



THE BITTER BROTHER

May 3 | Told to *Mission* by Pedro, Miguel, and Tomas Jimenez

Pedro stomped into his house. His face was filled with anger and hatred. “If I ever see Miguel again, I’ll *kill* him!” he muttered. He picked up a shotgun and checked to be sure it was loaded. Then he held it to his shoulder and sighted down the barrel. His wife trembled as she watched him. “Pedro, please don’t hurt anyone,” she begged. Pedro ignored her and set the gun carefully into the closet.

Years of Anger, Years of Grief

Pedro and Miguel are brothers. They live near one another on a lake in southeastern Mexico where they work as fishers. Pedro and Miguel had once been close. But Miguel had betrayed Pedro, and Pedro swore revenge.

Then a week later Pedro heard a voice saying that what he planned to do was not right. Pedro unloaded the shotgun, but he refused to forgive his brother for what he had done. For more than two years Pedro harbored hatred toward Miguel and warned him to stay away from him. Miguel knew that Pedro would kill him if he had a chance.

The Mediator

Tomas [toh-MAHS] is older than Pedro

and Miguel. Both brothers respected him. Several years earlier Tomas had become a Seventh-day Adventist believer. He prayed every day that God would help him find a way to reconcile his two angry brothers and avoid bloodshed.

Two years after the feud began Tomas invited Miguel to attend evangelistic meetings that the church was holding. By this time Miguel had married, and Miguel was searching for peace in his life. He and his wife, Lucila, attended the meetings. The couple was drawn to Jesus, and the pastor visited Miguel and Lucila and encouraged them to give their hearts to God. It was apparent that they wanted to change their lives, but Miguel fidgeted throughout the visit. Finally he said, “I want to be baptized, but I have a problem with my brother.” The pastor saw tears in Miguel’s eyes and asked how he could help. Miguel explained that he had wronged his brother, and that Pedro was still angry and still wanted to kill him. The pastor offered to talk to Pedro.

The pastor took Tomas with him to visit Pedro. “If this is about Miguel, forget it,” Pedro said. But because Pedro respected his elder brother, he listened to the pastor. The pastor invited Pedro to attend the evangelistic meetings. Pedro

refused to go or allow his wife, Ernestina, to go.

Tomas begged Pedro to forgive his brother. “No, never!” Pedro spat.

“May we pray?” the pastor asked. Pedro nodded. But as the pastor asked God to give Pedro a forgiving heart, Pedro vowed that he would not forgive his brother.

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A Dream and a Desire

After Tomas and the pastor left, Pedro’s anger boiled. He wanted to get drunk, but he could not drink. He tried to eat, but he had no appetite. His anger ate at him. Frustrated, he stomped to his bedroom, and there he fell down and prayed, “God, forgive me! This hatred toward Miguel is hurting me and my family. Please change my life and my heart.” That night he tossed and turned for hours before he finally fell asleep.

He dreamed that he and Tomas were in their boat fishing when suddenly thunder rumbled and the heavens parted. Lightning struck the earth, and angels flew down through the torn sky. Then he heard a voice saying, “If you had forgiven Miguel, God could have forgiven you.”

Pedro felt utterly lost. Then a man in white robes told Pedro, “Jesus is coming soon. Go and ask forgiveness.” Pedro awoke crying. He knew that God wanted him to forgive his brother. But could he do it?

The next day Pedro told his wife they would attend the evangelistic meeting that night. When they arrived Pedro saw Miguel and his wife sitting across the room. When the pastor invited those who wanted to give their lives to God to step forward, both couples walked to the front.

After the meeting, the pastor met with the brothers. “Pedro, Miguel longs to ask you for forgiveness. Miguel, here is Pedro. Before God can forgive you, you two must forgive each other.”

Miguel asked Pedro for forgiveness for hurting him. Pedro nodded and then he asked Miguel to forgive him for hating him. The brothers fell into each other’s arms, sobbing.

The brothers called a fiesta to celebrate their reconciliation. The two brothers and their wives were baptized together. The enemies are once again brothers—brothers in blood and brothers in Christ. The brothers and their wives now share a small-group ministry in their community and are studying the Bible with 12 families.

This quarter part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build churches for existing congregations in central and southern Mexico. Thank you for holding up the hands of believers in the Inter-Oceanic Mexican Union Mission. 🌐

FAST FACTS

- The Inter-Oceanic Mexican Union Mission extends from just north of (but not including) Mexico City to the isthmus, the narrowest portion, of Mexico. It also includes a small section of the state of Tabasco in the south.
- Within this union an average of one person out of every 205 is a Seventh-day Adventist. But within the union the ratio varies extensively. Oaxaca [whah-HAH-kah] has one Adventist for every 24 people, while another area has one Adventist for every 994 people.