

FINDING THE LIGHT

By

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FADE IN

INT. FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH - SUNDAY MORNING

The sanctuary is quite full. PASTOR WILSON is sitting down in his own pew, waiting for the service to start. In the narthex, the USHERS are waiting by the doors leading into the sanctuary, waiting for people to come in.

A family of four, the Friedmanns, walks in. The father, JASON, mid 30s, is wearing black dress pants and a white dress-shirt. He has a medium-sized body and short, brown hair. The mother, LISA, early 30s, is wearing a red dress and has her long, brown hair down. The daughter, CHRISTINE, 12, is wearing a cute little white dress and has her hair down. The son, PAUL, 11, is wearing black dress pants and a black dress-shirt. He also has short, brown hair.

One of the ushers hands Jason a bulletin.

USHER

Here ya go.

JASON

(taking the  
bulletin)

Thanks.

Jason looks at the bulletin. It says the name of the church along with a picture of a cross and the Pastor's name.

PAUL

Dad, why can't I have a bulletin?

JASON

Well, son, the bulletin just tells you what's going on in the church today. Nothing really special.

PAUL

Oh.

USHER

Well, I'll tell you what, we have a special bulletin just for the kids.

The usher hands Paul and Christine a children's bulletin.

LISA  
Well, isn't that very nice of him.  
What do you say, Paul and  
Christine?

PAUL & CHRISTINE  
Thank you!

The usher chuckles.

USHER  
You're welcome.

LISA  
Come on, Jason, let's go and find  
a seat.

All four go into the sanctuary.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH - AFTER SERVICE

The Friedmanns are walking out of church, along with the rest of the congregation.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - SAME TIME

Four teenage boys are in a Jeep, driving really fast along the open road, playing really loud rock music.

DRIVER  
Told you guys this baby zooms!

PASSENGER 1  
Come on, man. It can go faster  
than that.

DRIVER  
Yeah, but, I really don't need to  
get into an accident.

PASSENGER 2  
Come on, man! Have some balls!

PASSENGER 3

Besides, nothing's on this road  
except the church.

PASSENGER 1

Guys, he won't do it, he's too  
chicken!

DRIVER

I am not chicken!

PASSENGER 2

Prove it!

DRIVER

Fine!

The driver depresses the accelerator, and the Jeep speeds  
up. The boys all cheer.

EXT. FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

The Friedmanns are about to walk across the street.

JASON

Lisa, you stay here with the kids.  
I'll go and get the car.

LISA

Ok, sweetie.

Jason walks across the street toward the car. Christine  
starts to run after him. The Jeep with the teenagers is  
speeding and about to hit Christine.

INT. JEEP - SAME TIME

The boys are still driving at a ridiculously fast speed.  
Suddenly, one of the passengers shouts.

PASSENGER 3

Watch out!

EXT. FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH - SAME TIME

LISA

Christine, watch out!

INT. JEEP - SAME TIME

The driver presses hard on the brake.

EXT. FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH - SAME TIME

Christine has a look of horror on her face as she sees the Jeep about to hit her. The Jeep hits her (unseen).

PAUL

No!

Paul, Lisa, and Jason all run toward Christine's body.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICE CREAM PLACE - 5 YEARS LATER - DAY

Paul, now 16, is sitting at a table with two of his friends: ALEXIS, an average-sized blonde, and JOEL, a heavy-set red-head, eating ice cream.

ALEXIS

So, what're you doing on Sunday,  
Paul?

PAUL

I don't know, probably sleeping.  
You know, school is so tiring.

JOEL

Paul, we have some stuff to do on  
Sunday, remember?

PAUL

Oh, right...forgot about that.

ALEXIS

What're you guys doing?

JOEL

We just have some...homework...to do.

ALEXIS

Hmmm...fine, I was just going to ask  
if Paul would like to go to...oh,  
forget it.

PAUL

What?

ALEXIS

Nothing, just forget about it.

PAUL

What? Were you going to invite me to church or something?

ALEXIS

Yes.

PAUL

Alexis, you know perfectly well that I will not go to church. You've been trying to get me to go ever since...

ALEXIS

Yeah, I know, but, you should really get over that, no offense.

PAUL

Well, that's just something that I can't easily get over. You have no idea what it's like! And, besides, why would I go to church? It's just another stupid way for people to make money.

ALEXIS

It is not! It's a way for people to worship God.

Paul laughs.

PAUL

Ok, Alexis, you keep living in your fantasy-land with your God and his son who killed himself with a tree, while Joel and I stay here in the real world.

ALEXIS

You just have no idea, do you?

Alexis gets up and leaves.

JOEL  
What's her problem?

PAUL  
Beats me.

CUT TO:

INT. THE FRIEDMANN HOUSE (OFFICE) - MID-DAY

Lisa is sitting at her computer, working on a new business project. She is dressed in her business suit. The front door is heard opening and then closing.

PAUL (O.S.)  
Hi, mom!

Lisa, not realizing that Paul's home, continues working. Paul enters.

PAUL  
Hi, mom!

LISA  
Not right now, Paul, I'm working on a project for work.

PAUL  
(to himself)  
Sorry that I even bothered talking to you, then.

Paul walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIEDMANN HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Jason is lying on the couch, watching television. He's dressed in jeans and a t-shirt. Paul enters.

PAUL  
Hey, dad.

JASON

Hello.

PAUL

What's up?

JASON

Not right now, Paul, I'm in the middle of watching something.

Paul shakes his head and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIEDMANN HOUSE (CHRISTINE'S ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Paul walks in through the bedroom door. The room is decorated like a normal 12 year old girl's room would be, along with pictures of Christine all around.

Paul picks up one of the picture frames, which is sitting on the dresser. It's a picture of the family at a barbeque.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRIEDMANN HOUSE (BACKYARD) - 5 YEARS EARLIER

It's a beautiful day. The sun is shining and there's not one single cloud in the sky. All four Friedmanns are having a barbeque. Lisa, Christine, and Paul are sitting down at the table, while Jason is cooking some steaks on the grill.

CHRISTINE

Dad, I'm hungry. When's the steak going to be ready?

JASON

In a few minutes, just wait a sec, ok, sweetie?

CHRISTINE

'Kay.

PAUL

Mom, are we going to church tomorrow?

LISA

Well, of course, honey. We should always go to church whenever we can.

CHRISTINE

Why?

JASON

Well, God loves us, so, we should go and worship him.

PAUL

If God loves us, does that mean that he will never take our family away from us, until we're really old?

LISA

Yes.

JASON

Come on, guys, let's do the family photo.

Lisa, Christine, and Paul get up and stand in front of a photo camera, which is standing on a tripod. Jason runs over to the camera, presses a button, and then runs back into his place next to Lisa and behind Christine and Paul. The camera flashes.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIEDMANN HOUSE (CHRISTINE'S ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Paul puts the picture frame back down onto the dresser. The doorbell rings. Paul exits.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIEDMANN HOUSE (FRONT DOOR) - MOMENTS LATER

Paul opens up the front door to see who's there. Joel is standing right outside the door.

JOEL

You ready?

PAUL

Yeah.

Paul grabs a bag that is sitting right next to the door. They both leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL (MAIN ENTRANCE) - EVENING

Paul and Joel walk up to the front door of the school. Joel is carrying a small briefcase with him. He takes out a lock pick.

JOEL

Ok, so, we have approximately thirty seconds after opening the door before the alarm goes off, all of the doors lock us in, and the police are called. So, we have to deactivate the alarm quickly.

PAUL

But, don't we need some kind of a code or something?

JOEL

Ha, no.

Joel puts the pick into the lock and, rather quickly, unlocks the door. They both go inside.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (FOYER) - MOMENTS LATER

Paul and Joel walk in through the main door. A loud beeping noise is heard.

PAUL

What's that beeping?

JOEL

That would be the alarm.

PAUL

How do we deactivate it?

JOEL

Don't worry. I got it covered.

Joel takes out an electronic device, which looks like a cell phone. He presses a button on it, and the beeping stops. Paul looks impressed.

PAUL

Where did you get that?

JOEL

Let's just say I have my sources.  
Come on, let's go.

They both walk off toward the gym.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIEDMANN HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Jason is still lying on the couch, watching television.  
Lisa walks in.

LISA

Honey, where'd Paul go?

Jason sits up, takes the remote, turns the television off,  
and then puts the remote back down.

JASON

I don't know. Maybe he went to  
church.

LISA

Yeah, right. The day that he goes  
to church, they'll find life on  
Antarctica.

Jason laughs.

JASON

Poor kid, doesn't even know Jesus  
anymore.

LISA

Where did we ever go wrong with him?

JASON

Now Lisa, how many times do I have to tell you? It's not our fault. You know why he doesn't trust in God anymore.

LISA

I know. I just wish I could find the little bastards who did it.

JASON

We have to forgive and forget...well, at least forgive.

LISA

How can you possibly say that? They killed our daughter, Jason. She could have had a great life if it wasn't for them.

Lisa starts to cry. Jason hugs her.

JASON

Now, I know we only have one kid left. But, let's just try and forget the boys that killed our other child. We need to focus on Paul right now. He needs us, he needs Jesus.

Lisa nods.

LISA

You're right. Where's he at, anyway?

JASON

I don't know, why don't you call him?

Lisa takes out her cell phone, dials a number, and puts the phone up to her ear.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (GYM) - MOMENTS LATER

Joel and Paul walk into the gym. Joel puts his briefcase down on one of the bleachers.

JOEL

You ready?

PAUL

Yeah, come on, let's do this.

Suddenly, a cell phone rings. Paul reaches into his pocket and pulls out his cell phone. He answers it.

SPLIT SCREEN:

PAUL

Hello?

LISA

Hey, Paul. Where are you?

PAUL

Oh, hey mom. I'm just at Joel's house.

LISA

And what are you doing over there?

PAUL

We're just playing some videogames.

LISA

Ok, just don't be home too late, alright?

PAUL

Ok, mom.

Paul hangs up the phone.

NORMAL VIEW:

JOEL

That was close.

PAUL

Yeah.

Joel opens up his briefcase. There are four rolls of toilet paper inside. Joel hands one to Paul and takes one for himself.

JOEL

Let's do this!

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (FOYER) - MOMENTS LATER

The principal, MR. PETERS, walks in through the main entrance of the school. He looks around, wondering why the alarm hasn't started to beep. He shrugs his shoulders and walks into his office.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (GYM) - MOMENTS LATER

Joel and Paul are standing in the middle of the gym, looking around at what they just did. The entire gym is covered with toilet paper. It's over the floor, on the bleachers, and even taped onto the walls.

PAUL

Well, we did a good job.

JOEL

Yeah, wait until Principal Peters walks in on this tomorrow.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE) - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Peters walks into his office and sits down at his desk. He takes a look at the security monitors. One of them shows the gym and the two boys in there vandalizing it. He doesn't notice and turns his head toward his computer and

starts typing. He then realizes and looks again at the security monitor. He stands up and runs out.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (GYM) - MOMENTS LATER

Paul and Joel are still standing in the middle of the gym. Suddenly, Mr. Peters walks into the gym.

MR PETERS

Hey, what are you boys doing?

Paul and Joel turn quickly to face Mr. Peters. Their eyes get wide. Joel runs out of the gym through the back door, which leads outside. Paul starts to run, but Mr. Peters is too quick, and catches him.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIEDMANN HOUSE (KITCHEN) - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Lisa is by the stove, washing the dishes. Jason walks in, looking angry.

JASON

Lisa, I just got a phone call.

LISA

Really? From who?

JASON

Mr. Peters.

Lisa stops what she's doing and looks at Jason.

LISA

Paul's principal?

Jason nods.

JASON

He's with Joel. Apparently, he never even went over to Joel's house, but they both broke into the school and vandalized the gym.

Joel ran away, but they caught Paul.

Lisa gasps in shock.

JASON

I have to go and head on down to the school for him.

LISA

I'm coming with.

JASON

No, you stay here and watch Christine.

Lisa looks directly into Jason's eyes.

JASON

Sorry, let's go.

They both leave.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE) - MINUTES LATER

Mr. Peters is sitting at his desk. Paul is sitting in a chair on the other side of the desk.

MR PETERS

So, Paul, tell me...why did you do it?

PAUL

I told you, because I felt like it.

MR PETERS

Do you realize the damage that you have done to this school, and even to yourself?

A buzzer sounds.

MR PETERS

Ah, that would be your parents.

Mr. Peters presses a button on the desk. Jason and Lisa walk in.

LISA  
Paul Benjamin Friedmann, I am very disappointed in you.

PAUL  
I'm sorry...

Jason raises his right hand to silence Paul.

JASON  
We'll talk about this when we get home.

MR PETERS  
Paul, could you please step outside and close the door, I need to speak with your parents alone.

Paul gets up out of the chair, walks out, and closes the door behind him.

MR PETERS  
Please, sit down.

Jason and Lisa sit down in the two chairs.

MR PETERS (CONT'D)  
Now...what your son did tonight, it honestly wasn't the worst thing that's ever happened here.

JASON  
Will there be any charges?

MR PETERS  
Well, unfortunately, there has to be.

LISA  
How much?

MR PETERS

Now before I tell you the amount, I'd recommend that instead of paying the money for it, that you enroll your son in one of our community service programs.

JASON

And how much does that cost?

MR PETERS

Actually, it's completely free-of-charge.

LISA

Ok, and what would he actually be doing in this program?

MR PETERS

Well, he'd just be going around, with a group, and doing community service stuff. Fixing up sidewalks, rebuilding parks, removing graffiti...you know, that kind of stuff.

Lisa and Jason look at each other and raise their eyebrows.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (DIRECTLY OUTSIDE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE) -  
MOMENTS LATER

Paul is sitting on a chair, looking down, crying. He looks at his watch and then looks up at the door to the principal office. He gets up, and runs out.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE) - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Peters, Jason, and Lisa are standing up, ready to exit the office.

MR. PETERS

Now, don't forget. He starts his community service on Monday.

JASON

Yes, thank you, Mr. Peters. And,  
we're really sorry about all this.

MR. PETERS

Don't worry about it; it's not  
your fault.

Lisa opens the door, and all three walk into the main  
office.

LISA

Paul, are you ready?

Paul is nowhere to be found.

LISA

Paul? Paul?!

JASON

Oh, for goodness sakes, I don't  
believe it! What's into him  
lately?

LISA

Well, you know what? Let's just  
let him go. If he wants to run  
away, fine, let him go. But, he'll  
be back when he's ready.

JASON

Let's just go home.

MR PETERS

Good luck!

LISA

Thanks.

Jason and Lisa exit the building.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUIET ROAD - SAME NIGHT

The road is completely quiet. There are a few cars parked  
here and there along the side, and all of the houses are

dark, except for one. Paul is walking along the sidewalk and walks up to the lighted house. He knocks on the front door. The door opens to reveal Alexis, who is wearing pajamas, and her hair is in a knot.

ALEXIS

Paul? What are you doing here?

PAUL

Do you think I can stay the night?

ALEXIS

What? Did your parents kick you out or something?

PAUL

No, but...

ALEXIS' MOM (O.S.)

Alexis, who is it?

ALEXIS

It's Paul, Mom. He wants to know if he can spend the night.

ALEXIS' MOM (O.S.)

Well, sure he can. Just no sex!

Alexis' face turns bright red.

ALEXIS

Mom! How many times do I have to tell you? We're just friends!

Paul starts chuckling. Alexis notices.

ALEXIS

Oh, shut up and come in!

Alexis opens the door and Paul enters.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEXIS' HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Alexis and Paul sit down on the couch.

ALEXIS

So, what happened?

PAUL

It's a long story.

ALEXIS

Paul, you can always talk to me  
about anything.

PAUL

Well...

CUT TO:

INT. FRIEDMANN HOUSE (MASTER BEDROOM) - SAME TIME

Jason and Lisa are lying in bed, talking about Paul.

LISA

I just hope he comes back.

JASON

He will, Lisa. When the Lord wants  
him to come home, he'll come home.  
We just have to wait.

LISA

We really should do something for  
the kid. He feels alone, and he  
doesn't even know that God exists.

JASON

Well, honey, I honestly have no  
idea what to do anymore. We've  
tried everything.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEXIS' HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES  
LATER

Paul and Alexis are still sitting on the couch, talking.

ALEXIS

So, what you're saying is that you're completely lost and have no idea where to go in your life.

PAUL

Yeah, that pretty much sums it up. I just need help. I mean, I've never had a *real* girlfriend, none of my friends like me, my parents hate me, and I have no idea why I keep doing all this bad stuff. I know I shouldn't, I don't even want to, but, I just...do.

ALEXIS

Well, Paul, your friends *do* like you. And, if they don't, should they really be your friend?

PAUL

No, I suppose not...

ALEXIS

And girlfriends? Paul, you're only sixteen. Who cares if you haven't had a girlfriend yet? You have plenty of time. I'm the same age as you are, and I don't have a boyfriend.

PAUL

But, you've *had* a boyfriend.

ALEXIS

Yeah, and that didn't exactly work out too well. He just ended up being a big jerk. And, your parents. Paul, just because they're a little bit strict on you, doesn't mean that they *hate* you. They just want what's best for their son.

PAUL

Yeah, I guess you're right.

ALEXIS

What else is bothering you,  
though?

PAUL

Well, it just seems like nobody is  
accepting that I'm an atheist.

ALEXIS

Well, to be honest with you, I  
don't understand it and I don't  
like it. But that doesn't mean  
that I don't accept it.

PAUL

Thanks, Alexis.

ALEXIS

Can you please just explain one  
thing to me?

PAUL

Sure...

ALEXIS

Why *did* you stop believing?

PAUL

Well, my parents always told me  
that God would keep us together,  
that he would never split us  
apart. But, he took my sister away  
from me.

ALEXIS

No he didn't.

PAUL

What?

ALEXIS

God never really took your sister.  
Maybe physically, and I'm sure he  
has his reasons for that; we just  
don't what it is yet. But, you're  
the one that's taking your sister  
away from yourself. Your heart and

mind are full of hatred toward God, that you can't see the light. If you just open your heart, and let the Holy Spirit, the light, flow into you, you'll find your sister in your heart, and you'll know that God loves you, no matter what you do.

Paul stares directly into Alexis' eyes.

PAUL

You know, that was very nice and all...but, honestly, I don't believe in any of that crap, and I'm sorry, Alexis, but, I really have to leave...

Paul gets up and walks toward the front door. Alexis also gets up and follows Paul.

ALEXIS

What? Where are you going?

PAUL

I don't know...and I don't know when or if I'll be back.

ALEXIS

But, I was really looking forward to hanging out with you.

PAUL

I know; I'm sorry. But, maybe if I leave for a while, everything will be better.

ALEXIS

Paul, running away won't help. You have to stand up and face it. You can get through this.

PAUL

(ignoring  
Alexis)

And, maybe, I'll find a girl who actually cares about me, maybe

I'll find the girl who's right for me...the girl that loves me.

ALEXIS

Don't look too hard, she's sitting right next to you.

PAUL

(still  
ignoring  
Alexis)

And, maybe...

Paul breaks off and stares at Alexis.

PAUL

What?

ALEXIS

Don't you realize? I accept you for who you are, and you are my best friend. We've never dated, but...I...I still love you.

Alexis quickly kisses Paul. Paul looks directly into her eyes and kisses her back.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALEXIS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Alexis and Paul are standing in the doorway. Paul is about to leave.

ALEXIS

Are you sure you won't stay the night?

PAUL

I told you, yes.

ALEXIS

Not even for a couple more hours?

PAUL

I'm really really sorry...and, I enjoyed every second of that kiss,

but, I just can't stay here  
anymore.

ALEXIS

Fine, just go, then...

PAUL

I'm really really sorry.

Paul leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRIVATE ROAD - DAY - 18 HOURS LATER

Paul is walking along the road, which is empty. He is wearing the same exact clothing as before, except now they are ripped and torn in places. His hair is a complete mess.

A car pulls up to Paul's left and stop, who also stops. The passenger window rolls down. PASTOR MARK CROSS, mid-60s, gray hair, brilliant blue eyes, is driving. Paul does not know this man and does not realize that he is a minister, but does realize that he is a nice man.

PASTOR CROSS

You look like you need some help,  
boy.

PAUL

Yeah, I just need some food and  
water...and maybe someone nice to  
talk to.

Pastor Cross chuckles.

PASTOR CROSS

Well, I live right in town. Why  
don't you hop on in?

PAUL

Sure, I'm starving!

Paul gets into the car and the car slowly drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. PASTOR CROSS' CAR - MOMENTS LATER

PASTOR CROSS

So, what's your name, son?

PAUL

Paul Friedmann.

PASTOR CROSS

Do you have a home?

PAUL

I used to.

PASTOR CROSS

What happened?

PAUL

I got into some trouble with the school and then with my parents...so, I left.

PASTOR CROSS

You know, running away from your problems doesn't solve anything.

PAUL

I know, I just...wasn't thinking.

PASTOR CROSS

Obviously. Don't you think your parents might be worried?

PAUL

No. They never cared about me. They've just been concerned about legal issues ever since my sister passed away five years ago.

PASTOR CROSS

Oh, I'm sorry. Do you want to talk about it?

PAUL

No.

PASTOR CROSS

Okay. But Paul, maybe you're not looking hard enough. Do you honestly think that your parents don't care about their one and only son?

PAUL

Well, ok...so, they probably care. But, still, they never pay any attention to me. They're always too busy with work and whatever else. Even when they have time, they don't talk to me.

PASTOR CROSS

Maybe you should try and show them that you need to talk to them? Perhaps you're not expressing your feelings, that you're keeping them all bottled up inside you?

PAUL

I never thought about that. But still, my parents and I kind of have religious differences.

Pastor Cross raises his eyebrows.

PASTOR CROSS

Oh really? Like what?

PAUL

Well, everybody in my family are devout Christians. Nobody seems to understand why I'm an atheist.

PASTOR CROSS

Is it because of your sister?

PAUL

I said I don't want to talk about that!

PASTOR CROSS

Sometimes, you need to talk about things, even if you don't want to.

PAUL

I suppose you're right, Mr...ummm...I'm sorry, I forgot to ask you your name.

PASTOR CROSS

Reverend Mark Cross.

PAUL

You're a pastor?

PASTOR CROSS

You don't hold that against me, do you Paul?

PAUL

Not as long as you don't try and pour water over my head.

Pastor Cross chuckles.

PASTOR CROSS

Don't worry, I won't.

Pastor Cross turns the car to the right, stops, and then shuts off the car.

PASTOR CROSS

We're here.

Pastor Cross and Paul both get out of the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. PASTOR CROSS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Pastor Cross and Paul are standing in front of the house. It's a cute little cottage. Nothing really fancy. Just a nice cozy cottage in the woods.

PASTOR CROSS

Not too big, but it's home.

PAUL

It seems pretty nice.

They both go inside through the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. PASTOR CROSS' HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Pastor Cross and Paul both walk in through the front door. The living room is rather nice and open. It's small, but cozy.

PAUL

Nice place.

PASTOR CROSS

Just make yourself at home. I'm going to go and cook dinner.

PAUL

What're we having?

PASTOR CROSS

How do burgers sound? Do you like yours well-done?

PAUL

That sounds awesome!

Pastor Cross laughs and heads into the kitchen. Paul sits down on the couch and takes a look around the room. He looks through a few of the books sitting next to him. He then notices a photo hanging on the wall. He gets up and takes a look at it. It's a portrait of Pastor Cross with a shorter brunette woman.

PAUL

Are you married, Mr. Cross?

PASTOR CROSS (O.S.)

I was. She was the most beautiful woman that I've ever seen. Name was Sharon. She was truly an amazing wife. I loved her so much.

PAUL

What ever happened to her?

Pastor Cross comes out from the kitchen and stands next to Paul.

PASTOR CROSS

She passed away about six years ago. She got hit by a speeding jeep.

Pastor Cross snuffles.

PAUL

My sister died six years ago too. She also got hit by a jeep.

PASTOR CROSS

Wow...kind of...weird. But the Lord works in mysterious ways. And he allowed Sharon and I to be together for thirty-eight years.

PAUL

Wow...that's a long time...

PASTOR CROSS

Yes, but, it seems so short now.

PAUL

Mr. Cross, may I ask you a question?

PASTOR CROSS

Sure, but, why don't you ask me at dinner? It's ready.

PAUL

Okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALEXIS' HOUSE - SAME TIME

A car pulls up in front of Alexis' house. Jason gets out from the driver's side, while Lisa gets out from the passenger's side. They both walk up to the front door. Lisa knocks on the door. After a few seconds, Alexis opens the door.

ALEXIS

Oh, hi, Mr. and Mrs. Friedmann.

JASON

Have you seen our son?

ALEXIS

Yeah, he came over here last night.

LISA

Oh, he did?

ALEXIS

Yeah, and we talked for a while, and then he just kind of left.

JASON

Did he say where he was going?

ALEXIS

No, he just...left.

LISA

Oh, my gosh. We need to find him...if he's even still alive.

JASON

Lisa, please...he'll be fine...let's just let him find himself, and then, maybe, he'll come home.

CUT TO:

INT. PASTOR CROSS' HOUSE (DINING ROOM) - ABOUT A HALF-HOUR LATER

Pastor Cross and Paul are seated across from each other. They just finished eating. Paul is drinking a soda, while Pastor Cross is drinking a glass of water.

PASTOR CROSS

So, Paul, what was your question?

PAUL

Why did you become a pastor?

PASTOR CROSS

Well, I used to be sort of like you. I mean, I believed in God, but, I always felt like nobody was ever there for me. So, my faith started to dwindle down, and then I decided to start listening to my heart...and, my heart was telling me to go with God. So, I did...and, here I am today, I've been a Pastor for thirty-eight years.

PAUL

Wow...

PASTOR CROSS

Paul, if there's one thing that I wish everybody would do, it's listening to their heart. Listen to your heart, Paul, and maybe...maybe you'll find the light. But, first, and no offense, you need to take a shower. There are some of my grandson's old clothes upstairs in the guest room. He's about your size.

PAUL

You have grandchildren?

PASTOR CROSS

Just one, actually. His name's Jimmy. But, he's in college now.

PAUL

Cool. So, where's the guest room?

PASTOR CROSS

Upstairs, first door on your right.

Paul gets up and goes upstairs. Pastor Cross starts cleaning up the table.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - EVENING

Joel is running through the forest with a pistol, afraid for his life. He runs out of breath, and sits down next to a tree. He's breathing heavy. He looks like he's about to pass out. He takes a look at the pistol in his and cocks it.

CUT TO:

INT. PASTOR CROSS' HOUSE (GUEST BEDROOM) - NIGHT  
It's completely dark and quiet in the room. Paul is lying on the bed, sleeping. Slowly zoom into a close-up of his face.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIEDMANN HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - 5 YEARS EARLIER

Paul is sitting down on the couch, talking with Jason. Paul is crying, while Jason is trying to hold back the tears.

JASON

Listen, Paul, I know you're upset, but, things like this happen sometime.

PAUL

But, mommy said that God will keep us all together, and that he will never take anybody away from us.

JASON

Well, God has his reasons, I'm sure. We're all upset about what happened yesterday, but we can't just sit around here and mope. We have to look ahead toward the future and try and make it the best it can possibly be.

PAUL

I'll never see her again.

JASON

Sure, you will. Just pray to God, and he'll help you get through this. Just ask the Lord for help and guidance, and you will get it.

PAUL

No, I won't! God took her away from me, and I'll never get her back! Why should I even talk to God?

Paul gets up and runs to his room.

JASON

Paul...

CUT TO:

INT. PASTOR CROSS' HOUSE (GUEST BEDROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Paul suddenly wakes up. He gets out of the bed, and walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. PASTOR CROSS' HOUSE (DINING ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Pastor Cross and Paul are sitting at the dining room table, eating breakfast.

PAUL

Pastor Cross, I've finally figured it out.

PASTOR CROSS

What's that?

PAUL

God *is* real, and he loves me. And, no matter what happens, he will *always* love me.

PASTOR CROSS

Paul, you're absolutely right. And, I'm proud of you. You've finally found the light.

PAUL

Yes...I found it...I found Jesus...and he loves me. Thank you, Pastor, for making me see the light.

PASTOR CROSS

No need to thank me, Paul. You found it yourself. You guided yourself in the right direction.

Paul nods and smiles.

PASTOR CROSS

Do you think you're ready to go home now?

Paul sighs, and then nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRIEDMANN HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - A FEW HOURS LATER

Jason and Lisa are sitting on the couch, reading books. Suddenly, the doorbell rings. Jason and Lisa are startled. They both get up, and go to answer it.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIEDMANN HOUSE (FRONT DOOR) - MOMENTS LATER

Jason turns the door handle and opens the door. Paul is standing right outside. Jason and Lisa look at him.

PAUL

Hi, mom...dad.

Lisa gives Paul a big hug, and Jason joins in.

PAUL

I found it, mom and dad.

Jason and Lisa stare at Paul.

PAUL

I found the Holy Spirit, and it told me wonderful things.

All three of them smile and continue hugging each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALEXIS' HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Paul walks up to the front door and rings the doorbell. The door opens to reveal Alexis standing in the doorway. She screams and hugs Paul.

ALEXIS

I missed you.

PAUL

I missed you, too. What do you say we go to church on Sunday, together?

Alexis pulls back from Paul and looks at him.

ALEXIS

Really?

PAUL

Yeah.

Alexis smiles and continues hugging Paul.

PAUL

May I ask you something?

Alexis pulls back again and looks at him.

ALEXIS

Sure.

PAUL

Have you heard from Joel at all?

Alexis sighs.

ALEXIS

Paul, now don't get upset, I know he was one of your best friends. But, a few days ago, his body was found in the woods, along with a gun in his hand.

Paul stares at Alexis and sighs.

PAUL

Wow.

ALEXIS

I'm so sorry, Paul.

PAUL

No...no, it's...it's ok. He's with God now.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (CHURCH SIGN) - 10 YEARS LATER

Shot of the sign that sits outside the church. It says:

FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
 SUNDAY SERVICES: 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.  
 SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:00 a.m.  
 FIND THE LIGHT BIBLE STUDY: TUESDAYS AT 2:00 p.m.

Pan down to last sentence:

PASTOR: REV. PAUL FRIEDMANN

CUT TO:

INT. FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (SANCTUARY) - SAME TIME

Paul, now 26, is at the pulpit, preaching a sermon. The congregation includes Jason and Lisa. It also includes Alexis, now 25, holding a baby in her hands. We also see Pastor Cross, now in his mid-70s. We get a few shots of each of these people throughout Paul's sermon.

PAUL

Sometimes, all that we need to do is just listen. We need to find the Holy Spirit in our hearts and listen to what God has to say. God loves each and every one of us. He wants us to spread that love to other people. And, we can do that by letting other people find the light...

Slowly pan and zoom in to a young girl who is sitting in the back row. It looks exactly like the 12 year-old Christine.

The screen goes black.

END CREDITS