

# DARRYL BURTON

Miracle Man | Freedom | Hope & Forgiveness



darrylbarton.org

Darryl Burton all too clearly understands injustice and the human condition, where it relates to poverty and division among racial lines. He grew up near the racial tensions in Ferguson, Missouri, and at age 22 was wrongfully imprisoned for a crime he did not commit.

## Freedom

Exonerated after 24 years, “Miracle Man” Darryl was set free from the physical and spiritual prison that held him captive.

## Hope & Forgiveness

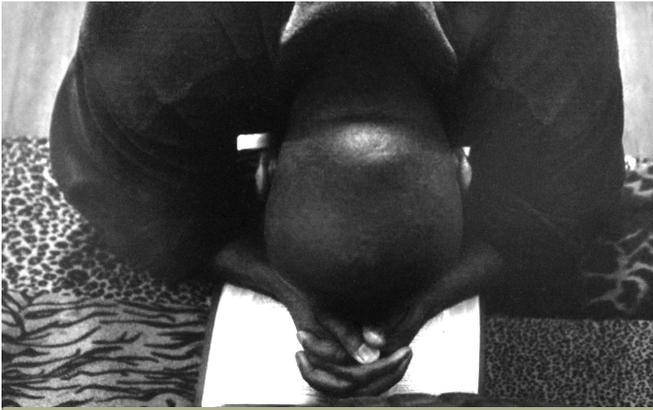
Now *Better, not Bitter*, Darryl’s story of how to forgive inspires others through his powerful message of “Hope and Forgiveness” through adversity.



## Miracle Man (Darryl’s Story)

In 1984, a drug dealer was shot to death at a gas station in St. Louis, Missouri. The man who shot him was a light-skinned African American male, 5’5” in height. Police looked for suspects and even though Darryl Burton was dark skinned and 5’10” in height, he was summoned to a police line up. Two men came forward identifying Darryl as the murder. Both were awaiting trial, but were given a lighter sentence if they testified that Burton was guilty. Darryl Burton was assigned a public defender who spent only one hour with him before his trial and the jury convicted him in less than an hour. Darryl found himself being sentenced to life in prison without parole. He was assigned to the Missouri State Penitentiary, one of the most violent prisons in the U.S. [continued p.2]

“When I heard the jurors say ‘guilty’ I felt shock and disbelief. I just didn’t think that in America an innocent man could be sent to prison, especially for capital murder.”



Praying for a miracle, Darryl pleaded, “Jesus if you’re real and help me get out of this place, not only will I serve you, but I’ll tell the world about you.”

## Miracle Man *[cont. from p. 1]*

Darryl remembers, “When I heard the jurors say guilty, I felt shock and disbelief. I just didn’t think, in America, an innocent man could be sent to prison, especially capital murder” explained Burton. He clearly remembers a huge banner that hung at

the entrance of the penitentiary that said “Welcome to the Missouri State Pen. Leave all your hopes, family, and dreams behind.” “When I saw that banner, it deeply affected me and I lost all hope. I hated the place, the system, and anyone that had

anything to do with it. It was hell on earth – filled with violence, evil, and hate.”

Darryl remained in prison twenty-four years from 1984-2009 and spent many of those days in the prison law library, dedicated to proving his innocence. He wrote over 600 letters to members of the government, nonprofit organizations, even Oprah Winfrey to plead his case. However, it was not until he allowed Christ into his life that he began to experience a change. Darryl discovered that anger and hate can be another prison, and that Jesus said we must love our enemies, pray for them, and forgive them. “Until I read that truth in Luke 23:34, I didn’t think that was possible,” he said. Ten years prior to Darryl’s exoneration, he felt emotionally and spiritually freed. “God had to work something out of me (bitterness and hatred), in order to work something into me (love and grace), in order to do His work through me.”

After learning of a confession from a witness who admitted in 1985, “You have the wrong man, he’s too dark,” Darryl worked with Centurion Ministries to have his wrongful conviction overturned. Darryl often recalls a letter that he wrote to Jesus while imprisoned. It said “Jesus, if you’re real and help me get out of this place, not only will I serve you, but I’ll tell the world about you.”

Darryl now shares his nightmare story of adversity to help others and bring glory to the name of Jesus Christ. Since 2009, he has spoken about forgiveness, redemption, and hope at churches and conferences around the globe. Seven years after his exoneration, he never takes one day for granted.

In May 2016, Darryl Burton will graduate from Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas, and will continue to serve a Pastor at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, the largest United Methodist Church in the US. “I’m doing things today that can only be by the grace and mercy of God,” Burton says. “I have come to embrace my walk of faith. I pray to be a humble servant in my ministry.

# HIGHLIGHTS

Education, Experience and Involvements

## EDUCATION

- Masters in Divinity (Fall 2015), Saint Paul School of Theology in Leawood, Kansas
- Undergraduate Studies at Northwestern Community College, KCMO (Computers & Law) & Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri

## EXPERIENCE

- Public Speaker
- Associate Pastor, The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, Kansas [www.cor.org](http://www.cor.org)

## INVOLVEMENTS

- Congregational Care Minister; Associate Pastor, The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection
- Weekly Leadership Facilitator Live Forward: Healing Hurts for Men
- Mentor/Re-Entry Coordinator, Catholic Charities, KCMO
- Youth Mentor/ Volunteer, Don Bosco Charter High School



Darryl Burton and author John Grisham



Darryl Burton embraced by actor Danny Glover

# CONTACT INFO

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