



VOLUME XXXVI NUMBER X
Sonship Gift V: Accepted

SATURDAY, JUNE 1

Scripture: Ephesians 1:5-6

Ephesians 1:5-6 says, “...having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.” We see that Ephesians 1 is Paul’s testimony as to how he was able to overcome blame, shame and guilt for killing a number of people and destroying the lives of many more as he wasted the church and tried to destroy it. Each one of these Sonship Gifts was successful in eradicating all blame, shame and guilt. These gifts gave him a clear conscience whereby he could accept, believe and germinate the seed of God's Word and bring forth perhaps the strongest of all of the apostolic ministries in Scripture. What Jesus has provided for us in the Sonship Gifts truly works. Paul is an example and this is his testimony of how he came into complete and total freedom. The first three Sonship Gifts are 100% grace manifestations in that they are all done for us in order to qualify us to be adopted into God's Family. First, God **chose** us before the foundations of the earth. Second, He declared us **holy**, through the Blood of Christ. And third, He proclaimed us **blameless**. Our only response can be to thankfully accept without reservation what has been given. Acceptance of those three character traits – chosen, holy and blameless – qualify us to take a position as a family member in the Family of God! Those three gifts qualify us to be a son or daughter of the Most High. The fourth Sonship Gift is the actual gift of **adoption**, which is bestowed upon us and that sets the stage to agree with and receive God's acceptance. This acceptance is critically important as a foundation for faith. So God accepts us into His Own Family and now we have to find and accept our assignment in the Family. Finding our place is discovering the fullness of the purpose for which God created us in the beginning. The Bible is not silent about God's individual purpose for every single one of us. Scripture is very clear – we were created with a unique calling. The real battle is, will we accept our position in God's Family and will we shoulder the purpose for which we were created?

SUNDAY, JUNE 2

Scripture: Ephesians 1:7-9

Each of these Sonship Gifts is consecutive and has a consistent purpose and goal. We are looking at the fifth Sonship Gift – acceptance – but in verse 7 we see the sixth Sonship Gift which is redemption. The sixth Sonship Gift means every fine has been paid for every violation we have ever committed. All the violations, the guilt from the violations and the penalty of the violations have been forgiven and lifted through the Blood. To be redeemed means to pay the penalty of the violation and buy freedom back. The seventh Sonship Gift is forgiveness of sin. By the time we get to the seventh Sonship Gift, God has fully eradicated all blame, shame and guilt and we begin to uncover the purpose of our creation. Only after our blame, shame and guilt are gone can we handle and germinate the purpose of our creation. Only then can we shoulder our eternal purpose, believe for it and call it forth to walk it out. Verse 9 says, “...having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself...” God's will is an unfolding mystery that comes alive in us completely when we are fully ready to shoulder it. He may give us a glimpse or speak to us about it in part, but the actual mystery of the unfolding of it comes when we walk through these Sonship Gifts and the soil has been tilled by our acceptance and the complete removal of blame, shame and guilt so that we can walk in perfect faith before God. As we mature step-by-step, we can develop the same relationship with the Father that Christ had. There is nothing between us and God to prevent us from developing the same relationship with the Father that Jesus had. And that relationship has a purpose. The purpose is the whole reason we were created. Why does it take so long? We do have an enemy, we do have obstacles, and we do have much to overcome. In the book of Revelation, there is one consistent thing among all seven churches. He says the very same thing to the congregants

of every church: “...To him who overcomes...” It is a universal principle and He repeated it seven times. There is no one who chooses God that is not immediately baptized into warfare and has significant overcoming to do. Every single person who chooses God, encounters warfare. Jesus Himself learned obedience through the things He suffered. He overcame His own flesh. He was fully Son of Man and fully Son of God. But as the Son of Man, He had to overcome His own flesh. He had to use His faith on His flesh to obey God. That is a primary principle we learned through Abraham, the father of faith. God places a premium on overcoming. Anybody who is deceived into reaching for perfection is caught in the lies of the enemy. There are no perfect people, there are those who choose to overcome and those who do not. True overcomers trust Christ as their perfect sacrifice for their sin. True overcomers faithfully stay the course and continually reach for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus! Our goal in this series is to achieve the relationship that Scripture says we can have with God so that we can make our full contribution and completely fulfill the purpose for which we were chosen. That is not an easy job. There is a significant amount of overcoming that has to be done in order to arrive there. I trust we see that and with determination choose to commit to walk that path.

MONDAY, JUNE 3

Scripture: Ephesians 1:6

Ephesians 1:6 gives us the fifth Sonship Gift and says, “...to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” “...made us accepted” is the Greek word **khar-e-too-o** from **khar-ace**, which is the word for grace. Acceptance, in the etymology of the word, starts with grace that is extended to us, in Christ. And that abundant grace manifests by God overlooking all of our faults and failures and dealing with them through the Blood of Christ. It makes us holy, blameless, adopted, fully family and called to shoulder God's acceptance. In Sonship Gift number five, we have to agree with God that He is a benevolent Creator Who, just like adoptive parents in the earth, choose people they want to adopt. And He chose us. That makes a big change in our lives because we now become a son and a daughter with privileges and with an inheritance from the Creator of the heavens and earth. Can we acknowledge the fact that God has chosen to accept us into His Own Family? That is what we are told! Family privileges mark a major transition in Scripture. We are not just saying yes to a concept, but yes to a family relationship that has an inheritance. In order for that inheritance to become a reality, it has to be accepted and believed because it is accessed by faith. Without faith, we cannot please God. And faith is what is required to walk in our inheritance. It requires our acceptance of His acceptance of us.

TUESDAY, JUNE 4

Scripture: Matthew 11:11

Matthew 11:11, in one verse, summarizes the transition that adoption presents us as we are accepted as a member of God's Own Family. It says, “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” This is perhaps one of the most amazing statements in the New Testament because it highlights the issue that, in Christ, we become members of God's Own Family. And what makes us greater than John the Baptist or Mary is, that we enjoy the favor of children under the New Covenant, while they served under the Old Covenant and they were called servants. They were servants of God, who accepted their assignments. They were servants who never in their earthly years became Family. The reason why he who is least in the Kingdom is greater, is because even the least are still Family. They are Family members with an inheritance like all the rest. We need to realize that the New Testament is very clear about the fact that under the New Covenant, we stand in a much better place. We are positioned no longer as servants but we are sons and daughters of God Himself. That is a different place to walk in and requires acceptance.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5

Scripture: Jeremiah 35:15

Jeremiah 35:15 says, “I have also sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, ‘Turn now everyone from his evil way, amend your doings, and do not go after other gods to serve them; then you will dwell in the land which I have given you and your fathers.’ But you have not inclined your ear, nor obeyed Me.” Jesus came on the heels of all the prophets including John the Baptist, who were all servants. But He came preaching the Kingdom and Sonship and bringing a whole new dimension of Kingdom rule and reign. This passage identifies for us again the transition that Jesus was announcing from servanthood to sonship. He who is least in the kingdom is greater than he... The issue of being a son or a daughter means we have a pattern to follow and that pattern comes from Christ. He showed us what is available to a son – from walking on the water to raising the dead to stilling the winds and the waves. All those acts are fruit of walking in

relationship with the Father as a son! We are the ones who are charged with showing the fullness of Christ as He was in the Gospels, but also as He is in the book of Revelation. There is a strong change toward the judicial when we see the activity of Christ in the book of Revelation. What are we going to do in the days ahead as we begin to see fullness emerge? It is obvious we have to make a transition in our thinking and shoulder the fullness of being sons and daughters. It is God's call, it is God's timing and it is here now!

THURSDAY, JUNE 6

Scripture: Ephesians 1:6, Luke 1:28-33

In Ephesians 1:6, we find that **khar-e-too-o** appears two of only three total times in the New Testament. The first one is bestowed upon Mary, but quickly transitions. In Luke 1:26-33 we are told, *"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, 'Rejoice, highly favored one/ **khar-e-too-o**, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!' But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.'" Here we see Mary referred to as a highly favored one. She was to serve God by bringing forth the Prince of Peace in her womb. She was to give birth to the Son of God as a servant under the Old Covenant. All under the New Covenant are greater than she. It is hard to believe, but it is exactly what the Word of God tells us. We have to make the transition in our thinking to the fact that we are sons and daughters of the King. I trust we will!*

FRIDAY, JUNE 7

Scripture: Luke 1:34-38

What do we do with this kind of high favor and acceptance? That was a quandary for Mary and it will likely be a quandary for most of us. Luke 1:34-38 says, *"Then Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I do not know a man?' And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.' Then Mary said, 'Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her."* We need to understand that as the mystery of God's Will unfolds, we may very well have to ask, 'How can this be?' Life is full of unknowns and they come every day. God says that the answer to all of the unknowns is the same – the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit is the answer to our unknowns. The Holy Spirit came on Mary and created in her the body of God's Son. And that is exactly what happened. We need to spend some time yielding our lives to the Holy Spirit, walking with Him, praying in the Spirit and building the Kingdom in us so that we can bring forth His perfect will as we discover it.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

Scripture: Ephesians 1:9-11

Finding ourselves adopted into God's Family, we can accept our new position as sons and daughters as we discover all the freedom that goes with it. The overall purpose that unfolds here is what Christ determined He wanted to do with and through us before the foundations of the earth. In verse 9 we see that unfold, *"...having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,..."* As God's will unfolds for us, we find that it is what He purposed for us at our creation. In verses 10-11, it moves on to say, *"...that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,..."* Here again, even in the unfolding plan of God, the inheritance that we are given and contribute to, helps bring forth the fullness of God in our generation and that was His purpose all along. The word that describes what started this whole process is God's purpose. He saw us and created us for good works. Everything we obediently do contributes to the eternal purpose and eternal harvest and all that God wants us to participate in. This is an amazing process as it unfolds because it is the evolving purpose of God's will.

SUNDAY, JUNE 9

Scripture: Ephesians 2:4-10

In Ephesians 2:4-10 we are told, *“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”* All the good works that God ordained for us, He prepurposed and predestined us to do. What we have here is the unfolding purpose of God, through His sons and daughters who are schooled in who they are and walk in faith. Sickness cannot fell them, demons cannot stop them and nobody can kill them before they finish their race. We were saved in order to contribute to God's ongoing purpose in the earth. We were predestined to do good works that will accomplish His eternal purpose. For such a season we have come to the Kingdom and surely we can walk this out as we participate in gathering in His harvest. God has a divine design and it unfolds through the church. Let's walk it out, in Jesus' name!

MONDAY, JUNE 10

Scripture: Genesis 4:1-7

Genesis 4:1-7 says, *“Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, ‘I have acquired a man from the Lord.’ Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.’”* Here we find the word *“accepted”* appear for the very first time in Scripture. Cain was told, *“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”* Cain apparently did not seek God and as a result offered that which did not please God! It is obvious that God's very first order of business was for the church and believers to experience His acceptance that He offered though a God-pleasing tithe. Blood Covenant guarantees that participants in tithing experience God's acceptance. The whole issue of the tithe is about building relationship at the altar of God for the worshiper. Connecting with the Lord through our giving builds relationship. God intended believers to experience His acceptance covenantally through giving!

TUESDAY, JUNE 11

Scripture: Genesis 28:10-14

In Genesis 28:10-14, Jacob had a dream. The Scripture says, *“Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: ‘I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”* In this dream, Jacob has found God's 'house' and he is communicating with God at the location of His house. The angels are ascending and descending and the Lord is showing Jacob his future. Not only did God intend acceptance to come first at the tithe, He also intended us to learn to hear His voice concerning where to give our tithe. Giving emerges as the primary relational path under the Old Covenant. Hearing God's voice is a major relational encounter. Because giving is foundational to divine provision, we have great motivation to hear God when we give.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12

Scripture: Genesis 28:17-22

In verses 17-22 the fear of God comes all over Jacob because he is at the place he finds God. He calls the name of that place Bethel, or God's House, and he restates the five covenantal promises of the tithe in the order of their importance to him personally. We learn the five elements of the tithe are, (1) *“...If God will be with me, (2) and keep me in this way that I am going,*

(3) and give me bread to eat (4) and clothing to put on, so that (5) I come back to my father's house in peace..." First, God will be with us. Second, He will keep us in the way we are going. Third, He will give us bread to eat. Fourth, He will give us clothing to wear and shelter. Fifth, He will bring us back to our origin in peace having fulfilled our destiny. These are the five primary elements of the tithe and so not only are we to experience acceptance but, we learn to communicate with God where we talk to Him and He talks to us. God, where do You want me to sow my tithe this month? Asking and waiting for His response are major steps in developing the kind of relationship He wants with us. Let's walk in the Sonship gifts, in Jesus' name! The fruit of our acceptance by God is our accepting His voice, His will and His ways.

THURSDAY, JUNE 13

Scripture: Deuteronomy 26:1-2

Deuteronomy 26:1-2 reveals, *"And it shall be, when you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the Lord your God is giving you, and put it in a basket and go to the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide."* The tithe guarantees us everything we need to survive, and when we are in a new place survival becomes an essential issue. God's Presence, His direction, food, clothing, shelter and our destiny are five essentials of life. In Deuteronomy we discover that God expects us to hear His voice over where to give our money. We are to go to the place where the Holy Spirit chooses and give! In the process of the tithe, we first experience acceptance, but we also learn to hear and discern His voice. We learn to communicate with God. We learn to talk to Him and He in turn talks to us. We are to listen and respond to Him and to His verbal overtures. It is no wonder that the fifth Sonship Gift is acceptance. God intended acceptance to first manifest through our obedience in the tithe and doing what He says. In learning to hear His voice, we must consequently develop our relationship with Him. We need to get serious about our giving and get serious about letting God direct it. We need to be serious about submitting ourselves to Him and come into the fullness of this relational covenant. As sons and daughters, we have an inheritance in the New Testament and that is no small issue! We also discover that God has ordered a relational, developmental path for us that starts with our giving. As we begin to walk in this, what begins is a relationship with God of the quality and the nature that Christ had!

FRIDAY, JUNE 14

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1-3

When we explore the purpose for which God accepts us, we see it start to unfold prophetically in Isaiah 43:1-3. It says, *"But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place."* God created and formed us for a purpose. We find that we have a specific purpose and a value in God so that He not only preserves us, but His Hand of protection and blessing is on us. Ultimately, He has a purpose for us and it comes to us through accepting and walking in our Sonship Gifts. God has an overarching purpose and we please Him through fulfilling that purpose!

SATURDAY, JUNE 15

Scripture: Isaiah 43:4-6

In verses 4-6 it says, *"Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored, And I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life. Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west; I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth—"* We are precious in His sight, He honors us, He loves us and He will give others for our lives. He is with us. That is the first guarantee of the tithe – He is with us by covenant. He will even bring our descendants from the east and gather them from the west. There is a purpose for this Family and we see the value God places on His Family. He places great value on family relationship and we are part of His Family!

SUNDAY, JUNE 16

Scripture: Isaiah 43:7-10

Verses 7-10 says, *"Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him. Bring out the blind people who have eyes, And the deaf who have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together,*

And let the people be assembled. Who among them can declare this, And show us former things? Let them bring out their witnesses, that they may be justified; Or let them hear and say, 'It is truth.' You are My witnesses,' says the Lord, 'And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me.'" We are His witnesses, His servants, who He has chosen, that we may know Him, believe Him and understand that He is our Eternal Father. All of the Sonship Gifts exist because God desired relationship with mankind and wanted a people for Himself who would be witnesses to His reality. The ultimate purpose we have, in Christ, is that we are His witnesses, His trumpets to the world. That is our eternal purpose. We, through our righteous, committed lives, are proof to the world that God is real. We are proof to the world that He has a purpose for man. We are living proof in the world that God is real and our number one purpose is to be witnesses to the reality of God. That is who we are, what we are and what we are called to. We are His witnesses.

MONDAY, JUNE 17

Scripture: Ephesians 1:6; Acts 1:12-14, Matthew 10:3

We are looking at the issue of acceptance and accepting our place in God's Family. We can benefit from looking at some of the people who God chose. That will give us a broad picture of who God chooses and what the common characteristics are. The author of the first Gospel of the New Testament is Matthew. He is a classic example of who God chooses. We find him mentioned for the very last time in Acts 1:12-14. We are told, *"Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."* Here we have the Twelve, plus the additional people that numbered up to 120. They were gathered there to be empowered on the day of Pentecost. This is the same Matthew that was a tax collector. When he was taking his place in God's Family that was full of Jewish people, he was seen as a traitor among them. He worked for the Roman government and collected taxes from his own people. He was an agent of Rome to extort. Most often, tax collectors made their money by adding a percentage to what they claimed people owed. What kind of reputation did he probably have? He was likely despised. But who does God accept? God accepts people based on their heart, often who are misunderstood, misperceived and rejected by the majority.

TUESDAY, JUNE 18

Scripture: Luke 19:1-9

In Luke 19:1-9 we find Jesus singling out a man named Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and he was very rich. He added more to people's tax bills and consistently cheated others to gain personal wealth. He was short in stature and had to climb up a tree in order to see Jesus. When Jesus walked by, He looked up and spoke to him by name. Jesus said, *"Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house."* The Bible says Zacchaeus *"...received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, 'He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.'"* That created quite a stir among the Jewish people. They knew Zacchaeus and they knew what he did. Zacchaeus said, *'Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.'* Jesus responded, *"Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."* I bet the happiest disciple of all was Matthew because he alone had to bear the stigma of being a tax collector. And all of a sudden Jesus embraced and forgave Zacchaeus too who was likely far worse than Matthew. Jesus consistently pursued those who were disqualified and rejected by the mainstream. Jesus often embraced people who were flawed, misunderstood, misguided and misjudged and proceeded to anoint them to confound the wise. That is a principle by which God works!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19

Scripture: Mark 10:46-52

In Mark 10:46-52, we read about a blind man named Bartimaeus, sitting by the road and begging. He was completely at the mercy of others, even to feed himself. When Bartimaeus heard that it was Jesus passing, he started crying out. Verses 47-52 says, *"And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.' And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. So Jesus answered and said to him, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' The blind man said to Him, 'Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your faith has*

made you well.’ And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.” What do we know about blind beggars in that society? They had nothing. They could offer nothing and were totally dependent on others. They were among the lowest part of society because of their handicap. Who does Jesus accept? God accepts the needy, the lowly and the humble. He accepts those at the bottom of the social ladder. His ways are higher than ours!

THURSDAY, JUNE 20

Scripture: John 12:1-6

In John 12:1-6 are told, *“Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?’ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.”* Here is a woman Jesus chose to be His friend and disciple. Both Mary and Judas fulfilled prophetic purposes from hearts that were dramatically opposite. I can’t even imagine those two walking together, but Christ had relationship with both. Who chooses such people but God? Who will test us by putting us in charge to see if we will overcome our flesh or yield to it? Only God chooses a thief and makes him a treasurer! I wonder if the other disciples complained about Judas?

FRIDAY, JUNE 21

Scripture: Matthew 27:38-44; Luke 23:39-43

In Matthew 27:38-44 we are told that two robbers were crucified with Jesus. During the crucifixion, people who passed by were blaspheming, mocking and taunting Jesus, including the chief priest. Verses 39-44 says, *“And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’ Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.”* This account gives us a picture of the men who were crucified with Christ. The two robbers joined the others in mocking Jesus. The account in Luke 23 reveals a stunning example of God's acceptance and longsuffering. Luke 23:39-43 says, *“Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’”* Here we are told that one robber had a change of heart. He started out in mockery and taunted Jesus like everyone else. But somehow during the few hours prior to death, this thief changed his mind and repented. He cried out to God and God accepted him in the last hours of his life. That is mercy in action! Why would we tolerate any accusation from demons that we are not acceptable to God when we have this testimony written so clearly in the Word! It is time we renewed our mind and understood that when God accepts us, it is complete! We are engrafted into His Family once and for all. No weapon formed against us will prosper and every tongue that rises against us in judgment we are to condemn! When the voice of the enemy is causing havoc in our thoughts, that is exactly what we must do!

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

Scripture: John 3:1-16

In John 3:1-4, we read of someone who is not on the bottom of society, *“There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’”* Nicodemus knew enough of God's Word to discern that Jesus was anointed by God. *“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’”* When Jesus was dealing with the bottom of society, He went straight to acceptance. But when he was dealing with the privileged and powerful of society, He didn’t default to acceptance but instead challenged them as with Nicodemus. Jesus knew the wealthy often have additional barriers to break through – wealth, power, intellect and arrogance. He had to create a moment when Nicodemus was willing to humble himself before he could grasp the truth. Verses 5-16 state, *“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the*

kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus answered and said to Him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 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.'" The primary salvation verse in the whole Bible and the judgment that went with it was inspired by one of the leading teachers of Israel in Jesus' day, and his name was Nicodemus. God was ready to accept Nicodemus, but Nicodemus had to get through his pride and his religious spirit. It was much more difficult for God to accept Nicodemus than it was to accept all the other people we have looked at. In every single one of their cases, they knew they were needy and in trouble. They knew their condition and had the humility that invited salvation. Nicodemus' problem was he lacked that humility. He was brimming with pride, power and influence. His religious façade had to be broken in order for him to be saved.

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

Scripture: Acts 5:33-39, Acts 22:1-8

In Acts 5:33-39, we run into another one of Israel's upper crust, a leading rabbi named Gamaliel who was a teacher of the law and respected by all the people. In verse 33 we see major persecution was about to begin against the early church, "When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. And he said to them: 'Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.'" Now the real question is, where did that wisdom come from? It doesn't appear that Gamaliel was a believer at this stage, so where did his wisdom come from? In Acts 22:1-8 Paul was on trial and giving his testimony before the crowd. In verses 3-5 he said, "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished." Paul's teacher was Gamaliel! Gamaliel knew he had taught him well, and watched Paul achieve leading status among the Jews for Paul's zeal in killing Christians. He then had to witness Paul's salvation and his dramatic transformation. This perhaps clarifies where Gamaliel's wise counsel came from. God loves to save the lowest of the low, because humility comes easily. But the only way He saves the wealthy and elite is when people choose to bow their knee and humble themselves, and it is far more difficult for the powerful and influential to reach that place. Acceptance is a gift for the humble heart!

MONDAY, JUNE 24

Scripture: Acts 7:51-58, Acts 8:1-4, Acts 9:1-2

In the New Testament the closest person to a serial killer we see is Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle Paul. God decided to save him, but it is not a pleasant salvation. It is not someone choosing to simply bow their knee. As the early church prayed for protection and survival, God had mercy on them. Paul was on his way for another confrontation with believers when God knocked him to his knees, blinded him and left him blind for three days. Jesus sovereignly invaded Saul's life! In desperation, Paul cried out to God, God delivered him and called him into ministry. Who does God accept? He accepts characters! He accepts people that the church would often rather leave behind. Much of the church continued to fear Paul for years after his conversion. God will take just about anybody as long as they have the humility to bow their knee. If God has to knock someone to their knees, He's willing to do it. Getting knocked to our knees frequently has the effect of teaching us who is Boss! Saul of Tarsus was knocked off his donkey and blinded for three days! God moved His Judicial Hand against the enemy of the church and it had the effect of humbling Paul and causing him to turn to Christ. How wonderful that God saw Paul at his core. He saw Paul's passion and his quest for truth. What amazing grace God has! God saw Paul's potential and He sees ours as well!

TUESDAY, JUNE 25

Scripture: Matthew 16:21-23

One of the leading men of the New Testament that God chose was a lowly fisherman. But he certainly was an opinionated and strong-willed, lowly fisherman. Peter wasn't just your average lowly, pliable individual, but was outspoken, strong-minded and impulsive. In Matthew 16:21-23, Jesus told the disciples He was headed for the cross and death but that God would resurrect Him. Peter didn't like it and it didn't fit with his own plan. So Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him. In turn Jesus rebuked Peter, *"Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."* If a person is willing to rebuke the Creator of the heavens and earth, he or she is certainly bold and opinionated to the point of being identified as listening to satan instead of God. Does God accept hard-headed, opinionated people who at times unknowingly turn their ear to satan? It appears He does! The Lord loves a challenge and has all the tools in His arsenal to take the hardness out of our heads and hearts and replace it with something else! He did it with Peter and He will do it with us! Let's humble ourselves and submit, in Jesus' name!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

Scripture: John 8:1-11

In John 8:1-11, we meet another class of the lowly that qualify for acceptance. A woman was caught in adultery. In her public humiliation, everyone condemned her except Jesus. Her actions were worthy of stoning and death, but that was not how Jesus approached her. He said, *"He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."...Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, 'Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.'* Who does Jesus accept? He accepts the defiled and the immoral and delivers them. The cross section of those who Jesus accepts is broader than we can imagine. Let's accept our acceptance!

THURSDAY, JUNE 27

Scripture: Luke 1:45-56

In Luke 1:45-56, we see some very humble people. One of the most humble and lowly of all was named Mary who became the mother of Jesus. She went to visit her cousin Elizabeth and out of her own mouth said, *"My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the **lowly** state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the **lowly**. He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever."* Why did God pick Mary? She was humble and had a low opinion of herself. God saw her willing heart, a heart that would say yes to God and accept her divine assignment.

FRIDAY, JUNE 28

Scripture: 1 John 3:1

1 John 3:1 says, *"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."* Who does God choose for His Family? He prefers the broken and dysfunctional. Psalm 138:6 AMPC says, *"For though the Lord is high, yet has He has respect for the lowly (bringing them into fellowship with Him) but the proud and haughty He knows and recognises only at a distance."* It tells us right here – He chooses the humble and the lowly. That is who God accepts, who He transforms and then who He uses for His purposes! Soft clay works well in His Masterful Hands!

SATURDAY, JUNE 29

Scripture: Acts 2:25-31, 34-35

Acts 2:25-30 is a prophetic word uttered first by one of those lowly individuals in the Old Testament. David was the lowest in his family. He was the youngest, and received all the unappealing assignments nobody else wanted. Everyone else got a large sheep herd while he received only a few. Large sheep herds meant they could kill lambs and eat well, because it

would not matter if they lost one. But not David. He was a young man of great, great humility. In Samuel's search to anoint a king, he had to pass over every older brother until Jesse brought David. Acts 2:25-31 says, *"For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'* Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades,..." Verses 34-35 say, *"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'"* Why does God choose the lowly? In order to show Himself great and demonstrate that He can make their enemies their footstool. He takes the lowly, transforms them and uses them to accomplish His purposes. May God cause us to arise and see our personal destiny with the eyes of faith!

SUNDAY, JUNE 30

Scripture: Luke 1:67-79

In Luke 1:57-79 we have the account of Zacharias and Elizabeth. Do they qualify for the category of people that God loves to accept? In their culture and time, not being able to conceive children meant one was cursed. Everyone else had children but this couple had none and it was a great grief to them. They endured much pain and humiliation. Everywhere they went they were the subject of pity. Their painful walk of childlessness produced humility. Luke 1:67-79 says, *"Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: 'Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people, And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David, As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began, That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.'"* Who does God accept? He accepts everyone who will come to Him. From this point on, saints, we cannot entertain the voice of the accuser of the brethren. God has demonstrated who He accepts and He accepts all who come to Him. He even accepts some who refuse to come to him until they get knocked off their donkey! God rescues and delivers people for Himself and He accepts His chosen!

ITINERARY

6/7 – 6/8	Midland, TX	The Bridge Midland 2813 Maxwell Dr. Midland, TX Fri. 7 PM, Saturday 9:30 AM	Keith McLelland 432-967-3470
6/9 – 6/10	Andrews, TX	City of Refuge 1876 N. US 385 Andrews, TX Sunday 10:30 AM, 6 PM, Monday 7 PM	Larry Brewer 432-523-7773
6/21 – 6/23	San Juan, PR	Ministerio De Casa Restauracion Call for location and meeting times	Ap. Hector Melendez 787-231-0628