

A man with a distressed expression and a forehead wound, holding headphones, looking at a vintage radio on a desk during a rainstorm. The scene is dimly lit, with rain visible through the window. A crucifix and a family photo are on the wall, and a cup of coffee and crumpled paper are on the desk.

PREDESTINED RADIO

by Dr. Paul Crawford

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Introduction

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” – Matthew 11:15 (NLT)

Life doesn’t always whisper. Sometimes, it blares.

Other times, it goes silent.

This is the story of a man who lost the signal.

Elias Vance was once a voice people tuned in to hear. He rode the radio waves like a king behind the mic—charming, clever, and full of swagger. But somewhere along the line, the volume of his life was turned down—first by failure, then by loss, and finally by despair. Now, he plays hymns he doesn’t believe in, takes calls he doesn’t care about, and wonders if God has turned the dial and left him on dead air.

But what if the silence wasn’t absence, but waiting?

Predestined Radio is a novel about what happens when the supernatural breaks into the ordinary, when grace finds a man in the middle of the night and refuses to leave him alone. When an old, dust-covered radio starts speaking future truths in Elias’s own voice, he is forced to confront the idea that his life is not random, not forsaken, not over.

What begins as a curiosity becomes a calling. The events foretold aren’t spectacular—they’re subtle, mundane, human. Yet, behind each forecast is something sacred: a nudge, a rescue, a redirection. As Elias resists the broadcasts, he wrestles with the deepest questions of existence: Is my life mine to control? Is God speaking, and if so, why to me? What does it mean to be free, and what if freedom looks like surrender?

This story explores the beautiful tension between **free will and divine destiny**, between rebellion and redemption. It asks whether we are truly listening—or simply tuning out the one Voice that has never stopped speaking.

Welcome to the journey of Elias Vance.

Welcome to *Predestined Radio*.

Don’t touch that dial.

You’re exactly where you’re meant to be.

Preface

By Dr. Paul Crawford

I didn’t write *Predestined Radio* because I had all the answers.

I wrote it because, like Elias Vance, I’ve wrestled with the questions.

What do we do when life doesn't go the way we expected?

When the dreams we chased disappear, when the people we loved are gone, and when the God we thought we knew seems silent?

I've walked through seasons of silence.

I've known the ache of unanswered prayers, the sting of shattered plans, and the slow, quiet unraveling of certainty. Perhaps you have too.

And yet, in that silence, I discovered something unexpected:

God hadn't stopped speaking.

I had just stopped listening.

This novel is deeply personal. Not because I've heard my own voice through an antique radio, but because I've felt the tug of a divine hand pulling me back when I strayed. I've watched as God used ordinary moments—unexpected phone calls, long walks, late-night thoughts, strangers with kind words—to remind me that nothing is truly random. That grace has a way of showing up even when we've stopped believing in it.

Elias Vance is fictional. But his questions are real. His resistance is honest. His pain is familiar.

And his journey, I pray, is one that echoes something in your own heart.

My hope is that *Predestined Radio* will do more than entertain. I pray it will stir reflection, ignite hope, and awaken your ears to a frequency that's always been broadcasting—quietly, persistently, lovingly.

No matter how far you've wandered, no matter how broken your story feels, there's a Voice still calling out to you.

Not to control you.

But to lead you.

Thank you for picking up this book.

Thank you for listening.

Now, tune in.

You just might find what you've been longing to hear.

Dr. Paul Crawford

Part I: Static and Silence

Chapter 1 – The Last Broadcast

The "ON AIR" light flickered above Elias Vance like a dying star—half-hearted, almost apologetic. It buzzed faintly as if unsure whether it was worth staying lit. The station smelled of cold coffee, burnt wires, and dust older than sin. The walls were lined with decades of album covers, hymn charts, and yellowing devotionals, all frozen in time like ghosts waiting for a second chance.

Elias leaned back in the creaky chair behind the microphone, the call letters *WZBT 88.3 – Zion’s Beacon of Truth* proudly displayed on a worn-out banner behind him. It was nearly 2:00 AM, and Middletown was asleep. So was his hope.

“Up next,” he said with a practiced monotone, “we’ve got another classic from the Gaither Vocal Band. For all you night owls and insomniacs out there clinging to grace in the dark hours.” He let the vinyl spin and leaned away from the mic, rubbing his face with both hands. The song played, but Elias heard none of it. His world was quieter than ever.

He used to command audiences in the hundreds of thousands—back when his voice sold records, booked interviews with celebrities, and stirred crowds into a frenzy. Back when his name meant something. Now he played hymns for the faithful few, many of whom called not for song requests, but just to hear another voice echoing back at them through the void.

Sometimes, he wondered if that’s all anyone really wanted—confirmation they weren’t alone.

A red blinking light on Line 2 caught his attention. Another call. Another lonely soul needing something Elias wasn’t sure he could give.

He hit the switch. “You’re on the air with Elias. Go ahead.”

Silence.

Then a faint, wheezy voice crackled through. “Just wanted to say... the Lord sees you, son.”

Elias froze.

“Excuse me?”

“You think He’s forgotten. But He hasn’t. You’re not as lost as you think.”

Click.

The line went dead.

He stared at the console. Not because of the words, but because... it wasn’t a voice he recognized. And after years of working this shift, he knew the regulars. The lonely. The grieving. The hopeful.

This one felt different. Almost rehearsed. Like it had come from somewhere further than a few blocks away.

He glanced at the old wooden radio sitting on the shelf behind him. His grandfather’s, an antique tube radio he had brought from the attic as a sort of nostalgic decoration. It hadn’t worked in decades—or so he thought.

The hair on the back of his neck stood up.

For the first time in months, Elias felt something stir inside. Not quite faith. But not quite emptiness either.

He turned back to the mic as the song faded.

“Well... that was ‘He Touched Me.’” He swallowed. “Which... maybe He just did.”

He reached for the fader and cued up another track. But as he did, the station lights flickered. The board went quiet. Dead air.

And then, softly, impossibly, a voice came through the old radio behind him.

“...and this just in—local man Elias Vance narrowly avoids injury tonight after a small electrical fire at WZBT. Stay tuned for more updates from Predestined Radio.”

Elias spun around.

His mouth went dry.

That voice... it was his own.

Only older.

More certain.

And the fire?

It hadn't happened.

Yet.

He looked back toward the console—and smelled the faintest hint of smoke.

He didn't move. Didn't breathe.

The only sound in the room was the hum of that old radio, whispering a future he hadn't lived.

And so began the last broadcast of the man Elias Vance used to be.

Chapter 2 – Dialed into Nowhere

The smell of smoke wasn't strong—just a whisper on the air, like a memory brushing past. Elias stood motionless, staring at the old radio, afraid that moving might confirm he'd lost his mind.

He glanced at the station's circuit board. Everything was stable. No sparks, no damage, no heat coming from anywhere. Yet the words from the old radio repeated in his head like a song he couldn't turn off.

“Local man Elias Vance narrowly avoids injury tonight...”

He exhaled slowly, checked beneath the console, and stood up again. The station's equipment was ancient, but not combustible. He knew this place better than his own apartment. The coffee-stained counters, the peeling linoleum tiles, the walls that had soaked up decades of gospel music and grief—it was a second home. No—his *only* home now.

He turned back to the radio.

Its wooden case was polished but aged, the dials faded with time. It sat like a sleeping relic, the kind of thing you'd see in your grandfather's living room next to a dusty Bible and a bowl of peppermints. Elias hadn't touched it in weeks. It had never worked before. Not once. Not even a hiss of static.

And yet... it had spoken.

His voice.

Older. Calmer. Wiser, somehow.

He shivered.

“Okay,” he muttered, trying to bring sarcasm to the surface, “maybe I’ve finally snapped. That’s it. Sleep deprivation, too much caffeine, and a long-overdue midlife crisis. All wrapped up in a late-night paranormal delusion.”

But the joke fell flat, even in the silence.

Elias sat back down at the console and pulled his headphones off. He rubbed his temples and opened his laptop, trying to distract himself with emails and news feeds. Anything to pull him away from what he’d just heard.

One unread message caught his eye.

Subject line: "**Predestined Broadcast**"

No sender. No timestamp.

He clicked it.

There was nothing in the email but a line of text:

“You still have time to change the ending.”

His stomach dropped. He slammed the laptop shut, heart hammering.

This was a prank. Had to be. Some twisted joke from one of his old industry contacts. Maybe a former colleague who thought this small-town radio gig was a punchline.

But deep down, Elias knew better.

No one knew about the old radio. He hadn’t told a soul about the voice. And yet, the email had arrived *minutes* after the transmission.

The fear creeping up his spine now had nothing to do with ghosts or pranksters.

It was the kind of fear you feel when you realize someone—or *something*—knows you better than you know yourself.

He reached over and unplugged the radio from the wall, just to be safe. The cord was warm.

Warm.

How?

The device had no tubes left in it. It didn’t even function as a speaker. And yet, it had *broadcasted* something. Not static. Not interference.

A prophecy.

A voice from the future.

His own voice.

Elias pushed his chair back and walked to the tiny studio kitchen. He poured the cold remains of his coffee into the sink, then rinsed the mug and stood there for a long moment, hands braced against the edge of the counter.

His reflection stared back at him from the dark window: a man in his late forties, gaunt from skipped meals, hair peppered with gray, wearing a crumpled flannel shirt and weary eyes. Once, he'd been called "The Golden Voice of Chicago Radio." Now, he looked like someone who haunted a forgotten frequency.

It had all unraveled so quickly.

The scandal with the intern. The abrupt firing. His wife leaving, taking their daughter with her. The abrupt descent from fame to obscurity. Elias had landed in Middletown not out of desire, but out of necessity. Zion's Beacon of Truth was the only place that would take him, and even that had felt like punishment. Playing old hymns for people who believed in a God he no longer trusted.

But something inside him had shifted tonight. Not much. Just a crack in the cement. A tiny opening.

He turned back toward the studio.

The radio sat quietly, inert.

He walked toward it.

Plugged it back in.

Waited.

Nothing.

No voice. No signal. Just silence.

Elias leaned down and tapped the side of the wood casing.

"Come on," he said. "Say something."

Silence.

He sat down, the room too quiet. The usual comfort of white noise was gone, replaced with the kind of stillness that left no place to hide.

He flipped on the microphone again. Might as well do his job.

"This is Elias Vance," he said, the weariness returning to his voice. "And you're listening to WZBT. Coming up, we've got 'Nearer, My God, to Thee.' Seems... appropriate."

He pressed play on the next track.

The familiar strains of a slow, mournful hymn filled the studio.

As the music played, Elias leaned back and whispered to no one in particular, "God, if You're out there... if You're doing this... I'm listening."

For the first time in a long time, he meant it.

Somewhere deep inside that dusty old radio, a faint hum began to rise.

Chapter 3 – Graveyard Shift

The hours between 2:00 and 5:00 AM were made for ghosts.

Not the kind that rattle chains or float through walls, but the ones that live in the mind—the regrets, the memories, the what-ifs. In those hours, the rest of the world sleeps under warm blankets and closed blinds, but Elias Vance walked among the living dead. Not by choice. By habit. By punishment.

The hymn finished playing, the last note trailing into silence like a benediction over a dying world. Elias sat motionless at the mic, headphones draped around his neck, staring at nothing. The monitor in front of him displayed the station's low-resolution playlist, most of it filled with old Southern gospel standards and public domain devotionals.

Zion's Beacon of Truth wasn't about innovation. It was about nostalgia—comfort food for the soul. It broadcast to a radius of maybe sixty miles and reached an audience of a few dozen during the overnight shift. Most of the regulars were truckers on the highway, shut-ins with AM radios, or elderly believers who hadn't updated their technology in twenty years.

It was a slow, flickering heartbeat in a world of streaming apps and satellite playlists.

But tonight, something about the silence between the songs felt different.

Elias stood and stretched. The studio was cramped—barely room for two people and definitely not designed for comfort. He'd added his own touches over the months: a travel mug with a crack down the side, a faded photo of his daughter tucked behind the mic stand, and a small bookshelf that held his grandfather's Bible (unread), a devotional journal (mostly blank), and the antique radio that had, for a few seconds, turned his world upside down.

He stared at it now.

It didn't hum. Didn't glow. Didn't do anything but sit there like a piece of history no one had bothered to bury.

"You gonna talk again?" he whispered, folding his arms.

Nothing.

Part of him felt foolish. Talking to an inanimate object. Waiting for something that couldn't be explained. But another part of him—a part he hadn't acknowledged in years—was awake now. A sliver of childlike wonder. The same feeling he used to get lying in bed as a kid, wondering if God really heard prayers, or if angels really did walk through walls.

He shook his head.

"Too many late nights," he muttered. "That's all this is."

Still, he didn't walk away from the radio.

A call came in—Line 1. Elias blinked, startled, then slid back into his chair. He clicked the button.

“WZBT, you’re on the air.”

A raspy voice answered. Female. Old. Southern.

“Elias,” she said, “I heard it.”

His heart skipped.

“...Heard what?”

“That voice. The one that ain’t from here. It came through while you were off the mic. Said somethin’ about a fire at the station.”

Elias leaned in.

“Wait—who is this?”

“Marge Collins. From Tall Pines. I’ve been listenin’ to your show for years, baby. Never called in before. But I heard it clear as day. And it was *you*. Only... it wasn’t.”

Elias stared at the radio.

“You’re sure?”

“I may be old, but I ain’t deaf. That was your voice. And it gave me chills.”

He swallowed hard. “Did it... say anything else?”

“No, baby. Just the one thing about the fire. Then it faded. Like the Holy Spirit exhaled.”

Elias felt his throat tighten. “Thank you, Marge.”

“No,” she said. “Thank *you*, Elias. I know you don’t talk much about the Lord on your show. Not like Brother Hank used to. But I got a feeling He’s talkin’ to you now. And I just wanted to say... don’t turn the dial if He is.”

Click.

The line went dead.

Elias didn’t move.

He sat there for a full minute, her words ricocheting in his brain.

“Don’t turn the dial.”

That was the problem, wasn’t it? He’d turned the dial years ago. Away from faith. Away from family. Away from hope. Life had been a series of wrong stations ever since—each one broadcasting a different flavor of pain, regret, and cynicism.

He thought back to when he first arrived at Zion’s Beacon. A broken man with a suitcase full of shame. The station manager, Pastor Curtis Abbott, had been the only one willing to take him in.

“You don’t have to preach,” Curtis had said. “Just play the music. Let the hymns do the talking.”

So Elias did.

Night after night.

He never sang along. Never prayed on air. Never shared a testimony.

But now? Now the past had come alive through static and wood. Now an old radio with no signal had sent a message through time. And someone else had heard it too.

He turned back toward the shelf.

The radio remained silent.

But Elias didn't feel alone anymore.

He reached under the counter and pulled out his journal—the one he never used. He flipped past the empty pages until he found a clean one. At the top, he scribbled a title:

"What I Heard"

Beneath it, he wrote the words from the mysterious broadcast:

“Local man Elias Vance narrowly avoids injury tonight...”

He added the date. The time. The note about the warm cord. The email with no sender.

Then, after hesitating, he wrote:

“Marge Collins confirmed hearing it. Said it was my voice. Not sure what to believe.”

He stared at the page.

Then he added:

“But I’m listening.”

And for the first time in a long time...

He meant it.

Chapter 4 – The Voice That Isn't There

It was nearly dawn, that in-between hour when the night is too tired to keep going and the morning hasn't quite begun.

Elias sat in the parking lot behind the station, legs dangling out the driver's side of his rusting Corolla. The car door was open, letting in the cool breath of pre-sunrise air. He held a Styrofoam cup of gas station coffee that tasted like boiled cardboard, but it grounded him—something warm and bitter to hold while the world tried to make sense again.

He hadn't gone home. Not yet. Something about walking into his silent apartment—where the lights didn't flicker, and the furniture never spoke—felt more hollow than usual.

He'd written in the journal for over an hour after Marge's call. Page after page. Not just the radio. Not just the prophecy. But all of it—the ache, the emptiness, the questions, the fear. Things he hadn't said out loud since his wife left, since the scandal, since he'd lost custody of Chloe.

Now, with the sky beginning to bleed soft amber at the edges, Elias felt something he hadn't felt in years: anticipation.

Not joy.

Not peace.

But that restless tension just before something breaks.

He sipped the coffee, eyes on the sky, trying to calm his racing mind.

Was it really my voice?

How could that radio possibly work?

And why now?

He hadn't prayed in five years—not since the night Chloe begged him to come to her school play and he didn't show up. He'd been too drunk, too angry, too consumed with his fall from grace. That night, something in her eyes shattered, and he knew he'd lost more than just a family. He'd lost her trust.

And if he couldn't be a father, what was the point in believing God was one?

But now—*now*—this voice from the antique radio had sounded like a version of him that *didn't* reek of regret. It had spoken confidently. Clearly. Like someone who had been through hell and made it out whole.

That voice haunted him more than the message.

Because it made him ask the one question he'd long given up on:

Could I still become that man?

A knock on the window made him jump. He turned to see a figure leaning down—thick glasses, oversized flannel, a baseball cap too clean for a man his age.

Pastor Curtis Abbott.

Elias rolled the window down.

“You look like you've seen a ghost,” Curtis said with a grin.

“Worse,” Elias muttered. “I think I *heard* one.”

Curtis raised an eyebrow and walked around to the passenger side, opening the door and settling in beside him with a grunt.

“Morning radio does weird things to the brain,” he said. “That's why I stuck to pastoring. Less static, more Scripture.”

They sat in silence for a moment. Curtis had always known how to fill a room without speaking. He was like a tree—quiet, firm, present. Elias had never known if Curtis was just kind... or discerning. Probably both.

“You wanna talk about it?” Curtis asked.

“No.”

Curtis nodded. “Okay.”

More silence.

Then Elias blurted it out.

“Curtis... what would you do if God spoke to you through a broken thing?”

The pastor blinked slowly. “You talking about yourself, or something else?”

Elias chuckled bitterly. “Maybe both.”

Curtis adjusted his glasses and leaned forward. “I believe God has a history of speaking through broken things, Elias. Burning bushes. Barren wombs. Betrayers. Even Balaam’s donkey. And last time I checked, radios aren’t off-limits.”

Elias took a long sip of coffee.

“So you’re saying I’m a donkey.”

“I’m saying you might be the only one in the building humble enough to listen.”

Elias didn’t laugh this time.

“I heard a voice,” he said, “coming from that old radio on the shelf. It sounded like me... but older. And it warned me about an accident that didn’t happen. Not yet.”

Curtis didn’t interrupt.

“Marge Collins called in. Said she heard it too. Word for word.”

Still, Curtis remained silent.

“I think I’m going insane.”

“You’re not.”

“How do you know?”

“Because God doesn’t whisper nonsense. He whispers *purpose*.”

The words landed like a soft weight.

Curtis turned and looked him straight in the eyes. “If He’s speaking, Elias... it’s because He still wants you. Still has a use for you.”

Elias wanted to argue. To protest. To point at the mess he'd made of his life. The divorce. The career implosion. The faith he'd abandoned. The nights he spent drinking alone while pretending to believe in the music he played.

But Curtis didn't give him the space.

He just reached into his coat pocket and handed him something: a small, battered Gideon's New Testament with a sticky note on the front.

In block letters, it read:

"Romans 8:28 – Just in case."

Elias held it like a grenade.

"You don't have to believe it today," Curtis said. "Just don't throw it away."

He climbed out of the car and walked toward the building, leaving Elias alone with the sunrise and the verse echoing in his head:

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God..."

He couldn't finish it.

Not yet.

Because the truth was, he didn't love God.

But maybe—just maybe—God still loved him.

Elias stared down at the radio again through the window of the studio, dimly visible behind the glass.

It hadn't spoken since.

But now... he wanted it to.

Not to predict the future.

But to remind him there *was* one.

Chapter 5 – Ghosts in the Signal

The station was quiet when Elias walked back in, that eerie kind of hush that settles after something holy—or terrifying—has passed through.

He turned the lock behind him with deliberate slowness, as if sealing the threshold between the normal and the strange. His steps echoed softly against the old tile floor, his fingers brushing the wall as he moved. The walls of WZBT hadn't changed. Same paint, same posters, same forgotten awards gathering dust in their glass case. But *he* had changed—just enough to feel like a stranger in his own skin.

His heart beat a little too fast. His mind raced ahead of his footsteps, constantly wondering if the voice would return. If the warm hum would rise again. If that old radio would speak from beyond time once more.

He entered the studio and paused at the door.

The radio sat exactly where he left it—unplugged, silent, still. Like a witness pretending to sleep.

The little Bible Pastor Curtis had given him pressed against his chest from the inside pocket of his jacket. He hadn't opened it. Couldn't. But he hadn't thrown it away either. That felt like progress.

He walked to the radio and plugged it back in.

Stillness.

He sat down at the desk and stared at it.

"I'm here," he whispered.

Nothing.

He leaned closer.

"I don't know what you are. I don't know what *this* is. But if there's something I'm supposed to hear—something I'm supposed to do—just say it. Speak."

The silence stretched out.

And then—

A click.

Soft. Mechanical. Subtle enough that it might've been imagined.

The dial turned a hair's breadth to the right. Elias hadn't touched it.

He froze.

A faint hum rose in the background. Not music. Not static. Just a tone—low and steady, like the vibration of a cello string beneath the surface of the earth.

Then, a voice.

His voice.

"At 3:42 AM, Elias Vance will receive a call from an unknown number. He must answer.
She's waiting."

The hum cut out. The dial flicked back.

And the room went completely, utterly still.

Elias stared.

The air in the studio felt heavier, as if the words had displaced something—oxygen, maybe. Or doubt.

He looked at the clock.

3:39 AM.

Three minutes.

Three minutes until what?

Who was waiting?

A hundred thoughts assaulted his mind at once—Chloe? No. She wouldn't call. Not after all this time. Not unless she wanted to scream at him for what he'd done. For what he *didn't* do.

Could it be his ex-wife? A listener? A prank?

He reached for his phone and stared at the black screen.

3:41 AM.

One minute.

He wiped his palms on his jeans. His stomach tightened. His mouth went dry. What would he say?

What could he say?

3:42 AM.

The phone buzzed.

UNKNOWN NUMBER

Elias froze.

The voice from the radio echoed in his head: "*He must answer.*"

He hit **Accept**, put the phone to his ear.

"...Hello?"

A pause.

Then a shaky breath on the other end.

"Dad?"

He nearly dropped the phone.

"...Chloe?"

A sob.

"Yeah. It's me."

His voice cracked. "Is everything okay?"

"I don't know," she said softly. "I just... I don't know why I called. I didn't plan to. I couldn't sleep. I was scrolling through old voicemails and... and there was one you left. After everything. You said you were sorry. I don't know why, but... I believed it tonight."

Elias pressed his hand over his mouth.

“I *meant* it,” he whispered. “I still do. Every word.”

Silence stretched again.

“I’m not saying everything’s fine,” she said finally. “But... I’m not hanging up either.”

That was all.

But it was enough.

He closed his eyes and let the tears come, hot and silent. Redemption didn’t roar. It whispered. Just like the voice on the radio.

They talked for ten minutes—about nothing and everything. The weather. Her college classes. Her cat, Pumpkin. She didn’t bring up the past, and he didn’t try to justify it.

She didn’t have to forgive him tonight.

But she had *called*.

And maybe that was the miracle.

When the call ended, Elias laid the phone on the desk and stared at the old radio again.

“I don’t know what you are,” he whispered, “but thank you.”

The radio didn’t respond.

Didn’t hum.

Didn’t glow.

But Elias didn’t need it to.

The message had come through.

Loud and clear.

Chapter 6 – A Call from Yesterday

Elias didn’t sleep that morning.

How could he?

He sat in the studio long after the sunrise spilled through the blinds, bathing the room in golden stripes that shimmered across the dusty equipment and faded posters. The old radio remained quiet, like a prophet who had said enough for now. But Elias’s mind was anything but silent.

He replayed the call with Chloe again and again. Her voice. Her hesitance. The way she said *Dad*, like it had weight again, like it hadn’t been completely erased from her vocabulary.

He hadn’t dared to hope for a call like that in years. It had come out of nowhere—or rather, from somewhere beyond his control.

The call had been real. The prophecy had been real.

The voice had spoken truth.

Not a metaphor. Not a parable.

Actual, concrete, measurable truth.

The weight of that realization made his hands tremble.

He walked out of the studio and into the hallway, where old tapes were stacked in crooked towers and moth-eaten acoustic panels lined the walls. The station had been around for over forty years, and it showed. Yet for the first time, it felt like a sacred place to him. Like maybe this tiny building, with its blinking lights and creaking floors, had become holy ground.

He wandered down the hall, past the small storage room, and opened the door to Pastor Curtis's office.

It was empty, as expected. Curtis usually didn't come in until around ten. But the door was never locked—Curtis wasn't that kind of man. Trust was his default setting.

Elias stepped inside.

Stacks of books surrounded the desk—Bibles in multiple translations, theology texts, prayer journals, biographies of missionaries. On the wall was a framed calligraphy piece: *"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion."* (Philippians 1:6)

Elias stared at it for a long time.

"Good work," he whispered. "That's rich."

He sat down at Curtis's desk and opened the top drawer. He didn't know what he was looking for. Answers, maybe. Reassurance. Something concrete. Something that proved he wasn't losing his mind.

But instead of answers, he found a photograph—one of Curtis and his late wife, June, standing in front of the original WZBT tower sometime in the 80s. They looked so happy. So unshaken.

Elias envied them.

He put the photo down and pulled out the small Bible Curtis had given him. The sticky note with *Romans 8:28* was still there.

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose."

He read it aloud. Slowly. As if the words might change if he gave them enough weight.

But the words remained unchanged.

It was *he* who was changing.

He flipped through the pages until he found Romans 8, underlining the verse with a borrowed pencil. Then, unsure why, he flipped back to the Gospels and landed in John.

His eyes fell on a passage he hadn't read in years:

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27)

The voice.

The radio.

It wasn't just some supernatural trick.

It was a call.

A calling.

A nudge back to the Shepherd.

Elias leaned back in the chair and let out a long, slow breath. A thousand memories flooded his mind—church pews, Sunday school flannel boards, his grandmother humming “It Is Well” while folding laundry. He had walked away from all of it. Had burned the bridge with God so thoroughly that he never expected to see the other side again.

But somehow, God had built a bridge back.

Through a broken man.

Through a broken radio.

He closed the Bible and stood, a strange mixture of grief and hope bubbling in his chest.

As he returned to the studio, his phone vibrated.

He checked it.

A text from a number he didn't have saved.

"Just wanted you to know... that call last night saved me from something stupid. I was gonna do something I couldn't take back. But I heard your voice say I wasn't alone. Thank you."

There was no name attached. Just silence after that.

But Elias knew.

It wasn't *his* voice that saved anyone.

It was the voice coming *through* him.

A call from yesterday... meant for someone *today*.

He sat back down at the desk, the journal open beside him, and added two more lines beneath last night's entry:

“Chloe called. Still doesn't trust me. But she called.”

“Someone else heard the broadcast. They said it saved them.”

Then, below it, he wrote:

“I'm not just hearing the future. I'm becoming someone who belongs in it.”

Outside, the sun had fully risen.

But inside the studio, Elias felt something even brighter beginning to stir.

Chapter 7 – Dust on the Dial

Elias never used to care about dust.

Not when he was on top of the world. Not when his name rode the airwaves of Chicago like a wildfire—unpredictable, loud, and untouchable. In those days, he left the details to assistants and interns. He only cared about the spotlight, the soundboard, and the next line on his résumé.

But now, staring at the dust clinging to the edges of the old radio dial, he noticed everything.

Each particle looked like time incarnate—proof that this object wasn't supposed to be part of anything important. Not anymore. It had been a relic. A forgotten keepsake from his grandfather's shelf. Something nostalgic, nothing more.

And yet, it had spoken.

It had come to life.

He brushed his fingers along the wooden casing, careful not to move the dial. There was a reverence in him now, the way you might approach a relic from a saint. Not because the radio itself was holy, but because something holy had *come through* it.

He thought about Chloe's call. About the anonymous text. About Marge Collins from Tall Pines who had heard the broadcast with her own ears. None of it added up. Not scientifically. Not logically. Not even theologically—at least not from the Sunday school lens he'd long discarded.

He'd once told a reporter in an interview that "*Religion is just marketing wrapped in incense.*" He remembered the backlash. He remembered how smug he'd felt.

Now? Now he wasn't so sure.

Dust meant age, yes.

But it also meant *waiting*.

How many years had this old radio been waiting to speak again?

How many years had Elias himself been waiting to *hear*?

He pulled out his journal and opened to a blank page.

"Day 2."

He chuckled to himself. Two days into a mystery he never asked for, and he was already journaling like a seminarian.

"I used to think dust meant something was dead. Now I think it means something's been resting—waiting to be awakened."

He paused. Wrote another line:

“What else in my life have I mistaken for dead?”

He didn’t like the answers that came.

His faith.

His daughter.

His ability to hope.

His ability to be *used*.

He wiped at the dial with a cloth from under the desk. As he did, he noticed something he hadn’t seen before—an engraving etched in the brass rim beneath the dial.

It was small, almost invisible beneath the grime:

“He who has ears, let him hear.”

Elias’s hand stilled.

He felt the weight of it—not just the words, but their *placement*. Who had engraved that? His grandfather? A technician from decades past? Or had it always been there, invisible until now?

The phrase struck him hard. It was something Jesus had said again and again in the Gospels. A call to pay attention. A warning that some truths can only be heard by those who *want* to hear them.

He stepped back, heart pounding.

“He who has ears, let him hear.”

Was this some kind of sign? A divine reminder carved into brass? Or had it always been there, waiting for his eyes to be open?

He opened the Bible Curtis had given him and found the phrase again, in Matthew 13. Jesus had just finished telling the parable of the sower—the story of the seed falling on different types of soil. Elias read it slowly, the words crawling off the page and wrapping around his soul:

“Some fell along the path... some among thorns... but some fell on good soil.”

He set the Bible down and stared at the radio again.

Maybe he had been thorny ground.

Maybe the signal had always been trying to reach him, but the static of his own ego, pain, and bitterness had drowned it out.

He remembered a moment from childhood, sitting on his grandfather’s lap, fiddling with this very radio. He couldn’t have been more than seven or eight.

“Listen close, Elias,” Grandpa had said. “Some stations don’t come in unless you tune real slow.”

He hadn’t understood it then.

He did now.

All his life, he'd been spinning the dial too fast—racing from job to job, relationship to relationship, sin to self-righteousness. Never stopping long enough to truly *listen*.

But something—*someone*—was calling him now.

Through dust and time.

Through whispers and warnings.

Through grace and static.

And he was finally still enough to hear it.

Elias reached out and gently turned the dial on the radio, ever so slightly to the right. The softest hum came through—not a voice yet, but the promise of one. Like the Spirit hovering over the waters, waiting to speak.

He leaned in close.

Waiting.

Not forcing.

Just listening.

Chapter 8 – Hymns and Heartache

Elias never liked hymns.

Not really.

Not when he was a boy in starched Sunday clothes, sitting beside his mother as she sang off-key in a Baptist pew. Not as a teenager with a Walkman full of rock anthems tucked in his jacket, hiding his headphones beneath his collar during altar calls. And certainly not as an adult, standing in the ashes of a life he burned himself, listening to elderly callers request songs like “Blessed Assurance” and “I Surrender All” as if they were antidotes to grief.

To Elias, hymns had always sounded like empty platitudes stitched together with outdated poetry—old words from old voices about a God who, frankly, didn't seem to show up when it counted.

But lately... something was changing.

It began the night he heard the broadcast—that voice from the future that saved him from a fire that never came. Then Chloe's call. Then the anonymous text. Then that quiet hum in the early hours when he was finally still enough to hear it.

Now, the hymns didn't sound so hollow.

They sounded like... memory.

Like prayers someone else prayed first, so he wouldn't have to find the words.

At 9:17 PM, Elias sat in the studio chair, staring at the playlist queue.

Tonight's lineup included all the classics:

- "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"
- "Be Thou My Vision"
- "It Is Well with My Soul"
- "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

He queued them up automatically—reflex from months of repetition—but tonight, he didn't just play them.

He listened.

He let the lyrics wash over him like rain after a drought.

"When peace like a river attendeth my way..."

His eyes welled with tears. Not because the music was beautiful—though it was—but because it didn't lie to him. It didn't sugarcoat pain or pretend life wasn't hard. It acknowledged the storm, then anchored the soul in something deeper.

"...whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul."

Was it?

Could it be?

He wasn't sure yet. But for the first time in a long time, he *wanted* it to be.

The red call light on Line 3 blinked.

He tapped the switch. "WZBT. You're on the air."

A man's voice came through, gruff and unsteady.

"Hey. This is Dave. From Route 19."

Elias nodded slowly. "Go ahead, Dave."

"You played that hymn—'Be Thou My Vision.' That was my wife's favorite."

Elias glanced at the log. That had been half an hour ago. Before the set of Scripture readings.

"She passed last summer," Dave continued. "Cancer. Quick and cruel. I haven't been able to listen to this station since. Until tonight."

Elias didn't interrupt. The silence on live radio stretched like a prayer.

"I don't know why I turned it on," Dave said. "But I heard that song and... I remembered her voice. The way she used to sing it while making breakfast. She was always so off-key." He chuckled through his grief. "But tonight it sounded perfect. Like... like she was still here."

Elias blinked back his own tears.

“She used to say I didn’t listen to the right voice,” Dave added. “She meant God. I told her I’d rather listen to the news than church talk.”

A pause.

“But tonight,” Dave said slowly, “I think I heard Him in the song.”

Elias couldn’t speak at first. The lump in his throat was too thick. Finally, he managed, “I’m glad you called, Dave.”

“Thanks for playing it,” Dave said. “I needed that.”

Click.

The line went dead.

Elias sat still for a long moment.

There was a presence in the room now—more than just the afterglow of emotion. It felt like something holy had walked through the broadcast and left a trail behind.

He looked at the old radio.

Still silent.

Still waiting.

Maybe the miracle wasn’t just in the supernatural moments. Maybe it was in the music, too. In the quiet. In the voice of a grieving trucker finding his way back to hope through a worn-out melody.

Elias reached for the mic.

His hand hovered for a second.

Then he pressed the button.

“This is Elias,” he said quietly, “and if you’re tuning in tonight from somewhere between the pain and the promise... I just want you to know—you’re not alone. You may be bruised. You may be tired. But the music hasn’t stopped. Grace is still on the air.”

He played the next hymn.

“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing.”

And for the first time in his life, Elias Vance sang along.

Softly. Brokenly.

But from the heart.

Chapter 9 – That Old Antenna

The tower loomed above the station like a forgotten sentinel.

Rust clung to its joints. Ivy had started to wrap around its base, creeping upward in slow defiance of time. It wasn't tall by modern standards—barely seventy feet—but in Middletown, it was one of the tallest man-made things around. Its silhouette pierced the early morning sky like a cross tilted just off true north.

Elias stood at its base, holding a flashlight in one hand and a wrench in the other. The transmitter had begun acting up again—blips in the signal, dead air windows, static where clarity should've been. He could ignore it no longer. Pastor Curtis had left a voicemail earlier, apologizing for not being able to swing by today, but reminding him that the maintenance box was still in the shed out back.

Elias wasn't a technician. He barely passed algebra, and he'd dropped out of his first communications degree before he'd even touched a real transmitter. But desperation makes mechanics out of dreamers.

He climbed the first rung of the ladder and stopped.

From this height—just five feet off the ground—he could already see the studio differently. The roof sagged slightly in the middle. The shingles were cracked like old skin. The building had always looked humble from the front, but from back here, in the shadow of the antenna, it looked even smaller.

Fragile.

Like him.

He climbed higher, slow and steady, one rung at a time.

As he climbed, he thought about his grandfather. Henry Vance had been the original station manager when WZBT launched back in the late 1960s. Elias used to spend summers with him—long, hot days riding his bike around the church parking lot while Grandpa fiddled with the tower's tuning coils or adjusted the grounding rods.

"You keep the antenna clear," Henry would say, "and the message gets out clean. But let weeds grow, let the metal corrode... and nobody hears a thing."

Elias hadn't understood it back then. But now, as he reached the maintenance panel halfway up the structure and stared at the corroded junction box, he realized something:

This was more than signal maintenance.

It was a metaphor.

He opened the box. Inside was chaos—twisted wires, frayed connections, rusted contact points. No wonder the signal had been cutting out.

He began untangling the mess, slowly replacing wires, brushing off corrosion, reconnecting what had come undone.

As he worked, his mind drifted again—to the voice from the radio, to Chloe's call, to Dave from Route 19. Each of them a broadcast of grace, cutting through the static of his disbelief.

He thought of the hymn last night—"*Come Thou Fount*"—and the line that had stayed with him:

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love."

That line had broken him.

Because it wasn't just poetic—it was autobiographical.

He had wandered. Not just from faith, but from family, from purpose, from everything that once anchored him.

But the antenna still stood.

Damaged. Weathered. But standing.

So was he.

A sudden gust of wind rocked the tower gently. Elias tightened his grip, heart racing. He wasn't afraid of heights, but there was something sobering about being this high off the ground, suspended between earth and sky, fixing a broken system so people could hear songs about eternity.

Ironic, he thought. I've spent my whole life climbing platforms... but this is the first one that might actually matter.

He finished reconnecting the last wire, closed the panel, and climbed down slowly.

As his boots hit the ground, he turned and looked up at the antenna again.

It hummed faintly—alive again. Transmitting.

He pulled out his phone and checked the station feed.

Clear.

No static. No signal drop.

He smiled—just a little.

Then something caught his eye.

The weeds at the base of the tower had been trampled—flattened in a perfect circle around the antenna's footing. He crouched, brushing his fingers along the dirt.

No footprints.

No animal trails.

Just a perfect, quiet circle.

Like something had stood here... listening.

Elias stood slowly, heart pounding.

He looked around the empty field.

Nobody.

But the air felt charged. Not with fear, but with presence.

Like something unseen had been watching.

Listening.

Waiting.

He looked back at the tower one more time.

Then, without knowing why, he whispered aloud:

“...I’m listening too.”

And somewhere inside, a quiet voice echoed back—not from the radio this time, but from his own heart:

“Then you’ll hear Me again.”

Chapter 10 – Midnight in Middletown

Midnight in Middletown was different than midnight anywhere else.

In a city, midnight hums with life—neon lights, taxi horns, laughter spilling from bars and broken dreams echoing in alleyways. But here, in this slow-paced Ohio town with its shuttered storefronts and single blinking traffic light, midnight didn’t hum.

It sighed.

The kind of long, low exhale that only happens in places too small to matter and too quiet to notice.

Elias Vance knew this hour well.

It had become the rhythm of his exile—the graveyard shift where no one was watching, no one was listening, and yet somehow... everything mattered. When the world slept, he wrestled. When others dreamed, he remembered. And now, in this quiet valley of stillness, he was starting to hear things he had once blocked out.

The station lights cast a soft amber glow over the studio, barely enough to chase the darkness from the corners. The only sounds were the low hum of the equipment and the faint ticking of the wall clock above the main console.

12:03 AM.

Another day. Another night.

But tonight felt different.

Not because anything strange had happened yet—no ghostly broadcasts, no divine interruptions. But because Elias felt something stir inside of *him*.

He leaned into the microphone, voice low and steady.

“This is Elias Vance. You’re listening to WZBT 88.3—Zion’s Beacon of Truth. If you’re awake out there... I see you. I know what this hour feels like. And I know what it’s like to wonder if you’ve missed your chance, if the world passed you by, or if God just stopped speaking.”

He paused.

“I used to think the same. I used to think this shift was a punishment—exile for a voice that once mattered. But now... I think maybe this is where the real broadcasting happens. Maybe it’s in these silent hours that grace speaks the loudest.”

He cued up the next hymn—“*Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling.*”

And as the opening notes filled the room, Elias leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes.

There were no calls coming in.

No emails.

No mysterious messages.

But the stillness itself was speaking.

He thought of his old apartment downtown, the one he shared with his wife before the scandal. He remembered their little kitchen, where she used to dance barefoot on the linoleum floor while the coffee brewed. He remembered Chloe at age seven, spinning in a princess dress in the living room, trying to get his attention.

He hadn’t noticed back then.

He’d been too busy chasing something louder.

But now, here in this midnight studio in a town no one remembered, he was hearing the echoes of everything he’d missed.

And it hurt.

He pulled out the journal again.

Tonight’s entry was harder to write.

“Midnight in Middletown. The quiet is deafening. Not in a painful way, but in a holy one. Like God is whispering in all the spaces I left empty.”

He sat with that sentence for a long time.

Then he added:

“I don’t know if I believe in second chances yet. But I think I’m living in one.”

Suddenly, the red light on the phone blinked—Line 4.

Elias startled.

He hadn’t given out the number tonight.

He tapped the switch.

“You’re on the air with Elias.”

There was a pause.

Then a child's voice came through, trembling and unsure.

"...Are you the man from the song?"

Elias's breath caught. "I'm sorry?"

"My grandma says the man on the radio sings with his heart broken open. She said that's how Jesus gets in."

Elias was silent.

The child continued, "She listens to you every night. She cried during the one song. The one about being near to God."

Elias blinked back tears. "That's... 'Nearer, My God, to Thee.'"

"Yeah. That one. She said you're not just playing songs. You're being brave."

Elias couldn't speak. He couldn't breathe.

"Can you tell her she's not alone?"

He leaned forward, voice soft.

"She's not. Neither are you."

Click.

The line went dead.

And Elias Vance sat there—hands shaking, heart raw.

Midnight in Middletown had never felt so alive.

He stood and walked to the window.

Outside, the street was empty. The town was asleep.

But something eternal was awake.

He looked back at the old radio.

Still silent.

But it didn't need to speak tonight.

The message had already come.

Part II: Strange Frequencies

Chapter 11 – The Radio in the Attic

The attic smelled like old wood, mothballs, and forgotten prayers.

Elias had to duck to avoid the sloped ceiling as he climbed the last few creaking steps. Dust particles hung in the shafts of light spilling through a single circular window, dancing like tiny spirits stirred awake by his presence. The silence was thicker here—not just quiet, but *still*, like the air had been holding its breath for decades.

It had been years since he'd stepped foot in his grandfather's attic. The house, vacant since Henry Vance passed away, still sat on the edge of town—a pale green farmhouse with peeling paint and a yard overrun by dandelions. Elias kept the utilities on out of guilt more than sentiment, but he rarely visited. Too many memories lived here, and most of them were ones he had tried to outgrow.

But now?

Now he had questions. And something told him the answers might still be hiding beneath the eaves.

He swung the flashlight beam across the rafters.

Stacks of old radio manuals. Wooden crates filled with vacuum tubes. Military-green boxes labeled with grease pencil: “WZBT Archives – 1972–75.”

He set the flashlight down and opened one of the boxes.

Inside: a tangle of headset cords, reel-to-reel tapes, and a black leather-bound notebook with the initials “H.V.” embossed on the cover.

His grandfather's journal.

He wiped the dust from the top, heart pounding, and opened it.

First page:

“The voice of the Lord can come through thunder—or through the gentle hum of a broken machine.”

Elias froze.

He turned to the next page.

“March 19, 1974 – The radio picked up something again. 1:11 AM. No call sign, no station ID. Just a voice. Mine. But older. It told me to stay home this morning. That there'd be a wreck on Route 7. I obeyed. The crash made the news.”

Another entry:

“April 3, 1974 – Spoke with Pastor Graham. He says if it's of God, it'll bring peace, not fear. I told him it feels like both.”

Elias sat back, stunned.

His grandfather had heard the voice too.

Decades ago.

The same voice. The same impossible phenomenon. And just like Elias, Henry hadn't known what to make of it—only that it was *real*, and it was *divine*.

He flipped deeper into the journal. The entries stretched across years, chronicling strange transmissions, warnings, and even moments of miraculous timing.

But one entry stood out.

It was dated five days before his grandfather's death.

"I don't understand it all. But I know now the radio was never just a machine. It's a vessel. A whispering place. The Lord doesn't always shout from mountaintops. Sometimes He speaks through circuits and silence. If Elias ever finds this... tell him the voice is real. Tell him it's not fate. It's grace."

The flashlight flickered.

Elias looked up, blinking back sudden tears.

"Why didn't you ever tell me?" he whispered. "Why did you wait until now?"

He closed the journal and scanned the attic again.

Near the back wall, half-covered in a moth-eaten quilt, sat another radio—older than the one in the studio. Bulkier. Hand-carved.

He recognized it.

It was *the* original.

The first radio his grandfather ever used when WZBT was a pirate station, broadcasting hope on a shoestring budget from the farmhouse before the FCC even knew it existed.

Elias knelt and uncovered it.

The wood was dry but intact. The knobs worn smooth. The speaker mesh slightly torn.

And on the faceplate, just beneath the tuning dial, carved with unmistakable precision, was the same phrase he'd seen before:

"He who has ears, let him hear."

He touched the lettering.

It hadn't been a coincidence.

It had been waiting.

He gently picked up the radio, hugging it to his chest like something sacred. The weight of it pressed into him like history, like inheritance.

He didn't know what he would do with it yet. Not exactly.

But he knew it had to come back with him.

Not to decorate the studio.

To *listen*.

To continue what his grandfather had started.

As he descended the attic stairs, the morning sun just beginning to climb the horizon, Elias Vance carried a piece of his past toward a future he never thought he'd want.

And in the attic behind him, the dust slowly began to settle again—this time, not as a sign of silence.

But as a witness to awakening.

Chapter 12 – A Voice Like Mine

Elias placed the old radio—his grandfather's original—on the shelf beside the modern broadcast console with a reverence he hadn't shown anything in years. He didn't plug it in right away. It didn't feel right to force it, like he was waiting for the Spirit to say "go ahead."

The studio was quiet, save for the distant hum of the cooling fans and the low, slow song of "How Great Thou Art" playing through the airwaves. The hour was creeping toward 2:00 AM—prime time for truckers, night nurses, and the wounded. The faithful few who tuned in not because they had nothing better to do, but because they *needed* to hear something holy at that hour.

Elias sat in the chair, his eyes flicking between the journal, the new radio, and the old one.

They looked like two generations of preachers sitting side by side. One smooth and silent, the other cracked and full of history. And both had carried a message that outlived their design.

He opened Henry's journal again.

"The voice is always yours, but not always from you."

That line struck him like a tuning fork to the chest.

The voice is always yours... but not always from you.

He hadn't admitted it aloud to anyone yet, but he'd been turning it over in his mind since the first broadcast.

It had *been* his voice.

Every time.

Older. Wiser. Steady. Kind.

Not the voice he used now. Not the tone he gave to strangers or listeners. It was a version of himself he barely recognized. A man at peace. A man he didn't yet know how to become.

He reached for the new journal page.

"Tonight's reflection: It's one thing to hear your own voice in the future. It's another to realize it's not the man you are now—but the man you're supposed to become."

He stared at the sentence for a long time.

It terrified him.

And it thrilled him.

Because maybe—just *maybe*—God wasn't showing him a set path carved in stone.

Maybe He was showing him the *destination*... and asking if he was willing to take the road to get there.

He turned back to the radio and did something he hadn't done since the first broadcast.

He plugged it in.

The lights in the studio dimmed for a second, the old radio drawing more power than it should have for something its age. A soft pop came from inside, and then—silence.

Elias leaned in.

Waited.

And then... a hum.

Low. Gentle.

Then the dial lit up faintly with a golden hue, like a candle being relit after a long night.

Elias pressed the "record" button on the studio console.

If this was going to happen again, he wanted proof. He wanted documentation. He wanted to *remember*.

The hum deepened, and then—

The voice returned.

"Tomorrow at 8:46 AM, Elias will be walking across 5th and Jefferson. He will see a woman drop her purse. He must stop and help her. What follows will be a divine appointment."

Elias blinked.

That was all.

No name. No context.

Just an ordinary moment that the voice had framed as *divine*.

He sat back, overwhelmed.

It wasn't a near-death warning this time. Not a miracle moment. Not a prophetic intervention.

Just a simple instruction.

A woman. A purse. An intersection. An act of kindness.

That was it.

But in that simplicity, Elias heard something far more profound than he expected:

God didn't just orchestrate rescue.

He orchestrated *redemption*.

One moment at a time.

Even small ones.

Even ones you might walk right past.

He looked at the clock.

2:17 AM.

In just over six hours, he'd be at that intersection. The voice had made that part clear.

He could ignore it.

Or he could follow it.

He didn't know what would happen if he did.

He didn't know what wouldn't happen if he didn't.

But this time, he wasn't afraid of obedience.

He was curious.

He looked back at the radio.

"Why me?" he whispered.

The radio didn't answer.

But somewhere deep inside him, a memory stirred—of his grandfather holding him as a child, saying, "*God doesn't need you to be strong, Elias. He just needs you to be willing.*"

And tonight, for the first time in decades...

He was.

Chapter 13 – Something That Hasn't Happened

The corner of **5th and Jefferson** was nothing special.

A cracked sidewalk. A blinking walk signal. A coffee shop across the street with chipped paint on the windows. A few maple trees that hadn't yet turned with the season. The kind of place you'd pass a thousand times and never remember once.

Elias stood on that corner like a man who had been called to holy ground.

It was **8:44 AM.**

He had never felt more out of place. Dressed in his usual flannel shirt and jeans, clutching a lukewarm coffee in a paper cup, he looked like any other early riser. But inside, his heart was pounding with anticipation, doubt, and something else—*hope*.

The voice had said:

“Tomorrow at 8:46 AM, Elias will be walking across 5th and Jefferson. He will see a woman drop her purse. He must stop and help her. What follows will be a divine appointment.”

He checked his phone again. **8:45.**

One minute.

He scanned the street.

Pedestrians bustled by—nurses getting off night shift, a man in a suit talking into a Bluetooth headset, a teenager with a skateboard and a backpack hanging from one shoulder. The world was moving. And yet, for Elias, everything had slowed down.

Was this how prophets felt?

Not certain.

Just *called*.

The seconds ticked by.

Then—there she was.

A woman, maybe late 60s, walking briskly with a large handbag slung over one shoulder, a paper grocery sack in her arms. Her gray hair was pulled back in a bun, and she wore sensible shoes and a concerned look, as if she were late for something important.

Elias stepped closer to the curb.

8:46 AM.

As she crossed the street, the strap of her purse slipped from her shoulder. The weight shifted, caught awkwardly on her elbow, and the whole bag spilled across the sidewalk—coins, receipts, a hairbrush, a half-eaten granola bar.

People passed her by.

One man glanced and kept walking.

Another stepped around the mess as if it were debris on the highway.

But Elias didn't hesitate.

He was already moving, crouching down beside her.

“Let me help you,” he said.

She looked startled, then grateful.

“Oh, thank you—thank you,” she stammered, kneeling beside him.

He scooped up the change. She grabbed the brush and the receipts.

“I’m sorry,” she added. “I’m not usually this clumsy.”

“No worries,” he said, smiling. “Happens to the best of us.”

They gathered the last few coins and stood.

As he handed her the bag, she looked at him with surprise.

“You’re... you’re the radio man.”

Elias blinked. “Excuse me?”

She nodded slowly. “You play the hymns. Zion’s Beacon. My husband listens every morning while I make coffee. He says you sound like someone God is chasing.”

Elias was stunned.

“I... well, that’s one way to describe it.”

She laughed. “It’s a compliment. It means you’re still worth chasing.”

She paused, then reached into her coat pocket.

“I wasn’t supposed to be here this morning. I usually take Oak Street, but the bus route changed unexpectedly. I was annoyed at first. I’m supposed to be at the hospital. My husband’s having a procedure. I’ve been so anxious I couldn’t even focus on packing his things this morning.”

She pulled out a folded envelope and held it up.

“This fell out of my bag too. I would’ve lost it if you hadn’t helped. It’s my husband’s DNR—his end-of-life instructions. I forgot to give it to the nurse.”

Elias felt the air leave his lungs.

She clutched it to her chest, eyes watery.

“I prayed this morning,” she whispered, “that God would help me not fall apart today. That He’d send someone to help. And here you are. Picking up my mess. Like an angel in plaid.”

Elias laughed gently, blinking back tears. “I don’t know about angel. But I’m glad I could help.”

She looked at him for a long moment.

“I don’t think you realize how important you are,” she said. “Not just to people like me... but to *Him*.”

She nodded upward.

Then she smiled, thanked him again, and walked off.

Elias stood there, rooted to the spot.

The voice had known.

The voice had known.

Not just that the purse would fall, but that *he* needed to be there. That this woman needed help. That the paper in her hand had *eternal weight*. That her prayer would be answered by a broken man trying to believe again.

He felt like the wind had passed straight through him.

When he returned to the studio later that morning, the hum from the radio greeted him like a familiar friend.

No voice this time.

No prophecy.

Just that soft golden glow and the low, steady whisper that had become more than a sound.

It had become *companionship*.

He sat down at the mic and flipped the switch.

“This is Elias Vance,” he said, voice calm. “I’ve been thinking a lot lately about things that haven’t happened yet. About how we spend most of our lives worrying about disasters that never arrive and missing miracles that sneak in the back door.”

He paused, looking at the antique radio.

“Sometimes the future shows up dressed like a stranger dropping a purse. Sometimes grace walks past us, waiting for us to turn around. And sometimes... we hear a voice before the moment comes, reminding us that we’re part of something bigger than we think.”

He played the next hymn.

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness.”

And this time, he *believed* every word.

Chapter 14 – The Lost Wallet

It started with a knock at the studio door.

Elias didn’t get visitors. Not during the day. Not ever, really. The station was tucked behind a row of auto shops and a shuttered laundromat—far from the foot traffic of Main Street. And yet, as he sat in the booth cueing up a hymn for the afternoon repeat broadcast, the knock came again.

Three sharp raps.

Cautious.

He rose slowly and crossed the narrow hallway. Through the dusty glass door, he saw a man in his mid-thirties—disheveled, fidgeting, nervously shifting his weight between his feet. He wore a denim jacket with a rip on the shoulder and a ball cap pulled low over his brow. There was something in his eyes—restless and exhausted, like someone on the verge of walking off a cliff.

Elias opened the door halfway. “Can I help you?”

The man looked up. His expression shifted as if he recognized Elias—or maybe just the sound of his voice.

“You’re him,” the man said. “From the radio.”

“I am,” Elias said carefully. “You a listener?”

The man nodded slowly. “Sometimes. Not on purpose. It just... comes on. When I’m flipping stations. Usually at night.”

“Are you okay?” Elias asked.

The man hesitated. Then he held out a worn leather wallet.

“This yours?”

Elias frowned and took the wallet. Opened it.

Sure enough—his ID. His credit card. The twenty-dollar bill he’d tucked behind the insurance card for emergencies. It was all there.

“I—uh—I didn’t even know I lost it,” Elias admitted.

“I found it downtown,” the man said. “Near the coffee shop. Thought it might’ve fallen out of your jacket.”

Elias stared at him. “Thank you. That was kind of you.”

The man shrugged. “Didn’t do it for kindness.”

He looked away. “I was gonna take the cash. Honestly. I had every intention of doing it. But then... your voice came on. Said something about how ‘what you carry reveals who you’re becoming.’ I don’t even know if that was the sermon or the song or what.”

Elias blinked. He hadn’t said that on the air.

At least—not yet.

The man scratched the back of his neck. “I don’t know what it was, man. But it hit me. Like something—*Someone*—was saying, ‘Don’t do this. You’re better than this.’”

Elias felt a chill crawl up his spine.

He stepped aside. “Come in. Sit down. Want some coffee?”

The man hesitated again, then stepped inside the studio. His name was *Jonas*. He was a roofer by trade, laid off three months ago after a back injury. He’d been couch-surfing ever since. No wife, no kids, just a string of bad breaks and worse decisions. He hadn’t planned to stop by today. He was walking toward the bus stop when he saw the station sign.

“I didn’t even know where this building was,” Jonas said. “Never thought about it. But something told me—‘You owe this guy a return. Go.’ So I did.”

They talked for over an hour.

About guilt. Regret. Choices. God.

Jonas said he wasn't religious. But something had shifted in him. He couldn't name it. Couldn't explain it. Only that, somehow, the sound of a voice on the radio—Elias's voice—had reached a place no sermon ever had.

Elias didn't preach. Didn't quote scripture. He just listened.

He offered Jonas a bag of groceries from the emergency pantry Pastor Curtis kept in the back office. A ride to a friend's house. His cell number, if Jonas ever wanted to talk.

Before he left, Jonas turned at the door.

"Can I ask you something?" he said.

"Sure."

"Do you believe in second chances?"

Elias smiled softly. "I believe in third, fourth, and fifth ones too."

Jonas nodded and stepped out into the fading light.

The door closed behind him with a quiet click.

Elias returned to the studio, sat at the console, and stared at the old radio.

It was glowing again.

A soft amber warmth.

Then, the voice—his voice—came through once more:

"This one won't be the last. More will come. Not because of you, Elias, but because the station has been tuned."

Then silence.

No more prophecy.

No specific date or time.

Just a declaration.

The station had been *tuned*.

The frequency was right.

Elias leaned back, overwhelmed.

The radio wasn't just predicting the future.

It was inviting him into it.

He flipped the mic on.

“This is Elias Vance,” he said slowly. “And I want to say something to whoever’s listening: Sometimes you don’t know what you’ve lost until grace puts it back in your hands. And sometimes, the voice that changes your life isn’t from a pulpit or a choir stand—it’s from a stranger who brings you your wallet and asks if second chances are real.”

He smiled.

“They are.”

He played a hymn.

“Come As You Are.”

And he did.

He came to the mic with doubt.

But now... he stayed with hope.

Chapter 15 – Late Again

The clock read **7:58 PM**.

Elias stared at it like it had betrayed him. Again.

He was late. Again.

Not to the station—he lived there most days now—but to something that actually mattered.

Tonight was Pastor Curtis’s Bible study over at Zion Community Church. Curtis had invited him three times this week, subtly, without pressure. Just a soft, “We’re in John tonight if you’re curious,” and a smile that said *You belong there, even if you don’t think so yet*.

Elias had promised he’d come.

But then a caller kept him on the line. Then a cable at the transmitter fritzed out. Then the old radio started humming again, and he waited—hoping it might speak.

It didn’t.

And now he was late. Again.

He ran a hand through his hair, agitated. The study would’ve started fifteen minutes ago. And Elias didn’t like walking in late to anything, let alone a room full of people who had watched his fall and now saw him slowly crawling toward something redemptive.

He stood in the hallway outside the studio, keys in one hand, a thousand excuses in the other.

Then the phone rang.

He turned back toward the booth.

Line 1 blinking.

He hesitated.

The tension in his chest said *go*—to the church, to Curtis, to the promise he'd made.

But the call pulled at him like a string tied to his soul.

He answered.

"You're on the air."

Silence.

Then a quiet voice. Male. Maybe mid-twenties. Shaky.

"...Is this... the man who plays the songs?"

Elias sat slowly. "Yes. This is WZBT. You've got Elias."

Another pause.

"I didn't think you'd answer."

"I'm here."

A shaky breath.

"I was gonna end it tonight."

Elias stopped breathing.

"I had it all planned," the caller continued. "Wrote the note. Took the pills. I was just waiting for the right moment. But I turned the radio on, and... you were talking about grace. About how it sometimes comes disguised as a delay."

Elias blinked.

He hadn't said that *tonight*.

Not out loud.

But maybe... the *radio* had.

"I just... I don't know what to do now," the man said. "I don't want to die. But I don't know how to live either."

Elias found his voice.

"What's your name?"

"Ben."

"Ben, I'm so glad you called. First, I need you to do something. Don't hang up. Stay with me, okay?"

"Okay."

Elias tapped into something he hadn't used in years—a calm, steady confidence from his old hosting days. But this wasn't for ratings. This was *rescue*.

“I want you to hear me, Ben. I’ve been there. Maybe not the same circumstances. But I’ve sat where you are, wondering if my life still had value. If anyone would miss me if I disappeared. And I need you to know something—there *is* a way forward. You don’t have to see the whole road. You just have to take the next step.”

Ben didn’t answer at first.

Then—“What’s the next step?”

“Let someone help you,” Elias said. “Let’s start there. I’ll stay on this line with you. I’m going to get you a number to call. And if you’re willing... I’ll meet you. In person. We’ll get coffee. We’ll talk.”

“...Why would you do that?”

“Because someone once did it for me.”

A pause.

“...Okay.”

They stayed on the line for twenty-five minutes. Elias walked him through finding a local counselor. Texted him the number. Promised to follow up tomorrow. Prayed with him—awkwardly, hesitantly, but sincerely.

When Ben finally hung up, Elias sat alone in the booth, exhausted.

He looked at the clock.

9:14 PM.

Bible study was over.

Late again.

But this time... it felt like he had been *exactly* where he was supposed to be.

He turned to the old radio.

It was glowing faintly.

And then, the voice—his voice—came through once more:

“You missed the study. But you saved a soul. The Shepherd left the ninety-nine. And tonight, so did you.”

Tears filled his eyes.

He whispered, “I was right where I needed to be.”

And for once, being late didn’t feel like failure.

It felt like faith.

Chapter 16 – “This Is Not a Test”

The emergency alert buzzed through the airwaves like a bullet through silence.

Elias nearly spilled his coffee when it hit—sharp, shrill, and entirely unexpected. The standard tone, followed by the robotic voice of the automated broadcast system:

“This is a test of the Emergency Alert System...”

He exhaled, chuckling to himself. “Well, thanks for the cardiac arrest,” he muttered.

The test had become a routine part of his late-night shifts. Always unexpected. Always jarring. Always interrupting a perfectly good hymn. It was supposed to be comforting, in a way—reassuring the public that systems were in place, that someone, somewhere, was prepared if everything went wrong.

But tonight, something was different.

Because as the broadcast continued, the message glitched.

Right after the automated voice finished the line—

“...This is a test of the Emergency Alert System...”

—another voice slipped through.

It was subtle. Like a whisper beneath the surface of a storm.

And it was his.

“This is not a test.”

Elias sat straight up, eyes locked on the console.

“Wait—what?”

He replayed the last five seconds of the broadcast, isolating the clip. Listened again.

“...Emergency Alert System...”

“...This is not a test.”

The second line was unmistakably *his* voice.

But it wasn’t *part* of the alert.

It hadn’t come from the EAS system.

It had come from the *radio*.

He turned to the antique set on the shelf.

Its golden glow was steady. The dial unmoved. But the air in the studio had changed. Heavy. Sacred. Like someone had opened a door between worlds and forgotten to close it.

Elias reached for his journal, flipping to a fresh page.

“October 17 – 2:13 AM – EAS triggered. Glitch. My voice—‘This is not a test.’”

He stared at the words. The pen hovered, then scratched another line beneath:

“What *isn’t* a test?”

He looked around the room, almost expecting another interruption. A call. A vision. Something.

But there was only stillness.

And then the understanding crept in—not spoken, not broadcast, but *felt*.

This life. This hour. This moment.

It’s not a test.

It’s the real thing.

The people calling him. The voice guiding him. The hymns, the emails, the late-night confessions. None of it was rehearsal. None of it was practice.

Every word mattered.

Every choice mattered.

Even the smallest acts—answering a call, helping a stranger, playing a forgotten hymn—were *real broadcasts into eternity*.

He sat back in the chair, sobered.

There were no do-overs. No second takes. No script to rehearse.

This was *the show*.

And he was on the air.

He glanced at the mic and whispered, “Are You listening?”

The answer came—not through the radio, not in thunder or trembling...

But in his own chest.

“Always.”

Chapter 17 – Scrambled Futures

The signal dropped at 3:06 AM.

Not all at once—but in a slow, eerie fade that left behind only broken syllables, fractured melodies, and static that hissed like a warning. Elias stared at the console, adjusting knobs, toggling switches. Nothing helped. Every button he pressed just produced more distortion.

It was like the future was short-circuiting in real time.

Then the old radio sparked.

A soft *pop*, followed by the sound of the dial turning itself—*click, click*—just a few notches to the right.

The glow brightened. Then dimmed.

Then a voice—not his voice this time, but someone else’s—warped and scattered like a jigsaw puzzle thrown across a table.

“El... warn... sto...com...don’t...”

He leaned in, heart pounding.

“Say it again,” he whispered. “Please.”

But the voice was gone.

Replaced by a scrambled hymn. Half of “*Rock of Ages*”, overlaid with static and a second, overlapping voice reciting Psalm 91—except the words were all jumbled, out of order, like a divine message had been torn and reassembled by a nervous angel.

Elias grabbed his journal and wrote as fast as he could:

“3:06 AM – Signal dropped. Radio dial turned itself. Not my voice. Warning? Fragmented scripture. Psalm 91. Snippets of ‘Rock of Ages.’”

He underlined the next part:

“Word fragments: ‘warn’ – ‘storm’ – ‘coming’ – ‘don’t.’”

He shut the journal and sat back, staring at the antique radio.

“I don’t understand,” he said aloud.

The radio made no sound. But Elias felt the urgency in his bones.

Something was wrong.

And the message hadn’t come through clean.

He opened the Bible on the desk and turned to Psalm 91.

His eyes fell on verse 10:

“*No evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home.*”

Then verse 11:

“*For He will order His angels to protect you wherever you go.*”

He read it twice, slowly.

The scrambled warning hadn’t been random.

It had been an echo—something sacred that got scrambled in transmission. But the intent was still clear.

A storm was coming.

Not a literal one—there wasn't a cloud in the sky outside.

But something spiritual.

Something personal.

He felt it in his chest. A heaviness. A resistance.

It reminded him of the day his marriage ended. That numb weight in his lungs. Like grief knocking on the door, asking to come in and redecorate.

He turned to the mic, clicked it on.

"This is Elias," he said, quietly. "And I don't know who needs to hear this tonight, but if something in your spirit feels... off, you're not crazy. Sometimes God doesn't send thunder. Sometimes He just scrambles the frequency and waits to see if you'll keep listening anyway."

He paused.

"I'm listening."

He played "*Rock of Ages*"—this time the full version, not the broken fragments the radio had coughed out.

As the song played, he prayed silently.

Not for clarity.

But for *courage*.

Because scrambled futures still came from sovereign hands.

And even static has a Source.

Chapter 18 – Signal Confirmed

The static faded at exactly **3:33 AM**.

Elias hadn't moved from the booth in over an hour. The hymn had long since ended. The signal remained scrambled. The air in the studio was charged with an almost electric unease—as if the radio, the wiring, and the very atmosphere were being re-tuned in real time.

The only sound for the past thirty minutes had been the soft hiss of the old radio and the occasional *crack-pop* from the antique dial as it made tiny micro-adjustments, completely on its own.

He had the headphones on, not because he needed them, but because he *wanted* to hear every whisper, every hint of the broadcast trying to push through. The message from earlier—the one scrambled beyond understanding—had left him restless. A warning. A disruption. But also, a calling.

And now, after all the waiting...

The hum returned.

Not sharp.

Not loud.

But unmistakably *intentional*.

The glow around the radio's dial flickered brighter, casting a halo of gold across the studio wall. The clock ticked to **3:33** exactly—three repeating digits that felt, somehow, divine. Elias didn't know why, but he had the strange sensation that **he was not alone** in the room.

Then, the voice came.

“This is Elias Vance... reporting from what you once called rock bottom. And I can tell you, it's not the end—it's the foundation. The storm has passed. Signal confirmed. You're not lost anymore.”

Elias's mouth dropped open.

It *was* his voice again.

Older. Confident. Clear.

But this time, there was no warning.

No instruction.

Just *assurance*.

A declaration that something had shifted in the heavens—and in him.

The static didn't return.

Instead, a warm silence filled the studio. One not born of absence, but of *peace*.

He reached slowly for the journal and, with trembling fingers, wrote:

“3:33 AM – Signal restored. My voice again. Clearer than ever. The message wasn't about the future—it was about *now*. ‘You're not lost anymore.’”

He paused, unsure how to process the weight of that line.

You're not lost anymore.

It was a strange thing to write about yourself.

Elias Vance had been many things over the years—a headline, a disgrace, a has-been, a disappointment. He had walked away from everything that once mattered: his marriage, his faith, his purpose, even his daughter.

But now, in the middle of the night, in a forgotten radio station surrounded by peeling paint and outdated hymnals, a version of himself from the future was declaring something new.

He was found.

It wasn't dramatic. It wasn't accompanied by trumpet blasts or a full choir of angels. It was a quiet knowing. A settledness in his chest. A holy hush.

He stood and walked to the old radio, placing his hand gently on the top.

"Thank You," he whispered—not to the radio, but to the One he now knew had been behind it all along.

God hadn't spoken in a burning bush or a thunderclap.

He had whispered through the hum.

And Elias had finally tuned in.

He walked back to the mic and turned it on, no script in hand.

"This is Elias," he said softly. "I don't have a sermon tonight. I don't have a lesson. I don't even have a song lined up. But I do have a question for someone out there—maybe just one of you. Have you ever been so lost that you didn't even know you were missing?"

He paused.

"I've been there. For years. Going through the motions. Making noise without music. Smiling without hope. I know what it's like to feel invisible. To wonder if your story's already over. But tonight, a voice I barely recognize—my own—told me something that I want to share with you."

He leaned closer.

"You're not lost anymore."

He let the words sit there.

Let them *breathe*.

Then he played "*Amazing Grace*", the live acoustic version he normally skipped because of the long intro.

But tonight, he let every second roll.

Because *this* was the moment grace became more than a concept. It became *confirmation*.

As the first verse played—"I once was lost, but now am found..."—Elias leaned back, tears forming, heart pounding.

He whispered under his breath, so soft no one but God could hear:

"I hear You now."

And the signal... held steady.

Chapter 19 – The Change in the Bus Route

The broadcast came at dawn.

Elias had barely slept. He'd tried—after the “signal confirmed” message, after *Amazing Grace*, after his impromptu midnight monologue—but sleep refused him like a locked door. His mind was buzzing with too many questions, too many possibilities.

So he stayed.

He brewed a fresh pot of coffee in the back room, pulled the blinds to let in the first shards of morning light, and sat once more in front of the old radio. The antique was quiet now, content in its silence like a messenger who had delivered his lines and stepped back into the wings.

But Elias could feel it—*something* else was coming.

At **6:47 AM**, just as he lifted the mug to his lips, the glow returned.

Soft at first. Then steady. The hum began low and slow, like a cello string plucked in eternity.

Elias leaned in.

Then the voice came.

“At 7:13 AM, a change in the northbound bus route will cause a delay. Elias must be there. A woman will be standing alone. Her name is Rosa. She’s not waiting for the bus—she’s waiting for a reason not to jump.”

Elias stood so fast he knocked the coffee over.

The cup rolled off the table and shattered.

But he didn’t care.

He was already grabbing his coat.

The air was sharp and cool as he rushed toward the corner of **Brookside and Alder**, the location burned into his memory like coordinates etched by the Holy Spirit. The bus route had recently been diverted due to construction, and only locals knew where the makeshift stop had been relocated.

He got there at **7:09 AM**.

Four minutes to spare.

He scanned the block.

A man walked his dog. A young mother pushed a stroller. But then—just beyond the faded shelter sign—he saw her.

An older woman. Sixty, maybe older. Her posture was ramrod straight, but her eyes were vacant, staring not at the street but through it. She held no purse. No bag. No ticket.

Just a folded scarf clutched tightly in her right hand and a desperation that radiated like heat.

She’s not waiting for the bus, the voice had said. *She’s waiting for a reason not to jump*.

Elias didn’t know what to say.

What do you say to a woman standing on the edge of eternity?

So he approached gently.

“Excuse me,” he said. “Are you Rosa?”

Her head turned sharply, eyes narrowing.

“...Do I know you?”

“No,” Elias said. “But I think I was told to be here. For you.”

She blinked. Her mouth moved, but no sound came.

He took a slow step forward.

“I know this is strange. I work at the Christian station downtown. You might have heard me—WZBT?”

She hesitated. “You’re the one... you talk between the hymns.”

“That’s me,” he nodded.

She looked away. Her voice, when it came, was fragile. “I wasn’t planning to come here today. But the bus change... it brought me to this corner. And... I don’t know why I stopped walking.”

Elias took another step. “Maybe because you were supposed to meet someone.”

She looked at him again. Hard.

“I lost my son three months ago,” she whispered. “Suicide. And I’ve been walking through days like they were fog. I told myself if God really saw me, He’d send a sign. Just one. I didn’t want to jump—I just didn’t want to *keep going*.”

Tears welled in her eyes. “Then you said my name.”

Elias felt his throat tighten.

He wanted to say something profound.

Instead, he simply said, “I see you. I really do. And you matter, Rosa. To me. To God. He sent a message to make sure you didn’t stand here alone.”

She broke.

The tears came in waves. She sat on the bench, trembling. Elias sat beside her, no more words offered—just presence.

Sometimes the holiest thing you can do is *stay*.

After several minutes, she whispered, “Will you walk me to the community center?”

He nodded. “Of course.”

They rose together and walked slowly down the block. Two strangers connected not by blood or history, but by divine broadcast.

When they parted, she looked him in the eyes.

“You gave me a reason not to disappear today.”

Elias smiled.

“No, Rosa. *God* did. I just... listened.”

Back at the station, the radio was silent again.

But it didn’t need to speak.

The *message* had already been confirmed.

Elias turned to the mic.

“This is Elias Vance,” he said, voice steady. “And I want to talk today about detours. About how sometimes, the road changes not to frustrate you... but to *position* you. How a rerouted bus stop can become the intersection of despair and deliverance. How God interrupts routines to save lives.”

He paused, hand trembling slightly on the console.

“I met someone today who was ready to disappear. But instead, she was seen. She was known. And that’s what grace does—it finds us in the alley, not just the altar. On the bench, not just in the pew.”

He cued the next song.

“His Eye Is on the Sparrow.”

And as the opening chords played, Elias whispered into the silence,

“I know He watches me.”

Chapter 20 – Collision Averted

The voice came in the middle of rush hour.

Not late at night.

Not during the sacred hush of 3:00 AM or the stillness of a graveyard shift.

It came *loud*—clear as glass—through the antique radio while the sun was high, the streets were alive, and the studio was bathed in golden light.

Elias had just finished responding to a listener’s email when the glow from the old radio flared again. No warning. No buildup. Just a soft hum and a clean signal—as if the air around him had parted for something holy to pass through.

He knew the sound now. Knew to stop what he was doing. Knew that these moments were divine dispatches wrapped in static and grace.

He leaned close as his voice—older, firmer—spoke through the radio.

“At 4:28 PM, a child will run into the street on Oakridge Boulevard. Elias will be there. The driver won’t see her. But Elias will.”

That was it.

No scripture. No poetry.

Just facts.

Time. Place. Purpose.

Elias scribbled the details in his journal, then grabbed his keys without hesitation.

Oakridge Boulevard was six blocks from the station. A long, sloping street lined with apartments and aging storefronts. It was one of the few places in town where the crosswalk lights malfunctioned regularly, and where kids played ball in the street even though they weren’t supposed to.

He got there at **4:25 PM**.

Parked his car at the far end of the block and stepped onto the sidewalk.

Nothing looked urgent.

Nothing looked dangerous.

Just a woman pushing a stroller. A teen sitting on a porch with his earbuds in. A dog barking somewhere out of sight.

He walked.

Each step measured. His eyes scanning everything.

4:27 PM.

He passed a corner bodega. Nodded to an older man sweeping the sidewalk.

4:28 PM.

Then—movement.

A red ball bounced into the road from between two parked cars.

A little girl—maybe six, tiny legs in pink leggings—darted after it, eyes locked on the ball, not the traffic.

A white SUV rounded the bend, going far too fast.

The driver didn’t see her.

But Elias did.

He didn’t think.

He ran.

He shouted as he moved, voice booming with adrenaline, “HEY—STOP!”

The girl froze just as she reached the edge of the curb.

Elias grabbed her by the arm and pulled her backward—hard.

The SUV screeched past with a gust of wind and the blare of a horn, too late to stop, too fast to matter. It disappeared around the next corner.

The street went silent.

The ball rolled to a stop.

The girl stared up at him, eyes wide.

“You okay?” Elias asked, heart hammering.

She nodded.

A woman—a young mother—came running from a building down the block, panic all over her face.

“Jessie! Oh my God!” she cried.

The girl ran to her.

Elias stood still, watching, hands still trembling.

The mother scooped her daughter up, eyes brimming with tears. “Thank you,” she said to him. “Thank you, thank you, thank you.”

He nodded.

She didn’t know who he was.

Didn’t know how he’d known.

But he didn’t need her to.

He turned and walked back to his car, the weight of what *could have happened* pressing down on him like a storm that had passed only inches overhead.

Back at the studio, Elias sat in silence.

He didn’t speak into the mic right away.

He just stared at the console, his journal open beside him, the page freshly marked:

“Collision averted. 4:28 PM. Oakridge. Girl saved. God spoke. I obeyed.”

He finally turned on the mic.

“This is Elias,” he said, his voice thick with emotion. “And I’m learning something strange lately—obedience doesn’t always feel sacred. Sometimes it feels inconvenient. Unclear. Rushed. Sometimes it

feels like walking into a neighborhood with no map and trusting that grace will meet you on the corner.”

He paused.

“Today, it did.”

He looked over at the antique radio.

Still glowing.

Still humming.

Still tuned.

“I don’t know why God would choose someone like me to help save a little girl from being hit by a car. I’m not a hero. I’m not even that good of a man. But today, I was listening. And maybe that’s enough.”

He pressed play on the next track.

“God Will Make a Way.”

And as the lyrics filled the studio, Elias Vance sat back in his chair with tears in his eyes...

...grateful not for a miracle he witnessed,

...but for a tragedy he *didn’t*.

Part III: A New Pattern

Chapter 21 – Rewinding Regret

Elias Vance had avoided the tape drawer for years.

It was tucked away in the back of the studio—beneath a shelf of out-of-print devotionals and a dusty stack of old phone directories no one had touched since 2009. Inside the drawer were dozens of reels, cassettes, and unlabeled mini-discs from a time when audio was captured, not streamed. A forgotten archive of voices, music, and moments—some holy, some awkward, some unforgettable.

He hadn’t opened it since his first month at Zion’s Beacon.

And yet today, after the little girl on Oakridge Boulevard, after the miracle that looked like timing, after the voice from the old radio had gone silent once more... he found himself standing in front of it. Staring at it. Like it had been calling him the whole time.

With a deep breath, he pulled it open.

The smell of plastic, dust, and memory wafted out.

His fingers hovered over the tapes like they were ancient relics. He didn’t know what he was looking for. A message? A memory? A reason? He just... felt led.

One tape caught his eye.

It was labeled in faded ink: “Vance – July 9, 2011. WCBR 97.4 FM”

Elias’s old station.

Chicago.

His prime.

His fall.

He stared at it, fingers tightening around the plastic.

He remembered that broadcast.

It was the night before the scandal broke—the night before the headlines, the fallout, the firings. The last time he stood behind a mic with pride in his voice and the illusion that his life was exactly where he wanted it to be.

Back then, he had everything.

A name.

A platform.

A wife who still smiled when he walked into the room.

A daughter who still believed her father could do no wrong.

And a heart that was, quietly, beginning to crack.

He slid the tape into the deck and pressed **REWIND**.

The soft *whirrr* of spinning reels filled the studio. It sounded like time rewinding itself, dragging his past toward the present, moment by painful moment.

When it stopped, he hit **PLAY**.

His younger voice filled the room—cocky, polished, full of radio charm.

“And that’s our throwback hour, Chicago. You’re listening to Elias Vance, the voice behind the voice, reminding you that life’s a highway and I’m just here to DJ the ride...”

Elias winced.

There was no soul in it.

Just showmanship.

“Up next, a live interview with pop star Lexi Raine—don’t touch that dial...”

He hit **STOP**.

That was enough.

He sat in silence, staring at the console, emotions churning like a storm tide.

That version of him had no idea what was coming. He didn't know that his arrogance would cost him his job. That his secrets would destroy his marriage. That one year later, his daughter would stop returning his calls. That he'd wind up in a town no one had heard of, on a station no one listened to, playing hymns he didn't believe in for people he never planned to meet.

But as he sat there, the regret didn't sting the way it used to.

Something was different now.

Because that same man—the one who had once broadcast lies wrapped in charm—was now being used to deliver *truth* wrapped in brokenness.

And the irony?

The very fall he had once tried to edit out of his story was the only reason he could *now be heard*.

He opened his journal, wrote carefully:

“Just listened to the last show I did before I lost everything. My voice was smooth, but my heart was static. I had no idea I was already falling. But grace caught me—years later. And it used my same voice to speak something better.”

He underlined the next part.

“Regret doesn't get erased. But it does get *rewritten*.”

The radio didn't hum.

No voice interrupted.

No message crackled through.

But Elias felt a quiet presence settle over him—like someone pulling a blanket over a man just beginning to wake up from a long, restless sleep.

He turned on the mic.

“This is Elias,” he said. “And I want to talk to those of you carrying things you wish you could erase. Moments. Decisions. Whole chapters you wish had never been written.”

He exhaled slowly.

“You can't rewind life like a cassette. But you *can* learn from it. And sometimes—if you're listening close—God will take the very tape of your failure and record something redemptive over it.”

He played the next track.

“All Things New” by Steven Curtis Chapman.

And as the song played, Elias looked at his reflection in the studio glass and whispered something he hadn't dared say in years:

“I forgive you.”

To himself.

To the man on that old tape.

Because the broadcast wasn't over.

And God was still on the line.

Chapter 22 – Letters from the Future

It came in the form of a yellow envelope.

No return address.

No postage stamp.

Just a name written on the front in neat, deliberate print:

“Elias Vance – Urgent.”

It was waiting for him at the station's front door early the next morning, tucked carefully beneath the welcome mat. He almost missed it. The envelope blended in with the concrete, like it belonged to the ground and not to him.

But the moment he saw it—his name in that strange, familiar handwriting—his chest tightened. The strokes were sharp, yet elegant. There was something eerily intimate about it. He knew this writing.

It was *his*.

Not the writing he used now, shaky and rushed from years of journaling and coffee-fueled insomnia.

This was... *older*.

Steadier.

He took the envelope inside, sat down at the broadcast console, and stared at it for a long moment. The room was still. The radio was silent. The air held its breath.

Then he opened it.

Inside was a single folded sheet of stationery paper—cream-colored, thick, like something you'd use for a wedding invitation or a goodbye letter. The handwriting inside was the same: his own.

But not a copy. Not printed. *Written*.

The letter read:

Elias,

I know this feels impossible. I know your hands are trembling. Mine were too when I wrote this.

But trust me—it's real.

You don't know yet, but there's a day coming when you'll stop doubting. When you'll stop running. When you'll stop punishing yourself for everything you can't undo. And when that day comes, you'll realize that every broadcast, every call, every divine interruption was never about control—it was about *calling*.

You've been chosen, Elias. Not because you're flawless.

Because you're *willing*.

You'll see miracles. Not parting-seas kind. Quiet ones. Rescued lives. Interrupted tragedies. Divine appointments at bus stops and sidewalks. And you'll be part of them—not because of your talent, but because you *showed up*.

But this next part is why I'm writing:

Don't shut off the radio. Not when it goes quiet. That silence is sacred. It's God tuning you—not the signal.

Also—don't forget the old lunchbox in the back of Grandpa Henry's attic. Trust me. When the time comes, you'll know why.

One more thing:

She's going to call again.

And this time, answer with your heart, not your guilt.

You're closer than you think.

Stay the course.

Keep broadcasting.

You're becoming the man I always hoped you would be.

—Elias

(from a little further down the road)

Elias stared at the letter for what felt like an eternity.

Then he read it again.

And again.

The writing was his. No doubt. The structure, the grammar, even the way he dotted his "i"s with slight leftward slants—it was *his hand*.

But he didn't remember writing it.

Not now.

Not ever.

He looked around the studio like someone might appear to explain it. But he was alone.

Or was he?

He reached for the mic—hands still shaking—and pressed the “On Air” button.

“This is Elias Vance,” he said, voice low, reverent. “And I just received something I can’t explain. A letter. In my own handwriting. From... well, let’s just say *the future*. And before you write me off as losing it, let me say this: I don’t care how crazy it sounds. Because the words inside that envelope held more hope than any sermon I’ve heard in a decade.”

He paused.

“I want to tell someone out there: your future self might not be perfect—but he’s rooting for you. She’s praying for you. They’re calling you forward, past the guilt and the fear and the silence. And you know what I’m starting to believe?”

He looked at the radio, which had just begun to hum again, warm and soft.

“I think the voice we hear in those impossible moments—the ones we call miracles, coincidences, prophetic interruptions—I think that’s the sound of grace catching up with us. Like a letter from the future written in mercy.”

He folded the note and placed it carefully in his journal.

Then he played the next track:

“Be Still, My Soul.”

And this time, as the words filled the studio, Elias didn’t feel like a man clinging to a signal from somewhere beyond...

He felt like a man finally learning to *send* one.

Chapter 23 – Caller #7

It began like any other night.

The playlist was set. The hymn rotation was smooth. The antique radio sat quiet, its dial glowing like a campfire ember that refused to go out. Elias had settled into the chair behind the mic, journal by his side, coffee in hand, posture relaxed.

But his spirit wasn’t relaxed.

Something in the air felt tense. Expectant.

He glanced at the call board. Four lines, all open. The silence was normal for this hour—just past 1:00 AM—but tonight, it didn’t feel peaceful.

It felt *pregnant*.

He reached for the mic and spoke.

“This is Elias Vance, and if you’re listening tonight... I want you to know I’m here. Sometimes that’s all we need to hear, isn’t it? That someone’s out there. That we’re not floating in the void.”

He cued up a hymn—“**Abide with Me**”—and leaned back. The words washed over him like the whisper of something ancient and patient.

Then the light on **Line 1** blinked.

He reached out, instinctively.

“You’re on the air with Elias.”

Silence.

Just faint breathing.

“Go ahead,” he said gently.

The caller hung up.

Line 2 lit up.

Then **Line 3**.

Each time, Elias answered. Each time, no one spoke.

Just breathing.

Then a click.

And silence.

He leaned forward.

The studio lights flickered.

The old radio hummed—not loud, not a full transmission—just a quiet thrum, like a heartbeat beneath the floor.

Then **Line 4** lit up.

Caller #7.

He hesitated.

Something in him knew: *This one’s different.*

He answered.

“You’re on with Elias.”

A woman’s voice, low and rough, filled the line.

“Am I really number seven?”

Elias blinked. “Excuse me?”

"I called six times. Couldn't speak. Couldn't breathe. Just kept hitting redial. I told myself if it rang a seventh time, I'd actually say something."

Elias swallowed. "Well... I'm listening."

She let out a breath that cracked halfway through.

"I'm not good at this," she said. "I don't talk to radio people. I don't... talk to *anyone*. Not anymore."

He waited.

She continued.

"My name's Julia. I haven't left my apartment in almost three weeks. I lost my son last year. He was nineteen. Drunk driver."

A pause.

"I used to listen to this station all the time. My husband and I would leave it on overnight—he liked the hymns. Said they kept the nightmares out. After the accident... he stopped sleeping. Stopped talking. Six months later, he left."

Elias closed his eyes. Let her words anchor him in reverence.

"I started turning the radio on again last week," she said. "I wasn't looking for hope. I was looking for noise."

A long silence.

"Then I heard your voice," she said.

Elias took a deep breath. "What did you hear?"

She hesitated. Then: "Not a sermon. Not advice. Just... honesty. Someone else who didn't pretend to have it together. You said once, 'Some of us don't need rescue—we need someone to sit in the wreckage with us until we remember how to stand.'"

Elias felt his chest tighten.

He *had* said that. A few nights ago. Off-script. Off-the-cuff.

"I wrote it down," she whispered. "That's why I'm calling. Because I've been sitting in the wreckage. And tonight... I think I want to stand."

Elias could barely speak.

"Julia... I don't have answers. I don't know why God lets certain things happen. But I know this: He *hasn't left you*. You're not forgotten. And your voice matters."

She broke.

Not loud.

Just a quiet sob over the line.

“I just needed someone to tell me that,” she said.

“I’m telling you now.”

He stayed on the phone with her for twenty minutes after going off-air. Listened. Prayed—awkwardly, clumsily, sincerely. Gave her Pastor Curtis’s number. Promised to send her some music. Promised to remember her son’s name—**Micah**.

When the call ended, Elias sat in silence, hands folded, eyes stinging.

Caller #7 hadn’t just been a voice in the dark.

She was a sign.

That the broadcast *mattered*.

That broken voices still echoed in heaven.

He turned toward the old radio.

It remained still.

Silent.

But he didn’t need it to speak.

Tonight, God had used a different signal.

A woman with a wound.

A man with a mic.

And a moment of connection that would never make the headlines—but would ripple in eternity.

He opened his journal:

**“Caller #7 – Julia. Lost her son. Nearly lost herself. Found something in the static.
Maybe I did too.”**

He looked at the mic.

Then said, softly:

“If you’re out there... if you’re afraid to speak... just keep calling. One day, someone will answer. And it might just be the voice you didn’t know you needed.”

He hit play.

“Come Ye Disconsolate.”

Because even the most broken are still invited home.

Chapter 24 – The Woman in Apartment 3B

Elias hadn’t visited the apartment complex since he moved to Middletown.

Not because it was far—it was only four blocks from the station—but because it reminded him of the kind of life he used to run from: low ceilings, heavy air, and voices that carried too easily through paper-thin walls.

He had once lived in a place just like it during his early DJ days in St. Louis. One-bedroom walk-up. Peeling paint. Roaches he named after pop stars just to cope. Back then, he thought it was just a stop on the road to somewhere better.

But some people didn't stop there.

Some people stayed.

And some people *got stuck*.

Like the woman in Apartment 3B.

He had no idea who she was until the radio told him.

It happened around **9:44 PM**. He had just come off a call with a listener who wanted to know the history of "The Old Rugged Cross," and as he was about to start the song, the hum returned—smooth, low, undeniable.

The old radio lit up.

"Elias. Tonight. Apartment 3B. She's not answering the phone. But she'll answer the door."

No name. No context.

Just an address and a *knowing*.

Elias didn't hesitate.

The **Willow Court Apartments** sat behind a shuttered gas station, surrounded by rusted chain-link fence and cracked sidewalks littered with forgotten fast food bags. It wasn't dangerous, exactly. Just... tired. The whole building seemed to lean slightly, as if weary from carrying too many stories.

He knocked on the door marked **3B** at exactly **10:07 PM**.

No answer.

He knocked again. This time softer. Slower.

Still nothing.

He leaned forward and said, "If you're in there... I think I'm supposed to be."

The lock clicked.

The door opened three inches.

An eye peered out.

Then widened.

“...You’re the radio guy,” the voice said.

Elias nodded.

“Yes. Elias. From WZBT.”

She opened the door fully.

Mid-forties. Pale. Thin. Auburn hair pulled into a loose ponytail. She wore a sweatshirt three sizes too big and looked like she hadn’t slept in days. Her eyes were rimmed with the kind of red that came from more than just fatigue—it came from hopelessness.

“I don’t... I didn’t call,” she said. “Did someone send you?”

“No one *here*,” Elias said gently. “But I think Someone *did*.”

She looked at him like she didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

Her name was **Darlene**.

She invited him inside.

The apartment was dimly lit. One lamp, a small TV on mute, a worn recliner with a crocheted blanket draped over the side. On the coffee table sat three prescription bottles. One was open. Half-empty.

Elias didn’t ask about them.

She didn’t offer.

Instead, she sat down on the edge of the recliner and stared at her hands.

“I’ve been listening to you,” she said. “Every night. Since... since the pain started.”

He sat across from her, folding his hands in his lap.

“I didn’t even believe in God,” she said. “Not really. But I kept hearing your voice... and I thought maybe—just maybe—if I kept the station on long enough, He might say something.”

Elias didn’t speak. He just listened.

“I left the door unlocked tonight,” she added, her voice breaking. “Not on purpose. Not really. But I think... deep down... I hoped someone would come. That someone would stop me.”

Elias swallowed hard.

“Then knock, knock,” she whispered. “And here you are.”

He stood slowly and walked over. Sat beside her.

“I don’t have a magic answer,” he said softly. “But I have a story. And if you’ll let me, I’d like to share it with you.”

She nodded.

So he told her.

About the radio.

About the voice.

About the little girl on Oakridge.

The letter in his own handwriting.

Caller #7.

And how tonight, the signal had whispered only one thing:

“She’ll answer the door.”

Darlene wept.

Not loud.

But freely.

And when he took her hand, she didn’t pull away.

They talked for an hour.

He made her tea from her own cupboard.

Found the number for Pastor Curtis’s wife, who ran the women’s outreach.

Tucked the medicine bottles back in the cabinet.

And before he left, he asked her something strange.

“Do you have a hymn you remember from when you were a kid?”

She smiled faintly through puffy eyes.

“There’s one. My grandma used to sing it when she brushed my hair.”

“What was it?”

“‘Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus.’”

He nodded.

“I’ll play it for you on the air tonight. Just for you.”

Back in the studio, he did just that.

“This is Elias,” he said into the mic, “and tonight’s broadcast is dedicated to anyone who left the door unlocked... hoping someone might notice.”

He paused.

“Darlene, this one’s for you. Your story’s not over. Not even close.”

He played “**Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus.**”

And as the melody filled the airwaves, Elias leaned back, closed his eyes...

...and gave thanks for the knock he had chosen to answer.

Chapter 25 – The Day I Didn’t Die

It was a day he never spoke of.

A date etched in silence, not stone.

A year before he moved to Middletown.

A month after he lost his job.

A week after his wife, *Kara*, filed the final papers.

And only hours after his daughter, *Lily*, texted him for the last time:

“I love you, Dad. But I can’t watch you self-destruct anymore.”

He never responded.

Because he didn’t plan to be around long enough to need to.

That night, Elias had driven out to Lake Monroe—twenty miles outside the city. It was the kind of place people went to either clear their heads... or leave them behind. He remembered the cold of the steering wheel, the smell of pine in the air, the half-empty bottle in the passenger seat.

He remembered writing a note.

Not a poetic one.

Just a plain, pathetic apology scribbled on the back of an old setlist from his last live show.

And he remembered standing at the edge of the dock, staring at the black water, thinking—

It would be easier for everyone if I just disappeared.

But he didn’t jump.

Because his phone rang.

It was an unknown number.

He shouldn’t have answered.

But he did.

The voice on the other end was an old man. Kind. Uncertain.

“Is this... is this Mr. Vance? Elias Vance? The DJ?”

Elias blinked, startled. “Who is this?”

“I—I’m sorry to bother you. My name’s Hank McKinnon. You don’t know me. But my wife and I... we used to listen to you every morning in Chicago. You once dedicated a song to our son before his surgery. I—uh—I heard you weren’t on anymore, but I found your number in an old contact book and just... I don’t know. Felt like I was supposed to call.”

Elias didn’t say anything.

He was staring at the water.

“I just wanted to say thank you. I know people probably don’t tell you that enough. But you got us through some hard mornings. And I felt like... maybe you needed to hear that.”

The line went quiet.

Then Hank added, almost shyly:

“Don’t give up. Okay?”

And just like that, the call ended.

The signal was gone.

But the words had landed.

Don’t give up.

It was the voice he didn’t know he needed.

So he stepped back from the dock.

He deleted the note.

He drove home.

And the next morning, he poured every last drop of liquor down the drain.

Elias never found Hank McKinnon again.

The number was disconnected.

No records. No listings.

It was like the man had called from outside time.

Now, years later, he stood in front of the mic again—older, scarred, sober.

And he knew it was finally time to tell the story.

He switched the “On Air” light.

Took a breath.

“This is Elias Vance,” he said. “And I’m going to share something I’ve never said out loud. Not on this station. Not to anyone.”

He stared at the old radio across the room.

Silent. Waiting.

“There was a night I almost didn’t see the next sunrise. A night I stood at the edge and thought... it was over. My career. My family. My future.”

A pause.

“But then the phone rang. A man I didn’t know reminded me that my voice mattered. That *I* mattered.”

He swallowed.

“And that’s why I’m here tonight. That’s why I keep broadcasting. Because someone out there is standing on their own dock, thinking it would be easier to fade away. If that’s you—hear me now.”

He leaned in closer to the mic.

“Don’t give up. Your story’s not finished. You don’t know what tomorrow holds, but I promise you this—God does. And He’s *already there*.”

He played the next track.

“You Are Not Forgotten” by Israel Houghton.

As the chords swelled through the airwaves, Elias finally wrote the truth in his journal:

“February 18. Lake Monroe. The day I didn’t die. The day I *heard grace*—and chose to live.”

Chapter 26 – Static and Psalms

The radio was hissing again.

Not in bursts or irregular blips, like usual. This was different—constant, insistent, like a veil had fallen over the airwaves. The kind of static that didn’t come from bad reception... but from something deeper.

Something internal.

Elias sat in the studio, headphones on, fingers hovering above the controls. Nothing he adjusted made a difference. He checked the wires. The satellite link. Even the transmitter in the next room. Everything was fine.

And yet the sound remained.

Like heaven had chosen to *pause*.

He leaned back, frustrated. “Come on,” he whispered. “Say something.”

The static hissed back, soft but relentless.

It reminded him of nights spent in his grandfather’s garage as a boy, fiddling with the old shortwave receiver. His grandfather used to say:

“That sound you hear? That’s the world trying to speak through fog. You just gotta learn how to listen through the noise.”

Back then, Elias thought it was nonsense.

Now, it felt prophetic.

He reached for the nearest CD in the station’s gospel shelf—**The Psalms: Volume I**, an old compilation of scripture put to soft piano. He hadn’t played it in years. Honestly, he’d forgotten it was even there.

He slid it into the tray. Hit play.

And the studio filled with Psalm 13, read in a trembling, earnest voice:

*“How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?
How long will You hide Your face from me?”*

Elias froze.

The words felt personal. Too personal.

His hand instinctively reached for the “stop” button—but he didn’t press it.

Because for the first time since the static began, the hiss faded.

Just slightly.

He listened.

*“But I trust in Your unfailing love;
My heart rejoices in Your salvation.
I will sing the Lord’s praise,
For He has been good to me.”*

And just like that—the static stopped.

Clean.

Silent.

Peaceful.

Elias stared at the console, stunned.

No explanation.

No signal change.

Just... *Psalms*.

It wasn’t a voice from the future this time.

It wasn’t even his own voice.

It was *David's*.

Centuries old. Yet somehow, still alive.

He flipped the mic on.

“This is Elias Vance, and tonight... we’re going to do something a little different. No playlists. No call-ins. Just this: the Psalms. The prayers of the broken. The cries of the doubting. The songs of the faithful.”

He glanced at the antique radio.

Still. But glowing.

“I know some of you are caught in your own static right now. I’ve been there. I *am* there, more often than I admit. But tonight, I remembered something. That God’s voice doesn’t always break through the noise with thunder. Sometimes... it seeps in through scripture. Through ancient songs. Through honest questions.”

He pressed play again.

Psalm 42 began:

*“Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God...”*

And as the words played, Elias opened his journal and wrote:

**“Sometimes the clearest signal comes wrapped in ancient sorrow.
Sometimes, God speaks through static.
And sometimes... He sings through the Psalms.”**

He leaned back.

Let the Word do what only it could do.

Heal.

Soften.

Speak.

Not from the future.

But from the *forever*.

Chapter 27 – Patching the Past

The sewing kit wasn’t his.

It belonged to *Mrs. Edna Temple*, the 83-year-old widow who lived across the alley behind the station. She'd brought it by in a shoebox, wrapped in a faded dish towel and tied with twine.

"For your coat," she'd said simply. "That hole's been staring at me for weeks. Figured God might be tired of looking at it, too."

Elias had chuckled, thanked her, and set it on the shelf by the turntable. That was three weeks ago.

Tonight, for some reason, he pulled it down.

The hole in the sleeve of his denim jacket had gotten bigger—just a little frayed patch near the elbow. It wasn't even about the coat, really. It was about what it represented. Neglect. Worn places. Things left unfixed because they "didn't matter anymore."

He threaded the needle slowly.

The room was quiet. The radio was still.

No voice. No prophecy. No call from the edge of eternity.

Just a man in a small-town radio booth, stitching the past together.

His fingers fumbled at first.

It had been decades since he'd sewn anything. His ex-wife used to do it—Kara had mended the knee of Lily's favorite jeans more times than he could count.

He winced as the needle pricked his thumb.

Blood welled up.

He pressed a tissue to it and laughed softly.

"Of course."

It wasn't until that moment that the memory hit him—*full force*.

Christmas, 2003.

Kara, sitting cross-legged on the floor, sewing the lining of his best sports coat before a church banquet. Lily was five, coloring on the kitchen tiles with markers she wasn't supposed to have.

Elias had come in ranting about a busted mixer board at the station. He didn't even notice Kara's hands were bleeding from the tiny pricks of the needle.

He'd never thanked her.

Never even noticed.

Just kissed her cheek, grabbed the coat, and left.

He stared at the patch now halfway sewn in place.

Suddenly, the fabric felt sacred.

Like penance.

Like worship.

Like grace made tangible.

And maybe—just maybe—that’s what healing actually looked like. Not grand gestures. Not dramatic conversions. Just quiet patches over the frayed places. One stitch at a time.

He turned on the mic.

“This is Elias. And I know this might sound strange, but I’m patching an old jacket right now. And in doing that, I think I’m patching something else.”

He held the jacket up for no one to see but God.

“This coat’s seen a lot. Studio nights. Fights. A courthouse. A motel. A hospital waiting room. And tonight, for the first time... it’s getting fixed.”

He paused.

“If you’re out there, sitting with broken things—relationships, regrets, hopes that feel beyond repair—I want to tell you something simple: *It’s not too late to start mending*. Even if all you’ve got is a shoebox of old thread and a prayer.”

He hit play on the next song.

“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing.”

And in the silence that followed, he finished the last stitch.

He didn’t know if the patch would hold.

But he knew this:

He wasn’t trying to cover the hole anymore.

He was choosing to *care*.

Journal entry:

“Tonight I patched the past. Not perfectly. Not cleanly. But intentionally. Maybe that’s what repentance is—threading grace through old fabric, trusting God to make it hold.”

Chapter 28 – Conversations with Ruth

She called every Tuesday night.

Like clockwork.

9:15 PM sharp, right after the weather report and just before the night's hymn request hour.

Her name was **Ruth Taylor**. Age: "None of your business, honey," she liked to say. But Elias guessed she was in her late eighties, maybe ninety, based on her gravelly voice and the way she spoke of the Great Depression like it was just a mild inconvenience.

She lived alone on the east end of town, in the same yellow cottage where she was born. No cell phone, no internet. Her landline crackled when she called in, always with the same introduction:

"Elias Vance, I don't trust satellites. But I trust you. And if I can hear you, it means God hasn't taken me yet."

He'd chuckle every time.

Somehow, Ruth had become more than a regular caller.

She'd become his *weekly confessor*.

Tonight's call started differently.

The phone lit up. **Line 2**. He picked it up with a smile.

"Ruth," he said, "I was just wondering if the CIA had finally bugged your rotary phone."

She didn't laugh.

Only silence.

Then: "Elias... I had a dream last night."

He leaned forward.

"That so?"

"Yes. And in it, I was standing on a porch, looking out over a wheat field. There was a boy there—maybe ten, maybe eleven. Brown hair. Bright eyes. He was waving to me, but I couldn't go to him. My feet were rooted. Like a tree."

She cleared her throat, voice quieter now.

"He was my son. The one I lost in 1964."

Elias didn't speak.

Ruth had never mentioned a child.

"We were supposed to go to church that day. He begged to ride his bicycle instead. I let him. He never made it back. Drunk driver. And I've been angry ever since."

Her voice broke, thin and raw like old parchment.

"For sixty-one years, I've gone to church, sang the hymns, tithed my widow's mite. But I never forgave God for taking him."

Elias shut his eyes. He could feel the gravity of her pain pressing through the phone line.

“And then last night,” she whispered, “the boy in the dream smiled at me and said, ‘Tell Elias to play the one with the river.’”

“The one with the river?”

“I don’t know what it means. But I woke up crying, and all day it felt like God was trying to say something.”

Elias turned slowly to the shelf of hymn CDs. His fingers moved without thinking. They landed on one:

“Shall We Gather at the River.”

He stared at the title.

That was the one.

He didn’t know how. He just *knew*.

“I’ll play it for you,” he said gently. “Right now.”

She was quiet.

Then softly: “I think I’m finally ready to forgive Him. Not because I understand... but because I want to stop hurting.”

A pause.

“Is that enough, Elias?”

He smiled through a welling tear.

“It’s more than enough.”

The music played.

The gentle piano. The choral voices rising like waves on the Jordan.

And Elias thought about the porch. The boy. The tree.

He imagined Ruth’s roots finally loosening, letting her step forward into peace.

When the hymn ended, he clicked the mic on.

“If you’ve ever held on to pain longer than you meant to, let tonight be your invitation to let go. Even if you don’t have all the answers. Especially if you don’t.”

He looked at the antique radio.

Silent.

But something holy stirred in the quiet.

“Forgiveness,” he said, “isn’t about forgetting what happened. It’s about remembering who’s still with you... even when everything else is gone.”

Journal entry:

“Ruth dreamed of a boy in a field and found a river of healing.
I didn’t preach. I didn’t pray. I just played the song.
And sometimes... that’s all God asks us to do.”

Chapter 29 – A Church I Didn’t Mean to Visit

It started with a wrong turn.

He had meant to head home after the Tuesday night shift. Elias was tired, heart still heavy from Ruth’s call. He’d taken the back roads to clear his mind—the winding ones near the river, where the streetlights grew sparse and the night grew thick.

Then, without warning, the headlights caught an old wooden sign, barely visible behind a thicket of trees.

“Bethesda Chapel – Est. 1897”

The paint was peeling. The letters, barely legible. He had passed it dozens of times before and never noticed. But tonight, something nudged him. Not a voice. Not a broadcast. Just a sense.

So he turned in.

The gravel crunched beneath the tires as he pulled into a patchy clearing that served as a parking lot. The little white church stood crooked but proud—an A-frame with a single steeple, half-swallowed by the woods. The windows glowed faintly.

There were no cars.

But the door was open.

He stepped inside.

Wooden pews. A dusty piano. Stained-glass windows that filtered moonlight through blues and purples.

No one was there.

And yet it didn’t feel empty.

The room felt... *held*.

Elias walked to the front, past a pulpit too small for his tall frame. On the wall behind it hung a wooden cross, hand-carved, scarred by time.

He took a seat in the third pew, center aisle.

And breathed.

No radio.

No caller.

No audience.

Just him.

And God.

He looked up at the rafters.

“Why did You bring me here?”

No answer.

But somehow, he didn’t need one.

Because as he sat in that still, silent sanctuary, the memories came—not loud, but steady. Like old letters being opened again.

The first church he ever visited with his grandmother.

The way she sang louder than anyone, always off-key, eyes closed in devotion.

The little red Gideon Bible she gave him at age seven.

How he lost it during college.

And how part of him always felt like *he* was the one who got lost.

He bowed his head.

Closed his eyes.

And for the first time in a very, very long time... he prayed.

Not eloquently.

Not theologically.

Just honestly.

“God, I don’t know what I’m doing. But You keep showing up in places I’m not even looking. And I think... I think I want to stop running.”

He sat there for over an hour.

No music. No sermon. Just peace.

Before he left, he wandered up to the piano and lifted the lid. His fingers, rusty from years of disuse, found the notes of an old tune his grandmother used to hum:

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross.”

He played it slow. Broken. Imperfect.

But full of heart.

Back at the station, he didn’t go on-air right away.

Instead, he wrote in his journal:

**“Tonight I visited a church I didn’t plan to find.
And somehow... it felt like it had been waiting for me.
Maybe grace is like that—old, hidden, patient.
Not loud. Not flashy. Just... open.”**

Then he stepped up to the mic and said:

“This is Elias. And I just came from a place where no one was speaking—but God said everything I needed to hear. So if you’re out there, lost in the woods of your own doubts, I want you to know—there’s still a light on in the chapel. And the door is open.”

He played **“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross.”**

And for once, he didn’t narrate.

He just listened.

Chapter 30 – Radio Silence

The signal was gone.

Not weak.

Not static-filled.

Just—*absent*.

The old radio, the one with the glowing dial and the mysterious transmissions, sat dark on the shelf. No hum. No flicker. No whispers of the future. Elias tapped the side of it gently. Nothing.

He checked the plug.

Still in.

Checked the wires.

All connected.

But the radio wasn’t broken.

It was... waiting.

Or worse—*done*.

Elias sat in the dim studio, the playlist loaded but untouched. He hadn't pushed "play." He hadn't spoken into the mic. The "**On Air**" light remained off.

And for the first time since this strange journey began, he wondered if the silence was *the message*.

He tried to fill the void at first.

Checked the weather.

Jotted a few notes for a devotional.

Rearranged his shelf of hymn CDs.

But the room felt hollow—like a cathedral with no liturgy, an empty confessional with no penitent.

He sipped his coffee and looked at the journal he had been keeping. The one full of entries that charted his slow return to belief. His rediscovery of grace.

He turned to a blank page and wrote two words:

"Radio silence."

Then, after a pause, beneath it:

"Is it punishment? Or permission?"

He leaned back in the chair, eyes scanning the studio like it was foreign. Had it all been a dream? A trick of grief and desperation? Had he only heard what he wanted to hear?

No.

Too many moments. Too many connections. Too many lives changed—including his own.

But now, this... this *void*.

He realized something unsettling.

For weeks, he had grown dependent on the voice in the radio. The guidance. The certainty.

And now, without it?

He felt like a blind man groping in an unfamiliar room.

And then, like a whisper not from the radio but from the soul:

*"You've learned how to hear My voice in the signal...
Now trust Me in the silence."*

He reached for his Bible, unopened for days.

Flipped through the Psalms.

His eyes fell on **Psalms 46:10**:

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

He exhaled sharply.

That was it.

The silence wasn’t absence.

It was *presence* in a different form.

Stillness.

A test of faith beyond miracles, beyond predictions.

Could he believe... without the signal?

Could he obey... without the prompt?

Could he *trust*?

He turned on the mic.

“This is Elias Vance. And tonight... there’s no message from the mystery radio. No vision. No voice. Just silence.”

He let that settle.

“But maybe that’s the point. Maybe God doesn’t always speak through thunder. Maybe sometimes, He just sits beside us and waits. And maybe faith is staying still long enough to feel Him there.”

He paused.

“If you’re listening and you feel like heaven’s gone quiet... you’re not alone. I’m sitting in the same silence with you. But I believe—even in the quiet—He’s still good.”

Then he played one song.

“Be Still My Soul.”

As the melody unfolded, Elias leaned back.

Not defeated.

But *anchored*.

Even in the absence of sound... the message remained.

Journal Entry:

*“Radio silence. Not because He left.
But because He trusts me to walk in what He’s already said.
Sometimes God pauses so we learn to keep going.”*

Part IV: Resistance on the Airwaves

Chapter 31 – Playing God

He didn’t mean to manipulate the message.

Not at first.

But as the voice from the antique radio had grown quiet—eerily so—Elias began to feel something he hadn’t felt in weeks:

Powerless.

The kind of powerlessness that once ruled his life. The same feeling that followed him after the divorce, after losing his daughter’s trust, after walking out of a court-ordered rehab facility pretending he was cured. He thought he’d left that part of himself behind.

But now, sitting in the studio with an audience that trusted him, Elias felt the old temptation return.

Control the narrative. Fill the silence. Pretend the plan is still working.

So he did what he swore he never would.

He *faked* a message.

It started small.

During the second segment of the evening broadcast, he paused the scheduled track and said into the mic:

“This just in—if you’re thinking about turning down that coffee invitation tomorrow from someone you’ve been avoiding... maybe don’t. Grace sometimes comes in strange disguises.”

It sounded like one of the usual predictions.

Listeners were used to that kind of divine nudge. And for all Elias knew, it *might* help someone.

But it didn’t come from the radio.

It came from *him*.

He made it up.

And something inside him recoiled even as the words left his mouth.

The calls came in quickly.

A woman in tears, saying she'd just received a text from her estranged brother to meet for coffee.

A college student saying she'd been planning to avoid her campus pastor the next morning but now would go.

Every story seemed to confirm the "message."

And Elias sat in growing discomfort.

Not because it hadn't worked.

But because it *had*.

He was, quite literally, **playing God**.

Later that night, he couldn't sleep.

He kept pacing the small studio, the late-night playlist playing faintly in the background. The old radio remained cold and lifeless on the shelf—no lights, no hum, no cryptic broadcasts from beyond time.

He approached it and whispered:

"I'm sorry."

As if the radio could hear.

As if the voice behind it had gone silent because of what he'd done.

Or maybe, he thought, the silence had *invited* the temptation to fill the void.

And he'd failed the test.

That's when he noticed the envelope.

It hadn't been there earlier.

Sitting on the seat where he usually rested his journal—just a plain white envelope, unsealed.

Inside, a single handwritten line on yellowed paper:

"You can imitate the voice, Elias...
but not the **intent** behind it."

No signature.

No explanation.

But he knew exactly where it came from.

He sank into the chair, guilt pressing like a lead coat on his shoulders.

The next night, he went live again.

“This is Elias Vance. And I need to confess something. Last night, I gave you a message that didn’t come from the radio. It came from me. And while it may have helped some of you, I realize now... I crossed a line.”

He swallowed.

“I wanted to keep the magic alive. I wanted to feel like I was still *chosen*, still *connected*. But the moment I tried to take control of the Voice, I stopped listening to it. And that, friends... is idolatry in its most subtle form.”

He let the silence breathe.

“But I believe in mercy. I believe God isn’t looking for perfect broadcasters—just honest ones.”

He queued up the next song.

“Create in Me a Clean Heart”

And as it played, he turned the envelope over again and wrote on the back:

**“Note to self: God doesn’t need a script editor.
He just needs a willing voice.”**

Journal Entry:

*“I lied to make God’s silence more palatable.
But grace isn’t mine to control—it’s mine to receive, then release.
And maybe the hardest part of faith...
is letting the quiet teach me trust.”*

Chapter 32 – Shutting It Off

It was 3:07 AM when Elias did the unthinkable.

He shut off the radio.

Not the studio equipment. Not the control board. Not the mic.

But *the* radio.

The antique one.

The one with the golden dial and the mysterious glow.

The one that first whispered back to him in his own voice, predicting future moments with pinpoint precision. The one that had rekindled his sense of wonder. His fear. His faith.

He reached for the power switch with a shaking hand.

And turned it off.

It had been silent for days now.

No future broadcasts. No divine nudges. No supernatural interruptions.

Just him. And the world. And the long, uncertain quiet.

He could have left it on—hoping, waiting, obsessing over when it might speak again.

But that wasn't trust.

That was addiction.

So tonight, Elias did the hardest thing he'd done since the whole journey began.

He stopped listening *for* the voice.

And decided to start living *by* what it had already said.

He sat in the studio's armchair, the room dimly lit by the console's amber glow. The silence that followed wasn't peaceful. Not at first. It was *raw*. Exposing.

Without the radio, there was no more safety net.

No holy spoilers.

No roadmap with supernatural street signs.

It was just faith now.

Unfiltered.

Unprompted.

Real.

He thought of Abraham, walking up Mount Moriah without a whisper from heaven until the knife was raised. Of Elijah, expecting God in the wind and fire, but finding Him only in the still small voice. Of Jesus in Gethsemane, praying in the dark while heaven kept quiet.

Faith was not hearing.

Faith was obeying, *even when you heard nothing at all.*

Elias reached for the mic.

"This is Elias Vance. And tonight, I shut off the radio. Not because I stopped believing in the voice, but because I've finally started trusting in the silence."

He paused.

“I’ve learned something these last few weeks: Miracles don’t build faith. *Trust does*. And if you’re holding your breath waiting for a sign... maybe the sign is your own heartbeat.”

He let out a breath he hadn’t realized he’d been holding.

“God doesn’t always speak to us through lightning bolts. Sometimes, He just waits to see if we’ll walk forward in the dark, knowing He’s still there.”

He cued up a hymn.

Not a modern one.

An old, creaky vinyl recording from 1944—**“I’d Rather Have Jesus.”**

He remembered his grandfather humming it while sanding an old bookshelf in the garage. That old man never claimed to hear God’s voice—but he *lived* like he did.

Maybe that’s the point.

As the music played, Elias opened his journal and wrote:

**“Tonight I shut off the radio. Not out of defiance.
But because the next chapter of my life isn’t about what I hear...
It’s about what I believe.
And I believe He’s still writing my story.
Even when the pen goes quiet.”**

The radio was off.

But Elias?

He was finally on.

Chapter 32 – Making the Wrong Turn

It wasn’t on the map.

He checked three times.

The road he’d turned onto didn’t exist on his phone’s GPS or the old, folded atlas stuffed in the glove box. No signposts. No mile markers. Just a narrow, cracked strip of pavement cutting through a dense forest like a scar nobody ever bothered to heal.

Elias had meant to take Route 15.

But somewhere between the diner and the gas station, his mind drifted—just enough to miss the turn. Just enough to find himself here.

Alone.

Lost.

And more frustrated than he wanted to admit.

He was already tired when he left the station that morning. A fog hung in his chest—a lingering weight from his confession on-air about faking a message. He'd been honest. Vulnerable. But something about that truth had unsettled him more than all the falsehoods that came before.

Now, as his car crawled deeper into the woods, the canopy overhead thickened. Sunlight filtered through like stained glass—green, gold, and flickering.

The road narrowed until it barely fit his tires.

He should have turned around.

But something kept him moving forward.

Up ahead, the trees parted just enough to reveal a clearing—and at its center, a rusted road sign nailed to a leaning post.

One word, hand-painted in faded white:

“RECALCULATING.”

He slammed the brakes.

Got out.

Stared at the sign like it had slapped him.

Not a town name.

Not a direction.

Just... *“recalculating.”*

As if the road knew.

As if *God* knew.

He sat on the hood of the car for a while, listening.

No signal on the phone.

No static from the antique radio in the backseat.

Only wind through trees and the faint sound of his own heartbeat.

And somewhere inside, a truth began to rise—slow, quiet, undeniable:

He had made a wrong turn.

Not just on the road.

But in life.

He had tried to direct his own path again. To speak in God's voice. To control the outcome. To be the narrator instead of the vessel.

The detour wasn't punishment.

It was mercy.

A chance to *pause*.

To recalculate.

He opened the trunk, pulled out the radio, and set it on the hood.

Still dead.

Still silent.

But somehow... *still sacred*.

"I hear You," he whispered.

Not in sound.

But in spirit.

He didn't need a broadcast to know what this moment was.

It was the intersection of pride and surrender.

Of planning and letting go.

Back on the mic later that night, he told the story.

"This is Elias. I made a wrong turn today. Ended up somewhere I didn't plan. But while I was sitting there, looking at this old sign that said 'Recalculating,' I realized—maybe God lets us get lost sometimes... just to give us a better route."

He exhaled slowly.

"Maybe grace isn't just about second chances. Maybe it's about *corrections in motion*. Maybe the wrong turns aren't wrong if they lead us back to Him."

He played "**Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah**" as the station's next track.

And for the first time in a long time, Elias didn't feel like he had to find the road himself.

He just had to follow the One who knew it.

Journal Entry:

*“Wrong turn. No signal. No map.
Just mercy in disguise.
Maybe the road to redemption is paved with detours we didn’t ask for—
and signs we didn’t expect.”*

Chapter 34 – Off Script

The show was supposed to run like it always did.

Segment one: a devotional thought.

Segment two: listener requests.

Segment three: “Stories of Grace”—his newest addition to the lineup, where Elias shared true stories of ordinary people finding God in unexpected places.

He had it all typed out.

Twelve pages of notes.

Perfect transitions.

Scripted sincerity.

Predictable pacing.

But as he sat behind the mic, notes spread neatly across the soundboard, the red “On Air” light blinking expectantly...

...Elias froze.

Something inside him resisted.

Not fear.

Not forgetfulness.

Conviction.

The words on the page no longer fit.

They were true. Good. Even meaningful.

But *safe*.

Sterile.

Manufactured faith in a box with rounded corners.

The kind that said, “*Let me inspire you without bothering to bleed with you.*”

And tonight, Elias felt the need to bleed.

To speak without polish.

To tear up the script and let the truth tumble out—raw and real.

So he did.

He reached over, grabbed the entire stack of typed pages, and slowly fed them into the shredder beneath the console. The hum of the blades echoed like a prelude to something holy.

Then he turned on the mic.

“This is Elias. I was supposed to give you a story tonight. Something inspiring. Something with a tidy bow and a theological quote or two.”

He leaned forward.

“But I’m not going to do that.”

He paused.

“Because sometimes, we write things to sound faithful... when we’re really just afraid of being honest.”

He took a deep breath.

“This morning, I stood in front of my bathroom mirror and asked myself if I really believed in any of this—or if I just liked *pretending* I did. It’s a hard question. A scary one. And if I’m being transparent... I’m still answering it.”

He didn’t flinch.

Let the moment breathe.

“I’ve seen too much these past few weeks to go back to the man I was. But I haven’t arrived. I’m not fully restored. I’m in process. Still stubborn. Still broken in places. Still tempted to play God on the airwaves.”

Another pause.

“And I think that’s okay.”

He turned to the shelf.

Grabbed a CD at random.

It was cracked, worn—no label.

He put it in.

A deep male voice filled the room, singing slowly:

*“I once was lost... but now I’m found...
Was blind, but now I see.”*

“Amazing Grace.”

But not a polished studio version.

It was scratchy. Almost amateur.

Real.

The kind of recording you might find on a forgotten cassette in someone’s glove compartment.

And somehow, it was perfect.

Elias wrote in his journal:

**“Off script.
On purpose.
Sometimes the best sermons are the ones we don’t plan—
The ones we live instead of deliver.”**

He ended the broadcast with a simple benediction:

“Tonight wasn’t scripted. Neither is life. But grace doesn’t need cue cards. Just a willing heart. So if you’re out there and you’re tired of pretending—join me. Let’s figure this out together.”

He turned off the mic.

No applause.

No “amen” from the heavens.

Just stillness.

And peace.

The kind you don’t write.

The kind you surrender to.

Chapter 35 – The Car That Didn’t Stop

It was raining.

Not a soft drizzle—but one of those slanted, relentless downpours that turned windshields into watercolor and made every headlight into a blinding halo. Elias hadn’t planned to be out that night, but

a last-minute call from **Deacon Thomas** had brought him to the edge of town to pick up a donated box of hymnals from a shuttered church.

He didn't mind the drive. Something about the storm matched the storm he'd been feeling inside.

The intersection was barely visible.

No lights.

No stop sign.

Just a faded patch of asphalt and a line of dripping trees.

Elias slowed to a crawl.

Then everything happened at once.

A flash of motion.

A blare of a horn.

Headlights—*too close, too fast*.

A car tore through the intersection from the left, missing Elias by inches as he slammed on the brakes. His tires skidded. The wheel jerked. His body slammed against the seatbelt.

Then silence.

Except for the rain.

He sat there, heart racing.

The other car didn't stop.

Didn't even brake.

It vanished into the night like a ghost in a thunderstorm.

Elias's hands trembled on the wheel. He pulled over, parked beneath an old pine, and shut the engine off.

His mind replayed the moment, over and over.

One second slower... and he'd be dead.

Then he saw it.

On the passenger seat.

The antique radio.

He'd brought it earlier to show Deacon Thomas—thinking maybe someone at the old church would know its origins.

But now, it sat there, *on*.

Glowing.

Warm.

Alive.

No sound came from it.

No voice.

Just the soft hum of power, steady and calm, as if to say:

*"I see what you don't.
I protect when you don't ask.
I guide... even when you've stopped listening."*

Elias leaned back in the seat, eyes stinging—not from the rain this time, but from realization.

How many times had he nearly wrecked his life? His marriage. His relationship with Lily. His sobriety. His faith. And yet—*somehow*—grace had always intervened. Sometimes with a whisper. Sometimes with a warning.

And sometimes... with **a car that didn't stop**.

He turned the mic on later that night with a voice still shaky.

"This is Elias Vance. Tonight I almost died. A car ran a blind intersection and missed me by a breath. I should be gone. But I'm not."

He paused.

"And I don't think it's luck. I think it's mercy."

He let the truth sink in, not just for the listeners—but for himself.

"I've spent most of my life asking why bad things happen. But tonight, I'm asking a different question—*why didn't they?* Why was I spared? What am I still here for?"

The silence on the airwaves pulsed like a heartbeat.

"I don't have the answers. But I do have breath. And as long as I do, I'm going to use it to tell someone out there: **You're still here for a reason.** You're not forgotten. You're not unseen."

He played the song:

"His Eye Is on the Sparrow."

And let it speak what he no longer could.

Journal Entry:

*“A car didn’t stop. But neither did grace.
Tonight I saw just how thin the line is between life and loss—
and how thick God’s mercy is in between.”*

Chapter 36 – Dead Air

It started with a blink.

One moment the “On Air” light glowed its usual red glow, humming quietly above the mic.

Then it flickered.

Then darkness.

Dead air.

No sound.

No backup feed.

No music queued.

No prerecorded devotional.

Just... **nothing.**

Elias stared at the board in disbelief. Every system was working—no storm, no outage, no tripped breaker. The signal was still broadcasting. The meters showed a live feed.

But there was no voice. No music. No message.

Only silence.

The studio felt heavier than usual.

Not just quiet—**oppressively quiet.**

Elias could hear everything: the soft buzz of the fluorescent light, the hum of the old refrigerator in the break room, even the faint ticking of the second hand on the wall clock.

This wasn’t just a technical glitch.

It was something else.

It was like the moment was... waiting.

He reached for the mic, hesitating.

How do you speak when heaven goes quiet?

How do you fill dead air when *you're not supposed to*?

He thought back to his early days in radio—how “dead air” was the cardinal sin. You never let silence live on the broadcast. Dead air meant listeners would change the channel. Dead air meant someone had failed.

But now?

He wasn't sure.

What if this silence wasn't a failure?

What if it was an **invitation**?

Elias stood slowly, moved away from the console, and sat on the floor in the middle of the studio. Cross-legged. Hands open.

He said nothing.

He simply listened.

To the silence.

To the stillness.

To the presence *within* the absence.

And for the first time in years, maybe decades, he felt something in the dead air he hadn't expected:

Peace.

When the silence had stretched for nearly fifteen minutes—an eternity in radio time—Elias finally stood up.

He walked to the mic.

And this time, when he spoke, it was no performance.

Just *presence*.

“This is Elias. You may have noticed the silence.”

A soft breath.

“Fifteen minutes of nothing. On purpose.”

He let that hang.

“In radio, they call it dead air. But tonight, I think it was something else. Maybe... it was holy air. Sacred space. A chance to stop speaking long enough to remember we don’t need to always be heard.”

His voice cracked slightly.

“I’ve filled so many hours with my words. But tonight, God filled this one with His silence. And I’m learning that silence isn’t empty. Not when He’s in it.”

He queued up “**Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence**”—a slow, haunting hymn with no instruments, just voices floating like incense.

Then he turned off the mic again.

Journal Entry:

“Dead air isn’t death.

It’s pause.

It’s presence without pressure.

Maybe the holiest moments in life are the ones where nothing needs to be said at all.”

Chapter 37 – Burned Bridges

There are some people you never expect to hear from again.

And then... they call your radio show.

It was late. Just after 2 a.m., during the quiet slot where Elias usually took prayer requests or opened the lines for testimonies. The phone rang like any other night.

He pressed the button.

“This is Elias, go ahead. You’re live on *Predestined Radio*.”

There was a pause.

Then a voice he hadn’t heard in **nine years**.

“I wasn’t sure you’d pick up. Or remember me.”

He knew instantly.

Natalie.

His ex-wife.

He nearly dropped the mic.

Her voice was softer than he remembered, but still had that low tremble she got when she was trying to stay composed. There was no anger in her tone—just quiet hesitation.

“I didn’t call to fight,” she said. “I heard your broadcast last week. About the car that didn’t stop.”

She paused.

“It made me remember all the times you didn’t stop either. For me. For Lily.”

Elias’s breath caught.

He’d burned that bridge long ago—torched it, really. His selfishness. His addictions. His pride. He remembered the last fight vividly: the suitcase in the driveway, the slammed door, the look on Lily’s face when she asked, “Daddy, why won’t you come home?”

And he never did.

“I’ve changed,” he whispered, unsure if she could hear it.

“I believe you have,” she said. “You sound... softer.”

He laughed. Not bitterly—more like someone realizing a miracle had happened and they hadn’t noticed.

“Maybe getting burned was the only way God could soften what had turned to stone.”

Another pause.

Then Natalie asked, “Do you ever think about rebuilding? I don’t mean us—I mean the bridge.”

Elias swallowed.

All the missed birthdays. All the silent holidays. The years without a father in his daughter’s life.

“I think about it every day,” he said. “But I figured it was too far gone. Too burned.”

Natalie didn’t hesitate.

“God doesn’t just build bridges. He walks across the ashes.”

They didn’t talk long.

Just ten minutes.

But when the call ended, Elias sat in stunned silence, staring at the mic.

Then he went live.

“This is Elias. And tonight... someone called who shouldn’t have.”

He let out a shaky laugh.

“She had every reason not to. Every reason to stay silent. But grace doesn’t keep score. It builds again. Even over burned bridges.”

He paused.

“So if you’re out there holding onto the ashes of something you ruined... maybe it’s not too late. Maybe the bridge is gone, but the *river still flows*. And the One who parted it before? He’s still in the rebuilding business.”

He played **“The Love of God”** by a gospel quartet—a song that spoke of grace “beyond the highest star and deeper than the lowest hell.”

And as the music swelled, Elias opened his journal and wrote:

**“Some bridges burn because we light the match.
But some bridges can be rebuilt with nothing but grace,
a phone call, and the courage to say ‘I was wrong.’”**

Chapter 38 – Interview with a Ghost

It started with a dream.

Elias was seated in the radio studio, same dim glow from the desk lamp, same hum from the mixer, but everything else was... *different*. The walls were older—wood-paneled, lined with dusty vinyl. The air felt thick, like memory clinging to the silence.

Across from him sat a man.

Not just any man.

His **grandfather**, Walter Vance.

The one who had owned the radio.

The one who died twenty years ago.

The one Elias hadn’t thought of in months—until now.

Walter sat upright in the guest chair, eyes wise and glassy, wearing his signature flannel and work boots. His hands rested on the Bible in his lap—worn leather, duct-taped spine.

“Is this live?” Elias asked, unsure if he was dreaming or remembering.

Walter chuckled. “Son, everything you say in front of a microphone is live. But some things? They’re eternal.”

Elias sat there, stunned. “I don’t understand. You’re... you’re gone.”

Walter leaned forward, voice steady.

“Then why am I here, Elias?”

Elias didn’t answer.

Walter did.

“Because there are things you need to say out loud. And things you need to *hear*—from someone who already crossed the finish line.”

The dream unfolded like a live broadcast—only no buttons were pressed. The mics worked, but there was no soundboard, no blinking lights. Just truth. Raw. Gentle. Unfiltered.

Elias asked, “Did you know about the radio?”

Walter smiled. “Knew it was special. Didn’t know how much. I just knew when I listened, I *felt* something—like Heaven was close enough to touch.”

“And the voice—why is it my voice?”

Walter tilted his head. “Maybe because God doesn’t want you to trust a stranger’s faith. Maybe He wants you to trust who you were always meant to become.”

Elias felt the weight of that.

The idea that the voice from the radio wasn’t *just* prophetic.

It was prophetic **because** it was redeemed.

“But I’ve failed,” Elias whispered. “I’ve lied. I’ve ignored the broadcasts. I’ve tried to play God...”

Walter’s eyes didn’t flinch. “And still He kept speaking.”

A pause.

“That’s grace, son. Not that you never mess up. But that He never gives up.”

Elias looked down at the table. “I miss you.”

Walter nodded, eyes soft. “I know.”

A long pause.

Then Elias whispered the question he never dared ask before.

“Are you proud of me?”

Walter leaned across the table, rested his hand gently over Elias’s.

“I never stopped being proud of you. But more than that... **He’s not done with you yet.** Not even close.”

A knock at the studio door in the dream made Elias turn his head—and when he looked back...
The chair was empty.
The studio was silent.
The dream had ended.
But something *had changed*.

Elias awoke at his desk, cheek pressed against his Bible, the old radio sitting beside him.
It was glowing again.
And softly—just faintly—he heard a line of his own voice playing through it:
“Your story isn’t over.”

Later that night on air, Elias didn’t tell the dream as if it were a fantasy.
He told it like an *interview*.
Like it had happened.
Because maybe, in the strange thin places where dreams and faith overlap... it had.

“This is Elias Vance. I had a guest in the studio last night. Not one I can prove was ever here. But one I believe I’ll see again. And he reminded me of something I want to tell you:

The ones you’ve lost in Christ aren’t gone.
They’re just ahead of you.
And every now and then... God lets the veil shimmer.
Just enough to remind you—Heaven is real.
And grace never forgets.”

He ended the show by playing a quiet piano version of “**Sweet By and By.**”
Then turned off the mic.
And wept.
Not out of sadness.
But out of something deeper.
Hope.

Journal Entry:

*“Interviewed a ghost last night.
But maybe ghosts aren’t dead things—maybe they’re echoes of life
so strong, they reach across time to remind you what matters most.”*

Chapter 39 – Lost in Transmission

It happened on a night when everything should’ve gone right.

Elias had prepped the entire show: songs loaded, notes outlined, even a special story from a listener queued for the second hour. He had coffee in hand, a clear mind, and—for the first time in weeks—a sense that things were finally *working*.

But then came the **transmission error**.

It started with the music.

One moment, the sweet harmonies of an old gospel quartet rang out through the headphones. The next, static.

Not the usual gentle white noise—the comforting kind that came before the antique radio would crackle to life.

This was violent.

Jarring.

Like a signal jammed by chaos.

He checked the console.

Everything read “normal.”

Meters moving.

Waveforms present.

But the station feed—*dead*.

He switched to mic-only mode.

“This is Elias. We’re having a little trouble with the system tonight, so bear with me.”

The moment he said it, the board lit up.

Not the phone lines.

The old radio.

The antique one.

It began to glow—then pulse.

A strange rhythm, in sync with the blinking error light on the mixer.

It was like the *past and present were misfiring together*.

Then a voice came through.

Not his.

Not even human.

It was a sound without language.

A transmission with no words—only feeling. Only *weight*.

He couldn't explain how he understood it, but the meaning pressed into his chest like a hand gripping his heart.

“You can't always interpret the message...
But you can trust the Sender.”

Elias stared at the radio as it hummed, blinking like a heartbeat.

He realized how desperate he had become for understanding. For clarity. For *control*.

But this—*this*—was a different kind of message.

A moment not meant to be *translated*, but **trusted**.

A reminder that not all transmissions are meant for broadcast.

Some are meant for the soul alone.

He took a deep breath and turned the mic back on.

“This is Elias again. I'm not sure what just happened. The station feed went out, the radio came alive, and for a second... it felt like I was hearing something meant only for me.”

He chuckled softly.

“I don't have a clever thought tonight. No verse to wrap it in a bow. Just this: Sometimes God doesn't speak in sentences. He speaks in silence. In static. In feelings you can't explain. And when the message gets lost in transmission, it might be because it was never meant to be *understood*—only *received*.”

He played **“Be Still My Soul”** in a stripped-down instrumental version, letting it fill the silence with something gentler than language.

Then he reached for his journal:

**“Not every message comes through clearly.
But even scrambled transmissions carry truth.
The heart often understands what the ears cannot.”**

And as the music faded and the static receded, Elias sat quietly, letting the mystery linger.

Not everything had to be explained.

Some things simply had to be heard.

Chapter 40 – Free Will Hurts

Elias sat alone in the booth, staring at the blinking cursor on the studio screen. The system wanted a title for tonight’s program.

He typed:

"Free Will Hurts."

Then hovered over the enter key.

Because it did.

It *hurt*.

The idea of choice had always been sacred to Elias. The ability to choose your words, your path, your fate—it was the one thing he’d clung to even as everything else crumbled.

But lately?

That freedom felt like a knife he had turned on himself—over and over again.

He thought of Lily—his daughter—calling him last week after years of silence. There was forgiveness in her voice, but also boundaries.

“I love you, Dad.
But I don’t know how to let you back in.
I *want* to.
But it still hurts.”

He hadn’t blamed her.

He had *chosen* his own way for so long—chosen ambition, addiction, pride—and those choices had cost him.

That was free will.

Beautiful. Terrible. Sacred.

Painful.

He took a call on the air that night. A young man named Trevor. Soft-spoken. Twenty-three. Newly sober.

“I keep messing up,” Trevor said, voice cracking. “I know God’s there. I know He’s good. But He lets me choose. And I keep choosing wrong.”

Elias swallowed hard.

“Yeah,” he said. “Free will isn’t clean. It’s not easy. God doesn’t force you to do right. He lets you decide—because He wants love, not puppets. But love has a cost. Real love always does.”

Trevor was quiet.

Then he whispered, “I wish He’d just take the choice away.”

Elias leaned into the mic.

“So do I... sometimes. But then I remember—if He took away our choice, He’d have to take away our ability to come back.”

He paused the conversation, played a hymn softly in the background, and spoke straight from his heart:

“This is Elias. I don’t have a sermon tonight. Just a truth I’m learning the hard way: **Free will hurts.** It hurts when we choose wrong. It hurts when others do. But it also makes redemption possible. Because every time we choose to come home—it’s *real*. It’s *ours*. And it matters.”

He queued up the next song—“**Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing**”—and let it play while he scribbled in his journal:

**“Free will is the wound and the healing.
The risk and the reward.
The power to walk away...
And the miracle of walking back.”**

The call with Trevor ended with tears on both sides.

Two prodigals, still in process.

Two men trying not to throw away the gift of a choice they finally understood.

And as Elias turned off the mic for the night, he didn’t feel proud.

He felt humbled.

Because even after all this time...

God still let him choose.

And tonight?

He chose *grace*.

Part V: Interference

Chapter 41 – The Emergency Broadcast

It started with that unmistakable tone.

A high-pitched, gut-level buzz that sliced through the airwaves like a warning siren from another realm.

Elias jolted upright in the studio chair, coffee sloshing from the mug in his hand. He hadn't touched anything on the board—hadn't queued an alert, hadn't triggered the system.

But the sound was *live*.

Shrill.

Pulsing.

Impossible to ignore.

Then came the voice.

But it wasn't the usual automated FEMA message or local weather authority.

It was his own voice.

Older. Slower. Measured.

“This is an emergency broadcast...
not for the city. Not for the nation.
For *you*, Elias Vance.”

He stared at the console.

Nothing was transmitting from the station. This wasn't coming from *anywhere* he controlled.

And yet... it was coming **through** him.

The voice continued:

“You are in danger—not of death, but of drifting.
Not of destruction, but of decay.
You've begun to grow comfortable in the halfway place.
The place between believing and surrender.”

Elias's spine straightened. The words sliced deeper than any storm siren ever could.

“This is your final warning, not of punishment—but of purpose.
You are not called to play it safe.
You are not called to balance faith and control.
You are called to jump.
To trust.
To *broadcast* the truth even when it costs everything.”

The tone buzzed again.

A final beep.

Then...

Silence.

Elias sat frozen.

Not from fear.

But from revelation.

He *had* been drifting.

Slipping into a subtle spiritual numbness. Saying all the right things on the air. Giving just enough of his heart to *look* transformed—but not enough to be truly changed.

He had stopped listening.

And tonight, the airwaves had shouted him awake.

He turned on the mic with trembling fingers.

“This is Elias Vance. If you just heard what I heard... you know it wasn’t for everyone. It was for me.”

He exhaled, voice unsteady.

“God just aired an emergency broadcast to wake me up. To remind me I’ve been holding back. Coasting. Balancing. But He didn’t call me to balance. He called me to burn—for Him. To be *bold*. And maybe... that’s why the signal still works. Because He’s not finished.”

He paused.

“If you’re drifting... if your faith has turned lukewarm and your prayers sound memorized—this is your broadcast, too.”

He queued a song that hadn’t played in months—an old choir version of “**I Have Decided to Follow Jesus.**” Every note felt like an altar call.

As it played, Elias wrote in his journal:

**“God doesn’t always whisper.
Sometimes He sets off sirens.
Not to scare us—
But to save us before we drift too far.”**

The studio was still quiet after the song ended.

But Elias wasn’t.

Not inside.

Because that emergency broadcast had done its job.

And for the first time in a long time...

He was wide awake.

Chapter 42 – “This Wasn’t Supposed to Happen”

It was just after dawn when Elias got the call.

His hand, still sore from gripping the mic during last night’s emergency broadcast, trembled as he reached for the phone. He wasn’t on air. Wasn’t in the studio. Just standing in his kitchen, pouring cereal he wouldn’t eat.

Caller ID: **Lily.**

He answered before the second ring.

“Dad...”

Her voice was barely above a whisper. Raw. Tight.

And in that single syllable, he knew: **something was wrong.**

“There’s been an accident,” she said. “Mom... she’s in surgery. It’s bad.”

He didn’t speak.

Couldn’t.

“This wasn’t supposed to happen,” Lily choked. “She was just driving to work. It was sunny. She kissed me goodbye. And now...”

The sentence trailed off into a sob.

Elias clutched the countertop for support. Natalie. The woman who had once stood by him. The woman whose voice had returned to his radio lines just weeks before. The woman he still prayed for when no one was listening.

He thought of all the unfinished conversations.

The rebuilding that had barely begun.

The bridges mending slowly—too slowly.

“This wasn’t supposed to happen.”

The words echoed all day.

In the car, speeding to the hospital.

In the waiting room, fluorescent lights flickering above coffee-stained floors.

In the silence between texts from friends and awkward prayers from nurses.

This wasn’t supposed to happen.

Elias paced the corridor like a man chased by invisible regret. He wasn’t family anymore—not legally—but when the nurse asked if he wanted to see Natalie before they sedated her again, Lily simply said:

“He’s my dad. And he still loves her.”

The hallway to her room felt like a tunnel between lifetimes.

There she was—bruised, pale, still breathing but barely conscious. Tubes, machines, beeping monitors.

Natalie Vance.

And the words escaped him before he could stop them:

“God... this wasn’t supposed to happen.”

He didn’t realize he had said it aloud until the heart monitor beeped faster—just a little—as if Natalie heard.

Back at the station that night, Elias didn’t plan to go live.

He wasn’t ready.

But something inside urged him.

He sat before the mic, not as a preacher or performer—but as a father, an ex-husband, a man unraveling.

“This is Elias. I don’t have a message tonight. I have a moment.”

He paused, voice cracking.

“Someone I care about is in a hospital bed right now. Fighting for her life. And all I can think is—*this wasn’t supposed to happen.*”

His breath caught.

“But then... neither was grace. Neither was the Cross. Neither was a Savior dying for a world that spit in His face.”

He wiped his eyes.

“Sometimes the things that ‘weren’t supposed to happen’ become the things that change us most. Break us. Save us. Heal us. And right now... I’m praying that this hurt will somehow turn holy.”

He ended the broadcast not with a song—but with silence.

Four minutes.

No words.

Just breathing.

Just presence.

Because sometimes, when life shatters without warning...

You don’t need a sermon.

You need stillness.

Journal Entry:

*“This wasn’t supposed to happen...
But maybe that’s the point.
Maybe what breaks us the most
brings us closest to the God who was broken for us.”*

Chapter 43 – Breaking the Receiver

Elias stared at the old radio on his desk like it was a coiled serpent.

It hadn't made a sound in over two days.

No hum.

No glow.

No signal.

No voice.

Just silence.

Natalie was still in the hospital. The surgery had gone well, but she hadn't woken up yet. Elias visited every day. Sometimes Lily joined him. Sometimes not. The nurses were kind. The coffee was bad. The wait was unbearable.

But the **radio's silence**?

That hurt worst of all.

Because it made him wonder:

Was God done speaking?

Or worse...

Had *he* finally stopped listening?

He snapped.

It was sometime after midnight. Rain tapped lightly at the windows. The studio was quiet. Too quiet.

Elias reached out, grabbed the antique receiver with both hands, and **slammed it to the floor**.

The wooden frame cracked.

The tuning dial snapped off.

Tubes shattered like bones.

The static died instantly.

For a long moment, he just stood there, chest heaving, staring at the wreckage. The thing that had been his lifeline. His mystery. His torment. His mercy.

He'd broken it.

On purpose.

Tears rolled down his face—not because of the radio—but because of what it **meant**.

He sank to his knees beside it, whispering:

"I'm tired of being steered.
I'm tired of nudges and riddles and cryptic grace.
I'm tired of feeling like You're speaking,
but never explaining."

His fists clenched against the studio floor.

“I just want something real. Something *clear*. Something that doesn’t feel like I have to lose everything to find You.”

The silence that followed wasn’t cold.

It was *holy*.

A quiet that didn’t condemn—but waited.

Waited... for Elias to stop trying to control the conversation.

Waited for him to surrender.

He didn’t hear a voice in that moment.

No divine whisper.

No future broadcast.

But he *did* remember something:

His grandfather’s words from the dream.

“God doesn’t want you to trust a stranger’s faith.
He wants you to trust the man you’re becoming.”

And suddenly, Elias realized:

The receiver was never the source.

It was just the **conduit**.

God wasn’t in the radio.

He was in the **relationship**.

Elias slowly stood, knelt beside the broken device, and picked up the pieces.

Not to fix it.

But to let go.

That night, he didn’t broadcast music.

He didn’t tell a story.

He didn’t play a single hymn.

He simply turned on the mic and said:

“This is Elias.
The radio’s broken.
And maybe that’s the most honest thing I could say.”

He exhaled slowly.

“Sometimes God lets us break what we thought we needed...
to show us what we truly need was never made of wires and wood.
It was made of *faith*.”

Journal Entry:

*“I broke the radio.
And it didn’t break me.
Because the Voice I needed
was never trapped in static.
It was waiting in surrender.”*

Chapter 44 – A Message Left Undelivered

The envelope had yellowed slightly with time.

The ink on the front, once bold, had faded to a dull gray:

To Lily. From Dad.

Elias found it tucked between old tax forms in a file folder marked *Never Sent*. He didn’t even remember writing it. But as soon as he unfolded the paper, the weight of every unsaid word came crashing down like a wave.

He wrote the letter five years ago. After the divorce. After one of those long, empty Christmases spent alone. After he’d stood outside her school concert, too ashamed to go in but too broken to stay away.

Back then, the radio hadn’t spoken yet.

Back then, Elias still drank too much, blamed everyone else, and called it free will.

Back then, Lily had been the only thread of hope still tethered to his name.

But he had never mailed it.

Because he didn’t think he *deserved* to be heard.

Now, sitting on the edge of his bunk in the back room of the station, Elias read the letter aloud for the first time—if only to himself:

“Lily,

I'm writing this because I don't know how to talk to you anymore.
I keep thinking of things I want to say, but when I see you, all I see is what I've done wrong.
And what I've lost.

I don't expect you to forgive me.
I don't even expect you to understand.
But I want you to know that I *remember* everything.
Your laugh. Your favorite cereal. The way you used to sing in the back seat.

I remember the last time you called me 'Daddy.'

And I remember that it stopped.

I broke something, Lily. Not just between me and your mom.
Between me and you.

And I've run from that truth for a long time.

But I miss you.
And if there's any way back to your heart,
even a small one—
I'd walk it on my knees.”

Elias folded the paper, his hands trembling.

He had written it in shame.

Now, he read it in grace.

That night on the air, Elias didn't name names. He didn't read the letter. He didn't reveal who it was for.

But he shared the heart of it.

“This is Elias. Tonight, I want to talk to anyone who's ever left a message unsent. A voicemail deleted before the beep. A letter stuck in a drawer. A prayer you never thought God would want to hear.”

He paused.

“I found a letter today. One I wrote but never sent. And it reminded me that *silence doesn't always mean peace*. Sometimes it means fear. Or pride. Or pain.”

He exhaled.

“But here’s what I know now:
Even a message undelivered still holds weight in heaven.
Even when we keep it buried, God hears the words we’re afraid to speak.”

He closed the segment with an instrumental version of “**Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior.**” The piano notes rang out like echoes of things never said.

And when the music ended, Elias whispered:

“If you’ve got a letter you never sent... maybe tonight is the night.
God’s not just waiting to hear it—
He’s been helping you write it all along.”

Journal Entry:

*“Some messages don’t need a stamp.
Some letters only need surrender.
And some hearts, like mine,
find healing in words we were once too afraid to speak.”*

Chapter 45 – The Caller Who Never Hung Up

The call board lit up at 3:13 a.m.—a time Elias would come to remember.

Not because of the time itself, but because the call **never ended**.

The line blinked, even though no number registered. Just **UNKNOWN CALLER** in faint gray letters, pulsing like a heartbeat on the display.

Elias hesitated. He’d taken hundreds of calls since joining the late-night shift at 94.7 Grace FM. Prayer requests. Confessions. Rambling conspiracy theorists. Teenagers battling doubt.

But this one felt... *different*.

He pressed the button.

“This is Elias. You’re live on *Predestined Radio*.”

Silence.

Then static.

Then...

“You don’t know me,” the voice said softly, “but I’ve been listening for a long time.”

The voice was gentle. Male. Old. Weathered, but kind.

“Every night, I wait for your broadcast. I don’t sleep much anymore. So I sit in my recliner with the dial just right, and I wait for you to say something that reminds me I’m not too far gone.”

Elias blinked. “I appreciate that, sir. What’s your name?”

Pause.

Then, almost shyly:

“You gave it to me... in one of your stories.

Chapter 17.

The man who couldn’t forgive himself.”

Elias’s spine straightened.

That had been a fictional segment. A composite character—he thought.

“I’m him,” the voice said. “I never called in. Never wrote a letter. But I never hung up, either. I’ve been on the other end of this line for years... just listening.”

Elias leaned closer to the mic.

“You don’t have to stay silent anymore.”

The caller chuckled faintly. “Oh, but I do. My lungs are giving out. Doc says a few weeks, maybe. I’m not calling to talk. I’m calling to *listen*—one more time.”

Elias swallowed.

The air in the studio felt holy. Like he was standing at the edge of eternity, speaking into a soul’s final quiet hour.

“Then let me say this,” Elias whispered. “If you’re the man who never hung up, then I’m the man who never deserved to be heard. But God kept the line open anyway. Grace never hangs up. And neither will I.”

The caller was quiet.

Then, in a breaking voice:

“That’s all I needed.

Thank you.”

Click.

But the line never disconnected.

The call remained active.

And for hours after the broadcast ended, even as Elias packed up and shut down the studio, that line blinked.

Still connected.

Later that morning, Elias received a voicemail.

A nurse at the county hospital.

“There was a man who passed away quietly around 4 a.m. Radio was on. Your station. We found a note on his bedside. It just said, ‘Tell the DJ... I didn’t hang up. I held on.’”

That night, Elias didn’t start the show with music.

He didn’t even say his name.

He just spoke into the mic like he was speaking into Heaven.

“This is for the silent ones. The ones on the other end of the line. You may never speak, but God hears you. You may never be known by name on Earth, but Heaven never forgets your voice.”

He paused, letting the moment breathe.

“Tonight, the line is open. For you. Always.”

Journal Entry:

*“Sometimes the most faithful are the ones who say the least.
The ones who never shout.
The ones who never hang up.
May I have that kind of faith.”*

Chapter 46 – Return to Static

The radio was still broken.

Cracked from where he had smashed it in a fit of anger weeks ago. The tuning dial lay beside it like a relic from another life. It hadn’t lit up since.

Elias hadn’t tried to fix it.

But tonight, something compelled him.

Maybe it was the call from the silent man who never hung up.

Maybe it was the note he left.

Maybe it was the ache of *unfinished grace*.

Whatever the reason, Elias found himself sitting on the studio floor, screwdriver in one hand, trembling hope in the other.

It wasn't about restoring the machine.

It was about facing what it meant.

He removed the back panel. Dusted the tubes. Realigned the wiring the best he could. Nothing fancy. Just enough to bring it back to life—if it was meant to live again.

He plugged it in.

The old red glow flickered...

...and then dimmed.

Then...

Static.

Not words. Not a broadcast. Just that soft, familiar hiss—like sand blowing across a desert of silence.

But to Elias, it was the most sacred sound he had heard in weeks.

Because **static** had always been the *space before the signal*.

The place where trust began.

He turned up the volume.

The studio filled with that ghostly sound—broken, wandering, eternal.

And in that moment, Elias smiled.

He didn't need the words anymore.

He didn't need prophecy or predictions.

He just needed to know the connection wasn't lost.

That night on the air, he spoke slowly, softly:

"This is Elias. No special broadcast tonight. Just static. Just silence. Just waiting."

He paused, let the gentle hiss wash over the room.

"I used to think God's silence meant absence. But I've learned it often means *invitation*—an invitation to lean closer, to trust deeper, to believe even when you don't hear."

He sat back, let the microphone hum with holy quiet.
And as the minutes passed, the static never turned into words.
But Elias didn't mind.
Because grace was there in the waiting.
And sometimes, when the voice goes quiet...
The heart learns to listen better.

Journal Entry:

*"The static isn't empty.
It's filled with all the words God hasn't spoken yet—
and all the ones He wants me to trust anyway."*

Chapter 47 – The DJ with No Music

The station's computer system crashed at 9:47 p.m.
Elias had just finished answering a listener email when the monitors flickered, turned blue, and froze.
No songs.
No preloaded tracks.
No commercials.
No backup hymns from the old digital vault.

Dead silence.

For a moment, he stared at the screen like it had personally betrayed him. Then he looked around the studio. The dusty CD rack, long abandoned. The ancient turntable he never bothered to repair. The flash drive labeled "Favorites" that he'd left at home on his desk.

He had nothing.

No music.

And yet, the "ON AIR" light glowed red, unwavering.

Elias sat behind the microphone and chuckled bitterly.
"Well," he said, "this is a first.
I'm a DJ... with no music."
The silence after his words was heavy. Not awkward—**sacred**.
It was the kind of silence that made you pay attention.
The kind that asked you to stop performing.

“I always thought the music was what made this station matter,” he admitted. “But maybe... it wasn’t the songs. Maybe it was the *space* between them.”

He glanced at the old radio in the corner—still broken, still silent.

“And maybe I needed this moment. This emptiness. Because I’m starting to realize I’ve spent most of my life trying to *fill* the silence instead of *feeling* it.”

He looked directly into the mic, as if speaking to a single soul.

“If you’re listening tonight and you feel like the soundtrack of your life just... stopped—
If the music is gone,
if the rhythm broke,
if you feel like the DJ of your own soul just ran out of songs—

Then I want you to hear this:
God isn’t afraid of your silence.
He’s not bothered by your emptiness.
In fact... He’s waiting there.”

Elias reached over and turned up the gain slightly—so the faint background hum of the studio could be heard clearly. Not words. Not music. Just **presence**.

He didn’t speak again for five minutes.

And not a single listener turned the dial.

Later that night, he wrote in his journal:

*“Tonight I had no music to give.
But maybe that’s when the real ministry begins.
When all the noise fades, and you find God
still sitting in the soundless booth beside you.”*

He signed off with just one line:

“This is Elias Vance. Still here. Still listening.
Even without a song to play.”

Chapter 48 – The Mirror Broadcast

It began with a flicker.

Not from the studio lights. Not even from the broken antique radio that Elias had long since stopped expecting anything from.

No—this flicker came from the **glass**.

The narrow piece of mirror mounted above the console, left over from some long-forgotten engineer's installation. Elias had seen his reflection in it a thousand times—usually a tired man with disheveled hair, circles under his eyes, and guilt in his posture.

But tonight... something was different.

The reflection moved—but Elias hadn't.

He froze.

Blinking.

Staring.

The man in the mirror was *him*—same jawline, same gray-flecked stubble, same weary eyes.

But not *exactly* him.

The man in the mirror was older. A little stronger. A little *lighter*, somehow, in both face and frame.

And then the reflection smiled.

Not smugly. Not mockingly.

But with a **peace** Elias had never seen on his own face.

Suddenly, the studio speakers—though all systems were still down—crackled.

And Elias heard the voice.

His own voice.

But like the man in the mirror, it was *changed*—deeper, fuller, and wrapped in something sacred.

“This is Elias Vance...
and if you're hearing this, it's because you're ready.”

Elias backed away from the console, unsure if he was dreaming, hallucinating, or stepping into something holy.

The voice continued, now broadcasting clearly, not from the speakers, not from the radio—but from *everywhere* in the room.

“You’ve been asking for proof.
For answers.”

For control.
But what if God never wanted to prove anything?
What if He just wanted you to see what He already sees—
the man you were always becoming?”

Elias dropped into the chair.

His hands were shaking.

He couldn’t respond—not yet.

So the voice kept speaking:

“You’ve been broadcasting to others for months.
Offering encouragement.
Comfort.
Hope.

But tonight’s broadcast is for **you**.

Because the truth is...
You are not your past.
You are not your failure.
You are not the sum of your regrets.

You are the voice that kept going when no one called.
You are the man who stood in the silence and stayed.

And *I*—the version of you you’ve been afraid to become—
I’m already real.
I’ve been waiting for you to believe.”

Tears spilled from Elias’s eyes.

Not because he was afraid.

But because for the first time... he *recognized himself*.

The mirror shimmered again.

The older Elias—this version from the future, from grace, from destiny—looked back with one final word:

“You don’t have to earn this.
Just receive it.

Stop broadcasting someone else's script.
Start becoming the man God already wrote into existence."

And just like that, the reflection faded.
The mirror returned to its usual dull shine.
The speakers fell silent.
The static returned.
But the **message**? It had landed.
Squarely.
Deeply.
Unmistakably.

Elias sat in front of the mic and spoke—no script, no notes, no hesitation.

"This is Elias Vance. I'm not sure how to explain what just happened. Maybe I'm not supposed to."

He wiped his eyes.

"I saw myself. Not the version that messed everything up. Not the failure. Not the sinner. But the *redeemed* man. The *freed* man. The *called* man. And if God can show me that... maybe He's been trying to show it to you too."

He leaned closer to the mic, his voice shaking.

"You're not who you were. You're who He's calling you to be."

Journal Entry:

*"Tonight, I met the man I could become.
And for once, I didn't run from him.
I listened.
And what I heard...
sounded like grace."*

Chapter 49 – Ruth's Revelation

The morning after the mirror broadcast, Elias walked the long path behind the station to the little white house with the blue shutters. Ruth's house.

He hadn't planned on stopping by.

But some pulls in life aren't mapped—they're **magnetized** by something deeper. And Ruth, with her lace doilies, gospel vinyls, and uncanny spiritual insight, had been tugging on Elias's heart since the first time he met her.

The screen door creaked open before he could knock.

"You're late," she said with a smile. "I put the kettle on twenty minutes ago. I figured after *last night's broadcast*, you'd need some strong tea and stronger truth."

Elias blinked. "Wait... *you heard it?*"

She gave him a look like he'd just asked if she breathed air.

"Child, I never turn your show off. Especially not when God's about to say something to you *through* you."

They sat in her sun-drenched kitchen. Ruth poured the tea with shaky but practiced hands. Her walls were lined with cross-stitch verses and faded photos—memories of a husband long gone, a son who'd stopped calling, and a God who had never left.

Elias stirred his tea and stared into the cup like it might explain everything.

"Ruth... that voice. That *version* of me in the mirror... I don't know if it was God or a hallucination or just a hopeful version of who I want to be."

She reached across the table, laid a paper-thin hand over his.

"It was all three," she said. "That's how God works."

She let the silence linger, then added:

"You've been so afraid of becoming the wrong man, you never let yourself believe you could become the *right* one. But that mirror didn't show you a stranger. It showed you the reflection God *already sees*."

Tears pricked the corners of his eyes.

"Why now?" he asked. "Why *me*?"

Ruth sipped her tea slowly before answering.

"Because grace is patient, but it's also **timely**. You've been carrying a message, Elias—not just through the radio, but through your life. And now... now it's time to *live* the broadcast you've been giving others."

She stood and shuffled over to a drawer. From it, she pulled a faded envelope—creased and yellowed like something sacred.

“My Frank,” she said softly, “was a preacher. But before he preached, he doubted—just like you. One night, he heard God say something that changed him. Not in a booming voice. Just a whisper in the heart.”

She handed Elias the letter.

“He wrote it down that night and told me, ‘Give this to someone who needs it more than I ever did.’ I think that’s you.”

Elias opened the envelope. Inside was a single page, handwritten:

*“God doesn’t need your perfection.
He doesn’t even need your understanding.
He needs your **yes**.
And once you say it...
He’ll spend the rest of your life proving why you were right to trust Him.”*

Elias folded the note carefully, hands trembling.

“I don’t know what to do with this.”

Ruth smiled.

“Read it again. Then say ‘yes.’ Out loud.
Because God is listening.
And the signal...
is stronger than you think.”

Later, back at the studio, Elias turned on the mic.

His voice was calm. Steady.

“This is Elias Vance. I had tea with a prophet this morning. Her name’s Ruth. She lives behind the station and smells like peppermint and wisdom.”

He chuckled softly.

“She told me something that I think someone out there needs to hear:

You’re not too late.

You’re not too broken.

And you’re not disqualified.

All God needs from you... is your *yes*.”

He paused, voice suddenly full.

“So here’s mine.”

Journal Entry:

*“I said yes.
Not because I understand.
But because grace is too good not to trust.
And sometimes, the most prophetic voice
comes from a woman with peppermint tea
and a drawer full of promises.”*

Chapter 50 – The Signal Inside Me

It had been months since Elias first heard the voice.

The first strange forecast.

The first impossible broadcast.

The first glimpse into a life he didn’t yet believe in.

And now, standing in the middle of the studio in the late hours of the night, no music playing, no callers on the line, no broken antique radio glowing in the corner, Elias felt something deeper than he’d ever known:

Stillness.

But not the hollow kind.

Not the silence of being ignored.

This was the stillness that **listens back**.

He sat at the mic—not to speak, not even to broadcast—but to *listen*.

He closed his eyes and breathed.

Slow. Steady.

And then it hit him—so gently he almost missed it.

Not a sound.

Not a voice.

Not even a word.

But a **knowing**.

For the first time, Elias didn't need a frequency or a forecast.
He didn't need the dial to spin or the radio to glow.
He didn't even need the next miracle.

Because the signal wasn't **out there** anymore.

It was **in here**—within him.

The voice of the One who had never left.

Who had spoken through static and songs, mirrors and mistakes, call-ins and coffee cups.

The signal of grace had taken up residence in his soul.

Elias opened his Bible. Not because he needed a sermon.

But because he wanted a conversation.

His fingers landed on John 10:27:

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

He smiled.

It was always that simple.

Not hearing thunder from the clouds.

Just recognizing the Voice of the Shepherd... **inside his spirit.**

He leaned into the mic one more time.

“This is Elias Vance,” he said gently, “and I think I finally figured it out.”

He chuckled—warm, real.

“I kept looking for a radio signal.

Kept waiting for a miracle voice.

But the whole time... God was trying to get me to listen to the one He placed in me.”

He paused.

Let the truth soak into the quiet.

“So if you're listening tonight, and you're still waiting for a sign—

Maybe this is it.

Not because *I* said it...

But because deep down,
you can feel it too.

That tug.

That whisper.

That knowing.

It's not coming from the airwaves anymore.

It's already **in you.**"

Elias didn't sign off that night.

He simply left the mic on.

Not broadcasting music.

Just *presence*.

Just *space*.

Just the silent hum of a soul that had finally come home.

Journal Entry:

*"I am no longer waiting for the signal.
I am walking with it.
The Voice I searched for across frequencies and wires
was already written into my soul.
It's not a transmission.
It's a **transformation.**"*

Part VI: Tuning In

Chapter 51 – The Voice of Peace

The sky was steel gray.

Not stormy. Not menacing. Just... quiet.

The kind of sky that made you breathe slower. Think deeper. Stand still a little longer.

Elias sat outside the station on the wooden bench he'd helped Ruth repaint last spring. A thermos of black coffee steamed beside him, untouched. He wasn't there to drink.

He was there to **listen**.

But not for a broadcast.

Not for a call-in.

Not for a whisper from the broken radio.

He was listening for **peace**.

And to his surprise—it came.

Not all at once.

Not in some great heavenly wind.

But in the way a long-forgotten song returns to you in the middle of the night. A melody you can't explain but recognize instinctively.

Elias closed his eyes.

And for the first time in years, his thoughts were not a roar of regret or speculation.

They were... **quiet**.

Still.

At rest.

He remembered what Ruth told him:

“Peace isn’t the absence of noise.
It’s the presence of Someone greater than the noise.”

He had been chasing guidance, signs, and certainty. But now, what filled him wasn’t a directive—it was a presence. A calm. A knowing.

And it was **enough**.

Back inside the station, he flipped on the mic—not because he had something to say, but because others might need what he now had.

“This is Elias. No message tonight. No sermon. Just... peace.”

He paused, letting the silence hum like a prayer.

“I don’t know where you are right now.

Maybe you’re waiting for answers.

Maybe you’re running from your past.

Maybe you’re just tired.”

His voice softened.

“But I want you to know something:

There’s a Voice that doesn’t demand, doesn’t condemn, doesn’t rush.

It just says... *‘Peace. Be still.’*”

He leaned back, eyes damp, lips forming a quiet smile.

“Tonight, I’m not playing anything.

No music.

No words.

Just stillness.

And if you’ll join me,

maybe we’ll both remember what it means to breathe again.”

Elias turned off the lights in the studio, leaving the ON AIR light glowing red in the dark like a lighthouse for the soul.

Journal Entry:

“I don’t need the next step spelled out.

I don’t need the future broadcasted.

All I need is this Voice.

The one that calls me by name and calms the sea inside me.”

Chapter 52 – The Message I Needed

The envelope was pink.

Folded once. No return address. No stamp.

Just slid beneath the studio door sometime after midnight.

Elias found it while locking up, stepping over it by accident before the quiet color caught his eye. He bent down slowly, hands trembling—not from fear, but from something even more dangerous.

Hope.

He sat down at the console before opening it, the envelope resting like a heartbeat in his palm.

There was no name on the outside.

But he already knew.

Lily.

His daughter.

The one he hadn't seen in almost four years.

The letter was short.

Four paragraphs.

Written in blue pen, with little curls in the letters just like her mother's.

He read it once. Then again. Then a third time aloud—like every word had to be carved into his soul to be real.

Dad,

I heard your voice tonight.

Not just on the radio, but your real voice. The one I remember when I was small, before everything fell apart.

I used to wonder if I'd ever hear that voice again.

Tonight, I did.

Elias pressed the paper to his chest, breath caught between past pain and present mercy.

I'm not writing to fix everything.

I'm not ready for that yet.

But I want you to know... I believe you're changing.

I don't know who helped you find your way back—maybe it was God. Maybe it was that old radio. Maybe it was both.

But whoever it was, I'm thankful.

Elias wiped his eyes.

The letter was only two more paragraphs, but they weighed more than anything he'd ever broadcast.

I've been listening, Dad.

Quietly. From far away.

And I think... maybe we're both trying to come home in our own way.

So, here's my first step. A message for the DJ who finally stopped running:

"I never stopped loving you."

Elias crumpled, the letter still in his hands, knees to the floor of the studio. Years of guilt, shame, silence, and broken fatherhood bled out through his tears.

He didn't deserve this.

And yet...

Grace never asks if you deserve it.

It just walks through the door when you're finally still enough to receive it.

When he got back on the air that night, he didn't read the letter. It wasn't for them. It was for *him*.

But he shared its heart anyway.

"There are some messages that don't need a mic," he whispered.

"Just an open heart."

He cleared his throat.

"Tonight, I received the message I didn't even know I needed. It didn't come with thunder or static. It didn't arrive through prophecy or prediction. It came as something even more miraculous—**forgiveness.**"

He paused, feeling the weight of years lift like mist in the morning sun.

"And maybe that's what someone else needs tonight too.

Not another forecast.

Not another plan.

Just someone to say... *'You're not too far gone.'*"

Journal Entry:

"The radio gave me signals.

The studio gave me space.

But tonight, a daughter gave me something holy.

Her voice.

Her grace.

The message I didn't know I still needed to hear."

Chapter 53 – Prayer on the Air

The idea had come to him a dozen times before.

But every time, he'd dismissed it.

Too personal.

Too vulnerable.

Too... *real*.

And yet, tonight, it wouldn't leave him alone.

Elias sat in the dim studio, Lily's letter resting on the console like a love note from Heaven. The "ON AIR" light glowed softly in front of him—red and expectant.

He stared at the mic.

And for once, he didn't prepare anything.

No music cue.

No message outline.

No caller lineup.

Just a **nudge**.

A quiet whisper in his spirit.

Pray.

He cleared his throat and clicked the mic on.

The station went live.

But this time, it wasn't a broadcast.

It was a confession.

"Good evening, friends. It's Elias. Just Elias tonight. No DJ. No format. No playlist."

He let the quiet settle.

"I've been thinking a lot about how long I've *talked* about faith without ever really *talking to* God. And maybe that's something some of you feel too. So... if you don't mind..."

He paused.

Swallowed.

Then, with closed eyes and an open heart, he prayed.

"God..."

I don't even know how to start this.

You know how long I've avoided You. How long I've tried to do this in my own voice, on my own frequency.

But I'm tired of pretending I've got it all together.
I'm tired of carrying the guilt. The regret. The fear.

So tonight, in front of whoever's listening—whether it's one person or a thousand—I just want to say... I'm sorry.

And thank You.

Thank You for not hanging up.
For not changing the station.
For chasing me down through static and silence and broken songs.

You've been the voice I couldn't explain.
The hand I didn't deserve.

I don't know what happens next. But I'm Yours.

Use me.
Heal me.
Speak through me, if You still want to.

And if there's anyone else listening tonight who feels too far gone—
let this prayer be theirs too.

Because grace is wide.

And love... is louder than static."

Silence.

A deep, holy stillness filled the studio.

For the first time in years, Elias didn't feel like a man performing a role.

He felt like a *son coming home*.

The phone line lit up five seconds later.

Then another.

Then another.

No words. Just calls. Open lines.

Listeners silently agreeing.

Some were praying too.

Others were crying.

Some just wanted to be part of the moment.

The station wasn't just a frequency anymore.

It was **a sanctuary**.

Journal Entry:

*"Tonight I prayed on the air.
But what really happened...
was I let God speak through my cracks.
And for once,
the mic felt like an altar."*

Chapter 54 – The Listener Who Changed Me

The call came at 3:14 a.m.

The studio was quiet. The lights were low. Elias had just finished replaying a hymn by request—"Come Thou Fount"—when the blinking light on Line 3 turned steady.

He almost didn't answer. He was tired. The calls were slowing.

But something urged him.

"WPNZ, this is Elias."

A pause. Then a voice—small, cracking with age and emotion.

"I've been listening to you for... a long time. I don't usually call. I don't even know what I'd say. But I felt like I needed to tonight."

Elias smiled gently.

"You're saying enough already."

Her name was **Margot**. 87 years old. Widow. No kids. Had lived in the same house since 1962. She told him she rarely slept anymore.

But she listened. Every night.

"You were angry, once," she said.

Elias blinked. "You could tell?"

“Oh, honey,” she chuckled, “it was thick in your voice. Like static under every word. I could tell you weren’t sure what you believed. But you kept showing up.”

That hit him hard.

“Why keep listening?” he asked.

Her voice softened.

“Because even when you didn’t believe what you were saying, I believed **you**.”

For the next ten minutes, Margot told him how his voice—shaky, wounded, authentic—had become her companion. Through her surgeries. Her lonely birthdays. The anniversary of her husband’s passing.

“You didn’t just keep me company,” she said.

“You reminded me that *God still speaks*, even through someone who’s wrestling.”

Tears welled in Elias’s eyes.

He thought he’d been preaching into the void.

But someone had been listening.

And not just any someone—a **soul who’d been quietly anchoring his own**.

“I always wanted to be the one changing lives,” Elias whispered after a long pause, “but I think you’ve been changing mine.”

She laughed—a warm, grandmotherly sound full of grace.

“That’s how the best ministry works, son. You think you’re pouring out, but really you’re being filled.”

Before she hung up, she asked if she could pray for him.

He said yes.

And in the stillness of the graveyard hour, with no one else on the line, Margot prayed over Elias with the strength of a prophet and the tenderness of a mother.

“Use his voice, Lord, but more than that—use his life.

Let him feel the seeds he’s sown, the hearts he’s healed, the hope he’s handed out.

And don’t ever let him forget... he’s still being listened to.”

The line went dead.

But Elias sat in the studio like someone had handed him the final missing puzzle piece of his soul.

**He had chased signs, miracles, even broadcasts from the future.
But maybe God had used one quiet, faithful listener
to show him what faith really looks like.**

That night, Elias didn't journal.
He simply whispered to the empty studio:

“Thank You for Margot.
And for every listener I'll never meet,
who heard something true in my brokenness.”

He leaned into the mic one last time before sunrise.

“This is Elias Vance.
And tonight I met the listener who changed me.
If you're out there—hurting, doubting, just surviving—
I hear you.
And more importantly...
He does too.”

Chapter 55 – Forgiveness on Frequency 88.3

The letter had sat on his desk for three days.

It wasn't from Lily.

It wasn't from a listener.

It was from *himself*.

Typed. Folded. Unsent.

An apology he had never broadcast.

The words were raw—confessions of the things he'd said to his wife during their final argument, the ways he'd pulled away from Lily, the hollow years of hiding behind microphones and music instead of healing.

He had written it after Margot's call.

But what do you do with a letter when the people you wronged are either gone... or still deciding whether they want you back?

You read it anyway.

Out loud.

And tonight, Elias decided to do just that.

He flipped on the mic at 2:00 a.m., the same hour he once played soundscapes just to fill dead air. But this time, the air wasn't dead.

It was **holy**.

“Good evening. This is Elias Vance...
and tonight, I'm reading something I never thought I'd share.”

He unfolded the paper, hands steady for the first time in weeks.

“It's a letter of apology.

To my daughter, Lily.

To my late wife, Anna.

To anyone I've hurt by being silent when I should have spoken...
or by speaking when I should have *listened*.”

His voice cracked, but he didn't stop.

“I'm sorry for hiding behind a job instead of facing my grief.
I'm sorry for blaming God when it was my own bitterness I couldn't let go of.
I'm sorry for letting fear of rejection keep me from love.

And I'm sorry I waited so long to say all of this.”

The station was silent for a full thirty seconds afterward. No song. No outro. Just Elias breathing, raw and real, in front of a live signal.

And then...

The call came.

Line 1.

He hesitated, then answered.

“Elias?”

His breath caught.

He knew that voice.

Lily.

“Dad... I heard it. All of it.”

He opened his mouth, but no words came.

“You don’t need to keep apologizing,” she said, voice trembling.

“You already did the bravest thing. You *told the truth*.”

He finally spoke.

“I was afraid you’d never hear me.”

“I heard you a long time ago,” she said. “But tonight... I believed you.”

They didn’t say much else.

They didn’t have to.

The silence between them wasn’t the kind that wounds.

It was the kind that **heals**.

Elias ended the show without music.

Only this:

“If you’re listening on 88.3 tonight and carrying guilt that’s been rotting in the corners of your soul—

I want you to know something.

God isn’t waiting for you to be perfect.

He’s just waiting for you to *be honest*.

And if you’ve got something to say...

maybe this is your time to say it.”

Journal Entry:

“Forgiveness isn’t a sound.

It’s a frequency.

One you don’t always know how to tune into—until grace grabs the dial and sets it for you.”

Chapter 56 – Grace Interrupted

The show was running smooth that night.

Too smooth.

Elias had just finished queuing up “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” when the phone rang—Line 4, blinking insistently. He glanced at the call board.

Unlisted.

He almost let it go to voicemail. After all, this was supposed to be the “Grace Hour”—an uninterrupted block of hymns and Scripture readings he’d crafted for those who couldn’t sleep. Those afraid. Those alone.

But the blinking didn’t stop.

It pulsed, like a heartbeat on a monitor.

He reached for the receiver.

“WPNZ, this is Elias—”

“Is this... the one who reads letters and prays like he’s breaking inside?”

The voice was young. Shaky. Male.

Elias blinked.

“That’s me,” he said gently.

Silence.

Then, a confession:

“I was going to take my life tonight.”

The room went cold. Not because of fear, but **sacredness**.

The kind of holy stillness you don’t dare speak into until you’re absolutely sure it’s the Spirit moving and not just your own nerves.

“But I turned on the radio instead.

I don’t know why.

I don’t even believe in God.”

“That’s okay,” Elias whispered. “He believes in *you*.”

What followed was twenty-eight minutes of raw, unfiltered pain.

The young man—his name was Devon—told of abuse, addiction, being kicked out, and of churches that told him he had to be cleaned up before he could come in.

“But then I heard you,” Devon said.

“You were crying while reading a letter. You weren’t trying to be impressive. You sounded... human.”

Elias could barely speak through the lump in his throat.

“Devon, listen to me.

Grace doesn’t wait until we’re clean.

It *interrupts* us—right in the middle of our mess.”

He prayed with him. Right there. On air.

Not a performance.

Not a formula.

Just a broken man holding another broken soul in the presence of a perfect God.

“Lord, interrupt him.

Interrupt his despair.

Interrupt every lie the enemy has spoken over him.

Crash through his plans with mercy.

Remind him tonight that his story’s not over.”

When the call ended, Elias didn’t play a song.

He didn’t need to.

The Spirit was the song.

He leaned into the mic.

“Friends...

Grace is not polite.

It doesn’t wait its turn.

It doesn’t knock softly at the door.

It *interrupts*.

It bursts in with light when all you’ve known is darkness.

And if you’re still breathing...

then grace is still coming for you.”

Journal Entry:

*“Tonight I had a show planned.
But God had a soul to save.
Grace doesn’t ask for permission.
It just... arrives.
And when it does,
everything changes.”*

Chapter 57 – The Boy and the Bike

It was just past noon on a Thursday when Elias took a rare walk through town.

The studio was quiet during the day, save for the automation software playing soft gospel music and pre-recorded segments. For once, he felt at peace leaving it in someone else’s hands. He needed fresh air.

He strolled past Main Street Hardware, nodded to the barista at the corner coffee shop, and paused near the small park across from the Methodist church. That’s when he saw him.

A boy—no older than ten—sitting on the curb next to a mangled bicycle. One wheel bent in like a broken wrist, the handlebars twisted like pretzels. His backpack lay beside him, the zipper gaping open. A few torn math worksheets fluttered in the breeze.

The boy wasn’t crying. But he was staring.

Still. Silent.

Like someone waiting to fall apart.

Elias hesitated.

He’d never been particularly good with kids. Especially not since losing his own family. But something about the boy’s expression felt familiar.

That look. That ache. That stillness.

So Elias crossed the street.

“Hey,” he said softly, kneeling down. “You okay?”

The boy didn’t answer.

Elias looked at the bike, then at the scuffed palms on the boy’s hands. A torn pant leg. Red at the knee.

“Tough crash?”

A slow nod.

“Anyone I can call for you?”

A shrug.

They sat in silence for a moment. Elias didn't push.

Then, without prompting, the boy finally spoke.

“It was my dad's bike. He gave it to me before he left.”

Elias' breath caught.

“I ride it every day. Even though the brakes don't work. I just... didn't want to stop.”

He said it so plainly, Elias felt like he'd been punched.

“Can I tell you something?” Elias said, voice low.

The boy glanced up.

“When I was your age, I crashed a bike too. Not my dad's... but the one I loved most. Took a hill too fast and flipped over the sidewalk. Thought I'd broken my arm and the world.”

The boy's lips twitched. Almost a smile.

“You didn't?”

“Nah,” Elias grinned. “Just my pride.”

He sat down next to the boy on the curb, both of them staring at the broken bike like it was a puzzle that neither had the pieces to fix.

“But you know what?” Elias said. “A broken bike doesn't mean the ride's over. It just means someone might need to help you fix it.”

He paused.

“And that's okay.”

The boy looked at him again, really looked this time.

“You on the radio?”

Elias blinked. “Yeah... yeah, I am.”

“My grandma listens to you. She said you cry on the air sometimes.”

Elias laughed through his nose.

“Guilty.”

“She said you’re real. That you used to be sad but you’re getting better.”

Elias nodded slowly. “Still getting there. But yeah. Better.”

They sat in quiet companionship a while longer, until a woman came around the corner calling the boy’s name.

He stood, wiped his hands on his pants, and looked at Elias one last time.

“Thanks for stopping.”

“Thanks for letting me,” Elias said.

The boy turned to leave, dragging the bike beside him, bent wheel wobbling.

Halfway down the street, he turned back and shouted:

“Hey! You’re not done getting better yet!”

And then he was gone.

Elias stood there for a long time, heart full.

He hadn't said anything about God.

Hadn't quoted Scripture.

Hadn't offered a sermon.

He had just... *been present*.

And sometimes, that’s all grace asks of us.

Not to fix the bike.

But to sit on the curb

until the hurting feel seen again.

Journal Entry:

*“Today I met a boy with a broken bike
and a father-shaped hole in his story.
He reminded me that healing doesn’t need a broadcast.
Sometimes it just needs a curb, a scar,
and someone who’s still learning to listen.”*

Chapter 58 – A Visit to the Old Church

The doors were heavier than he remembered.

Not just in weight—but in meaning.

The last time Elias Vance had stepped foot inside *Grace First Baptist Church* was the day of his wife’s funeral. He hadn’t come back since. Not for Easter. Not for Christmas. Not for closure.

He had driven past it hundreds of times.

But today, something pulled him in.

Not guilt.

Not obligation.

A gentle whisper.

The sanctuary smelled of old wood and hymnals. The stained-glass windows filtered the morning light in muted reds and blues that danced quietly across the pews.

It was empty, save for a janitor humming an old tune off-key as he polished the communion table.

Elias made his way to the back pew—*their pew*—the one he and Anna used to sit in, three rows from the back, always slightly crooked because Anna said it gave her a clearer view of the cross.

He sat down slowly, half-expecting to be flooded with sorrow.

But what came was... *peace*.

Not the kind that numbs.

The kind that **heals**.

He closed his eyes and let the silence of the room wrap around him like a blanket. And then, without thinking, he whispered:

“I’m sorry I stayed away so long.”

The words echoed softly off the sanctuary walls.

And for a brief moment, he imagined her sitting beside him again—Anna—her hand resting on his, her soft smile unchanged.

He opened his eyes to the sound of footsteps.

An older man, the current pastor perhaps, approached with kind eyes and a Bible under his arm.

“You here for the service?” the man asked.

Elias shook his head.

“No service. Just... visiting old ghosts.”

The pastor smiled.

“Well, the cross has a habit of turning ghosts into grace.”

They spoke for a few minutes.

Not about theology or church schedules.

Just about life.

And love.

And how sometimes, the most broken people become the most powerful testimonies—not because they were fixed, but because they were *found*.

Before he left, Elias walked to the altar.

He didn’t kneel.

He stood.

Shoulders straight.

Eyes forward.

Heart open.

“Thank You for not giving up on me,” he whispered.

“Even when I gave up on You.”

“Thank You for the voice that never stopped calling me back.”

He didn’t stay long.

He didn’t need to.

He had finally returned to the place he feared the most...
and found it was never **condemnation** waiting for him.

Only **welcome**.

Journal Entry:

*“Today I returned to the place I buried my faith.
And instead of mourning,
I found resurrection.
Old pews.
Old ghosts.
But a new heart.*

**The church didn’t change.
I did.”*

Chapter 59 – Repentance on Repeat

It started with a song request.

A woman named Angela from Ridgeview called the station and asked for a rare, old hymn: “*I Repent*” by Steve Camp.

Elias hadn’t heard it in years. He found the dusty vinyl buried in the back corner of the studio, labeled in faded Sharpie. The kind of song you didn’t just hear — you *felt*.

He played it without introducing it.

Let the piano keys and trembling vocals speak for themselves.

But as the lyrics poured out into the quiet night, Elias found himself leaning forward in his chair, heart pounding.

*“I repent for moments I have spent
Recalling all the pain and failures from my past...”*

He didn’t move.

He couldn’t.

Each verse echoed like footsteps in his chest.

Conviction. Not condemnation.

The music faded, but the words didn’t.

Elias sat still for nearly ten minutes.

No calls. No cues. No commercials.

Just... silence.

And then he reached for the mic.

*“I don’t know who that was for tonight,” he said, his voice low, raw.
“But I have a feeling it wasn’t just for the woman who called in.”*

He paused.

“We talk a lot about grace on this station. About forgiveness. About starting over. But what we don’t talk about nearly enough is the rhythm of repentance.”

“See, I used to think repentance was a one-time thing. You do something wrong, you say you’re sorry, God forgives you—done. But I’ve learned it’s not like that. Not for me, at least.”

“For me, repentance is **on repeat**. It’s every day. Every time I catch myself reaching for control. Every time I use my pain as a shield. Every time I forget who I am—and who He is.”

He leaned closer to the mic, speaking not to a crowd, but to one listener—whoever needed it most.

“If that’s you tonight... If you’ve been here before, If you’re tired of saying, *‘I’m sorry’* over and over again—I want to tell you something I’m still learning.”

“God doesn’t get tired of hearing it. He’s not annoyed. He’s not rolling His eyes. He’s not counting how many times you’ve fallen.”

“He’s counting how many times you come back.”

A soft instrumental hymn played behind his words, but Elias didn’t notice. The studio lights flickered gently, and the air felt thick with grace.

“You’re not a failure because you keep repenting. You’re faithful... because you keep coming home.”

Journal Entry:

*“Repentance isn’t weakness.
It’s worship.
A daily turning.
A sacred rhythm.
And I’m not ashamed of how often I return—
I’m thankful I still *can*.”

Chapter 60 – The Broadcast from Calvary

It was Good Friday.

The kind of day that hung heavy in the soul, even if you didn’t believe in much.

Elias woke up before dawn, not because he had a shift, but because his heart wouldn’t let him sleep. Something was stirring—deep, sacred, and urgent.

He didn’t go to the studio.

He went to the old church on the hill—Grace First Baptist—the one he’d visited a few weeks earlier. He found the sanctuary empty, save for a few flickering candles and a wooden cross draped in black cloth at the front.

The pastor had placed a small wooden radio beside the altar.

It wasn’t plugged in. It didn’t play anything.

But it didn’t have to.

Elias stared at the cross for a long time.

It didn’t speak, but its silence was deafening.

He thought about every broadcast he had sent out—every word, every apology, every scripture, every prayer.

Then he thought about the one message that echoed louder than all of them combined:

“It is finished.”

Not a whisper.

Not a maybe.

Not a hope.

A broadcast.

From a hill.

From a bleeding Savior.

From a God who chose a cross instead of a microphone.

Elias sat on the floor, arms resting on the front pew, forehead against his fists.

“I’ve been trying so hard to get it right,” he whispered.
“Trying to say the right things.
Feel the right emotions.
Hear Your voice clearly.”

He looked up at the cross.

“But You already spoke.
You already sent the signal.
And I’ve been trying to tune into something...
that already happened.”

Tears welled in his eyes—not of guilt, but of release.

He didn’t need another sign.

He didn’t need another voice.

He needed to rest in the message that had been ringing through eternity:

*Grace is done.
Forgiveness is finished.
Love has already spoken.*

Later that evening, he went back to the station and turned on the mic. No fanfare. No opening theme.

Just a simple message:

“Tonight’s broadcast isn’t mine.
It came from a hill, long before I was born.

And though it wasn’t recorded,
it’s still echoing across the frequencies of broken hearts everywhere.

The signal from Calvary is still clear—
still strong—
still for *you*.

You don’t need to clean up to hear it.

Just listen.”

He played no music. Just silence.

And somehow, the silence was louder than anything he had ever aired.

Journal Entry:

*“The cross was never a tragedy.
It was a transmission.
And I finally heard it—not in my ears,
but in the hollow place grace came to fill.”*

Part VII: The Final Transmission

Chapter 61 – That Still, Small Voice

Elias had always associated God with noise.

Church choirs belting out hymns.

Thunderous preaching behind wooden pulpits.

Revival tents crackling with hallelujahs and shouted amens.

Radio programs with layered soundtracks and voices preaching repentance in full stereo.

For most of his life, the only voice he trusted was one that came through a microphone—his own, broadcast through speakers, turned up loud enough to drown out the silence of his soul.

But silence, he had come to learn, was sacred.

And now, it was where he heard God best.

It was Sunday evening, and the station was empty. No volunteers. No guests. Just Elias and the hum of old equipment, waiting to be powered on.

He sat in Studio B, where the walls weren’t soundproofed quite as well—where you could hear the occasional creak of the old pipes, or the birds outside the alley window, or even the passing of a train in the distance.

And for once, he didn’t mind.

He wasn’t looking to produce something.

He was looking to *listen*.

He opened his Bible. It fell naturally to 1 Kings 19.

“And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.”

Elijah.

Running from Jezebel. Hiding in a cave. Begging God to end it all.

And then—**God didn't shout. He whispered.**

Elias closed his eyes.

He had been there.

In caves. In fear. In depression that made him beg God to just let it be over. In the static of a thousand regrets and one too many yesterdays.

He knew what it was to be exhausted from faith.

And yet, somehow, he was still here.

Still breathing.

Still listening.

And in the silence of that empty room, without music or microphones or call-in shows or carefully crafted words, something happened.

He heard it.

Not audibly.

Not like the broadcasts from the mysterious radio.

Not like his own voice from the future.

But in his soul.

A quiet presence.

A gentle peace.

A whisper.

Not of judgment. Not of instruction.

Just **presence.**

Tears slipped down his cheeks as he whispered back:

“I'm here.”

And he felt—*not imagined, not conjured, not manipulated—but truly felt—the warmth of the Holy Spirit wrap around his tired heart like a blanket freshly pulled from the dryer.

The still, small voice didn't tell him what to do next. It didn't give him a map or a plan or a prophecy.
It gave him what he had long forgotten he needed:

Assurance.

The kind that doesn't fade when the music ends.

The kind that doesn't demand performance.

The kind that says:

“You are My son.
I never stopped speaking.
You just had to stop shouting long enough to hear Me.”

Later that night, Elias sat behind the console in Studio A and broadcasted in near silence.

“Tonight's show is dedicated to the ones who are listening for something... but aren't sure what.

You're not crazy.

You're not alone.

That ache inside you isn't an echo.
It's a whisper.
And I believe with all my heart, it's God.”

He didn't read Scripture.

He didn't play a song.

He just let silence fill the airwaves.

And somewhere, across a thousand miles of transmission, someone else heard it too.

That still, small voice.

Journal Entry:

*“The most powerful voice I've ever heard didn't come through the speakers.
It came in the silence—
After the fire.
After the storm.
After I stopped trying to be the signal...
And became the receiver.”*

Chapter 62 – My Father’s Frequency

The attic smelled like cedar, dust, and something that can’t be named but always lingers in the places time forgets.

Elias hadn’t been up there in years.

Not since his father died.

Not since the day he’d shoved the boxes away with a bitterness he didn’t want to name. He had told himself he didn’t need the past—especially not the man who built it. But something had changed. Something had softened.

So, here he was.

Kneeling among boxes labeled “**Dad’s Gear**”, his breath forming small clouds in the afternoon chill.

He opened the first one.

Cables.

Microphones.

Old tapes labeled in that familiar handwriting: “**Sunday Sermons – 1983**”, “**Special: A Father’s Blessing**”, and one marked simply: “**Elias.**”

He froze.

The name hit harder than he expected.

He hadn’t known there was a recording with his name on it.

With trembling hands, he pulled out the old reel and loaded it into a dusty but working player. The hum of the machine filled the attic, and then, like a memory unlocked, his father’s voice filled the space.

“Elias, if you’re hearing this... it means I’ve probably gone home to be with the Lord.”

A long pause. A crackle in the tape.

“I know I wasn’t the perfect father. I know I didn’t always say the right things. But I want you to know—I prayed for you every night. Even when we didn’t talk. Especially then.”

Elias sank to the floor.

“I always hoped you’d come back to faith, son. Not because I needed you to be like me, but because I knew what life without that anchor would do to you. And I wanted more for you. I wanted you to know the God who held me together when nothing else could.”

“You have a voice, Elias. A gift. One I think God intends to use. But not just to entertain. To *reach*. To *heal*. To *preach*, even if you never call it that.”

“Your frequency is unique, but it’s always been tuned to heaven. Even when you didn’t know it.”

“If you ever feel lost... tune in again. He’s still broadcasting.”

Elias wept.

There, in that dusty attic, his father’s words reached through time and grief and regret, and met him like a signal that had finally found its receiver.

Not condemnation.

Not disappointment.

Love.

Grace.

Blessing.

Later that evening, Elias carried the reel to the station.

He didn’t introduce it.

He didn’t explain.

He simply played it.

His father’s voice filled the night airwaves.

A man long gone, still reaching people with a love that echoed beyond the grave.

After the recording ended, Elias whispered into the mic:

“I used to think my father never really saw me.

But it turns out... he never stopped speaking.

I just wasn’t tuned in.”

Journal Entry:

“Every life broadcasts something.

My father’s frequency was grace.

He wasn’t loud.

He wasn’t perfect.

But his voice outlived him...

And now, it’s guiding me home.”

Chapter 63 – A Station Beyond the Static

The old radio on Elias's desk had stopped working.

At least, that's what he thought.

It hadn't picked up anything in weeks. No future broadcasts. No warnings. No gentle nudges about wallets or wrecks or broken souls in need of rescue.

Just... static.

Unrelenting, hollow, frustrating static.

He had banged the side of the casing. Switched outlets. Checked wires. Nothing helped. Eventually, he stopped trying. Stopped listening for it. Pushed it aside in favor of more traditional broadcasts—scripture readings, call-in prayers, late-night gospel sets.

But tonight, something drew him back.

He turned off the studio lights.

The only glow was from the red ON AIR sign and the faint dial on the old radio.

He sat in silence, eyes closed, heart still.

The static remained.

But he leaned into it now. Let it fill the space between his thoughts. Let it ask the questions he didn't have answers for.

“Where are You, God?”

Not with anger.

Not with doubt.

Just... longing.

And then he remembered something his father used to say when they listened to AM radio late at night:

“The strongest signals are just beyond the noise.
You've got to wait through the static... to hear the station.”

Elias reached for the tuning knob.

Slowly.

Patiently.

He turned it left, then right, then ever so slightly back again. The static shifted. Warbled. Fluttered. Still no voice. Still no broadcast.

But something *was* there.

Not audible.

Not concrete.

But **present**.

He didn't hear a message that night.

He didn't receive a prophecy.

But in the waiting... he realized something:

The absence of sound doesn't mean the absence of God.

The signal was still there.

Just beyond the static.

And maybe, that's what faith really was.

He took a deep breath, leaned into the mic, and spoke quietly:

“To anyone out there hearing nothing but silence...

Hold on.

Don't turn the dial.

Don't unplug the radio.

Sometimes, the clearest message comes through *trust*, not volume.

There is a station beyond the static.

And the One who runs it... never stops broadcasting.

Even if all you hear right now is silence—

He's still speaking.

And He's not far.”

Journal Entry:

“I used to think static meant failure.

A lost signal. A broken voice.

But now I see...

Sometimes, static is where God teaches me to wait.

To listen longer.

To believe louder.

*There's a station beyond it—
And it's calling me deeper still."*

Chapter 64 – Elias, Meet Elias

The radio came to life at exactly 3:17 a.m.

No knobs turned.

No switches flipped.

No input from Elias.

Just... a soft hum.

A tuning frequency that settled on its own. No static. No distortion. Just a voice—familiar and unfamiliar all at once.

His voice.

But older.

Wiser.

Calmer.

He sounded like a man who had finally made peace with the storm.

"If you're hearing this, Elias... it means you're ready."

He froze.

Not in fear.

In awe.

"I've been waiting for this moment. Not because I needed to speak to you—but because you needed to recognize the voice."

"You're not broken anymore, brother.
You're not pretending.
You're becoming."

The voice paused.

"You always thought the signal was meant to control you.
But it was never about control.
It was about *calling*."

“You feared predestination because you thought it meant you didn’t have a choice. But you *did*.
And you made it.
You listened.”

Elias leaned forward, eyes wide, tears quietly slipping down his face.

“I know what you’ve walked through.
I know the ache that won’t name itself.
I know the guilt you carry from things you said—and didn’t say.
But I also know who you’re becoming.”

“You are a man who broadcasts hope.
Who hears God in the static.
Who answers phones in the middle of the night not because it’s your job—but because it’s your *calling*.”

Elias clutched his chest, as if somehow trying to hold the voice in.

This wasn’t fiction.

This wasn’t fantasy.

This was *faith*—speaking through a frequency that didn’t exist on any dial but still found its way into his heart.

“The man you feared becoming?
He never existed.
But the man you’re becoming now—he was *always* part of the plan.”

“I’m proud of you.”

“You finally stopped talking long enough to listen.
And now, Elias... it’s time to speak again.
This time—not as a man with a microphone,
but as a man with a *testimony*.”

The signal clicked.

Silence.

Not a hollow silence.

A holy one.

Elias sat there for a long time.
Not to figure it out.
But to *breathe it in*.
For the first time in his life, he felt aligned.
With his calling.
With his Father.
With himself.

Journal Entry:

*“Tonight, I met myself.
Not the version molded by pain,
or fear,
or failure—
but the one God always saw.
The one He was always calling me toward.
I’m not there yet.
But I’m on the frequency.
And I’m listening.”*

Chapter 65 – The Radio and the Cross

Elias stood in the sanctuary again.
It was nearly empty, save for the lingering scent of old candles and Easter lilies.
He had come after hours. No one knew. No announcements. No broadcast.
Just him.
And the cross.
He carried the old radio in his hands. The one that had started it all. The one that had spoken in his voice, shown him glimpses of the future, saved him from wrecks and wrong turns—and, most of all, saved him from himself.
He set it gently down on the altar.

He stared at the radio. Then at the cross. Then back again.
It hit him like a revelation breaking through the static.
They were one and the same.

The radio was never about predictions.
It was never about control.
It wasn't even about divine warnings.

It was about *invitation*.

An invitation to trust.

To surrender.

To hear a voice calling out not from a transmitter, but from a *tree on a hill* where the greatest message ever broadcast was sent out into the world without wires or towers.

Just blood.

Wood.

And mercy.

Elias sat on the front pew, heart thudding slow and steady, like the ticking of a metronome in God's time.

The cross wasn't decorated.

It wasn't stylized.

It was just wood and nails.

But it was more alive than the glowing equipment back at the studio.

Because here—at the intersection of eternity and grace—Elias finally saw it clearly:

The signal had always been coming from Calvary.
Not to inform him of the future,
but to remind him of a finished past.

He whispered aloud, not to himself, but to the One who had orchestrated the journey all along:

“The cross was the first transmitter... and I was the static.”

A tear rolled down his cheek, but it was not born of grief.

It was *release*.

Years of shame.

Years of silence.

Years of self-inflicted guilt... lifted in one holy moment.

The radio crackled to life—just once.

A single phrase came through.

Elias barely heard it with his ears.

But his soul caught every word:

“This is My beloved son... in whom I am well pleased.”

And then... nothing.

Just stillness.

Just peace.

Elias reached for the mic at the altar—not connected to anything earthly—and said the words he was born to say:

“I hear You now.”

Journal Entry:

*“Today I brought the radio to the cross.
And I realized—they were never separate.
God’s greatest signal wasn’t a warning.
It was an invitation.
Not to escape my story—
But to live it... in Him.”*

Chapter 66 – Everything New

The studio didn’t look any different.

The soundboard was still scratched from decades of use.

The walls still wore faded acoustic foam.

The “ON AIR” sign still flickered on its left side when it got too warm.

But Elias saw it all with new eyes.

It was as if the world had been quietly reborn when he wasn’t looking.

Not louder.

Not flashier.

Just **cleaner**.

Clearer.

New.

He slid into his usual chair, ran his fingers across the faders, and exhaled.

The past weeks—months, really—had been a journey from silence to signal, from wandering to worship. And now, sitting at this old console in the late-night hours, Elias wasn't just a DJ anymore.

He was a messenger.

A receiver.

A living signal of mercy that refused to be static any longer.

He turned on the mic, but didn't speak yet.

Instead, he whispered a prayer—not because anyone was listening, but because *He* was.

“Lord... I'm not who I was when I first sat in this chair.
And I don't want to go back.”

Then, softly, he opened his Bible to Revelation 21:5.

He read it into the mic, his voice steady and full:

“And the one sitting on the throne said, ‘Look, I am making everything new!’”

He paused.

Let the words do their work.

“I used to think grace meant fixing what was broken,” Elias said to the unseen audience.
“But now I know—grace doesn't repair. Grace *resurrects*.”

“God isn't interested in patching up our lives with religious duct tape.
He wants to rebuild.
Not just heal.
Renew.”

He smiled, eyes scanning the glowing controls before him.

He had fought so hard to stay in control.

To prove he was free.

To prove he could steer his own story.

And all along, God wasn't trying to override his will—

He was inviting Elias into something far greater:

A new life.

He began playing a new playlist.

Different songs. New voices. Hymns remixed with testimonies. Classic gospel blended with spoken word scripture. It wasn't professional or polished, but it was real.

It was a sound born not in production—but in **redemption**.

And people could tell.

The phone lines lit up within minutes.

Not with debates.

Not with theological questions.

But with weeping voices.

Thankful voices.

People whispering, "I thought I was the only one..."

Elias didn't try to fix them.

He didn't offer advice.

He just spoke what had become his life's message:

"He's still making things new.
And if He can do it for me...
He can do it for you too."

Journal Entry:

*"I used to think God wanted to fix my broken pieces.
But I see it now.
He wanted to give me new ones.
A new heart.
A new voice.
A new song.
Everything is new—
Because He didn't come to repair me...
He came to resurrect me."*

Chapter 67 – This Time, I Listened

He had heard the voice before.

Not the mysterious one on the radio.

The other one.

The quiet conviction when he passed a man crying on a bench.

The nudge to call his daughter before she stopped answering altogether.

The whisper that came in the middle of the night, telling him to lay down the bottle instead of picking it up again.

The stirring in his chest when he heard a hymn he pretended not to remember the words to.

He had heard it.

He just didn't *listen*.

Elias sat on the edge of the station's roof. A soft breeze rustled through his jacket as the sun prepared to rise.

In his hand was a small recorder.

Tonight's broadcast was prerecorded—something he rarely did now—but this one was different. It wasn't for the regular audience.

It was for *him*.

He pressed PLAY.

And there it was.

His own voice, recorded in Studio B just hours earlier:

“There were so many times I heard You, God.
And I shrugged it off.
I wasn't rebellious... just stubborn.
Just scared.”

“I didn't want to believe You'd still speak to someone like me.
A has-been. A dropout. A father who failed. A man whose pulpit was a playlist of regret.”

“But this time...
This time, I listened.”

Elias closed his eyes and felt the presence of the Lord like sunlight before the dawn.

No booming voice.

No flashing sign.

Just peace.

Still. Warm. Alive.

“You didn’t shout at me.
You waited.
Through the addictions.
Through the losses.
Through the wandering.”

“You waited.”

“And when I finally turned down the volume of my own voice...
I heard Yours.
Not condemning.
Not controlling.
Just... calling.”

He looked out at the horizon.
A new day was beginning.
Not just on the clock—but in him.

He remembered that first strange broadcast.
The voice that sounded like his future self, warning him about a missed wallet.
What if it wasn’t just future Elias trying to reach him?
What if that was just *how God chose to speak to him*—
in a language Elias could finally understand?
A DJ’s voice.
A familiar cadence.
A station tuned to the frequency of grace.

And this time, he listened.

And nothing was ever the same.

Journal Entry:

*“There were so many moments I heard Him, but refused to believe it.

This time, I listened.
And what I heard wasn’t control.
It was kindness.
It was patience.

It was God saying—
'I still want you.'

And that was all I needed to hear.”*

Chapter 68 – The Testimony Hour

There was no intro music.

No scheduled lineup.

No commercial breaks.

Just Elias Vance sitting in front of the mic, hands steady, heart full, a Bible opened to the Gospel of John—chapter 9, verse 25:

“One thing I do know: I was blind, but now I see.”

He exhaled into the mic and began speaking—not as a host, not as a professional, but as a man who had been utterly, completely, undeservedly redeemed.

“This is the Testimony Hour,” he began, voice firm but tender, “and tonight... I want to start with mine.”

“I used to think I was in control.
I charted my own path.
Built a career. Lost a family.
And thought that was the end of the story.”

“But then came the static. The silence. The nights when the only voice I heard was my own—and even that stopped comforting me.”

“And then, God... spoke.”

He told the story.

Not the polished version.

The **true** version.

He told about the late-night broadcast with his own voice coming through a forgotten radio.

He told about resisting it.

Fighting it.

Running from it.

And then—falling flat on his face in the wake of it.

“God didn’t force me,” Elias said, “He pursued me.”

He talked about Ruth.

About the woman who saw him as more than a fallen voice on FM airwaves.

About how God had placed her in his life as both mirror and messenger.

He talked about the listeners—the ones who called in not for answers, but for *hope*.

He talked about the night he took the radio to the church.

And how the cross finally made sense to him—not as religious symbolism, but as a **rescue transmission** from Heaven.

Then, his voice broke slightly.

“I want you to know—whoever you are—whatever you’ve done:
God is still broadcasting.
He hasn’t turned off the signal.
You just might be tuning in at the perfect time.”

The phone lines lit up.

One by one.

People who hadn’t called in for months.

People who never called at all.

A grandmother who had lost her faith when her son overdosed.

A teen boy who confessed to planning his own suicide just weeks ago.

A former preacher who hadn’t prayed in seven years until he heard Elias read John 3:17.

Elias didn’t rush them.

He let their voices take center stage.

Because *this* was church now.

One caller—a woman named Angela—whispered through tears:

“I’ve been waiting for someone to admit they heard Him too.”

Elias whispered back:

“Then let this be your confirmation... He’s still speaking.”

By the end of the hour, Elias didn't feel drained.

He felt resurrected.

Because testimonies don't deplete.

They multiply.

As the station went to automated music, Elias sat back in his chair, overwhelmed, and lifted his hands slightly—just enough to say:

“Thank You.”

Not for the platform.

Not for the voice.

But for the fact that he had a story worth telling.

Journal Entry:

“I used to broadcast noise.

Now I broadcast grace.

And tonight, I learned that testimony isn't about polishing your past—

It's about pointing to the One who stood beside you in it.”

Chapter 69 – A New Signal

The station had never felt this alive.

Not because of the lights, or the soundboard, or the late-night calls.

But because something had shifted *inside* Elias.

He walked the narrow hallway between Studio A and the old equipment room with a sense of reverence—like he was walking through a church aisle instead of a radio station. And in a way, he was.

This place—this creaky, dusty station that once felt like a graveyard of forgotten dreams—was now his pulpit. His altar. His sanctuary.

And tonight, he felt a whisper in his spirit:

“It's time.”

Time for what?

He didn't know entirely.

Only that the old signal—the one that pulled him toward grace—was giving way to a *new* one.

One that didn't just speak to him...

But spoke *through* him.

He sat at the mic.

Hands steady.

Heart quiet.

Not to read a script.

Not to share a song.

But to declare something new.

A new broadcast.

A new purpose.

"Good evening, friends," Elias said softly. "If you've been with us for a while, you know this station has changed. And maybe... I have too."

"For the longest time, I was just trying to figure out what the voice on the other end of the frequency was saying.

But now I realize...

I *am* the frequency."

"God didn't just want to reach me.

He wanted to *reach others through me*.

And that means it's time to launch something new."

He paused. Smiled.

"Tonight, I'm announcing a new program.

Same station.

New purpose.

We're calling it *The Hope Frequency*."

"It's not about me anymore.

It's about *you*.

Your stories.

Your breakthroughs.

Your second chances."

"Because if God can restore a man like me...

He can redeem anyone."

The studio felt holy.

Like revival had crept in quietly and taken a seat by the soundboard.

Elias kept speaking:

“Every week, we’ll feature testimonies from real people who encountered grace where they least expected it.

We’ll pray together.

We’ll cry together.

We’ll walk through the static—together—until we hear that still, small voice again.”

“And I believe... God’s going to do something powerful through this new signal.”

The phone lines blinked.

Not wildly.

Not in chaos.

But in steady, gentle rhythm.

One by one.

People tuning in.

Hearts opening.

A new signal had begun.

Not of control.

Not of fate.

But of **faith**.

Elias wasn’t chasing a voice anymore.

He was walking with it.

Carrying it.

Becoming it.

Because the real miracle wasn’t the voice on the radio...

It was the man who finally said yes.

Journal Entry:

*“The signal has shifted.
The voice still speaks—
But now it echoes in me.
This is more than radio.
It’s revival.
And it’s just beginning.”*

Chapter 70 – Predestined

It began where it ended.

Or maybe it ended where it began.

Elias stood at the base of the hill where his grandfather’s old farmhouse once stood—now overgrown with weeds and brush, the radio tower long gone, its rusted foundation barely poking through the soil like a forgotten relic of another age.

But the wind still moved through the grass.

And in the silence, he could almost hear it:

*“This is Predestined Radio...
where every signal is sent with purpose.”*

He had hated that word once—*predestined*.

It sounded like a trap.

Like a cosmic prison.

Like freedom was just an illusion.

But now?

It sounded like *love*.

A love so sure of itself, it began planning his redemption long before he ever whispered, “I’m lost.”

A love that waited through decades of silence.

A love that sent broadcasts into a broken life not to shame, but to steer.

He walked slowly to the place where the old workbench had once been—where the first strange signal had come through on that antique radio.

He knelt down.

Not in grief.

In worship.

Because he finally understood:

The signal didn't originate with him.

It didn't even originate with the radio.

It originated at the cross.

God had been speaking all along.

Not to control Elias.

But to **call him**.

Not to limit his choices.

But to **redeem** them.

That was the paradox of predestination:

Not that God removed freedom.

But that He loved Elias enough to fight for his heart through every wrong turn—

To bring beauty out of ruin.

Hope out of static.

And a new voice out of an old, broken man.

Back at the station that night, Elias stepped into the booth for one final message.

No fanfare.

No music.

Just a man, a microphone, and the peace of finally knowing who he was... and Whose he was.

He spoke slowly:

“This is Elias Vance...
signing off from a journey I didn't plan,
but one that was clearly... predestined.”

“Not by fate.
Not by force.
But by *grace*.”

“The voice you've heard? It was never mine.
Not really.
I was just the static He spoke through.”

"I once feared the idea of a life that was written before I lived it...
But now I see—
That life was written in love.
And I was never meant to write my story alone."

"If you're still searching, still wandering, still afraid you've missed your signal...
Listen closely."

"It's not too late.
You haven't tuned in too late.
The station is still live.
And the voice is still calling."

"You were made for this moment.
You were made for redemption.
And yes...
You were *predestined* for grace."

He turned off the mic.
And for the first time in his life...
There was no fear in the silence.

Only peace.

Final Journal Entry:

*"My story was not random.
Neither is yours.
We were both written into something sacred.
And now I see—
Not every signal is meant to be understood.
Some are simply meant to be received.
And when they are...
Everything changes."*

The End
...and the true beginning.

Epilogue – The Signal Never Stops

There is a strange quiet after a final broadcast.

Not the kind of silence that feels empty, but the kind that *settles*—like dust after a long journey, like breath returning after a deep dive.

Elias Vance no longer sits behind a radio mic every night.
The studio still exists—station 88.3, *WGRV: The Grove*—but the voice most people hear now isn't his.
It's the voices of the redeemed.

In the months that followed Elias's final broadcast, something remarkable happened.
People began showing up at the station—not with resumes or demo reels, but with *testimonies*.
A single mom who used to cry herself to sleep to the sound of Elias's scripture readings now runs a prayer call-in show.
A former addict, who swore God had gone silent on him, now hosts a segment called "*Static to Salvation*," where he interviews others who've heard the voice of grace through their pain.
Ruth, the quiet neighbor who never stopped believing in Elias, leads a weekly Bible study in the studio's tiny break room.

As for Elias?
He speaks occasionally—never to reclaim the mic, but to share what he's still learning.
He teaches quietly.
Writes sometimes.
Walks often.
Listens always.
He no longer questions whether God still speaks.
Now he just tries to stay in tune.

One autumn afternoon, Elias returned to the old farmhouse hill.
In his hand was the same antique radio that started it all.
He set it on a stump, angled the dial, and sat back.
Static.
And then, faintly, as if carried on the wind:
 "Be still, and know that I am God."
No station ID. No music bed.
Just that.
Just enough.

And that's the point, he realized.

It was never about the radio.

Never about signals and frequencies and future warnings.

It was about a God who *longs to be heard*.

A God who chooses the quiet things.

The broken things.

The forgotten and out-of-tune people of the world...

to carry a message that never loses power:

"You are seen.

You are loved.

And yes—

You are part of the plan."

Elias wrote a letter to be read on air the week after he left the station for good. It wasn't a goodbye, just a passing of the mic.

Here's what it said:

"To whoever is listening now...

I want you to know that I didn't always believe.

I didn't trust that God had a plan.

I thought my voice was wasted, my life miswired, my signal corrupted by too many bad choices.

But I was wrong.

God never stops broadcasting.

And when I finally chose to listen, I realized...

I hadn't missed the message.

I was the message.

If you've been running, doubting, failing, or fearing—
you're not disqualified.

In fact, you might be closer to your breakthrough than you've ever been.

Don't wait for a booming voice.

Sometimes, the clearest guidance sounds just like your own soul—
when it finally aligns with the One who made it.

So here's what I've learned:

Grace isn't a backup plan.
It's *the* plan.

And if God can use a burned-out DJ from a backwoods station to tell His story...

Then trust me—He can use *you*.

Keep listening.
The signal's still strong.

I'll see you on the other side of the static.

— Elias Vance”

The station keeps the old radio on display now.

It doesn't work—not in the technical sense.

But visitors still come, stand in front of it, and swear they hear something.

Not always words.

Sometimes just a hum.

Sometimes just peace.

But always... *something*.

And maybe that's the greatest broadcast of all—

Not a voice from the sky...

But a quiet whisper that says,

**“You are not forgotten.
You are not random.
You were Predestined.”**

Author's Note

By Dr. Paul Crawford

When I first sat down to write *Predestined Radio*, I didn't plan on writing a story about a radio DJ.

I didn't plan on setting it in a dusty, forgotten station, or giving voice to a man who had long since stopped believing in anything—especially himself.

But God has a way of guiding us to unexpected places.

What began as a simple idea—a mysterious radio receiving messages from the future—quickly became something deeper. It became a parable. A metaphor. A mirror.

Elias Vance may be fictional, but his journey is deeply personal. In many ways, it mirrors my own.

Like Elias, I've walked through seasons of silence.

I've sat behind the microphone of ministry and wondered if anyone was still listening.

I've felt the weight of free will—and the gentleness of grace when I misused it.

This book was never about explaining predestination as a theological concept.

It was about exploring it as a *personal rescue plan*.

Because that's what I believe it is.

God doesn't write our stories in ink that disappears when we fail.

He writes in mercy.

He edits in grace.

And even when we walk away from the signal...

He never stops broadcasting.

I want to thank you, reader, for journeying through these pages.

Whether you come from a background of faith or find yourself wrestling with doubt, I hope Elias's story reminded you that redemption is not a one-time event—it's a constant invitation.

I hope you heard something in these pages.

A whisper.

A truth.

A frequency of hope.

If this book has spoken to you, I pray you'll carry its message forward—to someone who may need it more than you know.

Because someone out there is still searching.

Still tuning through the static.

Be their station.

Be their signal.

Be their grace.

Thank you for listening.

And thank you for letting *Predestined Radio* play a part in your story.

With gratitude and grace,

Dr. Paul Crawford

THE BIBLE WAY TO HEAVEN

1. Admit you are a sinner.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

(Romans 3:23)

No one is good enough to go to Heaven on his own merit.

No matter how much good we do, we still come short.

2. Realize the penalty for sin.

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23a) Just as there are wages for good, there is punishment for wrong. The penalty for our sin is eternal death in a place called Hell.

3. Believe that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again for you.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

4. Trust Christ alone as your Saviour.

"...But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23b) "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13) Eternal life is a gift purchased by the blood of Jesus and offered freely to those who call upon Him by faith. Anyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved forever. Being saved is a one-time event.

Dr. Paul Crawford is more than just a Christian Author; His books are a source of inspiration and guidance on your spiritual journey. His books are created with a deep sense of faith and a desire to uplift and inspire all who read.

<https://www.crawfordbiblecommentary.com/>

