



Building The House Which Stands After Any Storm

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**Team Jesus Ministries
International**

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Two hunters fly to Kenya, where they bag six gazelles. As the crew is loading the small plane to return, the pilot says the aircraft can take only four gazelles back.

“Last time, the pilot let us take all six, and he had the same plane as yours,” argues the first hunter. Reluctantly, the pilot gives in and takes off. But the little plane is too heavy, and it goes down.

Climbing out of the wreckage, the second hunter turns to the other. “Any idea where we are?”

The first replies, “I’d say we’re pretty close to where we crashed last time.”

Life is like a series of plane crashes for most of us.

I don't know why we have so many problems. Perhaps they are because we're building the wrong things in life. Whether it's right or wrong, we keep doing the same things repeatedly. The scientist, Albert Einstein, is quoted as once saying that **insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.**

We experience this **insanity, doing the same things which do not succeed** throughout life. We see it in the news. We see it in our marriages. We see it in how we deal with our children. We see insanity in our schools. We see it in politics. We see it in our work. We even see it in our religious lives. I believe it is time that we stop the

insanity! It is time to take a look at what can be done to change that which is not working in our lives. More important, let us also look at what is affecting eternity for us.

Have you, like me, ever noticed that there is often something, some little flag, that goes up even in church? If you voice your opinion, or bring up what you are feeling, it is often said that **“you just need to pick the meat from the bones”**. Over the past few years, there have been several large ministries that have collapsed. Large buildings being foreclosed on, people scattered, some not even going to church anymore. This was predicted by the apostles and Jesus.

Matthew 24:1-14

1 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ² “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

⁴ Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars, and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹ "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come

The Apostle Peter later even comments.

2 Peter 3:1-14

***3** Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as*

reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. ² I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

³ Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." ⁵ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. ⁶ By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷ By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

⁸ But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by

fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.^[a]

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.^[b] That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

¹⁴ So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

I have spent a lot time asking the Lord the answer to these questions. As a contractor and a builder, I have found the answers amazing and simple. As a pastor for over 40 years in the ministry and as an evangelist, I find the answers alarming.

I had thought that I had found the answers until I got ready to go to Kenya this time, the Lord said this is the message that I want you to carry. He woke me up in the middle of the night and told me I was wrong in my first assumptions, and that I had to renew my thoughts and thinking. I know that you've never come across this in life, but there's always room to grow. The scripture He started me with was the Book of Proverbs Chapter 9. It is

a simple, but powerful word from the wisest man in the Bible, King Solomon.

Though I had read it before, the scripture was suddenly opened up to me. I realized Wisdom is the Lord and the house is His house.

PROVERBS 9:1-11

Wisdom has built her house;

she has set up^[a] its seven pillars.

² She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.

³ She has sent out her servants, and she calls from the highest point of the city,

⁴ "Let all who are simple come to my house!" To those who have no sense she says,

⁵ "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.

⁶ Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight."

⁷ Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults; whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse.

⁸ Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you; rebuke the wise and they will love you.

⁹ Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

¹¹ For through wisdom^[b] your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.

Bear with me please as I place the main scripture for this book on the page once again.

***Proverbs 9:1 Wisdom has built her house;
she has set up^{a/} its seven pillars.***

As a builder, I know that we must first find our house site and then clear it so that we can build our house on it. This involves clearing the ground and preparing the site with everything that we will need to fulfill our design. In life there are a lot of things that happen that are unruly and unsettling to us. Still, I believe that God is setting us up for that which he wants to do in our lives. According to David in Psalms 139 God already knows everything about us.

Psalms 139:13-16

¹³ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Everything about our life has been written down and it is yet to be fulfilled to the finish. I don't know how it works. I am not God, I do not want to be God, but I do know that it's an awesome God we serve and that according to Jesus in the book of John we have been called and chosen. As are His Chosen site.

John 15:16-17

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

We didn't choose Him, but He chose us, and He has called us that we should go forth and bear fruit much fruit. fruit that will endure. God speaks to us very plainly in the Book of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 29:11

11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

We have been held captive by a watered-down interpretation of God's plan for our lives. He never intended for us to be just sitters in a large building just listening to a preacher waiting to get to Heaven.

James 1:22-24

²² But be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.²³ For if any be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror;²⁴ for he beholdeth himself, and then goeth his way and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

In the message bible it might be easier to understand:

James 1:23-24

Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear! Those who hear and don't act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are, what they look like.

Since I have been chosen, I want to know the truth. What is it that God wants from me? What is his plan? What is the final chapter of the book written about me? These are the things that I believe most of us have on their minds. We are not satisfied just sitting in a church week after week wondering why we are there.

We are there for answers. When we don't get them then every little storm and wind that comes up blows us down and us tears apart. They cause us to

struggle just to keep a grip on everyday life. When the storms finally pass, we find that we must start all over again building our lives back.

Let us take a look at the rest of Jeremiah chapter 29 and see what God says about it:

Jeremiah 29:12-14

¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity.^[b] I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

We have a calling on our lives which we have yet to fulfill. Peter speaks about it and tells us very bluntly in his first book in the second chapter verse 9.

1 Peter 2:9

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

He has called us to minister to people. Have we missed the prize and high calling the Apostle Paul speaks

to the Philippians about? He had, it appears, to have endured a period of similar struggles. He had found a solution which he shares with new, struggling church in Philippi.

Philippians 3:14 KJV

¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,
¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
¹⁵ Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

After reading this scripture, perhaps we need to likewise press on. We need to discover what it is that is wrong. Then we need to find the way to proceed onto the right path.

In John Chapter 8 we find Jesus speaking to the Jewish leaders and people gathered around Him.

John 8:31-32

³¹ To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the speaking to the truth will set you free."

God, if you are willing, would like to present His plan once again to you. He desires to give you the truth that you can be set free from the captivity of the past. Past false teachings, past misdirection, past wrong motives, and past mistakes.

If you are with me thus far, we have cleared the ground and now we are ready to start building the house. We are about to get back to the place from which we came. The place from before we were placed in exile from the Lord's plan.

The Lord wants to restore and establish once again the victorious church. The one that has defeated the devil at the cross. The church body He established to dwell with him in heavenly places. In Jesus Christ, we are more than conquerors, we were made overcomers in this life. The word of the Lord that is about to come to you is to help you finish the race victoriously.

I say as the Apostle Paul told the Galatians.

Galatians 1:3-12

³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different

gospel—⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one, we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

¹⁰ Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

¹¹ I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin.¹² I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Humbly I speak, not as an Apostle, but as a donkey on the pathway just as the one before Barak. The following truth is by revelation from God. The Apostle Paul writes in the Book of Romans

Romans 13:10-14

¹¹ And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because

our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So, let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.^[5]

I believe that because we see certain truths coming together as fulfillment of prophecy, that these words could never be more relevant than today. We are in the end times, if not for the world, then for ourselves. More than any other time in history, we need to ask ourselves what manner of person should we be? I believe also that as we look at the House of God, it is essential that we get back to the first church pattern. The one that He built as He prepared to leave this earth and ascend to the right hand of the Father. The one He, the Lord designed, and not the house designed by men. A church made not with men's hands but one that is made up of the Lord's chosen ones.

The Apostle Paul did not mince any words when he addressed the church in Corinth. Let's look at those words in first Corinthians chapter 3

1 Corinthians 3:1-17

3 Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. ² I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. ³ You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? ⁴ For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

⁵ What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷ So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸ The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. ⁹ For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly

stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. ¹⁴ If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

¹⁶ Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

Chapter 2: The Foundation

The Apostle Paul, a tent maker by trade and familiar with construction, spoke to the church in Corinth the following:

1 Corinthians 3

¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.

Jesus Christ gave this warning in the Book of Matthew so that we would not be caught off guard.

Matthew Chapter 7:15-26

¹⁵ "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise,

every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

God Spoke in the prophetic Book of Isaiah to the backslidden people of God. He was speaking forward to this day.

Isaiah Chapter 28:14-19

14 Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers

who rule this people in Jerusalem.

15 You boast, "We have entered into a covenant with death,

with the realm of the dead we have made an agreement.

When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us,

for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place."

16 So this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who relies on it

will never be stricken with panic.

17 I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line;

hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding place.

18 Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the realm of the dead will not stand.

When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by, you will be beaten down by it.

19 As often as it comes it will carry you away;

*morning after morning, by day and by night,
it will sweep through.”*
*The understanding of this message
will bring sheer terror.*

The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians Chapter 2 almost the same theme as to the Corinthians.

Ephesians 2:19-22

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

To Timothy he writes again about the foundation in his second letter to his disciple.

2 Timothy 2:14-26

¹⁴ Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. ¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. ¹⁶ Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. ¹⁷ Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and

Philetus,¹⁸ who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.

¹⁹ Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

²⁰ In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. ²¹ Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

²² Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. ²³ Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. ²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. ²⁵ Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

In the Book of 2 Samuel we read about King David and what he sang concerning the importance of having a sure foundation in the middle of a swarm of storms.

2 Samuel 22:1-3

22 David sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. ² He said:

"The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;

³ my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield^[a] and the horn^[b] of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior—

from violent people you save me.

Have you ever found yourself between a rock and a hard place? Has life ever dealt you a hard blow? Got any enemies? Any limitations? Are you getting older? (Don't go anywhere !!!!) Let's look at David for a moment.

David killed a lion, a bear, and a giant as a young boy. Oh, to be invincible and young. But alas, we all get older and closer to the end of our time here on Earth.

As he matured, David's enemies had taught him his strengths, limitations, and of course God's character. King David had many battles. He was constantly having to deal with enemies and oppositions. We ask ourselves

sometimes the question, why me? You know what I'm talking about.

There are always **three** major problems in life which are common to all of us.

First, things tend to become unstable. They are volatile and unsecured. Health changes, relationships change, jobs change. Things degenerate- not visa-versa. Just when you think have got a grip on life – POW, like nitroglycerin hitting a bump, it explodes into another fit of chaos. It is a destructive explosion. A storm that comes out of nowhere seeking to destroy you and all that which is around you.

Second, no one can stand the constant stresses of life alone. Life is like going to the ocean in the Pacific Northwest. When I was a child growing up in Oregon, we often went to the beach for vacation at Seaside, Oregon. This beach is well known for the tall sand dunes and the big waves which break onto the sandy shore.

It was there that I learned about life from my time at that beach. When the waves knock you down, they don't stop to let you catch your breath. They usually keep coming. We all need a safe place to get out of the battering and abuse in the world that keeps coming against us. Things that seem to give us a break often deceive us. Drugs, money, alcohol, and sex often end up destroying us.

Third, we often get in ruts and situations which are too deep to get ourselves back out of. Knowing how to get into trouble comes naturally. It does not take much practice to get into situations and problems.

My wife and I flew to Alaska a few years back to minister. As we were flying over Cook Inlet, outside of Anchorage, we were told the story of people getting trapped in the mud and not being able to get out. This happened because they waited too long to call for help. They perished because their delay gave the water enough time to liquefy the ground and they sank too deep. At some point we must realize that we need a rescuer before it becomes too late.

You see, you need to experience the stress of a storm to understand how much you need an anchor. If you drift, you need an anchor. If you are anchored to the wrong thing, you will drift with it. If you are anchored to the Rock, you will be steadfast, and unshakeable. Others have a testimony of this fact.

Psalms 108:1

*My heart, O God, is **steadfast**; I will sing
and make music with all my soul*

Psalms 112:7

*⁷ They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD.*

ISAIAH 26:3

³ You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

Without a test, you have no Testimony. The answer that King David gives for life's problems are really quite simple. ***"The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield^[a] and the horn^[b] of my salvation."*** The Lord is to whom he is anchored to. His testimony he writes in the 37th Psalms:

Psalms 37:23-28

*²³ The LORD makes firm the steps
of the one who delights in him;
²⁴ though he may stumble, he will not fall,
for the LORD upholds him with his hand.
²⁵ I was young and now I am old,
yet I have never seen the righteous
forsaken
or their children begging bread.
²⁶ They are always generous and lend freely;
their children will be a blessing.^[a]

²⁷ Turn from evil and do good;
then you will dwell in the land forever.
²⁸ For the LORD loves the just
and will not forsake his faithful ones.

Wrongdoers will be completely destroyed^[b];
the offspring of the wicked will perish.*

The House of God has to be anchored in Jesus Christ. Jesus must be the foundation of our worship, our lives, our hope, our marriages, and our families.

He must become our fortress, our shield, and our strength. He is our deliverer, our strength, and our salvation. But He is also much more. Not only is He the foundation, which is rarely seen, but He is also the roof of the house that wisdom builds. Remember what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians.

EPHESIANS 2:20

²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

The word chief means the topmost, the highest. In other words, if you look at a pyramid it is the top cornerstone at the very top of the pyramid. It is the stone that you see for miles and miles around. The point that the light reflects off of, and that travelers use for a beacon to find their way. In a sea of sand, it is the one thing that shines above all else, and which gives the travelers a bearing to carry them on their journey safely.

Jesus declared this truth in the Words written by the Apostle John, First in the Book of John, and later in the Book of Revelation:

John 12:30-33

³⁰ Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ Now is the time for

judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up^[a] from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

Revelation 21:6

⁶ He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.

Revelation 22:13

¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

How do we lift Him up? How do we make it so the world sees Him for who He is, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the promised One from the Father. I believe that what Jesus said in Matthew and Mark is the beginning of our lifting Him up.

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I

am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:15-18

¹⁵ He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸ they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

At the end of the Book though, in Revelation 12, the final lifting up of Jesus by the believers is accomplished and Satan is defeated. Perchance, this is where we find ourselves today, in the midst of the evil and perverse generations around us.

Revelations 12:11

They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Chapter 3: The Door

No house is really a house unless it has a door. Without a door, instead of a house, you would have a tank or a storage bin. What God is doing in our lives, is building a dwelling place for Himself. It needs to be built on earth as it is in Heaven. The Psalmist tries to give us a glimpse of what God's House.

Psalms 46:4

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

Ever since the Fall, when Satan made humanity his dwelling place, God has tried in every possible way to find a home for Himself in the hearts of men. He has never found much room because of the weakness of the flesh. Paul wrote to the Corinthians asking them to enlarge their hearts because they were restricted by their fleshly affections. The apostle found it difficult to find room in their hearts to receive the Word of God.

2 Corinthians 6:11-13

¹¹ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. ¹² We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. ¹³ As a fair

exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

It is the work of the Spirit of God to build us up to be the dwelling place of God. Again, we look at Ephesians and how Apostle Paul addresses God's house.

Ephesians 2:19-22

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

We see by this, that each one of us is a dwelling place of God. We grow together with the other Believers to become a holy temple in the Lord. This, the church around the world, is made up of many churches. The unity of these dwelling places in the Lord is clearly evident, whether we are alone or together.

At the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden sin came into the body, soul, and spirit of men. God's desire for us, is to be His dwelling place once again. Jesus tried to explain at the beginning of His ministry a simple truth.

John 4:24

²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

Even the Apostle James communicates this truth. A truth which our fleshly man is blinded from. It is a truth most of the church body still misses today.

James 4:5-6

5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us[a]? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." (Pr 3:34)

2 Timothy 3:6-7

⁶ They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, ⁷ always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Our human spirit has also, by the Fall, come under the law of sin and death. Satan has corrupted the spirit that God blew into Adam's nostrils when he became a living soul. Like Satan, the sinful man has become proud, boastful, and arrogant. God is sorely jealous for our spirit.

Therefore, He gives us a great and powerful grace during our fight for liberation from Satan's power and dominion.

1 Corinthians 15:45

⁴⁵ So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being^[a]"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.

The last Adam is Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and we are under His influence. Our human spirit is under the law of sin and death. He has been given the task of making it alive. He suffered death, according to the flesh, but was made alive according to the Spirit.

1 Peter 3:18

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

Jesus Christ is now doing this same effective work in us. In this way we are made to be a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

God jealously desires His Spirit to dwell in us. For when God comes into the spirit of a person, they are not only kept and protected, they are made alive. Why is God so zealous to make our spirits alive? Why should we be a dwelling place of God in the Spirit? God must have a reason for this.

It is because God is love, and He wants to bring out our best potential. It is more clearly explained by John in the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 21:1-3

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,”^{1a} for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

Now that we have laid out the general idea of the house, let us look at the door. That is **The Door of Faith.**

Acts 14:26-29

²⁶ From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. ²⁷ On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had

opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. ²⁸ And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

We live in a time where religion is flourishing. The problem is, it's not just Christianity. I hear a couple of questions all of the time- "How do I know that as a Christian I am right? After all, the Muslims, the Hindu, the Buddhist, and all other religious groups, believe they are right."

Unfortunately, many Christians answer this with, "Just have faith." That response usually causes the next question to come up- "How do I know that I am really saved? Sometimes I do not feel, or act saved." For many people, including myself, the standard answer is not good enough when you are discussing their eternity. The Apostle Paul held fast to this declaration given to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

What is the door of Faith made of? The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews defines it.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

Faith is believing in something although your five senses cannot prove it. How does faith in Jesus Christ occur?

This is not so much a definition of faith, as it is the declaration of what faith does. It is the substance of things that are hoped for. And the word substance there has been translated in the new versions of the Bible as, the substituting of the things that we hope for.

And the word evidence, has been translated as the conviction of the things not seen I am convicted of truce. Though I may not have seen them I am convicted of their existence. There is evidence for the existence of God, and it causes me to believe in God. Though I have never seen God, the evidence of his existence creates that faith in my heart.

There are many things that we believe in that we don't and haven't seen. For instance, let's look at three or four examples.

The wind -- we believe in the wind, though we haven't seen the wind, we see the effects of the wind. We see the trees that are bowing in its force, and we see

the leaves that are blowing. We see the dust that is being carried. We see the evidence of it, and you can feel it.

We say, "oh, that's a cold, biting wind," or we say, "Oh that's one of those warm Santa Anas". And you feel the wind. You see the evidence of it, and thus we believe in the wind, though we don't actually see the wind itself.

Magnetic Force --I believe in it, but I've never seen it. I see its effect as I bring opposite poles together and I watch them attract. And so, I believe in the magnetic powers or the magnetic force, but I have never seen it. I see evidence of it. I can take a piece of paper and put iron filings on the paper and the filings will form to the magnetic force to show it is there.

Crops that Grow--We take seeds and put them in the ground. We are hungry and we could eat them, but we believe if we put a seed in the ground, we will get a harvest. We have done it before, and others have done it in the past. They have shared the experience with us in Books and speech. Having seen and heard our faith increases and we act accordingly.

Transportation--I get in my car and drive to where I want to go. I don't worry that I will get into an accident. I don't fear that I might die. I have been riding and driving in cars for 60 six years. My testimony is that I have never been in an accident. The longer I have this testimony the more my faith increases

My testimony as a Christian, guides me the same way. I see evidence of God. I feel the presence of God. I feel the power of God I feel the love of God. And I see the evidence of God's existence, and that's faith. I believe in the existence of God, though I've never seen God. Yet, I do not doubt his existence, because of the evidence that is all around. Faith - the substance of things that are hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Everything that we do as a Christian, hangs on faith.

Hebrews 11:2-6

2 This is what the ancients were commended for.

3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." [a] For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Now here is the key verse-verse 6

without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Romans 10:17

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

It is the Word of God given down to us by the testimonies and actions of those chosen by God before us. The writer of Book of Hebrews, in speaking to the descendants of the Old Testament, in Chapter 13 writes

Hebrews 13: 6-8

⁶ So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.

What can mere mortals do to me?"^[b]

⁷ Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

The Apostle Paul writes to reassure the Romans and us. In his letter to the Romans he gives this testimony

Romans 8:27-37

²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[a] have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or

*persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*³⁶ *As it is written:*

*"For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be
slaughtered."*^[b]

*³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than
conquerors through him who loved us*

By Faith we enter God's house. Paul tells that we cannot conceive what God has prepared for us. It is only faith that He, God, cannot lie.

1 Corinthians 2:4-9

⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

⁶ We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ However, as it is written:

“What no eye has seen,
 what no ear has heard,
 and what no human mind has conceived”^[b]—
 the things God has prepared for those who
 love him—

¹⁰ these are the things God has revealed to us
 by his Spirit.

Apostle Peter writes in his second letter

2 Peter 1:10-11 (NIV)

¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers and sisters,^[a] make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, ¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Though I like the New International Version of the scriptures, I like the New English Translation for Verse 11:

2 Peter 1:11 (NET)

*¹¹ For thus an **entrance** into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be **richly provided for you**.*

Just as the entrance to Heaven was then, it is today also. Storms and fears were sweeping across the body of believers. The Sadducees and Pharisees were troubling Jesus and His followers. Jesus, the exhorter,

gives the disciples some encouraging words which the Apostle John writes in his Book of John.

John 14:1-6

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God^a; believe also in me. ² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going."

⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Jesus tells us in Revelations 3, that He stands at the door and knocks. The door is the door of **Faith**.

Revelations 3:20

²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."

We enter the door the same way the saints of old did. By Faith, by invitation, and by the Word of God!

Psalms 5:1-7

Listen to my words, LORD, consider my lament.

*² Hear my cry for help, my King and my God,
for to you I pray.*

*³ In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice;
in the morning I lay my requests before you
and wait expectantly.*

*⁴ For you are not a God who is pleased with
wickedness;
with you, evil people are not welcome.*

*⁵ The arrogant cannot stand in your presence.
You hate all who do wrong;*

*⁶ you destroy those who tell lies. The
bloodthirsty and deceitful ^{you,} LORD, detest.*

*⁷ But I, by your great love, can come into your
house; in reverence I bow down toward your
holy temple.*

James, the Apostle, writes in his letter concerning faith. Faith isn't just knowing, nor is Faith just believing. Faith is a matter of action.

James 2:14-26

*¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if
someone claims to have faith but has no
deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose*

a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰ You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless^[d]? ²¹ Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,"^[e] and he was called God's friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

*²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶ **As the***

body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

There is an old movie titled “How to Support your local Sheriff”. In the movie, James Garner draws lines to represent a jail cell on the floor of an empty room. When he gets his first prisoner, he tells the prisoner he can’t escape. The prisoner never does. He tries once and is caught going out the door. Then he never tries again.

The devil and our flesh work the same way. We are constantly being bombarded by fake news, our self-doubts, and our fears. In the Bible it is written 367 times to fear not. That's more than one for each day of the year.

James 5:6-11

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

¹⁰ And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you

and make you strong, firm and steadfast. ¹¹ To him be the power for ever and ever.

Psalm 100:4

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, [And] into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, [and] bless His name.

Philippians 4:4-6

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Chapter 4: Pillar 1-Grace

Proverbs 9:1

Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:

In the modern era of construction pillars are designed to endure not only storms, but earthquakes, fires, and attacks. They support some of the most valuable buildings which man has ever constructed. Some are seen all the time. Some pillars are never seen. Some pillars are only seen after the storm.

John 3:16

16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

In Africa I heard the following story:

Two guys are walking through a game park and they come across a lion that has not eaten for days. The hungry lion starts chasing the two men.

They run as fast as they can and the one guy starts getting tired and decides to say a prayer, *"Please turn this lion into a Christian, Lord."*

He looks to see if the lion is still chasing him and he sees the lion on its

knees. Happy to see his prayer answered, he turns around and heads towards the lion.

As he comes closer to the lion, he hears the lion saying a prayer: *"Thank you Lord for the food I am about to receive."*

THE Apostle Paul had a similar experience.

2 Corinthians 12:6-12

*⁶ Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, ⁷ or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My **grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.**" Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

¹¹ I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by

you, for I am not in the least inferior to the “super-apostles,”^[a] even though I am nothing. ¹² I persevered in demonstrating among you the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles.

In explaining it to the Church in Ephesus, Paul writes

Ephesians 2: 1-10

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

*⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by **Grace** you have been saved.*

⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

*⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his **Grace**, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

⁸ For it is by Grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

The clarification of **Grace** given as a pillar is found in Romans 5. It is the first and foremost pillar. Without Grace there would be no house.

Romans 5:1-17

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we^[a] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom **we have gained access by faith into this Grace in which we now stand.** And we^[b] boast in the hope of the glory of God.*

³ Not only so, but we^[c] also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the

ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ **But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—

¹³ To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law.

¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.

¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one

man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the Grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶ Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.

*¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of **Grace** and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!*

Hebrews 2:9

*⁹ But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, **so that by the Grace of God** he might taste death for everyone.*

Hebrews 13:9

*⁹ Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by **Grace**, not by eating ceremonial foods, which is of no benefit to those who do so.*

1 Corinthians 1:4

*I thank my God always concerning you for the **Grace** of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,*

Romans 5:1-2

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

*2 through whom also we have access by faith into this **Grace** in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Grace started in the Old Testament. It was on the Earth from the beginning. God could have wiped Adam and Eve out and started fresh. Instead he gave them clothes and sent them forth to live out their lives. As you read you will find verses where God declares that people have found grace.

Exodus 33:12-17

¹² Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' ¹³ If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

14 The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

17 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

In the King James Bible verse 17 is written -

Exodus 33:17 kjv

So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found Grace in My sight, and I know you by name."

We know we have **Grace** by the presence of the Lord around us and by the little things He does for us. Look at the promises to the captives in the Book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 43:1-4

*But now, this is what the LORD says—
he who created you, Jacob,*

*he who formed you, Israel:
 "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
 I have summoned you by name; you are mine.*

*² When you pass through the waters,
 I will be with you; and when you pass
 through the rivers, they will not sweep over
 you.*

*When you walk through the fire, you will not
 be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*

*³ For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of
 Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your
 ransom, Cush^[a] and Seba in your stead.*

*⁴ Since you are precious and honored in my
 sight, and because I love you, I will give
 people in exchange for you, nations in
 exchange for your life.*

⁵ Do not be afraid, for I am with you;

Isaiah 49:1-3

*Listen to me, you islands;
 hear this, you distant nations:
 Before I was born the LORD called me;
 from my mother's womb he has spoken my
 name.*

*² He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,
 in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
 he made me into a polished arrow
 and concealed me in his quiver.*

*³ He said to me, "You are my servant,
 Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."*

Even the Prophet Jeremiah heard the same witness and testimony from the Lord. I believe it is for us today also.

Jeremiah 1:3-5

⁴ The word of the LORD came to me, saying,

⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew^[a] you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Jeremiah 29:11-14

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

¹⁴ I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back from captivity.

Like King David, we need to recognize the truth of GRACE from God towards us. David writes in the Book of Psalms

Psalms 139:13-18

- ¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.*
- ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and
wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.*
- ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths
of the earth.*
- ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in
your book
before one of them came to be.*
- ¹⁷ How precious to me are your
thoughts,^[a] God!
How vast is the sum of them!*
- ¹⁸ Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.*

Why Grace towards us? Remember His word
endures **FOREVER!**

1 Peter 2:9-10

- ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal
priesthood, a holy nation, God's special
possession, that you may declare the praises*

of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Jesus showed us Grace in action in one of His many examples. I am using this example because many of us have been caught up in the acts of sin. We have prostituted ourselves to the world. Yet, God's love for us remains still. Let us look at the story as written by John, the beloved disciple.

What is the grace of God? Simply put it is God's favor and kindness toward us. God rains down grace on all mankind. He gave us the beauty and wonders of nature that we see each and every day. He gives us near misses when accidents are heading our way. He often brings us the right solutions just in time.

He also gave us an innate conscience to know right from wrong. All these things are common graces, and everyone born on the earth has the benefit of them because God so loved the world.

Before I believed in the Lord, God wooed me with these kinds of graces: beautiful sunrises and sunsets, relaxing moments surrounded by God's glorious creation in nature, fun, laughter, and camaraderie with friends. He also lured me with thoughts that there is something more in life, something beyond the simple notion that life is good.

Just being born on this planet includes many benefits. Oh, but when I became a believer in Christ, I got even more graceful benefits! In fact, believers are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm because we are united with Christ.

Grace is absolutely free. When I was a child, a company in Portland, Oregon used to sell televisions at the commercial breaks during the Friday and Saturday night late movies. The stores would give some small thing away with any purchase. The owner's commercial hook was the following line:

"It is free, and everyone knows free is a very good price".

The Grace of God is Free. You cannot buy it. You cannot earn it. You cannot barter for it. You didn't work for it and you didn't even deserve it.

If He stopped there, it would have been enough, but He continues to give us even more grace, kindness, wisdom, and understanding. What an awesome God! For He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ to supply all that you need.

Let us take a look at 6 specific areas where God shows us grace that we might find it. Again, I remind you as Apostle Paul writes.

Ephesians 2:8 *(NKJV)*

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God,

1. Salvation Grace

John 3:14-18 (NKJV)

14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

15 "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

We, in the world today, are going through a lot of storms. It is important that we always remember that God is in control. David said it:

Psalms 46:7-11 (NKJV)

7 The LORD of hosts [is] with us; The God of Jacob [is] our refuge. Selah

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has made desolations in the earth.

9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I [am] God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

11 The LORD of hosts [is] with us; The God of Jacob [is] our refuge. Selah

2. Numerous Grace

Psalms 103:1-12 (NKJV)

1 [A Psalm] of David. Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, [bless] His holy name!

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:

3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,

4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

5 Who satisfies your mouth with good [things,] [So that] your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The LORD executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed.

7 He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.

8 The LORD [is] merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

9 He will not always strive [with us,] Nor will He keep [His anger] forever.

10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, [So] great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;

12 As far as the east is from the west, [So] far has He removed our transgressions from us.

I have sinned, I sin, and I will sin. I always seem to do what I don't want to do and not do what I want to do, even though I want to do right all the time. Yet God will forgive me each time if I repent.

Jeremiah 31:34 (NKJV)

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Isaiah 43:25 (NKJV)

25 I, [even] I, [am] he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Micah 7:18 (NKJV)

18 Who [is] a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth [in] mercy.

1 John 1:7 (NKJV)

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

All sins — past, present, and future — are forgiven after you believe in Christ. Sin comes naturally but righteousness takes focus. Focus on obeying God's Word and allowing the Holy Spirit to help.

On my own, I seem to always say or do the wrong thing. But, when I confess each sin, try and learn from it, and change my way of thinking, the Lord forgives me. Not just every now and then, but all the time. God has more grace than I have sin.

3. Forgiveness Grace

Not only are all of my sins forgiven when I repent, but I also gain a supernatural ability to forgive others of offenses they commit. God helps me to forgive little offenses, big offenses, and even previously unforgivable

ones. It is not easy to forgive the wrongs that others have done to us.

One day I was driving down the street in Portland, Oregon. I pulled into a bank parking lot to deposit some money in the day and night teller. When pulling into the bank parking lot, the driver of a car exiting, made an obscene gesture towards me. I did not know the person, nor had I done anything to them.

The gesture they made is one that I detest more than anything and it greatly angered me. I put my money in the slot at the deposit and started chasing the car and driver down the road.

I had a brand-new can of white spray paint next to me on the seat of my pickup. As I looked at it, I had made up my mind I was going to spray his windshield with the paint because of the gesture he made. I chased him for several minutes down 82nd Ave, one of the busiest streets in Portland.

Just as he pulled into a left turn lane at a traffic light, I was beside him and stopped. I grabbed the can of spray paint and started to put the driver window down when the Holy Spirit spoke to me, "Be angry and sin not". I put the can down and drove on.

I have learned that forgiveness is possible even when the offense committed has caused extreme hurt. There are examples of people forgiving other people of murder. We hear and read about them almost every day.

The greatest example is Jesus on the Cross. Jesus, Himself, said, "Father, forgive them for they know not

what they do,” from the cross! This kind of forgiving grace doesn’t take away from the depravity of the offense, but it does provide an atmosphere where the offender can repent if he chooses.

Forgiving grace requires the strength of God, because, when I’m left to my own thoughts, revenge and/or depression are at the forefront of my mind. Forgiveness is usually a God-ordained thought.

Luke 23:34 (NKJV)

Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” And they divided His garments and cast lots.

Matthew 6:14-15

*14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
15. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

Mark 11:19-26 (NKJV)

*19 When evening had come, He went out of the city.
20 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.
21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him,*

"Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.

23 "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

24 "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive [them,] and you will have [them.]

25 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

4. New Grace

Each morning I have the glorious chance to begin again. If I made mistakes yesterday, I can start each day over with a clean slate. Every new day, new hour, and new breath is a chance for me to act better and display more of the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-26 (NKJV)

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told [you] in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

24 And those [who are] Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Because of His presence within me, I always have new opportunities to think and do better. Instead of

thinking only of me, I can show concern for others. Instead of being full of anxiety, I can be full of peace and joy. Instead of tapping my foot, I can wait with patience.

God's grace gives me the self-control to act with kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness, and meekness. I am decaying as I grow older in the flesh, but my heart, my spiritual nature, is being renewed daily...

2 Corinthians 4:16 (NKJV)

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward [man] is being renewed day by day.

1 John 1:5-10 (NKJV)

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

5. Freedom Grace

Grace gives me the freedom to forget about other people's opinions. I can learn to be the person that God created me to be before the lies of this world attached themselves to me. I don't need to impress other people. I just need to be faithful to the One who created me, and He already loves me, so I have nothing to prove.

Psalm 139:14 (NKJV)

I will praise You, for I am fearfully [and] wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And [that] my soul knows very well.

Romans 8:28-39 (NKJV)

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to [His] purpose.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined [to be] conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God [is] for us, who [can be] against us?

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? [It is] God who justifies.

34 Who [is] he who condemns? [It is] Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [Shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am free to be me. I am **fearfully and wonderfully made** with a purposeful design. Getting to know God through His Word helps me to know my real purpose

in life. A purpose which fulfills my inner being and fills the empty spots in my life.

6. Future Grace

John 8:31-36 (KJV)

*31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed;
32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?
34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.
35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: [but] the Son abideth ever.
36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

God always promised to be with me. His Holy Spirit will counsel me and prompt me as I go through my days. He is with me in each present moment and those moments lead to a glorious future. Even when I go through trials, and I will, He is there to help me get through them and make life around me better. In the final words to the Hebrews read what Paul writes.

Hebrews 13:1-6

¹ Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. ² Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. ³ Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

⁴ Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. ⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” ^[a]

⁶ So we say with confidence,

*“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?”*

Jesus even said that here on earth I will have many trials and sorrows.

John 16:33

³³ “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have

The unknown is easier to go through when you have a hand to hold. That's grace—the feeling that I'm never alone.

Isaiah 41:8-13

8 “But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend,

9 I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, ‘You are my servant’; I have chosen you and have not rejected you.

10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

11 “All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish.

12 Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you

will be as nothing at all.

13 For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear;

I will help you.

The Great Commission- The purpose of the First church and it is still our purpose for the end time. It has never changed. Only we have changed!

Jesus still desires for us to win souls and snatch them from Satan. He has never changed course. It isn't over until it is over.

Matthew 28:17-20

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Always remember that grace is a gift. You can't earn it, but you get a lot of it. It's free and abundant. When you go to God in heartfelt prayer, He will always give you what you need. Forget about worrying about getting what you deserve. Grace is getting much more than you deserve.

Matthew 7:9-10

"You parents — if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people

*know how to give good gifts to your children,
how much more will your heavenly Father give
good gifts to those who ask him"*

In the middle of complete oppression, Gideon was found trying to get wheat to eat while hidden in a winepress.

Judges 6:12-17 (KJV)

12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD [is] with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where [be] all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family [is] poor in Manasseh, and I [am] the least in my father's house.

16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.

We live in wicked last days. Men call evil good, and good evil. They worship the creature instead of the creator. Time is running out. It is said that it will be as the days of Noah at the end of our time.

Genesis 6:5-8 (KJV)

5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually.

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

8 But Noah found Grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Do, you reader, need to find Grace? Are you loaded down with weights and sin? Are you being oppressed by news and those which have changed our way of life?

God never runs out of Grace for those who diligently seek him. It is time to put the Pillar of Grace

back in your life and the house of God. Now let us look at the second Pillar.

The first altar call in the early Church sets our next three pillars in order. Let us look at that first Evangelistic service.

Acts 2:14-41

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

*¹⁷ "'In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.*

*¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.*

*¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.*

*²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and
glorious day of the Lord.*

*²¹ And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved. [c]*

²² "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men,^[d] put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵ David said about him:

*"I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.*

²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

my body also will rest in hope,

²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,

you will not let your holy one see decay.

²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life;

you will fill me with joy in your presence.^[e]

²⁹ "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke

of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay.³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand

³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Chapter 5: Pillar 2-Repentance

Acts 2: 38

*³⁸ Peter replied, “**Repent** and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

To repent = to change one's mind, i.e. to repent to change one's mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins

"Repentance (metanoia, 'change of mind') involves a turning with contrition from sin to God; the repentant sinner is in the proper condition to accept the divine forgiveness."

Literally it means or expresses the idea of turning around and going in the opposite direction. If we sin, we are turned from God. When we repent we turn towards Him.

Why, you might ask, “If our Sins are Forgiven, why must we repent?”

Look at how Jesus handled the woman caught in adultery. He saved her from the crowd. He did not look at the crime. We do not know what He wrote in the sand. We do know He looked at her heart.

John 8:1-12

¹ but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

² At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴ and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" ⁶ They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷ When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." ⁸ Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

¹¹ "No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Jesus does not want you to get trapped again in your old lifestyle, nor your old habits. He does not desire for you to put on the old chains, the old clothes, the old way of life, that were keeping you in bondage.

Why, you might ask, "If our Sins are Forgiven, why must we repent?"

I believe a good answer comes from the Word of God. Perhaps, one verse sums it up best, given by the Apostle James.

James 4:7 (NLT)

So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

John the Baptist started his ministry with this cry in the Book of Mark.

Mark 1:15 (NLT)

"The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"

1 John 1:1-10 (KJV)

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen [it], and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship [is] with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

It's an understandable question: If we're justified by faith and forgiven all our sins—past, present, and future—then why is it necessary to continue seeking forgiveness? Aren't our sins already forgiven?

There are at least three biblical truths that must be kept together simultaneously.

First, for those who have repented of sin and trusted in Christ as Lord and Savior, God declares them right before him on the basis of Christ's righteousness and substitution on the cross for us. Jesus takes our place.

Romans 3:19-28 (NLT)

19 Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God.

20 For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

21 But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago.

22 We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

23 For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

24 Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ

Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

25 For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they

believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being

fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past,

26 for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did

this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be

right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

27 Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our

acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith.

28 So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

Romans 5:1-2 (NLT)

1 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. 2 Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

Romans 8:1-4 (NLT)

1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. 2 And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. 3 The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. 4 He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

Later, in the letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul explains why he is so content in the new person he has become. Let us look at the Book of Romans Chapter 8

Romans 8:29-33 (NLT)

29 For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

30 And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

31 What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

32 Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?

33 Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one--for God himself has given us right standing with himself.

As a declarative act of God and not a process by which we are infused with righteousness, justification takes place in the believer once for all time.

Romans 5:12-21 (NLT)

12 When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

13 Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break.

14 Still, everyone died--from the time of Adam to the time of Moses--even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come.

15 But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ.

16 And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins.

17 For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

18 Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness

brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

19 Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

20 God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant.

21 So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Philippians 3:8-9 (NLT)

*8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ
9 and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.*

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 (NLT)

14 Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life.

15 He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

16 So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now!

17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

18 And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.

19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.

20 So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"

21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

The bottom line is that we are ambassadors of Jesus Christ to the world, and as such we don't act the way that we normally would act. The world needs to see repentance and saved sinners glorifying God. It needs to see the changes which take place with the forgiveness of sin. The world needs to see repentance which glorifies God. This is what it is about. This is our testimony!

Romans 3:3-9 (NLT)

3 True, some of them were unfaithful; but just because they were unfaithful, does that mean God will be unfaithful?

4 Of course not! Even if everyone else is a liar, God is true. As the Scriptures say about him, "You will be proved right in what you say, and you will win your case in court."

5 "But," some might say, "our sinfulness serves a good purpose, for it helps people see how righteous God is. Isn't it unfair, then, for him to punish us?" (This is merely a human point of view.)

6 Of course not! If God were not entirely fair, how would he be qualified to judge the world?

7 "But," someone might still argue, "how can God condemn me as a sinner if my dishonesty highlights his truthfulness and brings him more glory?"

8 And some people even slander us by claiming that we say, "The more we sin, the

better it is!" Those who say such things deserve to be condemned.

9 Well then, should we conclude that we Jews are better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin.

Although everyone will stand before Christ's judgment seat and hear the public verdict of whether or not we are in him. The Word of God is clear in laying out this fact that our goal ought to be to always please Him and not ourselves.

2 Corinthians 5:7-11 (NLT)

7 For we live by believing and not by seeing.

8 Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord.

9 So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him.

10 For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

11 Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too"

for believers this end-time verdict has now been brought into the present. We have already crossed from death to life

John 5:24 (NLT)

"I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

Romans 8:1-2 (NLT)

1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

2 And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

Justification once received cannot be lost. God is not a false giver. Our only way of losing justification is walk away from it.

Second, God commands us to confess our sins as we sin. It is an act of obedience and an acknowledgement of Him as Lord and cleaner of our souls.

1 John 1:9 (NLT)

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

This command not only applies to our initial justification, but, as the context of 1 John makes clear, confession is ongoing for Christians:

1 John 1:8–10

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves if we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar . . . but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins

Think of it like this, you take a bath but over time you get dirty. Do you take a second one or is one bath good enough? You standfast that once is enough. You go into a crowd and mix with your friends. Even though you're loved by your spouse, loved by your parents or your kids, one thing is true. The longer you go without bathing again, the more you are going to Stink. Even if your loved ones don't stop loving you, those around you are not impressed.

Isaiah 3:24 *(NLT)*

Instead of smelling of sweet perfume, she will stink. She will wear a rope for a sash, and her elegant hair will fall out. She will wear rough burlap instead of rich robes. Shame will replace her beauty.

Philippians 4:18 (NLT)

At the moment I have all I need--and more! I am generously supplied with the gifts you sent me with Epaphroditus. They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God.

Third, God not only commands us to confess our sins, but also promises to forgive us in the future and, in a real sense, hinges our forgiveness on whether we forgive others, after we have presumably been justified.

Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT)

*14 "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you.
15 But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

Matthew 18:15-35 (NLT)

*15 "If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.
16 But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses.
17 If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she*

won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.

19 "I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you.

20 For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."

21 Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?"

22 "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!

23 "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him.

24 In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars.

25 He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold--along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned--to pay the debt.

26 "But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.'

27 Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

28 "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.

29 "His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded.

30 But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

31 "When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened.

32 Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me.

33 Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?'

34 Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

]35 "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart."

But how do we make bible sense of these truths without minimizing any of them? Here are **three reflections**.

First, from God's viewpoint there is no problem with saying that when he declares us just, he forgives our future sins—as well as our past and present sins—since our future lies before him as an open book.

Yet from our point of view, it's best to think of our justification as the forgiveness of all our past and present sins, and as the judicial ground for the forgiveness of future sins.

As we live our lives and unfortunately sin, we need to return to God in repentance and faith and seek his forgiveness. Yet we do so on the basis of Christ's work applied to us in our justification. Such an experience is not a new justification, but a renewed application of our justification.

When we sin, we lose our consciousness of forgiveness and our sense of peace with God. So, when we confess our sins, by the work of the Spirit, we are reawakened to what Christ has done for us. God revives our security in him and assurance of our salvation.

Believers, then, continue to pray daily for forgiveness—not with the despair of one who thinks he is lost, but in the confidence of justified and adopted children approaching a heavenly Father who has declared them just in Jesus Christ.

When we confess sin, we are not experiencing a new justification but a renewed application of our justification.

Second, this issue illustrates the importance of time and history. In our justification by grace through faith in

Christ's all-sufficient work, our past, present, and future sins are fully forgiven and paid for. History is yet important, in a similar way, because God elects a people for himself before the foundation of the world.

Ephesians 1:4-8 NIV

⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he ^[b] predestined us for adoption to sonship ^[c] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us.

It is certain that they will be justified in Christ, the plan of salvation must still unfold in space and time. Christ must take on our humanity, live his life for us, and die and be raised on our behalf. In addition, for Christ's work to be applied to us, the elect must come to exist, hear the gospel, and be brought to saving faith.

Although God's plan is from eternity, it's effected in time. As temporal creatures, God applies Christ's work to us by the Spirit in the right timing.

Third, we live in covenant relationship with our God. In history, we are brought to saving faith in Christ and enter into a covenant relationship with him. In that

relationship, until our glorification, we will still sin. God, as the triune-personal God, is displeased with our sin. This requires repenting and seeking forgiveness on an ongoing basis. As we confess our sin, God forgives us our sin, on the basis of Christ alone. There is no contradiction.

We are always complete in Christ, yet we are also in real relationship with God. By analogy, in human relationships we know something of this truth. As a parent, I am in relationship with my five children. Because they are my family, they will never be cast out; the relationship is permanent. Yet if they sin against me, or I against them, our relationship is strained and needs to be restored. Our covenant relationship with God works in a similar way. We ask God to forgive us, not to be justified again, but to walk before him in confidence that Christ has paid it all.

I used to weigh almost 400 pounds. I wasn't born that way. It just happened as I aged, one pound at a time. It wasn't hard to gain but it was hard to lose. Sin is the same way. It starts by us not paying attention to what we are doing, who we are hanging out with, what we read or watch. It is not long before it becomes a huge problem for us.

The Apostle Paul writes:

Hebrews 12:1-4 *(NLT)*

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us

down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.

Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

3 Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.

4 After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.

This is how we can make sense of our full justification in Christ. Also, the Scripture's teaching that we need ongoing forgiveness. In asking God to forgive us, we add nothing to Christ's perfect work. Instead, we are reapplying what Christ has done for us as our covenant head and Redeemer. It reaffirms and reminds us of the Grace given us.

There is absolutely no contradiction between justification by grace through faith and our need for ongoing forgiveness of sin. We ask God to forgive us not to be justified again, but to walk before him in confidence that Christ has paid it all. We are debtors to grace alone. Justification occurs once for all time yet, confessing sin and receiving forgiveness is ongoing until we are glorified and sin no more.

We repent, when we commit to lay sin aside, knowing that if we repent, He is quick and just to forgive our sin, and remembers it no more. The Devil no longer has a way to torment us or bring accusations. We can run full speed to carry out the work of the Lord through us.

Let us run as a Team with confidence. After all,
WE ARE TEAM JESUS.

Chapter 5: Pillar 3- Baptism

The pillar of Service

Wisdom's third Pillar is **Baptism**

Acts 2:38 *(NLT)*

*Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

The Greek word for "baptism" is "βαπτίζω". The English letters look like this: "baptidzo." The Greek word "baptidzo" literally means to "dip" or to "immerse".

The symbolism of baptism is that, just as Christ died and was buried, so the baptized person is submerged (whether physically or symbolically) under water. And just as Christ rose again from beneath the earth, so the baptized person rises again from beneath the water. Under the water is the believer's old, dead, heavy, suffocating life. Out of the water, cleansed by the blood of Christ, is the believer's new, fresh, purposeful life.

Think of Baptism as being like a wedding ring. We put on a wedding ring as a symbol of our commitment and devotion. In the same way baptism is a picture of devotion and commitment to Christ. A wedding ring

reminds us and tells others that we belong to someone special. In the same way, baptism reminds us and others that we are devoted to Christ and belong to Him. We are here to serve Him.

Notice that baptism goes hand-in-hand with repentance. Baptism is an outward act that symbolizes the inward phenomenon of coming to and accepting Jesus Christ as Lord of your life. It is the sacrificial means by which those who believe in Him can be forever reconciled to God. It is not about salvation, nor the forgiveness of sin. If Jesus had no sin, why did He need to be baptized? We will see and cover Jesus's baptism further on.

The purpose of baptism is to give visual testimony of our commitment to serve Christ. It is the first step of discipleship.

The story of Philip and the eunuch demonstrates this.

Acts 8:26-38

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." ²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian^[a] eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The

Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

³¹ "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³² This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

*"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

*³³ In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth."^[b]*

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶ As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" ^[37] ^[c] ³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

1 Peter 3:15-21 (NLT)

15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.

16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.

17 Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

18 Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.

19 So he went and preached to the spirits in prison--

20 those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood.

21 And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Next, let us look at the question that is asked so often. Do you need to be baptized to be saved? According to God's Word, Baptism is not a requirement

of salvation. Let us examine what the Scriptures teach on this issue. It is quite clear from such passages as Acts 15 and Romans 4 that no external act is necessary for salvation.

The thief on the cross was not baptized yet he was told by the Lord that he would be in Heaven.

Luke 23:39-43 (NKJV)

39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"

41 "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."

42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Salvation is by divine grace through faith alone

The Apostle Paul stressed to the Romans that our salvation and justification was by faith and not works such as baptism. Let us look at what Paul wrote and note there is no mention of baptism.

Romans 3:20-31 (NKJV)

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

25 whom God set forth [as] a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

27 Where [is] boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

29 Or [is He] the God of the Jews only? [Is He] not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,

30 since [there is] one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Romans 4:1-8 (NKJV)

1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has [something] to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

7 "Blessed [are those] whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;

8 Blessed [is the] man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."

Paul writes to the Galatians and the Ephesians. Again, he does not mention baptism as part of justification.

Galatians 2:14-16 (NKJV)

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before [them] all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

15 "We [who are] Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16 "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we

have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Ephesians 2:4-19 (NKJV)

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

6 and raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in the heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus,

7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in [His] kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands--

12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, [that is,] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man [from] the two, [thus] making peace,

16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

If water baptism were necessary for salvation, we would expect to find it stressed whenever the saving gospel of Jesus is presented in Scripture. Paul never made water baptism any part of his gospel presentations.

In **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**, Paul gives a concise summary of the gospel message he preached. There is no mention of baptism.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

¹Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance^[a]: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

In 1 Corinthians 1:17, Paul states that “Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel,” thus clearly differentiating the gospel from baptism.

If baptism were part of the gospel itself, necessary for salvation, what good would it have done Paul to preach the gospel, but not baptize? No one would have been saved.

- The penitent woman (Luke 7:37-50),
- the paralytic man (Matthew 9:2),
- the publican (Luke 18:13-14), and
- the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43)

All experienced forgiveness of sins apart from baptism.

For that matter, we have no record of the apostles having ever been baptized. Yet, Jesus pronounced them clean of their sins. It is the Word of God, not baptism, that cleansed them.

John 15:3

³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

There are two Bible verses that may cause confusion in the regards to how baptism and salvation are linked together.

Acts 2:38 says *"repent and be baptized"...* meaning that baptism is not required but a physical next step to take after the spiritual step.

Mark 16:6 *"whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."*

...again, baptism is stated as a natural next step after the spiritual believing. It is the belief (Faith) that grants salvation and the failure to believe that causes condemnation. So why is baptism a pillar of the house?

Water baptism is certainly important; however, the New Testament does not teach that baptism is necessary for salvation. Let us read Apostle Paul's discourse in his letter to the Romans Chapter 6

Romans 6:1-10

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with,^[a] that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

According to Romans 6:1-10, baptism pictures at least three things:

1. **First**, baptism is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. As we stand in the water we are representing Christ on the cross. As we are dipped underwater, we illustrate the burial of Christ. As we come out of the water, we demonstrate the resurrection of Christ.

2. **Second**, baptism is a personal testimony to us of the washing away of our sins. As we go under the water, we reconfirm that our sins are forgiven. As we come out of the water, we are resurrected to live a new life in Christ.

3. **Third**, baptism represents our personal identification with Christ. Paul declared in Romans 6:3-4 "We were buried with Christ in baptism and we are raised to walk in a new life" as forgiven followers of Christ empowered by the Spirit of God.

Being sprinkled or having water poured over your head when you were an infant, or too young to understand, is not truly baptism. The actions miss the point of baptism on all three levels as mentioned above. Here is why.

The Bible teaches that commitment to Christ always precedes baptism. In fact, baptism is your testimony of surrendering your life to Christ. The New Testament order is not be baptized and then receive Christ. It is always first you receive Christ and then you get baptized. If you were not aware of submitting to the Lordship of Christ, then it is impossible to think of your baptism as a personal commitment to Christ.

Now we will look at the baptism of Jesus and why it is, and was, important. Remember, Jesus was sinless. It could not be for salvation. Jesus' Baptism as written in Matthew chapter 3

Matthew 3:11-17 (NLT)

11 "I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am--so much greater that I'm not worthy even to be

his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

12 He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire."

13 Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John.

14 But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?"

15 But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him.

16 After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him.

17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."

If John was baptizing for repentance and Jesus was without sin, why would he have to be baptized?

Jesus' meaning in Matthew 3:15 was not a statement that baptism is necessary for salvation, nor that he needed to repent of anything. According to Jewish custom, a first-born boy, was responsible for the care of his mothers and siblings until he was 30 years old if he had brothers. The responsibility would then fall to the next boy in line. Being the first-born son, Jesus would

be in the line of priest hood. According to Luke we see Jesus was about 30 years old when he was baptized.

Luke 3:21-23 NIV

²¹ When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

²³ Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph,

Numbers 4:3

³ Count all the men from thirty to fifty years of age who come to serve in the work at the tent of meeting.

Thirty was the age specifically fixed as full maturity of bodily energy to perform the duties assigned them in the wilderness, as well as of mental activity to assist in management of the sacred services of the priesthood. It was also the age that both John the Baptist and, six months later, Jesus Christ entered their ministries. The trade of Joseph taught Him as a boy was that of a carpenter. Up until this time, Jesus was the carpenter. In the Book of Luke Chapter 2, we are told

the story of Jesus acting as a Priest at the age of 12 years old.

Luke 2:41-52 NIV

⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

⁴⁹ "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"^[1] ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

The intent of the Jewish people regarding baptism was to signify their readiness to follow the will of God. Baptism had long been an act of declaring a change of responsibility and a declaration of servitude.

When Jewish followers accepted Christ, they were disowned and lost all rights to their inheritance. Why? Because they were declaring themselves no longer followers of the Jewish law but of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

By engaging in this action, by including himself in this tradition of his people, Jesus “fulfills all righteousness,” not, merely by the physical act, but by the spiritual implications of it.

There was no written legal requirement for Jesus to be baptized in order to inaugurate his ministry. Jesus followed the law, but he also followed the traditions in line with the heart of the law. By this act, Jesus who was now 30, proclaims the beginning of his ministry. It was an example for us to follow.

Colossians 2:9-15 NIV

⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and in Christ you have been

brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. ¹¹ In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self-ruled by the flesh^[b] was put off when you were circumcised by^[c] Christ, ¹² **having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.**

¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you^[d] alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.^[e]

1 Peter 3:18- 21 NIV

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. ¹⁹ After being made alive,^[d] he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— ²⁰ to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight

in all, were saved through water, ²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God!^[e] It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

We were not called to Lord over people. We were chosen to be servants. Jesus continually strived to communicate this fact to His disciples. Look at the Book of Matthew Chapter 20

Matthew 20:21-28 (NET)

²⁰ Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

²¹ "What is it you want?" he asked.

She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."

²² "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?"

"We can," they answered.

²³ Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to

those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.”

²⁴ When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵ Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

At the last supper, Jesus left the disciples with these words found in the Book of Luke.

Luke 22:24-30 NIV

²⁴ A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. ²⁵ Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. ²⁶ But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. ²⁷ For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. ²⁸ You

are those who have stood by me in my trials. ²⁹ And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, ³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Baptism must be a commitment to service. With believing in Jesus Christ, and repenting of your sins, it is like putting a seed in the ground and never watering it.

James 2:14-26 (NKJV)

14 What [does it] profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?

Can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give

them the things which are needed for the body, what [does it] profit?

17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your

works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent [them] out another way?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

As the sinner confesses the Lord Jesus, he dies to sin (Romans 6:11) and is raised to a brand-new life (Colossians 2:12). Being submerged in the water represents death to sin, and emerging from the water represents the cleansed, holy life committed to service which follows salvation. Romans puts it this way:

Romans 6:4

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

The old man has passed away and all things have become new. Very simply, baptism is an outward testimony of the inward change in a believer's life. Christian baptism is an act of obedience to the Lord after salvation; although baptism is closely associated with salvation, it is not a requirement to be saved. Baptism is a public testimony of your commitment to serve Jesus. Christian baptism is the means by which a person makes a public profession of faith and discipleship. In the waters of baptism, a person says, wordlessly, "I confess faith in Christ; Jesus has cleansed my soul from sin, and I now have a new life of sanctification."

Christian baptism illustrates, in dramatic style, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. At the same time, it also illustrates our death to sin and new life in Christ. The Bible shows in many places that the order of events is

- 1) The person **believes** in the Lord Jesus -GRACE
- 2) The person **repents**- TURNS From the DEVIL
- 3) The person is **baptized**- COMMITS to SERVE

This sequence is seen in Acts 2:41, "Those who accepted [Peter's] message were baptized"

Are you ready to humble yourself before God and allow Him to exchange your past for His Future?

Jesus, Himself, told us

Luke 16:13 (KJV)

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon

We must become servants. Jesus's arms and legs on this earth.

Matthew 25: 34-46

³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

³⁵ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

³⁶ Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

³⁸ When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

³⁹ Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

⁴⁰ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

⁴¹ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

⁴² For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

⁴³ I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

⁴⁴ Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

⁴⁵ Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

⁴⁶ And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Remember what Paul wrote to Timothy in his second letter on how we are to serve.

2 Timothy 2:19-26

¹⁹ Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them

that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

²⁰ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

²¹ If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

²² Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

²³ But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

²⁴ And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

²⁵ In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

²⁶ And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Chapter 7: Pillar 4-The Holy Spirit

Acts 2: 38

*³⁸ Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of **the Holy Spirit**."*

The next pillar is the Holy Spirit. It is a pillar because it is the force that dwells in us to help us to establish the next two pillars in our study. In the Book of John, Jesus established the Holy Spirit pillar in the conversation with Nicodemus.

John 3:1-15

¹ Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

*³ Jesus replied, "**Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.**"^[a]"*

⁴ "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit^[b] gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You^[c] must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. **So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.**"^[d]

⁹ "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰ "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? ¹¹ Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.^[e] ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,^[f] ¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."^[g]

Without the Holy Spirit we are still a carnal man. The Holy Spirit is God within us. Until Jesus died, God could only rest upon the shoulders of men, and walk around with them. He speaks to them and gives men words in the Old Testament. There is no place where it states that He dwelt in them until the birth of Jesus.

In the Book of John, Jesus gives the discourse on the born-again experience.

John 14:9-20

⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

¹⁰ Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

¹² Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

¹³ And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

¹⁴ If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

¹⁵ If ye love me, keep my commandments.

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not,

neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

¹⁸ I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

¹⁹ Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

²⁰ At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

As we have previously written, it is the Holy Spirit which changes us from carnal to spiritual beings. It is the born-again experience where we become as a little child. We begin to desire the spiritual milk that Peter talks about.

1 Peter 2:1-3

1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

I have 5 children, 17 grandchildren, and 3 great grandchildren. The one thing I'm certain of is that when a baby comes out of the womb and it's first born, it has no trouble trying to find milk and drink. In the same way, a newborn Christian, that is one that has received the

Holy Ghost at Salvation, has no trouble being hungry for the word of God. It is a natural response resulting from the born-again experience.

I love seeing new babies in the Lord. They will pick up the Bible and pour through it. They have so many questions. Like baby birds in a nest, they call for more and more of the Spiritual food. No wonder, the early church gave us three witnesses of the importance of this experience. Jesus, after the disciples had rebuked Him for taking time with the children who people were bringing to Him, is quoted in the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Matthew 19:14

*14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, **for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.**" 15 When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.*

Mark 10:14 -16

*14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 Truly I tell you, **anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.**" 16 And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.*

Luke 18:15-17

¹⁵ People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. ¹⁶ But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁷ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

You can see how important it is to become as a little child. Having had five children myself, there are a few things I have learned. They are always hungry for food, they are dependent for guidance, and they trust what they are told. At least they are for the first few years. They are trusting for everything that they need. They are born without worries and cares. This is how Jesus wants us to be according to the Book of Matthew.

Matthew 6:25-34

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life^e?"

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

I wish that I could tell you this is how we are when we are saved. I wish that I could tell you this is how are going to become. But the truth is, we still have a carnal mind. It continually wrestles with the spiritual mind. The Holy Spirit is given to us to teach us all things and to guide us as we grow in the knowledge of the Word and Grace. As grow, we learn, and our mind is renewed, our faith grows, and if we should live long enough, we will grow into the image of Christ. It does not happen overnight. I can assure you though, that It will not happen without the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul continually dealt with the issue of converts not wanting to submit and receive the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12: 1-2

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

*¹⁹ **Do not quench the Spirit.** ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil.*

There has been such a show of the Holy Spirit and the demand that it is a requirement for Salvation. It causes people confusion about receiving the Holy Spirit. In my years as a minister and Christian, I've heard and seen a lot of nonsense. I have had people in church tell

other people they need to just say the vowels over and over rapidly and they'll start speaking in tongues and get and have the Holy Ghost. I've had others to start shaking the jaw of person seeking the Holy Spirit and telling him to stammer and making sounds.

I have told groups for years that if they can describe to me the taste of a banana without saying it taste like a banana, I will give them \$50. No one has collected yet. A banana is unique. The Holy Spirit is unique also. The Spirit of God is a gift that is necessary for our growth and strength. If God is a Spirit as we have already covered, and Jesus says that it is the Father which is in Him that does the works. (And Luke says it was the Holy Spirit that Fathered Jesus in Mary). We have already covered the fact God that dwells in a house not made with men's hands, and each of us is a part of the House of God that God dwells in. Then I want as much of the Holy Spirit as I can get.

According to Peter all I must do is ask for it. Peter said that if you, ***"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."***

It all depends on how much you open up yourself and allow the Holy Spirit to come in. Some people get the baptism of the Holy Spirit right away with the evidence of speaking in an unknown tongue. Others never get the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in an unknown tongue. Just because you don't have the gift of tongues, it does not mean that you do not have the Spirit of God in you. The Fruit of the Spirit is also an

evidence of having received Him. The gift of tongues is a sign for the unbeliever not for the believer.

I do know that when the baptism of the Holy Ghost fell on the disciples in the upper room, it completely transformed their lives. The Holy Spirit transformed them and empowered them for the ministry.

A fisherman named Peter got up and ministered to 3000 people and the crowd was amazed that the word spoken came out of a mere fisherman. In your life, you will see the difference that the Holy Spirit will make.

I can only share with you what He's done in my life. He made a radical change in my desires, temperament, and character. The old man has passed away and I have become new. He never killed the old man. He only abides to strengthen my being and to bring me into the conformity an image of Jesus. I still have power over Him if I want it. The only thing is, with all He does and gives me, why would I want to take the power from Him. When I am weak, Christ is made strength. There are 10 Things the Holy Spirit does for you.

1. The Holy Spirit is your Helper

John 16:5-11

5 "But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts [and taken complete possession of them]. 7 But I tell you

*the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, **the [a]Helper** (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him (the Holy Spirit) to you [to be in close fellowship with you].*

8 And He, when He comes, will convict the world about [the guilt of] sin [and the need for a Savior], and about righteousness, and about judgment:

9 about sin [and the true nature of it], because they do not believe in Me [and My message];

10 about righteousness [personal integrity and godly character], because I am going to My Father and you will no longer see Me;

11 about judgment [the certainty of it], because the ruler of this world (Satan) has been judged and condemned.

When I think of the **Holy Spirit**, this is how I primarily think of Him: God with us, helping and empowering us to live a flourishing life that radiates the goodness of God. I don't know about you, but I'm constantly aware of my need for divine help. As my flesh fights for control, it's the Spirit that steps in and helps me to be who God created me to be.

When you are feeling powerless or tired or like your failing at life, you can have confidence as a believer that you're not alone. You can start each day knowing the Holy Spirit is there to help you. He is the power that sustains, energizes, and keeps you on a holy path. Do not hesitate to invite Him in.

2. The Holy Spirit sanctifies you.

1 Corinthians 6:11.

“But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God,”

“Sanctified” means to be set apart as sacred. Essentially, it’s the purification of sin and spiritually maturing to become more Christlike. This is an important process for a believer--leaving behind the old and becoming a new person. But it’s a daily process, and it takes time.

The Holy Spirit wants to help you in this process of sanctification: to die to your old self and be all that God created you to be. To be free from the entanglement of sin and live victoriously.

2. He makes you more like Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18.

“And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit,”

Moses experienced God’s glory on the mountain top but we have communion with Him every day!

Theologian Warren Wiersbe writes “Moses reflected the glory of God, but you and I may radiate the glory of God. When we meditate on God’s Word and in it see God’s Son, then the Spirit transforms us! We become more like the Lord Jesus Christ as we grow ‘from glory to glory.’”

Our goal is Christlikeness, and this takes place through the power of the Holy Spirit. While we focused on sanctification and the diminishment of sin in the previous point, this is rather a transformation into the image of Christ.

4. He helps you to do the Father’s will

Acts 8:29

“Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go up and join this chariot,’”

Throughout the New Testament we see the Holy Spirit direct people to do the will of God. He helps us tune into the voice of the Father and, in **faith**, do what we believe He is calling us to. Ask the Spirit to show you what the Father’s will would be for you today and ask Him to empower you to carry it out!

5. The Holy Spirit gifts you for ministry.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,^[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.^[b]

¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

The Holy Spirit imparts to believers gifts that are needed in the Church. Nobody receives all the gifts, but they are distributed among the Body of Christ, each person receiving different gifts. The gift(s) that you receive will empower you for the calling God has placed on your life. Embrace what God has put inside of you and be His instrument for Kingdom purpose!

6. He imparts love

Romans 5:1-5 GNT

Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have^[a] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² He has brought us by faith into this experience of God's grace, in which we now live. And so we boast^[b] of the hope we have of sharing God's glory! ³ We also boast^[c] of our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, ⁴ endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope. ⁵ This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us. We find love in our suffering. As we endure trials, God's love is poured out into us through the Spirit and it's this empowerment that carries you and I through the hard seasons. When you are doubting this love in your difficulty, remember that the Spirit pours it into your heart.

We find God's love in our suffering. As we endure trials, God's love is poured out into us through the Spirit and it's this empowerment that carries you and I through the hard seasons. When you are doubting this love in your difficulty, remember that the Spirit pours it into your heart.

7. The Holy Spirit gives hope

Romans 15:13 GNT

¹³ May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hope is the substance of faith. This is only possible in abundance through the power of the Holy Spirit. And it's hope that carries people through all trials and tribulations. Hope is fuel for the soul. Sometimes the Holy Spirit just gives you a peace that surpasses all understanding. Tap into this by His power and experience peace among your surroundings.

8. The Holy Spirit teaches and gives insight

John 14:25-27 AMP

25 "I have told you these things while I am still with you.

26 But the [d]Helper (Comforter, Advocate Intercessor—Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will help you remember everything that I have told you.

27 Peace I leave with you; My [perfect] peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. [Let My

perfect peace calm you in every circumstance and give you courage and strength for every challenge.]

The Holy Spirit will give you insight into what you are reading and furthermore, the Holy Spirit will help you recall what you've read in Scripture. He brings to your mind understanding and truth. I am continually amazed how the Holy Spirit can open up a scripture which I have read several times before and show me a new truth in it.

Have you ever had one of those moments when you were in a situation and a Scripture verse you read or memorized years ago popped into your head, encouraging you in that moment? That was the Holy Spirit reminding you of what you had been taught. He empowers you with understanding and the ability to recall important verses that apply to your life.

9. The Holy Spirit guides your prayers

Romans 8:26-27 AMP

26 In the same way the Spirit [comes to us and] helps us in our weakness. We do not know what prayer to offer or how to offer it as we should, but the Spirit Himself [knows our need and at the right time] intercedes on our behalf with sighs and groanings too deep for words.

27 And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because the Spirit intercedes [before God] on behalf of [c]God's people in accordance with God's will.

Sometimes I have no words. Or I have so much to say that I'm not sure where to start. Ever experience that?

I was in Kenya the first time and had a prayer line and no interpreter. As I began to pray for the first lady, I stood about 4 feet from her. I didn't speak Swahili, so I began to pray in tongues by the Holy Spirit. She went over in the Spirit eyes closed, hands raised, uttering a foreign language from her smiling mouth. Two nights later she confessed that when she came, she was a Muslim, but now wanted to be a Christian.

Sometimes, we don't have to have the right words. The Holy Spirit knows just what to say. Lean into Him and allow Him to express to the Father what needs to be said. It is the most powerful thing you can do.

10. He uses you for evangelism

Acts 1:8 AMP

6 So when they had come together, they asked Him repeatedly, "Lord, are You at this time re-establishing the kingdom and restoring it to Israel?"

7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.

8 But you will receive power and ability when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be My witnesses [to tell people about Me] both

in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth.”

Telling others about Jesus and making disciples is our most important role on this earth. It is literally the last thing Jesus said before he ascended into heaven! Having the Holy Spirit with us means having power to be a witness. The Holy Spirit, if you will listen, will show you what you need to tell people about what Jesus did for them on the cross. To tell them how He conquered death and reigns victoriously! Don't shy away from being an advocate for Christ; it is what you are called to do. Jesus wants to use you. Allow the Holy Spirit to empower you for the Kingdom purpose of making disciples

Ephesians 4:29-32

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

The next verse leads to our next pillar.

³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Chapter 8: Pillar 5-Compassion

What Is Compassion? Compassion literally means “to suffer together.” Among emotion researchers, it is defined as the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another’s suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering. Sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others. Who are "the victims should be treated with compassion"

Ephesians 4:32

³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

The late Colonel Sanders (of Kentucky Fried Chicken) was on an airplane when an infant screamed and would not stop even though the mother and flight attendants tried every trick they could think of. Finally, the Colonel asked if he could hold the baby. He gently rocked the youngster to sleep.

Later a passenger said, “We all appreciate what you did for us.”

Colonel Sanders replied, “I didn’t do it for us, I did it for the baby.”

What a great example of what compassion is about. Compassion is a combination of two words, com “with” and passion or “to suffer together,” and so it is

with great passion for others, someone could be said to be sharing in their suffering and that's biblical as Paul writes, speaking of Holy Spirit and the essence of our ministry.

2 Corinthians 1:4

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

The question is, "Have you ever felt compassion for somebody?" Was your response to their suffering a desire to help? Whether its commiseration, condolence, sympathy or any other act or capacity for sharing the painful feelings of another, compassion is indispensable in the Body of Christ, the church.

Have you shared in someone else's suffering? Could you call it "to suffer together?" In addition to having the sorrow that is felt for the suffering of others, it is a willingness and an urge to assist them. The word actually means to do something about feeling sorry, to be affected by their situation. It is to enter into one's sorrow and pain.

When we feel true compassion, we will be moved inwardly. Having empathy; to have one's heart reach out toward the needs of others. To be compassionate, to pity; to be kindhearted. It means to be

tender-hearted; to be sensitive and affectionate, to be moved with tender feelings over the pain and sufferings of others.

We are instructed by Peter to be united in brotherly love. He means there should be no fussing and arguing within the Lord's body.

We read of Jesus healing the woman with the issue of blood and raising to life again the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue in the Book of Mark.

Mark 5:21-43

²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.

²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his

cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰ At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

³¹ "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?' "

³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"

³⁶ Overhearing^[c] what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, "Why all this

commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.”⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was.⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”).⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

The Lord Jesus Christ was demonstrating His great power with His enormous compassion. His death was motivated by compassion, as was His power over nature and evil spirits.

In the Book of Job Chapter 6 we are told how compassion can go beyond words. Job said that his friend Eliphaz's advice was like eating the tasteless white of an egg.

This shows us how ill-advised counsel is distasteful when someone is going through a severe trial. Inside they are upset, even though they may listen quietly and politely.

Job 6:1-30 (NLT)

1 Then Job spoke again:

*2 "If my misery could be weighed and my troubles be put on the scales,
3 they would outweigh all the sands of the sea. That is why I spoke impulsively.
4 For the Almighty has struck me down with his arrows. Their poison infects my spirit.
God's
terrors are lined up against me.
5 Don't I have a right to complain? Don't wild donkeys bray when they find no grass, and oxen
bellow when they have no food?
6 Don't people complain about unsalted food? Does anyone want the tasteless white of an egg?
7 My appetite disappears when I look at it; I gag at the thought of eating it!
8 "Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant my desire.
9 I wish he would crush me. I wish he would reach out his hand and kill me. 10 At least I can take
comfort in this: Despite the pain, I have not denied the words of the Holy One.
11 But I don't have the strength to endure. I have nothing to live for.
12 Do I have the strength of a stone? Is my body made of bronze?
13 No, I am utterly helpless, without any chance of success.
14 "One should be kind to a fainting friend, but you accuse me without any fear of the Almighty.*

15 My brothers, you have proved as unreliable as a seasonal brook that overflows its banks in the spring

16 when it is swollen with ice and melting snow.

17 But when the hot weather arrives, the water disappears. The brook vanishes in the heat.

18 The caravans turn aside to be refreshed, but there is nothing to drink, so they die.

19 The caravans from Tema search for this water; the travelers from Sheba hope to find it.

20 They count on it but are disappointed. When they arrive, their hopes are dashed.

21 You, too, have given no help. You have seen my calamity, and you are afraid.

22 But why? Have I ever asked you for a gift? Have I begged for anything of yours for myself?

23 Have I asked you to rescue me from my enemies, or to save me from ruthless people?

24 Teach me, and I will keep quiet. Show me what I have done wrong.

25 Honest words can be painful, but what do your criticisms amount to?

26 Do you think your words are convincing when you disregard my cry of desperation?

27 You would even send an orphan into slavery or sell a friend.

28 Look at me! Would I lie to your face?

29 Stop assuming my guilt, for I have done no wrong.

30 Do you think I am lying? Don't I know the difference between right and wrong?

Are we judgmental or compassionate when we see someone going through a trial? We should be slow in giving advice to those who are hurting.

Many times, they often need compassion more than they need advice. It is so easy to advise them a solution when what they really need is help and love in their grief.

In the story of the man with palsy, we find that it is the compassion of his friends which leads to the miracle.

Mark 2:1-12

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ² They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³ Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? ¹⁰ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, ¹¹ “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” ¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Our Lord God is compassionate. A ray of hope was seen in the middle of all the sin and sorrow surrounding him by Jeremiah.

Lamentations 3:18-24

- ¹⁷ So I say, “My splendor is gone
and all that I had hoped from the LORD.”
¹⁹ I remember my affliction and my wandering,
the bitterness and the gall.
²⁰ I well remember them,

- and my soul is downcast within me.
²¹ Yet this I call to mind
 and therefore I have hope:
²² Because of the LORD's great love we are not
 consumed,
 for his compassions never fail.
²³ They are new every morning;
 great is your faithfulness.
²⁴ I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;
 therefore I will wait for him."

Our Lord Jesus Christ took the term a step further. He used it to help illustrate the attitude that should capture the life of every believer.

In the parable of the unforgiving servant, the master had compassion and forgave the servant's debt. This is told in Matthew 18:21-35

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."^[a]

²³ "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold^[b] was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not

able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶ "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.^[1] He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

²⁹ "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

³⁰ "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵ "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

We also see where the prodigal son's father had compassion on the son in the Book of Luke. A warning about how we treat the sinners in our families.

Luke 15:10-23

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven

and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants. ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet

you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!"

³¹ "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

The Lord had compassion on the crowd in Mark Chapter 6 and stopped the disciples' and His vacation. He had told the disciples they needed to get away for some rest. Instead, because of Jesus' great compassion, they ended up working even harder and a great miracle took place.

Mark 6: 20- 44

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³ But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot

*from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had **compassion** on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.*

³⁵ By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. ³⁶ Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

³⁷ But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages^[e]! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

³⁸ "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see."

When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

³⁹ Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the

people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

This same compassion will stand ready to assist the one who is sorrowing as well as the crowds. Paul preached that God is the source of all the believer's ability for showing true **compassion**. We see what he wrote to the Colossians

Colossians 3:12

"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering."

Now that the elect of God is a new man, the garment of **compassion** should be a part of the new man's clothing. The clothing of **compassion** should always be worn by the believer. The believer should reach out and try to help others through their suffering. Compassion is the seat of man's affections. Of all human emotions, compassion is the deepest movement of emotions. It is moved within the deepest part of a person's being.

In Luke Chapter 7, we read of the widow whose son had died

Luke 7:13

"...and when the Lord saw her, he had compassion and said unto her, Weep not."

The Lord had compassion as He assured her. He saw the woman and had compassion on her. Let us note these three facts.

(1) We read that it was "the Lord" who saw her. Luke is making the point that it was "the Lord", the Sovereign Power of the universe. He saw this woman and saw that she was truly heartbroken.

(2) We see that it was "the Lord" who had compassion on her. The fact is startling, that the Sovereign Power had compassion on a mere woman. He was not unattached to the people of the earth and its inhabitants. Jesus was extremely interested. In fact, He was interested enough to be looking and noticing. He was filled with concern and full of compassion for all of the heartbroken. The Lord spoke and gave assurance to a simple woman. The apostle and writer Luke stresses that it was "the Lord" who spoke and gave assurance to a simple woman. He gives great assurance to men. His Word, the Bible, gives us great assurance.

(3) We see that our Lord God is very interested in our affairs. There are many examples in the Bible of compassion. The three examples of compassion that I have chosen are ones which the Lord God and Jesus Christ noticed, and in which they, were moved by the suffering of another person.

Even in the Old Testament we find that God is a God of compassion.

Deuteronomy 30:1-3 (KJV)

1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call [them] to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,

2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

*3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have **compassion** upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.*

Matthew 9:35-38 (KJV)

35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

*36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with **compassion** on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly [is] plenteous, but the labourers [are] few;

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

We often, in America, point out in Christian movies and stories how people will drive right by a fellow Christian with a flat tire because they don't want to be late for church.

Luke records the Lords' teaching to the Pharisee In Luke 10, the story of the good Samaritan. It is a lesson for each of us as to how we should treat others.

In Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷ He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'^[c]; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^[d]"

²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denari^[e] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Our Lord God is revealed clearly as a God full of compassion. This extends to the entire human race, which He effected not only a temporal, but a spiritual and eternal deliverance by giving up His own Son to the death of the cross.

This was done in order to save us from sin, with its consequences. It is seen in that Jesus Christ died for the sins of all mankind, thereby gaining a new, wider people for Himself, more devoted and more filled with the expression of His own Spirit.

Therefore, it is necessary for Christians to cultivate compassion and show mercy. This is to be shown just as Jesus is merciful and compassionate. Christianity needs to always be compassionate.

There is also the compassion of humans told of in the Scriptures. In Matthew 18:22-26 we read of human compassion being shown.

Matthew 18:22-33 (KJV)

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."^[a]

²³ "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold^[h] was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶ "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.^[i] He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

²⁹ "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

³⁰ "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.' ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵ "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

The apostle Peter tells us in his first letter.

1 Peter 3:8-10 (KJV)

*8 Finally, [be ye] all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, [be] pitiful, [be] courteous:
9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.
10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:*

The world that we live in desperately needs pity. It is a world of tremendous suffering. Notice how compassion will not leave any room for selfishness. True

compassion will have a person deny himself so he can help others in their grim needs and sufferings. As people impart and assist others, they are drawn together.

The Uniting of people can be accomplished by compassion. This is the goal of being part of Team Jesus. When a person shows a feeling for another and sacrifices, by reaching out to help each other, a great bond is formed. It is formed between believers, and it also is formed between the believer and the ones that he ministers unto.

We can't wrap our minds around God's compassion. The Apostle Paul quotes **Exodus 33:19** in

Romans 9:15

"For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion"

If you want God's compassion on you, you must look to the Man of Passion, Jesus Christ as

John 1:12-13 (NKJV)

"all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God".

And in the book of Matthew

Matthew 25:40 (NKJV)

*And the King will answer and say to them,
'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it
to one of
the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

Chapter 9: Pillar 6 – Love

John 13:34-35

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another,”

We have a cartoon special that is played at Valentine’s Day every year. The Peanuts Charlie Brown Valentines Special.

Lucy of Peanuts fame, says to Charlie Brown: "You know what I don’t understand? I don’t understand love!"

Charlie Brown responds, "Who does?"

Lucy says, "Explain love to me Charlie Brown."

Charlie Brown says, "You can’t explain love. I can recommend a book or a poem or a painting, but I can’t explain love."

Lucy responds, "Well, try, Charlie Brown, try."

Charlie says, "Well, let’s say I see this beautiful, cute little girl walk by . . . "

Lucy interrupts – "Why does she have to be cute? Huh? Why can’t someone fall in love with someone with freckles and a big nose? Explain that!"

Charlie Brown says, "Well, maybe you are right. Let’s just say I see this girl walk by with this great big nose . . . "

Lucy screams, "I didn't say GREAT BIG NOSE!"
Charlie Brown sighs, "You not only can't explain love, you can't even talk about it."

It is indeed difficult to explain love. Is it a feeling? Is it a behavior? The use of the word has become so contaminated in our society. We use the word to refer to affection and compassion, devotion and emotion.

We say we love God, our spouses, Mexican food, and football. What does the word mean for us as Christians? In the words of the song writer, Cole Porter, "What is this thing called love?"

Jesus stated it this way in describing Love in the John chapter 15

John 15: 8-17

⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

For the Christian, love is one of the essential pillars of the church and of Christian character. We've already examined the first five of those pillars: **Grace**, **Repentance**, **Baptism** (Service), the **Holy Spirit** (Born Again), and **Compassion**. Love is the sixth and there is one more to go.

It's hard to decide if one pillar of Christian character is any more important than the other. Love is so indispensable that Jesus told His disciples that it was the singular distinguishing mark of a true disciple:

We will be known, Jesus said, not by our religious works. The world will know we are Christians by our love. That is how people will know we are His followers. The first church according to tradition was established in Antioch,

Acts 11:19-24

¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

²² News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴ He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

For the first three centuries of the Church, mutual Christ-like affection was indeed the characteristic. The

pagans most closely associated with the early Christians would say “My how they love each other!”

What was the great love they had for each other? To get a get look at this great love we need to look at what was going on in Rome with Nero.

Nero was a politician who desired to be the greatest emperor ever recorded in history. He wanted to rebuild the ancient city of Rome into a modern city that would glorify his name and achievements. The Roman senate resisted because of the high cost. This argument and debate started the greatest persecution of the Christians. This great persecution was the work of Emperor Nero.

Nero was already unpopular by the time of the Great Fire of Rome in 64 AD. The fire started in the Market section of Rome. The fire lasted for 3 days and was finally extinguished. A few days later it flared up again and destroyed over two thirds of the city.

With rumors that the Emperor himself was behind the fire circulating, Nero picked on a convenient scapegoat. Nero blamed the Christians for the terrible fire of Rome and many Christians were arrested and executed.

Christians taught that the world would be judged by fire, and so it was easy to cast suspicion on them as being fire bugs. They were punished by being burned as human torches. Fire became a common means by which heretics were eliminated. Whenever we speak of making a bonfire, we do not realize that the word comes from

the gruesome practice of burning people, which was known as a bone fire. This kind of experience with fire makes exciting movies, but it is not the kind of experience that appeals to us. Most Christians do not have a martyr complex.

Those Christians being persecuted descended into the caves created by the excavating of sand which was used for the new construction going on. These 600 miles of caves became known as the Catacombs. They became the home and graveyard for many of those early Believers. This is where we get the term “to go underground”.

Instead of decreasing, the number of Christians grew. Since the crucifixion of Jesus, the early Believers expected to die because of persecution also. Their goal was to pursue the words of Jesus and love their enemies.

When they heard that their Roman neighbors were sick or injured, they would come out of the catacombs and minister to them with food and care. As a result of their display of Christian love, many Romans became Christians and the Church exploded instead of disappearing.

The Apostle Paul reflects on this in his letter to the Corinthians written while he was in Ephesus.

1 Corinthians 23:2-3

¹ If I speak in the tongues^[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I

have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast;^[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Perhaps this links into what Paul wrote to the Ephesians

Ephesians 5:1-2

¹ Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Love is not about sex, material things, or the gratification of the flesh or ego. Love is about sacrifice. I was a US Marine. We had a lot of stories of our exploits to live up to. The biggest exploit was the unwritten one that we all knew. Our comrades in the foxhole next to us were the most important ones to get the mission accomplished. We were to protect him at any cost.

There is a list with the names of the many soldiers who, when a hand grenade landed in the foxhole,

without thinking, jumped on it to save the others. It was something we did not dwell upon, we just did.

Jesus spoke these words before His transfiguration in the Book of Luke

Luke 9:21-27

²¹ Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. ²² And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

²³ Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? ²⁶ Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."

²⁷ "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

The pillar of Love is the pillar of being willing to jump on the hand grenade to pull others out of the fires

of Hell. The Apostle Paul was one who was willing to jump on the grenade for us. He writes to the Corinthians and declares the 7th pillar to us.

1 Corinthians 15:29-33

²⁹ Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? ³⁰ And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? ³¹ I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³² If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

*“Let us eat and drink,
for tomorrow we die.”^[d]*

³³ Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”^[e] ³⁴ Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.

Chapter 10: Pillar 7- Resurrection

Matthew 22:23-33

²³ That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ²⁴ "Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. ²⁷ Finally, the woman died. ²⁸ Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"

²⁹ Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. ³⁰ At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ³¹ But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, ³² 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ^[b]? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.'"

³³ When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

The physician Luke, who became a disciple, put the Resurrection at the end of the Book of Luke. He explains the Book of Luke as a summary at the start of the Book of Acts. He had gone back and interviewed everyone who had been around, and involved with, Jesus for the Book of Luke. It is reflected in statements like "His mother bore it in her heart" Let us read Luke's summary.

ACTS 1:1-10

¹In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with^[a] water, but in a few days you will be baptized with^[b] the Holy Spirit."

⁶Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the

Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Most religious groups and even non-religious groups do not believe in a resurrection. Especially the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the defining proof that Jesus was the Messiah.

The pillar of the Resurrection is the pillar that, with Grace, holds the whole building together. Just as there would be no church without Grace, there could be no church without the proof of the Grace, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian faith. Without the resurrection, the belief in God's saving grace through Jesus is destroyed. When Jesus rose from the dead, he confirmed his identity as the Son of God and his work of atonement, redemption, reconciliation, and salvation. The resurrection was a real, literal, physical raising of Jesus' body from the dead.

Jesus was arrested, tried and found guilty of claiming to be a king. His body was hung on a cross between two thieves. After his death, Jesus' body was wrapped in linen clothes and placed in a tomb with a large stone rolled across the opening. On the third day, an early Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and another Mary came to the tomb and found it empty. Sitting on the rolled away stone was an angel of the Lord who told them to not be afraid because Jesus had risen. As the women left to tell the disciples, Jesus Christ met them and showed them his nail pierced hands.

Matthew 28:1-15

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

² There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

⁵ The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his

disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

⁸ So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them.

"Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

¹¹ While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹² When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, ¹³ telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' ¹⁴ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." ¹⁵ So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Mark 16.1-14

² When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus'

body. ² Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³ and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

⁶ "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

⁸ Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.^[a]

[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20.]

⁹ When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. ¹¹ When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

¹² Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the

country. ¹³ These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.

¹⁴ Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

Of course, The Apostle John has a more personal view. I have underlined it.

John 20:1-2

¹ Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the

linen.⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

¹³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

And now Luke's account:

Luke 24:1-12

² On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

The Resurrection was of such great importance that all four Gospels record it. Even the Apostle Paul brings it up in his letters to the churches. He constantly reminds the believers.

Romans 8:31-39

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

*“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be
slaughtered.”^[1]*

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[k] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:1-58

¹Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance^[a]: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas,^[b] and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

⁹For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

The Resurrection of the Dead

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For he "has put

*everything under his feet.*²⁷ Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

²⁹ Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?³⁰ And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour?³¹ I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord.³² If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

*“Let us eat and drink,
for tomorrow we die.”³³*

³³ Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”³⁴ Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.

³⁵ But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?”³⁶ How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.³⁷ When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something

else. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. ³⁹ Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. ⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. ⁴¹ The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"^[f]; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we^[a] bear the image of the heavenly man.

⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”^[1]

⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”^[1]

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Colossians 2:11-12

were circumcised by^[2] Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you

were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Finally, the Apostle Paul sums up the importance and the message in the next chapter of Colossians.

Colossians 3:1-3

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Again, we look at John Chapter 14 and the Words of Jesus. It is important because perhaps you are going through some discouraging times right now. If you have made it this far you have caught the vision of the truth of building a House that can stand in any storm.

John 14:1-6

*1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God[a]; believe also in me.
2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?
3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

4 You know the way to the place where I am going."

5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really know me, you will know[b] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

I have had a great deal of opportunity to minister around the world and have come across many different religions. One of the facts I have discovered is that most people believe in gods or a god. Some even believe in the God. All of them believe in the need to find favor to come to their god.

Most of their religions require works or penance to get that favor or grace. They honor and worship their teachers by visiting or treasuring their bones and graves. When I ask them how they know when they have done enough works to have favor, the answer is always the same, they never know.

We know we have favor with God by His Word and the Promises in It. It is Grace by Faith. Proved by the other 6 Pillars. It is the foundation of the place Jesus prepares for us. The House of God which will stand in any storm. The one in which the Apostle Paul Writes

Romans 8:9-16

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life^[a] because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of^[a] his Spirit who lives in you.

¹² Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.^[f] And by him we cry, “Abba,^[a] Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Now let us take one final look at the house of God in the final Chapter. The House where all things are possible. The successful ministry, the successful family, the successful business, and most of all the successful life.

Chapter 11: The 3 C's to Success

The Bible tells that if we have three things, nothing we can imagine can be withheld from us. I am sure this is what is going on in the Church today. Let us read the words Moses wrote in Genesis.

Genesis 11:1-8

¹ Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. ² As people moved eastward,^[a] they found a plain in Shinar^[b] and settled there.

³ They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

⁵ But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶ The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

⁸ So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹ That is why it was called Babel^[c]—

because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

First off, I want to tell you that we need to look at verse 4.

⁴Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”

As Christians we (most, not all) have grown into the people mentioned here. We have become a people who have developed church growth and finance related classes and teachings with the intent to advance the kingdom of God. I am inundated ever week with companies wanting to help me raise funds. I know of several Churches who that are so far buried by debt for their buildings and building program, that each week they are in danger of losing everything.

WE reach Heaven with our spirits. We do this without spending money or entangling ourselves in the world system. We don't have to become like everyone one else. We just have to become like Jesus and serve Him.

That is the warning given here. Now let us look at the three C's. It is in verse 6.

Genesis 11:6

⁶ The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them."

Here we see the 3 C's

1. **Communication-** *as one people speaking the same language*

We have begun as the followers of Jesus to have different meanings and interpretations of the words spoken among each other. Over time it is because of the teachings of men to set their works part. It would be wonderful to be known as some great revelator or founder of some great ministry. If I was in the world.

Ecclesiastes tells me there is nothing new under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-10

The words of the Teacher,^[a] son of David, king in Jerusalem:

² "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher.

"Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."

³ What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun?

⁴ Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.

⁵ The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.

*⁶ The wind blows to the south and turns to the north;
round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.*

⁷ All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.

⁸ All things are wearisome, more than one can say.

The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.

⁹ What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.

¹⁰ Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new" It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time.

No revelation or scripture comes by private interpretation. There will be others receiving the same revelation and interpretations from the Lord. It will also bear witness by the Spirit of God in us.

Our church communication is derived mostly by the doctrines we have been taught. Over the course of time men have been able to come in and pervert the original

church doctrine. We must return to it. We must teach it. It being the original teachings given by our Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostle of the New Testament. I have researched, prayed, and believe written down those doctrines attached as an appendix at the end of this book.

2. **Cooperation** - *they have begun to do this*

They began to work together. In the bible we find that cooperation was what allowed the restoration of the wall of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 4:1-6

¹When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews,² and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?"

³Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building—even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!"

⁴Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity.⁵ Do not cover up their guilt or blot

*out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face ofth the builders.
⁶ So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.*

We can restore the church Jesus started and restore the kingdom here on earth the way it should be. We have allowed the Devil to come in and lead us astray by building on our egos, and pride. If we will let go of our self-righteousness and our desires to be great, go back and take the lowest seat, we can lock arms and work together.

Psalms 133:1-3

*¹ How good and pleasant it is
 when God's people live together in unity!
² It is like precious oil poured on the head,
 running down on the beard,
 running down on Aaron's beard,
 down on the collar of his robe.
³ It is as if the dew of Hermon
 were falling on Mount Zion.
 For there the LORD bestows his blessing,
 even life forevermore.*

A few years ago, my wife and I went to Hawaii on a vacation. We left the big city and took a tour bus to the backside of the island. The tour guide on the bus began to tell us about how the hurricanes always hit that side of the island and destroyed the buildings. One of the

older ladies interrupted him. “How come” she asked, “if the Hurricanes destroy the buildings there are so many old ones here?”

“It is quite easy to explain” he said. “When the storms come, all the termites lock arms and hold them together.”

It is time for the followers of Jesus Christ, the Lord, to lock arms and hold the church together on this earth. We need to get back to cooperating on our outreach, prayer, and mission.

Jesus prayed this for us. It is His desire for us lock arms. Which brings me to the Third C.

3. Common Goal- *nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.*

Jesus states several times in the gospel the common goal of the church is. It is the same as the head, Jesus Christ.

John 5:28-30

²⁸ “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰ By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is

just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

John 6:35-40

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."

John 7:17

¹⁵ The Jews there were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having been taught?" ¹⁶ Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. ¹⁷ Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my

own. ¹⁸ Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him

In fact, Jesus gives the secret to saying and doing the will of the Father in John chapter 14. It is the secret to doing God's will. Let the Holy Spirit do it through you.

John 14:10-14

¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Jesus Prayed in John Chapter 17

John 17:13-24

¹³ "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that

they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by^[d] the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

It is time to bring this to a close. It is the time for the body of the Lord to come together.

1. **To speak the same language.** That is to get back to the meanings and values of our Lord. To follow His simple doctrines.
2. **To Cooperate Together.** There should not be Denominations. The Churches were out lined as cities and countries. They worked together and had the same Word of God. The same Doctrines. Micah 3:3 says How can two walk together unless they agree? Two mules pulling a trailer will not get far if they don't go in the same direction.
3. **To have the Same Common Goal.** Our goal ought to be to bring the Good News of Grace to the world. It should never be to see who can build the biggest tower in the city. It should be to establish elders and deacons. Teaching them the Word and equipping them to spread the Word. Then sending them out to go forth locking arms to do the same.

Revelation 2:1-7

To the angel^a of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among

the seven golden lampstands. ² I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³ You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

⁴ Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. ⁶ But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Amen

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Appendix A- Doctrinal Statement provided as a Bible study for New Converts- So we speak the same language worldwide.

Doctrinal Statement Team Jesus Ministries International

“Things Most Surely Believed Among Us” Luke 1:1

1. That God is **ONE** (Duet 6:4; Eph 4:6; Isaiah 43:10-11, Isaiah 44:6; 1 Cor 8:6; James 2:19; Romans 3:30 ; **Sovereign** (Duet 32:39, Ps 103:19; Ps 135:6; Col 1:17: Eph 1:11, Job 42:2) and He is **Eternal** (1 Tim 1:17; Rev 1:8; Duet 32:40; Gen 21:33; Ps 90:2 and He reveals Himself in three Manifestations or persons (Matt 28:19: Matt 3:16,17: 1 Cor 12:4-6) **Father** (1 Cor 8:6; Ephesians 3:14, 4:6; John 20:17, **Son** (John 10:30; John 14:9-10; Col 2:9) **Holy Spirit** (Acts 5:3-4; John 4:24; 1 Tim 1:17; 2 Cor 3:17)

2. That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16: 1 Tim 2:5-7; John 8:39-40) He was the First fruits of many Sons (1 Cor 15:20; Col 1:15); that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:18-20) born of a virgin (Luke 1:34-35) ; lived a sinless life (He 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5); died a substitutionary death (2 Cor 5:21: 1 John 2:1-2; 1 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 5:2; Romans 8:3); He arose the grave Bodily on the third day (Luke 24:39; 1 Cor 15:3-4 Luke 24:5-7; Acts 1:3); and ascended to the right hand of God Acts 2:32-33; Psalms 110:1; Eph 1:22; He 1:13)

3. That the Holy Spirit is God. (John 4:24; Acts 5:3-4; Isaiah 66:1, 1 Kings 8:27, Acts 7:48,49; John 14:10, John 14:16,17; John 14:20; Acts 17:24; Col 2:9; Eph 3:19) and personality is attributed to Him (John 16:13-14; Eph 4:30, 1 Thes 5:19; 1 Cor 2:10-11; 1 Cor 12:11; Rom 8:26-27; Neh 9:20; Gal 4:6)

4. The Holy Bible is the Inspired Word of God (2 Tim 3:15-17; Job 32:8) Church authority comes from the Scriptures (1 Cor 10:11; 2 Pet 1:21; Luke 4:7; Matt 15:4; Acts 28:25)

5. That Man was created in the likeness of God (Gen 1:26, 5:1; 9:6 ; 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9; Col 1:15 ; 3:10) That the first man Adam disobeyed God. and through that one man's sin, all men are made sinners (Rom. 5: 1 2-2 I; Gen 3:6; Rom 6:23; Gen 2:17; Gen 3:19, 22-24) and are totally depraved (Rom. 3:10-12; Rom 3:23, 7:18-21; 1 John 1:8-10).

6. That justification before God is by grace through faith (Rom. 3:24; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:8; 1 John 1:9). That the New Birth is that event whereby we are begotten again by God unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pet. 1 :3, 23 ; 1 Peter 2:2; John 1:13; John 3:3-8, James 1:18; 1 John 5:1,4,18).

7. That the believer is kept by the power of God (Jn. 10:28; 1 Pet. 1 :3-5; Isaiah 54:17; Pro 2:8; Ps 125: 1-2; John 4:14, 5:24, 10: 28-30,).

8. That the believer is empowered to be a witness unto Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit coming upon him (Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 6:8; Zech 4:6; Luke 10:19).

9. That the Church is the Body of Christ of which He is the Head (Col. 1:18; 2:10-14, 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 1:10,22,23; 4:15-16; 5:23); that it is comprised of every born again believer from Pentecost to the Translation (Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12: 13-14, 27; Col 1:24, 2:19, 3:15; Eph 5:30); that every individual believer is himself a priest unto God (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Isaiah 61:6; Ex 19:5-6; Rev. 1:6).

10. That the gifts of the Holy Spirit are present in and available to the Church today, and are distributed to that Body according as its Head wills (Rom. 11:29; 12:6-8; Mal 3:6; Joel 2:28; 1 Cor. 12:3-11; Eph. 4:7-16; Mal 25:15).

11. That there will be two literal and bodily resurrections-(Dan 12:2-3; Act 24:15; Matt 25:31-36; Jn. 5:28-29; 2 Tim 4:1; 1 Cor 15:20-23) the first of the saved unto eternal happiness (Luke 20:35; Phil 3:11, the second of the lost unto eternal punishment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:4-6; Rev 20:11-15).

12. That there will be a second coming of Jesus Christ (Jn. 14: 1-3); that it will be visible and bodily (Matt 24:30; Mark 13:26, 1 Thess 1:10, 4:16 ; 2 Thess 1:7-10; Acts 1:11; Rev 1:7);

13. That all believers are one in Christ and there exists no division in that Body in the mind of God and there should therefore be none in ours (Jn. 17:22; I Cor. 12:12-17,27 ; Gal 3:16; Eph. 4:4'12' 15, 16; Col 3:15).

14. That the shedding of blood has been, from the fall, and will be to the end of time. God's only provision for the cleansing from sin (Lev. 17: 11; Heb. 9:22; I Jn. 1 :7); and that all the Old Testament sacrifices of animals could not remove sin (Heb. 10:4); but prefigured the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross (Col. 1 :20; 2: 17).

15. That water baptism (Mt. 28: 19); and the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 10: 1 6-17; I Cor. 11 :23-26); are to be observed as ordinances.

16. That Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire; that he has no power or authority over the child of God except as it is given him by God Himself (Job 1 :6; 2:6; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

17. That God ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions; 1) the home; 2) the church; and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific, Biblical

responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God (Rom. 13: 1-7; Eph. 5 :22-24; Heb. 13: 17; I Pet. 2: 13-14).

18. That God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1 :26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

19. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive covenant union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2: 18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (I Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1Cor 6:9-10)

20. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Team Jesus Ministries as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the members Team Jesus and the community, it is imperative that all persons licensed or employed by Team Jesus Ministries in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22; 1 Cor 5:1-2)

21. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.)

22. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Grace Life Fellowships. (Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:11; 1 Thes. 4:1-8; Matt 18:17; 2 Thess 3:6, 14; Romans 16:10).

23. That Christians are discouraged from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve

personal disputes between members (I Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32).

24. That every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel (Matt 5:17; Mal 3:8-12; Lev 27:30-34; Mark 12:41-44; Neh 10:35-37; Deut 12:5-6; Gen 14:19-20). We believe that a Christian relinquishes all personal rights to the gift and relinquishes all personal rights to direct the gift, offering or tithe once it has been given (2 Cor. 8:1-5; 9:6-9; Lk. 16:10-13; Acts 6:1-3).

25. That a Christian should live a holy separated life (II Cor. 6:17-18; II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:1-6, 9). We engage to maintain family and private devotions; to educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world. Col 3:1-3

26. We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore

called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139:13-18)

27. That a congregation functions as a body under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the Elders as the under shepherds. Membership in this Fellowship does not afford those individuals with any property, contract, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Determination of the internal affairs of churches in Team Jesus Ministries are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the Church's own rules and procedures

AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH: The Doctrinal Statement does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Doctrinal Statement accurately represents the teaching of the Bible, and therefore, should be embraced by all members.

Appendix B- The Covenant Contract

Given as a means to maintain unity and cooperation. All who sign agree to the terms of Team Jesus and if a dispute arises be able to resolve it by this covenant.

Team Jesus Membership Covenant

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord & Savior, and, on the profession of our faith and baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ . By God's grace through the power of His enabling Holy Spirit, I will do my best to joyfully...

- worship God the Father, Son & Holy Spirit as three Persons, yet one God
- submit to the authority of the Scriptures (Ps119,2Ti3.14-17,2Pt1.19-21)
- help the Grace Life family grow in the knowledge of the Lord (1Th2.7)
- walk in Christian love (Ep5.2), dedicating ourselves to holiness (Hb12.4,1Pt1.13-16) & disciplined Christian living (1Co5.9-13,9.27, Ps141.5, Mt18.15-20, Hb12.5-11)
- walk carefully in the world (Ep5.15, Ja4.4)
- be just in our dealings (Mi6.8)
- be faithful in our engagements (Lk16.10, Mt25.23)
- be exemplary in our behavior (Ro12.2), confess sin to God & fellow believers, repent & seek help from the Body of Christ in putting my sin to death (Ro8.13, Co3.5, Ja5.16,1Jn1.6-10)

- avoid all gossip (Pv11.13,16.28,26.20), backbiting (Ja4.11-12, Ep4.29) and excessive anger (Ep4.26,31)
- seek God's help in abstaining from illegal drugs, and any food or drink practices that may bring unwarranted harm to the Body of Christ or jeopardize our own or another's faith (Ep5.18,Pv20.1,Ga5.19-21,Ro1.28-32,13.13,1Co6.19-20,Ja3.3-18)
- live in Christian sympathy to the trials & difficulties of others (1Pt3.8, Ep4.32, Mt5.7, Ro12.15)
- be courteous in speech (Co4.6)
- be slow to take offense (Ja1.19), eager for reconciliation and mindful to secure reconciliation without delay as directed by our Savior who gave His life to reconcile us to God (Mt5.9,23-24,18.15,2Co5.18-19)
- educate our children in the Christian faith (Pv22.6, Dt6.6-7)
- pray for one another (Ja5.16,1Ti2.1)
- physically, prayerfully and financially support the ministries of Your church family (Hb10.23-25,Ep6.18,1Co16.1-2, Ac2.42-47, Ti3.14, Mt25.14-30, Ro12.1-2, 2Co8-9, 1Pt4.10-11)
- help spread the Gospel to all personally, locally, and globally (Mt28.19-20)

I agree that, as a “child of the light”, I should walk differently from the world, living in accord with the articles of our Christian faith wherever the Lord may use me and wherever I may worship. Should I move on from the Team Jesus family, as soon as I am able, I will unite with another local church family to continue my growth in the spirit of this covenant & principles of God’s Word.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. –1 Peter 4:11

Just prior to writing this Book, Team Jesus Ministries International went to Kenya, Africa just before the Corona Virus hit the world. This book represents the message ministered by the Holy Spirit during their 2-week trip.

The response was over whelming and a fire of change has started. Over 183 Pastors in Kenya had joined the Team by the end of the 2 weeks. We have placed by the leading of the Spirit, Samuel Kioko Muthui as National Director over Kenya.



Samuel is an instructor at Harvest Fields Bible College in Nairobi, Kenya and also the Bishop over Harvest Fields Churches of Kenya. Here he is Pictured with the 2nd order of 100 Swahili

bibles for Pastors. We have since received requests for over 1500 Swahili bibles from ministries planting churches in 9 African countries. I have been asked to come to over 13 countries to minister the message of Building the House that can Stand in Ant Storm.

If you would like to join us in ministering to one of these countries, please let us know. It will change your life.



I am looking forward to hearing from you and hope are Blessed by the message. You may contact me for prayer any time.

Jerry Van Ronk

Evangelist, Pastor, Missionary.