

Hearts and Cars, Washed Clean

a brush with the law

On a hot Sunday afternoon in July, Houston-area law enforcement officers brought their vehicles to a car wash. The people scrubbing those cars squeaky clean with brushes and sudsy water were former prison inmates. (Now *there's* a get-together that could've been really awkward!) Reporters were on the scene and their coverage made the national news. We thought you'd like to hear how the story first started.

Like almost everyone else in prison, Torrance Wilson hated cops. He did four years for assaulting an HPD officer, went back for another two for aggravated robbery, and made his third and final trip for felony possession of a firearm. Little did he know back then what would happen the next time he came face to face with those police officers he despised so much.

mama's influence

Torrance did some figuring one day and came up with the number 90 -- that's how many years he could've received for his crimes. The fact that he did only 10 was, according to him, evidence of the Lord's favor. Only in hindsight could he have come to that conclusion.

Torrance's mother was addicted to crack cocaine. His father was an alcoholic. He was raised by both parents until they separated, when he was 13. Torrance was fathered by his neighborhood and the streets of Houston. Even so, he was never out of his Heavenly Father's sight.

My mother sent me to a Christian camp when I was 10, and it was there that I heard the gospel. I accepted Christ as my savior, but not my Lord. I went back to the same neighborhood and the same environment and the cares of the world choked the Word out of me. Money was my god, and I went on to sell crack for the next 20 years.

It was losing his grandmother that finally brought Torrance back to life. As a child, he had adored this godly woman. They had been so close that he called her "Mama." Now, locked up, he couldn't go to her funeral. In the grip of yearning grief, his heart led him back to the Lord, and this time, he totally surrendered his life.

out-of-the-blue idea

One evening, sitting in a chapel service, Torrance listened as the pastor told the inmates that they should give back to the communities from which they had once taken. As Torrance recalls, instantly the Lord gave him an idea: One day, he and other Christian ex-offenders could hold a car wash -- and not for just any ol' cars! They would wash the cars of law enforcement officers, the people he and his fellow inmates had once run from and despised.

The symbolism was so clear to him: Washing cars would represent Christ washing away their sins and making all things new. They could serve these officers, showing them the love of Christ and the redemptive power of Jesus. Until this moment, Torrance had never had any desire to serve law enforcement. He calls the idea that popped into his head "a testament to the renewal of the mind and heart in Christ Jesus." It was a great idea, but one that had to be put on hold while he did his time.

drawn in

Torrance was about two months away from being released to go home when God spoke to his heart to go to a halfway house instead. He was reluctant to do that because he knew that many of those homes were filled with addicts, and he was a former drug dealer. After fasting and praying, he told the Lord, "I'll be obedient, but the only halfway home I'll apply to is C.H.A.R.M."

He had learned about C.H.A.R.M. from their visits to his prison. "They came in and loved us well, and I understood why the scriptures say that the kindness of God draws a man to repentance. Their love drew me in, closer to Christ." Torrance came to our transitional home and stayed for 17 months.

official thanks

In July, the idea the Lord had given him in prison became a reality. He and his C.H.A.R.M. brothers held The Redemption Wash, where they washed the cars of law enforcement officers in a beautiful demonstration of their transformed lives. They thanked the officers for their service and prayed for their protection and for their families.

Torrance said, "It was such a joy serving the officers, and it blew me away how many faithful servants of the Lord wanted to be involved." What really warmed his heart was the comment made by Police Captain Michael Faulhaber:

It means a heck of a lot more than any commendation that I've ever received.

from drug dealer to bridge builder

Hosting more car washes is one of Torrance's many dreams and plans. Soon to be an ordained minister, he has a vision to develop discipleship and inner-city bridge-building ministries and wants to use every pain and heartache in his past to motivate and minister to others. Torrance says he's been on an "amazing journey." We can only imagine where his path might lead him.



Old things have passed away.



All things have become new.



All glory and honor to God!



The Redemption Wash

For more news stories, click here: [Redemption Wash](#)

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;
and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- Galatians 2:20

Your donation helps us provide family-style housing for recently released men and women. There they learn how to "do life" as they continue to grow in the Lord. We give them a stable place from which to launch back into society, now free to be the people God created them to be.

[Donate Today!](#)

Christ's Hope and Reconciliation Ministry (C.H.A.R.M.) ministers to incarcerated men and women and their families. Our mission is to share the hope found only in Jesus Christ and to see souls reconciled to God. As the lives of individuals are transformed, so are their relationships with their families, local church, and communities.

STAY CONNECTED



C.H.A.R.M. Prison Ministry, P.O. Box 55548, Houston, TX 77255-5548