

Heart of the Matter: My Story

By Anna Lallo

Dedication

To my Heavenly Father—

the Author of my life, my Healer, and my Redeemer.

To my husband, Joe—

my rock and steady companion through every storm.

To my children & extended family—

thank you for walking this journey of grace beside me.

To my father—

my pastor, mentor, and spiritual hero— thank you for teaching me faith, for pouring into my life until your last breath, and for entrusting me with your mantle.

Your legacy lives on through every life touched by this ministry.

To my mother—

a woman of extraordinary strength, unwavering resilience, and timeless wisdom.

All glory to the One who turned my brokenness into beauty and my pain into purpose.

Introduction

Every story begins with a breath—but mine began with a miracle.

From the moment my life started, God made it clear that His hand was upon me. My journey has taken me through sickness, heartbreak, abuse, divorce, cancer, and the deepest grief I've ever known. Yet woven through every valley is the undeniable truth: **God never let go.**

This book is not just my story. It is a testimony of grace, a witness to the God who heals, restores, and redeems. It is for the brokenhearted, the weary, the ashamed, the overlooked, and the ones who feel like their story is beyond repair.

If you have ever wondered whether God can still use you—
whether He can take your pain and make something beautiful out of it—
I pray my story answers that question.

Come with me into the journey that shaped Heart of the Matter Ministries.

Come see how God turned my deepest wounds into my greatest calling.

Born for a Purpose

My story began with a miracle.

When I was born, the umbilical cord was wrapped tightly around my neck. I entered the world blue and lifeless. Doctors fought to revive me, only to discover even more complications—Goldenhar syndrome and Chiari Malformation Type II.

Goldenhar syndrome is a rare congenital condition that affects the development of the face, eyes, and ears. For me, it meant my right ear was malformed, with no eardrum or ear canal, and a dermoid cyst developed near my eye, which required surgery when I was sixteen.

Chiari Malformation Type II is a serious neurological condition where parts of the brain—the cerebellum and brainstem—extend downward into the spinal canal, causing pressure, fluid buildup, and life-threatening complications.

God used someone very special to intervene.

My grandmother, *Frances Ackerman*, became an instrument of His protection. When I was five months old, she urged my parents—strongly, persistently—to take me to the hospital. That trip saved my life. Doctors discovered that the malformation in my brain required immediate surgery.

At just five months old, I was taken into a sixteen-hour brain surgery. The doctors doubted I would survive, but God was writing a different story. He whispered over my tiny life:

“She will live, and she will testify of My goodness.”

From the beginning, I was marked by miracles. My scars became part of my identity—not symbols of weakness, but evidence of God’s deliverance, protection, and purpose over my life.

Growing Up in Ministry

As the oldest of eight children in a ministry home, faith shaped everything we did. My father—an evangelist and pastor—preached with fire, passion, and conviction that stirred entire congregations. My mother had a beautiful, angelic voice that filled every sanctuary we entered. My sisters and brothers were natural-born singers and musicians; music ran through our veins like a God-given inheritance. Together, we became a ministry family—singing, playing instruments, praying with people, and watching God move in powerful ways.

We traveled wherever the Lord opened a door. Town to town. State to state. Church to church. We moved often—so often that I attended many different schools, rarely long enough to build lasting friendships. Just when I would begin to settle in, make a friend, or feel a sense of belonging, it was time to pack up and go again. There was a loneliness in that, a quiet ache I carried, even as ministry life brought joy and purpose.

Ministry was beautiful, but it also had its cost. I learned early that people can praise you one day and wound you the next. Church families would embrace us with love, but some would turn around and criticize, judge, or walk away. Those moments left their mark, but they also taught me resilience, compassion, and what it truly means to depend on God above all else.

Yet even in the hardest seasons, God remained steadfast. Amid the long drives, late-night services, and the constant rhythm of change, I also experienced some of the best days of my life. I felt His call deep within me from the time I was a little girl. I didn't fully understand where it would lead, but I knew—deep down—that His hand was on me, guiding my steps, preparing me for a purpose far greater than I could comprehend.

When Dreams Shatter

Tragedy struck my life long before I reached adulthood.

When I was fourteen, my five-year-old brother, Joseph, was hit by a teenage boy driving a car. He didn't survive. His death shattered our family and left a wound in my heart that would take years to understand.

Joseph was full of joy, always singing around the house. His favorite songs were *"I'm Gonna Wear a Robe and Crown"* and *"Wonderful, Wonderful, Jesus Is to Me."* Those little melodies became precious memories—echoes of a life that felt stolen too soon. Even now, I can still hear his voice, pure and bright, singing of heaven...the very place he entered long before we were ready to let him go.

Witnessing the accident at fourteen etched a deep mark into my soul. I carried immense guilt, replaying the moment over and over, wondering if I could have changed the outcome. That pain settled quietly into the background of my life, shaping how I saw myself, how I loved, and how I coped with loss.

By the time I stepped into my later teenage years, my world already felt fragile. And heartbreak struck again. Betrayal, pain, and an unplanned pregnancy at seventeen left me drowning in shame. I felt like the brokenness of my past—Joseph's death, the constant moving, the loneliness—had finally swallowed me whole.

I thought my future was ruined. I believed God could never use someone like me.

But in my darkest moment, He spoke so gently:

"Your story isn't over."

Those four words changed everything. God began to show me that His calling was stronger than my mistakes, stronger than my grief, and stronger than the burdens I had carried since childhood. Layer by layer, He started healing me—not just from the pain of my teenage years, but from the trauma I had held inside since the day Joseph went to heaven.

The Wounds of Love

Adulthood was a battlefield. Searching for love and stability, I entered five marriages and endured four divorces. I walked through abuse, infidelity, manipulation, and deep emotional wounds that left me feeling shattered and unworthy. Each separation made me feel more broken, more disqualified, and further from the woman I believed God intended me to be.

But nothing wounded me as deeply as what happened in 2012.

That year, I lost my first grandchild, Chenoa—my beautiful baby girl who was just fifteen months old. She had been born with Transposition of the Great Arteries, a life-threatening heart condition where the two main arteries of the heart are reversed. At only one week old, she went through open-heart surgery. She was tiny but fierce—strong, resilient, and full of light. She survived what many adults could not, and she became the joy of my life.

Then suddenly, without warning, she died from pulmonary stenosis. The moment she left this world, something inside me broke. My world collapsed. I didn't want to be here without her. I couldn't imagine living in a life she no longer occupied.

At the same time, my fourth marriage was crumbling—filled with abuse, fear, and pain. I felt trapped, hopeless, and ready to give up entirely.

But God intervened in a way I will never forget.

Out of the blue, an old friend I hadn't spoken to in sixteen years called me. He had no idea what I was going through, no idea how close I was to the edge. He simply said:

“I don't know what you're going through or what you're about to do, I HAD to call you. Look, there was a time I had a gun to my head. It jammed—and that night I met a short little brunette, full of life. She gave me hope. That girl was you.”

I don't know how he got my number but those words pierced through the darkness around me.

In that moment, I threw away the pills. Something inside me shifted. It was time to live—not just survive, not just exist, but truly live the life God preserved me for.

Even in all my pain, God never stopped pursuing me.

And when I was ready to stop believing in love altogether, He sent Joe—my answered prayer. His steadiness, faithfulness, and compassion brought healing to places I thought were beyond repair. God used Joe to restore what life had taken from me, showing me that real love—God's love—can rebuild what seems forever broken.

Through the Fire

Before the greatest storms of my life arrived, God was already weaving together the person who would stand beside me through every battle—Joe.

We met online, but our connection was no coincidence. Joe already knew most of my family, including two of my sons, whom he had worked with. When we talked for the first time, it felt less like meeting someone new and more like God unveiling a missing piece of my life. Joe had two children of his own—a son, Dustin, and a daughter, Destiny. Together, we became a blended family:

Ryan, Johnathan, Matthew, Andrew, Dustin, and Destiny.

And then the grandchildren—each one a precious gift.

Chenoa, who is in heaven.

Lorelai, Joey, Jackson, and Arabella, the joys that keep our hearts full.

Our family is strong and close-knit. My children are my heart.

And Joe—Joe is my rock.

Just when peace seemed to settle, the storm intensified.

I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Two surgeries and twenty-four rounds of radiation pushed my body and spirit to their limits.

There were days I could barely lift my head, I was so tired and weak.

But Joe never left my side.

He prayed with me.

He cried with me.

He believed for me when my strength had run dry.

Then, only two weeks after my last treatment, my father—the man who shaped my faith and ministry—fell gravely ill. When he came home from the hospital, he asked me to stay with him.

I didn't realize it then, but God was preparing me for one of the most sacred seasons of my life.

A season of honor, reflection, and deep, holy love. A season where I would sit at the bedside of the man who had taught me how to trust God through every storm—and now I would walk with him through his final one.

The Mantle

During my father's final days, the atmosphere felt holy—thick with the presence of God. The house was quiet, yet it felt like heaven was leaning close. Between whispered prayers and tender moments, my father poured decades of wisdom into me. He told me stories of faith, miracles, and the goodness of God in ministry. He spoke as a man who had walked with the Lord his entire life and was now preparing to meet Him face-to-face.

But during those sacred days, I carried more than just grief.
I carried responsibility.

My mother was devastated—broken in a way only a wife watching her lifelong partner fade can be. I became her strength, her comfort, her hands and feet. I cared for her day and night, all while keeping my siblings informed, helping them process what was coming. On top of that, I somehow found the strength to begin planning the funeral, making decisions no daughter ever wants to make.

But God was with me.

I felt peace in the chaos—an unexplainable, supernatural peace that held me together when everything around me was falling apart.

Then came the moment I will never forget.

As he took his final breath, I felt something warm wrap around me—like a soft blanket lowering over my shoulders. It was the most comforting, heavenly warmth I had ever felt. I didn't want to move because I didn't want it to lift. In that stillness, I looked up at my father.

A single tear rolled down his cheek.

Then he exhaled, slow and gentle, and stepped into eternity.

It was in that moment that heaven touched earth.

“It was time to take the mantle, and carry the fire.”

When he stepped into glory, grief washed over me—yet so did an anointing I could not deny. It was as if the mantle he had been preparing me to carry since childhood had truly descended, resting on my life with purpose, weight, and calling. I walked out of that room forever changed, carrying not only my father's legacy, but the fire of God that has guided me ever since.

Heart of the Matter Ministries

Out of pain came purpose.

Out of loss came calling.

And out of every storm I survived, God birthed **Heart of the Matter Ministries**.

This ministry was not formed out of theory—it was formed out of **experience**, out of the trenches, out of miracles, brokenness, abuse, grief, and the redeeming power of Jesus that rebuilt my life from the ground up. I began ministering to the forgotten, the ashamed, the discouraged, the bound, and the deeply wounded—people who felt like their mistakes disqualified them. People who felt unseen. People who were where I once had been.

I watched God restore lives the same way He restored mine—slowly, tenderly, powerfully.

I watched Him take ashes and create beauty.

I watched Him turn generational wounds into generational healing.

I watched Him transform darkness into light and chains into freedom.

This ministry is not just my assignment—it's my heartbeat.

It is the very fire my father told me to carry.

The Objectives of Heart of the Matter Ministries

Heart of the Matter Ministries is built on clear, Spirit-led objectives that reflect the journey God walked me through:

1. To Heal the Brokenhearted

Just as God pieced my heart back together, I walk with those who are grieving, hurting, or carrying silent pain. We help people process trauma, loss, abuse, betrayal, and shame through the power of Scripture, prayer, and Holy Spirit guidance.

2. To Restore Identity and Worth

So many people live with labels—"unwanted," "unworthy," "too far gone."

Our mission is to lead them back to the truth:

you are chosen, known, redeemed, and loved.

3. To Break Chains and Strongholds

From generational trauma to addiction, emotional bondage, fear, or spiritual oppression—we speak freedom.

We believe in the delivering power of Jesus and walk with individuals until they step into lasting freedom.

4. To Equip Believers for Purpose

Everyone has a calling. Everyone carries a mantle.

Through teaching, mentorship, and discipleship, we help believers recognize their God-given assignments and step into them with boldness.

5. To Minister with Compassion, Not Condemnation

Heart of the Matter is a safe place—a refuge for the wounded.

We do not point fingers.

We do not shame.

We love, restore, uplift, and walk alongside people until they can stand again.

6. To Bring Jesus to the Broken Places

Whether in churches, prisons, hospitals, recovery centers, homes, or hidden valleys of the soul—we bring the hope of Christ to those who feel forgotten.

Just as God found me in my darkest moments, we go to places others overlook.

Heart of the Matter Ministries exists because **God wastes nothing.**

He took my battles, my scars, and my testimony and birthed a ministry that reaches the very people He has always called me to love.

This is more than work.

More than service.

More than a title.

This is legacy.

This is calling.

This is the fire I carry.

Walking in the Fear of the Lord

Through every mountaintop and every valley, through every heartbreak, betrayal, surgery, and storm, I've learned what it truly means to *walk in the fear of the Lord*. This fear is not the kind that makes you hide—it's the kind that makes you bow. It's not terror—it's reverence. Not dread—but deep, holy awe.

To walk in the fear of the Lord is to recognize that His presence is not just comforting, it is **transforming**. It's understanding that He is God—and I am not. It's choosing obedience when emotions scream otherwise. It's surrendering when everything in you wants to control. It's trusting Him when nothing makes sense and honoring Him even when the fire burns the hottest.

I learned that faith isn't formed on the mountaintops—it's revealed there.

But it's *forged* in the valleys.

Forged in abuse.

Forged in betrayal.

Forged in the hospital rooms.

Forged in the seasons where prayers felt unanswered and the nights seemed endless.

The fear of the Lord taught me that His wisdom is greater than my wounds.

His timing is greater than my desperation.

And His purpose is greater than every attack that tried to destroy me.

Walking in the fear of the Lord means I don't have to understand everything—I just have to trust the One who sees everything. It means I choose His voice above mine. His truth above my past. His direction above my comfort. It means I submit my will, my future, my ministry, my family, and my heart into the hands that have never failed me.

And the more I've surrendered, the more I've seen Him move.

I've watched Him protect me in ways I couldn't see at the time.

I've watched Him close doors that would have crushed me.

I've watched Him turn trauma into testimony.

I've watched Him transform loss into legacy.

I've watched Him take the ashes of my life and breathe beauty into them.

Through every flame, God has proven faithful—not just as my Savior, but as my Father.

Not just as my Healer, but as my Defender.

Not just as my Redeemer, but as the One who walks with me through every fire and never lets go.

Walking in the fear of the Lord is the path that led me from brokenness to purpose.
It's what steadied me when the world fell apart.
It's what kept my heart tender instead of bitter.
It's what shaped my calling and birthed a ministry out of miracles.

And the longer I walk with Him, the more I realize:

**The fear of the Lord is not something to dread—
it is the foundation of wisdom, strength, courage, and peace.
It is the anchor of my life,
and the compass that leads me home every time.**

Epilogue – Beauty from Brokenness

From the moment I took my first breath to the very breath I take today, my story has been marked by one thing: **grace upon grace**. Not the gentle kind that floats in quietly—but the fierce kind that rescues, rebuilds, and breathes life into what was meant to die.

I have walked through sickness that shook my body, trauma that scarred my soul, betrayal that broke my trust, heartbreak that left me empty, and loss that carved permanent places in my heart. I have known valleys so deep that only God Himself could reach me there.

But I have also tasted the goodness of a God who does not leave His children in the ashes.

I have experienced healing that defied what doctors expected.

Redemption that rewrote chapters I thought were finished.

Restoration that reached into the deepest parts of my story.

Joy that came in the morning after nights I thought I wouldn't survive.

I stand today because of the legacy I carry:

my father's mantle, my mother's strength, my husband's unwavering love, and my Savior's eternal promise.

These are the threads God wove together to rebuild what life tried to tear apart.

Every scar on my heart and every chapter in my journey tells a story—a story not of defeat, but of deliverance. Not of shame, but of mercy. Not of brokenness, but of a God who bends low, picks up the shattered pieces, and creates beauty no one saw coming.

My life is living proof of this truth:

God heals.

God redeems.

God restores.

And He wastes nothing—not the pain, not the tears, not the scars. They all became part of the masterpiece He is still writing in me.

Back Cover Description

From a miracle birth to a lifetime marked by trials, abuse, cancer, heartbreak, and profound loss, **Anna Lallo's journey is a breathtaking testament to the power of grace.** In *Heart of the Matter: My Story*, Anna opens the pages of her life to reveal how God met her in the darkest places and transformed her deepest wounds into her greatest calling.

Through pain, purpose emerged.

Through brokenness, healing flowed.

And through every fire, God raised up a voice now called to bring hope to the hurting.

This is more than a memoir—it is a testimony of redemption, restoration, and the faithfulness of a God who takes shattered stories and writes **beauty from brokenness.**

Author Bio

Anna Lallo is the founder of **Heart of the Matter Ministries**, a Christ-centered ministry devoted to healing the brokenhearted, restoring identity, and bringing hope to the wounded and forgotten. Born a miracle and shaped through a lifetime of trials—including childhood medical trauma, domestic abuse, multiple divorces, cancer, and the devastating loss of her granddaughter—Anna carries a testimony forged in fire.

Her voice is authentic, compassionate, and deeply Spirit-led. She ministers from the trenches she once survived, reaching those bound by shame, grief, fear, or broken identity. Through her own journey of redemption, Anna now walks alongside others as God heals, restores, and rewrites their stories.

Her life is proof that God wastes nothing—and that even the deepest scars can shine with His glory.

To invite Anna to speak or minister at your event, please visit:

👉 www.hotm.life