

To whom it may concern,

On this 17th day of January 2025, I will give a brief testimony of the past thirteen years of my life. In 2012 I was accused of a sex crime. Since then, I have served two years in county jail, five years in state penitentiary and two years on parole. It is by the grace of God I survived my time in incarceration, for if you are not aware men with sex crimes are hunted down while serving their time. So, for seven years I spent every day looking over my shoulder from where the next attack was going to come, be it a guard or an inmate. As I reentered the world and began the parole process, I found it remarkable how society wanted me to remember, at all times, the stigma of the crime I served time for. There is a dehumanization that takes place after a sex offense conviction. The truth is sex offenders are not welcome. Not in schools, not in churches, not in new peer groups, they can't find housing or jobs. The struggle of identity is real. The most interesting factor I find is that society keeps men as a sex offender. In this psychology it never allows them to grow into a healed person. There is more risk in a broken identity than most comprehend.

Moving forward, since 2021 I've achieved a college degree and now have a job, by the grace of God. My first week at my job I had to publicly give my testimony, mind you this is 10 years after the accusation, after "paying for my crime" and "proving myself rehabilitated on parole." At this testimony I was publicly crucified. I've never seen such anger from certain people. Anger at me for their past, anger at my bosses for giving me a job, that I had rightfully earned and was highly qualified for. One third of the help at the ministry that I work in left as a result of my employment.

Carry on to today. For the safety of our ministry, I am constantly ducking out of photos, afraid that I might bring a bad image to the company. After witnessing the fruit of my heart, people still call and request for me to remain scarce while they are helping. I thank God for his devotion to me on a daily basis. For reminding me who I am in him. I can not imagine the mental anguish that sex offenders go through on a daily basis. I say all this, and the most typical response from a person after hearing the story of a sex offender is that they deserve everything they have coming. And maybe so. I hope this testimony ques questions in the mind of those who read it. I hope those questions bring freedom and truth. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Joshua Thorpe