



# THE Shepherd

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. Luke 19:10

## The Wild Man of Chattanooga

### Mickey Park's Two-fisted Journey to Salvation

by Frank Sambrick

*And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him.*

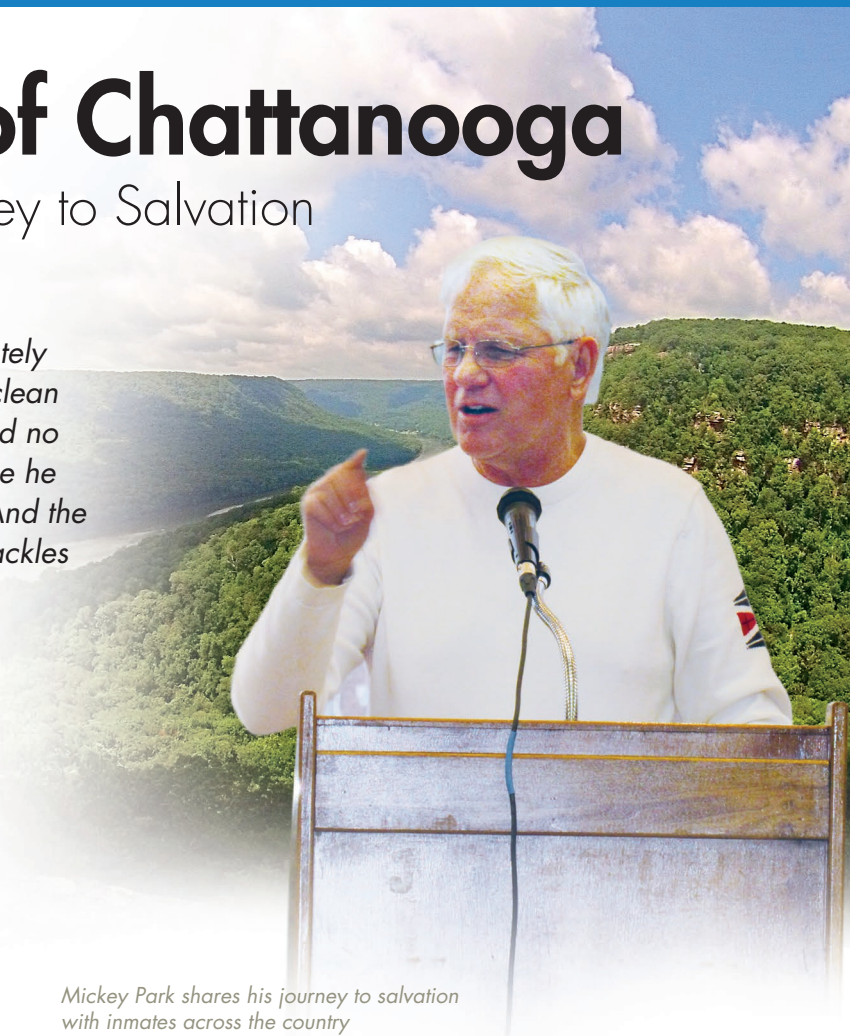
Mark 5:2-4

Those verses from Mark 5 begin the account of maybe the wildest, scariest homeless person ever. They could just as easily have been an introduction to the life and times of Mickey Park. In his rough-hewn autobiographical, *Stepping Stones To Freedom*, author Mickey Park peels away the layers of his life on the run to reveal the helpless, unloved child who only ever wanted to be a part of a real family.

His gripping story has been told on the 700 Club, Prison Fellowship's Inside Journal and in dozens of prisons across the country. **Christian Library International has begun distributing his book and his gospel tract to inmates, which has already resulted in at least 55 decisions for Christ.**

Using the vernacular of the street, Mickey takes the reader with him on his journeys as he drinks, tokes and fights his way across America, Canada and Europe, looking for the next opportunity to get stoned. He always finds it and when he does, there are always consequences to pay.

From an early age, Mickey had to learn to fight. At school, other kids ridiculed him for his hillbilly accent. At home, his



*Mickey Park shares his journey to salvation with inmates across the country*

parents were raging alcoholics. By the age of 10, he already hated his life. He was angry. He began picking fights just for kicks. Then came the alcohol. The drugs soon followed. By his teens he was a hopeless addict, living for the next high and willing to do just about anything to get it.

Mickey's life on the streets would naturally lead to a life of crime. He graduated quickly from petty theft to strong-armed robbery just to feed the habit. And then, the big time—a murder charge.

*continued on next page*

**"The problem with drug addiction is that you never get enough. It is a demonic bondage that keeps growing until it totally consumes you."**

Excerpt from the book, *Stepping Stones To Freedom*

continued from previous page

## Journey to Salvation



Mickey as a high school sophomore.

After agreeing to a plea deal for first-degree murder, Mickey received a sentence of 99 years. He contemplated suicide. In his despair, he remembered the one Christian he had known in his life—his grandmother. In his jail cell, he fell to his knees and began to pray. At the age of 25, with nowhere to run and no hope for the future, he gave his life over to Jesus.

The former hillbilly alcoholic drug addict, as he liked to call himself, was now a child of the living God. For the first time in his life, Mickey felt alive. He began to share his testimony with other inmates. Eventually, Mickey earned his Masters Degree in Ministry from Luther Rice Seminary and met a young missionary girl who would become his wife, all while still behind bars.

Today, Mickey is a free man with a real family. Granted parole by God's grace, he lives with his wife and daughter in a home that overlooks the beautiful hills of Tennessee, where he was born. But he still spends a lot of time behind bars, visiting inmates and sharing his life story in the hope of reaching one more lost life for Christ.

Sign up to write letters to new Christians behind bars who are hungry for spiritual truth like Mickey was. E-mail [cliministers@gmail.com](mailto:cliministers@gmail.com) to get started.

## Words of Light

*Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me. Psalm 142:7*

Prison is a building where people are legally kept for a crime they have committed. Some may have been wrongly convicted, but still, they are behind bars. We use the word *prison* in other ways to describe confinement and captivity.

For example, David considered the cave he was in a prison. He had fled there to escape his powerful enemies (Psalm 142). While David was in this self-imposed prison, he poured out his heart to God. He pleaded with God for mercy and deliverance.

**Sometimes we may feel like we're in our own prisons of despair, depression or disgrace.** It's like our minds are behind bars. We can't seem to free ourselves from destructive or sinful thoughts. Like David, we need to cry out to God for mercy and deliverance.

Whether restrained physically or mentally, there is only one course of action. As Christians, we know that course is to rely on Jesus. He trusted God the Father with His life and went to the cross. Like Jesus, we need to take up our cross and depend on God.

We may not be freed from our troubles right away. Everything is in God's perfect timing. Jesus died on the cross but was raised in glorious power. This is our hope. No matter what dire circumstances come our way, we have the resurrection power of Jesus Christ to see us through. **We may have difficulty, but we also have assurance of God's help** (Psalm 34:19).

God's help may not come in just the form or fashion we desire. But He knows all the details that we don't. He also knows the future, which we don't. This is why we have faith. We place our trust and confidence in God.

Believers in prison learn this lesson first hand. They're alone and vulnerable to persecution and violence. They desire to be released from their physical captivity, but that may not be God's plan for them. Like David, they desperately cry out for God's rescue.

David expects an answer and looks forward to the righteous gathering around him because of God's goodness to him. On the other hand, we know David praised God in all circumstances (2 Samuel 12:15-23). Even if he had not been freed from the cave, David would have still honored God. **This is also true for many of the inmates we serve; they are not physically freed from confinement, but free to praise God. And they do!**

Erwyn, imprisoned in California, writes, "I am in jail but I am free and for that I praise God and my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." And John from Mississippi writes, "Praise God! I've lost it all. But I have never had my heart smiling like it does now. God took hopelessness and helplessness and turned it to hope and helping others."

**Call to Action: Look for ways to praise God daily.**



Kathleen Skaar, Founder

## Change Lives Through Legacy Giving

By Tom Logan, CLI Volunteer and Partner

About 12 years ago, my wife began volunteering at Christian Library International by reviewing answers from inmates in the Christian Leadership Bible Study. She enjoyed writing notes to the

inmates and encouraging them. I also began to volunteer at CLI, where I helped ship Bibles and other Christian books to chaplains at approximately 1,600 prisons. Each book is stamped,



asking the reader to contact CLI if the book helped make a difference to them.

After my wife died, I started reviewing the inmate Bible studies and, like my wife, I found this to be a blessing. The CLI motto is "Advancing Christ's Light in Prisons," and I believe as these folks return from prison, they will have better lives as Christians.

CLI ships many boxes of books each month and also purchases large print and Spanish Bibles as requested by chaplains. I am glad that I am able to be a regular financial supporter and will add CLI to my will. I would encourage others who see the value in helping



Tom Logan, CLI Volunteer and Partner

these individuals become new creations in Christ to support this ministry through legacy gifts.

**For more information about legacy giving, call CLI at 919 790-6987.**

## Set Free by God

By Luis Vazquez, CLI Disciple

I pray that this article finds all of you well and with Almighty God's blessings upon you. I want to thank the volunteers at CLI for their constant prayers for me when I was incarcerated.

On February 21, 2018, at 2:30 p.m., I was found not guilty by 12 jurors. To God goes all the glory and all the honor! My mother's pastor told her, "God said, Luis is coming home soon, but it's in My time." Then God told my mother, "Luis is coming home, free, because he is innocent, but it's in My time."

I was set free by God. Thank you all for your prayers, for keeping my family in your prayers, and for all your inspiring feedback on my lessons.

Being incarcerated for two and a half years was stressful. But I trust in the Lord and all His righteousness.

May the Lord continue to bless you and help you in assisting others with your Bible studies and encouragement. Now that I'm out and free, I will continue the CLI Bible study and finish the journey I started with you guys.

If you are not already a volunteer, I encourage you to give your time to this worthy ministry so people behind bars can grow closer to God.

**Sign up to disciple inmates like Luis through the CLI Bible study by emailing [cliministers@gmail.com](mailto:cliministers@gmail.com).**

Inmate Letters:

### If the Son sets you free...

"I wanted to first write and say THANK YOU! CLI donated the perfect gift at the perfect time, a Mosaic Bible. It has a perfect combo of resources and a section specifically dedicated for drawing/journaling. The reason this is important is because one afternoon God laid it on my heart to keep a spiritual journal and that night I received your Bible. Words cannot express the awe I have in seeing that God always knows our needs and delivers."

Blake, MRRJ, Staunton, VA

"I received your CLI Bible today, the day after my birthday. I have been trying to get a Bible for over a month and when it arrived today, it brought tears to my eyes. The Lord blesses me everyday."

Keith, Bent County C.F., Las Animas, CO

The CLI Bible Study:

### You will be free indeed

"I really enjoy these studies and your comments. They keep me going and make me happy. I don't get letters from family, so it does help when I get my Bible studies and they have comments. Thanks so much!"

Estil, Stevens C.C., Welch, WV

"I love and am learning a lot from your studies and I will keep up with them wherever and whenever I go from this facility. I have your address in my Bible and will refer you to whoever wants to be in an in-depth and spiritually enlightened Bible study. I thank God for people and organizations such as yours for sharing God's love and Word!"

William, Laurel County C.C., London, KY



# AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

## 2018 Free To Praise Dinner & Silent Auction

Christian Library International's Free to Praise Dinner and Silent Auction is coming up in October. You'll be inspired by the testimony of a former inmate helped by our ministry, worship music, and great fellowship with other believers involved in our ministry. Reserve your table today!

**Tuesday, October 2**

6:30 PM

Embassy Suites

201 Harrison Oaks Blvd.

Cary, NC 27513

### Dinner Sponsorships:

Platinum: \$7,500

Gold: \$5,000

Silver: \$2,500

Bronze: \$1,000



All these sponsorship levels include a full table (10 seats).  
Email [jwatsoncli@gmail.com](mailto:jwatsoncli@gmail.com) today to make your reservation!

## Your Books Are Answers to Prayer

### Donate Your Gently Used Bibles and Christian Books

We all have Bibles and Christian books that we take for granted. Some books may not have been opened in decades. Why let these books go to waste when men and women behind bars would love to read the life-giving words inside?

Inmates write to us often about how certain books donated by CLI are answers to prayer. You can help answer more inmate prayers by mailing or donating your gently used Bibles and Christian books to:

**Christian Library International**  
4724 Hargrove Road, Suite 100  
Raleigh, NC 27616

For Georgia deliveries, call 706-362-3282.



In recognition of our compliance with Standards of Responsible Stewardship, CLI has been accredited by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

KATHLEEN SKAAR, FOUNDER | 4724 HARGROVE ROAD, SUITE 100 | RALEIGH, NC 27616 | 919 790-6987

KSKAARCLI@GMAIL.COM | WWW.CLI.WORLD | FACEBOOK.COM/CHRISTIANLIBRARYINTERNATIONAL | TWITTER.COM/CLI\_MINISTRIES

## DONATE TO CHRISTIAN LIBRARY INTERNATIONAL

ACCOUNT NO. \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

### Here's my donation of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK ENCLOSED     MAKE ME A MONTHLY DONOR

Please bill my credit card:

VISA     MC     AMEX     DISCOVER

**Christian Library International**  
4724 Hargrove Road, Suite 100  
Raleigh, NC 27616



Please mail this completed form with your generous gift, or you may donate on our secure website at [www.cli.world](http://www.cli.world) (501(c)(3) tax deductible).