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That Day: A Story of Great Rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ

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That Day: THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

SOUND CUE 1000 Opening song: "Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For"
[Lights down on musician, main stage lights up]

DAN: Can we get to the point, please? I hate wasting time. First off, I *am* deeply sorry for your loss. We weren't close, at least initially. 'Til a year ago, we were just coworkers. But, we became friends when... Look, I don't know what I'm doing here, speaking at a funeral - I'm not a pastor. Just a business guy. But, his wife asked me to say a few words. So, I took some notes and I'll make a deal with you: I'll tell you my story. But, [whispers intently] *pay attention*. When you hear it and do the math, you'll be dead certain you don't have any time to waste, either.

#1 - we all have this one day... *that day* we know our hard work will be recognized. So, we work hard, sacrifice, and go for it. [reads] 4 four hours is not enough sleep - but as a Christian, I don't believe God is glorified or impressed with laziness or mediocrity. That's why I'm willing to burn the midnight oil and beat the rising sun. I'm thorough, competent, deal-maker, a *provider*. 40 years... a long time to wait to get what's coming to me. But, today ' it'll all be worth it: once I close the *Wiederman* deal. 90... In **90** days, Mr. Derek Hogan - Hogan, Jeter, & White will present me, his "point man", with a very large bonus check. I'll turn some heads in the board room - be taking home three times what I gross right now.

SOUND CUE 1001 SPIRIT: [a deeper, deliberate voice] "How much is enough?"

DAN: [wildly angry, panicked] "SIX MONTHS!!!"

[calmly, to the audience] Can we start over? We haven't been formally introduced. I'm Dan. Daniel Scott Matthewson, w/ Hogan, Jeter, and White - software solutions for your business logistics needs? Anyway, I'm Dan and I'm not crazy. But, for *six months*... this voice - sometimes it sounds like the voice of God Himself - sometimes, I wonder if it's not "the other guy" has been *tormenting* me in my head... [voice interrupts]

CUE GROUP 1001 SPIRIT: "Oh Daniel... Not your head. Your HEART"

DAN: [Continues on heels of "heart", at the voice] It seems to interrupt when I'm just inches from making meaningful progress. But, *not this day*.

Let me rewind the clock back to 4:45 AM.

CUE GROUP 1001: *phone buzzing*

DAN: This is me - the early riser. This is Susan, my wife. She gets to sleep in a little... later. I'm not bitter. (smiles) No time for that. Big deal and I've got plenty of fires to put out along the way! But, I'm armed and ready: Tablet? Got it. *Wiederman* file? Got it. Getting out the door without waking up the kids? Got it. Breakfast? "Negotiable. We'll see..."

CUE GROUP 1001 SPIRIT: There've been a lot of "we'll see's" lately, Dan. Janie's third grade open house? Mark's first ball game? Jeffrey's kindergarten production? "Negotiables?" "We'll see."

DAN: Life happens - Deal in Denver. I apologized to Janie. Ancient history. Mark had a tee-ball exhibition. I am not my father - not going to

miss a varsity *inning* when he's playing *real* ball in high school. As for Jeffrey, the Bible says "if any would not work, neither should he eat. 2 Thess. 3:10. If Daddy wasn't busy closing the Kensington deal that day, Jeffrey wouldn't be in that excellent, *Christian* kindergarten program. [for an audience member's pardon] Pretty black and white, isn't it?

CUE GROUP 1001 SPIRIT: The Bible you used to read is pretty black & white...

DAN: I've not been "*in the word*" as much as I used to, but I've got the word in me; memorized more scripture than most guys have ever read and this kind of opportunity doesn't come along every day, in *this* economy! Wiederman? is a *God* thing; **[SELF CUE]** after today, a lot of these "we'll see's" will just be "See?!". Can we get back to the point? [settling down]

SCENE 2

[sits on chair as if driving] Atlanta has imported some of the worst drivers from all over the world. I just can't believe they're all on the same road at 5:15AM.. we're all going the same DIRECTION can we move please? (Horn honks)

Big day today - biggest deal, ever. 2PM - Wiederman Worldwide. I'll give you the short version: companies buy raw materials from India, China, wherever. They make stuff. Ship it to stores and you and I buy it. But, what happens when their supplier in India runs out of materials? Or, the dollar gets weaker in China or their shipping charges go through the roof in Europe? All in the same day.. [tritone] See, our software helps them manage that - makes their lives easier. Makes your life easier. You're welcome. That's why *Wiederman* needs us. [double horn - sighs] Only thing standing between me and that deal is about 8 hours, some pesky tech support issues, 5000 minor interruptions, and a meeting I have with Mary Lou Bernet. Direct report of mine gone from strong team player, to "so not cutting it" *overnight*. If I weren't a Christian, [out the window:] Quit texting, the light is green moron... [back:] I'd have cut her loose already. Shows up tired/late all the time, no good ideas, why show up for strategy meeting if you're just going to mope? Waste of time.

GROUPED CUE 1006 SPIRIT: Her youngest child's been sick for 4 months, Dan.

DAN: I understand, but don't make that *the team's* problem. Real world. On my clock, there's one number: "NOW" - Clock doesn't stop because her life has a train wreck. Her production *is* her responsibility. "Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." Ephesians. Five sixteen.

GROUPED CUE 1006 SPIRIT: "but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. (KJV) [ALTERNATIVELY - but, in humility, consider others better than yourselves." (NIV)]

DAN: Philippians! ['rebuking' the voice] Thank you! You stay here in my car in and I'll go to *work*. I'm talking to a *voice again*.. yelling.. I'm not crazy - *you* heard it too. Finally silence *that* interruption only to walk straight into..

SCENE 3

DAN: [in Joe's voice XDSR]: "Awwwww - Mr. Matthewson!"

DAN: [as Dan] Every day. Joe, - (struggles to recall) TheShoeshineguy. Not his real last name - I didn't take notes. Rail thin black fella about 60

years old, though he looks like he could be plus or minus 10 years. Shines shoes in the building lobby from 6AM 'to God knows when. Doesn't seem like a lot of formal education, but that guy *knows* the Bible. Just wish he knew it a little quieter at 5:45. (rushes past, staring at cell phone) "Good morning, Joe, hayadoin?"

JOE [Dan continues in Joe's voice]: "Can't complain, Mr. Matthewson. Lord been good to you this mawnin'?" (3:18/7:20) Tascam 424

DAN: "It's 6 in the morning, Joe! But, sure, God is good allthetime & allthetime God is good. [SELF CUE GROUP 1008] (aside:) Ever push the up button on the elevator more hoping it'll show up faster?"

GROUPED CUE 1008 - DING!

DAN: Playin my song, Joe -gotta go!

JOE: "Well, the Lawd bless you and keep you, Mr. Matthewson! His face..."

DAN: The Lord bless you, too and keep you... [aside] *outta my way...* [arrives]

SCENE 4

Finally get to my office - corner office, 28th floor - and when I walk in, there's Juanita, from the cleaning crew.

"Juanita, I thought I asked you to be done before I got in."

[in Juanita's voice] "Oh, I'm sorry Mr. Mathewson, I trying, pero I come in early, ju come in earlier, so I come in más earlier, ju come in MUCHO MÁS earlier... How I keep up weeth that? Howiss your family?!"

I want to tell Chatty Kathelina they're just as good as they were *yesterday when she asked*, but, I'm a Christian... So I smile, & "they're excellent" & get busy *ignoring her*. Juanita is dusting the furniture, when she walked over and picked up a picture from my desk.

[in Juanita's voice] "Oh, Mr. Matthewson, your family is so super nice - your children are just beautiful!"

"Thank you... *Working...*"

[in Juanita's voice] "And your wife was so super nice to me and my children at the company picnic last summer. I tell her my little girl wants to be *just like her* when she grows up, and you know what? My Gloria is accepted for Georgia Tech in the Fall! Go Yackets! Her admission letter was such wonderful news after such a hard time. It was so hard for her to concentrate on school after my husband, Carlos, died years ago."

I'm sure I at least half listened to her and probably mumbled something remotely sympathetic, but I'm focused on my notes on *the Wiederman* contract and the nagging in my gut that something's... She got the message - she put the picture back on my desk, and on the way out the door: "Mr. Matthewson, you're a good man, and I want you to know *I pray for you, and for your family... Always.*" And she left.

Really?! I've got the deal of the decade to close in less than 8 hours and I just shooed away my greatest spiritual cheerleader? 'wrong with me? Wish I could figure out what's wrong with this Wiederman deal. Good deal - *fair deal*, win, WIN deal. Derek Hogan is so calculating, shrewd, controlling. Yet, perfectly fine with my signature on every last line with this one? Biggest deal in company history, and I fly solo on it? Whatever. I deserve

it. I've been on point with everything, now if I can just get Gerry Baker's technical team to fix these issues with the software we've already sold to Weiderman local, we can finally close the deal everyone's been waiting for: Wiederman *global*. 42 offcs. 6 timezones. Big bucks.

SCENE 5 - BIBLE, BOSS, & BAKER

Then as I'm going over some of the numbers, my phone buzzes with a notification from "Stay in the Word", devotional app. I paused, looked at it, all I could think of was how much I've let the... *noise of life*, distract me from the Word of life. "That's gotta change. *Today, Dan.*"
(3:30/10:50) TASCAM 426

GROUPED CUE 1009 SPIRIT: Do you remember when the best part of your day was the first part, walking through those pages?

DAN: [sincerely, more calmly] Hmm. It was a simpler, less noisy season of life. Show up early enough for some uninterrupted "preparation" time. Dive into scripture first thing... Of course, there was less pressure at my old company. But, this is Hogan, Jeter, and White. And, nobody here's giving awards here for "least productive".

GROUPED CUE 1009 SPIRIT: You've been productive financially. What about spiritually?

DAN: You gonna to hang me for not doing my devotions more regularly?

GROUPED CUE 1009 SPIRIT: [soothing] Daniel. [pause] "Doing your devotions." Remember when it was "spending time with the Lord" When did it become a checklist item to be "done"?

DAN: [pleading] Is that You, Lord or the counterfeit?! ' *Focus!* 60K of this bonus will fund 2 of our church's missionaries for 2 years! In Jesus' name, let me do my work.

DAN: [STOP SOUND CUE AFTER APPLE "TRITONE"] Then, all of a sudden - [imitating Derek Hogan] "You okay, Dan?" [looks toward office doorway] Good morning, Derek. [to audience] it was my boss, *the boss*, Derek Hogan. Never to be out-dressed, distinguished features, jet black hair, prominent eyebrows, measured smile with perfect teeth. Everything he touched turned to a wad of cash, including Hogan, Jeter, and White.

Incredibly likeable in public. But, behind closed doors? Not so much. Praying for him. "Derek - Took me six months to sell Wiederman on trying our software in his Atlanta office. But now, we're having issues... support issues... that violate clauses... that damage trust. If Gerald Baker and our tech support team can't support this one measly office, how is Wiederman going to trust me at 2PM to sign a worldwide deal?

Derek Hogan? Answer for everything. [imitating Hogan] "You remember when I first recruited you away from that loser outfit three years ago? What did I tell you? 'Bucks is the name of the game.' Well, "bucks" is still the name of the game. And this'll be the biggest bucks we've evah brought in, thanks to you. Technical support is a bunch of bull. Companies that size, have IT departments - they work out glitches all day long. It's what they're *hired to do*. Tech support clauses are just a *license to whine*. They'll change their minds about the requirements after they sign the contract, blame us, we'll go back and forth, the problem will get solved

or the lawyers will clean it up in the end. It's how our industry works. It's how we get paid, and you're gonna get paid more than you've ever made on this deal alone if you don't lose focus. I'll handle Baker. You focus on the deal. 2 PM. Bucks, Dan. Bucks. Today is *that* day you been living for." (2:50/13:40) TASCAM 427

Look I got his point, but I've still got this feeling in my gut that the problems with our local install are bigger than our team is letting on and I got no [SELFQ] time for technical surprises to pop up in this meeting.

So, I drop my own bomb in Gerald Baker's voicemail box. "If my deal is on the line, *your job* is on the line. You want to lose your work visa? Go bik to Southiffrika. FIX IT, Baker!" Slam the phone down just time for my face to face with Mary Lou Bernet. Look, I'm a Christian, I've got sympathy for her - I even prayed for her daughter.

SCENE 6 - MARY LOU & BIG NEWS FOR YOU

SOUND CUE 1012 SPIRIT: Son.

DAN: God, who hears all prayers, knows who I was praying for. Anyway, she's got to pull it together? [SELF KILL SOUND CUE] This, too, shall pass. She's not in my office for more than 3 minutes when Derek Hogan appears at my doorway, envelope in his hand - "Sorry for the interruption. [nods] 'Mary Lou.' Dan, before you go any farther, will you give this your immediate attention?" In what seemed to be one motion he not only handed me the envelope, but smiled at Mary Lou with his lips, called her weak and worthless with his eyes, and was gone. Now *that's* multitasking! Mary Lou tries to finish her story, breaks down crying in my office about her two year old kid and some disease I can't even pronounce, just as I'm reading the sticky note on the papers in the envelope: "You've passed every test so far. One more home run and you're on your way to really big things. If you can close the deal this afternoon, sign these papers and claim your prize!"

It was a contract offering me a full partnership in the software division - Hogan, Jeter, White, & Mathewson! [building] "We'll see... we'll see... WE'LL SEE... [pauses, holds up contract triumphantly] SEE?!?! Praise God.

Meanwhile... "Mary Lou - I understand you've got a lot on your mind, but you've just been half the woman you used to be - I need you to focus. Today is the day." She just gets worse, bawling about how her kid's illness has put a strain on her marriage, hasn't spoken to her husband in three days, tadaa, tadaa, tadaa. I'm thinking "you're a woman of faith, pray it over and pull it together - you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you." I thought that. But what came out was more like "Sometimes, you just gotta "give it to God" and take one for the team."

She looks up at me, grits her teeth and gives me the "Of all people, I expected a little compassion from you, Dan. The rest of these people are just *sharks*. Now, you are, too." Mary Lou... I'm sorry! Too late. [explodes] **No!** Not today. Not *this* deal. Need to focus. Clear my head... Head for my car, know right where I'm going -[self cue] Manny's Deli. 11 o'clock, no lunch rush yet. "Big day, Mr. Mathewson, won't be long, now!" I can eat, buy Mary Lou a nice take out lunch and apologize for being an idiot just now. And I AM going to read my bible, maybe GOD can tell me why my signature is so important on so many pieces of paper today. What's with

this deal - *is it Satan standing in my way or the Lord directing my path?*
How do I position this with Wiederman - my word, my promises, my support,
my signature... (3:30/17:10) TASCAM 428
[GROUP CUE 1013: Thunder & trumpets]

And, then it happened. A flash of lightning, trumpets And, I distinctly heard a distant voice say "Away from me, I never knew you..." no less than several million times in what seemed to be only a moment. Then, it's all bright again and ' the air tasted... like peace. Next thing I hear is that voice..."

SCENE 7 - WELCOME TO HEAVEN

GROUP CUE 1013 SPIRIT: "This way, Dan. To the Bema seat."

DAN: "You? For a moment, I thought I might be in heaven, until you start pestering me again... But, this time, as He spoke, I could feel a quickening in my heart, like I haven't felt since I was a kid at that retreat I went to. Could this really be the voice of the Holy Spirit, after all?!"

GROUP CUE 1013 SPIRIT:

SPIRIT: Yes, Dan, I have dwelled within you since the time you first confessed with your mouth that Christ is Lord and believed in your heart...

DAN: [finishing with Him] that God raised Him from the dead? The Bema Seat? The Bema! I recalled a verse from 2 Corinthians chapter 5: "that we'd all appear at the judgment seat of Christ to receive rewards for things done in his body, according to what we'd done, whether good or bad." The Bema is the seat they'd sit on in Roman times to pass judgment at the end of a race, contest or case. To make sure everyone "competes according to the rules..." 2 Tim 2.5? Which means Christ Himself is about to rewarded us or disqualify us... *Disqualified?*

GROUP CUE 1013 SPIRIT: No, Dan, not like that. The Great White throne is not for you - your debt has been paid by the shed blood of Christ. This judgment seat is where rewards are given to the children of God.

SOUND CUE - STOP AUTO SOUND & SWITCH TO MANUAL CUES (4:20/21:48)

DAN: Got it: Everyone who hadn't been cast out of the presence of the Lord at the White Throne judgment was here, among the forgiven. Once sinful men, qualified to stand in the presence of holy God by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It was as justified, forgiven saints that we would face the Lord of all creation.

At the Spirit's direction, I find myself among millions filing into this stadium. Massive, fearsome angels usher us to our seats. *[Ad lib son of Noah?] Next to me a guy introduces himself as Timolaus Germanicus. [slow & loud] "Nice to meet you, Daniel Scott Matthewson (pause) Hogan, Jeter, and White." I know. I said it. [as Timolaus] "Zat is quite a name, Daniel Scott Mathewson Hogan Jeter and White, from *when* do you come?" I had never been asked *when* I was from. And then it hits me: I'm sitting in the presence of everyone throughout history who has ever "walked in the footsteps of the faith of our father, Abraham". Romans, 4.12? (4:30/18:10)

Timolaus and I make small talk about the Lord, our lives and fires we had to put out. He seems like he's got it together. Knows his trade, loves the

Lord, serves those in need. Got the idea he might have been murdered for his faith. Made me wonder if Idda had what it takes to suffer for Christ unto death. Timolaus says it's "Zis is not important. To be faithful where ze Lord puts us, wiz what He gives is the greatest matter." Wow... "Found *faithful*"? Wonder if that'll be me...

SOUND CUE 1017 SPIRIT: "We'll see..."

SCENE 8 - HOUSEKEEPING

DAN: [sighs, laughing] Well, the physical appearing of the Lord and the Father Himself were surrounded by huge celebration - singing, cheering and millions of angels and a set of winged creatures chanting "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!" As we all joined in, I now understood the meaning of "joyful noise"! TASCAM 431

~~{Dan exits USL as Worship Leader/team enters, SR. Worship Song: "Agnus Dei" (Third Day) Worship leader/team exits SR immediately. Dan enter USL}~~

A MASSIVE angel - Gabriel, strode to center stage and read from a scroll:

"All who are here, your sins have been forgiven separated from you as far as east is from west - never to be remembered against you for salvation!"

DAN: I had this thought - "why do angels always speak in British accents?"

GABRIEL: "It's not British, it's Angelic. The Brits merely copied it from the heavenly hosts. Can we get back to the point?"

DAN: My bad. I'll try to think more quietly... #awkward. [ToDAY]

GABRIEL: Today you shall account for your lives and receive rewards. We will all see your lives played out in living color. But, sin cannot exist here in heaven. Therefore, when you see a portion of someone's life in dim light, faded colors, and blurred edges, it is a moment of sin you are watching. Only they will truly know what sin is being brought to account. It will be weighed, burned, and some of their reward will be appropriately forfeited. Thus sayeth the Lord.

Gabriel stepped aside and Jesus rose to the center of the platform.

SOUND CUE 1018: LION'S ROAR

JESUS: Welcome! I commanded you to store up treasures here... At last, the day has come to rightly award them to you all! Today's judgment isn't about the mere quantity of your works, rather the quality and will be based on three criteria:

1. **Dependence** - was it built on a foundation of full surrender to me? All that was built on human effort will be burned away by the fire of truth.
2. Second, **stewardship** - How well you handled that which I gave you. You will not be compared to each other - rather the gifts, time, and opportunities given to you alone, and how faithfully you used them.
3. Thirdly, we'll look at your **motives**. Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Father looks at the heart. So we will examine the things you did & the motives with which you did them. If they were done with an earthly reward in mind - you have already received it. No further reward will be required. 3:30/21:40

The remaining result from the fire of judgment shall be eternal reward. All of you will be glorified in me and receive your glorified body, but there will be varying degrees of glory. Some of you will walk with me in garments of white or receive a white stone with their new name written on it. Ultimately, stewards who proved faithful to me in their own lives will be given authority over others, cities, provinces, even nations.

"In addition to these great treasures, some of you will receive crowns. I will be giving out **the Crown of Righteousness** to those who lived for this day, eagerly awaiting my glorious appearing. **The Crown of Glory** will be given to those who shepherded my people - not only to pastors, but often to those who gave service to my people without pay - out of love for them and for me. **The Crown of Life** will be given to those who were persecuted for my sake. **The Crown of Faith** will be given to those who trusted in me to the end. And the **Soul Winner's crown** to those who led others to me!

"Furthermore, some of you will receive a verbal commendation. I will say to you, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' My highest award.

What are you waiting for?! Let's begin!"

Gabriel returned and announced the first name by pounding his staff on the stage three times.

SCENE 9 - Let the Judgments Begin

SOUND CUE 1019 "Timolaus Gerimanicus of Lugdunum"

DAN: An angel swooped down from the gallery and carried my friend to the base of the platform. Timolaus walked up, and stood before Jesus. They began to talk - and an amazing thing happened. It was like we all stepped into some virtual reality; not only could we hear what was said wherever we were, but we were all able to see Timolaus' life - from the inside, out. We could feel his hopes, fears, dreams, passions, hear his private thoughts, even scroll through trails of people his actions later impacted. 3rd century AD Lyon, France. Poor man. A smith by trade. Gave what he had to the poor believers around him. For professing Christ as Lord, soldiers had his skin peeled from his body by instruments made from seashells, placed on a rack, where his bones were broken and dislocated. Then he was thrown to wild animals and as they attacked him, he cried out, "My name is Timolaus, and I belong to Jesus!"

What problems did I have? What real fires did I have to put out? This is true suffering; yet his courage and faith were astounding. This man is my brother who has suffered like this for the name of Christ.

Jesus rose from his throne, lifted Timolaus from the floor, and announced, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" In a blinding flash, Timolaus received his new, glorified body. At last, we could see him as he really was - an uncluttered reflection of Christ-likeness! Jesus gave Timolaus the Crowns of Righteousness, Glory, Life and Faith - he got all five! He was dressed in the gems and treasures Christ gave him. Finally, the Lord put one hand on his back and announced:

"This is my beloved Timolaus Germanicus, in whom I am well pleased."

(4:10/25:50+music)

And billions of us cheered him back to his place and Gabriel called out:

SOUND CUE 1020 "Edward Kimball"

SCENE 10 - EDWARD KIMBALL

DAN: Edward taught Sunday School at a church in N.E. when he met a foul mouthed grade school dropout who worked at a shoe store. Dwight, who grew greatly under God's influence and later influenced a young man named Frederick. Frederick became a minister and mentored a young man. J.W., who became a pastor and evangelist. He started an outreach to professional baseball players and influenced an outfielder- Billy, who invited a man named Mordecai to preach a crusade in Charlotte. Mordecai gave an invitation to some people to "give their lives to Jesus Christ." One of those boys was also named Billy... Billy Graham. Jesus rose from his seat, turned Edward around to the crowd and said, "everyone who is here today due to the impact of Edward, either directly or indirectly, stand" - and around the coliseum nearly a billion people stood, and Jesus said "behold your harvest!". Edward fell to his knees. Jesus said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Be glorified!" Before he flew back to his place. Jesus presented him with a smooth, white stone. Edward examined the name on it, he burst into hysterical laughter. Whatever the joke was, only Edward and Jesus were in on it. And he flew back to his seat.

Thousands more judgments went on across time in no apparent order - statesmen, beggars, composers, nobodies - in this, I realized - even though God longs to reward us, He is no respecter of men.

SOUND CUE 1021 "Joseph Ray Robinson"

SCENE 11 - JOE

Joseph was born in the American south during the depression - not an easy life. As a black man, he was not permitted to attend school, but taught himself to read by studying the Bible. The boy had memorized 2/3 of the New Testament, *accidentally!* Lack of higher education prevented him from getting any great job - but he supported his family by working faithfully as a chauffer, delivering papers, and shining shoes at an office build... ..Joe Theshoeshineguy!!! I didn't recognize him at first...

Jesus invited everyone in the stadium who was there because of Joe's influence to stand, and I saw over 150 come to their feet, including a bunch that I recognized from my office building! I thought, "here's a guy who this morning I had no time for, and now I doubt that I am worthy to shine his shoes!" Jesus said, "Well done, good and faithful servant! Be glorified!" And Joe flew back to his place with his treasures.

It got worse. Or should I say, "better".

SOUND CUE 1022 "Juanita Perez de Cuellar"

SCENE 12 - JUANITA

DAN: My cleaning lady... I never really dedicated a lot of bandwidth to caring about Juanita. She was always keeping me from my work. But, I learned in heaven that she had lost her husband - crushed by an iron girder on a job site and was cheated out of an insurance settlement because of a language barrier. Still, she had raised her four kids alone, working three jobs. What stood out about her were the purest, simplest, most sincere prayers I'd ever heard. Every angel who walked before the throne of God knew the sound of her voice. (4:27/30:30+music)

{ Señor ame a los que odian el mal; y protégé la vida de sus fieles, y librellos de manos de los impíos." Tiny 2 BR apartment...She had one full wall covered with photos and news clippings from floor to ceiling where she prayed for people by name and by need - her pastor, the President, the

sick, the military, she'd even photocopied photos from peoples desks on every floor of my office building. When I saw how much she prayed for me and my family - I realized in some ways she had more of an impact on my kids lives than I had! And she was glorified, and went back to her place.

[regretful angry, to the audience] So... much... wasted... time...

Before I knew it, a half million more judgments passed before me, until:

SOUND CUE 1023 "Daniel Scott Mathewson"
(END SHORT VERSION - LIGHTS FULL BLACK)

SCENE 13 - MEET JESUS

Ten steps. Not very big steps. But, with the Lord Jesus at the top of them, they were 10 feet tall. His face... *Power-love mercy, strength, majesty... Holy... so holy...* One look in his eyes: He showed me a tree in my backyard. Then zoomed in to introduce me every molecule in every branch, cone, and needle - by name. Then, showed me every tree in my backyard, followed by every tree in Georgia. My God... The depths of your knowledge are truly unfathomable. I've worshipped you as too small for too long. Ever meet someone famous and immediately blurt out something stupid? Here was my chance: "Lord... Lord... You look nothing like James Caveizel!"

JESUS: "Welcome Daniel." He hugged me for 22,361 years (give or take). "Let's examine your life and see your rewards! I gave you 13,721 days, 10,023 of them came after you placed your faith in me. You were given talents, skills & knowledge which helped you earn financial resources... I gave you spiritual gifts - 2 in particular, and we will see how you used them. You had a wife and children, ancestors, and relationships (or *potential* relationships). All of these were assets I entrusted to you for building my kingdom. Today you will give account for what you did with them and I will reward accordingly. Do you understand?"

DAN [to Jesus]: "Yes, Lord."

"Lives are like buildings. Some are made from metals and stone, others from wood and thatch. Everyone was given choices from what they would build their lives - worthless, flimsy materials, or strong, enduring things? When you trusted in me, at age 10, I became the foundation. From there, I gave you my power and many decisions & opportunities to build on that foundation. Right now, I'm going to test the quality of your whole life with fire, Daniel, and burn away all the worthless fluff, the lies, the sin, and leave only the things that have eternal value."

"Sometimes, you did great things in my power, which will endure. Other times, you did wicked things or good things with selfish motives/your timing - same difference. Self sufficiency. Sometimes you put money in the plate at church so your guest or the man next to you would see what you did, and be impressed. - You got what you sought, but no further reward. Other times, you gave because you saw a need, and you did it when no one else noticed - long term reward. Understand?" (5:15/35:45+music)

"Yes"

"Ready to begin?"

[*confidently*] "No... [realizes] Yes." [Looks off toward "screen"]

SCENE 14 - MISS MATTIE & MICKEY

As we watched my life, there were many clear, colorful, moments in between many, faded, dim, black and white moments of sin. I could recall them for a rushing moment, but then they were gone, as if they were burning away from my being! The truth would set me free. But, this was not "cheap grace" as one might know it. **THERE WAS A HUGE PILE OF TREASURE TO MY RIGHT.** As I each sin played out, the fire of truth burned some of my pile to ash. My eternal 401K dwindled into a 201K, a 101K, a... *that's not okay!*

Miss Mattie... When my Dad walked out on us, she took care of my brother and I so Mom could work full time. She taught us this game - "Now, Daniel - you and your brother run as fast as you can toward that tree and when I scream 'repent', you turn and run back as fast as you can back into my arms... When you repent, it means you turn away from your sin, Daniel. Whenever you repent, you'll find God waiting with open arms. Understand?"

I'm ten years old. Sunday school retreat. Mickie Valentino "Dan... you seen tuhbe knocking yissself out try'na impress God wit how well buhaved you aww. You unnastand na differince bi'ween wuhks an' grace? Wuhks says there's some imaginary line... I's cawld "goot enough" annif you do enough goot stuff in yuh life to get ooldtaway ovah dat line, you gote'a heaven. Grace says onee Jesus kuhbbe dat good. Jesus told da people unless thay wiz betta din da Pharisees, they'd never get inta heaven. In udda werds - ain't nuttin you can do ti make God love you. Jesus nevah said "clean up ya act and then come follow me." He said "I pait for yaw sin, repent, follow me, an I'll clean you up." You unnastan?

"Jesus - I don't understand everything, but know I can never be good enough to save myself from sin, but You did. And, you died. And, I surrender to that." And, my spirit came to life!

SCENE 15 - LESSON 1

Lesson 1: WE'RE CALLED TO WORSHIP GOD WITHOUT RIVALRS. Jesus loves all people and He wants to be their only God. A lot of times, Jesus was all I worshipped. Other times, I gave in to a rival god: self esteem.

Sixth grade... Me and Jimmy. He was a red-headed freckle faced new kid just moved here from Rocky Mount, NC. This is the park near my house where me and Jimmy used to play. Those other kids - you saw how they rejected me once my parents got divorced, right? I just wanted to be "in" with them again. They asked if I wanted to play baseball with them. I said, "Sure, we'd love to play with you guys!" But they said, "No, Daniel... We don't want him, we just want you." So I looked at Jimmy, and said, "well..." And Jimmy said, "Oh, go ahead, I need to do something at home, anyway." So I left, never really played with him again. Every time I put "approval of man" over compassion for others, my pile got a little smaller. But, God was up to something... Conforming me to the image of Christ.

SCENE 16 - LESSON 2

Lesson 2: CALLED TO INVEST. ACCOUNTABLE FOR OUR INVESTMENTS. Never underestimate the eternal value of a relational investm't. 16. Junior year of High School, this is me in the David Hasselhoff hair... (See, I had hair. I just squandered it.) I did join our church youth group. *Dave Phillips*. Youth Leader. He not only answered every little question I grilled him with, he actually took me under his wing and appointed me to "pastor" a group of 8 students including that shy girl there - Sandy. I introduced

her to everyone and shared the gospel with her. "You're far more sinful than you dared imagine & far more loved than you ever dared hope". Sandy surrendered her life to Christ and grew so much in the study I led. In college, she led in her campus ministry, she led a bunch of people to Jesus, and some of them impacted others... Sandy got married to a great Christian man, had three kids. All of them became followers of Jesus, influencing others for Christ! I was stunned by the impact that one high school kid could have on eternity as I saw the compounding interest of my investment in Sandy. Jesus said, "Daniel, hold out your hand"

He placed a tiny gem in it. [as Jesus] "Thank you for pouring your life into Sandy and for making a difference for my Kingdom!" It was beautiful and if I'm not mistaken, it appeared to be growing in brightness... An appreciating asset!

What's better... I could be imagining this, because I don't have chapter or verse, but there was a feeling of God's glory that I could feel shining through the gem and into my soul. Like the more souls we led to Jesus, the more of Jesus we'd experience in eternity.

SCENE 17 - LESSON 3

Lesson 3 from the Bema Seat: EQUIPPED TO DO, ACCOUNTABLE FOR "DONE". Power and prosperity are given to us for God's glory and on behalf of those people and things He puts under our care. Not for us alone or because we deserve it. I had some great treasures - decisions I'd made, opportunities I ran with, tough relationships I'd leaned into - that lasted through the fire. As a giver, He often trusted me w/ money to use for His kingdom and people to love for His glory. But, I think this pile burns fiercest when I slip into using the people and loving the money for my kingdom and glory. I didn't recognize when it snuck up on me in its disguise: "progress". Jean Mischell was a friend of my dad's from their college days. He gave me my first big break a few years out of college. Had a gift for training and nurturing people, which helped him start Mischell & Associates back in the 80s when everyone needed computers but was terrified to touch them. But, there was more - Jean was a giver. He just loved to help people. Gave them time, energy, wisdom, 2nd chances. In heaven, I found in tough times he even skipped his salary check so me and my team could get our bonuses. Twice...

Over the years, his company went from a small business to a couple hundred million in revenue. We also watched me develop quite a bulldog approach to tracking down new clients and closing the deal. Man, I was good. I could spot the customer's need a mile off and steer them straight to the dotted line.

But, as I closed bigger deals, I met bigger guys - CFOs, CIOs, CEOs, guys living leagues above me. A couple of them belonged to 3 different country clubs because they made a pact they'd never join 4! I thought, "I don't need *that* much, but a little more would be nice. I and my family deserve more. More helps me do more for the Kingdom of God.. Nothing wrong with more... "Your Best Life Now?!" But when I took my eyes off of Jesus, I fell for the bait. [as Gollum] Manipulating everyone arounds me for just a precious little bit more!!!

Derek Hogan invites me to lunch... tells he'll double what Mischell's paying me. So I told Jean I was leaving. I'm sure he was hurt, but all he could talk about was how he appreciated my work ethic. Talked about what's fair,

what's customary... "Non-compete is typically about three years as an industry standard."

"I won't touch any of my old accounts for three years." We shook on it and I went to work for Hogan.

Pressure was on from day 1. Guy was never satisfied with *anyone* in that place! High standards, high quotas - but I met them, because I was *that good!* Harder I worked, the bigger the bucks. I was working 75 hours a week, but in 2 years, Susan and I went up 2 house sizes! She resented the hours, but I made up for it - bought her a \$90,000 SUV to drive the kids around in. Manicures every week. Date nights were fewer and farther between. But, box seats at the Opera with the Governor and his wife? *Before his ethics scandal, thank you. We were so BLESSED!!!*

And then one day, Hogan said he wanted me to go get the Metro Capital account." When I told him that would violate the verbal contract I'd made with Mischell, he went NUTS.

[Imitating Hogan] "A verbal contract is *no contract*. You want to go back to playing in the sand box, knock yourself out. I hired you because I thought you had potential. Now, go fetch or go home. But, quit wasting my time. Anything else?"

As I watched the Metro deal from heaven, I could see the betrayal ripped Jean Mischell's heart out. It was hard for me to look in the mirror for a few weeks, until the bonus check came in and Hogan handed me Henry Wiederman's business card and it was "on to the next". Down on earth I thought I was just... blessed - providing for my family. Storing up investments and properties that would "leave an inheritance for my children's children. Proverbs 13, 22." Sometimes, I'd get so focused on that, I'd misuse my power and possessions in ways that cost me piles of my own eternal inheritance.

SCENE 18 - LESSON 4 GRACE AND OBEDIENCE

Lesson 4: CALLED BY GRACE ACCOUNTABLE FOR WORKS. When it comes to salvation, there's no substitute for grace. But w/rewards, no substitute for obedience.

Jesus entrusted me ' with two gifts - giving and teaching. Here's the breakdown: I'd been given financial resources in the top 1/2 of 1% of wealth in all of human history. But, leveraged so much of it for my kingdom and glory instead of God's, that here I had amassed a small fortune... that started as a large fortune. Teaching? Often, I used that gift to build up others and God's kingdom. Sometimes, to build up my own. Every time I did that, It's like I left my first love.

JESUS: "Daniel... Child... You occasionally left your first love... But, your first love... never. Left. You."

DAN: "Thank you, Lord!"

Jesus placed his hands on my shoulders. I knelt there with a big jewel and a small pile of other treasure... As he said "Arise, Daniel Scott Matthewson". He didn't say "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Amazing... It was my life being reviewed and I was been rewarded, but none of it was about me... So, He turned me to face the Father and told Him all the great things He'd done through me ending with: "This is my beloved Daniel Scott Matthewson" without a, "in whom I am well pleased...". I understood. Jesus said the word and I was transformed into my new, glorified SHUT... UP!!! (Reacts to new body)
"Abs?! I've got ABS - forever!" As I flew back to my seat, I saw my kids and my wife and my friend Timolaus cheering for what Jesus did in my life. When the judgments ended, those who had received crowns flew down and laid them in front of the throne of Christ in the ultimate act of worship. Of course! Jesus prepared works for us to do, empowered us to do them, why wouldn't we give Him back the glory?! As they began to pile up around him, I stood up to reach for mine, but I didn't have one. I understood.

So, what happened? Was it a dream or a vision? Some kind of out of body experience? I don't know.

SCENE 19 - SECOND CHANCES

DAN: I do know one minute I'm in the glory of the Lord, the Father, and the Heavenly realms, next moment, it's Monday, 4:45AM and I've never felt less at home in my own bed.

SOUND CUE 1024 Phone buzzing

So, I let Susan sleep and found some space on the floor of our 450 sq. ft. walk in closet, and just laid on my face to pray the armor of God over my family and then...

"Lord, I'd rather be back there with You. But, if you have more for me to do here, I just want to do YOUR best at it... Not for me anymore... but for You and Your kingdom. I REPENT. I am poor in spirit - I need You."

SOUND CUE 1025 SPIRIT: "I will never leave you nor forsake you, Dan."

DAN: Good to hear your voice again... Immediately, confusion began to clear. It turned out this was Monday, the day for the Wiederman deal. As I left Susan a written invitation to dinner that night, "just us", I recalled that my meeting with Hogan about my concerns on the Wiederman deal happened Friday. That's when he came back with the partnership offer. There's still time to get to the bottom of this. First, some time in the word and a do over with Mary Lou Bernet.

The whole drive to work, the Spirit kept bringing a familiar face to my mind. I left a voice mail with him asking if he could help me figure something out. Ken Casey - old college roommate who got arrested for hacking the Pentagon wound up getting a job for the CIA. Why Ken?

SCENE 20 - CUP OF JOE

DAN [In Joe's voice]: Awwww Mr. Matthewson. Bright and early today, sir. The Lord been good to you this monin?"

DAN: Joseph Ray Robinson was shocked when I not only greeted him with a big bear hug and by his full name, but that for the first time, ever, I sat in his chair for a shine, then I prayed for us and hopped the elevator

to the 28th floor.

SCENE 21 - GETTING CLEAN WITH THE CLEANER

Juanita, I wanted to thank you for your prayers. But also to ask - how can I pray for you?" [in Juanita's voice]: "Oh, Mr. Matthewson. We don't need much. My children are well, my Gloria is accepted for Georgia Tech in the fall. I have three super jobs that keep the lights on."

I knew she had paid for the other three kids' education with a lot of scholarship money and a lot of overtime, but Tech didn't exactly come with a State school price tag like her other kids had.

"How about I pray that Gloria gets a full ride to Tech next fall?"

[in Juanita's voice]: "Oh, Mr. Matthewson, you are so funny... pero, I'll tell Gloria you are praying for her. She would like that very much. Gracias, Mr. Matthewson."

Two shocked faces this morning. Later that year, a dozen guys from church would secretly pool our resources and give Gloria a full ride 4 years. Go Yackets?

SCENE 22 - MARY LOU, TAKE 2

Mary Lou I've been insensitive to your situation how can I help? Shocked face number three. She went on for almost half an hour about exhausting tests, mitochondrial morphology, procedures, and flights to four different states for hospital stays and specialized treatments... I was stunned she had even showed up for work at all after all that.

Mary Lou, I need all hands on deck for this deal, but your family needs you even more. I've spoken to Marcia in HR and she's approved an additional 4 weeks paid leave of absence effective immediately. My wife and I want to drop off dinners for your family all this week and if you're not tied up at your church, come to ours this weekend. Mary Lou not only didn't have a church... or a relationship with Christ. As we talked for 45 minutes, I told her about grace and "good enough". Mary Lou prayed with me to receive Christ, *in my office*? Shocked face number 4 - Daniel Scott Matthewson.

SCENE 23 - WIEDERMAN UNDWIDS

Ken Casey left me a weird message on my cell phone - "Public record shows Derek Hogan was under investigation by the FTC 8 months ago, but I can't comment on anything further at this time..."

My heart sank. My little business deal was part of some kind of fed case. If the CIA was in any way involved with my little business deal, I didn't need to be. So, it's That Day... 2 PM. I left Henry Weiderman alone in his office and nothing in my office but my resignation letter. Free at last.

SCENE 24 - THAT DATE NIGHT

Monday night, surprise date night. Didn't mention the dream. Didn't want her to think I was crazy, yet... I explained to Susan how odd feelings in my gut led me to poke around in places I usually don't and find out things I didn't want to know about the deal I was trying to close. I told her about the call from Ken, the apology I left for Wiederman, and I quit the firm."

SUSAN: "Who are you and what have you done with my husband?"

DAN: Susan, I've been a Christian since I was ten, but not much of a *follower of Christ*. I professed Christ, but over the years, I've served a dozen counterfeit Gods and performed child sacrifice - our children - at the altar of personal gain. One day, we're all going to come face to face with Jesus and account for what we've done with what He gave us - and I think He deserves at least one crown from what He's done in my life."

I think I... forgot we were at a nice restaurant... She hates it when I talk too loud in public. But, she just threw her arms around me and said she'd never been more proud of me. The rest is history, right?

SCENE 25

Six months later, I get this frantic knock on the door - Gerald Baker. Begging for my help... FTC and CIA investigation had turned the firm upside down - thought he was going to jail...

The issues we were having with the Weiderman software? They weren't software issues... Gerry didn't know it, but 6 months prior, Hogan had brought two world class hackers into the software development team as new hires. They'd used their access to embezzle money and sensitive information from 8 of our largest clients. If I'd have closed my big deal, they'd have gone to town on Weiderman's company, too and I'd have been caught in the web with a quarter partnership as my motive. God had not only saved me from my own greed, He'd brought a broken man to my door asking me "what in God's name do I do?" "Exactly," I said, "you need Jesus, Gerry."

As GERRY: "Don't give me that churchy garbage, Matthewson - I need a *solution* - yesterday."

DAN: What if God is the solution you've been looking for?

As GERRY: "I've heard this before Dan. I'm a good guy, you know? I've never murdered anyone..."

DAN: That's reassuring... But, Jesus said if you've hated your brother in your heart, murder just the same. Ever lusted after a woman: Adultery. Gerry, with God, the bar is so high when it comes to good enough, NONE of us could ever make it in. In the end, works alone doesn't work. Only grace that *leads* to works. It's like they said - Repent, surrender, and God'll welcome with open arms.

That day, six weeks ago before a city bus put our friend in that coffin, Gerry Baker got it... How about you? Are you still trying to work your way into heaven by being good instead of trusting in the only one who IS good? Or does it finally make sense to you - you're both far more sinful than you ever dared imagine AND far more loved than you ever dared hope? Will you pray with me?

"God, I admit, I've put my trust in how good I can be in order to win your love. *I repent.*

On my own, I can sin without breaking a sweat

- I need a Savior. Jesus, be mine.

Left to myself, I'm prone to live for myself

- I need a Lord. Jesus, be mine.

Help me to stop living for today

and keep my sights set on That Day. Amen"

Gerry Baker received salvation by grace - through a faith in Christ alone. Not because he prayed a prayer or impressed God by what he did with the rest of his life, but *because he'd surrendered to Christ as both savior and Lord*. "Hey Gerry," I pointed to the sky "no thunder, no trumpets yet..." Take your time, Jesus - we're building more crowns to throw at your feet. See you on That Day."

[lights down] **Closing Song:** ("I Can Only Imagine")

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