

Announcer

Welcome to Transformed by the Word, a podcast about discovering how to live your life with gratifying purpose. God created you for a reason and the Bible contains the keys to unlock your transformed life. Now, here's your host, Debora Barr

Debora 0:23

Well, thanks for joining me for episode 48, of Transformed by the Word. I have really been blessed by the testimonies of all of my recent guests on this show, and I hope you have been blessed as well. Each person's story is different. But what they all have in common is that each of them had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, that has made a true and lasting difference in their lives.

Jesus is the Word of God, and the Word transforms lives. In the Bible, in John, chapter one, it begins, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him. And without him, nothing was made, that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot comprehend it.

My guest for today is another dynamic witness for Jesus Christ. He sustained unimaginable injuries during a horrific act of terror and survive to tell the story of the impact that Jesus has made in his life, and why everyone should place their faith and trust in him.

My guest today is Angel Colon, and he survived one of the most deadly shootings in the United States history, the Pulse nightclub shooting, the attacker killed 49 people and wounded 53. But by the grace of God, Angel survived, but he was shot multiple times and suffered a shattered femur. Despite his wounds, Colon was determined not to let this shooting discourage him.

Growing up in a strong Christian home, he knew that the Lord was the source of his strength. What started as his mess has now become his message. Angel is using his voice to spread a message of hope, freedom and faith to all who will listen. And he wants the world to know that there is freedom in Jesus Christ.

Stay tuned, we'll be back in just a moment.

<<MUSIC INTERLUDE>>

Debora

Hey, Angel, it is so great to see you. It has been quite a while since we were ministering together in Florida, before the COVID pandemic. So thanks for coming on the show today.

Angel 3:58

Of course, thank you so much for having me. It's a it has been a while. So it's great to catch up here with you.

Debora 4:05

We were so blessed to have your ministry partner Luis with us a couple months ago in Episode 43. And it was such a blessing to hear his story of survival. And he also of course mentioned you and so I know our

listeners are going to love to meet you and hear how God has been working in your life. Would you share with us a little bit just to go all the way back to your upbringing so that we can get a sense of you know, your childhood and what you knew about God way back then.

Angel 4:35

Yeah, I was. I was born and raised in church and ever since I was a kid I remember I loved God so much. I love to worship I was that child that love to be in the front and I have a mic. I love the I love the attention. I bring in the front I just wanted to be with Jesus and sing to him. It's so wild because I grew up, Christian Pentecostal, you know, so it can get a little crazy in church. But I was that kid that I hated to go with all the other kids. When hen the craziness happened, I wanted to be in the fire of God, like I would tell my parents and the kids school teacher, I was like, No, I wouldn't say the chariots. I don't want to go with the kids.

Debora 5:21

Don't make me go to Sunday school.

Angel 5:25

I don't want to go with that I want to be with the adults. So it was you know, it was it was hilarious. But I have so many great memories of the way that I grew up in church. As a child, my parents were very adamant about the Word of God. And ever since I was young, I can remember. I will go to bed and my mom would always do a prayer with me. She would do a prayer in the mornings before I went to school, she would heal me with the anointing oil. Yeah, so yeah, I had an awesome parents. And so, so I grew up, great and church. And, and I'm very thankful for that. Because I already started to struggle. At the age of five, I began to struggle and I didn't even go through something, it just, it just happened. But ever since that age, like, I remember that I knew something was wrong. And I knew that what I was feeling was not right. And I knew that it was not of God, you know.

Debora 6:33

Some of our listeners that don't know what you struggle with, what was it that you were struggling with? Even at that age?

Angel 6:38

Yeah, I was, I was struggling with same sex attraction at that age already, I wouldn't notice that I was attracted to other boys more than girls. And you know, and nothing had happened. Until about like, a year or two. after that. I went to one of my cousin's that came from Puerto Rico. Actually, that was the first time that I was touched by another boy. And, but that did create even more of a fire me to, to really have the attractions. And that, that helped me to be the initiator as well with other boys at that age. And, um, but then again, like I said, I knew I knew about God, and you know, and, and the word already at a young age. So I tried my best to just put those feelings aside and be like, Okay, I know that this is not right. I know that I was not created for this. So even at a young age, I knew that I had to push those feelings aside. And that's why I was, you know, that's why I'm very grateful for parents who instruct their child in the Word of God at a young age. Because, yes, we don't think that kids understand. But to an extent, they really do. You know, they really are listening to what you're saying, sometimes it doesn't seem like it because it just screaming into other stuff. But they really are listening to what you're saying,

you know, and it's very biblical as well, you know, instruct your child in the ways of the Lord, and it will return for you. You know, so you're planting a seed in your child already at a young age. And that's what my parents said, you know, so throughout my childhood and going into my teens, I had that seed planted in me, and it was something that was always there. You know, so I, I did, I did good until I, I became a teenager. You know, I was in church, still, I became that teenager that was on fire for the Lord. I wanted to do every part in the youth, I wanted to be known to be a leader in the youth. And I did, but there came a moment where all these feelings were just building up inside. And I really didn't know what to do, because at that time, at that time in church, there really was no openness. You really cannot talk about this. You really couldn't, like confess to each other. You know, what, what you're feeling it's, it's in the Bible, you know, we're supposed to do that. And, but I didn't have that, you know, at age.

Debora 9:31

Did you ever share your struggles with your parents or maybe one of the leaders or anybody at the church or did you just bottle it up inside?

Angel 9:41

Yeah, I was. I was I was really scared to actually share because I was used to just hearing you know, in church, they never spoke about it. But if they did speak about it in church, it was a quick you're going to hell it was it was something scary to talk about. It was very taboo to really mention if you're into Are you and you're going through this? You know, and, and even, I'm hearing people joke about gay people in the church. I remember, you know, I would have friends in my church that would say, oh my gosh, Angel is like the gay best friend, you know, and those kinds of things were like, well, I really am going through this, but like, I don't, I don't really want you to say that, you know. So it's, it really does damage the things that you speak over people, it really starts to make them feel that they are that person. People started to treat me like if I was that gay friend, like, if I was a girl, guys that are really treat me, like another guy, you know, it was it was very different. And those things really did start to have an effect on me even in school. I remember, like, there were times where, where I did have a crush on a girl where I didn't like a girl. And you know, and people, they would be like, That's not possible.

Debora 11:03

It's as though people labeled you and that became this is this is who you are, and there's nothing else about you.

Angel 11:10

Yeah, yeah. Like, I'm like, there was no space for me to grow. Like, there was no space for me actually, you know, think about these thoughts and actually say, it's not me, you know, so what you speak over people really does have an effect on, you know, on someone's life. And it came to a point where, when I was 17, a lot happened in my family and my parents, they separated. And that really affected me, it really turned my life upside down. Because I saw my parents has, you know, the ultimate married couple people saw our family as like the Brady Bunch, like we were like, perfect family. And then all of a sudden, all this just happening. And I was like, Well, alright, you know, I took that as an open door to be like, Well, Lord, this happened to my family, I'm just gonna go ahead and live the lifestyle that I've just always wanted to live. And I remember at the age of 18, when I graduated high school, I left my home quick, and I just went, I dived right in to the homosexual lifestyle.

Debora 12:22

And did you have multiple relationships are? I mean, what did that look like for you?

Angel 12:29

So big. I remember because I loved God, so much the moment that I church, I was like, Lord, I'm gonna make a pact with you. And I'm never going to be in a relationship with a man. Because I know that one day, I am going to come back to you. And I said, I'm never going to take a relationship serious. Because I know that one day, I'm going to come back to you. And I see till this day, like, I haven't been in no religion at all. You know, and people don't actually, I believe that. But in the lifestyle, I was just, I'm promiscuous. I had different partners sexually. But I never ended up having a real relationship with a man.

And so I was I was I was out of church. And I remember about a year and a half after I was getting a little anxious, and I was just thinking about Jesus over and over again. I was thinking about church. And I was like, I missed worshiping. I miss going to church, I miss doing everything in that. And I started to visit my mom's church. And I said, Okay, Lord, I'm gonna give you a chance again. I miss you. And I'm, I'm up for just leaving everything behind you. Just going back to you. And I remember I rededicated my life to Jesus when I was 20.

And I came back to church and I was doing good. I started to pray, asking the Lord just to take these feelings away. And about a year went by and and I started to struggle again. And still, there was no openness. There was nobody that I could talk to. I didn't hear other testimonies. I was I was alone. And I said, Lord, I'm trying my best. I'm doing the best I can. I'm praying, I'm fasting. I still had these plantations like I don't know what's happening, Lord, I, I tried. I tried and you're not changing me. And I remember I just said, this is just who I am. I'm gay. And I remember I left church and it was wild because you know it just like the Bible says spirits kind of come back to test and see if your full or empty and if you're empty, he's going to bring his friends Uh, seven times more. And I really saw how much more like, deeper I went into lifestyle. When I left church again, it was it was, it was just insane. You know, I always told myself, I will not touch drugs, I won't, I want to certain things and just everything I just kept on going deeper and deeper. But a lot of it was because even in the lifestyle, the Holy Spirit would speak to me, even in the lifestyle, I would have spiritual warfare in my room in the lifestyle. And I couldn't understand I couldn't understand the purpose of, of me going through this, but I'm living in a way that the Lord doesn't want me to live. But I still have the power and authority to cast out a demon to tell it get out of here. You do not belong in this house. It was to me it was just a weird, I'm like, Lord, what, how was this happening? What is this? How, like, I thought it was far gone from you. Like I'm in this lifestyle, living and doing all these things that you obviously Hey, but yet again, like, there's a purpose.

Debora 16:12

Yeah, there was a tremendous battle for your soul. I mean, this is what happens in the spirit realm. And when we turn away from God, and we go in a direction that is against him, the enemy loves that. And he grabs a hold of our lives and drags us towards him. And there's this raging battle in the spirit realm for our soul.

Angel 16:32

Yes. And, you know, so I got to the point where, like, every time I will go into a part of your club, like our I would just hear that voice. I said, Angel, you don't belong here. Do you enjoy what are you doing? You know, so I just got, you know, I got deeper into alcohol, I got deep into drugs. I became a cocaine addict. And you don't think that you're that you're, you're addicted to a drug until you get out of it? You know? Because in it, you just see it as a party. Yeah, in it. Like, you don't see each other as in Oh, wow. We're addicts. Like, it just doesn't, you know, you become an addict. And, you know, in the beginning, I wasn't an addict, but you became an addict on Wednesday, you're, you're doing this every day, you're doing it. Not only in a party or at the club, and now you're doing your job. Now you're doing it at home. Now you're doing it everywhere. If you're doing it to be in a good mood, that's an addict. You know, a lot of people don't see it. You don't have to be that kind of person that's out in the street and you're homeless, and you have to go to rehab. That's not the only idea. You're an addict, the moment that you need it in your life.

Debora 17:42

Right. And it's a dangerous slippery slope. It starts out as, oh, I can do this one time. It's just fun to party. And then suddenly, you realize that you're hooked.

Angel 17:54

Yeah. And you know, and, and it came, yeah, it came to that point where I remember in 2016. Like, I was like, I am fed up with his lifestyle. Like, I'm 26 years old. Yes, I have money. Yes, I have everything that I want. Yes, I can. I can have any guy that I want. I can go wherever I want. But there's just no peace in me. Like there's always this, this anxious side of me like, the like, if I could still feel the Holy Spirit calling my name like I remember I would get drunk at the club. And I would just start to sing worship songs.

Debora 18:35

You were a party downer?

Angel 18:38

Yeah. And I'm like, why? What are the world like, and it was just like the heart of a worship, it was just there, that seed was just there were even when you're drunk the spirit of saying, I'm here. The Holy Spirit was crying out. I'm like, you know, and, like, I love to remember these moments, because it just reminds me like he, he's going to pursue you. Like, he doesn't care what darkness you are in. He's going to pursue you. He's going to call your name, even at the moment. So we truly Forget about him where we turn our backs on him. He just says, Hey, I'm here with open arms, and I want you back and I will love you and I will forget of every little thing that you did. I will throw it into the sea of forgiveness.

And it's just like, you know, I love to remember this, you know, and I love to speak about it to people, because so many people think that just because you're drinking, you're doing these things that the Holy Spirit is not going to meet you. He will do what he needs to do. To meet you where you are at. Yeah, you know, yeah. And I and I would have these moments and you know, so in that year 2016 I was just like, Lord, like, I really want to come back to you. I really want to drop ever everything and just come back to you. But I don't know how to, you know, my life now revolved around the gay lifestyle. All my friends were gay, everything that I did were in the gay community had something to do with the gay lifestyle.

And I just didn't know how to stop it. I depended too much on it. Yeah. And you know, and my identity became this thing. It wasn't even me. It was just me ELRA, you know, revolving around this thing. And in April 2016, I remember I did a prayer. And I said, Lord, I want to come back to you. I don't know how to. I suppose so. Lord, allow me to go through whatever I need to go through for me to come back to you.

Debora 20:46

Well, that was a dangerous prayer Angel.

Angel 20:48

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I said, Lord, like I just, you know, and I had heard people doing this before. And I said, Can we just give it a try? So let me just give it a try. Because I knew the need for my soul. Yeah, you just know.

Debora 21:08

Yeah. And I say it's a dangerous prayer. Not that it's a bad thing. It's a dangerous prayer. Because God answers our prayers. When our hearts truly are surrendered to Him, and we're crying out for the exact thing that he wants for us. He'll answer that prayer. And it won't necessarily be in a way that you expected. So tell us what happened just a couple of months after that prayer.

Angel 21:36

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So like, I did that prayer. And then, you know, I completely forgot that I made that prayer. And I just kept on living the way that I was living. I remember the weekend of June, it was June 11. I was working that weekend in downtown Orlando. And I was let go of work early that day. It was a Saturday. And I was I was a bit hungover. I was partying the night before. But I was I didn't plan to leave work early that day. So I was like, Okay, I need to go get a haircut. I was feeling a little scruffy. So after work, I went away and got a haircut. And so what happens after you get a haircut? I looked at myself in the mirror and I was like, Okay, I, I can not do nothing tonight.

Debora 22:31

I looked too good.

Angel 22:32

I was like, I look pretty good. Like, I don't I don't want to go Oh, like there's just no way. I was like, okay, Angel, what are you gonna do? And it was because because I started to get texts about a house party that night. I actually had a friend that was flying in from Tony, he was like, Hey, can you pick me up? And I was like, Okay, perfect. Let's go out. So I remember I went to the mall, I got my outfit, I got a bottle. And we ended up going to add to the house party.

So we were at the house party. And crazy thing is that I crashed into Luis at the house party. And it's so wild because I hadn't seen him for about a year before that. And I remember I saw him I was like, Where have you been? Like, I haven't seen you in so like, give him a big hug. And, and all along. I didn't know that the Lord was already working in his life, too. You know, so it's just, it's just wild that the Lord already you know, um, because people think, Oh, you just went back to church because of the shooting. That's not true. Like the Lord was already working in our hearts. years before that, you know, so it's just

well to know now, you know, his part of the story. So I remember seeing him and giving him a hug and then after that all of us decided to go to pulse. So we got to Pulse. And we were there dancing. It was a fun night with friends. And then I remember they called Last call. So I made sure I went to the bar. I got my last. My last drink. I came back to the dance floor. And we were just talking chit chatting. It was almost time to go so people you know so people started to say their goodbyes and tool 2am came around the corner and I remember that's when everything's changed my whole life changed at that moment.

I remember I was chatting with my friends and out of nowhere I just hear a loud pop. Heard it's so loud in my in my right side. And I remember seeing an orange flash across my face. I jumped I dropped my drink and and in seconds I can just start hearing shots pop up up up up really fast. At that moment I didn't know what it was. I just knew that I had To run quickly, I heard screams you know, in seconds the club was in chaos. I remember, I had turned to my left, and I just started to run, I ran around two or three steps, like everything just happened. So quick, I ran two or three steps. And at the moment, I just started feeling hot taps behind my legs. And I didn't know what it was. I just knew that something was hitting me really hard in my legs. And I remember I fell forward. I hit my head on the floor, I fell forward.

And at this moment, people were already jumping over each other trampling over each other, trying to exit you know, the one door trying to go to another part of the club. And I remember that moment, I tried to get back up, even though I knew that I couldn't really do anything because my legs were shot. I tried to get back up. And I remember feeling someone jumped over me. And I felt their foot behind my left leg. And I remember over the screens and over the music, I hear a snap. And I remember feeling one of the most painful, excruciating feelings I have ever felt in my life. And at that moment, my my leg is broken, and I fall right back down. I couldn't do anything, I couldn't go anywhere I couldn't move. I remember being so close to the door yet so far away, because I just couldn't get there. All I could do was cover my head. I kept on hearing people screaming every time I looked up, I can just see bodies falling down, one by one, and it gets quieter and quieter. And at this moment, I can just I hear everyone outside that's in the patio and I hear just shots going on outside in the patio. And I took that moment to just lift my head and I look around and I just see bodies all over the floor.

Angel 27:16

I didn't really know what to think at that moment. I couldn't believe like this was really happening. I kept on I kept on hearing myself, I get them pinching myself. I kept on telling myself Angel, this is a dream. This is not real. This is a nightmare. This is not happening. I I really cannot believe like I was involved in something like this. And as I was looking around, I remember hearing footsteps coming into the door. And I put my head down and I just I just started hearing pops again. But this time it was different. It was slower this time, I can just hear, pop, pop, pop. And I hear the pups coming closer. And then I came to realize that not he's shooting everyone that's on the floor. So he's making sure that you know, everyone's that in that room. You know, if if he didn't catch people outside, he was going to make sure that other people who did catch inside were were done.

And at that moment, I had a lady that was next to me. She had fallen next to me and she was in pain. And I remember I had grabbed her hand and I told her, it's going to be okay, we're going to be fine. You just need to relax. You need to relax and you need to be quiet. And you know, I can hear the shots coming closer and closer. But she was the yelling. And I told her is coming our way you need to be quiet. You need to pretend you're dead or you're going to die. We're both gonna die. And at that moment, I

told myself Angel. Hold your breath. Pretend you're dead close, your eyes do not move. And I remember I close my eyes. I put my hand over my head. I had my other hand holding her hands. And I just waited. And I remember hearing a loud pop again and I got scared. And I opened my eyes and I saw the lady and I can see her buddy just jumping up and down from the ground. And I remember her hand lets loose of my hand. And I look at her face and I just see her eyes shut and the inside I'm panicking. Like I was telling myself that this cannot be real. I would have never thought I would ever see someone get murdered in front of my face. Let alone someone that I I'm trying to help someone like I'm holding her hand like I'm the last person that she just spoke to. And she was just murdered in front of my face.

And now I'm thinking annexed, he knows I'm alive. He sees me holding her hands. I'm right next to her. I'm covering my face. You know, I told myself Angel, you're, you're dying. You're dying tonight. And I remember feeling him behind me. And it can feel that stare when someone is just staring at you. You just know that they're looking at you. And, but nothing was happening at that moment. And it was weird. It was like if time froze, and I was like, Okay, Lord, well, I think I think you've given me my moment to make peace with you, because I'm going to die right now. And I remember I started, I started praying, and I started asking for forgiveness as sort of, you know, I sort of saying, Lord, I'm sorry for leaving your site. I know, you never left my side. I left your site, but please forgive me and just take me with you right now, Lord. And, you know, and, and, and it was a prayer that was coming from my heart. Like I was really speaking to the Lord.

What the thing was that nothing still was happening. No, like, he wasn't shooting, there was nothing going on. It was like it was time still was frozen. And it just felt different. It felt like if, like if there was spiritual warfare going on, or just something going on above me, and something just clicked inside of my head. And I changed my prayer. And I said, Lord, no, and I'm praying in my head, because I'm still pretending that I'm dead. And I'm bringing my head and I said, Lord, no, I'm not leaving here. Tonight, I'm leaving your life. I said, Lord, You've promised me so many things that haven't been fulfilled in my life, and they're going to be fulfilled. So I'm leaving here live tonight, I started to prophesy over my life, I started saying, Lord, you promised my mom that her baby had a has something huge in this life, and it hasn't been fulfilled. So this means that I'm leaving here, like tonight. And it was crazy. Like me prophesying over my life. At that moment, it was like, if I was changing the angle, the enemy at that time, like if, you know, I, then I was telling me the Lord, you know, you're gonna take me, you're gonna, I'm gonna live your life. And I'm not going to leave your date. And I said, and the moment that I leave here, I'm going to testify of your goodness, I'm going to testify of what you are going to do in my life.

And I just kept on testifying for my life, prophesying over my life. And you know, and that was the moment that I was able to understand that God has given you the power and the authority to change the atmosphere in the room that you walk into a room can be so dead, but because of that power and authority that God has given you, you could live in that room up with his presence. And that's what I was doing at that moment. And I just kept on praying and at the moment that I said, Amen, in my head, said, Amen.

And right there, I hear a pop, a loud pop, and I remember feeling my body jump up and down from the ground. I feel a pain in my midsection. And I, I'm realizing that he's shooting me all over again. And I just see black you know, and I thought to myself, Okay, until you're dead. That's it. He just shot you again. You're dead. And I hear footsteps walking away. And I remember I was able to open my eyes. And

at that moment, I could just thank, God, I, I didn't know how I was alive. It was like if that prayer gave me the strength to not yell, to not to not move while I was being shot again. Deb I don't know what it was I took the pain that I didn't move, I didn't yell, I didn't do anything. I just laid there. Like if I was dead, you know. And now Now I realized, you know, that prayer really was like, if it was armoring me up for that moment, you know, and God just gave me that strength to you know, to push through that moment, and I, you know, I opened my eyes and I just started thinking God, because everyone around me was that everyone around me was dead. And I was just there.

And you know, as I was thanking, God, I can hear the shots now in the other room, and I see cops. I see their flashlights through the door and they're whispering because they didn't know how many shooters but you know, they They sneaked into the door. They were asking very low. If anyone was alive. I raise my arm real quick. And I said, please just get me out of here. And the cop came to me and I asked him, Can you please carry me I can't feel my legs, I can't walk, I'm in pain. And he said, I'm sorry, I can't carry you out of here. It's a procedure. There's bodies everywhere, and I have to drag you out of here, I can't carry you. And I said, Just do what you have to do.

And I remember, he grabbed me, he flipped me over. And he just started to run, you know, and I kept on telling him run, run, get me out of here. And there was just a mix of emotions. At that moment. It was like, I felt a sense of relief that I was being taken out. But I was scared at the same time, because I hear the shots, and I'm thinking he's gonna hear us, he's gonna run back in and shoot. And then at the same time, I feel pain because I'm being dragged over glass, I feel a glass, cutting up my legs as I'm being dragged out. But I'm just yelling, run, get me out of here. And by the grace of God, we made it outside later, cross street. You know, and one minutes passed by and I got to the hospital. And you know, and there's, there's a lot more, you know, that I could say, but, you know, but I got to the hospital. And, you know, I tell people, you know, because they think that that night, was the hardest part of the process. And you know it really wasn't

Debora 36:19

You went through a horrific and Oh, my God, I'm so grateful that he spared your life. How did you get through that process in the, you know, intervening months? And I mean, so much had to transpire?

Angel 36:34

Yeah. Yeah, I tell people like, then Yes, it was really hard. It's just something that just changed my life. But the process afterwards was when the real pain started, you know, because it wasn't just physical. It was spiritually it was mentally, it was. Everything breaking down in my life, everything changing in my life, I got to the hospital, I was in the hospital for about three weeks. And I ended up being the first interview that was live from someone that survived inside of the building. And I didn't know that I was the first interviewer. Because they had just told me, Hey, Angel, there's a, there's a small press conference with a few doctors, and people would just like to know what happened inside of the club. You know, so I said, okay, yeah, that's fine. I'll let everyone know. And this was like, like, two days after I believe. And I remember I was drugged up. So like, I was just out of it. And I was in the chair, and they strolled me into the room. And I remember just seeing hundreds of cameras, hundreds of people, like I didn't know, this was there. Like, it really clicked in my mind that this was going to be something huge, like, until that moment. And I remember that like Angel, what happened. And so I did that interview. And after that interview, I got to my room. And quickly that interview is around the world.

Quickly, people know who Angell Colon was, you know, so the moment that I was discharged from the hospital, because of all the interviews I did, I did go to church, and I said that the Lord, I knew that that was the first thing that I had to do. And I was like, Lord, like, I promise you, like I told you that on that floor, that I'm going to worship you and just testify we did. So you know, I remember, I found a church and I started to, you know, to be there. But because I was so known. I was doing all these events with the people from the club.

And as the more I yield physically, the more that I was traveling, so I was I was going to New York going to California, attending all these events about gun violence, going to gay awards that were really big, and you know, you know, because I thought to myself, Okay, I'm, I'm going to church, but I'm also going to support this because it was a huge tragedy. And about a year went by. But I noticed, like I My Life Spiritual was not moving forward. And, and I hadn't noticed that even people in the lifestyle. They were really happy that I was going to church, they're really happy that I had a relationship with God. And you know, in my head, I was like, this is weird, because I would have thought that they would have had a problem with it. I was like, wow, this is nice. Like, I can go to church and I can, you know, do all this in the lifestyle. Until I realized that, you know, they were seeing me as a gay Christian advocate. They were seeing me as a gay Christian voice And it got to the point where even me going to church, I started to go back to my old ways I started to slowly fall back into the lifestyle. I started to go on dates with guys while I was in church.

So not only was I doing these things, but now I was actually worse than I was before because that was lukewarm. I had one foot in, and one foot out, even going through this tragedy. And I remember I would, I was fighting with the Lord. I was like, Lord, I went through this shooting, I survived, why am I still having these temptations? If I'm trying my best now when church? Why, Lord, you know, and it and it was, it was getting really hard because I became a face of the tragedy. Not only was I doing interviews, but now I was getting offers, I was offered a movie about my life, I was offered a reality TV show of my life afterwards. Everything that I wanted before the shooting was now coming to life. I was hired by a speech company speaking at schools, just about what happened that night. I was getting paid very, very, very well. And I had no idea that this was the way that the enemy was trying to use to look back into my life trying to look me back into the gay lifestyle. And I remember about a year after I was like, Lord, I'm still lost. I'm fighting with you. I don't I don't see change. I'm healing physically. People see that see me, I says here, and they they seem as this huge person that survived tragedy. life looks like is going great, but I'm still empty inside.

Debora 41:56

So tell us about the danger of the Gay Christian movement. What is it about that? A lot of people think, Oh, well, that's fine. But what is it about that kind of movement? Or that kind of label? That is not truly Christian?

Angel 42:15

Yeah, you know, the, the thing is that, you know, it's, it's, they speak a lot about the love of God, which is amazing. Yes. And I tell people, you know, because people are like, Well, God loves me. And I'm like, Of course he does. He loves everyone. But how are we being obedient to the Word of God? Is there truth, we can speak about God's love all day long, because it is amazing. But are we also speaking about the word because that is God. That's his word. He is the Word, always speaking about this. And that is

where everything changes, you know, and we're trying to conform our lives with the way that we want to see Christianity, or whether we want to see God, you know, you know, a lot of us say, Well, God would he will not do that to his children, he will not make them go to this, you know, it's not him doing it to us, first of all, you know, it's not him, you know, and he loves us enough to be like, Hey, I'm here. Like, if he didn't love us, he would just let us go. Right? And not even worry about it anymore. You know, and I was falling into this category, without even thinking that I was in this category, but I'm living this lifestyle.

And people were just commending me, like, so happy. And you know, and I realized, you know, about a year after I said, Lord, this is not who I want to be like, you save. I was seconds away from death. I'm not supposed to be alive. And I said, Lord, and I'm out here, still living a life of mess, even going through this life, when you could have saved someone else that was gonna give their life completely to you. And I'm here just I think, like if nothing happened, and I remember, like, at that time, it was, you know, there was a night where I just broke down and I said, Lord, like, I'm not fighting with you anymore.

I surrender to you, Lord, I give I just give you everything I give you my temptations, I give you my struggles. And I said, The Lord. Not only that, I just give you all of my heart. I don't give you just my sexuality. Just take everything, just take it all from me. And at that moment, the Holy Spirit spoke so clearly to me, he said, Angel, that's all he wanted. What you just said is what he has been wanting. He said, he just wants you to love him to get to know Him and His word and he's gonna take care of the rest.

You know, I was going through such a hard time because you know, As I was going back to church again, like I started to do this thing where like, I started to want to look straight, to act straight, to speak different to do all that. And I was forgetting about the person who transforms you. I was forgetting about the person who lives in study you, you know, I was forgetting about the person who rescued me that night, and I was trying to do it on my own all over again. You know, and that's what I was doing before. When I when I tried to be, you know, in church again, and, you know, the moment that he said, AngelList, that's all he wanted, everything changed.

Everything changed. And I was still doing events, and I was still doing things. But now it just didn't feel right. And I remember at that moment, I reconnected with Luis and I remember, we had lunch, and I was like, This is crazy. Like, we forgot about each other for that whole year. Like, I didn't even think about Louis. I didn't even think about me. But then I remember his mom takes on a headset, a there's a survivor that I think going to church. And she mentioned me he's like, wait, I know him, you know. So we reconnected. And I remember, he testified first on social media. And he shared that you left the gay lifestyle. And you did all that. And I just saw the backlash. I saw what he went through. I remember he would call me in tears. And, and I was like, Man, this is this is hard. And God spoke to me. He said, Angel, you're next. And he said to you, I need to, I need to, to share.

And you know, because it was in my heart already to, you know, to start letting go of what I was doing, and really sharing my full story. And I said, Lord, I don't know if I could do it. I don't know if I could do this, I don't know if I could share, I'm gonna lose it all. I'm gonna lose everything, my my, my friends, my family, in the lifestyle, you know, all all the work that I'm doing other work, you know, the I worked hard for after the shooting, it's all gonna go away. And he said, in order for you to let to enter in a new level with me. This is a step to it.

Angel 47:18

And I remember, I just felt peace. And I said, Okay, Lord. Let's do it. And I remember the beginning, it was early, early, early 2018. It was either the end of 2017, early 2018, I did an article with Charisma magazine. And I showed everything. I showed what happened that night, and I shared about me leaving the LGBT lifestyle for good and giving my all to Jesus. And I remember the moment that they posted it. It went viral. And the same thing that happened to Louise started happening to me. And Deborah, it was insane. Because it was just like the world turned their back on me completely. Everything stopped at that moment, all the offers all the income, everything I was doing to stop, it got to the point where I really did lose everything. It got to the point where I couldn't afford rent anymore. I moved in with my sister. And I started to fight with God again. And I said, Lord, I just I just risked it all. And now I'm here with nothing like, what are you trying to do? Like, I thought it was gonna be okay. And that season, you know, I tell people that was one of the hardest seasons. But there was one of the best seasons for me. Because I was able to learn how it really is to fully trust and depend on God. When, because I never knew what it really was to not have any. I didn't know what it was. And to really be like, Lord, you're all I have. I have my mom, my sisters and you. I can't do anything else.

Debora 49:12

Tell us about how you and Louise started fearless identity and you know how people what your ministry is about and how people can connect with you.

Angel 49:22

Yeah, you know, so. So at that moment, you know, I really started to learn who God was there. And life change. At that moment, life changed completely and freedom started to come my way. Me and Louise reconnected, we started to hang out and we just started to talk about what we both went through and we just felt led to start something and to just share, to really share what freedom is to really share how God you know, rescued us that night and to share you know, that yes, you know it's it's a Battle, it's a struggle, but you can overcome. And we, we felt that the name fearless identity was the perfect fit for this because, you know, our identity, it was tested spiritually and it was tested in this world, you know, by all the backlash that we got all the threads that we got just everything. And not only that, but knowing that Jesus had a fearless identity in this world when he was here. I was like, this is the perfect name. And he said, This is the perfect name. And we both prayed about it. And we said, let's do this. Let's go.

And we started, you know, we started testifying, going around churches, and through this, we kept on finding more freedom we kept on finding healing in our lives, the more that we testified, you know, because just like it says in Revelation 12:11, and we overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of our testimony, I tell people, even if you're going through, even if you're struggling, testify with your mouth and share to the world, there is freedom in Jesus Christ, you know, the enemy is going to be like, No, I want to shut your mouth. No, but when we testify, we're finding more freedom, we're finding more healing in our lives. And we were able to really see and know what the definition of freedom was. And because you know, all my life, I struggled because I thought that, you know that one day, just other temptations, were just going to go away, just like that, you know, I was taught, you know, when I was

young, no, at the moment that you're free with that, you know, that you're not tempted anymore with this lifestyle, you're not tempted anymore, you know. So those were the things that I was looking for. And I'm like, Lord, I'm not free. But I was able to understand the moment that you're that you have freedom is the moment where you can look at temptation in the eye and say, I don't want you I want Jesus, the moment where you choose life or death, the moment where you choose Jesus over everything else. That's freedom, when you will have the option to be like, Yes, I can fall into that, but I don't want that anymore. I don't want that anymore. You know, that's true freedom.

And yes, the Lord has all the power to take all your temptations away, you know, but everyone's story is different, you know, but, you know, just because you are tempted with something does not mean that you are that, you know, and that's something that we need to be clear that we need to be speaking out about. Because there's a lot of people in the lifestyle now to this day, that I would speak to even in the world, you know, because I knew it was a sin in the world, you know, but they will tell me Angel this is just the way that I feel I've prayed for these feelings to go away, but they're still there, I'm still tend to so it just means that I'm this you know, so I, you know, we keep on sharing what what freedom really is. And we try to equip pastors and youth pastors and leaders on how to welcome people from the lifestyle into the search.

Debora 53:03

So Angel, how do people connect with you? How do they find information about fearless identity? And how do they connect with you if they want you to come and speak at their church or they just want to reach out to you?

Angel 53:15

Yeah, it really you just type fearless identity on Google, like, you'll see our stuff. Our site is fearless identity.co You could find us on Instagram, you could find us on Facebook, you could find my page, you can find the resource page as well. And you could send us an email, AngelColone@fearlessidentity.org. or, LouisJ@fearlessidentity.org. And you can, you can send us an email, we are actually creating more ways as well to get in contact with us and to see more stuff.

And we also have a documentary as well on Amazon Prime, called More than a Victim, you can just type that up in on Amazon. And you will see that come up on your screens. And it's just beautiful to see what the Lord is doing. It's beautiful to see, you know, the journey and the process that gets it's amazing to look back. Six years now in June, it's six years this year. It's awesome to look back and just to see the man that I am today that has gone through that journey of freedom of really getting to know Jesus and having relationship with him. And being able to be a light and to encourage others who are going through this and just telling them that they're not alone in this telling them that there's a family out there. There are people who understand what you are going through and that we are able to overcome.

We are able to overcome this. But to really focus on Jesus and relationship with him and connection with him. I tell people taming the secret place is a necessity every single day. You know, I could tell like, you know, and you know, and I'm human, you know, there's days where I'm not in the secret place. And I can tell the level of my spirituality I can tell when temptations come how strong and because of the way that I'm in the in the prayer room in the secret place. And I think it's just really important that connection, you know, because a lot of people ask, I'm what is the best way to just, you know, push

through all this? Really? We overcomplicate things a lot of times, yes. What? Like, yes, books are amazing. Preachings are amazing going on YouTube. And you know, all the courses are amazing. But the top thing is connection prayer with our Father. You know, he lives inside of us. And the more connection we have, the more strength we have to overcome these temptations. So I tell people, like it's a really basic answer, and you're probably gonna break well, I know that, but it's a tough thing. It really is the top thing, and we need to bring back prayer like it was we need to be so focused on prayer and being in the Word of God and just knowing him and knowing who we are in Him. Knowing who we are as sons and daughters in Jesus Christ and knowing the power and authority He's given us to overcome these things. Because a lot of times, we think very small ourselves. And sometimes we don't think that we have the, you know, the authority to really renounce and call out these things that are coming into our lives, when in reality, we have more power than them. We have more power than them, and we are able to overcome these things.

Debora 56:48

Yeah, Angel, you have completely blessed us today. And I know that there's listeners out there that are hearing your story, and maybe they're struggling in their own life, with same sex attraction or any number of things. It would be a blessing, if you would pray for our listeners right now. Would you do that?

Angel 57:09

Of course - Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we just thank You, Lord, we thank you for who you are. We thank you for your love. We thank you for your wholeness. We thank you for what you did on the cross for us, Father, God, we just thank you for sending your son to die for us, Jesus, Lord. Now we know what true love is. Now we know what it really is to have someone who loves us, Lord. And this moment, Lord, we pray for those lives that are listening to this podcast, Father, God, Lord, those people who are going through the same struggles that Deb and I have gone through in our lives on the go, Lord, I pray that you meet them where they're at, Lord, you meet them at any level that they are in their life, even if they're at the lowest of the lows, Father, God, Lord, there is no darkness that can overcome you, Father, God, Lord, and you can meet anyone where they're at. Nobody is too far gone. Nobody's too far gone. And you love each and every one of us Father Carlos, I pray that you meet everyone where they're at father, God, Lord, that You pour an overwhelming love over their life sword, and you remind them who they are, Lord, and who you call them to be Father God, Lord, I pray that you remind them of their identity, Lord, and what authority they have in this life, Father, God, Lord, so we just thank you for each and one of them. Lord, I thank You, Lord, that You have given me into just to strength Lord, to keep on overcoming this father, God, Lord and being a light to this world are we thank you and we love you, Lord. In your beautiful name we pray, amen.

Debora 58:48

Amen.

Don't go away. We'll be right back after this short break.

<<MUSIC INTERLUDE>>

Debora 59:31

We just heard from Angel Colon, who shared with us what it takes for real change to occur in our lives. He said that his prayer life and his being obedient to God is what made all of the difference for him.

If you have never surrendered your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, you too, can experience a new identity and have the assurance of everlasting life, in addition to peace that will flood your heart, even now, if you would like to accept Jesus, you can pray a prayer like this.

God, I confess that I'm a sinner, and I need Jesus in my life. I repent of my sins and I turn to you. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins, that He was buried and rose from the dead. And I accept this by faith and invite Jesus to be Lord of my life.

Please let me know that you made a decision today to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. You can do that by going to my website and clicking on the link that says, record your decision for Jesus and I'd be happy to reach out to you and celebrate with you and give you some next steps in your Christian faith.

My prayer for you today is that you will allow Jesus Christ to guide and direct your life that you would allow him to fulfill his plans and his purposes for your life, and that you would grow steadily in your faith and trust in him.

Stay tuned for our next episode of Transformed by the Word, where we will hear another life transformation story.

Announcer 1:01:27

Thank you for listening to transformed by the word with your host Debora Barr, be sure to subscribe to our podcast on iTunes or Google Play and connect with us at TBTWpodcast.com. Until next time, be blessed.