

## When God Turns Mourning into Joy

December 2023



A picture of Liliana the day we built her house

Hard news often hits us when we do not expect it. In a moment, it can change our lives. Liliana, a mother of two from the Ejido Lazaro Cardenas neighborhood, shared the news she received several weeks ago. The growth in her body had been confirmed to be cancer. The treatment needed to start immediately. The doctor told her that she would need to prepare herself for life in a wheelchair. Even if she survived, the wheelchair could be permanent. Her neighborhood is all dirt roads and hills. This was hard news. The tears in her eyes were such a sharp contrast to the joy we shared as we built a home for her family last September. She was so overwhelmingly happy then. I assured

her we would try to help fit the home with a ramp for the wheelchair. As she cried she told me that she knew God would take care of her, and that He had the final word, but they had already started to make preparations. She is a Christian and her faith would sustain her even in this time.

I saw her again at our last visit to Ejido. She said, "I didn't want to send this electronically in a phone message." She held several papers in her hand. She started to cry as she explained, "Look, it says it right here, no cancer is detected, no cancer is detected." She showed me page after page of test results. She had the old page from when the cancer was detected, and the new tests which now bewildered the doctors. The cancer was gone without a trace. She told me through tears that God had saved her, and she knew God would not abandon her. "All I could say in the hospital was praise God, praise God!" We shared some hugs, tears, and prayers of thanks. God showered some of His grace on this little family from Ejido once again. We share in her spirit of gratitude and praise. Just in time for Christmas!



Part of the roof of their home blew off during a recent storm

December is a time when we celebrate God sending His son to save us. He still saves today! We are excited to bring this celebration to the poor neighborhoods of Tijuana. As we bring toys, blankets, tarps, and food to the neighborhoods this December, we treasure the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus' birth. This is the gospel. We were slaves to sin, a sickness for which we had no cure, and Jesus reached out to us with freedom and life. We are all invited to answer His call and follow Him. We are excited for the opportunity we have this month to share the gospel with so many in the communities we serve. Christmas is a time of joy and hope, and that is right along the lines of what so many need today. Jesus is the greatest gift we can give!

We invite you to pray for the families this winter. The forecasts speak of rain and heavy wind. For the poorest of families, this can bring much suffering. We visited two families recently after a short but heavy spot of wind and rain. One family saw the roof blow right off their humble home, and the other lost about a quarter of their roof. These homes are humble, cobbled together with spare pieces of thin wood. When the roofs go, the rain pours in and ruins the few belongings they have. Needs abound during this season. Thanks for partnering with us in our task of fixing roofs, providing tarps, building homes, and bringing gifts, medicine, food, and clothes. Our greatest joy is sharing the gospel which holds the power of God to change lives. Mourning into joy. That is what God does. Thanks for being a part of what we do here in Tijuana. If you would like to support our work (your gifts are indeed vital), you can donate at [spectrumministries.org](http://spectrumministries.org).

From all of us at Spectrum Ministries, Merry Christmas!



Paul Alvarado  
Director

*Psalm 30:11 "You have turned  
my mourning into joyful  
dancing. You have taken away  
my clothes of mourning and  
clothed me with joy."*



Making new friends



Christmas is a time of giving!

