

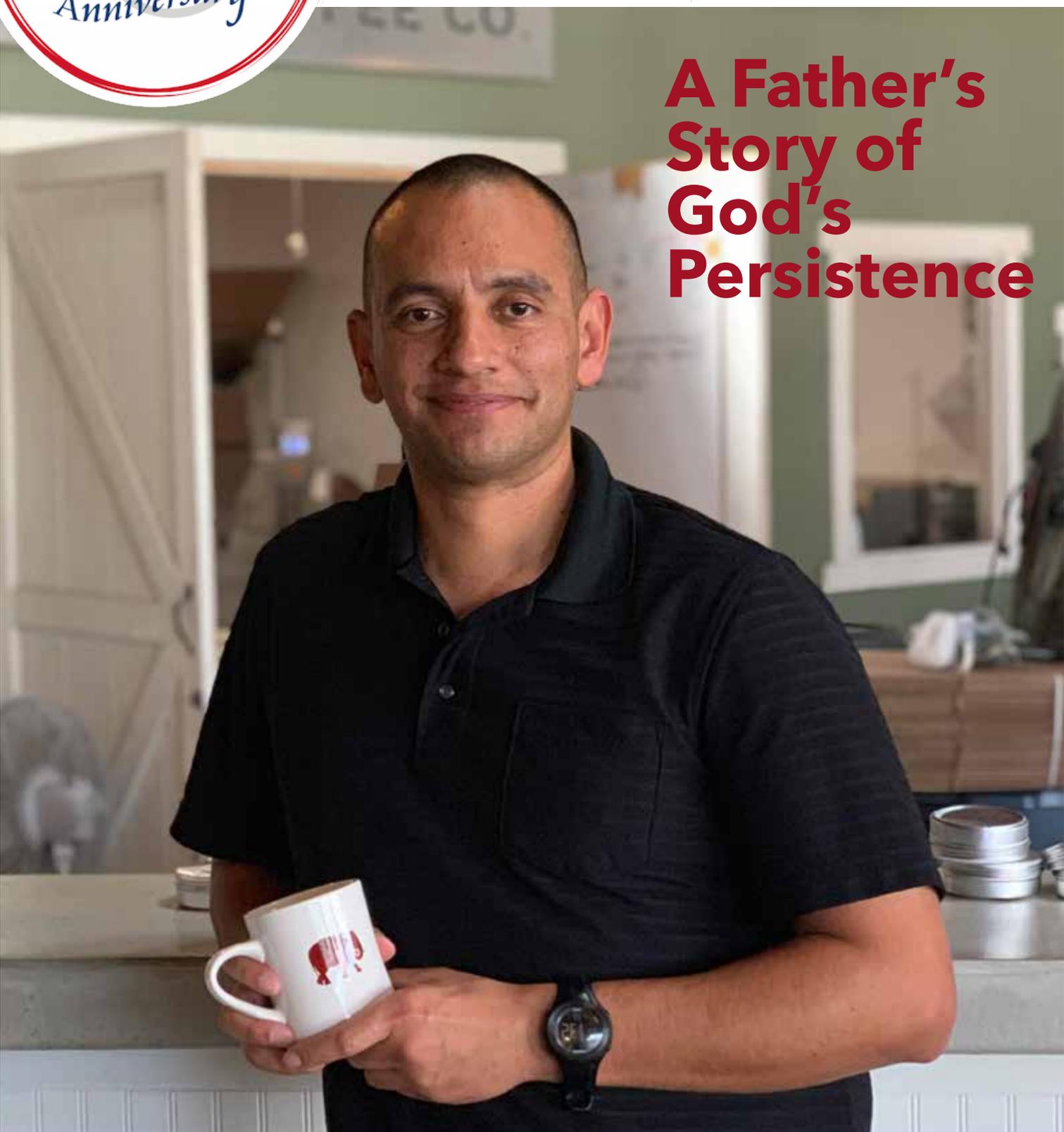


Lighthouse

News

Issue 6, Volume 70
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THE STORIES YOU'RE CREATING  THE LIVES YOU'RE CHANGING



A Father's Story of God's Persistence

FINDING REFUGE IN OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

From the Desk of Matt Dildine

Usually, the purpose of my letters is to share inspirational stories and ministry thoughts. Right now, I am simply asking for your help.

Here at the Fresno Rescue Mission, we never turn anyone away because of a lack of space. We will always find a way to create another place for a safe night of sleep. That doesn't mean, however, that we are not short on space and, most importantly, the RIGHT type of space. We don't use the term "shelter" because it implies that we provide just a bed when, in fact, we provide so much more. We provide places of dignity and peace that encourage transformation.

More than any other time in recent history, we have been forced to use our overflow capacity. This means, in simple terms, that we are placing sleeping mats on the floor of our chapel and other rooms for our guests. It's not ideal, but it is better than the street. But the floor is not the space of dignity and peace that we want to offer. Another startling, sad, and not well known fact is that aside from the few spaces that we have, Fresno has no emergency housing for families. If a family is homeless there are extremely limited options in Fresno in comparison to other communities. We believe this needs to be addressed.

The Mission is as fiscally sound an organization as you will find. We have no debt. We operate within budget, and the Lord has always provided through you. There are times, however, when we feel called to step out in faith as an organization when we feel God wants us to do something outside of our normal fiscal comfort zone. This is one of those times.

We have an organizational goal to accomplish three things. We want to open approximately 100 emergency bed spaces for men, women, and women with children; (real beds, not sleeping mats.) Secondly, create a nine-unit emergency housing facility used exclusively for families and fathers with kids. Lastly, it is our goal to provide 50 bed spaces to be used as gap housing for men. We are grateful to be able to do all of this by renovating and repurposing our existing facilities.

To accomplish these God-sized goals we need additional help. Here is how you can partner with us:

- Consider a special gift specifically for this project. To serve the additional individuals and families will cost approximately \$1,000 each night, over our current budget.
- Consider adopting a room. We need assistance with transitioning the spaces, furnishings, and play areas to create places for children, families, and single men. Whether you like painting or decorating, we could use your help. If you are interested, please contact our Community Engagement Director at 559-293-4533.
- Pray for us. This is the most valued contribution you can give us and the men, women, and children we serve. Our desire is to continue to stand in the gap for the lost and hurting in our community. And helping them to discover hope in Christ is the first step.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Dildine'.

Matthew Dildine
Chief Executive Officer



None of us have had a perfect earthly father. But through Jesus we have been adopted, and our Father is perfect. Romans 8:15 says, “The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

A Father's Story of God's Persistence

Like so many children of alcoholic parents, his father's obsession with drinking left a deep void in Gilbert's heart. His parents' divorce at age 10 was the start of a downward spiral that seemed to negatively affect every aspect of his life. Four years later he and his older brother moved in with their father. Now ages 14 and 16, they discovered that living there meant no rules or boundaries. He recalls “I could stay out all night if I wanted to.” Seeking for anyone he could cling to, Gilbert soon started to look up to some of the guys in their neighborhood. He recalls “One of them, who was a few years older than me, was doing cocaine. When he offered me my first hit, I thought it was cool. Eventually I got my older brother started as well, which is something I really regret.” His life had no direction or purpose.

By the time he hit his late teens, he was no stranger to regular drug use or jail time. In the midst of the chaos, Gilbert recalls that at age twenty, two major events occurred in his life. First, his son was born. That same year as he was learning the value a son could have on his life, he was introduced to another son that would eventually change everything for him as well. Jesus. While doing jail time, he started to attend church services with some others he knew there. It was there that he accepted Jesus into his heart, but He did not become a real part of his life until almost 20 years later. Gilbert shares today, “I spent the next 18 years running from Him. You are never really the same after He comes into your life.” But God was not done with Gilbert yet. “God was always with me, urging me along. ‘Come on, son. You're better than this.’” His life continued to be defined by positive seasons of jobs and staying clean, only to be followed by another drug relapse and jail time.

Gilbert's face beams each time he speaks of his son. “When I was 27, I came back from another jail stint and realized that my son was used to me not being around all the time. He knew I was going to go back to jail. And I didn't like that at all.” In 2016, Gilbert had a high-paying job, a house, and several cars. “I celebrated my success by getting wrapped up again in drugs. When I relapsed, I didn't relapse with little. I relapsed with a lot.” Through all of this, he gained the resources needed to purchase large amounts of drugs, soon becoming a regular dealer and eventually was arrested. His son was now a teenager and was becoming more and more aware of the consequences of his father's choices, on both of them.

Over the next two years, God would gently lead him on a path that led to the doors of the Fresno Rescue Mission. In 2018, while doing another stint in jail, Gilbert recalls feeling worthless, with no hope or purpose. He was facing incredible disappointment in himself because he had missed his son's high school graduation. It was then that Gilbert finally stopped running and fully surrendered his whole life to Jesus. “I always considered myself a strong-willed person. But I've learned to surrender my will. In the program (at Fresno Rescue Mission), I've done nothing but embrace everything we do here: the counseling, chapel, the classes. God was always with me, urging me along. And through my life getting better, I can help someone else. Especially my son.” Continuing his involvement with the Fresno Rescue Mission through working at Lanna Coffee in downtown Fresno, he is growing consistently and discovering his life-purpose through God. As a result, he is slowly healing his relationship with his son, discovering what it means to be the father God intended.

“ God was
always with me,
urging me along.
‘Come on, son.
You're better
than this.’ ”

Gilbert constantly shares that his story can be summed up by Romans 8:28: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

It's because of the prayers, hard work, and donations of so many involved with the Fresno Rescue Mission that fathers like Gilbert get the chance to change the course of their lives and the generations that follow. Together we are making a difference.



GETTING INVOLVED

Acts 2:42-47 describes God's people creating community despite all their differences. This community would create the foundation of the church. At Fresno Rescue Mission, we focus on creating community that facilitates life transformation. And we need you.



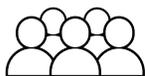
Individual

God has gifted us each uniquely so that we can help create transformational change through Jesus Christ. Do you have a skill you can teach? Are you interested in leading a Bible study? Our team is always excited to help individuals become involved in the mission.



Small Group

Small groups and families can volunteer to serve our guests through our daily food service. You can also schedule a tour or organize a donation drive for canned goods or other items.



Church or Business

Large groups or corporations have many opportunities to create community with our men, women, and children. You can volunteer as a group, take a tour, and go in-depth with our mission by scheduling a service opportunity such as, sponsor a meal or a adopt a room.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

If you are interested in volunteering please apply on our website at <https://fresnorm.org/get-involved/> or reach out to the volunteer staff at (559) 268-0839 for any additional information.

FRESNORESCUEMISSION, INC.

To mail a gift:

P. O. Box 1422, Fresno CA 93716-1422
Phone: (559) 268-0839

FRM THRIFT STORE AND CARS
181 E. Sierra, Fresno CA 93710
Phone: (559) 440-0870



Please remember the Fresno Rescue Mission in your will or trust.

Need Help?

COMMUNITY CARE – 315 G Street
24-Hour Emergency Services
Case Management
Pre-Program Assessments
Phone: (559) 444-0451



Register to play or sign up for a sponsorship on our website!

Fall Celebration Banquet October 22, 2019



Tickets are available on our website!