

Marialena Cristerna

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SPEAKERS

Marialena Cristerna, Mary Wilson

- M** Mary Wilson 00:01
Today is October 28th, 2020. My name is Mary Wilson, and I'm speaking with Pastor Marialena and I'm going to let her introduce herself and her ministry. Thank you for joining me today and talking with me during this time. Let me just open it up for you to share a little bit about your own story.
- M** Marialena Cristerna 00:26
Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share with you about my personal life and now my ministry. I mean, it has been a great blessing to live on this side, in the United States and to live in a border town with your neighbors and have my ministry over there. I mean, it's just a blessing because I know both cultures. It's amazing.
- M** Marialena Cristerna 01:01
There's some cultural differences, but our common denominator is the same. God is our common denominator and that's why we understand each other. No matter if you are a Mexican American, and you speak English, or you speak Spanish, whatever it is, we understand each other. That's the main thing.
- M** Mary Wilson 01:28

For our listeners, you live in Eagle Pass], in the United States and your congregation, Church of the Shepherd, is that right? And that's in Piedras Negras [Piedras Negras, Mexico]?

M Marialena Cristerna 01:45

Yes, Piedras Negras, on the Mexican side. We have two churches over there. The resurrection in the Good Shepherd [Church.]

M Mary Wilson 01:54

Okay, and they are Anglican churches, yes?

M Marialena Cristerna 01:59

Yes, both. They are Anglican churches. I wanted to share with you a little bit about my background. I was born in a small town in the state of Coahuila, Mexico. My parents own a ranch. I grew up surrounded by ranch animals, such as cows, pigs, chickens, and all that. My parents sent me to elementary, middle and high school. I had that education in Mexico. When I was at the age of 20, I immigrated to the United States, directly to California, to the state of California, where I started working in the field, making tomatoes, chiles, all that stuff. It was so hard for me, Mary.

M Mary Wilson 03:19

That's hard work.

M Marialena Cristerna 03:21

It is. I admired the people that working those fields. I did it for two years and then I decided to go to school, but I had to struggle to get an education in the United States because of the language barrier.

M Mary Wilson 03:43

Yes, of course.

M Marialena Cristerna 03:45

I decided to take summer up to go to the adult basic education program. I took some English classes and then I wanted to better myself and to go to GED class, I mean, GED classes. I graduated and obtained my GED. Then I continued taking classes for my bachelor's, and then my master's and I graduated from Sul Ross University with a master's in education.

M Mary Wilson 04:19
Oh, good for you. Could you repeat what university? I didn't quite hear it.

M Marialena Cristerna 04:26
Sul Ross State University.

M Mary Wilson 04:29
Oh, yes!

M Marialena Cristerna 04:33
I mean, it wasn't easy like I said, because of the language barrier, but I made it. I made it.

M Mary Wilson 04:43
Congratulations. Good for you.

M Marialena Cristerna 04:45
Yes. I have lived in Eagle Pass for 50 years and I have two children. I have eight grandchildren, great grandchildren, and of course, my husband. He is a very supportive man. You know him?

M Mary Wilson 05:12
Yes.

M Marialena Cristerna 05:13
We are both pastors. It has been a great blessing, working together for the greatness of

our Lord.

M Mary Wilson 05:25
And you make quite a team. How did you all come to be pastors together?

M Marialena Cristerna 05:31
To be pastors together - we understand each other, and we speak the same vocabulary, the same language, the love of God. We have the same boss [laughs].

M Mary Wilson 05:49
[Laughs]. That's good. How long have you been ministers together?

M Marialena Cristerna 05:58
24 years

M Mary Wilson 06:00
Have you been married that long, 24?

M Marialena Cristerna 06:03
Well, I met him 24 years. I got married 24 years ago, and then I became a pastor, oh, about 23 years ago. He was a key player, a very important part in my decision to become a pastor. It is just amazing how our Lord works. When he has a plan for you and he's guiding you, he's encouraging you and motivating you to accomplish.

M Mary Wilson 06:50
You all do so much in your churches and with the people in your congregations. I've had the fortunate opportunity to visit there, just once, but hopefully again soon. Can you tell the people that are listening, some of the things that your congregations do for the community there in Piedras Negras?

M Marialena Cristerna 07:18

Well, you know that our churches serve the poorest of the poor. We are always providing spiritual food, Mary - [it] is the most important thing, so they can have the strength to overcome. I'm going to start preaching to you [laughs].

M Mary Wilson 07:44
Go ahead.

M Marialena Cristerna 07:48
Yeah, so they can have the strength, the peace and the love of our Lord, and continue working and struggling, facing or encountering everyday challenges. We are there to support them. You came that one time, where Chuck and Nancy were delivering bags of groceries, right?

M Mary Wilson 08:18
Bags of groceries, and some coats.

M Marialena Cristerna 08:23
We continue doing that throughout the year. We provide groceries, we provide medicines. Right now, we are helping our families with computers because the classes are online, they cannot afford to buy computers.

M Mary Wilson 08:50
Now, I had read that in Mexico, the government had put all the classes on TV. So, it wasn't just from individual schools, but everyone or anyone could jump into the classes that were on TV. Could you explain a little more how that's working?

M Marialena Cristerna 09:10
Well, some of the our people live in neighborhoods where there's no internet. They have to pay for it. So, the TV doesn't work.

M Mary Wilson 09:30
What is happening with those kids?

- M** Marialena Cristerna 09:33
Well, this summer, different churches have opened some centers, computer centers so the children can go and take their classes and do their homework, and our church is one of them. Since transportation is a big problem - because some of them live very far from the church - we have provided them with computers.
- M** Mary Wilson 10:08
Do they need laptop computers or iPads?
- M** Marialena Cristerna 10:16
Yeah, either - laptop or iPads. We have in the church, an engineer in computers. He's helping us to adjust and to fix all computers and all that. He has been a great help in saving us money and helping these families. So, this is what we are doing right now. We are providing food, but more than that, we are helping the families to get their children educated.
- M** Mary Wilson 10:59
Right. It's such a difficult time.
- M** Marialena Cristerna 11:04
Yeah, definitely Mary, definitely.
- M** Mary Wilson 11:07
I know in in Austin, the school district would send school buses into some neighborhoods with WiFi. So, families that didn't have their own WiFi connections could use the feed off of the buses. I know that they have some kids coming to the school or to the schools in person now to get in class instruction. In Austin, not all the students are going to school at the building. Mostly they're still at home going online.
- M** Marialena Cristerna 11:48
Well in Mexico, there are no classes in person.

M Mary Wilson 11:57
Well, how is it for you, getting across the border now back and forth? Because I know that's important for your work to be able to go back and forth. Are you able to do that?

M Marialena Cristerna 12:08
Sometimes there's a long line. To come back, it takes us about three or four hours.

M Mary Wilson 12:18
To come back from Mexico?

M Marialena Cristerna 12:19
From Mexico to Eagle Pass, yeah.

M Mary Wilson 12:23
How long does it take you to go from Eagle Pass to Mexico?

M Marialena Cristerna 12:26
Oh, 15 or 20 minutes.

M Mary Wilson 12:28
Oh, okay because I have been under the impression that Mexico was not letting too many people from the United States come across because the United States has such a high number of cases of the Coronavirus.

M Marialena Cristerna 12:47
Well, we don't have any problems going from Eagle Pass through the United States to Mexico, there's no problem. But coming back, if you are not a legal permanent resident, or you don't live in the United States - you are just a visitor, you are not allowed to come.

M Mary Wilson 13:06
Oh okay. So, no visitors from Mexico are allowed through right now?

M Marialena Cristerna 13:11
Mexico, or any other country, they are not allowed. We don't have any problems going back and forth or anything.

M Mary Wilson 13:24
I was wondering about your mobility back and forth. I knew that was important for you to be able to go back and forth. How is the Coronavirus in Eagle Pass and Piedras Negras? Are there a lot of cases? Have you had any people die from it?

M Marialena Cristerna 13:47
Yeah, we have had so much. It's kind of a high heat in Eagle Pass and Piedras Negras, so, we have canceled so many, or we have had to adjust our church activities because we are not allowed to have so many people or big groups at the same time. What we are doing now - we increase the number of services, so we can have small groups. During the weekend, we have six services.

M Mary Wilson 14:26
Ah, and do you do them outside or are you able to do them in your building?

M Marialena Cristerna 14:31
Outside or inside depending on the weather, but we are allowed as long as we have small groups. I'm talking about 20, the most 30 people inside of the church. We had to increase that number. So, it's a lot of work, Mary, it's a lot of work, but we have to feed the people spiritually because they are very weak. They are afraid of this situation. So, how they are gonna overcome this fear is just praying, believing and trying to have a closer relationship with God.

M Mary Wilson 15:30
There are so many struggles. Have you found the pandemic has made the struggles they already faced even harder?

M Marialena Cristerna 15:45
Oh, yes. Many people have lost their jobs because of the pandemic situation. Restaurants

are not allowed to let people dine in, things like that. It has been so difficult - [the] economic situation is bad.

M Mary Wilson 16:13
Is the Mexican government helping with that in any way?

M Marialena Cristerna 16:20
Well, let me tell you this - just a little bit. Once in a while they're providing food, but it's not enough. It's not even about 20% of what they need.

M Mary Wilson 16:39
People are losing jobs and that impacts their ability to feed their families, and the schools are not meeting and so they're all online, but not everyone has access to either the internet or a computer in order to to go to school. It seems like when you start listing [the things], it just gets more and more compounded. What do you think the most helpful thing someone could do to assist you and your and your husband and your ministry to help those that you work with, that are in your congregation?

M Marialena Cristerna 17:36
Mainly, food.

M Mary Wilson 17:42
It always starts there, doesn't it? People need food.

M Marialena Cristerna 17:47
If you are hungry, you don't want to do anything. I mean, there's no motivation for you to go out and find out how you want to get a computer or what place to go and get a computer. You don't even want to do anything because you are hungry. So that's the main thing, Mary. We are approaching the different neighborhoods in Piedras Negras, just to provide them with food.

M Marialena Cristerna 18:26
Thank you, Jesus, he has provided for so many families to get that help. It's food and then

education, in that order. We don't want the children to stay home without receiving any classes. It's so sad. Domestic violence has increased because of our economic situation. Also, child abuse and all that because the children are hungry, crying, asking for food or something and parents feel impatient. What did they do? I mean, they get mad because they don't have a way to feed their family, their children. So, it's very sad.

M

Mary Wilson 19:40

Yeah. So how do you feed your soul so that you can keep going to be a pastor to your congregation?

M

Marialena Cristerna 19:53

Well, at the beginning, you know, these seniors I was going to tell you that it is a great blessing to share with another pastor how I feel because you understand me. We both know the word of the Lord and we know his promises, and we have made this commitment to serve him no matter what the situation is. It is a great blessing. This interview is an opportunity to get something off my chest.

M

Mary Wilson 20:36

Yes, I'm so glad that we were able to do this. I've talked to many pastors now and all of them are saying, this is a hard, hard time because they cannot do the things they would normally do. When people are sick, they can't go to them, when they're in the hospital, they can't go to them. They see people having problems that are compounded by being isolated.

M

Marialena Cristerna 21:08

And loneliness, Mary. I mean, wow, that's bad. Father Miguel and myself, and some of the parishioners, we go in and pray outside of the hospital. That's what we do because we are not allowed to get in there.

M

Mary Wilson 21:30

Right, you can't go in. So, what has been the hardest part for you?

M

Marialena Cristerna 21:47

[crying] To see the families, mainly the children, their needs. To see them going through this situation. They cannot do anything about it. We were doing bags of groceries with the basic products, like cooking oil on flour, all those things. And then I said, but the children go out and expect something for them. They don't care if we take cooking oil, sugar, they want something for them. I started taking cookies, candy. Something to motivate them to have hope or to feel the love of Jesus through our actions.

M

Mary Wilson 22:56

Yes, because the children don't see that if you provide flour or sugar or whatever - to help cook meals - they don't make that connection right away - that that is something that is also for them.

M

Marialena Cristerna 23:12

Exactly, and the hardest part is not to provide the children with everything they need, all when we [are] hear[ing] about child abuse. We cannot do anything because there's a government shelter, but they are not doing anything. They're not even open during this pandemic situation.

M

Mary Wilson 23:45

The shelters [are] not even open?

M

Marialena Cristerna 23:47

No. We have ours, and we are providing the shelter. We have done a shelter. We are providing a shelter for women and also for children. But unfortunately, they stay just for one or two days because the father goes in and [takes] them with him, [and] there's not much we can do about [that]. That's the hardest part - not to provide the children, seeing the children in needing so many things - we cannot afford it, to provide them with everything they need - but at least food, at least food.

M

Mary Wilson 24:43

Oh my goodness, it sounds sounds so challenging. How are you feeding your soul? I know you're looking forward to be able to talk about this, but on a day to day basis?

M

Marialena Cristerna 24:59

Let me tell you, I pray and I pray, I love praying. And in the grace of the Lord, like I said. A while ago, I told my daughter, "Oh, I'm having a meeting," and I told her, "The grace of the Lord is upon me." And they know me. I know the Lord's promises, every day I say, "Your grace is sufficient for me." That grace that makes possible, the impossible, Mary. That's what I do every day, praying and praying and praying, and I get that strength from him. I can hear that his voice telling me, "Go, go out and serve." I mean, that's amazing. Yes, I believe and receive and declare that victory in my life, in my family, in everybody that I approach in His name.

M

Mary Wilson 26:22

And that keeps you going?

M

Marialena Cristerna 26:24

Yes, definitely. There is nothing else, but him and his work. When you believe, you receive, yes. And there's no explanation for that, Mary.

M

Mary Wilson 26:42

I keep hearing that from the pastor, that they feel that encouragement and that strength, that source of hope.

M

Marialena Cristerna 26:54

Prayer and faith, those are very powerful tools.

M

Mary Wilson 27:01

Yes, and so, you are working hard to share that with your congregation, so that they have hope, and have a place of grace in the midst of a very challenging time. More challenging than "normal times."

M

Marialena Cristerna 27:26

We have intensified the way we are working with [the congregation], even calling them on the phone. We have a closer relationship because we are talking on the phone very often [like,] "How do you feel? How are you doing? What did you need?" This pandemic situation

has altered significantly our lives.

M

Mary Wilson 28:09

I have experienced that as well. I know, especially after ending my pastorate the spring when the pandemic was hitting. I am sort of in between places, and I haven't connected with a new community, or I haven't learned what my next thing should be, what next calling would be. So, it's a strange place for me to be right now. That is partly due to the pandemic, the options are very different and it's harder to figure out what that next thing is.

M

Marialena Cristerna 28:59

Exactly. Things will never be the same, Mary. We need to understand, we need to find a way to adjust our lives or to understand that this situation is going to be forever I think. I mean, we are not expecting this virus to end or something, even if we find a way to kill this virus or whatever it is. I mean, it is not going to be the same. A lot of people have died. A lot of people have passed away, and I said, Christmas is not going to be the same.

M

Marialena Cristerna 29:51

I'm gonna be walking on the streets on the 24th taking too many families bags of groceries so they can have something to eat on that night. I already told my family, "I'm not spending Christmas Eve with you. There's a lot of people out there that need me. They have lost their loved ones, some of their loved ones, they have no food. I'm gonna join them. I'm gonna be with many of them on that day." So, that's what I'm planning to do. I already talked to my parishioners, like I said I already talked to my family - this year is going to be a different Christmas.

M

Mary Wilson 30:48

Yes.

M

Marialena Cristerna 30:49

Yeah. It's hard when you are interacting with the needs of the people, person to person, it changes your heart, your mind, your life.

- M Mary Wilson 31:06
Yes and you can't you can't ignore it.
- M Marialena Cristerna 31:09
Exactly. Because you are interacting with them, crying, looking for some support, right away, they need it.
- M Mary Wilson 31:26
Right and such basic need of food.
- M Marialena Cristerna 31:34
Right now, I'm waiting. We are getting ready for Thanksgiving. Since we cannot get together on Thanksgiving with all these people that we used to have at the church. We're planning to take 200 plates to four different neighborhoods. That's our next activity. We're going to cook about 100 to 1000 plates to take.
- M Mary Wilson 32:05
Wow, that's wonderful.
- M Marialena Cristerna 32:11
Yeah, it's a lot of work, but that's our calling, Mary. That's how we're calling.
- M Mary Wilson 32:20
Sounds like you have never worked this hard except for maybe in the fields when you first came.
- M Marialena Cristerna 32:26
You're right, yeah.
- M Mary Wilson 32:35
How was your husband doing?

- M** Marialena Cristerna 32:40
He's doing fine. I'm very active, and even though we are very different, our personalities, very different. I talk and talk and he's so quiet and he says, "Marialena, you can do it, you can do it. Go ahead and I help you out, and I support you, and I think that's a very good idea. Let's do it together."
- M** Mary Wilson 33:16
He doesn't only believe in God, he believes in you.
- M** Marialena Cristerna 33:23
Exactly, Mary. We love each other, and we understand each other. We testify that the love of Christ, the greatness of our Lord is in our relationship. The greatness of our Lord is manifested in our relationship. We want to be an example for the other couples.
- M** Mary Wilson 33:52
That's one of the things, in my congregation that I felt so fortunate to be able to see. We had couples in our congregation that were married 60+ years, several of them and many younger couples said, "Ah, I'm going to look to them." It's funny, I asked one gentleman one time since "How did you navigate difficult times" or, "What do you think about divorce?" And he goes, "Well, we just refuse to get divorced." Now, some couples need to, for a lot of reasons, but for this, they just said, "We're going to stick this out and whatever is hard, we're going to do together." That doesn't always work for everyone, but it's helpful to know people that are willing to work hard and say, "Okay, everything's not always perfect, but we'll keep going."
- M** Marialena Cristerna 35:04
Since we know His word, we have to not only preach, but act. The text of the apostles is not the "Prayers of the Apostles," it's the "Acts of the Apostles."
- M** Mary Wilson 35:22
Right, and the acts were to love one another and care for one another.
- M** Marialena Cristerna 35:30

Amen, amen. You can say that again.

M

Mary Wilson 35:36

We need to love one another and care for one another [laughs].

M

Marialena Cristerna 35:42

That's right and it's a great blessing to serve the Lord together and to understand and to believe in Him. If you believe in Him - that's the key - to believe, to receive, and to lead. To lead his word, to show the world that He is alive, that He lives in you.

M

Mary Wilson 36:21

That makes me want to ask, did you always grow up with a family that went to church or that supported your desire to serve as a minister. Have you always been part of an Anglican church? What is your faith journey? What's your story?

M

Marialena Cristerna 36:48

We settled in Nueva Rosita [Nueva Rosita, Mexico] and that is small town that I was born in. My parents used to attend to an Episcopal church over there. We were not that active, but we [were] attending once in a while, like, everybody says, "Oh, I'm a Roman Catholic, but I don't go to church." "Oh, okay," that's the way it used to be when I was a little girl. Then when I grew up and immigrated to Eagle Pass, I started attending the church here in Eagle Pass, the Episcopal church in Eagle Pass. So, I have been an Episcopalian for so many years.

M

Mary Wilson 37:50

But as an adult, it has become more important in your life, is that true?

M

Marialena Cristerna 37:57

More important, especially when I met my husband.

M

Mary Wilson 38:01

Ah, okay. Was he already a minister?

M

Marialena Cristerna 38:07

Yes. I met him in the Episcopal Church here in Eagle Pass. He was in one of the Sunday services and he was preaching, and I didn't like him. He was so quiet. I said, "Well, I think I'm gonna move to another church." That's amazing how the Lord worked and I can hear the Lord saying, "That's what you think, but my thoughts are not your thoughts." I thought that was going to be the first and only time that I was going to be in contact with him.

M

Mary Wilson 39:08

24 years later, here you are.

M

Marialena Cristerna 39:15

I was by myself, I was a widow. I was with my children only, and I needed someone to talk to, but I wanted a good man. We started a friendship and closer relationship. I started helping him over there in Piedras Negras. One night, when he was at home, we were on a Thanksgiving celebration and he said, "Well, I don't know how to tell you I have never had a girlfriend" because he was a Roman Catholic, he was a seminarian for eight or nine years, so [he did not have] meeting a woman [in mind]. He said, "I don't know how to tell you how I feel. I feel something different through you." I said, "Maybe you love me, don't you think so?" I was very, desidida, determined to take a relationship with him, and said, "You want me to be your girlfriend? You want me to start dating you?" So I took the initiative— "Well, I think so." That's how we started our relationship. I took the initiative, and am still taking the initiative. I mean, he's a very humble man.

M

Mary Wilson 41:22

Yes.

M

Marialena Cristerna 41:23

He's a very humble man. Then later, about eight months later, we got married. That's the Lord's plan, Mary.

M

Mary Wilson 41:37

You make a wonderful, wonderful team.

M Marialena Cristerna 41:43
Yes. And I know our Lord is so proud of us, working together and that's what we will be doing for the rest of our life - helping the people, feeding the hungry.

M Mary Wilson 42:00
Yes.

M Marialena Cristerna 42:02
Exactly. What a pleasure to talk to you, Mary, quite a pleasure. A beautiful interview, like I said, I wanted to talk to a pastor and that was you!

M Mary Wilson 42:13
I'm so glad, I'm so glad we were able to do this. I think I can share with you that the other pastors I have talked to feel the same challenges, they are struggling and in different ways, like, "How do I pastor my people, my congregation? How do I help my community, when mostly we're talking across the computer? If we try to meet, it has to be in very different circumstances."

M Mary Wilson 42:51
I've talked to some pastors [that say], "We're not going to have church until we have a vaccine where people can be safer." That'll be sometime in the months to come. I know when my congregation initially decided that we shouldn't meet in person, out of precaution and safety, we didn't know how long that would be.

M Mary Wilson 43:17
But I don't think we expected initially that it could be a year, which it might be. Churches really are able to go back, my mom is in her 80s and she has attended her church a little bit, but stopped going because a couple people got sick. She decided she wasn't going to go back because it was a problem. I don't know if the church decided to cut back on meeting themselves or not, but it's a problem everywhere.

M Mary Wilson 43:57
It's a struggle because one, just as human beings, we seek to be in relationship, we were

made to be in relationship and two, as churches and as pastors, we want to help build community and provide safe spaces. How do you make that work right now?

M

Marialena Cristerna 44:20

That's why we increase the number of services. Like I said, it's exhausting to have six services on the weekends. It's exhausting, but people need to hear the work of our Lord. They need to have hope that someone is with them 24/7, to remind them that this battle is not ours, it's His. So, that's why we need to be in contact with them, either by phone or, of course, during our services, we follow the protocol because the government gave us a letter with instructions to follow - everybody wears masks, and have germ-x available and have this and all that, and respect the the distance, how do you call that one?

M

Mary Wilson 45:36

Social distancing.

M

Marialena Cristerna 45:38

The social distance, yeah. So, we have to do that. And we have to remind the people that, "You have to follow this, you have to do this." Sometimes they feel uncomfortable, but there's no choice because if we don't follow the government instructions or the protocol, they can close our church.

M

Mary Wilson 46:04

Exactly. Yes. I think that may be one difference in the United States versus Mexico. I don't think the government would be able to close a church here, but they may not be happy with them. Well, I don't want to keep you too much longer, but I do want to ask [if] there is anything else you would like to share that we may be skipped? Or I didn't think to ask, something that you think is important that people should know about either you or your congregation?

M

Marialena Cristerna 46:46

We already talked about this - just to encourage, there's hope. "Hay una esperanza," we say in Spanish, there's hope. We need to keep praying. We need to keep praying. We need to keep encouraging the people to read the Bible, to pray, embrace the Lord, so they can get rid of fear and anxiety, fear - faith, not fear. We need to believe in that and keep going. Keep it going and don't give up because we are more than conquerors through

Him. He loved us. Yes, that's all I want to say, Mary. What a pleasure to see you.

M

Mary Wilson 47:51

Thank you so much.

M

Marialena Cristerna 47:53

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share what's going on during this pandemic situation in my ministry and with my mission in Piedras Negras.

M

Mary Wilson 48:04

Yes, I think it's important for people to know what's going on where you are. It's one thing to talk to people in Austin or Dallas, or to the large cities, but at the border, it's a different type of practice.

M

Marialena Cristerna 48:23

Definitely. It makes a big difference on our culture, depending on if you are Mexican or Anglo, our culture is completely different. But for me, it has been a great blessing to know this culture. I love this country where I have lived for 50 years and [I am] still a Mexican. It's a great blessing. Like I said, I love this country. I became [an] American citizen about forty years ago. I'm very active in this city helping people over here through the Mexican Consulate. They call me and I participate in different activities, helping the people. I don't know if you know this, but I went to the United Nations to participate in the empowerment of women.

M

Mary Wilson 49:39

I did not know that. I'm glad you included that, when did you do that?

M

Marialena Cristerna 49:47

I was there for 10 days, and it was an honor to be at the United Nations building, participating in a debate, talking about the empowerment of women and equality, gender inequality. I was there, [and] it was an honor. I'm always active trying to help everybody and trying to be an example for those who think they're not going to make it, for any reason. When you are excited, you can accomplish your goals, if you believe in yourself because the kingdom of God is inside of you. If you believe in yourself, believe in God. God

is inside of us. Amen.

M Mary Wilson 50:57
Amen. It was so good to talk you.

M Marialena Cristerna 51:02
Okay, anytime, and hopefully we'll see each other in person.

M Mary Wilson 51:08
Yes, I would like to do that. My time is, not as occupied on weekends now. I'm not preaching every week.

M Marialena Cristerna 51:23
One of these days, these weekends we can meet.

M Mary Wilson 51:26
Yes, I would like that very, very much.

M Marialena Cristerna 51:29
Okay. Thank you, Mary.

M Mary Wilson 51:31
I appreciate you being here so much. Let me turn off the recording.