of racism. No, no, no. It's just common sense, because everybody knows that not everybody that comes in, they're good people. You

know, I'm not saying everybody's bad — no, I'm not. I know there's a lot of good people out there. Somebody asked me this question in relation to the caravans, right? And the person said, "But look, you know, they're looking for a better life. Like you — you were looking for a better life." And yeah, it's true. They're okay, but their methods are not. You cannot just storm at a border and demand to be seen and demand to do this and that. They can come in, they can put in their case, and if it's legit, fine. If not, well, you know, it is what it is. But you have to be able to control who goes in and who goes out. Otherwise, there's gonna be chaos.

WAYNE: What's the difference between a thousand people storming the border and one 21-year-old climbing a wall?

LUIS: The difference is, I guess, one of them was invited by God Himself. However, I go talk to God and I said, "Lord, you could have just walked me in through the door. You could have given me a visa. You could have done so many things. Why did I have to go over the fence?" But you know what? He does things in a way that — I don't know. If people ask me this question too — they said, "Why through the wall?" And I said, "Why not?" That's another way for Him to show His power. Somebody who has broken ribs, who's really hurt, hungry, thirsty, can jump all those walls? There's no doubt that only God can do those things.

WAYNE: Some would argue that we do have visas that we give to Mexican nationals who apply to come into the U.S. And part of the problem has been, if people have come over without that permission, should they be given preference over people who've stayed in Mexico and keep applying year after year, trying to get one of the few thousand visas or green cards that we do give Mexican nationals to come to the U.S.?

LUIS: That's a tough question. I think that you need to take care of what's here right now. You need to take care of that.

WAYNE: Those are the tough choices we face, because we've got people who want to come in legitimately. We've got people who come in here illegitimately. I think for people like you, who've been here 25, 30 years, who have nothing to go back to — and we have exploited your labor at less than reasonable prices for decades — I think we owe something to people like that. If they're good, upstanding citizens in every other way — you guys have avoided taking money for medical care from the government and things like that. You've really tried to navigate your own way through society in hopes that one day you could be made legit.

LUIS: When you ask me what do I think about that, right? About people who are already here? I think, if I could, I will make a law that it's called "tough, but fair." And it's gonna be based on character. If you obey the laws — as long as you obey the laws and you pay your taxes and you do well, you're part of the solution or part of the problem — then you should stay. It's just that it's a complicated issue. This is not just a black and white thing. There's a lot of levers, a lot of moving parts on this.

WAYNE: I hope for that too, someday. I think our government is so into simplistic solutions — like with the pandemic stimulus. We'll just throw a check at everybody. And they gave all these checks to major

corporations that didn't need the money, and many of them kept it. Or they sent money to people who kept their jobs, and they didn't send money to people who actually lost their jobs and needed the money. And even when we get to this, it's either amnesty for everybody or we got to deport everybody. Instead of — are there people who've been here 25 years who are upstanding citizens, who we should find, like you said, tough, but fair? I like that. Where maybe there's a fine to pay because you came illegally, and maybe there's a character check. So there's people like me who are citizens saying, "Yes, Luis and Maria are exactly the kind of people we want in this country." That there ought to be ways that we could find to make of this 11 million people — even if we have to do everything for everybody, maybe let's find five million first and make them legal, who have the character, who have jobs.

The dirty lie, even among Republicans, is: if we don't have some of this labor here of these 11 million people, our economy can't function. Nobody's interested in deporting them all, because there's jobs here that other people aren't filling. And so we need the labor. Unfortunately, Republicans like paying less for that labor. So it's valuable to them to keep you here undocumented, because then you can't earn what you really deserve to earn.

I would hope that somehow — and maybe this administration — I just... I don't think government thinks about what's the best way to do this. It's simply just gonna say, "Okay, we're gonna give a pass on this issue for everybody" — which, of course, the Democrats love, because they think that's a lot of votes going their direction. It may not prove out to be true. But I think there's a way that you could do this in a reasoned way that says, hey, let's make it fair for those who've been here. Yeah, you broke the law to get in — maybe there's a fine that goes with that, something. But let's make this legal, so that we can get on and not let people live in limbo like you guys have lived for so long.

LUIS: There's a thing like that right now, where you can pay a waiver — you accumulated illegal status for being here illegally, so there's a waiver that you can pay. But you have to qualify for it. And it's really expensive, and doesn't guarantee the forgiveness, though. It just tells you that, okay, you apply, and they may take it, they may not. I think one of the laws that they should bring — that was the Bracero program, the one on the — I don't know if it was on the 50s or 60s. My dad used that, when he used to come for six or seven months out of the year, work on the fields, then go back six or seven months. And I thought it was a great program. I don't know what happened to it, but it was really good for a lot of people. Because in Mexico right now, today, you make \$10 a day.

WAYNE: And I think people like in that program — I was, in the 50s — I remember my dad only used local labor. We didn't use some of that migrant labor that came through. But like you said, some of those people could make in two or three months what they could make a full year in Mexico. Yeah, that's a valuable program. And I know a lot of people in your friendships — people I've met through you — and, you know, a lot of work here, a lot of your work, is money sent back to Mexico to help people you love. Not just a matter of "I'm taking care of me," but "I'm taking care of people back there that I love." I think the program partly ended because so many of those migrant workers who came didn't go back when they were supposed to.

LUIS: Oh, well, that I didn't know.

WAYNE: Like, you come up on a boxing scholarship and you reckon, oh my gosh, look at the United States, man — they have pizza. They have things that I don't have in Mexico, and they have such a better life, and they're free, and they're not hassled by the cartels — and yeah, all that. And people — it's hard for people to go back after you've been here. That's what's hard. And I don't know the answer, because as a citizen of the kingdom of God, I'm not an open borders guy, just because you can't let everybody come to America that wants to come to America — this whole economy would just implode, and it's just not enough to provide for all that. But we have enough to provide for more than we have. We can help people who are definitely impoverished, don't have opportunities elsewhere. More needs to be done in being generous with that, for sure.

I know, for me, my affection for people no longer ends at the border — and it used to. You know, I hear about an airplane crash in Africa or whatever — I know me and many of my friends were: how many Americans were involved? And if there's no Americans — ah, it's kind of, ah, thank God. Yeah, thank God, there's none of — and I think that's kind of false. What's the difference between a death of somebody who was born north of a border and somebody was born south? And — but we can afford to be generous in a world that's in need, and we are. Do a lot of giving to foreign aid. There's a lot of missionary organizations and Doctors Without Borders — lots of groups going into the world. And I think that's great. I think America needs to be involved in that kind of thing. Any developed country does. But compassion doesn't stop because of a border. And you've taught me that. You make me hurt for people that I don't know. And now I hear about something happens in Mexico — it doesn't matter if it happened in Mexico, an earthquake, whatever, or it happened in Los Angeles. These are still people that are suffering in the world. Being that kind of a global citizen is a good thing. And now I don't have to care because it didn't happen to someone I know or someone that looks like me?

And now, with your daughters — both citizens here, because they were born here — and now one's turned 21, so there's hopefully a chance to sponsor you in and get that all nailed down. The last four years have made that a difficult application to make, but hopefully, with a change of administration — and our new President Biden has talked about making 11 million people here legal and giving them a path to citizenship over time. What would that mean to you?

LUIS: Oh, you kidding me? That would be awesome. I'm one of them, and my wife is one of them. That will be amazing. Being able to go back and see the place where you were born.

WAYNE: You're an incredibly intelligent, gifted man, and right now your life is limited to cleaning houses. Yet you never complain. I mean, you have so many gifts and talents. You could be doing so many other things, but because your ability to move in this culture is now limited — it makes me sad for you. At the same time, I know what an incredible gift you're giving to your family, because you had your kids here, and they have a future and a hope that's not yet yours — but hopefully one day it will be.

LUIS: That's my prayer. Thank you, brother.

WAYNE: People have so much more around you than you have for yourself, yet you're grateful for what you have.

LUIS: Extremely grateful for what I have.

WAYNE: It doesn't bother you that you're cleaning some pretty fancy homes?

LUIS: Oh, I do. Except for that school.

WAYNE: It doesn't surprise me that Luis always works his way to the top of anything he does — from a kid wanting to box to Golden Gloves status in international competition, from sweeping the floors at a car dealership to becoming the parts manager of two dealerships. As long as I've known Luis, however, he has only been able to eke out a living by cleaning houses. I watch an extremely gifted, intelligent, responsible, and congenial man do the mundane when he could use his talents in far more fulfilling ways. It's the sacrifice he's making to offer his two daughters a different kind of life — away from the atrocities he endured in Mexico, to being citizens of a nation he deeply loves. It means he can't always live the life he wants to, not yet, but they can. And that is enough for him.

This story, however, is not over. Another door is about to open that neither of us expected. Luis was about to be drawn back to the love he encountered as a 21-year-old on the night he crossed the border. It had been buried under a few decades of religious obligation, but would once again find its way to the surface and lead him down a path that would fulfill some of the deepest desires of his heart. Next time, on My Friend Luis...

LUIS: Nobody really preached to me the gospel on December 19th. But the way I came to have a relationship with Jesus, and the Trinity itself, was because He showed Himself to me. He just came and embraced me. And that day I knew how I didn't have to earn His love. He always loved me. How in the world did I lose that?

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This transcript was generated from the episode audio and lightly edited for readability: paragraph breaks and speaker labels were added, and obvious transcription errors were corrected. The speakers' own words and phrasing have been preserved.