



September 2025 CAMPFIRE GRADUATION

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come...”

On September 14th the men above were given the privilege to share their testimonies of the new life God has extended to them by His amazing grace and loving mercy. This is “pay day” for all of us as we come to a realization that what seemed impossible was made possible through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It never gets old to witness the genuine transformation of a man who was dead be brought to life by the power and touch of the Holy Spirit.

I then had the opportunity to “charge” them a speak a word of encouragement. I became aware that my words were not only for them, but they were speaking to my own soul as well. I passed on a message that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians in his second letter in the fifth chapter.

In verse fifteen, he wrote, “And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.” This is for all of us; He died so that we may live for Him, not for ourselves. We have spent enough time in the past choosing to live in selfishness. I believe all of us come to a reconciling moment when we determine to live our life for others and not ourselves. My focus should be Christ and the people He places before me; this is the path that leads to freedom and eternal purpose.

Verse seventeen mentions, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” That old life centered around me – what I wanted, when I wanted it, and how I wanted it was all that mattered. I had no regard for anyone else outside of my selfish desires. I was bound to the thoughts, emotions, and behavior that followed. Once the life of Christ and His Spirit was deposited in my inner being, I discovered a new way to live. I was able to say “no” to the flesh and yes to the Spirit. I became enamored with Him, the center of my new life. I now desire to walk in the fullness of knowing Him.

Paul makes a powerful statement in verse twenty that brings everything into clear view for me. He writes, “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors....” My actions now communicate to the world who Christ is and what He is about. I represent Christ in all that I do and all that I say. This is a great privilege that comes with a loving burden. I desire to represent Him well. What does my life say about Christ? Does it reflect His love, grace, and compassion? Does my life tell His story and what He cares about accurately?

Lastly, we looked at the first verse in chapter 6; “As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain” Wow! If I receive this precious gift in vain, then I will not appreciate Him and what He has done for me; I will take it for granted. If I do that, my actions will not reflect gratitude for His loving sacrifice. My desire and prayer is to embrace the newness of life that Christ has deposited in my heart and live for Him in a way that brings Him glory, honor, & praise.

Fully receiving and appreciating His grace,

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Graduation

SEPTEMBER 2025



Matt Chavis

I cried out to the Lord and asked Him to save me; that night I had a stroke and woke up on the way to jail. I entered a program called Damascus House and they helped me get to Dunklin. I'm so grateful for this opportunity and everyone that helped along the way. My plan is to stay until the Lord calls me elsewhere.



Ryan Gilhooly

I come from 13 years of addiction fueled by resentment and fear. I pushed away everyone that cared about me. I came to Dunklin to get off drugs but I've learned that sobriety is a byproduct of following Jesus. The Lord restored my marriage and the relationship with my family. I'm so grateful and give all glory to God.



Blake Jones

Since a very young age I've used alcohol to escape reality and get a momentary break from my problems. I had everything a man could ever want but still had no joy or peace. I chased the world and material things but I could not fix an internal problem with external things. It took losing everything more than once for me to finally surrender.



Jeremy Brown

I come from 23 years of addiction. My heart was full of bitterness and unforgiveness. I was rebellious and had no relationship with God. But God rescued me and brought me to Dunklin. He has blessed me with peace of mind and a sense of freedom I never knew I could have. Most of all He blessed me with a relationship, with Jesus which I plan to continue in Stage 2.



Scott Kaiser

I come from 28 years of addiction. I pushed away every meaningful relationship. I first heard about Dunklin in the Martin County Jail but wasn't ready. But when I finally surrendered and developed a real relationship with Jesus Christ, I found the peace and joy I'd always been looking for. I thank Jesus for pulling me out of darkness and placing me in His light.



Ryan Hampton

I come from 25 years of addiction to alcohol and drugs. I lived in total denial and blamed others for my problems. Even after losing everything I tried to maintain an image of myself that did not exist. I was in fantasy and by the grace of God I was arrested. I was sentenced to Dunklin and this was the start of a genuine relationship with Christ. I'm so grateful. I will be going back home to be a father to my boys.