**Scene 9**

*(Lights up)*

*(Pastor Mike is in the basement of the church with lights dim listening to an old tape of him preaching)*

**Pastor Mik**e: *(chuckling*) The Old Preacher huh?

Where is that guy? What happened to me? All for what? For money? A nice house, cars, clothes?

*(Looking down at the rings on his finger)*

*(Angrily*) All for these material things! (*Takes wedding ring and other ring off and throws them)!* How does this help me now? *(Crying with deep breaths)*

God I’m sorry! I’m so sorry! Why did I let these things consume me? Why?

*(Realizes he threw his wedding ring)*

Oh no! Not my ring! (*Frantically looks for it and finds it! Puts it back on his finger*)

Help me Lord! I need you! I need you now!

(*His phone rings)* (He *Stops the tapes and regains his composure)*

*(Sniffling)*

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Hello! Yes this is he! Hello Cherise! Why are you up this time of night? I’m sorry, but I don’t think that’s a good idea….Cherise look we’re meeting tomorrow, just…….At the front door?….(*Walking to the front door)* Cherise this is very dangerous! Hold on! (*Looks through the peep hole)*

Cherise let me see your right hand please! *(Opens the door)*

*(Cherise comes in. Pastor Mike closes and locks the door behind her)*

Cherise I don’t think this is a good idea.

**Cherise:** WellI had nowhere else to go!

**Pastor Mike:** I know but…

**Cherise:** You have no idea what I’ve been through!!!…..I’ve been running and hiding in the streets for the past three weeks…

**Pastor Mike:** What happened to your apartment?

**Cherise**: I can’t go back there! This old man that I used to always help came to visit me a few weeks ago and he was one of them!

**Pastor Mike**: One of them?

**Cherise**: One of the soldiers or troopers, I don’t know. He choked me and tried to make me receive that Mark!

**Pastor Mike**: Cherise I’m sorry to hear that, but you being here may not be the best idea. We need to stay separated….it’s safer.

**Cherise** (*Raising her voice*) Did you hear what I said - I have nowhere else to go!

**Pastor Mike**: Shhh Shhh!

**Cherise** (*lowering her voice)* Look, I’m hungry, but I can’t buy any food…I can’t even get into a shelter without that 666….No one will sell me anything! I even tried to sell some of my mom’s jewelry for food, but without that Stupid Mark, no will even talk to me….I don’t know, it’s too much….I might as well take the dumb mark and get on with my life.

**Pastor Mike**: (*Whispering*) Cherise I told you this would happen! You don’t believe, but we are living in a world now that is completely controlled by Satan! And for the next few years, this is what we can expect….You can’t take the Mark! You can never take that mark!!! You will be doomed for hell! Look, our outreach ministry has stored some food and clothes down here so I have plenty of food for you to eat and you can sort through some clothes to see what fits you…

**Cherise**: Thanks. Just let me clean myself up and grab some clean clothes…then I’ll be gone.

**Pastor Mike**: Are you coming to the second meeting tomorrow?

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**Cherise**: No, this stuff is not for me. I’m a loner! I don’t need this little support group you got going. I’ll be out of here in thirty minutes

**Pastor Mike**: Cherise, you won’t make it out there. We need to stick together…

**Cherise:** For what? We’re no match for what’s out there! They’ve got guns and equipment we’ve never heard of….it’s the military for god’s sake.

**Pastor Mike**: You’ll either accept the mark or be dead in a few hours or less. Look, there are plenty of blankets back there. Why don’t you just get some rest and stay here for the meeting tomorrow

**Cherise**: I don’t know…

**Pastor Mike**: Cherise please! I owe at least this much to your brother….

(*Cherise puts her head down….)*

**Cherise**: I miss my brother! He was all I had left!

**Pastor Mike**: I know.…and you’re mom passed away a few years ago right?

**Cherise:** Yeah.

**Pastor Mike:** And what about your father?

**Cherise:** I never met him! Rock said he remembered seeing him once or twice, but he completely took off after I was born….he never called or checked in or us….so I never had a father.

**Pastor Mike**: I miss your brother too! He was the best Deacon a Pastor could have and he loved you very much.

**Cherise**: I know he did…

**Pastor Mike**: He told me about your lifestyle

**Cherise:** Oh boy, here we go!

**Pastor Mike**: No, No! I’m not gonna drill you…. Can I tell you something….the reason I’m not with Jesus right now is because I didn’t tell the whole truth!

**Cherise**: Oh yeah? And what’s that supposed to mean?

**Pastor Mike**: It’s a long story….look Cherise I understand you had a rough life, but living an alternative lifestyle was not God’s will for your life.

**Cherise:** I thought you weren’t gonna….

**Pastor Mike**: I’m not! I’m not! I’m just saying so many young people like you are confused!

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**Cherise:** I’m not confused!

**Pastor Mike**: Yes you are. You have convinced yourself that this is who you are, but it’s not.

**Cherise**: So what are you saying? I can’t know Jesus! I can’t be saved living this lifestyle?

**Pastor Mike**: I’m not saying you can’t be saved because you’re struggling with homosexuality, not at all. We all have sinned and we all come short. You’re struggle is no different from someone who struggles with fornication or pornography or lying or anything. But if you are saved and know the Lord, you will strive to not give in or act on your struggles.

**Cherise**: Look, I listen to the preachers on tv all the time! And they say no matter how I live or what I do wrong, God’s grace is sufficient.

**Pastor Mike**: And you know what - that is true, but it’s true when you are attempting and trying to do the right thing….God never promised that his grace would cover willful, blatent sin. Now we as sinners were kept by his Grace because he chose to cover us…but that wasn’t a guarantee…we were just blessed! The bible asks us “shall we keep on sinning just because grace is there? Absolutely not! And you know what Cherise, many people say they Love the Lord, but Jesus said if you love me, you’ll keep my commandments…you’ll live Holy and upright!

**Cherise**: It’s like this “living Holy” thing is not realistic! No one is perfect!

**Pastor Mike**: You are right! No one is! But Holiness isn’t perfection….Holiness is working hard to be mature in the sight of God! And despite what the preachers tell you today…despite what I’ve said on my programs, everyone has to Choose! Right or Wrong? God or Satan! Try or not try!

**Cherise**: Look I’m tired! I just want to get some rest alright. I can’t help how I was born!

**Pastor Mike**: Okay, but God doesn’t make mistakes! You are wonderfully made! And He didn’t make you to be in a relationship with another female. Somewhere in your life something happened or didn’t. Someone was where they shouldn’t have been or wasn’t where they should’ve been. You’ve experienced something along the way…And Satan took that time (or times) in your life and used it as an entryway to convince you that you are not who and what God say’s you are!

**Cherise**: *(Crying a little)* Alright that’s enough! I don’t want to hear anymore! I just don’t believe all this stuff! If it was true, I would have heard it from the thousands of preachers that I’ve listened to all my life!

**Pastor Mike**: Cherise, you can’t ignore this….you have to choose to serve God or you’ll never see your brother again….

**Cherise:** Don’t! Don’t Alright! Don’t try to push this stuff on me so you can feel better about your failures! You should’ve said this when you had the chance. You’re weak! You hide behind your charismatic sermons and catchy sayings…..But if I’m messed up then so are you! We’re all messed up. This life is messed up! I’m going to sleep! *(Cherise exits to the back of the church)*

**Pastor Mike**: *(in a low voice)* Good night Cherise!

 *(Lights out)*

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