

Paul's Ponderings

In a world intoxicated by noise, indulgence, and distraction, Scripture calls us to something radically different: sobriety. Not only sobriety of body, but of mind and spirit. It's not about deprivation, it's about freedom. Freedom to see clearly, to love deeply, and to live with purpose.

Paul urged Timothy, "Be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Timothy 4:5). This isn't just pastoral advice; it's a blueprint for Christian living. To be sober-minded means to live free from the things that cloud our judgment, whether chemical, emotional, or spiritual. It's to keep our heads clear, our hearts anchored, and our eyes fixed on Christ.



Paul Stasi
Executive Director

SOBRIETY

Sobriety isn't just about putting down the bottle; it's about picking up a new way of life. It's a journey of personal growth, honesty, humility, and transformation. That's what happens here at City Rescue Mission. Every day, men and women come to us broken and burdened. Through faith, accountability, and community, they discover a spiritual awakening, a life rebuilt on truth, grace, and hope.

Peter reminds us, "The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray" (1 Peter 4:7). Sobriety clears the fog so they can finally hear God's voice again. It restores relationships, renews purpose, and revives the soul.

It's not simply the absence of substances that defines sobriety, but the presence of joy and peace. And it's through your generosity that lives are being changed, one person, one prayer, one day at a time.

Thank you for helping people find not only freedom from addiction, but the fullness of life that comes from walking in the light of Christ.



3 WAYS TO GIVE

by phone



by mail



online



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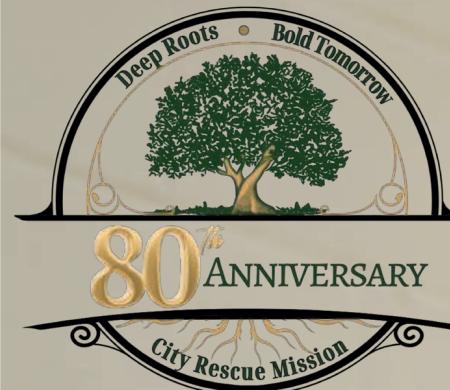
WE NEED YOUR HELP!

City Rescue Mission is in need of the following:

- Women and Children Garden:
 - » Pavilion - \$8,000
 - » Two-Bay Post Swing Set - \$5,500
 - » (1) Pavilion table - \$1,250
 - » (12) Pavilion chairs - \$1,500
 - » (3) Pavilion side tables - \$750
 - » Fence - \$2,500
 - » Arbor - \$500
- Twin sized blankets (400)
- Twin sized white sheet sets (400)
- Bus Passes: Weekly - \$20 each, Monthly - \$65 each
- Clothing, shoes, and accessories for men, women, and children for the Thrift Store
- Volunteers in reading, math, and English to help our students
- White towels (1,000) and white wash cloths (2,000)
- Men & women's deodorant

Contact: Sherrie Mack | [\(904\) 387-4357 ext. 224](mailto:shmack@crmjax.org)

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New Life

NEWS

JANUARY 2026



JAMES

"GOD BROUGHT ME OUT OF THE DARKNESS"

James was ready to die. Years of struggle, including substance abuse, crime and emotional pain drove him to a place so dark he no longer wanted to live. But at City Rescue Mission, he found love, healing and a relationship with Christ that inspired him to live for the Lord. Today, he's sober, reunited with his family and faithfully serving others. Thank you for your partnership, gifts and prayers that continue to make transformations like this possible.

JAMES' STORY

CHRISTMAS
PUBLIC MEAL &
SHOEBOXES OF LOVE

PAUL'S
PONDERINGS
MESSAGE FROM
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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JAMES' STORY

GOD BROUGHT ME OUT OF THE DARKNESS

For years, James lived on the edge – run-ins with the law and running from the Lord. He hated himself and believed he would die in that dark and broken state. But at City Rescue Mission, surrounded by prayer, compassion and the truth of the Gospel, James discovered how to live in the Light of God.

Growing up in Jacksonville, James recalls a normal childhood. "I had what I needed and most of what I wanted," he shares. But one important aspect was missing – a relationship with God. His family never went to church or prayed over a meal.

"God was pretty much the furthest thing from my mind."

Without a spiritual foundation, James struggled. At age 13, he experimented with drugs and quickly started facing substance abuse. Soon, he was no longer welcome in his parents' home. He took to the streets. His destructive behavior escalated. He spent time in jail. He even dabbled in witchcraft.

"I was seeking something spiritual. I didn't really know if it was bad or good."

Eventually James started a family, but he continued his toxic lifestyle.

After his first child was born, he was incarcerated again. His mother, who had long ago cut ties, reconnected. For the sake of his baby girl, she urged him to check into a faith-based recovery program. But James had no place for God in his life.

Then, while still behind bars, he received devastating news. His best friend had died. His baby's mother was struggling with challenges of her own, and his little girl had been taken into state custody.

"If I hadn't come to the Mission, I'd probably be dead. But God used this place to save my life – and He can do it for others too."



"It was the darkest time of my life. Everything I loved had been ripped away."

Broken and desperate, James finally agreed to enter rehab as an alternative to prison. For a time, life improved – he regained custody of his daughter, held a good job and embraced his sobriety. But the chain of substance abuse had not been completely broken. He slid back into his destructive ways and to a place even darker than before.

When his wife nearly died giving birth to their youngest child, he was ready to die himself. With no other option, he turned to God – begging Him to save her. She lived. That's when he knew it was time to change, and it would take God's help to do it. So he surrendered to the Lord and joined the Mission's faith-based LifeBuilders Program.

For the first few days, James faced grueling withdrawals. "I lay in that dorm so sick I couldn't even shower." But with the encouragement of our staff, he didn't give up.

"They loved me, prayed for me, and walked with me through it all."

As his health improved, he excelled in every aspect of our faith-based curriculum – Bible study, adult education, workforce development, life skills development, counseling and case management. As with all participants, our goal was to help James discover how to be a sober, productive, self-sufficient member of his community.

After graduating, James began to rebuild his life – step by faithful step. He found steady work, reunited with his family and recommitted himself to his wife who, too, had turned to God in her darkest moments. Today, they are raising their children in a Christ-centered home.

"I used to hate myself and believed I would die in my addiction."

TO VIEW JAMES' STORY
IN VIDEO, PLEASE USE
THE QR CODE



Save the Date

80TH Anniversary
Gala Dinner

May 7, 2026

If you'd like to serve on the committee

CONTACT

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"ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE, BUT A LITTLE CHOCOLATE NOW AND THEN DOESN'T HURT."
-CHARLES SCHULTZ

CHARIS Chocolates
Since 2018
Filled with Grace and Sweet Taste

CHOCOLATES PRODUCED BY
CITY RESCUE MISSION

When you purchase CHARIS CHOCOLATES you support meals for the hungry, shelter for those experiencing homelessness and treatment for those who are addicted. You also provide job readiness, GED classes, emotional and spiritual care.

Your purchase becomes the lifeline of hope, healing and change for those who are in the most need.

Thank you for supporting the Mission.

Homeless Memorial

A heartfelt thank you to the community members and organizations in Jacksonville, like Changing Homelessness and the City of Jacksonville, who stand with us in the fight to end homelessness.

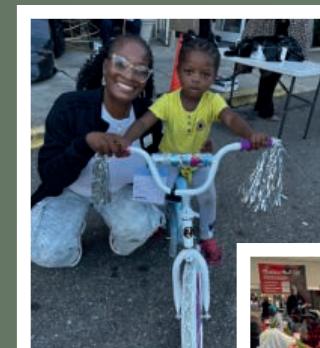
Together, we honor the 42 lives lost in 2025 while experiencing homelessness.
Thank you for loving them and joining us in remembrance.



Christmas Public Meal + Shoeboxes of Love

What a wonderful turnout from our neighbors in Jacksonville who joined us for our annual Christmas Public Meal and Shoeboxes of Love drive. This year we received over 4,000 shoeboxes!

Thank you to the individuals and organizations who donated and volunteered, making it possible to provide a nourishing meal and much-needed cold-weather items. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus!



Holidays at the Mission



Christmas at City Rescue Mission was filled with joy, gratitude, and purpose as we celebrated the greatest gift of all alongside our staff and students.

Thanks to overwhelming community support, the gifts of Christmas were shared generously, making the holidays unforgettable as we closed out a remarkable year at the Mission.