

Glory to God

Written By

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INT. GOOD SHEPHERD HAVEN OF FELLOWSHIP - DAY

The church is sparse with ATTENDANTS. Pastor Rodriguez RODRIGUEZ is at the altar finishing up his sermon on prayer.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Remember beloved, Hebrews 4:16 says "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." We may approach the throne boldly because of Jesus Christ. He is the great mediator between us and God. So please don't take prayer lightly it is an amazing time for us, in the Old Testament only priests could sacrifice and pray on behalf of others.

We scan the CHURCH-GOERS and see some are engaged and others playing on their phones. We see this dichotomy in our couple FELICIA ORTEGA sits rapt in attention as her husband GABRIEL ORTEGA is fiddling with his phone.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

But we have a direct connection with the Father through the ultimate sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If you just take a step back and see it for what it really is. Think of it this way your children have it way better than you did right. Anyone remember having only 1 tv and getting only three stations?

(SCATTERED LAUGHTER)

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

Now they have copious amounts of entertainment; and they still complain about being bored!

(MORE LAUGHTER)

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

Imagine being a Hebrew from those times and being told "Yeah we just talk to God anytime we want". They'd stare at you in shock, because it wasn't possible before

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Jesus and now we have this amazing gift among many others all because Jesus gave his life on Calvary for us. So I want to issue a challenge to you all, including myself. It's a 30 day prayer challenge, pray at the same time every day in earnest the same prayer for 30 days and see if the God doesn't answer.

Felicia nudges Gabriel, he turns to her and she nods her head at the Pastor telling Gabi to pay attention. He puts his phone away but pouts sullenly.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

There are a few caveats to this and you should incorporate these in your everyday prayer life as well. They can't be self serving, James 4:3 warns that your prayers won't be heard if they are only for your lusts. As in that new boat some of you want, or that winning lotto ticket. Sorry it ain't happening, but Philippians 2:3-4 emphasizes the value of praying for the needs of others, you might want to start there. And make sure your prayer isn't some repetitious rambling, you know "Oh please help so and so yadda yadda" Jesus warns against this in Matthew 6: 7-8. It has to be heartfelt each time, and most of all don't forget to pray believing, Mark 11:24 says "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Now lets bow our heads and pray.

EXT. GOOD SHEPHERD HAVEN OF REST - DAY

Pastor Rodriguez stands by the door of the Church shaking and bidding farewell to his congregation. When two attendants GABRIEL ORTEGA and his wife FELICIA stop and chat as others file out.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Coach Ortega, how are you? Have you
(MORE)

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)
thought about your prayer?

GABRIEL
No not yet Pastor, but I'm sure it
will come to me.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
Probably when you least expect it.
What about you Felecia?

FELECIA
I'm going pray this city becomes a
place I can raise my children in.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
Amen to that, I think I'll add that
one to the list myself. Hey Coach
remind of when your next game is.

Gabriel thinks for a moment.

GABRIEL
Oh we have one coming up Wednesday
Pastor, will you be there?

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
Definitely, you'll see me praying
in the bleachers.

GABRIEL
If we keep playing like we have
been we're going to need it.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
Don't even worry about it, you're
doing a service just keeping those
kids off the streets.

They finish their goodbyes and continue down the steps as
the Pastor continues bidding people farewell.

EXT STREET - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Gabi and Felicia continue walking down the street toward
their car. Here we get a good look around the neighborhood.
Boarded up houses and abandoned store fronts line the
sidewalks. Wind kicks up and throws trash and dirt around.
GANG MEMBERS hangout on porches and stop talking to stare at
Gabi and Felecia. They get in their car and begin to drive.
Gabi shoots a glance in the rear view mirror behind them to
the thugs still staring as they slowly go back to their
conversation.

GABI
I hope God hears your prayer Feli,
because there's no way I'm raising
a family here.

EXT PORCH - DARK

Later on that day. The same gang members on the porch chat among themselves, when JA'MESE HOWARD 14, walks by. One of the gang members picks his head up.

GANG MEMBER
Yo shorty, come over here.

Ja'mese keeps his head down and keeps walking, ignoring the Gang member.

The gang member angrily gets up and starts walking after him.

GANG MEMBER (CONT'D)
Hey, I said come here!

Ja'mese starts walking faster until he reaches his front porch. He zooms up the stairs. Opens the door..

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DARK

Ja'mese closes it and leans against it breathing heavily and we see a ratty apartment building complete with peeling wallpaper and dingy stairs. He walks up a few flights of stairs and you can smell the stale urine as he passes by garbage bags left out and not a few beer bottles litter the stairs. He comes to his door and lets himself into...

INT. JACOB AND JA'MESE APARTMENT - DARK

There he find his big brother JACOB HOWARD playing video games on the couch. He slams the door and throws is backpack on the floor.

JA'MESE
(angrily)
Why do I have to ignore those
douchebags every time I walk by
them?

Jacob pauses his game and looks sympathetically at his brother.

JACOB
They start on you again.

JAM'ESE

Every single time I walk by, now I know what girls feel like. It makes me want to punch them in the face.

Jacob gets up goes to his brother and puts his hands on his shoulders. Ja'mese is shaking with rage.

JACOB

You know they're either trying to recruit you or kill you. They use kids like you as their slingers. And if you strike out, they will kill you.

JAM'ESE

I know Jake, I know. I just wanna get outta here so bad.

JACOB

Same here, and I'm working on it. For now remember God will not put on us more than we can bear.

Ja'mese turns his shoulder away from Jacob.

JAM'ESE

We haven't been to Church since Mom died. I think you can stop with the righteous act.

JACOB

It's not an act, and it never has been. I still believe in God, just like Mom did. When the time comes you will too.

JAM'ESE

When are you gonna realize God's about as there for us as Dad is.

Ja'mese storms off to his room and slams the door. Leaving Jacob to stare and shake his head slowly. He walks over to a coat closet next to the entrance door. He opens it and heads into...

INT. PRAYER CLOSET - DARK

Jacob pulls on a cord and a light comes on. Its a very modest set up with only a chair and a Bible sitting on it. Jacob closes the door behind him.

He gets down on his knees and starts to pray.

JACOB

Father in Heaven, I ask that you
guide my brother to your arms.
Ja'mese needs you more than he
knows, remove the scales from his
eyes so he can truly see your mercy
and compassion. No matter the cost
Father, please lead him to you. In
Jesus name, Amen.

FADE OUT:

EXT. HILLE CITY HIGH SCHOOL - THE NEXT MORNING -
ESTABLISHING

The school bell rings as students still mill about outside
still deciding whether or not they're going to go in. The
school is fenced in by wrought iron that's rusting and the
school itself has seen better days with broken windows and
graffiti in various places.

INT. HILLE CITY HIGH SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MORNING

Gabi sits in the chair opposite the desk of PRINCIPAL LELAND
GREY.

LELAND

There's no easy way to say this
Gabi. The Board of Ed wants to cut
the Basketball Program, for the
school.

GABI

What!? They can't do that! What
about the kids, what's the Board's
plan to keep them out of jail or
out of body bags?

LELAND

I know how you feel, but let's face
facts Gabi we're running a
glorified after school program
here, the last one at that. It was
only a matter of time till the
board figured out it wasn't
necessary anymore.

GABI

Lee, you don't have to tell me
that, every year I lose more and
more kids to hustling for these
gang bangers; the love of money is

(MORE)

GABI (CONT'D)

killing them and they don't even see it. I know my team may only has 7 kids on a good day. But they're loyal and they love this game, heck this team more than anything and if you tell them it's over, you might as well be signing their death warrants.

LELAND

Gabi, you think its just the team they're leaving? Kids in this neighborhood care more about the latest Jordans than they do about anything else. Trying to get them to think about their future is getting harder and harder ever year. But that's a conversation for a later day.

They silently commiserate each not looking at the other for a long moment. Then suddenly a flicker of an idea passes over Gabi's face.

GABI

Lee, what if we can get into sectionals? To you think that'll change the boards mind.

LELAND

I suppose, I mean you'll get some press, so you can make your case to the public, but let's be realistic here that'll take...

GABI

A miracle yes I know but if we can win the last three games, we'll at least get invited to compete and that'll get some attention on it's own. I know my team has that much left in them.

LELAND

Alright Gabi, good luck.

GABI

Thanks, we'll need it.

INT. HILLE CITY HIGH GYM - LATER THAT DAY

ANGLE ON THE COURT

THE BASKETBALL TEAM all 7 MEMBERS are in their final moments of a full court scrimmage.

Jacob and Ja'mese star players the dynamic duo of their team, it's a 3 v 4 game but it looks like a 2 v 5 game as they pass the ball back and forth effortlessly through the other players like they've done this a million times.

Jacob leaps from almost the foul line as Ja'mese throws the ball at the basket, Jacob slams it in for an alley-oop no one saw coming.

CHESTER gangly and clumsy gets the ball tries to dribble and the ball bounces off his foot and goes out of bounds.

From the sideline TYQUAN hefty and slow, sweating like nobodies business throws the ball back in bounds and then proceeds to trail after the rest of the players huffing and puffing along.

DEMETRIUS ball hog and hot head, gets the ball and proceeds to show his frustration at getting shown up yet again by Jacob and Ja'mese by hurling the ball like stones at his disappointing team members.

CHRIS not bright and not paying attention gets the ball bounced off of his head and right into D'ANTHONY's, ADHD and smart mouthed, mouth just as he's about to make a wisecrack.

On the sidelines Gabi shakes his head and pinches the bridge of his nose as he sighs. Meanwhile his ASSISTANT COACH TYRELL MORRIS tries his best to stifle a laugh.

TYRELL

So how many games do you think they can win again?

GABI

Don't start T, please.

TYRELL

I'm just saying maybe its for the best aren't you always saying God does everything for a reason.

GABI

Yes, but I don't want to give up without giving it our all. Making sure there was absolutely no way to turn this around.

TYRELL

Okay, you know this'll crush them

(MORE)

TYRELL (CONT'D)

right? They may not even want to play the next few games.

GABI

I know T, but I'd rather tell them now on the off chance that it'll fire them up and maybe get them focused on winning.

Gabi blows the whistle around his neck.

GABI (CONT'D)

Bring it in and take a knee fellas.

All of the Team Members gather around the coach and get down on one knee.

GABI

I have some bad news boys. The Board of Ed. wants to shut down our program at the end of the school year.

Most look at each other worried.

CHRIS

Who's Ed?

D'ANTHONY

It means education, genius.

CHRIS

Ohhhh.

Tyrell snorts and Gabi looks at him angrily.

Tyrell holds up his hand and regains his composure.

GABI

Anyway, I was going to tell you guys that if we get some media exposure and speak out about them cutting our program the Board of Education might reconsider.

JACOB

How do we do that, Coach?

GABI

By getting invited to Sectionals, we have to win our last three games in order to qualify.

They all begin to grumble with and speak out.

DEMETRIUS

With this team, yeah right!

JA'MESE

There's no way we can win all three games.

Gabi holds his hands up for silence. They all settle down.

GABI

I know what I'm asking you seems immense and too big to handle, but we can do this. I know we can, I just need you to believe it too.

The team looks crestfallen and doubtful.

GABI (CONT'D)

Regardless of the outcome, I want 110% from each of you, we're going to work hard, harder than ever before. Now hit the showers guys, all except Jacob.

They all get up and head to the showers except Jacob he comes closer. Gabi puts a hand on his shoulder.

GABI (CONT'D)

I didn't see you grumbling, do you think we have a shot?

JACOB

I think with God all things are possible...even this.

GABI

Good, we're going to need that faith of yours now more than ever. Now have you considered my offer?

JACOB

I did coach, and I don't think now is the right time. Besides we've been surviving so far and pretty soon I'll graduate and get a good job making more than they pay at the corner store right now. We'll be alright, I have faith God has a plan for us.

GABI

Well, I'm not gonna force you, but Felecia and I would love to put you guys up at least until you get a job with better pay.

JACOB

Thanks Coach, really I appreciate it.

Jacob heads to the showers.

TYRELL

You know I admire you Gabi, not everyone would keep inviting two teens with raging hormones to live with them and their attractive wife.

Chuckling, Gabi punches Tyrell's shoulder lightly.

GABI

The Bible says true worship is to help the oprhans and widows, I'm just trying to do my part. Any way what do you think of our chances?

TYRELL

Honestly, I think you know what to pray for in that 30-day challenge you were telling me about.

GABI

Yep, I sure do.

INT. PETER C STONEWELL HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT
A WHITSLE BLOWS

Jacob and a PLAYER from the Stonewell team jump for the tip off. Jacob bats the ball to Demetrius he catches it and immediately starts crossing the ball between his legs in front of another PLAYER, showing off.

He goes to cross the ball once more and finds that he's crossing air another PLAYER has stolen the ball and scores an easy layup gaining the first score of the game.

Gabi stares angrily from the sidelines and Demetrius shrugs sheepishly. This sets the tone of the game.

SERIES OF SHOTS

STONEWELL 47 HILLE CITY 42

Jacob and Ja'mese are running like a well-oiled machine passing the ball to each other setting up plays that include other players whether they like it or not.

Chris at the 3-point line staring off into space takes the ball to his chest. He catches exhaling and almost doubling over. The daze clears from his eyes and he shoots from the line and makes it in SWISH.

Others stare at him in shock.

D'Anthony is guarding a PLAYER while trying to trash talk.

D'ANTHONY

You know the difference between you
and a skunk?

PLAYER 1

I don't know what is the difference
between me and a skunk.

D'Anthony looks down trying to think of the punchline, while he's distracted the player he was guarding gets the ball passed to him and he scores.

D'ANTHONY

Oh, it smells better than you.

Demetrius runs past him.

DEMETRIUS

Pay attention!

ANGLE ON SIDELEINES

TYRELL

D'Anthony didn't take his ritalin
again.

Gabi throws an exasperated gesture.

THE FINAL BUZZER SOUNDS
STONEWELL 66 HILLE CITY 68

INT. STONEWELL LOCKER ROOM

The boys have barely eked out a victory and Gabi is not pleased.

GABI

What was that out there! I thought
we were gonna try our hardest from
now on.

DEMETRIUS

Well we won.

GABI

Thanks only to Jacob and Ja'mese
the rest of you were too busy ball
hogging, daydreaming, and trash
talking to do any good. And
Demetrius so help me I see another
cross-over from you I will bench
you from now until next year.

DEMETRIUS

If we get a next year.

Gabi stares at him warningly. Demetrius deflates and looks
away. Gabi's shoulders then slump and all of a sudden he
looks very weary.

GABI

Go hit the showers.

They obey quietly.

Gabi sits on a bench and Tyrell sits next to him.

TYRELL

Demetrius may be a self-absorbed,
ball hogging little snot, but isn't
wrong. The likelihood of us...

GABI

I know T, even if we get exposure
it probably won't change the
board's mind. And it's not like we
can rely on funding from the public
either, remember the last time we
tried a car wash for new uniforms.

TYRELL

Oh you mean the day of the "Hille
City shootout" who knew getting
your car washed in the wrong
territory was so dangerous.

GABI

Yeah, I'm just glad no one got
hurt.

TYRELL

That was a miracle.

GABI
We could definitely use another one
right now.

They both look at the floor defeated. In the B.G. Jacob
looks on listening intently.

INT. JACOB'S PRAYER CLOSET

Jacob is on his knees praying once more.

JACOB
Father you are the God of miracles,
we need one now. I pray that Your
will be done over this team and our
coaches. I ask that You help us to
succeed and become an example to
others as to what faith can do. In
the name of Jesus I pray, amen.

INT. LITTLEWOOD HIGH GYM - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS

WHISTLE BLOWS

Tip off

Demetrius ends up with the ball and starts showing off
again.

Gabi calls a time out

ANGLE ON SIDELINE

The boys gather around Gabi, He points to Demetrius.

GABI
I'm not going to watch another
repeat of the "Magical vanishing
ball" sit down.

He turns to Tyquan.

TYQUAN
Oh no.

Time slows down. We can hear Tyquan's thudding heart.

GABI
Get ready.

CLOSE UP on Tyquan's face. Sweat streams down as he looks
around terrified. People speed past him in the background

and foreground and he's frozen stiff.

ZOOM OUT to see him in the middle of the court as the game is going up and down the court around him.

Gabi from the sidelines is trying to coax him to get into the game.

Jacob stops in front of him and put a hand on his shoulder.

JACOB
You alright Ty?

TYQUAN
Uh-huh.

JACOB
Did you know Moses stuttered?

TYQUAN
What?

JACOB
Well, Moses told God he had a speech impediment, maybe a stutter. So God in His wisdom told him to bring his brother Aaron with him to speak to Pharaoh and you know who ended up doing most of the talking?

Tyquan shakes his head, sweat flying.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Moses did, so if Moses with God's help could speak to Pharaoh, a King that could have had him killed with a flick of his wrist, and free his people then I think with God's help you can do anything, right?

Tyquan looks at Jacob resolve setting in.

TYQUAN
Right.

They take off and rejoin the action.
LITTLEWOOD - 71 HILLE CITY - 80

Everyone is cautiously optimistic about the win. Gabi and Tyrell are off somewhere and the boys are laughing and talking loudly. All except Demetrius who's still upset about Gabi benching him.

Tyquan is changing his clothes when Demetrius slams the locker Tyquan's using in his face.

DEMETRIUS

Don't get used playing fat boy. I
won't be ridin' the pine for long.
You'll get your seat back next
game, trust me.

JACOB (O.S.)

Leave him alone.

Demetrius turns his head to see Jacob sitting on a bench against the wall with his head leaned against it and his eyes closed. He walks over the pick a fight he's been aching for.

DEMETRIUS

Well will you look at this, The
Coach's pet has something to say.
What you gonna do, huh? You gonna
snitch on me Pet?

Jacob doesn't say anything, his lips are move silently. Everyone is looking at him intently to see what he will do.

Demetrius kicks at his shoe.

DEMETRIUS (CONT'D)

You gonna answer me or not Pet!?

Slowly Jacob opens his eyes.

JACOB

A Bible verse just came to mind
while I was praying for you. It's
from Proverbs "A prudent man
concealeth knowledge: but the heart
of fools proclaimeth foolishness".

DEMETRIUS

Did you just call me a fool?

JACOB

Like I said, it just popped into my
head while I was praying about your
jealous heart.

Demetrius' eyes light up with rage, he looks like he's going to take a swing. But fast as lightning Ja'mese steps in front of him.

JA'MESE

My brother may be all about peace,
but trust I'm not. You betta sit
down 'fore things get real.

Demetrius and Ja'mese stare at each other the tension is so strong you can cut it with a knife. Suddenly the doors to the locker room open, Gabi and Tyrell stroll in carrying on a conversation.

They stop cold as they survey the situation.

GABI

Excuse me fellas, do we have a
problem here?

Demetrius and Ja'mese continue staring. Demetrius blinks first.

DEMETRIUS

No sir, no problem at all.

GABI

Well then sit down, before we do.

Everybody goes back to where they were, albeit much quieter than before. Ja'mese sits back down next Jacob. Who has his eyes closed again and his against the wall.

JACOB

You know you really have to control
that temper of yours.

Ja'mese just looks at him incredulously.

INT. GABI'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Felecia is sitting at the kitchen table with pajamas and a robe on. She's got her hands wrapped around a mug as she reads the Bible which is open on the table in front of her.

Gabi comes in through the front door, weary but excited he comes into the kitchen, and takes a seat at the table.

GABI

You should be asleep, Feli.

FELECIA

I was too nervous for you and the
boys to sleep. How'd it go?

GABI

We won...

FELECIA

Is there a "but" coming?

GABI

But I just don't know if it'll make a difference. What are we really trying to accomplish here?

FELECIA

Well, I thought the goal was to keep the team going.

GABI

For how long though, most of the kids look defeated already. The only one who has any faith left is Jacob. Who's to say we don't lose the kids we have and end up getting shut down any way?

FELECIA

I know you have a hard time letting things go and letting God handle them, but maybe this is one of those times.

Gabi shrugs. Felecia reaches and takes his hand in hers. He looks at her and his shoulders slump.

GABI

I don't know how. I wish I had more faith like you or Jacob but I just don't know how to let go.

FELECIA

Leaps of faith can be scary but if we're never taken out of our comfort zone how will we ever see God's power?

Gabi nods.

FELECIA (CONT'D)

Have faith in Him and you may just be surprised.

They get up from the table kiss and hug. They make their way to the bedroom with Gabi putting his arm around Feli.

GABI

I know you're right Feli, besides Jacob has more than enough faith

(MORE)

GABI (CONT'D)

for all of us, with him around I'm
sure we'll get where to we need to
be.

INT. CORNER STORE - THE NEXT NIGHT

Jacob is behind the counter with his homework spread out in front of him. He's concentrating diligently on his homework when suddenly a flash of thought crosses his mind. He picks his head up a curious expression on his face.

He tears off a sheet of paper from his notebook and just starts writing furiously as if he's trying his best to get the words out before it's too late.

Angle on: The bell above the store's door.

The bell rings as a someone pushes the door open.

Jacob is writing feverishly and doesn't notice the NEW CUSTOMER.

Angle on the new customer's back. He has a black hooded sweater on with the hood over his head. He walks slouched slightly.

Each step is an eternity. We see Jacob writing still not paying attention.

The new customer pulls something from his sweater pocket. Jacob still doesn't notice.

The new customer stands in front of Jacob and points what he's holding at him.

Jacob finally done, picks up his head and sees the customer in front of him. At first fear registers in his face but slowly a new expression registers as he stands upright and puts his hands in the air...peace.

EXT. CORNER STORE - NIGHT

Two shots and muzzle flashes are seen and heard from the outside. The door opens up in a hurry as we see the customer in the hoodie running out into the night like a bat out of Hades. Sirens soon sound in background.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

PAN across row of mourners as we see INTERSPERSED individual reactions to the news.

PAN ACROSS JA'MESE'S SOBBING FACE

EXT. CORNER STORE - NIGHT

IN SLOW MOTION we see the police holding Ja'mese back as he tries to see his brother.

PAN ACROSS GABI'S FACE

INT. GABI'S OFFICE - DAY

Gabi numbly hangs the phone up. He sits for a beat and suddenly rage and anguish flash across his face. He flips his table over in an outburst of frustrated rage.

PAN ACROSS DEMETRIUS'S CRESTFALLEN FACE

INT. GYM - DAY

Demetrius has a cart of basketballs next to him shooting from the 3-point line, his face a mask of grim determination. Each basket he throws goes in to a steady beat.

SWISH

SWISH

SWISH

After each SWISH his mask falls slowly to a face of anguish and pain at losing a rival. He reaches for another ball and looks at it for a beat. He concentrates all of his rage and fury into it and tosses it at the far wall as he walks away disappointed and defeated.

PAN ACROSS THE TEAM'S FACES

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The rest of the team sits around looking melancholy. It's like they've all been hit with a gut punch. Some don't even know what to do they're in the middle of undress for practice when they just stop.

Tyquan can be seen crying uncontrollably as Chris puts a hand on his shoulder for support.

After Jacob's casket is buried in the ground the mourners slowly depart, all putting their hands on Ja'mese's shoulder and uttering condolences before they leave.

Felecia walks up to Ja'mese and gives him a motherly hug, Ja'mese loses it. He starts sobbing and Felecia holds him.

FELECIA

I'm so, so very sorry mijo. I don't know if you knew this but Gabi asked Jacob if you guys wanted to live with us. Jacob always turned him down. I'm asking, no I'm begging please come stay with us for as long a you like.

Ja'mese too overcome with emotion to talk nods on her shoulder.

Gabi walks up to them and gives hugs them both.

FADE TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

It's been a few days since the funeral. A coffee shop sits on the outskirts of Hille City thankfully far away enough to escape the day to day violence. Gabi walks in and looks around he sees Pastor Rodriguez at a nearby table and sits down in front of him.

GABI

Why did you want to meet here and not the church?

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

I find this space is more accommodating to those who may have something to say without feeling the need to be reverent of their environment. It helps especially if you have grievances to air about the Almighty Himself, although He knows everything some people find it easier to communicate without feeling like they're despoiling His house.

Gabi nods understandingly.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ CONT'D

How are you feeling, Gabi?

GABI

Like God just pulled the rug out from under me.

The Pastor nods.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
And how are Felecia and Ja'mese?

GABI
It's bittersweet for Feli, she's always wanted to have children and maybe even adopt, but under these circumstances... I don't think any of us were prepared for this. And Ja'mese is slipping further into depression, he won't eat, he can't sleep and he doesn't want to go to school.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
And the rest of the team?

GABI
They're in pretty rough shape too, we forfeited the last game, I couldn't ask them to play so soon after that. Now it looks like we're done for good, so that just adds salt to the wound...That kid was our rock you know. You could always count on him and now that he's gone none of us know what to put our faith in anymore.

They sit in silence for a beat.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
Gabi, may I be blunt.

GABI
Of course Pastor.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
I know this is hard to hear, but I believed this happened for a reason. I'm sure you all have heard that a lot recently, but I mean it.

GABI
Why though? I mean he was so young and he had his whole life ahead of him.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
You know we often fight against it, but we're all here for a reason, God puts each and every one of us

(MORE)

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

here for a specific purpose. Jacob knew that more than most. He and I spoke often, he would come to Church at night and he and I would just sit and chat. That young man was a breath of fresh air every time we spoke. He reminded me so many times, that we're all just visitors here for a short while. He spoke of heaven so familiarly you'd think he was homesick.

GABI

But why leave us like this, what was the purpose in that?

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

I'm sure Christian disciples thought the same thing whenever one of the Apostles went to be martyred. But more often than not their passing only helped to spread the Gospel even further. And I am tempted to believe we have similar situation here. We all of have chance to remember what Jake stood for and honor his memory and at the same time do what we were meant to do.

GABI

And what were we meant to do?

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Bring glory to God.

INT. GABI'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Feli sleeps peacefully, but Gabi tosses and turns. we hear his thoughts as he wrestles with sleep.

GABI (V.O.)

More than enough faith.

FELI (V.O.)

Letting God handle them.

JACOB (V.O.)

God has a plan.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (V.O.)

Bring glory to God.

Two imaginary gunshots go off and Gabi sits up breathing heavy and sweating profusely. He looks over at Feli who is still sleeping soundly. He gets out of bed and walks over to...

INT. JA'MESE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ja'mese sleeps soundly as the door to his bedroom opens a crack. We see Gabi checking on him from the hallway. The room itself is very spartan there's an open suitcase with clothes thrown about. There is a bed and a desk but no other furnishings yet.

Gabi closes the door and heads back to...

INT. GABI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

His room. Gabi kneels at the foot of his bed and begins to pray.

GABI

Father God, I just want to say that I'm sorry. Deep down I know You do things for our own good but I'm in really bad shape here. But I remember a good friend telling me nothing is impossible for You. So I ask that You change my heart and my mind Lord. I want to be more like Your son Jesus and more like Your servant, my friend Jacob. Help me to let go of this world and bring Glory to you God.

INT. GABI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ja'mese sits on the couch slouching, a lump of sadness as he flips through tv channels. Feli walks in and stops short seeing him like this hurts her.

FELI

Hey Ja'mese, I think it's time for you to get some fresh air, do you want to run some errands with me.

Ja'mese shrugs noncommittally.

FELI (CONT'D)

Great, let's get going.

Ja'mese peels himself off of the couch slowly as if he's become part of the furniture.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Feli and Ja'mese walk down the gross alleyway.

JA'MESE

Uh, Feli, where are we going.

FELI

You'll see.

They continue walking until they reach a service entrance on the side of one of the buildings. Feli knocks on the door conspiratorially. A hatch in the door slides open.

PERSON

PASSWORD?

FELI

God is good...

PERSON

Ah-ah-ah en Español por favor.

FELI

Ugh, fine Dios es bueno todo el tiempo.

PERSON

Y?

FELI

Todo el tiempo Dios es bueno.

PERSON

¡Exactamente!

The door opens to reveal ESMERELDA NUÑEZ 51 a stocky hispanic woman. She gives Feli a bear hug and after Feli catches her breathe she kisses the older woman's cheek in greeting.

FELI

Bendición, titi.

ESME

Otra bendiga,

They part and Emerelda sees Ja'mese for the first time. Her eyes light up.

EMERELDA

¡Ay, que chulo! ¿Quién es

ESMERELDA

¡Ay, que chulo! ¿Quién es esto
guapo niño?

FELI

Titi, this is Ja'mese. Gabi and I
are taking care of him for now.

Before Ja'mese knows what hits him, Esmerelda gives him a
big motherly bear hug and kisses him on the cheek.

JA'MESE

Um...hello?

They part.

ESMERELDA

¿No habla Español?

FELI

No, titi.

ESMERELDA

Ay, don't worry I'll teach you.

And with that she hooks her arm in his and she walks him to
the door, speaking rapid fire Spanish the whole way. He
glances behind him to give Feli a pleading glance she just
shrugs her shoulders and walks in after them.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

They walk into a diner style kitchen. There are several
PEOPLE inside doing various prep work. Ja'mese looks around
wide-eyed at this new world he's been thrown into, as he is
dragged along by Esmerelda, who is still speaking to him in
Spanish.

One of the people sees Ja'mese's plight and walks up to
Esmerelda.

JENNETTE

Titi, I need your help with this
recipe.

She detaches from Ja'mese and follows Jennette. Jennette
looks back and gives him a wink.

FELI

(Mouthing to Jennette)

Thank you.

JA'MESE

What, the heck was that?

FELI

That was Esmerelda, but everybody calls her Titi, it means aunt in Spanish. She runs this soup kitchen and don't worry she treats everyone like that it's part of her charm. Once you come into her place, you're family automatically. Also she wants to teach everybody Spanish, if you keep coming here I'm sure you'll learn enough to impress your teachers. Come on, let me introduce you.

They tour the kitchen. They stop at various stations and Ja'mese is introduced to GIL DOWNES 27, CARMEN DE LA CRUZ 42, OMAR PETIT 48, and DANIKA BEEKS 30.

FELI (CONT'D)

The person who saved you was Jennette, we all know how overwhelming Titi can be especially for the first time.

JA'MESE

Yeah, no kidding. So how often do you come here?

FELI

Every day.

JA'MESE

(shocked)

Every day?

FELI

Well, yeah. Volunteering here and spreading the Gospel to the people while they eat help me unwind after a long day of classes.

They come to an unoccupied station, she starts handing him onions from a basket.

FELI (CONT'D)

You peel, I'll chop.

Ja'mese shrugs and starts peeling. He absentmindedly hands her an onion.

JA'MESE

How does this help you unwind?

Feli takes it and with a practiced hand, cuts the onion in half and starts chopping the onion into bits.

FELI

It helps me get out of my own head and focus on the bigger picture. Your mother used to say all the time "There's no work like God's work."

JA'MESE

How did you know my Mom?

FELI

We met here actually, when Gabi and I first came to town we were looking for a place to volunteer. She's the one who saved us from Titi our first time.

They work in silence for a moment.

JA'MESE

Can I ask you a question?

FELI

Anything, mijo.

JA'MESE

Why do you believe in God? How can you be so sure he or it or whatever exists?

FELI

That's a really great question. You know I could give you some philosophical stuff about the Universe and how it was created. I could quote scripture and tell you all of the things Jesus and the Apostles said. But I don't think it will help you, not at this time, not with this situation. So I'm just going to boil it down to this. I know God is real because I'm not miserable anymore.

JA'MESE

That's it?

FELI

That's it.

JA'MESE

Why do you think that God has something to do with that? Couldn't it just be because of your marriage or because you're a happy person.

Feli laughs hysterically. Ja'mese looks at her like she's crazy.

FELI

Have you met my husband, he can drive a nun to drink sometimes. And you didn't know me before I became a Christian, I was...let's just say I was a very different person.

JA'MESE

What do you mean?

FELI

Have you every woken up just hating the world, everyone around you, heck even you're own existence?

JA'MESE

Well I'm 15, and an orphan, so I'd say that's a safe bet.

FELI

Well that was me too, I was so angry and bitter at what had happened in my life. I was a firm atheist. I didn't want to believe in anything that created this terrible world. I thought I knew everything, the Bible was false and Jesus was just some guy who died for no reason a long time ago. I was pretty arrogant now that I think about it.

JA'MESE

What changed?

FELI

Well, a friend of mine dragged me to Church one Sunday. The sermon was such a revelation, it felt like the preacher was talking directly

(MORE)

FELI (CONT'D)

to me. Things started to make sense a little bit; the Bible, Jesus and what he did for us. I wasn't quite convinced yet, but I was intrigued. I went back a couple more times on my own. One day as I was leaving the Pastor of the Church asks for a minute of my time. I said sure but I was scared I didn't know if they were going to tell me I couldn't come back.

JA'MESE

What happened, what'd he say?

FELI

We went to his office and he told me point blank, he says: "I know you're not a believer, but I felt like God wanted me to sit down with you and have a chat."

JA'MESE

What'd you guys talk about?

FELI

Why I didn't believe, he shared some scriptures with me he taught me how to pray and he even gave me a Bible to keep. He told me to start with the Gospel of John.

JA'MESE

Then what happened?

FELI

Nothing, we said our goodbyes and I went back to my place.

JA'MESE

This isn't very inspirational.

FELI

I'm not finished yet silly. I got home and I started praying like the Pastor taught me, and I'll admit it felt silly at first, but after awhile it started to feel good. It was cathartic just getting it all out there. Then I started to read the Gospel of John, I finished it in one sitting and I wept like a

(MORE)

FELI (CONT'D)

baby. Jesus's sacrifice, to know that he did it for me... I don't know how to describe it, but something inside me changed that day. I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior and haven't looked back since. Now I'm just filled with, well as it says in the Bible, joy unspeakable. I try to put words to it and they just fail. I love so much now, everyone and everything unconditionally. And the circumstances don't matter I'm still filled with these feelings even at the worst times. I pray daily that everyone could feel the way I do, that's why I do what I do here.

JA'MESE

That's...wow, that's really beautiful. No one has ever described it to me before. I see all these people that say they're Christians but they're filled with hate, I just thought that was Christianity blindly following some laws some guys wrote in a book. That's why I couldn't understand what my Mom or my brother saw in it.

FELI

Those people, I pray for them too. Somewhere along the way they've lost the true meaning of what it means to be a Christian. It's okay to disagree with someone else's beliefs and still love them and try to reach them. Paul said that he made himself like the people he was around to a certain extent just to share the Gospel. He came down to their level instead of expecting them to reach his. Just like Jesus came down to our level to teach us about His Father.

Ja'mese nods in understanding. Feli hands him the bowl full of chopped onions.

FELI (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go feed God's sheep.

INT. SOUP KITCHEN DINING HALL - EVENING

There are tons of people there everyone looking disheveled and hungry as they all sit and wolf down the food that the volunteers prepared. In the midst of it all Feli is making the rounds from table to table and sharing the Gospel with everyone there. Ja'mese watches on in amazement. Gabi comes in and sidles up quietly to Ja'mese.

GABI

She sure is something, isn't she.

Ja'mese almost jumps out of his skin.

JA'MESE

Coach what are you doing here?

GABI

You haven't even noticed the time
have you?

Ja'mese looks up at the clock in the room it's sometime into the evening. School and practice have been over for quite some time.

JA'MESE

Holy...

Gabi gives him a reproachful look.

JA'MESE (CONT'D)

I mean, wow I can't believe what
time it is.

Gabi cracks a smile and pats him on the shoulder.

GABI

It's alright, I know what you mean.
When you guys weren't home I
figured you would be here. This is
where she always comes to clear her
mind. How'd you like it?

Ja'mese is quiet but a slow smile creeps across his face.

GABI (CONT'D)

It's really good to see that smile
again.

JA'MESE

You know Jacob used to say all the time: "It's more blessed to give than to receive." I never really understood that until now seeing all these people that I helped feed today, it makes me want to do it more.

GABI

I'm glad, I'm sure Esmerelda would love to hear that, she's always looking for new students to teach Spanish to.

JA'MESE

On second thought...

They both laugh.

GABI

I think we both needed that.

Ja'mese nods solemnly

GABI (CONT'D)

Let's get out of the way, there's something I wanted to talk to you about.

GABI (CONT'D)

We got some good news from the state athletics commission today. We've been selected for the wildcard slot in the State Tournament.

Joy and sadness mix on Ja'mese's face.

JA'MESE

That's great coach, how'd the team take it?

GABI

About the same way you did. I know how you feel. It's bittersweet.

JA'MESE

To be honest coach, I don't know if I'll ever play again. It'll never feel the same without Jake.

Gabi nods in understanding.

GABI

The boys and I are going to give it a shot. But we all understand your decision either way.

Ja'mese nods sullenly, his head bowed, deep in thought.

INT. HILLE CITY GYM - DAY

The boys are gathered around Gabi.

GABI

It looks like God has given us a second chance at this, I trust that He has a plan. And I just need you to trust me in that. We are going to work harder than ever before. When you all agreed to go for this, you said you'd give me 110% and I need that and more from you. We are going to give this our best shot and let God handle the rest. Agreed.

ALL

YES SIR!

A WHISTLE BLOWS

SERIES OF SHOTS

The boys run stamina drills, passing drills, layup drills and various other drills, with varying levels of success.

Chester still miss handles the ball and one errantly thrown ball hits Chris in the head, but he takes it in stride.

Everyone has a determinant look on their face even Tyquan although he looks the worse for wear.

GABI BLOWS HIS WHISTLE AGAIN

All the boys are laid out on the gym floor panting and sweating.

GABI

Good practice fellas, hit the showers and we'll pick this up again tomorrow. Remember we have three weeks until our first game of the tournament.

The boys all groan.

Tyrell walks over to Gabi. As the boys extricate themselves from the floor.

TYRELL

I don't think they'll three days,
let alone three weeks.

GABI

They will, I'm sure they will.

TYRELL

By the way, while you were
commencing your torture session
Principal Grey stopped by. The
local radio station found out we'll
be in the tournament. They want to
interview us.

GABI

Alright! Amen, I hope this will
give us the attention we need. When
do they want us, next week?

TYRELL

Tomorrow.

GABI

Well...the sooner the better I
guess.

Tyrell claps him on the back.

TYRELL

That's the spirit.

Gabi looks at him side-eyed.

INT. RADIO STATION - DAY

Gabi sits uncomfortably with a microphone in his face and a head set on. Tyrell sits next to him with a headset and microphone as well. JOHN GRIFFITH a dj and radio personality for the local station WKSB - HILLE CITY CENTRAL sits across from them as they go on the air.

JOHN

Hello and welcome back. Today I
have with me from Hille City High
Coach Gabriel Ortega and his
Assistant Coach Tyrell Morris.
How're you doing fellas?

TYRELL
Good, thanks for having us John.

GABI
Glory to God.

John gives Gabi a slight look, then shrugs.

JOHN
I hear you've got some good news recently.

Gabi goes to speak as if to answer his question.

GABI
Uh, Glory to God.

JOHN
Um, ok. Amen I guess.

Tyrell and John give him a look. Gabi shrugs and tries to speak again.

GABI
Glory to God.

Gabi starts to look concerned.

GABI (CONT'D)
Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God.

Gabi frustrated and angry tries one more time in Spanish.

GABI
¡Gloria a Dios!

Gabi stares in shock at the microphone and looks pleadingly over to Tyrell.

TYRELL
Ah, sorry about that folks. What Coach Gabi meant to say was, Yes we were invited to the state tournament. Despite losing a player in a tragic homicide we will be playing our first game in three weeks time.

John regains his composure after staring at the scene that just took place.

JOHN

I was sorry to hear about that. I'm glad to see you guys soldiering on.

Tyrell and John look at Gabi, but Gabi shakes his head emphatically, not wanting to try talking again.

TYRELL

Yeah, his name was Jacob and he was irreplaceable but he would want us to honor his memory by giving it our all a the tournament.

John and Tyrell's voices face into the background as Gabi stares at his mic dumbfounded.

FADE TO:

INT. GABI'S HOUSE - DAY

The front door opens and Gabi walks through, exhausted. Feli rushes to him and Ja'mese pokes his head around the corner from the living room.

At once Feli is all over him, checking his forehead and his pulse all the while asking him a myriad of questions?

FELI

Are you alright? Did you go to the doctor? what'd they say? Was it a stroke, please tell me it wasn't. What are you doing standing here you should be resting?

She hustles him over to the couch in the living room to sit down.

GABI

Feli, I'm fine ok. I went to the doctor, they said I was fine. They say it might be some form of Aphasia brought on by stress. Then they took an MRI, that'll probably cost a fortune, and told me the results will be back in a couple days. But to be honest I don't feel like there's anything wrong with me.

FELI

Remember that happened a while back to a couple of reporters and they

(MORE)

FELI (CONT'D)

had had strokes Gabi.

GABI

Not all of them were strokes and I wasn't speaking gibberish I was clearly saying "Glory to God".

JA'MESE

Yeah, what was that about?

GABI

I don't know, I honestly have no idea.

FELI

Do you think it's something psychological? Like grief related?

GABI

It's possible...I guess. I don't know it doesn't sound right.

Gabi gets up to leave.

FELI

Where do you think you're going?

GABI

I wanted to talk to the Pastor about it, see if he knows anything.

FELI

Why the Pastor?

GABI

It just feels like the right thing to do. Don't worry I'm going to walk, besides T dropped me off anyway. The car is still at the radio station.

FELI

Ok, just be careful and if you feel weird or pain or anything hurry back home or stay with the Pastor.

EXT. GOOD SHEPHERD HAVEN OF FELLOWSHIP CHURCH - DAY

Gabi walks up the stairs and knocks on the door of the Church. After a moment the door opens and Pastor Rodriguez comes out looking worried.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
Gabi, what are you doing here? Are you alright I heard what happened on the radio.

GABI
I'm fine Pastor, can we sit and talk for a moment.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
Absolutely, come in, come in.

Pastor Rodriguez welcomes him in and they head to...

INT. GOOD SHEPHERD - BACK OFFICE - DAY

Inside the office Pastor Rodriguez urges Gabi to sit down and Pastor Rodriguez goes behind his desk and does the same.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
It's a good thing you caught me. I was about to head out.

GABI
I'm glad I caught you then. I'm not keeping you from anything am I?

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
No, not at all. I'm just happy to see you're doing alright. On the one hand I was glad to hear "Glory to God" over the radio but I was worried when you kept saying it.

GABI
That's what I wanted to talk to you about Pastor. I know I don't read my Bible as often as I should but this felt very familiar to me. Have there been any cases in the Bible where God has caused people to only say what he wants them to say?

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
Why of course, two instances came to mind when I heard you speak. There was Zacharias the father of John The Baptist, and Jeremiah one of the Major Prophets from the Old Testament.

GABI

What happened to them?

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Well Zacharias was a priest but he and his wife couldn't conceive. He prayed to God for a child and an Angel of God appeared before him one day and told him his Prayers were answered, he then goes on to describe the son they would have John the Baptist who would prepare the way for Jesus Christ. After Zacharias finished speaking with the Angel he couldn't talk. God didn't open his mouth until John was born and named.

GABI

Wow, I'm starting to think I got off light here.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Maybe, but you're situation reminds me more of the prophet Jeremiah's; If I were to compare the two. Jeremiah warned often of the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem because of the people's sinfulness. He was often beaten and threatened. People wanted to him dead for the things he said, he even tried to stop preaching his prophetic visions but couldn't. In the book of Jeremiah he describes it like this "But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones." It hurt him physically not to preach the word of the Lord.

GABI

Yeesh, I didn't feel anything like that. It just felt like my mouth wouldn't say what my brain wanted it to. Almost like I was on autopilot.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

I have to admit it is a very strange phenomena, God hasn't used someone like this for quite some

(MORE)

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

time.

GABI

What should I do?

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Let God do what He does best.

GABI

And what's that?

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Work. If this is God's doing which I'm inclined to believe there isn't much we can do about it. So just let Him work and I'm sure everything will be revealed in due time.

FADE TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL GREY'S OFFICE - DAY

Principal Grey and a Gabi sit across from each other.

LELAND

Gabi, how're you feeling?

GABI

I'm fine Lee, I don't really know what happened at the radio station.

LELAND

Have the doctor's told you anything?

GABI

They can't figure it out either. They think it's some form of selective aphasia. They don't know for sure, but everything else checks out fine.

LELAND

That's a relief but maybe it's best if you let Tyrell take over though. I think this grief about Jacob is getting to you.

GABI

Maybe you're right Lee but I can't abandon the kids, not after this. They need me right now.

LELAND

I urge you to reconsider. If you keep going like this you might not like how things turn out.

GABI

That's not a threat is it Lee?

LELAND

Just a friendly warning. If the board gets wind of this, I won't be able to protect you.

GABI

And why is that?

LELAND

Look Gabi the worlds been changing. We've separated Church and State and taken all mention of God from our schools. We teach about hard evidence nowadays, and what you're doing threatens to subvert that. It's going to rub a lot of people who fought for that separation the wrong way. We're a public school Gabi, I can't have people believing that we're all religious zealots here people will start to question if their kids are in the right hands, not to mention the heat I'll have on me from the Board of Ed. Now, I've known you for a long time Gabi and I'm truly sorry for what happened to Jacob. But I sincerely hope you're not trying to garner sympathy to keep your team going.

GABI

No way Lee, this isn't some insane stunt, I'm still trying to figure this all out myself. But I'm not going to give up on these kids, I'm not willing to throw in the towel yet. I get that you're afraid of this becoming some sort of media circus and I don't want that either but I will coach them until they take this job from me, I will lead them.

LELAND

Well, If you can't get this under control, I suggest you let Tyrell coach so that you have to opportunity to coach again next year.

GABI

How about for now, until I can get this thing figured out, I'll just try to stay away from microphones for the time being.

LELAND

That sounds good to me.

INT. WOOSLEY GYM - NIGHT

The first round of the tournament has arrived. The boys are going up against. Woosley High, a formidable team to start with. They have full bench of hungry and eager players. The gym is huge and packed. Every corner of the gym is decked out to support their team.

ANGLE ON: Announcer's booth in the corner of the gym.

ANNOUNCER 1

Hello and welcome to our First Round of the High School State Basketball Tournament! If this is your first time tuning in I am RICH NORMANSON, here with my colleague CLYDE BUSH. This is the first year the State Championship games will be televised from start to finish. We will also be equipping all of the coaches with microphones just like they do in the NBA so those lucky viewers at home can hear all the action from the sidelines.

CLYDE

That's right Rich, I'm happy to be here at the beginning of all this. People say the NBA is exciting and I tell them all the time you aren't watching High School basketball then. These kids are hungry and ready to prove themselves on the court. Some say college is where you can see real talent. I say "No way" this is where you can see the

(MORE)

CLYDE (CONT'D)

genesis of true talent.

RICH

I couldn't agree with you more
Clyde and I can't wait to see what
will unfold for us tonight.

CLYDE

That's right Rich, the high ranked
Woosley High Falcons will be facing
our wild card team Hille City High.
Will we see an upset here tonight
Rich?

RICH

You're guess is as good as mine
Clyde. I'd love to see a good
old-fashioned Cinderella story here
tonight Clyde, but I gotta tell ya
with the passing of a teammate
another, M.I.A. and a empty bench,
I don't have much hope for these
guys.

CLYDE

I know what you mean Rich, although
you never can tell how these things
are going to go once the dust has
settled.

INT. WOOSLEY HIGH LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The boys are visibly nervous, some are sweating D'Antony's
leg is bouncing at hyperspeed. Chris jumps up to puke in a
waste basket, much to the chagrin of the other. Tyrell is
pacing back and forth while Gabi stands in front of them
trying to think of something to say.

GABI

Listen all of you. We made it this
far and I don't think it's been for
nothing. We are going to change
things starting tonight, I can feel
it.

The door opens and everyone stares. A YOUNG TECH comes in
and hands Gabi a mic clip and a transmitter. Gabi takes it
confused.

GABI (CONT'D)

What's this?

YOUNG TECH

No one told you? They want the coaches to be mic'd up just like the NBA. They're really going all out with this.

GABI

Yeah, no kidding.

YOUNG TECH

Do you know how to put it on?

GABI

Huh, oh yeah. I mean no, no I don't.

The Young Tech hooks him up and tells him how to turn it on or off. After that he leaves and Gabi just stares off into space wide-eyed and white as a sheet. Tyrell comes and walks him some distance away so the boys won't over hear.

Just as he's doing that Pastor Rodriguez comes through the door. Concerned he walks over to them.

GABI (CONT'D)

I can't do this, T. What if all I can say is "Glory to God". How am I going to call plays. How am I going to tell them what to do? What are we going to do!? I already told the principal I'd stay away from the mic, what if they stop me from coaching?!

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

What do you mean, what's going on?

TYRELL

They told Gabi he has to wear a mic for the games. Now he's freaking out.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Ay Señor, ok Gabi let's not panic. I need you to calm down. Remember this is all happening for a reason. It's His will and His way the only thing we can do surrender control. In the meantime why don't you let Tyrell here handle the plays?

GABI

Ok...ok. I'll point out the plays from the book for you T and we'll just go from there.

They head back to the boys.

GABI (CONT'D)

Guys I know this is unorthodox, but Tyrell will be giving the plays.

TYQUAN

Where will you be?

GABI

I'll be there I just won't be able to talk. I can't go into much detail about it but you heard about the Radio Station, right?

They all nod their heads.

GABI (CONT'D)

I don't know what's making it happen but I'm pretty sure I won't be able to say much to you tonight while I have a mic on me. Before we get out there I asked Pastor Rodriguez to come back here so that he can pray for us. Again I know it's different but anyone who doesn't want to pray doesn't have to.

The boys bow their heads ready to pray. The Pastor shrugs and the adults bow their heads as Pastor Rodriguez begins to pray.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Heavenly Father, we know that you work in mysterious ways; but you also told us you would never leave or forsake us. So we ask for Your presence here tonight and that you help us surrender to Your will which is perfect, Lord. Guide this team and these coaches to reveal Your will here tonight Father and help them to succeed in bringing You glory Lord. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

ALL

Amen.

INT. WOOSLEY GYM - NIGHT

The Scoreboard reads. FALCONS - 18 HILLE CITY - 12

The action is fast and frantic on the court. The boys are playing their hearts out but it doesn't seem to be enough. They are still missing vital pieces to the puzzle but they battle on.

Demetrius goes for a layup and is fouled hard by a FALCONS PLAYER. The ref sees it and blows his whistle to signal a free throw.

The players line up around the free throw line. The crowd falls silent. As Demetrius shoots.

SWISH

He makes it in. Some boo and some cheer briefly. A hush falls again as he gets ball a second time. He shoots...

SWISH

It's in again, and the crowd goes wild with cheering and boeing.

ANGLE ON: The Announcer's Booth

CLYDE

What an exciting game we have here, huh Rich.

RICH

Definetly Clyde. The Falcons are in the lead but Hille City has a never say die attitude and you just have to love them for it.

CLYDE

Absolutely, those two free throws now put them 4 points away from the Falcons lead. But I have to admit the story of the night here is Hille City's coach Gabriel Ortega.

RICH

I know exactly what you mean Clyde, he's gesturing like a coach but whenever he opens his mouth he sounds like a preacher.

ANGLE ON: Hill City sidelines.

Gabi paces back and forth. Sometimes motioning for players to do certain things. No one understands him of course much to his frustration.

GABI
Glory to God!

SERIES OF SHOTS

A war of shots is waged on the court.

Demetrius hits a 3-pointer.

a FALCONS PLAYER hits a lay-up.

Back and forth the battle wages until...

It's the final moments of the game the scoreboard reads
FALCONS - 49 HILLE CITY - 48.

The Falcons are playing it safe, keeping the ball out arms reach. D'Anthony's guarding the player with the ball.

D'ANTHONY
Your shoes are untied.

THE PLAYER looks down briefly and Demetrius steals the ball for a fast break.

He passes to Chester, but Chester runs for the basket but as he nears it he trips on his own feet. The ball bounces out of his hands, it bounces high and before anyone can grab it, Chester turns his stumble into a leap, he grabs the ball and slams it forcefully into the basket.

The BUZZER sounds just as Chris comes down. The crowd goes wild.

The SCOREBOARD reads FALCONS - 49 HILLE CITY - 50

The boys run to Chester and dog pile him.

GABI
Glory to God!!

Everyone is celebrating.

ANGLE ON: The Announcer's Booth

RICH
I cannot believe what I just saw.

CLYDE

I've been calling this sport for a long time but I have yet to see a fumble turned into a dunk like that before. This Cinderella story might just have traction.

RICH

I'm starting to think it's a David vs Goliath story now.

CLYDE

You may be right Rich. For those tuning in at home that decisive dunk marks the end of the game but just the beginning for Hille City High as they make their way to the next round of the tournament. I think I speak for everyone when I say I can't wait to see what happens next for this...unorthodox team.

INT. WOOSLEY LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The boys are celebrating and asking Chester all sorts of questions.

TYQUAN

How'd you do that?

CHESTER

I don't know.

D'ANTHONY

What was going through your head.

Chester shrugs.

DEMETRIUS

Why don't you just tell us what happened.

CHESTER

Well I don't know how to describe it. I know I tripped but something just came over me. The ball was in the right place and all of a sudden I just knew what to do. It was like I was on autopilot and somebody else was at the wheel.

DEMETRIUS
Have you been practicing dunking?

CHESTER
I've never dunked before...ever.

Everyone grows silent for a moment, reverent.

D'ANTHONY
Man, I hope someone put that on
youtube. You're gonna get all the
girls now. Just remember who your
wing man is.

They all start laughing, shirking the feeling off.

Gabi and Tyrell stand away from the boys, letting them have
their moment.

TYRELL
I still don't know how he did it.
To recover from a fumble like
that...He should've landed flat on
his face.

GABI
I don't know what to tell you T,
except Glory to God.

INT. GABI'S HOME - NIGHT

Gabi comes in through the door and before he can fully open
it Feli jumps on him. They kiss and spin excitedly.

FELI
You did it!!

They part and she drags him to the Living Room

FELI (CONT'D)
I was watching but tell me
everything anyway.

They sit down on the couch.

GABI
I don't know Feli...I just really
felt God's presence out there. Hey
where's Ja'mese anyway? Was he
watching the game with you?

Feli's smile fades and her brow knits with worry.

FELI

The cops came by today to give
Ja'mese some of Jacobs
effects...There was a letter Jacob
wrote before...he passed. Ja'mese
took it to his room and he's been
there ever since.

GABI

Do you think I should talk to him?

Feli nods slowly.

INT. JA'MESE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ja'mese is on the bed with his knees folded to his chest and
his arms wrapped around them. His head is down and we can
hear soft sobs. There is a KNOCK on his bedroom door and
Ja'mese picks his head up and hurriedly wipes tears away
from his eyes.

JA'MESE

Come in.

Gabi opens the door slowly.

GABI

You mind if we had a talk?

Ja'mese nods. Gabi comes in and has a seat on the bed.

JA'MESE

I thought you were Feli.

GABI

Don't worry, your tough guy act is
safe with me.

JA'MESE

How'd the game go?

GABI

Really good. The boys, they asked
how you were doing.

JA'MESE

Yeah?

GABI

Yep, Demetrius seemed the most
concerned.

JA'MESE
That's weird.

GABI
Tell me about it.

They're silent for a beat, both working up the courage to talk about what happened that day.

JA'MESE
So...Feli told you what happened?

GABI
Yeah, just that you got some of Jacob's things from the cops and you've been in here ever since.

JA'MESE
Yeah...

GABI
Listen Ja'mese if you don't want...

JA'MESE
No, it's okay. I think I'm ready to talk about it now.

GABI
Ok.

JA'MESE
Jacob wrote a letter to me...right before it happened. I've read it I don't know how many times.

He passes the letter to Gabi. It's still sealed in the evidence bag. Gabi starts to read it.

JACOB (V.O)
Hey bro. I know what you're thinking. "Who even writes letters anymore?" Right? I can't explain it but something just came over me and it felt right just to write it all down. I want you to know that I love you, I know it sounds kinda corny but I do. You're the best friend I could've ever had, you've been there with me through thick and thin. When Dad left, and when Mom passed away you were there to help me focus, to share a laugh,

(MORE)

JACOB (V.O) (CONT'D)

and to make the dark times just that much brighter. There is only one thing I regret through all of that. I regret not being able to lead you to Christ. I tried to let you see Christ through me and my actions, but sometimes I can be a poor imitation. What I want you to know about Jesus more than anything is that He loves you...so much. He loves you even more than I do, even more than Mom did and I can tell you we both loved you more than life itself. But Jesus loved you so much that he sacrificed His own life so that you could be saved from yourself. I want you to understand that the things He did in the past still affect all of us today. We're all still sinners and we all have a chance to change our ultimate fate. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23. Salvation is a free gift Ja'mese, please take it before it's too late. When this life is all said and done, I want to see you again little brother. I know Mom does too.

Tears stream down Gabi's face. He turns to Ja'mese who is crying again himself.

JA'MESE

I've been sitting here this whole time, trying to wrap my head around it. It's almost like he knew what was going to happen...but that's impossible isn't it?

GABI

Nothing is impossible...for God.

Gabi holds his arms open and Ja'mese jumps into them. They embrace each other like father and son.

JA'MESE

I believe...I believe and I want to be saved.

Feli watches from the door, tears streaming down her face. She walks in wiping the tears from her eyes.

FELI
Did you tell him how to get saved?

GABI
I was just about to.

Ja'mese looks around a little bewildered.

JA'MESE
W-What do I have to do?

GABI
We're just going to say a prayer. I need you to repeat after me.

They gather together hold hands and bow their heads.

GABI (CONT'D)
Dear God in Heaven, I come to you in Jesus name, I know that I am a sinner and want to turn from my ways.

JA'MESE
Dear God in Heaven, I come you in Jesus name, I know that I am a sinner and want to turn from my ways.

GABI
I believe that Jesus Christ is your only begotten Son and He came to save me from my sins when He died for me at Calvary.

JA'MESE
I believe that Jesus Chris is your only begotten Son and He came to save me from my sins when He died for me at Calvary.

GABI
I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. My soul now belongs to you.

JA'MESE
I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. My soul now belongs to you.

GABI

Lord Jesus transform my life so
that I may bring glory and honor to
you alone and not myself.

JA'MESE

Lore Jesus transform my life so
that I may bring glory and honor to
you alone and not myself.

GABI

Thank you for this gift so freely
given at such great cost. Thank you
for your sacrifice Jesus and thank
you for saving me. Amen.

JA'MESE

Thank you for this gift so freely
given at such great cost. Thanks
you for your sacrifice Jesus and
thank you for saving me. Amen.

Gabi and Feli both hug Ja'mese.

FELI

We're family now.

FADE TO:

INT. GABI'S HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Feli is at the table sipping coffee and reading her Bible.
Periodically we hear a THUNK coming from outside. Gabi walks
in to the kitchen and starts preparing himself a cup of
coffee.

THUNK.

GABI

Good morning, mi amor.

FELI

Good morning, amor de mi vida.

He walks over to her and gives her a kiss as he settles down
in a chair.

THUNK.

GABI

I have to admit God really
impressed me last night.

FELI

You should see what He can do with
the Red Sea.

They both smile at the corny joke.

THUNK.

GABI

Ok, what is that sound anyway.

FELI

I was wondering when you were going
to ask. Why don't you go out and
check for yourself.

GABI

I hope it's not another addict
"fixing" our roof again.

Gabi gets up and heads to go...

EXT. GABI'S HOUSE - DAY

Gabi steps outside to see Ja'mese shooting a basketball at
the hoop attached to Gabi's garage --Swish. Gabi's smile
can't be contained, he walks toward the basket so he can
rebound for Ja'mese.

They continue on like this for a little while neither one
talking Pass -- Shoot -- Swish. Ja'mese never missing a
basket.

JA'MESE

You know we used to go to court at
the park and do this just about
every night. We'd practice then
he'd tell me to practice my threes
and free throws. It was just really
zen you know?

Gabi nods.

JA'MESE (CONT'D)

I never knew he had so much to tell
me... Actually deep down I did, he
used to ask me to get saved,
especially after he was baptized
but I always shot him down. After a
while he just stopped trying, I
guess he figured I wasn't ready.

GABI

Jesus once said that no one can come to him unless the Father brought them. My guess is Jacob sensed that was the case for you and left the issue with God.

Jacob stops shooting and holds the ball.

JA'MESE (CONT'D)

Well now that I am saved, what's next?

GABI

That is a very good question. I think we should ask someone who knows best.

JA'MESE

Who?

INT. HAVEN OF FELLOWSHIP - DAY

Pastor Rodriguez, Gabi and Ja'mese sit at a table in the back area, usually reserved for gatherings etc.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Please excuse the bear hug I gave you earlier; are your ribs ok?

JA'MESE

Yeah I'm fine. You knew my brother right?

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Yes, we used to have wonderful conversations about God and you. As a matter of fact I'm sure he and God are crying tears of joy right now.

JA'MESE

So what are the next steps? Do I get a whole bunch of rules to follow?

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Well there are things that we must abide do in order to keep our relationship with God stable. Our salvation is guaranteed, but we control how our fellowship with

(MORE)

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

God. Some things you will find yourself doing out of conviction by the Holy Spirit as Jesus said we are to: love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. He also said we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. The way that we show God we love Him is to keep his commandments and that includes treating everyone how you would treat yourself. We are also to partake of the communion; we do this to remember Jesus and the sacrifice He made for us as He took our sin upon Himself when he was crucified at Calvary. And we are to take part in the great commission; which is teaching others about Jesus Christ so that hopefully they can be saved like we are.

He passes Ja'mese a Bible and a work book.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

Now Gabi will go over everything in more detail by discipling you and then we'll get you baptized as a way of telling the world about your faith. But for today I'd just like to talk to you about faith.

SERIES OF SHOTS

We Hear the Pastor talk about his beliefs about faith as we see Ja'mese get back into the swing of things.

INT. GABI'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ja'mese has the Bible open in front of him with the workbook and a pencil as he looks back and forth to jot things down.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (V.O)

Jesus refers to faith the size of a mustard seed several times throughout the Bible. I believe that one of the reasons he compares the two is because faith starts off as a tiny utterance; "I believe". Then it has to be nourished and cared for, we do that by reading the Word of God and praying to God.

INT. HILLE CITY LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Ja'mese is seen slipping tracts into the lockers of his fellow teammates. He slips the last one in just as the boys file in. They all celebrate his return, hug him and pat him on the shoulder.

They all talk around him. Soon after they disperse and head to their lockers. Ja'mese tries to look busy but he nervously glances around to see what their reactions will be.

CHRIS

No way!!

TYQUAN

This can't be happening.

DEMETRIUS

Ja'mese was this you?

They all turn to look and Ja'mese and he nods sheepishly.

D'ANTHONY

Yeah me too.

JA'MESE

You won't believe this guys but I got saved.

Everyone gathers around as he tells them the story of how he came to Christ.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (V.O.)

We give it sunshine when we bring our faith to the light and tell others about it.

INT. HAVEN OF FELLOWSHIP BAPTISMAL POOL - DAY

Ja'mese is dressed in a white robe stepping into the pool and behind him are his team mates all getting baptized together.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (V.O.)

Before you know it, your faith grows large and begins to affect the world around you in amazing ways.

INT. MATHIS HIGH LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The boys are gathered praying as they are about to play the

next game in the tournament. Gabi and Tyrell walk in to the locker room carrying boxes. They set them down and open them to reveal new team uniforms with a team name: SAINTS. The boys put them on, they hold hands in prayer. After that the boys looks up with determined faces.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (V.O.)
Your faith will become your shield
and your banner as you go forth to
bring glory to God.

INT. MATHIS HIGH GYM - NIGHT

The team heads out to the court as cheers explode from the seats. People with signs saying "Glory to God" and other Bible verses wave their signs proudly.

ANGLE ON THE ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

RICH
Listen to those cheers as they
welcome the Hille City team to the
floor.

CLYDE
I think you mean the Hille City
Saints, Rich.

RICH
Well, I'll be. You're right Clyde,
they've go new uniforms and a new
team name. We're dealing with the
Saints now folks. The team is also
welcoming back Ja'mese Howard, glad
to see him back after the tragic
loss of his brother Jacob.

CLYDE
That's right Rich, is Ja'mese the
key to victory here tonight as they
vie for dominance as the district
champs against the Mathis High
Pumas.

RICH
We'll see. As far as I can tell the
Saints still have a handicap as far
as the coach goes. He can still
only say Glory to God.

CLYDE
It is rather bizarre, but I have to
(MORE)

CLYDE (CONT'D)

say it has garnered his team a large amount of support from fans. I also hear the whole team got baptized at the same time. Maybe there is something to this whole thing.

RICH

You never can tell Clyde. I hear the Almighty works in mysterious ways.

CLYDE

You got that right Rich. And I believe we're ready for the tip off.

ANGLE ON THE COURT

The players are gathered for the tip off Demetrius and a PLAYER from the Pumas are set to spring for the ball. THE REFEREE blows his WHISTLE and throws the ball up. Both players spring and Demetrius gets there first. He automatically passes to Ja'mese and the game is on.

Everything is coming together like never before. Instead of a two man show; all the cylinders are humming with harmony. The pumas don't know what hit them as they are being dominated early on.

ANGLE ON THE SIDLINES

Gabi can be seen giving directions with his hands. The team follows along with out a problem now.

The buzzer for half time sounds. The scoreboard reads Pumas:15 Saints:34

ANGLE ON THE ANNOUCNER'S BOOTH

CLYDE (CONT'D)

And it's the half. The Saints are just killing it out there tonight.

RICH

No kidding Clyde, it's like they're a brand new team. I don't know what's gotten into them but I'm starting to like their chances for not just for tonight but if they keep playing like this the State Championship might just be around

(MORE)

RICH (CONT'D)

the corner.

CLYDE

Me too, the Pumas were not any easy team to beat but it looks like the Saints are just putting them through the ringer tonight.

RICH

And it looks like the coach has drilled his team well on hand gestures, because gone is the confusion of the last few games.

CLYDE

He's getting more things done with his hands than I've seen coaches do with screaming and yelling.

The teams come out of their respective locker rooms, and hit the court.

RICH

It looks like we're ready for the next half.

ANGLE ON THE COURT

The rout continues as the Saints hold on to possession of the ball and the Pumas just can't keep up. The last buzzer sounds the scoreboard reads Pumas - 34 Saints 82. The fans storm the court and lift the boys up in celebration.

CLYDE

What a decisive win. I've never seen a team turnaround like this before. Congratulations to the new District Champions the Hille City Saints!

RICH

Congratulations indeed Clyde, and I think I can speak for all of us when I say; I'm just dying to see what the Saints do next.

SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. WINTERS GYM - NIGHT

Ja'mese hits a three-pointer.

Gabi fist pumps in the air saying "Glory to God!".

The scoreboard reads Winters - 42 Hille City - 58.

The fans go wild, there are more and more carrying signs.

INT. HAVEN OF FELLOWSHIP - DAY

The Church is half full as Pastor Rodriguez preaches from the pulpit.

INT. GARDEN GROVE GYM - NIGHT

Ja'mese passes to Demetrius for a thunderous alley-oop slam dunk. They high five each other.

The scoreboard reads Garden Grove - 68 Hille City - 75.

INT. GABI'S KITCHEN- NIGHT

Ja'mese, Feli, and Gabi hold hands as they pray. They finish and open their Bibles up.

INT. RIVER DALE GYM - NIGHT

ANGLE ON THE SIDELINE

The team is in a huddle, Tyrell is explaining the next few plays to them. They put their hands in the circle as they break and say: "Glory to God".

The scoreboard reads Riverdale - 81 Hille City - 92

INT. HAVEN OF REST - DAY

The church is full to the brim. People are standing up as Pastor Rodriguez preaches.

INT. GABI'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The entire team is there and they're all praying. They finish and open their bibles.

INT. CHITWOOD GYM - NIGHT

D'anthony distracts a player and steals the ball. He passes to Tyquan who shoots a 3-pointer just as the buzzer sounds. SWISH.

The scoreboard reads Chitwood - 56 Hille City - 72.

The BUZZER sounds.

The boys all dog pile Tyquan. They jump around in celebration.

ANGLE ON THE ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH.

RICH
Can you believe folks! The Saints
are going to the finals. This David
and Goliath story is about to draw
to a close. And I for one wish them
the best.

FADE TO:

INT. LELAND GREY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gabi is sitting across from Leland again the atmosphere is
tense with foreboding.

LELAND
Gabi, you knew this day would come,
didn't you?

GABI
Yeah Lee, I did.

LELAND
Thanks to your success the board is
paying attention if you win the
State Championship they will keep
funding the program.

GABI
That's fantastic, I can't believe
it!!

LELAND
There's another catch though.

GABI
What is it?

LELAND
They want you off the team
effective immediately.

GABI
Immediately!? I'd at least thought
they'd wait for the championship
game.

LELAND
They think a win for you would be
to dangerous it might make things
worse to take you off the team
after the big game. If you win
you'll be a hero and people will
fight tooth and nail to keep you

(MORE)

LELAND (CONT'D)

where you are...But, the board isn't down here they don't see the work you've done. I have, I've seen this team come back from the depths of loss and despair and use that motivation to win this school's first district title. I've seen you, use your handicap to encourage and lead your team to this city's first state title shot. I've seen the hope you guys have given this city, empty streets are full of life again, people that were afraid to come out of their homes are celebrating your victory with this city's first block party. Now I don't know if I believe in God but I do believe in hope and you've given it back to us all. To thank you for that...this conversation never happened.

GABI

What, I don't follow.

LELAND

I never got around to telling you the board's decision before your last game. You never heard any of this.

GABI

Wow Lee, I don't know what to say...except thank you.

Gabi gets up and shakes Leland's hand her turns to leave. But stops at the door. He turns around with the door open.

GABI (CONT'D)

To be honest with you Lee, I didn't do anything. But I did have faith and God did not disappoint me. So if you believe in hope, you're that much closer to believing in Him because hope is found in the Lord.

EXT. BLOCK PARTY - DAY

It looks like the entire city has shown up to show support and take part in the festivities. The city is alive again as people bustle and mingle, take part in games, and contests and the air around the blocks is care free and fun loving.

There's a banner hanging from the Good Shepherd church proclaiming: HILLE CITY FIRST ANNUAL BLOCK PARTY Brought to you by GOOD SHEPHERD HAVEN OF FELLOWSHIP and WKSJ - HILLE CITY CENTRAL GOOOOOOO SAINTS!!!

Further down the street though we see the hoodlums from earlier. The leader who tried to call out Ja'mese is surveying the area and seething. Police cars and officers can be seen blocking off the areas of the party.

He's paying close attention to Ja'mese as he walks around shakes hands and helps with the festivities.

Another compatriot of his walks up next to him.

GANG MEMBER 1

Yo, E what you thinka this. It all looks bad for bidness right?

E

Man, don't worry bout it. All this kumbaya stuff is gonna be over once another body shows up. And it's gonna be over real soon once they found out who did it?

GANG MEMBER 1

What you mean?

E

You see that kid over there?

GANG MEMBER 1

Oh yeah, ain't that little homey that lived over there, his brother died right?

E

Yeah, they're sayin' this is for him and crew playin basketball or something. But once I'm done with him, they won't be celebratin' no more.

GANG MEMBER 1

How you figure?

E

I know who did his brother, and I'm sure he's gonna want pay back.

GANG MEMBER 1

I feel you, but who did it?

E
I don't know but he'll think I do.

GANG MEMBER 1
Ohhh, nice one E.

ANGLE ON: The Block Party

Pastor Rodriguez steps up to a podium in front of the church. The taps on a microphone to get everyone's attentions.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ
Hello everyone, I just want all of you to look around for a moment...There are so many people here and I am overjoyed to see each and every one of you. It feels like it's been far too long since this city has had a reason to celebrate. Gang activity, murders, and other horrible crimes have spread fear to all of our hearts. But a group of young men and their coach have found faith in a time of great loss and pulled together to give this city something to root for. We have found hope through their courage and I pray that we can find courage from that hope. The courage to stand up and fight back against the darkness that threatens to engulf this city. The courage to tell these gang-bangers and drug dealers that we will no longer be victims. The courage to let God do our fighting for us, Deuteronomy 31:6 says: "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

Everyone cheers and claps.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)
We need not fear those who have chosen paths of crime and violence. King David said in a psalm: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the
(MORE)

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" We need not fear them but we do need to pray for them. I believe in the power of prayer, I believe this change is coming about because of the power of prayer. Jacob the young man who passed away told me that one of his favorite bible verses was Matthew 7:7 "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:" We need to ask for hearts to change for God to breathe new life here, and to be that city on the hill once more!

The crowd erupts with thunderous applause and cheering, whistles and shouts of praise can be heard as well.

The applause dies down. Pastor Rodriguez bows his head and begins to pray, all others bow their heads as well.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

Lord Jesus you said: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." There are many here in your name and we are asking for change from the Father on High, for a change of hearts, a change of minds and a change of this city. Father we need you to move throughout this place Lord, we know that this is just the beginning of your might plan coming to fruition. Help us all, to become helpful and faithful servants desirous to help You bring about the change taking place here and now. Abide within our hearts and dispel the fear taking root there. Show us how to serve you with courage and strength. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

ALL

Amen.

FADE TO:

EXT. BLOCK PARTY - NIGHT

The party has died down, people are still milling about

mostly cleaning. Ja'mese is clearing a few tables. He grabs some disposable table clothes, cups and plates. He goes to the nearest garbage can but it's already overflowing. He walks to...

EXT. HAVEN OF FELLOWSHIP BACK - NIGHT

To the dumpster behind the Church, he heaves all of the garbage he is carrying in there and turns around to find four men standing there, E and his CRONIES.

They surround Ja'mese and E saunters over to him in almost a friendly yet predatory manner.

E
Ja'mese right?

Ja'mese only nods too scared to speak.

E (CONT'D)
I was real sorry to hear about your brother.

He puts a hand on Ja'mese shoulder.

JA'MESE
Thanks.

E puts his arm around Ja'mese's shoulders making it difficult for him to leave.

E
Now, I asked my boys and none of 'em did your brother. So I did some diggin' and found out the hitter was a guy joinin' up wit anuther crew. I can't have that goin on, not on my block. An' I know you probaly want some payback, so I'ma make you an offer.

E waits for Ja'mese but he doesn't say anything.

E (CONT'D)
We know the cat that did it and he ain't too far from here, I figure you join up wit us and get you some payback. What you think?

Ja'mese starts mumbling under his breath.

E (CONT'D)
What did you say?

JA'MESE
My son if sinners entice thee,
consent thou not.

E
What?

JA'MESE
It's from the bible, it means don't
listen to people who just want to
get you in trouble. I'm not going
with you.

Ja'mese slides out from under E's arm and faces him.

E
You a coward? This guy killed your
brother and cold blood and you
ain't gonna do nothin about it?

JA'MESE
It takes more courage to forgive
someone than it does to take a
life. I've forgiven the person who
killed my brother, and Jacob
wouldn't want me to hurt anyone
else for him.

E just stares at Ja'mese with fury in his eyes.

EXT. BLOCK PARTY - NIGHT

Back at the block party Gabi is cleaning gunk off a table.
Suddenly he picks his head up. Feli is just walking by at
the moment and stops.

FELI
What's wrong, Amor?

GABI
I don't know...do you know where
Ja'mese went?

Feli shakes her head slowly.

Gabi leaves what he's doing and takes off. He runs to...

EXT. HAVEN OF FELLOWSHIP BACK - NIGHT

There Gabi sees a group of guys standing over a figure on
the ground in the fetal position.

GABI
HEY!! WHAT'RE YOU DOING!?!

The men turn around and take off as soon as they see him. The scurry away like roaches when the light comes on.

Gabi runs over to the figure and see it's Ja'mese. He beaten up pretty bad, Gabi sets down beside him and holds him in his lap.

Feli comes running and see the scene. She gasps and covers her mouth with her hands.

Gabi turns to her with tears in his eyes.

GABI
He's hurt, call the ambulance.

Feli nods as tears begin streaming down her eyes as well. She pulls out her cellphone and makes the call.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The DOCTOR is in the room with Gabi and Ja'mese. Ja'mese is sitting on the examination bed he's pulling his shirt on gingerly over bandaged ribs. He banged up with some cuts and bruises on him.

The Doctor is putting X-rays up on the light board.

DOCTOR
You're very luck young man, aside from some bruised ribs and some other scraps you're completely fine.

JA'MESE
I don't feel fine.

DOCTOR
Well from the way I hear it you did just tangle with one of the worst gangs in town, be glad you're feeling anything at all.

JA'MESE
Good point.

The Doctor shakes hands with Ja'mese and Gabi, and heads for the door.

DOCTOR

Just take some pain meds and rest for week or two and you should be fine. No strenuous activity, make sure you baby those ribs.

JA'MESE

Thank you.

GABI

Thanks Doc.

With a wave he opens the door and heads out. Leaving Ja'mese and Gabi alone in the room.

GABI (CONT'D)

What happened out there?

JA'MESE

They asked me to join up with them.

GABI

What did you say.

JA'MESE

I quoted Proverbs to them.

Gabi guffaws and slaps Ja'mese on the shoulder. Ja'mese winces in pain.

GABI

Oh yeah, I'm sorry.

JA'MESE

No problem, with my luck you probably just popped something back into place.

GABI

I see your sense of humor is still in tact.

JA'MESE

That's probably the only thing that isn't bruised.

GABI

Come on wise guy, let's go home.

Gabi helps Ja'mese off of the exam bed and you can tell he's in a lot of pain.

Ja'mese stops for a second.

JA'MESE

The game is tomorrow, what are we going to do?

GABI

We'll do what we've been doing this whole time.

JA'MESE

And that is?

GABI

We'll trust in God.

FADE TO:

EXT. HILLE CITY - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS:

The streets are mostly deserted, wind picks up some debris and paper and floats it through the street.

JOHN GRIFFITH (V.O.)

Hello out there Hille City this is John Griffith on WKSB - Hille City Central and if you're just rolling into town don't worry we haven't abandoned the place.

Different storefronts are showing closed signs in their window and no signs of life.

A banner is hanging in the middle of the city it reads: GO GET EM SAINTS!! GLORY TO GOD.

JOHN GRIFFITH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And to the boys I've got a special request and a special message to you from all of in Hille City, good luck and glory to God.

INT. BUS - DAY

We see the speaker on the corner of the bus as we hear something like "Glory" by Phil Wickham play. We see the boys sitting in their seats heads bowed, praying.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

We see the bus as it passes by and there's a line of cars behind it stretching as far as the eye can see.

EXT. HARDEN VALLEY DAY

Harden Valley is an idyllic city beautiful and bustling and the opposite of Hille City in every way. The bus passes through the city streets and boys stare out the windows in amazement at how beautiful and grandiose everything is.

The bus turns into the arena where they'll be playing and we see a flashing neon sign advertising the game. Animations play on the screen along with the words: "COME AND SEE THE 5-TIME STATE CHAMPIONS THE HARDEN VALLEY TIMBERWOLVES AS THEY FACE OFF AGAINST THE HILLE CITY SAINTS FOR A 6TH RUN AT THE TITLE!!" "GOOOOOOOO T-WOLVES!!!"

INT. BUS - DAY

After seeing that The boys sit back down as the realization starts to kick in.

D'ANTHONY

Man, all we got was a basic banner.

DEMETRIUS

Don't worry we'll just go home with their basic trophy.

They all laugh, easing the tension.

INT. HARDEN VALLEY ARENA - NIGHT

The Arena is packed to the gills. There are signs everywhere some for the T-Wolves others for the Saints. We see familiar faces in the seats, Feli is sitting with Esmerelda and the Soup Kitchen crew, Principal Grey is there with his family,

Pastor Rodriguez is there in the middle of many church goers, all with sings saying: Glory to God, and other Biblical phrases.

ANGLE ON ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

RICH

Can you feel the electricity in this crowd tonight Clyde?

CLYDE

Oh absolutely Rich, I have been announcing for events for years and I gotta tell ya this crowd matches those in some of the most anticipated face-offs I've ever seen.

RICH

That's right Clyde and that is in no small part to teams that are playing tonight. We have the 5-time State Champions the Harden Valley Timberwolves facing off against first-time competitors the Hille City Saints in a David and Goliath story almost straight out of the Bible.

CLYDE

It has been an absolutely incredible ride Rich, watching these young men find faith against uncertain odds and through times of turmoil has been one of the highlights of my career.

RICH

Mine too, it was amazing to see their ability and confidence get stronger as their faith grew.

CLYDE

I have to hand it to them their tenacity has been impressive but will their faith and their determination be enough to win them the championship tonight?

RICH

Only time will tell Clyde, only time will tell.

INT. HARDEN VALLEY ARENA LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The boys sit visibly nervous, Gabi paces, and Tyrell's knee won't stop bouncing.

The door the locker room bursts open and they all jump, as Pastor Rodriguez comes in, looks around and tries to suppress a laugh as he knows he's caught them at a vulnerable moment.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Nervous?

GABI

Us? No way.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

Really?

He looks over and Gabi follows his gaze to Tyrell who's just coming down from the lockers.

GABI

Maybe a little.

Pastor Rodriguez claps Gabi on the shoulder and smiles.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ

I came pray with you guys, before the last game.

They all get up and gather around arms over each others shoulders forming a circle.

PASTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

Father we come before you once more to ask you to lead us one last time. We want nothing more than for you to be exalted over us, so we ask that you rebuke anything in us that is not of you. When these boys take the court tonight let the crowd, and the people at home only see you and your transformative power. Let them see how you've taken these boys from the depth of despair and brought them up to the highest of heights. Be with them Lord, go before them and let them rely on your power, your strength, and your wisdom. In Jesus' name we pray.

ALL

Amen

GABI

I want to tell you all that I'm proud of you guys, you stuck in there even when things got bad, you didn't give up, you kept the faith. That faith in me, in Tyrell, in the team and in God got us this far, don't lose it now. This is it, we've accomplished what we came here to do, but let's take it all the way, let's win this one for Jacob who had faith in all of us

(MORE)

GABI (CONT'D)

from the start, today is the day we
honor what and who he stood for.
Today is the day we bring Glory to
God.

He puts his hand in the circle, which quickly followed by
everyone else's.

GABI (CONT'D)

On three.

ALL

1,2,3 GLORY TO GOD!!!

They part and Tyrell leads the boys out to the court. Gabi
stays behind with Ja'mese.

GABI

You sure you want to head out
there?

JA'MESE

They're my team, I have to support
them, even if it's only in prayer.

Gabi nods and he walks out with Ja'mese to the...

INT. HARDEN VALLEY ARENA COURT - NIGHT

ANGLE ON BROADCASTER'S BOOTH:

RICH

And here they come!!

Cheers erupt from the crowd, air horns are blown confetti is
thrown as the Saints charge out on to the court. For the
first time the front of their Jerseys can be seen. They all
of have Saints like usual but they all have the same number;
14.

CLYDE

The Saints are making their way to
court with new jerseys ladies and
gentlemen. And let me clear up any
confusion for you they all do have
the same number on the front but
their usual team numbers on the
back.

RICH

I think that's in memoriam of the
student who lost his life recently
Jacob Howard may he rest in peace.

CLYDE

Did you notice Ja'mese limping his way out here.

RICH

I did Clyde, I believe he was assaulted recently and is not participating tonight.

CLYDE

He looks like he should be home healing up.

RICH

I think so too, but I'm sure wild horses couldn't keep him away from this game.

CLYDE

Your're right, this is the place to be tonight. As the Timberwolves make their way out to the court.

Loud music begins to queue up as the lights go dark and strobe lights start flashing, as well as laser lights. An ANNOUNCER can be heard of the loud speakers.

D'ANTHONY

You gotta be kidding me.

ANNOUCER

INTRODUCING YOUR STARTING LINEUP
FOR THE HARDEN VALLEY
TIMBERWOLVES!!!

The crowd erupts in to even louder cheers. The first PLAYER bursts through a human sized-paper with GO GET 'EM WOLVES printed on it. As he comes through air horns blare and confetti shooters blast off in his path. The Announcer rattles off the names of the starting five as they all make their way out.

The lights come back up and as each PLAYER comes out they get passed a ball and each one dunks the ball with a different kind of flare.

CHESTER

Well that's intimidating.

TYQUAN

You're telling me?

DEMETRIUS

It's just lights and dunking, I
have faith in us.

After they all finish, the REFEREE makes his way to the middle of the court with the ball. He blows his WHISTLE to get everybody settled down. The players all gather for tip-off.

Demetrius and the POINT GUARD from the T-wolves come to the middle and get ready for the tip.

The referee throws the ball, blows the WHISTLE and the T-wolves Point Guard leaps even higher than Demetrius bats the ball to one of his teammates and the war attrition begins.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The T-wolves score first.

Demetrius gets the ball and is immediately double-teamed. He's forced to pass it, but before it gets to another Saint it gets stolen and the T-wolves gain the the lead.

Gabi groans as he watches on. Ja'mese has his head bowed in prayer.

Tyquan gets passed the ball, and instantly shoots it just to get rid of it...Scoring a 3-pointer, everyone looks around stunned.

The T-wolves score again.

Tyquan shoots another 3-pointer.

The T-wolves score again.

Tyquan shoots another 3-pointer.

After the T-wolves score once more. Chester passes the ball to Tyquan and two T-wolves swarm him. Tyquan smiles and passes it between one of their legs to Demetrius who has not trouble getting past his defender now for a lay up.

The COACH for the T-wolves is livid, and calls a timeout.

The Saints gather around Gabi and Tyrell on the sideline.

TYRELL

Alright Tyquan! You shook their
confidence, they though Demetrius
was the only threat.

D'ANTHONY

I did too...no offense.

TYQUAN

You weren't the only one. I don't know what happened it's like the ball had a mind of it's own.

TYRELL

Either way, it was awesome. They'll switch to man-to-man now and that'll give you room to move Demetrius. But don't focus too much on Demetrius or else they'll double team him again, try to pass it around, take a shot if you got it and Demetrius you be there for the assist. Anything else to add Coach?

Gabi shakes his head and put his hand in. They all do and break on ...

ALL

GLORY TO GOD!

The game resumes and the boys are working like a machine again, passing and shooting with Demetrius there to help with assists.

The scoreboards battle for supremacy as each team makes a basket. The BUZZER signaling the end of the first half sounds, and the scoreboard reads Saints: 28 T-wolves: 30.

INT. HARDEN VALLEY ARENA LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The boys are panting heavily, everyone has sweat streaming down them.

Gabi surveys his team, his heart swells.

GABI

I see you guys, you're playing your hearts out and God sees what you're doing in His name. Have heart and rest up, this is far from over, but by the end of this God's name will be glorified and either way this shakes out we'll be rewarded for leaving it all out there and having no regrets.

Ja'mese stands up, with tears in his eyes.

JA'MESE

I just wanted to say I'm sorry I can't be out there with you tonight. You know growing up it was just me, Jacob and Mom and soon enough it was just Jacob and me, and then I lost him too. But after everything we've been through, and after seeing you honoring my brother with everything you have tonight...it makes me feel like my family has gotten so much bigger. Thank you all, all of you.

Demetrius is the first to get up and give him a hug, then the rest of the team joins in slowly one at a time, for a massive group hug.

After a beat.

JA'MESE (CONT'D)

You know I love you guys, but ya'll stink pretty bad.

Everybody laughs.

INT. HARDEN VALLEY ARENA - NIGHT

The WHISTLE blows and the action resumes. The pace is fast and furious, the T-wolves have kicked it up a notch and the Saints are trying to keep up.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The boys are matching shot for shot with the T-wolves.

The scoreboards react climbing higher and higher.

Sweat pours off of both teams as they make shots.

At one point Chester gets that ball, it slips from his hand and one of the T-WOLVES grabs it and brings it to the hoop, Demetrius blocks the shot last minute to the gasps of the crowd.

ANGEL ON THE AUDIENCE:

Shots of the crowd as they watch the game pensive. We see Felicia wringing her hands, Pastor Rodriguez looks on with concern, Esmerelda watches as her hands to her mouth.

ANGLE ON THE SIDE LINE:

Gabi paces back and forth, Ja'mese is still head bowed and praying.

ANGLE ON THE ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH:

RICH

This is just a good old-fashioned shoot out here, Clyde.

CLYDE

It's truly a sight to behold, The T-wolves have a slight edge, but the Saints are holding steady, this feels like college level stuff right here.

RICH

Some of these boys are destined for that and maybe even the NBA if they keep this up.

CLYDE

Have you notice the level of dedication from both teams Rich?

RICH

Absolutely, the Saints have got to be winded but they aren't giving a single quarter to the T-Wolves.

CLYDE

And I've noticed the coach of the T-wolves signaling players to switch out and they shake their heads at him. The starting lineup is seeing this through to the bitter end.

RICH

That is tremendous dedication, Clyde.

CLYDE

My thoughts exactly, Rich.

The final few seconds of the game approach. Harden Valley is ahead by 1 point and are keeping the ball in their possession trying to run down the clock.

Suddenly Ja'mese's head snaps up. He catches Gabi's attention.

JA'MESE
Put me in coach.

Gabi shakes his head, "No"

JA'MESE
Coach, I need you to put me in now.

Gabi looks at him perplexed.

JA'MESE
Have faith.

Gabi relents and nods, he flags down Tyquan and they switch out.

RICH (V.O.)
What's this now?

CLYDE (V.O.)
It looks like a switch up and they're going to be putting in Ja'mese Howard.

RICH (V.O.)
I thought he was hurt.

CLYDE
Sure does look at it, what could the coach be thinking?

Ja'mese limps over to the basket. As the clock ticks down. Chris and Demetrius are checking the ball on the other side of the court. Demetrius gets the ball then looks at the clock.

He spots Ja'mese, and in a last ditch effort hurls the ball with all of the strength toward the other basket.

Time slows down the ball flies through the air as the clock counts down the seconds before the last buzzer. Ja'mese starts running, a few steps in he lifts off the ground as the ball reaches him, he grabs it and slams it down for a thunderous slam dunk. He falls and hits the ground with a thud.

The BUZZER SOUNDS as the scoreboard changes showing T-WOLVES - 82 SAINTS - 83.

The Saint's crowd goes nuts, they storm the court and lift the boys, Gabi and Tyrell up, someone passes them the trophy and Gabi lifts it high.

GABI
GLORY TO GOD!!!

FADE TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Gabi and Ja'mese are in the office again. Ja'mese is on a bench and the doctor is talking to them.

DOCTOR

I don't know what you two were thinking with that stunt you pulled. But the X-rays show that there's has been no additional damage. I can't explain how it happened but you're very lucky indeed young man.

A tear streams down Ja'mese's cheek.