

**BUILDING A 2<sup>ND</sup> WALL**



**52 days of Word and Wisdom**

**This Is Your Season Ministries**

**Discipleship Materials**

**May 14- July 4, 2013**

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# **52 Days of Building a Second Wall with the Word and Wisdom**

## **Table of Contents**

1	Studying His Word	4
2	Destroying the Mixture of False Worship	9
3	Building on the Strong Foundation of God's Love	12
4	Man Made Walls of Defense	16
5	God Commands Obedience from His Chosen People	21
6	Being a Testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ	25
7	The Royal Law	28
8	Law of Liberty	32
9	God Brings Rain from Heaven	36
10	The Veracity and Value of the Word of God	40
11	The Word of God in our Wilderness	43
12	Preparation of the Bride	45
13	Aroma of our Prayers	49
14	Consecrated to the Lord	53
15	Costly Anointing	57
16	Revive Me According to Your Word	60
17	Enlarge My Heart, Lord	63
18	Establishing the Priestly and Kingly Anointing of God's Presence	67
19	Revive the Precious Stones	71
20	Ambassadors for Christ	75
21	Keep My Eyes from Looking at Worthless Things	78
22	Give Thanks to the Lord for He is Good	84
23	Our Hope is in the Lord	87
24	The Prophetic Voice of God's Forerunners	91
25	Lifestyle of a Forerunner	94
26	Why Do We Question God	98

27	Bringing Us Back to the Garden	102
28	Comfort Cry Out	105
29	Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord	109
30	Keys to God's Heart	112
31	Fashioned by God for His Purposes	116
32	Pray for Salvation	121
33	Make Our Way Straight	124
34	The Lord is Sending His Envoys to Speak His Coming Judgment	127
35	Wait for the Lord	131
36	Refrain from Making Vows	135
37	Fragrance of God's Presence	139
38	Responding to Distractions	143
39	Discipline not only Desire Will Determine our Destiny	146
40	Understanding God's Plan of the Tabernacle	151
41	Purpose of the Bronze Altar	154
42	Sanctify Us With Your Truth	157
43	Walk as Children of the Light	161
44	Come to the Table and Eat	165
45	Privilege of Prayer	169
46	Upright are Thy Judgments	173
47	The Lord has Spoken, Who Can But Prophecy	177
48	Overcomers will be Sealed	181
49	Judgment Begins with the Leadership	185
50	Help to a Higher Standard	189
51	Build My Temple	193
52	Into His Presence	

## Studying His Word

Day 1 – May 14, 2013

Today, on the first day of our 52 Days of building a second wall, we are celebrating **Pentecost**. This is one of the 3 times of year the Lord asks His people to gather together.

***Deuteronomy 16:16** "Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover) and at the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.*

This feast is an observance of the giving of the Torah by God, and it is also an observance of the giving of the Holy Spirit to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:1-4). It is a time to reawaken and strengthen our personal relationship with God by **rededication to the obedience and study of the Word of God**. It is celebrated with a lengthy study session of the Word of God

These next 52 Days we will be sending out daily Bible Studies, and we encourage you use what we send to launch you into a deeper study on your own. In preparation for that, we will start with a study on the tools available to study in this way.

There are **many study tools available** to us today, but the **Bible is our ultimate research tool**. It is best to use NKJV, NASB, or NIV (most Biblical reference books are based on these versions; and these versions are translated more word for word which aids in doing word studies). Paraphrased versions are good to have on hand because they are written as a narrative form that makes it easier to picture what is happening. The Bible is God's inerrant truth and there is no reference book that will give you more insight and truth than the Word of God. As you read a passage of Scripture, it is good to look up other verses that are related to it, these are called **Cross-references**. These often times give us more insight on the passage we have just read. God has consistent messages interwoven all throughout His Word, and He delights in showing them to us. There are several ways to look up cross-references:

- Most study Bibles have **cross-references listed in the margin** referencing verses that are related to the one you are reading.
- Most study Bibles also have a **Concordance in the back**. These list several key words of topics and a few verses that have these words.
- **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance** is a book that has **every word from the Bible**, so you can look up all verses that use the word you are studying.

The Bible was written mainly in Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). When the Bible was translated into the language you are reading, sometimes the richness of the meaning of some words or phrases gets diluted; this is because Hebrew

and Greek are often more precise languages. I have found that doing **Word Studies** adds great depth to my research and teaching. There are many handy reference materials to help you look up the meanings of the exact Hebrew or Greek word used in the passage of the Bible you are reading, without being a Hebrew or Greek Scholar.

All words (or phrases) used in the Bible have been assigned a number to correspond to the original Hebrew or Greek word. These numbers come from the **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance**. You can use a **Complete Word Study Book of Old or New Testament**. These books have the entire Bible with the Strong's numbers written over every word, and then in the back of the book, you can look up that number and get the Hebrew or Greek word and its definition. Often, a related word is given, and it is good to look these up to get more clarification.

It is good to have a **Webster's dictionary** to get more understanding on the meanings of English words from your Bible or from the definitions you get from the Greek or Hebrew. If you study in a language different than English, it is good to have a dictionary in your language.

**Bible dictionaries** are a good tool to gain more understanding on words, places, people, history, and customs from Biblical times.

I like to see all the facts when I am reading a passage of scripture, so I like to look up **Maps** from Biblical times, and read **books on the history and culture** of the people living in that time. These help me visualize what I am reading, and to get a better understanding of passage.

I have left one study tool to the end, and that is **commentaries**. These are studies that other men have written on various books of the Bible. In my opinion these are used too heavily today. Please use these sparingly, and only after you have researched the topic for yourself. Use them only as confirmation of what you have already studied for yourself. The Holy Spirit wants to impart God's truth directly into your mind and heart.

There are many good references books available for study, but over the last few years, I have used **Bible software** the most. You can get access to all of these references, often for free. They make the process of study easier and faster, so I can study more. My favorite is **E-Sword**, but there are many out there, like **Blue Letter Bible** and **Logos**.

## **How to Study**

**Start with Prayer for the Holy Spirit to guide you.** He will lead you into what you need to study for the season of life that you are in. Don't look around and see what others are doing, let the Holy Spirit lead your time of study precious for you. We might

all be reading the same scriptures these 52 days, but let Him tailor make your personal study just for you!

This week we will be studying Psalm 19: 7-14, and then we will spend the remaining weeks studying Psalm 119. **Select one or two key scriptures** that grab your attention, or tug at your heart.

Look up the meanings of the Hebrew words, and then look in a dictionary for their **definitions** to truly enhance your understanding. Look up **key words**; do not get bogged down looking up every word, unless the Holy Spirit leads you to.

Look for **lists** or **repeated words or phrases**. These are good indications that this has a lot of weight (importance) to God. When He repeats Himself, He is trying to get our attention. It is good to look for lists, because they all have something in common and we can study all the facets of the items on the list.

**Look up cross references and select the ones that stand out to you.** You will not use every verse you look up. When I teach I have to discipline myself to have the right balance between enough Scriptures so it is obvious I am teaching a Bible study, but not too many that it seems like you are just reading the Bible out loud.

**Think back in your life when you see the truths in what you are studying.** It is good to look at your victories and struggles and relate them to the Word of God.

Think of **other places in the Bible when the men and women had similar struggles** and how they reacted. Don't just read the passage, but think about what they were going through physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

It is very good to constantly **ask questions** about what you are reading. Sometimes you will answer them with added research, with a word from the Lord, through words of confirmation spoken by others, or through living the passage out, especially through trials and testings.

## **Let's try some of this**

Over the next 8 weeks we will be reading and studying through Psalm 19 and Psalm 119. **Let's read Psalm 19: 7-14, and Psalm 119:1-8.**

We love verses when we see God wants to bless us. The word **bles** used here (*esher*) means to be happy, and we love to be happy. Did you notice that there were conditions to this happiness, things we needed to do? Did you notice the list of things we are to walk in, words used in both passages? **Law of the Lord, Testimony of the Lord, His way, His precepts, His statutes, His command, and His judgments.** In my mind, these words seem to have the same meaning. But I had to stop and ask, "Was He trying to get our attention by repeating himself over and over, or are there

shades of difference in these words?" Let's look closer at these verses in Psalm 19:7-14

**Psalm 19:7a** The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;

Let's look at the definitions of the key words in this scripture:

**Law:** *torah* - a precept or statute, especially the Pentateuch (the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 books of Bible) and the Decalogue (the 10 Commandments), comes from the word *yarah* - to flow as water (rain), to shoot an arrow, to teach, to point out.

**perfect:** *tamiym*- entire (all we need), truth

**restoring:** *shub* - to turn back, to return to the starting point (the creation of our soul)

*The truths written in God's laws point out the way we are to live our lives so we can flow in the river with him, they are the truths to light our way.*

**Joshua 1:8** "This **book of the law** shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

**What does the law of the Lord do for us?** It restores our soul

**Jeremiah 1:5** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

*God knew us when He first created us, before we were formed in our mother's womb. He had great plans for our lives, but those plans got side-tracked because of our sins. When we repented and gave our lives to Christ, and followed the lead of the Lord, He is now turning us back to His original plans and purposes.*

**Psalm 19:7b** The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

**testimony:** *eduth* - witness, testimony (a solemn declaration or affirmation made for the purpose of establishing or proving some fact)

**sure:** *aman* - to build up or support, to foster as a parent, faithful, trustworthy

*The promises God has spoken to us are to build us up in Him, and we can have faith that He will do all that He has spoken.*

**Romans 15:4** For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

**What does testimony of the LORD do for us?** It makes wise the simple

**Testimony:** *A few years ago, God told me He wanted to partner with me. I didn't understand who I was so I rejected His Words to me for a while. It was fine working for Him, but I didn't consider myself worthy to work that closely with Almighty God. Over the next few months, He led me to many scriptures about partnering with Him and He spent time affirming who I am in Him. Now I have understanding of what partnership with Him means: He has His part and I have mine; He is in charge and I follow His lead. Now we flow great together. I try to do nothing without His lead. That is wisdom!*

**We encourage you to follow this example for Psalm 19:8-10. Look up the words used here and compare and contrast God's Law, Testimony, Precepts, Commands, and Judgments.**

God is serious about us walking in all He has commanded. How can we know what He has commanded? **We must be students of His Word.**

**2 Timothy 2:15** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

**We are assigning a memory verse every week.** This week's verse is **Psalm 19:7.** Please be diligent to hide God's Word in your heart!

**Let our prayer during these 52 days be from Psalm 19:14**

*Let the words of my mouth  
and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable in Your sight,  
O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.*

## Destroying the Mixture of False Worship

Day 2 – May 15, 2013

Please read **Deuteronomy 7 before** we get started with the building of the Second Wall. As God's chosen people, we will be blessed by God if we love Him and keep his commandments which He wrote down for us in His Word. In Deuteronomy 7 and many other places in His Word, God warns us that we have enemies that are greater and mightier than us, and we need to **utterly destroy them**. He makes it very **clear that we must not make covenant and marry them**. When we let them come close and attach themselves to us, **they bring with them mixture and false worship**; because they come to set up altars, sacred pillars and wooden and carved images.

**An idol is anything that we put before God in our devotion or trust.**

If you think you do not have any idols, let God search your heart. What do you put your trust in for yourself, your family members, your church, your job...? Who or what will you drop anything for? What things capture your attention (devotion) more than God?

If you think this won't happen to you, **Read 1 Kings 11: 1-11**

Wise King Solomon who had vowed to God that there is no other God, and promised to keep His commandments; fell into idol worship because he had married and allied himself with foreign idolatrous women. They turned his heart away from his whole hearted devotion to God.

**Last December and January were built the first wall through Warring (prayer) and Worship; and now we need to build the second Wall through the Word and Wisdom.** God has given us His Word so we can look back to when others have failed and try to not make the same mistakes. It is wonderful to see **God's redeeming love** poured out to His people, and we can know that He will give it to us too, **if we realize our false ways and repent and turn whole heartedly back to Him!**

During our April Worship Encounter, we saw that the **Samaritans** built their faith in God on false worship and idolatry because of the insecurity of their first King, Jeroboam. If we look at the history again of how **Samaria (Northern Kingdom) was built, we will see the foundation of the iniquity that hindered the people to truly know and worship God was built on a mixture of fear, rejection, worthlessness, and insecurity.** The King brought in altars, sacred pillars, and wooden and carved images; and his sin kept his people from keeping the commandments, statues, and judgments that God commanded them (and us) to observe. **We must utterly destroy all false worship before it destroys us.** After King Solomon's death, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the Northern kingdom called Israel, whose capital was Samaria; and the Southern Kingdom called Judah, whose capital was Jerusalem. **The books of 1 & 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles show the tragic history of kings of Israel, who led their people to idolatrous worship, which led to captivity and death.** Their leadership was filled with a mixture of pride and insecurities.

The southern kingdom had the temple of God and they stayed truer to God, but they still had a lot of mixture from the surrounding nations they did not destroy as God had commanded them. Eventually they too did evil in the sight of God.

**Please read I Kings 15:11-14, to see how the mixture of false worship can come into our lives.**

King Asa did “what was right in the sight of the Lord”, but he had a grandmother who was deeply into idol worship and had corrupted her son. King Asa dealt with his idolatrous grandmother and his heart was loyal toward God; but God still mentions he did not take down all the high places. **We can remove people, but we must remove the idols and high places of worship that have been set up by our forefathers; because they will ensnare us.**

King Asa ruled for 40 years in Judah (Southern Kingdom) while at the same time Israel (Northern Kingdom), had seven kings. **King Asa had a heart for God while the seven kings only had a heart from themselves.** The leadership got worse in Israel with each king. **Ahab married Jezebel, a high priestess to the false god baal.** Through them, the enemy used every opportunity to remove the true worship of God by killing the prophets of God. They brought in more false worship than ever before.

Samaria has always been a city of false worship, with its beginnings as the capital of Israel under King Omri. He moved it there because its location was almost impregnable (very difficult to capture or destroy). It withstood vicious assaults by the Assyrians, but was finally captured 150 years later. Samaria was then repopulated by foreigners who brought their idolatrous practices with them. The intermarriage of these foreigners with the native Jews created a mixed race known as Samaritans, who were hated by full-blooded Jews at the time of Jesus.

**This history of Samaria and all of its mixture only show us we must go deeper and deal with the false worship that is passed down to us by our forefathers.**

Starting with **Jeroboam** (the first king of the Northern Kingdom), sin passed down through the blood line of the people and the kings. He was afraid all his people would go to Jerusalem for the appointed feasts to worship God, and not return. He took it upon himself to make 2 golden calves and set them in a high place for his people to come and worship.(1 Kings 12:26-33)

The high places (**spirits of false worship**) tormented the people and led them to false worship. The seven kings of Israel, from Jeroboam to Ahab, brought in seven spirits that still torment us today. These spirits of false worship cause us to build a false wall of protection and refuge, separating the body of Christ from one another. Out of God’s love for His people, He will come and bring a **wall of judgment** to us, so we will tear down all false worship and truly worship Him with all of our hearts!

## **Digging Deeper**

Please read the following verses and see how these kings brought these seven spirits into their kingdom, resulting in torment and misery for their people.

Jeroboam - I Kings 12:25-33 - Division  
Nadab - I Kings 15:25-26 - Discord  
Baasha - I Kings 16:2 - Drugs  
Elah - I Kings 16:6-14 - Depression  
Zimri - I Kings 16:15-19 - Distress  
Omri - I Kings 16:23-25 - Deep Debt  
Ahab - I Kings 16:29-33 - Deep,Deep Darkness (Sexual Immorality)

If you see any of these in your lives, please take the time right now to repent and ask God to destroy these spirits in you and to cleanse you completely. Let Him fill you with His love and peace.

Remember your memory verse for this week is Psalm 19:7.

## Building on the Strong Foundation of God's Love

Day 3 – May 16, 2013

**Please read Psalm 19:7-14.** This is our passage of Psalms for our first week. We are working with God to build a second wall of wisdom, with His Word. We saw yesterday that **we have built walls of idolatry and false worship** that we have picked up from our traditions. Before we can effectively partner with God to build this second wall, we need to look at **other walls we have built**, and begin the process of tearing them down.

**Please read Deuteronomy 7: 1-2**

Thom Gardener wrote a book entitled *"The Wounded Heart*, in which he explains that the enemies Israel would face going in to the Promised Land are the same emotional enemies we all have that negatively influence us. He wrote, *"As Israel was about to cross into the inheritance of God, Moses warned them that they would encounter seven nations that were **"greater and stronger"** than they. These influences would be obstacles to the enjoyment of the kind of abundance and intimacy (His Love and your love) with God that He intended. **The following lists some of the negative emotions these ungodly nations suggest.**"*

Hittites:	<b>Fear</b>
Girgashites:	<b>Rejection</b>
Amorites:	<b>Worthlessness</b>
Canaanites:	<b>Shame</b>
Perizzites:	<b>Insecurity</b>
Hivites:	<b>Defilement</b>
Jebusites:	<b>Hopelessness</b>

The names of each of these **pagan nations suggest a strong influence that inhabited the land of grace and abundance into which God was bringing His people Israel.** The negative emotional influences that these names suggest still inhabit the abundant life that you and I are promised. Jesus said, **"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."** (John 10:10) But the beginning of that scripture says, **"the enemy comes to kill, steal and destroy"**. We are always in a battle with the enemy because he does not want to see us in complete covenant relationship with our Father God. Father God is filled with love that wants the best for us, and the enemy comes to rob and defile us so we cannot have a healthy functional love relationship with God and others.

**Psalms 119:1-2** says this, *"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of The Lord! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!"* We must be in a healthy functional love relationship with Father God so through the Lord Jesus we can be cleansed and we can walk the Word out as epistles and not just talk and preach about it. This is where we become a testimony before those who do

not know His love. We will be the ones who will seek to love Him with all our heart, soul, and strength.

**Please read Mark 12: 28-34** to see the commandments that Jesus said were the most important commandments for all for us. **There is no other greater commandment** than to *“love the Lord your God with ALL your heart, with ALL your soul, with ALL your mind and with ALL your strength”*. *“The second is this; you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

Verse 33, says that loving God and others is much more important than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices they gave to God. We don't offer sacrifices anymore, but we do works for God; so to put it in our times, **loving God is much more important than doing good things for Him.**

The Samaritan woman did not know this love. We can see that her testimony was not of God's love, but one who was seeking love from her husbands. They were not even all her husbands, which was a perverted love of her heart.

This is the **foundation** of our teaching for the next 52 Days. **We will build the Wall with the Word of God that will change and heal our hearts to love Him completely.** We will destroy the foundations of the enemy, who came to steal, kill and destroy our lives and the lives of our children.

### **Let's look at Deuteronomy 7:6-10**

*“For You are a holy people to the Lord your God; **The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure** above all the people of the face of the earth.*

*The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;*

*but **because The Lord loves you**, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, The Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

*Therefore **know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God** who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations **with those who love Him and keep His commandments;***

*And He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face.”*

**This message is for us today**, God loves us so much that He is determined to show us His love and keep His oath. We today have the Lord Jesus Christ who has brought

us out of the bondage of this world and the hands of the enemy. Father God gave us His only Son who would love us and then die for us, so we could come close to His heart. He gave us the Holy Spirit that would help us keep God's commandments with a heart that is continually being changed by the Word of God, which is Christ Jesus. (John 1:1)

The Love of God is amazing, God is love. Not just loving, but love. (1 John 4:7-8) **Love is not a description of God; it is the essence of God.** His quality of love can be understood as the unselfish giving of oneself for the highest good of another. It is not a behavior, prompted by feelings, or mere romanticism for a moment, but a steadfast choice to be love-centered/Christ centered. Divine love is God's nature.

What other nature is working in us that causes us to be hostile against God and others? What is influencing us to act out with fear, insecurity, worthlessness, hopelessness, defilement, shame and rejection?

When we are influenced by these strong emotions, often caused by the iniquities of our past, we cannot appreciate God's perfect love or allow this love to be produced in us to cause us to grow. When we get to know the love of God we will know His divine love. Then we can love Him out of a heart that has not been defiled, but that has been delivered, healed and cleansed by the Holy Spirit.

**Listen to John 14:15-16** *"If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray to the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever."*

I remember reading this years ago and I felt defeated because I loved Him, but I was still struggling with these hard areas on my heart. But I saw that I could have a functional loving relationship with Father God because the Lord Jesus died and rose again, and He sent me a Helper, the Holy Spirit. **Now we can say because of this love, we can keep God's commandments with the help of the Holy Spirit.**

Let's close with **Deuteronomy 7:11** *"Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them."*

**The word observe** means to be carefully attentive and notice; to conform one's action or practice to a law, rite, or condition; to comply with; to watch carefully especially with attention to details or behavior for the purpose of arriving at a judgment.

We can keep God's law, His commandments only based on our relationship with Him, by **allowing the Word to go deep in our hearts.** When we do this, our wounded hearts will be transformed and completely changed, so that we can love God and others with all of our heart!

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

**Please read the following scriptures of God's love and His correction:**

Hebrews 12:5-13

Psalm 89:30-34  
Jeremiah 10:24  
Proverbs 3:12  
Revelation 3:19

How is God's love different than the love you know from the people in your life?

Read **Psalm 19:7-14** again. Look at how God's commandments, etc. are described and how they help us. How does this help you in loving Him and keeping His commandments?

**How are you coming on your memory verse Psalm 19:7?**

## Man-Made Walls of Defense

Day 4 – May 16, 2013

**Webster defines the word WALL as:**

1. a high thick masonry structure forming a long rampart or an enclosure for defense;
2. a structure that serves to hold back pressure;
3. something that acts as a barrier of defense.
4. an extreme or desperate position or a state of defeat, failure, or ruin.

**Man-made walls in our life act as a defense mechanisms to hide us and to keep people out.** These walls leave us isolated and hidden; they keep us from being real with God and each other. They make us think we are self-sufficient and thus we become unteachable.

***Hebrews 10:24-25** “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”*

God’s Word is so clear about the vital importance fellowship with other believers is to our walk with the Lord. Do you regularly attend a church where you are an active participant? Do you attend a small group or weekly Bible study where you share your life and encourage others in the group as you all feed on God’s Word? Do you make time in your busy schedule to attend Christian retreats or conferences throughout the year? Do you gather with other believers just to worship God, to share in the joy of the Lord?

Or do you stay away from other believers, because they have either hurt you in the past or not lived up to your expectations of helping you? If you find yourself saying, “I just want to spend ALL my time alone with the Lord”; watch out, you are putting a huge target on your back for the enemy. Think about when a lioness is searching for prey to devour. She looks for an animal that is alone; and if they look injured or weak, all the better and she pounces. If you are hurt from others, you need to get with other believers to lead you into healing from those hurts. Your wounds will only get worse when you are alone, and the enemy has an easy time putting bitterness and unforgiveness in your heart, which separates and weakens you even more. If you are not regularly feeding on the Word of God, you will become weak. There is protection in fellowship with one another!

I encourage you to get together with other believers on a regular basis. They need you to encourage them and you need them to encourage you. We all have struggles and triumphs that have built our faith, and sharing these with others encourages them to persevere in their struggles.

**Hebrews 3:13** *“But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”*

Man-made walls do not accomplish what we subconsciously think they will do, protect us! **The truth is, they harm us and keep us hindered** with our relationships with others. But most importantly they **hinder our relationship with the Lord**.

**Man-Made Walls are very different from the Walls of God we have been learning about.** Our man-made walls are an outer wall that surrounds our heart. It has built up defenses without our permission. This wall is constructed layer upon layer over our heart through our life circumstances, through hurt, pain, disappointment, or passed down iniquity (sin) from our forefathers.

This man-made wall was not in existence in the beginning with Adam and Eve in the garden, until sin entered in. But when sin entered into the earth, we all had a man-made wall surround our heart. This wall the enemy wants to keep in place in your life through deception, pride, and ignorance. If it stays in place then you are not a threat to the enemy’s kingdom. These walls keep the Word, Prayer and Intimacy with the Lord at a distance.

**You must know: This wall has been constructed with *untempered mortar*.**

**Ezekiel 13:10** *Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar.*

**Untempered:** not duly mixed for use; not durable or strong, foolish.

The enemy's untempered mortar cannot withstand the strength of God's power working in your life.

**Tempered:** having the elements mixed in satisfying proportions, for strength.

This is God's building materials mixed in the right portions in your life that build up protection and peace in Him.

Just as we learned this wall cannot be broken down if it is not for the Holy Spirit, our Helper, working in our life.

**John 14:16-18** *And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, so that He may be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see Him nor know Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.*

Once the Holy Spirit reveals the man-made walls in our life, we must be willing to hand over the hammer and chisel and allow Him to begin the demolition process. This

process brings freedom. **Because our Heavenly Father desires what is best for us, He pursues our walls. He knocks on them with circumstances or people to see if we are willing to be vulnerable.**

**Are we willing to trust Him like Joshua did with the wall of Jericho in Chapter 6 of Joshua?** Joshua believed and trusted in the Lord. He knew that in his own strength or with his own ideas the wall would not come down. Because of Joshua's relationship with the Lord, he was willing to trust the Lord's leading to bring freedom to the Israelites. **The wall was no longer blocking them!**

**Joshua 6:1-2** *“And Jericho was completely shut up because of the sons of Israel. None went out and none came in. And Jehovah said to Joshua, See, I have given Jericho into your hand, and its king, and the mighty men of war.”*

**Joshua 6:10** *“And Joshua had commanded the people saying, You shall not shout nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word come out of your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout.”*

**Joshua 6:16** *“And it happened, at the seventh time, when the priest blew with the ram's horns, Joshua said to the people, Shout! For Jehovah has given you the city!”*

**Joshua 6:24** *“And they burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and the gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of Jehovah. “*

**Once the wall was broken down they consumed it with Fire, Purging took place! The Wall of Fire is in place after the wall of Jericho was torn down.**

God wants us to have freedom. What does that mean, you ask? **He wants us to have the freedom to be who we are in Christ.** The Lord desires real people to interact with Him and others, and not to be hiding behind a wall. The only way we can do this is to acknowledge the love that Christ has for us. Do you really grasp the Love that Christ has for you? To be honest, I know I don't. I believe though that the Lord shows me through my circumstances, trials and pain, the love He has for me if I am willing to accept it and be teachable.

In some quick research I learned some things about constructing stone walls. First, a stone wall must have a cornerstone. **A cornerstone is a stone that forms a part of a corner or angle in a wall, the cornerstone must be free from defect or it will skew the whole wall. A cornerstone is a basic element for building a proper foundation. The cornerstone makes sure the rest of the construction of the wall is sturdy and strong.**

**Can you see how this definition of a cornerstone is how we should view Christ?**

He was placed on this earth free from defect (sin) and was given as a sacrifice so that you and I could have eternal life. Building a proper foundation on Christ sadly contradicts with the man-made walls built in our own life, they all lack a cornerstone.

Why do you think the bible mentions in **Job 38:6-7**, *“To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone?”* God knows in order to stand firm in this world we must have a proper foundation. We must be tied into the cornerstone with the tempered mortar holding the wall in place.

There is no way in our own strength and effort that we can build a proper foundation. Therefore, God so graciously gave us One in Jesus Christ. We must attach ourselves to Jesus Christ, the Precious Cornerstone; we must trust Him in all areas of our life. Throughout the Old and New Testament Our Father makes reference to the precious cornerstone.

**Isaiah 28:16** *“Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.”*

**1 Peter 2:6**, *“Behold, I lay in Zion, a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”*

Once we understand the Love of God and that He desires freedom for us, we must pour ourselves into His Word so we can be changed from the inside out. No change takes place if we don't have His Word hidden in our heart. **It is His Word that changes us from our old ways to the ways of Christ.**

**Psalm 119:9-12** *“With what shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word. With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me wander from Your Commandments! I have hidden Your Word in my heart, so that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O Jehovah; teach me Your Precepts.”*

Some of us have short thin walls, others have double thick walls in our life; but whatever your wall of defense is, it is holding you back from a deeper intimate walk with the Master Builder of your life, Jesus Christ. We must be willing to ASK of the Lord to reveal to us our walls, and then **submit them to Him to tear down**. We have to be prepared to face the demolition process, which can be painful and hard. **As with the Israelites at Jericho, our hope and promise is on the other side of the wall.** On the **other side of the wall we will be anchored to the Cornerstone**. He wants us tied into the Love of the Precious Cornerstone, Jesus Christ. The reward is we will have a deeper relationship with Christ, our faith is strengthened and a foundation established. This foundation will not be moved. It will be steadfast and firm and will not crumble to the pressures and circumstances of this world.

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

Psalm 19:7-14 extol the virtues of God's Word, along with the benefits of keeping It.

**Please read Psalm 19:11-14** again and **list** how keeping God's Word helps us in our day to day walk.

Look up the meanings of the **key words** in these verses.

Look up some **cross-references** to parallel what is here.

**Remember your memory verse, Psalm 19:7. I pray it is in your heart.**

## God Commands Obedience from His Chosen People

Day 5- May 17, 2013

**Please read Psalm 19:7-14 and Deuteronomy 4:1-5.**

Throughout this entire 52 days of Bible study you will see these key words (repeated words): **statutes, judgments, commandments, laws, precepts**. We must let the definitions of these Hebrew words go deep into our hearts, so we can hear God clearly in what He is saying, and how we will respond back to Him. I pray that the Holy Spirit will open our hearts to deeper revelation of these words so we can walk in victory and full fellowship with God. We will see victory if we hold fast to what the scriptures teach us in His statutes and judgments. He has commanded us to be obedient to His word so we can possess the land, which is the land of our heart!

In Deuteronomy 4:1 we are to listen, learn (be taught), and observe God's statutes, judgments, and commandments.

**Listen-** *shama*- to hear intelligently, often with implication of attention and obedience;

**Teach-** *lamad*- to instruct or train; to prod or goad with a rod; diligently instruct students to be skillful students of the Word.

We must be a disciple of Christ; one who puts forth effort to follow both the teaching and the teacher.

**Observe** – *asah* – to accomplish; to be carefully attentive and carry out; truly practice; to conform one's action or practice to the law; to comply with; to watch carefully, especially with attention to details or behavior for the purpose of arriving at a judgment; to come to realize or know especially through consideration of noted facts.

This one verse in Deuteronomy 4:1 sums up **James 1:22-25**.

*“But **prove yourselves doers of the word**, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.**”*

Let's look closer at the Hebrew words for what we are to observe:

**Statutes** - *choq* - An enactment, engraving, inscription, appointment; a written rule, decreed limit, law, custom, **decree**. These all have a **defined boundary, especially when written into the law**. *Choq* appears with *mitzvah* (commandment or precept), *torah* (instruction or Law), and *mishpat* (judgment or regulation).

**Psalm 2:7-8** *“I will declare the **decree**: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession’.”*

This messianic **decree** was an official order issued by God, in which The Lord Jesus is destined to rule and reign and have all **dominion and authority**. God has **set defined boundaries that help us keep His Word in our heart, and He gave us the Holy Spirit so we are able to receive and act upon His Word in obedience**.

**Judgment** - *mishpat* - Decision, determination, judgment, a personal cause of right; justice, rectification, correction, punishment. *Mishpat* is from the verb *shaphat*, to decide, decree, judge, rule, determine. **Judgment is found always in God that produces decisions based on justice (being fair), rightness, truth, fairness, and equity**. Judgment rectifies (make what is wrong to be right) imbalances and sets things right again. If punishment is what is required to rectify things, then judgment brings punishment. God Himself is called a God of judgment.

**Isaiah 5:16** *“But the Lord of Hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God who is holy shall be hallowed in righteousness.”*

**Commandment** - *mitsvah* - to command; an ordinance; an authoritative order or decree precept; law; to charge or appoint something. *Tsavah* may have involved marking down. God marked down the commandments, which He gave Israel upon stone tablets. **God instructions and orders to us are set and not be changed**.

**Deuteronomy 4:2** *“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandment of the Lord your God which I commanded you.”*

**Precept** - *piqqud* – a mandate or general rule intended to regulate or control the behavior or thoughts of an individual. Webster’s dictionary defines *precept* as a commandment or order intended as an authoritative rule of action; but applied particularly to commands respecting moral conduct.

**Law** - *torah* - Instruction, teaching, direction, precept. Usually *torah* refers to the Law of Moses, or a portion of the Law. Sometimes *torah* refers to rules or instructions of a human parent, or of some other wise person. The root of *torah* is *yarah*, **meaning to shoot, to cast down in a straight manner, to direct, to rain down**. The idea is that God’s instructions to Israel (the **Torah**) were given to them in a straightforward direct manner. Under the old covenant, the *Torah* was first written on stone tablets; but now under the new covenant, God has caused it to be written on our hearts.

When God gives us a **commandment** it is set as a **precept** to help us control our behavior and thought. "Thou shall not lie", is a command that is set to keep us from

sinning against ourselves and others. **Lying is driven by fear, pride, insecurities, hurt, and other strong emotions.** When we speak falsely we step out of the boundaries (**statutes**) of the Lord. When we do not observe this law, there will be consequences (**judgment**). Judgment comes to make right what we spoke as a lie or deception. **Lies cause others to be hurt or feel betrayed, placing mistrust in the relationship.** This sets up a vicious cycle of hurt and separation.

When we are **obedient** to the law, we allow the **rain of God's Laws to produce the river of the Holy Spirit to flow** through us. Then His **teaching and instructions can flow through our hearts** to bring an abundance of life, victory and healing. But when we are **disobedient** to the law, we bring forth death, defeat, and distress.

Please read **Isaiah 43:1-2**. Do you see that God is with us whether we are in the waters with Him or if we are in the fire of judgment? Both are to bring us closer to Him.

Moses realized that when the Israelites finally took possession of the Promised Land, their greatest temptation would be to forsake God and to worship idols of that land. To prepare the God's people for life in the new land, Moses over and over taught the commandments and statutes God had given him to give to the people. God made it very clear in His covenants that **Obedience** would bring life, blessing, health, and prosperity; while **disobedience** would bring death, cursing, disease, and poverty.

This **covenant** showed God's children the way to live in fellowship with Him and with each other. This precept in Deuteronomy is so important for all believers that it is quoted over eighty times in the New Testament.

We shall live if we follow The Lord as a disciple of His Word.

***Habakkuk 2:4** "Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith."*

The phrase "**shall live**" is *chayah*, which means to **stay alive; be preserved; to flourish; to enjoy life; to live in happiness; to recover health; to live continuously.** The righteous person in his faithfulness, consistency, belief, and, steadfastness shall live!

***Deuteronomy 4:1** "Now, O Israel, listen to the **statutes** and the **judgments** which I **teach** you to **observe** that you may live, and go in and possess the land which **The Lord God of your fathers is giving you.**"*

In Day 3 of this teaching series, we saw seven nations that were already in the Promised Land, and these same enemies are in our hearts. We must be in complete obedience to God's law, so we can be empowered by the Holy Spirit to drive out these enemies and allow God to completely possess the land of our hearts. Then blessings will flow as we turn all control (trust) over to Him.

**Please read this message that was given to us from one of the intercessors:**

There is an unawareness that we have switched in the spirit. **The greatest cloud over our mind is for us not to be aware of where we are and live in ignorance or deception.** God has empowered us as he did Esther. It is no more ask me for half of the kingdom, but I will give you “whatever you ask”.

Esther’s power was to choose how she was going to deal with the enemy. God is waiting for the church to use our power and declare war on the enemy. He told me yesterday during prayer that the people that are bound want to be free but do not have the ability (power). They have an inability (lack of power). **You can want to do something but the ability (power) comes from God.**

He reminded me of David. The army did not have the ability to fight the giant. He is waiting for those with the ability to ask the King, as David did, to fight the Giant and to give us ability to do so. It is time to be like Moses and send the Plague and warring angels to our enemy. God is waiting for us to ask Him, not for Him to have to tell us. He also reminded me; the release and freedom comes so the people can worship Him freely.

God is asking you now; do you have the power (ability) of the Holy Spirit inside of you? If so, what are you going to do with It in your daily life and the situations that have arisen to try defeat, distress, and distract you?

### **Digging Deeper**

Please take time today to let this word go deep into you spirit. Ask God to search your heart and remove the things that keep you bound. Declare to Him that you want to be free, but it will take His power to set you free! Partner with Him today to set your captive heart free.

Do you see the power of our memory verse this week? Please pray it back to God as a prayer of empowerment and praise.

***Psalm 19:7*** “*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.*”

## Being the Testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ

Day 6-May 19, 2013

### Let's review the definitions of the key words of Psalm 19:7-9

The **law** (*torah* - Word of God) of The Lord is **perfect** (*tamiym* - complete, whole), **converting** (*shub* - restoring, changing us into His image) the **soul** (*nephesh* - mind, will, & emotions).

The **testimony** (*eduth* - witness, evidence) of the Lord is **sure** (*aman* - confident, true beyond a doubt), making wise the simple.

The **precepts** (*piqqud* - command issued with authority) of the LORD are **right** (*yawshawr* - straight, just, righteousness) rejoicing the heart;

The **commandments** (*mitsvah* - divine rule) of the LORD are **pure**, enlightening the eyes.

The **fear** (*yirah* - reverence, wisdom of His love) of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;

The **judgments** (*mishpat* - verdict, justice, decisions) of the LORD are **true** (*emeth* - stability, certainty, trustworthy); they are righteous altogether.

As we continue on the journey with the Lord to build the second wall we must see that we are making the Wall complete and whole. **The word will make us complete and whole in this season, because it is absolute, having unrestricted power to convert (to cause change) the soul.** His Word has the power to convert us from sinners to children of God, and then to continue to convert us into His image day by day! The testimony of The Lord is sure, which means it is trustworthy. We can be confident in who He is and what He did for us as we get to know Him through His Word.

The **Lord Jesus' testimony is true** and the proof is the righteousness exhibited in our lives. We see our lives and the lives of others completely changed because of the Word of God. As the Lord Jesus Christ enters into our souls, our lives are proof and evidence that He is a living God. We can rejoice in the Word that changes us to be complete in Him. This is the **testimony we have now as the written Word of God changes our hearts to walk in confidence that Jesus Christ is Lord. When our souls have been converted,** we see that the seed of that work is now changing our hearts.

**2 Corinthians 3:2-3** tells us we are to become an epistle of Christ ministering to others. Now the Word of God is "written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is of the heart."

Our hearts become tender before Him like the eight year old King Josiah, who was able to walk in the purity of God. **Josiah had a testimony of God's heart because he had a child's heart to follow the Word of God.** When Josiah found the Word and read it,

he took action to live it out, and then it became a testimony for many after him. To read more about his life, read **2 Kings 22 -23**.

When we look at the conversion of our souls and become a testimony, we all know it was because the gospel of the Word was preached and taught to us. The word of God gives us wisdom that even the scholars of the world cannot understand. This Word comes into the heart that will understand the testimony of Christ. When it is heard, it opens up our heart to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. That is why we can see new babes come into the Lord with **no strong educational or theological background**. They excel in the Lord, because their **hearts are open to Christ and they allow Him to write His Word on their hearts**.

**1 Corinthians 2:18-31** *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For **God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are.**”*

What an amazing testimony of those who are wise by the Word of God led by the Holy Spirit. God's word is true and sure for changing the heart and the soul of man. That is why in **Psalm 19:8** we have seen that the **statues which are the written law or instructions of God are a great joy to the heart of those who have been converted in their soul (mind, will and emotions)**. We who have been converted by the Lord through His Word, Commandments, and Instructions begin to see it as a delight. **We come to learn that God's Word is not bondage, but it is freedom for our soul**.

**When we are not walking in the love of God to produce a testimony or evidence that He lives in our heart, we despise and resent the instructions of the Word**. We even get angry with the one who brings forth the Word. As the Holy Spirit leads us to all truth, we see the purity of the Word of God. Now He is opening up our eyes to see His judgment is solid and right for our lives. Also when the Word comes through the reading, teaching, or prophetic voice it comes with fire to refine us like gold. The **instructions of this Word come to try us and purge us** so we can walk in the fear of God, which is the pure relationship of our love for Him.

Now the **trials of life refine us as gold** to become like Him in our walk and to exhibit a changed nature.

**1 Peter 1:6-7**, *“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes though it is*

*tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

We see that the Lord uses the Word to refine us to know the genuineness of our faith and the relationship of our hearts toward Him. The word **refine** means to **melt, test, or purify metal**. This melting process removes impurities from precious metals, such as gold or silver.

When our hearts are open to the Lord's **instructions and leadings of His Word**, it is sweeter than honey. **Honey** is a sweet substance with a pleasant taste, and so are the Words of God. Now our soul delights in Him and all that He has in His heart. The **word does not become law or a cold demand that has been forced upon us**. We are now willing to give our heart to the Lord for His leadings, as David expresses in Psalms 119. Our life no longer wants the gold of the earth or the things of this world, **now our heart is longing for the refining of the Lord**.

***Psalm 19:11-13** "Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from **secret faults**. Keep back Your servant also from **presumptuous sins**; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression."*

Our prayer is for the Lord to refine our heart and soul.

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

Look up the following scriptures on being refined:

Zechariah 13:9

Psalms 66:10

Psalm 26:2

Psalm 119:72

Psalm 119:127

Proverb 8:10-11

Malachi 3:3

Can you say your memory verse by heart yet? Practice with a friend or family member.

## The Royal Law

Day 7 – May 20, 2013

**What is on the heart of God in this hour?** What would He say to us right now if He was here? I truly believe that we are in the eleventh hour, which is the late hour. We do not have the time we think we have, and the Lord Jesus is calling us to respond to His heart in this hour.

Let's Read **James 2:8-9** where He tells us **to fulfill the royal law** according to the Scripture, "**You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin.**" Showing partiality is when we make distinctions among people based on their rank or influence, as in showing preference for the rich and powerful.

As we have seen this week, when the Lord gives out a law, we must obey it, so we must fulfill the Royal law, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*"? In Leviticus 19, God gives us a list of statutes to keep regarding neighbors. Please read **Leviticus 19:13-18** and see what He says about relationships with our neighbor, how we are to treat on another.

**Who is your neighbor?** The word **neighbor** means a person near and next to us. Neighbors are those who are near and close to us; our family, the people next door, those who are in the church, and those we work with. A neighbor is anyone who is close to us physically and emotionally near to our heart. Once we give our lives to Jesus Christ, He comes in through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to change us little by little. As He indwells us more and more, and as we allow Him to purge us little by little of the sins in our lives, **His love will grow in greater measure for the Lord and for our neighbors.** Our hearts can now be close to our neighbors because the love of Christ is in us. It does not make any difference who these people are, or what their status and position are in their lives. **What really matters is where our position is in their lives and that we are to fulfill the royal law.**

**Royal** means to have the status of a king or queen to carry out a royal/kingly position. **The Royal Law is the law that was fulfilled by the King, our Lord Jesus Christ.** In this hour He is asking us to fulfill this law because the hour is late. **His Heart is to love and show this love to all; especially the poor, weak, helpless, orphans, and widows.**

*James 1:27 "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."*

**How do we fulfill this royal law of love? Please read 1 Peter 4**

**Verse 1-3:** *“Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles; when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.”*

**Verse 7-8:** *“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins.”*

We must understand that there must be a drastic change in our lives, hearts, and minds. We have spent enough time living for our flesh (sinful nature), we must now live for the Spirit of God that dwells in us. We must know that this drastic change in our lives will bring suffering.

**1 Peter 4:12-13** *“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”*

**James 1:2-4** *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”*

Too often we have heard sermons on how wonderful (easy) our lives will be as Christians. **There is a peace and joy that is available in full measure for all believers, but we must know we learn it in the midst of trials and testings.** Are you willing to be brought low, to be humbled for the sake of your neighbors (your families, churches and communities)? Are you willing to pray for them at all times? Are you willing to share the Word of God with them? Are you willing to demonstrate the love of God even when they do show love to you? This is the kingly position of love that our King, Jesus Christ took for us.

Through this kingly position of His suffering for the sake of love, His glory will be revealed to us and manifest among us. It pleases and delights Him when He sees our heart of love. When we are patient to wait on God as we go through trials that test our heart, His heart is full of JOY. In this waiting process, His heart is produced in our heart.

**Psalms 37:4** *“Delight yourself also in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”*

The Lord Jesus does not want us to lack anything in this trial, because He is producing a love in our hearts to bear the burden of our neighbor, our brethren.

The royal law comes with a king or queen lays down their life for the people.

**James 1:12** *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation (the desire to do wrong) for when he has been approved, **he will receive the crown of life** which The Lord has promised to those who Love Him".*

There is a crown waiting for all who position themselves to endure. The crown refers to the fullness of eternal life. **1 Corinthians 9:25** tells us that our crown is an imperishable crown.

**Revelation 2:10** *"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulations ten days (temporary time). **Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**"*

The devil, meaning slanderer, is behind our persecutors, who will come to test us for a relatively short time. **If we are faithful, He will give us the joy of eternal life. We will learn to be over-comers as we walk out His unconditional love.**

Jesus warned us of the events that will come soon. The events that we are watching in the media today show us false images of things to come. The media today bombards our itching ears with news of disasters, divisions, and distress so much so that we become numb to the news. This causes our hearts to be cold and unfeeling hearts for those in need. When this happens, we will not have a love for those who are suffering and defenseless.

**Mathew 24:7-14** *"For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences and earth quakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows (deep distress cause by lost, disappointment, or other misfortune suffered by someone or others.) And because of lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."*

**We are in an hour, the eleventh hour, when we must endure.** To **endure** is to hold one's ground in conflict, to bear up against adversity, to hold out under stress, to stand firm and persevere under pressure, as we wait calmly and courageously. Enduring is not lying down and barely holding on for the trial to end; but an **active, strategic plan to defeat the enemy's devices**. The times we are living in are dark and perilous, and will get worse before the glorious day of Christ's return. We must not be ignorant of the enemy's devices that will try to take advantage of the situation and cause division

between us and our brethren. **We must do all we can to preserve and build up love amongst ourselves.**

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:7** and apply these definitions of love to your life.

Write down when you have failed and when you have succeeded to love others this way.

Take the time to repent for you failures to God and also to all the Lord leads you to repent to. There is great power in repentance and forgiveness.

Rejoice with God when you have succeeded. I say rejoice with Him, because you were able to love others rightly because of His Love inside of us.

The next time you are faced with a crossroads of using the Royal Law or not, stop and ask the Lord to fill you anew with His love for that person. Then you will be able to truly love them. Try this, I guarantee it will work for you. "Love never fails."

## The Law of Liberty

Day 8 – May 21, 2013

We are in our 2<sup>nd</sup> week of Building the 2<sup>nd</sup> wall around our families, churches, communities and nations. We pray you are digging deeply into God's Word and letting it ignite a passion to know more of His Word for yourselves and those you have been praying for. We spent last week focusing on Psalm 19:7-14, and now we will turn our focus to Psalm 119. **This week we are to read Psalm 119:1-24.** This is divided into three sections of 8 verses each. Please read and pray these scriptures every day. **There is great power when we personalize the scriptures and pray them back to the Lord.** Here is an example from verses 9-16:

*O Lord, how can I keep my way pure? You say by keeping it according to Your word. Help me Lord to seek you with all my heart; do not let me wander from Your commandments. Please help me to treasure Your Word in my heart, so I may not sin against You. Lord, I praise You, O LORD; please teach me Your statutes. Lord, I desire to be skilled in Your Word so that I may tell others of Your ordinances and testimonies that I have found great joy in. Your Word is a treasure to me. Lord, help me to take the time to focus my thoughts to meditate on Your precepts and to respect all Your ways. I long to delight in all of Your statutes. Come Holy Spirit and help me not forget Your Word.*

**Our memory verse for this week is: Psalm 119:10** *"With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!"*

Yesterday we studied the royal law of love, and the Lord is still revealing His laws to us as perfect laws that convert the souls of men. Today we will look at the **law of Liberty** as it relates to the Royal Law of Love.

**James 2:12** *"So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty."*

**Liberty** - *eleutheria* - **Freedom from slavery**, independence, absence of eternal restraint. God's love sets us free from the bondage of our pain and then as we love others with this same love, we can lead them out of their pain. Many times we have shared, "hurting people hurt people". We must see the liberty that the Word and action of His love brings to the heart of man. **The perfect law is to love, which causes us to have a free heart and soul that will freely love others under all conditions.**

**Galatians 5:13 -14** *"For you brethren, have been called to liberty (freedom from the flesh) only do not use liberty as an opportunity of the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

The love of God helps us set others free in their hearts, not to freedom to put others under the law of flesh. Too many times Christians read about God's unfailing love and think in their minds that God will continue to forgive their fleshly desires and sins. But this wrong thinking leads to bondage. It is their wounded hearts of unforgiveness, past hurts, abuse, and many other emotional pains that cloud keep them from freedom. But the law is clear and perfect; it is in God's LOVE and a deep and abiding relationship with Him that we are set free.

**Please read Romans 13:8-14**

These scriptures make it very clear; **we are to love one another, and love is the fulfillment of the law.** Next time you wonder, "what does God want me to do", remember this truth and **choose to love.** Ask God what that will look like and choose to walk in His love towards all men!

We are in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour; the time is drawing near for our Savior Jesus Christ to return. **It is high time that we awake out of our spiritual slumber and cast off all the deeds of darkness that still keep us in bondage.** We must walk properly and make no provision for our flesh. The Lord wants us to walk in this **law of liberty and that is love.** When we live in the flesh and let it dictate our choices, we are in bondage to a cruel taskmaster, who will not let us keep the perfect law of love.

Last week we saw where Psalm 19:7 speaks of this perfect law that converts the soul; that changes our life and the lives of those around us who do not know this love. This perfect law is carried out only through love.

***Galatians 6:2*** "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"

The law of Christ is to love one another. This was the true heart of Christ as He expressed His passion for loving one another with His disciples.

***John 13:34-35*** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also have love for one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

A **disciple** is one who follows the teachings of another. In order to be a disciple of Christ, we must have a teachable heart. **We must not be arrogant and think we know all we need to know about the Word of God.** Even if we take all eternity, to study God's Word, there will still be treasures He wants to reveal to us. There is an unfathomable depth to God's Word that we must understand and appreciate.

With our teachable heart we must remember that loving others often requires us to suffer and to be tested with various trials. We must constantly remind each other that the trials we are going through are to produce things of great value, like perseverance, character, hope, and love!

**Roman 5:3-5** *"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character, and character; hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because **the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**"*

We cannot love without the Holy Spirit in our hearts!

**John 14:15-16** *"If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever."*

This love God gives us through the Holy Spirit to give out to others is a very special love. The Greek word for this kind of love is **agape**. **Agape love is an undefeatable kindness and an unconquerable goodwill that always seeks the highest good of the other person, no matter what he does.** The enemy cannot come between us and our brothers when God pours out His Agape love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This love has been poured into our hearts during the times when we have persevered through in our prayers and difficult times of testing. Agape love is a self-giving love that gives freely without asking for anything in return. We can love this way because of the trust we have in God, the hope we have in Him, and His hope will never disappoint us.

Jesus spent so much time sharing Divine Love with His disciples because it is the foundation of us coming to an intimate relationship with Him and then partnering with Him to bring this love to others. Divine love should be our ultimate standard of conduct.

#### **Please read Mark 12:28-34**

Jesus is teaching a scribe about which commandments are the most important. He starts out by saying the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Father God has one heart and it is filled with love and unity. He is one with the Son and the Holy Spirit. He wants us to have the same love and unity with Them and with each other. In order to do this, we must love The Lord our God with **all our heart**, with **all our soul**, with **all our mind**, and with **all our strength**. This is the first and greatest commandment.

The second commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. I am truly that we cannot love God or anyone else until with let **Him change our hearts through the healing power of the Holy Spirit**. Only then will we be able to walk by God's law of love, and to walk in unity with Him and each other.

This scribe with all of his intellectual knowledge was finally getting this truth into his heart with understanding, as he repeats the commandments of the Lord. You can see him putting two and two together in his mind as remembers all the commandments he had been taught. The Old Testament commandments of obeying the LAW were colliding with the New Testament commandments of LOVE. **He was finally seeing that LOVE is the fulfillment of the law and the covenant God made to us.** His heart was being set free because of his understanding of the perfect law. This perfect law

was changing (**converting**) His mind, will and emotions. The scribe realizes that loving God and loving others was more important than all the works of the burnt offerings and sacrifices.

This story and commandments were repeated in **Mathew 22:34-40**. Remember, God repeats things that are very important for us to know. In **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**, God tells His people the same thing. The Jews were instructed to write these truths down and post them where they would be remembered each day, as they were to repeat them twice a day. This was part of the **Shema**, the oldest fixed prayers of the sons of Israel. As we repeat God's word over and over again, it will get into our minds and into our hearts. We must not be like the scribes and Pharisees who studied and memorized the Word of God but never let it become a way of life. We must strive to walk out this perfect law, because nothing is more important than the perfect law of LOVE.

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read and study James 1:22-25.**

Look at the two words that are contrasted in this passage of Scripture, being a doer or a hearer of the Word. What do these concepts mean? Think of times when you have done each of these things, and what were the results?

If we are to be a doer of the Word, we are to look, continue, and remember (not forget) the Word. Let God search your heart as to what you need to change in your way of approaching God and His Word; so you can walk in the perfect law of love and be blessed.

Personalize this scripture and pray it back to God, as a prayer of repentance and a prayer of declaring your changed heart to God.

## God brings Rain from Heaven

Day 9 – May 22, 2013

God is speaking to us about the number **eleven** prophetically as we build this 2<sup>nd</sup> wall with the Word and wisdom of God. Remember the **eleventh hour means the latest possible minute**. Are we going to wait until the last minute, or are we **ready to build this wall with His love**? Are we going to sit by **idly** at this time, or begin **to be obedient to His voice and the words God is giving us** in this eleventh hour?

*1 Peter 4:17* “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

The number eleven means judgment and disorder. The Lord is bringing order to us because He will bring judgment to the house of the Lord first.

*Matthew 20:6* “And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’”

**Are you idle during this time?** Being **idle** is an absence from significance activities; lazy, not active. **Significance** means something of importance that is worth our attention. What God is doing in this eleventh hour is very important, and we must be actively involved in the preparations for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must understand the importance and worth of this time of building with the Word of God.

**Please participate in this time of building the wall.** Don't wait to the last minute to get involved with what the Lord is doing. **Get your children and neighbors together and spend time in the Word**; meet at least once a week in your homes. Come to your Church at the appointed times to pray and be fed, and then **take the Word back home to your family and friends**. Let them know we are building a Wall of Love for the Kingdom of God, and you want them to join us in this eleventh hour. Ask those around you to come. Do not be idle, God is calling all to know His Love.

We must understand as we build this wall of His Word that the **commandments of God are the heart of God**. He was serious when He gave them to Moses to give to His people in **their transitions**. Now He is telling us we are in the **eleventh hour** which we know is the last hour before we transition to be with Him for eternity. God wants to get our attention, because the enemy comes to deceive us through the open doors of our wounded hearts. **We must pray that this Word will go deep in our hearts as we begin to understand the perfect law, the Love of God.**

**Please read Deuteronomy 6.**

We are going to focus on verses 4-9. This is what God has called us to in this eleventh hour. These verses have been known in Jewish tradition for centuries as "**The Shema**", which contains the fundamental truth of Israel's religion. They were prayed every morning and every night. The Jews would write these scriptures on their door posts, and put them in boxes strapped to their heads or arms, to carry the Word of God with them always. God called His people in the Old Testament to recite these prayers every day, and we saw the same scriptures yesterday in the New Testament, in Mark 12:28-29. Jesus did not come with a different gospel of His love, but the same message that God gave Moses in His commandments.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9** *"Hear O Israel: The Lord our God The Lord is one! You shall love The Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. **You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you lie down and why you rise up.** You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. **You shall write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gates.**"*

They also recited **Deuteronomy 11:11-14**

"But the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, and **which drinks water from the rain of heaven**, a land for which the Lord your God cares; the **eyes of The Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of year to the very end of the year.** And it shall be that if you earnestly **obey My commandments which I commanded you today, to love** The Lord your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give you the **rain** for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may **gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil.**"

God has been crying out to mankind from the beginning till now for us to understand and carry His love. He wants our hearts to be in oneness with His. God talks metaphorically about the land often in His Word. The **land represents our heart** and He wants to possess the hills and valleys of our heart. As we abide with the Lord, He will feed our hearts with water of heaven. A river of God's presence is produced when we worship Him in Spirit and Truth. This rain from heaven comes to nourish the land of our hearts in the good times (hills) and the hard times (valleys). This rain comes from heaven through the worship of love from our hearts to His heart. He is always watching us, every day of our lives, because He loves us and cares so much about us.

This promise of the heavenly rain has a condition to it. **IF** we will earnestly **obey His commandment of love** and love Him with all our heart and soul, **THEN** He will give us the **rain** for our lives that will **nourish** us. This rain will then bring us an abundant harvest of **grain (revealed Word of God), new wine (anointing of Holy Spirit) and oil (fire of the Holy Spirit).**

With this condition to love and obey the Lord, and with the wonderful promises of the giving of the Holy Spirit, comes **a responsibility**. We must be diligent to be steadfast in our devotion to God and not be deceived to turn away from Him.

***Deuteronomy 11:16-17*** "Take heed to yourselves, lest your **heart be deceived**, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the Lord's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you **perish quickly** from the good land which the Lord is giving you."

During the last 8 days of our 2<sup>nd</sup> 52 days of Prayer and Worship, we have received the fresh rain of heaven from God. He is giving us great warning that in order to keep this rain from heaven we must stay focused on the love of God.

**Please read the rest of Deuteronomy 11**, the promises of God are wonderful and amazing IF we are obedient in our love and devotion to Him.

Please hear His heart; **the Lord is giving us instructions on how to walk**, just as He was to the children of Israelites.

***Deuteronomy 11:26-28*** "Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today; and the curse if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known."

We can **chose the blessing** by getting to know this love and being obedient to His voice today, or we **chose to take on the curse** by going after the gods of this world. Our gods today are not golden statues, but they are the desires of the world; material things that cause us to stray away; pleasures that choke out His heart; jobs that consumes us from being with Him; school that cause us to look for our own worth instead of looking to Him; vanity that causes us to spend more time on our bodies to look good for ourselves; and so many more. There are so many god's that we worship by giving them our devotion and time. We run to these idols to get our self-worth instead of to the One who created us and has great purposes for our lives.

God spoke to Jeremiah when He called him to be a prophet for His people in Judah. He wanted to let Jeremiah know that He had set him apart because He had a plan and a purpose for him since the beginning of time. We must know that the same is true for us.

***Jeremiah 1:5*** "Before I formed you in the womb I **knew you**, and before you were born I **consecrated you**; I **have appointed you** a prophet to the nations."

God promises He has plans for all of us and we can walk those out if we love Him and are careful to observe all the statutes and judgments He has set before us. He promises to send us rain from heaven to meet our needs so we can produce an abundant harvest for our lives, for our families, and for the kingdom of God. As we possess the land of our hearts, He will abundantly provide us with rest and peace for ourselves and for our families.

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

Remember the teaching on the strong emotions of our wounded hearts: fear, rejection, worthlessness, shame, insecurity, defilement, and hopelessness? The enemy uses these to keep us from being obedient and loving the Lord with all of our hearts. We cannot let the enemy use these wounds to keep the rain from heaven from watering our hearts.

On this journey of 52 days of the Word and wisdom we will learn more about these nations (emotions) that are stronger than us and how to **utterly destroy** them. The **battlefield is in our minds**. When these wounds are not healed, our hearts remain under the influence of the world. **But rejoice, our minds are in the process of being transformed. When our minds are renewed, our hearts can be healed!**

Look up the following verses on the battle for our minds, and hearts:

2 Corinthians 4:4  
Ephesians 1:18  
Psalm 119:18  
Romans 12:1-2  
Ephesians 4:22-24  
Colossians 3:10  
1 Peter 1:13  
Philippians 4: 7-9

Please continue to read **Psalm 119: 1-24**,  
and work on your **memory verse, Psalm 119:10**.

## The Veracity and Value of the Word of God

Day 10 – May 23, 2013

As we are endeavoring to build a wall around our families, friends, churches... of the Word and the wisdom of God, and as we are reading through Psalm 119 that extolls the virtues of His Word, I was struck by a sobering fact. Most people who call themselves Christians do not read the Bible. I found in a recent Christian survey that **88% of Americans own a Bible, but only 20% read it at least 4 times a week and actually believe it is the actual words of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit with no errors.**

In my quiet time with the Lord this morning, He said, **“Most people who call themselves Christians do not understand the veracity or value of My Word!”**

I went to my dictionary to look up these words.

**Veracity** – truth, accuracy, precision; the truthfulness or honesty of somebody. Reliability, genuineness, authenticity, exactness, validity, legitimacy.

**Value** – the worth, importance, or usefulness of something to somebody.

So the question to us is, **do we see the Word of God as God’s truth, and do we see the value of it for our lives and our relationship with Him?**

**As followers of Christ, we must be disciples of His Word. In fact, He is the Word.**

***John 1:1, 14** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

All of God is expressed in His Word. **He perfectly reveals His will for us in the Word.**

***Hebrews 4:12** “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*

**Living:** *zao* – alive

**Active:** *energes* – active, powerful, effectual,

**Sharper:** *tomoterous* – to cut with a single stroke, very sharp

**Sword:** *machaira* - speaks of judicial punishment

The Word of God is a **living Word** for us every day of our life. I have often said, even with all eternity to read and study God’s Word, there will always be something new and living for me each and every day.

The Word of God is **very powerful**; it can cut through all of our negative emotions and go to the heart of our issues. With a single powerful stroke, it can bring correction to our minds and hearts. This correction is not to condemn us, but to convict us so we will change our ways. He has a path for each to bring us closer to Him and to abundant life and peace; and when we stray from it, He will bring a word to awaken us to our error.

The Word of God can **penetrate and divide our soul** (mind, will, and emotions) from our spirit. The Word of God is like the most precise laser, able to go into our souls and cut out our wrong thoughts and ways, while leaving the good.

**Psalm 19:7** *“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.”*

His Word can **convert or restore our soul**, from a self-controlled person, to a Spirit-controlled person. Now our mind, will, and emotions are following the Word of God and we are new creatures; more able to follow Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Let’s look at **Psalm 119: 1- 8** and see the wonderful things the Word of God can do for us. **IF** we walk in His Law, observe His Testimonies, seek Him with all our heart, walk in all His ways, keep His Precepts diligently, keep His Statutes, look upon all His Commandments, learn His righteous Judgments, and keep His Statutes; **THEN** our way will be blameless, we will be blessed – happy, we will do nothing unrighteous, our ways will be established, we will not be ashamed, we will be thankful, we will have an upright heart, and God will be with us!

We see these wonderful attributes of the Word of God and the benefits of us reading, studying, knowing, and walking it out; so **why do we have such a hard time** doing this. If you ask most Christians, they would say they would like to spend more time in the Word of God. The Word of God is a great treasure, it leads us in the perfect way, and we want to read and study it more; so why do we have such a hard time getting into it? The answer is found in the Word:

**Galatians 5:17** *“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”*

We have an enemy that lives in us called our flesh and it hates God and the things of God, especially His Word.

**Romans 8:7** *“because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,”*

This is why it is so important that our minds are renewed as we saw yesterday. We must set our minds on the Spirit of God, and when we do His Word becomes a burning

desire in our hearts. We will be able to read and study it, to find the treasures He has for us to find, and when we do, we will walk in life and peace. (Romans 8:5-6)

**Colossians 2:3** *“in (Christ) whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”*

The treasures of His Word are not hidden from us, but hidden for us so the Holy Spirit can reveal them to us one by one. Human nature loves a treasure hunt, and we take great delight in finding buried treasure. God knows that about us, because He created us that way. **He knows that we will treasure His treasures if we have to sacrifice the time and effort to look for them.** Think back to a time when you found something really cool in the Word of God, and how excited you were. You wanted to tell everyone about it. Usually they are not as excited as you, because they did not find the treasure, you did. There is a special emotion that comes with finding the treasure ourselves.

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Read Psalm 119:9-24. List what we are to do with the Word of God, and then what the results will be for us if we do.** Look up any key words that stand out to you or that you need clarification on.

Spend some quiet time with the Lord asking Him to search your heart and mind, and to separate out the things that are hindering you from delving deeper into His Word. Ask God to help you value His Word and to let the veracity of His Word have its perfect result.

Remember to work on your **memory verse, Psalm 119:10.** It is so important to treasure God's Word in our hearts!

## The Word of God in our Wilderness

Day 11 - May 24, 2013

Remember our memory verse for this week:

**Psalm 119:10** *“With my whole heart I have sought You. Oh let me not wander from Your commandments.”*

The Song of Solomon is a love story between the Shulamite woman and King Solomon; but at the same time it is an allegory symbolizing the love relationship Jesus wants to have with His bride, His church.

**Song of Solomon 3:1** *“By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought him, but I did not find him!”*

The word **sought** means **an attempt to find**, to seek, to look with **intent**, to go in **search**, to try to **discover**, to ask for, to **request**, to try to acquire or **gain**.

To **make an attempt** is to make an effort to achieve or complete something that is typically a difficult task or action; like climbing to the top of a mountain. You are not sure you can do it, but you will try. The more you want to succeed in the task, the harder you will try. So to search for Jesus is to make every effort to seek Him with our whole heart.

In Song of Solomon 3:1-4, the Shulamite woman is desperately seeking the one she loves. We must be like her and must continue to seek Jesus until we find Him; and then hold on to Him and never let go!

**Song of Solomon 3:6** *“Who is coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant’s fragrant powders?”*

The Shulamite woman saw her beloved coming out of the wilderness in a cloud that was giving off a sweet smelling aroma. A **wilderness** is an **uncultivated abandoned area; a dry and hard place; and an empty place**.

How many times have you felt like you were in the wilderness, a hard place of emptiness and abandonment? Jesus understands what it is like to be in the wilderness.

**Matthew 4:1** *“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”*

**Luke 5:16** *“So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”*

Jesus came out of the **wilderness with the glorious fragrance of God's presence** all around Him. The sweet aroma we sense in His Presence is **the love of the manifested Presence of God**. He comes to teach and show us this love.

**Ephesians 5:1** *"Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a **sweet-smelling aroma**."*

Even when we are in hard and empty places on a daily basis, we can imitate Christ by walking in the love of God for others. This sacrificial love sends up a sweet smelling aroma of worship to the nostrils of God, and He is pleased.

When Jesus came out of the wilderness of testing, He came out with the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Luke 4:14**, *"... Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit... and He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all."*

We too can come out of the wilderness we are in with the power of the Holy Spirit on us, if we will seek Him with our whole heart. In our attempt to find Him, we must strive to be like Jesus. When we imitate Jesus and walk in His love, He shows us how we are to walk out His love.

**Luke 4:18-19** *"The Spirit of The Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to **preach the gospel to the poor**; He has sent Me to **heal the brokenhearted**, to **proclaim liberty to the captives** and **recovery of sight to the blind**, to **set at liberty those who are oppressed**; To **proclaim the acceptable year of The Lord**"*

The Lord will lead us into a place in His heart, where we can carry out His heart toward others. We are to share the Gospel with those who do not know it, we are to bring healing to wounded hearts with God's love, we are to help set free those in bondage and blind to the truth by the Word of God, and bring freedom to the oppressed by our prayers. As we lead others out of the wilderness into victory, they become a sweet smelling aroma to the Lord.

**2 Corinthians 2:14-16** *"Now thanks be to Go who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to **God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved** and among those who are **perishing**. To the one we are **aroma of death leading to death**, and to the other the **aroma of life leading to life**. And who is sufficient for these things?"*

Are we the fragrance of Christ everywhere we go? Is it obvious to fellow believers and those who do not know the Lord that God is with you? If so, their reactions to you will

be very different. You brothers and sisters in the Lord will enjoy your company and the joined presence of the Lord, you are a sweet aroma to them. While those who do not yet believe will be very uncomfortable in your presence, because you stink of death to them.

**Are we sufficient to carry the Presence of God?** Sufficient means adequate, acceptable, welcoming, and pleasing. If we seek Him with all of our heart, the answer is YES! Jesus has made the way for us to come close and to carry His presence. Please do not despise and rush your wilderness times, because out of them is produced a sweet smelling aroma that is so pleasing to Him. This fragrance of Jesus' love is produced out of the testing of the wilderness.

When we decide to obey the Lord with all of our heart, to follow His commandments, statutes, precepts, ways, laws, testimonies, and judgments; we become who He is. Remember John 1: 14 from yesterday; Jesus is the Word. Since we have become like Him, we become the Word also; we become living epistles.

**2 Corinthians 3:2-3** *“You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; **clearly you are an epistle of Christ**, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.”*

Luke 4: 19 told us we are to **proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord**. This refers to a time of freedom that was offered to all every 50 years, the Year of Jubilee. With Christ, every year is a year of Jubilee. He came to set us free from our sins. Are you willing to be His written epistle and proclaim the acceptable year to all who do not walk with Him?

#### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please Read Deuteronomy 8:1-3** and see why God sends us into the wilderness from time to time. Look back on when you have had wilderness experiences. What was God's purpose for them and what did you learn from them? What was the outcome of each wilderness experience? Were you a sweet smelling aroma? Talk this over with the Lord.

**Continue to read Psalm 119:1-24, and to memorize Psalm 119:10.**

## Preparation of the Bride in her Wilderness

Day 12 – May 25, 2013

Yesterday we looked at **Song of Solomon 3:6** “*Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant’s fragrant powders?*” We saw that Jesus is the bridegroom coming out of the wilderness for His bride, wrapped in a pillar of fragrant smoke. We also saw that we are sent into the wilderness for a season to test our hearts to see if we are completely His. Let’s look at two more wilderness passages. **One as God was preparing His people to enter the Promised Land and the other when God prepares His People to enter in to the Millennial Kingdom with Him.**

**Exodus 16:10** “*Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.*”

**Revelation 12:6** “*Then the woman (God’s people) fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*”

Remember the **wilderness** is an uncultivated, abandoned area; a dry, hard and empty place. But God prepared a place for her, just as He is preparing us for His return.

The Greek word prepared is *hetoimazo*, which means to make arrangements and be ready for something that is coming.

Our Lord Jesus Christ will bring us out of our wilderness by the pillar of **smoke** to show us the place of **Worship and Prayer** in our lives. There was a part of the tabernacle that also mentions an aromatic column of smoke. The **Golden Altar of Incense** used in the Tabernacle (temple) was a form of worship and prayer that a priest would perform twice every day. He would enter the Holy Place in the tabernacle carrying coals from the Bronze Altar in a container and sweet incense on a golden plate. **As the incense burned, he would offer up prayers for the people and praise to God.** These would mix with the smoke of the incense as a column of smoke, going up to God as a sweet aroma to His nostrils.

As we send up our praise and prayers to God every day, we are sending up a delightful aroma to God. The sweet aroma of His Presence will fill us and set a delightful atmosphere in our homes. As Jesus is setting this atmosphere, He has instructions for us that we must understand. He is preparing us for His return and then instructing us in how to prepare the Bride of Christ for His return.

Webster’s Dictionary defines **preparation**:

1. to make ready beforehand for some purpose, use, or activity; to put in a proper state of mind . **We must be ready and prepared to listen to God with a renewed mind.**
2. to work out the details of a plan in advance. We must work out the details of God's plan with a prepared strategy as we gather His remnant.
3. to put together, to compound as a prescription. We must come together and put His Words together as God give us wisdom and understanding.
4. to put into written form. We must be prepared to write down all that God is telling us in this season for His children. He has specific instructions for us to prepare and pray.
5. to get ready. We must be ready and prepared for the call to battle in intercession that is coming and is here.

**Revelation 21:2** *"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, **prepared** as a bride adorned for her husband."*

As we seek The Lord with our whole heart, He will reveal His heart to us more and more. His heart is to protect us and give us everything we need to be prepared for His return.

**2 Corinthians 11:2** *"For I am **jealous** for you with **godly jealousy**. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."*

Do you see His heart towards us? He is zealous and jealous for His Bride, the Church.

The imagery of Jesus "**coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke**" used in **Song of Solomon 3:6** can be compared to a **palanquin**. This is a covered carriage carried on the shoulders of strong men, used in a royal wedding. We can see Jesus being carried to His bride. This also can be compared to the journey of the Ark of the Covenant. This was a part of the tabernacle where God's presence rested. When the children of God moved camp, the Ark was on the shoulders of the priests.

**Exodus 13:20-22** *"So they took their journey from **Succoth (tabernacle)** and camped in **Etham (a sign)** at the edge of the wilderness. And The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a **pillar of fire to give them light**, so as to go by **day and night**. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people."*

As God's people headed out of the bondage of Egypt, they stopped at Succoth which means **tabernacle**. They stayed there for a time and gave thanks to God. Then they camped at Etham, where God gave them a great **sign**. God's presence as a pillar of

cloud and fire was evident to all His people and the surrounding nations. But only His people were close enough to smell the sweet aroma of the smoke. The fragrant smoke in Song of Solomon 3:6 reminds us of this guiding pillar. God now manifests His presence through the **Holy Spirit who guides His people into all truth.**

***John 14:15*** “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and **I will love him and manifest Myself to him.**”

**Manifest** - *emphanidzo* - to cause to shine, to appear, come to view, reveal, exhibit, make visible, present oneself to the sight of another to declare and make known.

In our preparation while we are in the wilderness The Lord is leading us on a journey that He has chosen for us. On that journey we must understand He is the only one that can lead and guide us to all truths. While we are reading, praying and meditating on Psalm 119, God is changing our hearts to love Him and all that is on His heart. **He is leading us to see Him in the pillar of cloud that will appear every day if we position ourselves.**

In this season of preparation He wants us send up incense that is holy and acceptable for Him. Remember this is the acceptable year to proclaim God to all.

#### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

Please read and study **Exodus 33:9-17**, where Moses understood importance of God’s presence.

**Please continue to read and pray through Psalm 119:1-24.**

**Remember your memory verse: Psalm 119:10.**

## **Aroma of Our Prayers**

Day 13 – May 26, 2013

**As we send up our praise and prayers to God every day, we are sending up a delightful aroma to God.** The sweet aroma of His Presence will fill us and set a delightful atmosphere in our homes. As Jesus is setting this atmosphere, He has instructions for us that we must understand. He is preparing the remnant for His return and then instructing us in how to prepare the Bride of Christ.

This statement is worth repeating again; because The Lord wants us have instructions for leaving the wilderness. We must study and understand the commandments and instructions that were given to us in the Torah - first five books of the Bible. The more we read His Word, the more understanding we get of what is expected of us. The Word cleanses and prepares us as we get closer and closer to Almighty God! He loves to teach us about Himself in His Word so we can have greater faith and confidence in who He is.

Yesterday we mentioned the Altar of Incense in the Tabernacle, and today we will look at it in more detail. With the Altar of Incense, we are at a point in our Christian walk where we are drawing very near to God.

**Hebrews 10:22** *“Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”*

In this season of preparation He wants us send up incense that is holy and acceptable to Him. Remember this is the acceptable year to proclaim Father God.

Please read **Exodus 30:1-10, 34-38**.

Priests, chosen by lots, would go into the Holy Place twice a day to put hot coals and incense on the Golden Altar. As they were doing this, they would offer up prayers and worship to God. Their prayers mixed with the smoke and wonderful aroma of the incense was to always be going up to God as a sweet aroma to His nostrils. **The Altar of Incense signifies our prayer life.**

**Exodus 40:5** *“You shall set the golden Altar of Incense before the Ark of the Testimony, and set up the veil for the doorway to the Tabernacle.”*

**Exodus 30: 10** *“It (Altar of Incense) is most holy to the LORD.”*

With these two scriptures we see that **the Golden Altar, the ministry of prayer, is most holy to the Lord, and closest to His heart.** The placement of the Altar of

Incense directly in front of the veil leading into the Most Holy Place demonstrates how important prayer is to God and to our intimacy with Him. It is through prayer that we are able to come into His Presence.

In the Old Testament, when the priests would pray at the Altar of Incense, the veil was blocking them from His presence. This was the closest they could come to God in their daily worship. **We as Christians can come close to God in prayer every moment of every day!** Today there is no veil separating us from the throne of God. The veil was torn at the crucifixion, giving us direct access to the throne of God through the veil of Christ's flesh and His shed blood.

**Matthew 27:50-51** *“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.”*

The Tabernacle of God no longer exists, but there will be on build before the Lord Jesus Christ returns. In this future tabernacle, the golden altar is in the Holy of Holies, again showing the importance God places on prayer.

**Hebrews 9:2-4** *“For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the **Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense and the Ark of the Covenant**”.*

**Revelation 8:3-4** *adds further to this future tabernacle placing the Golden Altar of Incense before His throne, as an everlasting testimony to the prayers of believers that have ascended to God from all time.*

The Altar of Incense had four horns on the corners. At certain times of the year, the priest would take blood from a sin offering and sprinkle it on these horns. They would then pray to God to pardon sins, interceding on behalf of the people.

**1Chronicles 6:49** *“But Aaron and his **sons offered on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense, for all the work of the most holy place, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.**”*

Just as the Israelites had a high priest to pray for their sins, so we too have a high priest, Jesus Christ, who is always interceding for us before God.

**Hebrews 7:25** *“Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”*

**John 17** records a prayer Jesus prayed to God about us. He asks God to provide: protection for us from the world and from Satan, sanctification through the Scriptures, spiritual unity within the body of Christ, and the presence of believers with Him to behold His glory. It is a great comfort to know that Jesus is praying these things for us!

Prayer is our highest privilege, gravest responsibility, and the greatest power God has put in our hands. Do you realize the honor God has given us to actually talk to Him, Almighty God, the God who created everything, and who keeps everything in His loving hands? If you wanted to talk to the president about something that is bothering you or even to tell him he is doing a good job, you can't. **But God is always leaning over, bending His ear to our prayers.** He longs to have conversations with us. **He longs for us to share our hearts concerns with Him and for us to listen to His.** God holds prayer in great honor, do we?

**James 5:16b** *"The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."*

God gave Moses **strong warnings** about the way incense was to be made and presented to Him. Why do we think we can throw up prayers any way we want? Let's look at the warnings God gives to Moses about this most holy altar.

Let's look at the warnings God gave Moses about this most holy altar.

**Exodus 30:9** *"You shall not offer any strange incense on this altar, or burnt offering or meal offering; and you shall not pour out a drink offering on it."*

The first warning is not to offer any incense that is not what God instructed them to use; in other words, any **prayers that do not honor God**. These can be casual prayers that we throw up to the air not really expecting anyone is listening to them. One of the most offensive "prayers" we offer up to God as strange incense is cursing using God's name.

**Please read Leviticus 10:1-3.**

Two of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, offered strange incense before the Lord. They took it upon themselves to do their own thing and present it to God. Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them and they died! God was very clear that He was offended by their disrespect. Offering "strange incense" prayers is dishonoring to God and we need to repent every time we do this, and ask Him to forgive us.

**Exodus 30:37-38** *"The incense which you shall make, you shall not make in the same proportions for yourselves; it shall be holy to you for the LORD. "Whoever shall make any like it, to use as perfume, shall be cut off from his people."*

The next warning is to **not make incense for ourselves** that is the same formula as the incense to be used on the golden altar. This is when we pray with selfish motives, to try to manipulate Him into giving us something we want. Those selfish prayers are not pleasing to God. This is not to say that should not pray for ourselves. God desires for

us to share our heart's concerns with Him, which is part of our intimate relationship with Him.

When we are in a proper relationship with God and come before Him with our prayers in a way that honors Him, then we can have the full assurance that He will answer our prayers.

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

There is a third warning in **2 Chronicles 26:16-21**. Please read this passage and see what King Uzziah did that was so offensive to God.

**Please read through Psalm 119:1-24 again.** We must continue to read this passage to let it go deep into our hearts.

Have you memorized **Psalm 119:10** yet?

## Consecrated to the Lord

Day 14 – May 27, 2013

**Please Read 2 Chronicles 30.** This is a story of King Hezekiah and the joy of bringing worship back to the children of God.

King Hezekiah became king when he was 25, and he inherited a very messed up kingdom from his father King Ahaz; who was not in the will of God and who God was very angry at.

**2 Chronicles 28:25** “...(King Ahaz) provoked the Lord, the God of His fathers, to anger.”

2 Chronicles 28 records what King Ahaz had done in his 16 years of being king.

- Made molten images for the Baals
- Burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom
- Sacrificed his sons by burning them
- Sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree
- Fought against Israel (the northern kingdom) where many of his people were killed or carried away as slaves. God very angry that the king caused the slavery of Judah by their brothers in Israel.
- Asked Assyria (a major enemy that eventually defeated both Israel and Judah) for help fighting his enemies to the east and the west. The king of Assyria came against him instead of helping him. The King some things out of Temple and gave them to Assyria as a bribe. It did not help.
- Gathered all the gold and silver utensils in the Temple and cut them into pieces. He then closed the temple.
- Made altars for himself in every corner of Jerusalem, and in every city of Judah.

King Ahaz totally forsook the Lord and led his people to do the same. As soon as King Hezekiah became king (in the 1<sup>st</sup> month of his 1<sup>st</sup> year), he opened the doors of the temple so repairs could be made. He gathered the priests and Levites and asked them **to consecrate themselves and the House of God**, and to carry all the uncleanness out of the holy place.

**Consecrate:** *qadash* - to be clean ceremonially or morally; to dedicate yourself to the Lord; prepare to be holy; to purify; to sanctify.

Webster’s dictionary defines consecrate as: to make or declare to be sacred, by certain ceremonies or rites; to set apart, dedicate, or devote, to the service and worship of God.

These men of God had been living in a culture that was hostile to God, and it would have been hard to keep themselves pure. They had dedicated their lives to ministering

to the Lord and that was denied to them when the Temple was closed. I am sure they had to get other jobs. Living in this very idolatrous city undoubtedly had influenced them to some extent.

*We are living in a rapidly deteriorating culture, and we must be very careful to not allow it to influence us. We must stay close to the Lord and allow Him to show us when we are in need of consecration.*

### **Verse 12 starts out: The LEVITES arose...**

In the middle of this story there is a list of the names of 21 Levites. When we look at the meanings of these names, there is a message for these Levites from God.

*I come to erase and blot out the burdens imposed on you by King Ahaz. I am Your God and I am surrounding all who hear and obey My commands. Come back together as a congregation. I know you have been bitter about the things that have happened in the past, it has been very difficult for you to serve me. But I am here to help make your praise be heard, and to celebrate the opening of My House. Your banishment by King Ahaz is over and you are being brought back as a brotherhood. The wickedness of his idolatry is changed to delightful worship of Me. Come back together as brothers. I treasure My Priests and Levites, and I have watched over you and preserved you, and not let you get swept away. I have gathered all who remembered Me, who have put their hope in the Lord. My faithful ones, I will revive you; I will preserve all who obey My voice. As you raise your hands in worship and prayer to Me, know that I have heard your cries. Rest in the strength and majesty of your God.*

**... they assembled their brothers**, consecrated themselves, and cleansed the temple. The priests went into the inner part of the temple and took out everything that was unclean and disposed of it. They spent 16 days cleansing, repairing, and consecrating the temple and all the articles in it.

*It is good for us from time to time to go through our homes with the leading of the Holy Spirit to show us the unclean things we have brought into our homes. We must take them out of our homes and dispose of them.*

They went and told the king all that had been done. He assembled the princes (leaders) of the city and they went up to the temple. They offered 7 bulls, 7 rams, 7 lambs, and 7 goats for a sin offering for the kingdom, which the Priests sacrificed on the Bronze Altar.

Look what happened next. As the sacrifices were burning, an **incredible time of worship broke out** with the Levites singing the Psalms and playing their harps, lyres, and cymbals; and the Priests sounding the trumpets! Everyone bowed down and joined in this worship. Can you just see the smile on God's face as He was experiencing this worship? He was smelling the aroma of the burnt offerings, hearing the prayers of

repentance, and hearing the voices and instruments lavish praise on Him. There was great joy in the hearts of the King, the Princes, the Priests, and the Levites to be able to publically worship the Lord again.

*When we assemble in our churches to worship the Lord, do we worship with abandoned and consecrated hearts? We must not take the freedoms we have now for granted. There were probably many prayers of repentance going up to God that day as they realized how great it was to worship God again.*

After this prolonged time of worship, the King opened up the Bronze Altar for other kinds of offerings from all of the people. **They brought almost 4000 animals to be sacrificed.** All the people were excited to be able to worship God in the ways He had commanded them. But a problem arose; **there were not enough priests to handle all of these sacrifices, so the levities helped them.**

**2 Chronicles 29:34** *“But the priests were too few, so that they were unable to skin all the burnt offerings; therefore their brothers the Levites helped them until the work was completed and **until the other priests had consecrated themselves. For the Levites were more conscientious (hearts were more right) to consecrate themselves than the priests.**”*

There is much we can learn from this passage.

God always preserves a remnant for Himself, who have not bowed to idols. We are the remnant of today. We must see who we are and what we have been called to do. **Psalm 119 talks over and over again about keeping our way pure by keeping it according to His Word.** We must seek Him with all of our heart, and we must treasure all of His word in our hearts. **In Hezekiah’s day, there were not many priests who were committed to a consecrated lifestyle.** We can only speculate as to why. Many were discouraged and had lost hope; many had compromised and followed the ways of those around them. **We who are the remnant Levites, who have heard the call of the Lord to arise and assemble, must not judge our brothers and sisters,** but do what the Lord asks us to do. We must worship the Lord, and we must pray for our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

**2 Chronicles 29:36** *“Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced over what **God had prepared for the people, because the thing came about suddenly.**”*

Just as the reopening of the Temple came about suddenly, so too will all that God has prepared for this world in anticipation of Christ’s return. We must position ourselves in His Word with wisdom and an attitude of humble prayer to hear His instructions. He has much for us to do to encourage the Church to come into her rightful place, so she can be ready to truly share the gospel all over the world in preparation for the Lord’s return.

**In 2 Chronicles 30**, we see a parallel to the time we are living in. There was much **division** in Israel; it had been divided into 2 kingdoms, with the twelve tribes distributed among them. There was no unity or brotherhood. King Hezekiah **invited all Jews to come and celebrate Passover**, one of the 3 feasts the Lord commanded all His people to celebrate. It was a time for all to come and gather in Jerusalem. Some of the tribes laughed, scorned and mocked them; while others humbled themselves and came.

These are the same reactions we get in this age, some denominations reject and some embrace. **2Chronicles 30:6-9** needs to be our prayer for our brothers and sisters in the Lord who do not understand the times we are living in and the urgency of the Lord for us to come closer and to live consecrated lives, according to the Word of God. We are the courier of the King of Kings and we must know the Word of God, His letters, and take them to those near and far.

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

Please pray **2 Chronicles 30:6-9** for the church today.

*Oh Lord, may Your beloved ones, Your bride, the Church return to You with all of their heart and soul and mind and strength; so that You may be close to us. Oh Lord, may we escape for the enemies Your people still face, the world and our flesh. May we stop following the traditions of men and be faithful to You and Your Word. May we learn to flow with You and not be stiff necked in what we believe. May we yield to You and enter Your sanctuary, consecrated to You forever, to serve You with pure hearts. May Your burning anger be turned away from Your beloved ones. Lord as we all return to You, may there be great reconciliation and compassion among your people. Oh Lord, our God, You are gracious and compassionate, please do not turn Your face away from us so that we may return to You."*

**2 Chronicles 30:27** *"Then the Levitical priests arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard and their prayer came to His holy dwelling place, to heaven."*

### **When we pray scripture, we can know God has heard our prayers**

I encourage you to **pray through Psalm 119:1-24** for yourself, your family and friends, and your nation.

**Is Psalm 119:10 memorized?** If it is not yet, work hard on it today. We get a new one tomorrow.

## **Costly Anointing**

Day 15 – May 28, 2013

**Psalm 119:33** *“Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes, and I shall observe it to the end.”*

Yesterday we looked at the consecration of the Levites and Priests when King Hezekiah reopened the temple his father closed. Consecration is a process of cleansing to show your dedication to the Lord. It shows you are set apart for the Lord.

The Temple in Jerusalem does not exist, and the Levites today, like in King Ahaz's reign, are not able to carry out their priestly duties. So why should we study the priesthood? **We as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are Priests unto the Lord.**

**Revelation 1:5-6** *“... Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood; and **He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.** To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

As priests, we are to dedicate our lives to the Lord. We are to be consecrated, set apart from the world. We must know that we have a holy anointing on us that is sealed by the Holy Spirit. .

**2 Corinthians 1:21-22** *“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and **anointed us** is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.”*

Often, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Oil of the Holy Spirit. Let's look more closely at the oils that were used to anoint the priests and the tabernacle, and then the oils used in the incense used exclusively for the Altar of Incense.

**Please read Exodus 30: 23-38.**

**Exodus 30:30** *“You shall **anoint** Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister as priests to Me.*

**The anointing oil was only to be used on the priests and Levites, those set apart for the Lord. It was not to be used by anyone else, “it is holy, and it shall be holy to you.”**

The **holy anointing oil** was made of the finest and costliness of spices:  
500 shekels of flowing myrrh,

250 shekels of fragrant cinnamon  
250 shekels of fragrant cane  
500 shekels of cassia five hundred  
one hin of olive oil

**Myrrh** is a sticky white gum that comes out of the trunk and larger branches of a thorny tree. Its taste is extremely bitter; but its smell, though strong, is agreeable. The purest form of Myrrh is also called **stacte**, which flows out of the tree's bark. It is considered to be the most costly oil used in the Bible.

**Cinnamon** is a powder scrapped from the bark of the canella tree. It has a strong and spicy odor.

**Fragrant Cane** is also called **Sweet Calamus**, is a two foot reed that has a knot near the root. This knot has a soft white center that emits a very pleasing scent. It is used in the richest perfumes.

**Cassia** is a shrubby plant whose leaves and seed pods are used for medicine, while the aromatic oil is extracted from its bark.

**Olive Oil** is produced when olives are crushed to extract oil. They go through several crushings. The finest oil is produced in the first crushing.

The **fragrant incense** used on the Altar of Incense was made in equal amounts of:

**Stacte** is the purest form of myrrh, which is a gummy substance that is bitter to the taste, but has a pleasant aroma.

**Onycha** is a resin peeled off the shell of a mollusk.

**Galbanum** is a gummy resinous juice that comes out of a cane when it is broken. It has very many small shining grains that have a strong yet warm aroma.

**Frankincense** is a dry resinous substance in pieces or drops, of a pale yellowish white color, that has a bitter acrid taste. It produces a white smoke when it is burned.

**Just as these oils were costly to purchase, so is the cost of living a lifestyle under the anointing of the Lord.** In order to **prepare these oils**, and others used in the Bibles, they have to be stripped, pounded, cut, or crushed to get out the gummy resin. These resins are then dried and ground into a very fine powder. **This process of preparing the incense speaks of the trials we all go through; the crushing, stripping, pressing... all to prepare us a beautiful aroma to God's nostrils.**

*2 Corinthians 4: 8-10, 17 "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body... For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison."*

**Every believer goes through hard times of affliction when it feels like we are being crushed, stripped, or pressed.** The dry times of our various trials and testing

are likened to being in the wilderness with Moses. As we are crying out to God, something marvelous is produced, a glorious prayer life that is mature and strong built on our increased trust in Almighty God! We become a beautiful fragrance of Christ to God and to those around us.

**Please read Esther 2:9-12**

Esther was chosen by God because of her quiet, gentle, and obedient spirit, which pleased both her uncle Mordecai and the eunuch Hegai. She was able to succeed in being queen because **she listened to their wise advice out of a teachable spirit.** The Lord has given us the Holy Spirit to guide us and He has sent various teachers our way to teach us the Word of God. Do we have a teachable spirit like Esther?

During the 12 months Esther was in the palace, she underwent beauty treatments; 6 months with oil of myrrh – **basking in the presence of the Holy Spirit with prayer;** and 6 months of spices and perfume – **worship.**

This is what goes on in consecration! It takes time for His oil to soak into us, for us to be prepared for His presence. The more time we soak in the Oil of the Holy Spirit (His Presence), as He teaches us the Word of God; and the more time we spend in prayer and worship; the more we become consecrated to the Lord.

***Psalm 119:33-35** “Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall observe it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may observe Your law and keep it with all my heart. Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it.”*

During these 52 days, **God is looking to anoint His beloved ones, who will soak in the oil of the Word of God with teachable hearts.** He desires for us to count the cost of this anointing, and realize our relationship with Him is worth whatever it costs. He paid all, He gave His life for us; will we do the same? **Will we lay down our ways and our plans to live consecrated lives according to His ways?**

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read and study Psalm 119:25-48.** These are our verses for this week. **Our memory verse is Psalm 119:33.**

## Revive me According to Your Word

Day 16 – May 29, 2013

During these 52 Days, the Lord is making His Heart very plain to us that **He wants us to know and study His Word**. His Word is what we need to find our way in life. Psalm 119 talks over and over again about the benefits of following His commandments, statutes, precepts, ordinances, and judgments that are found in the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament. There are five other books in the Old Testament that are known as the **books of wisdom**: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.

Today we will spend most of our time in one of the books of Wisdom, Psalms. **Please read our passage of Psalms for this week, Psalms 119: 25-48**. In these 24 verses, some form of God's Word (commandment, precepts...) is mentioned 27 times, along with various promises for those who will observe it.

Reading King David's emotional words in Psalms is so refreshing. He is honest with God as to what he is feeling and going through. He pours out his heart to the Lord in the good times and the bad. Then **he stands on the promises of God's Word and he is refreshed**. This is why Psalms is a book of wisdom. When we are struggling, this book more than any other is comfort to our souls. It always seems to help when we know someone else has gone through hard times and has gotten through them.

Yesterday we compared the struggles and trials in our life to the oils that were extracted from various plants through the process of stripping, crushing, cutting, or pounding to prepare the costly anointing oil for the priests and the holy incense. When prepared and used, they produced a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

We know that the outcome of the trials we go through is glorious as we get closer to the One we love and who loves us, Almighty God, our Savior Jesus Christ, and our teacher and comforter, the Holy Spirit. **But the knowledge of this outcome does not take away the pain and exhaustion we feel as we go through these hard times**. Let's dive into Psalms and find encouragement and strength.

**Psalm 119:25** *"My soul cleaves to the dust; Revive me according to Your Word."*

**Psalm 119:28** *"My soul weeps because of grief (depression); Strengthen me according to Your Word."*

King David is very expressive; some of you might even say he is being overemotional. But he was just trying to express what he was feeling in his prayers to the Lord. He knew his help would come from no other, so he laid it all out before God. So many

times we are told to keep our emotions to ourselves; but God wants us to be real with Him. He knows what we are feeling, and there is great power in admitting it to Him.

King David is confessing that **he is in the depths of depression and grief**. He has gone through great betrayal and he is stuck in the swirling emotions of his mind and will.. The phrase **cleaves to the dust** means to be **stuck in the mud**. I don't know if you have ever been stuck in the mud, but it is a bad on so many fronts. You can go nowhere, because you are stuck. You keep getting muddier with each attempt to get yourself unstuck. And you have to wait for help to come to get you out. In these times of being stuck, do we wait patiently for help? Usually not, because our emotions are all over the place, manifesting in tears and anger.

In his depression, in his state of being stuck, what does King David ask of the Lord?  
**Revive and strengthen me according to Your Word.**

**Revive - *chayah***, which means to bring back to life.

Webster's Dictionary defines **revive**: to recover new life or vigor; to be reanimated after depression; to recover from a state of neglect, oblivion, obscurity or depression; to raise from depression or discouragement; to awaken; to bring into action after a suspension.

**Strengthen – *qum*** – to stand up, to rise up.

Why can we arise out of a state of depression and discouragement according to God's Word? Because His Word is true and the promises He speaks to us will come to pass.

***Psalm 3:1-4** "O LORD, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me. Many are saying of my soul, 'There is no deliverance for him in God.' But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and **the One who lifts my head**. I was crying to the LORD with my voice, and He answered me from His holy mountain."*

We can know that our Lord is the One who is listening for our cries and answering them. He is the One who lifts our head out of the miry clay (mud).

***Psalm 40:1-3** "I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, **out of the miry clay**, And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear And will trust in the LORD."*

King David gives us a secret to being lifted out of the mud we are stuck in. **He waited patiently** for the Lord. There are two parts to this: he waited and he was patient in his waiting. Neither of these behaviors is easy for mankind, but they are possible and very necessary to get us out of the miry clay we are stuck in.

**Psalm 44:23-26** *“Arouse Yourself, why do You sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not reject us forever. Why do You hide Your face And forget our affliction and our oppression? For our soul has sunk down into the dust; Our body cleaves to the earth. Rise up, be our help, And redeem us for the sake of Your lovingkindness.”*

King David was having a hard time waiting for the Lord and was very transparent with the Lord and with us in his writings. Sometimes we have to wait a long time to get out of the mud, or into the promises God has spoken in our lives.

The word **patient** means having the quality of enduring evils without murmuring or fretfulness; sustaining afflictions of body or mind with fortitude; not easily provoked; calm under the sufferance of injuries or offenses; not revengeful; persevering; constant in pursuit or exertion; calmly diligent; not hasty; not over eager or impetuous; waiting or expecting with calmness without discontent.

Please don't run the opposite direction from patience. It is a powerful fruit of the Spirit that has been put in all believers in seed form. Please allow it to come to maturity in your heart through these trials of waiting.

**Psalm 27:13-14** *“I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD.”*

Going back to **Psalm 40:1-3**, after we have waited patiently, He will pull us out of the miry clay and set our feet on a solid foundation. Who is that solid foundation? Jesus Christ. We had gotten stuck in the mud because we have wandered off the path (way) the Lord had laid out for us. But now He picks us up, and cleans us off, and sets our feet back on the chosen path, one with a sure foundation. What must we do when this happens? PRAISE HIM, PRAISE HIM, and PRAISE His some more. He will put a new song in our hearts, and we must sing it to Him! He has brought us out and now we can soar with Him, more grateful of His presence and sure footing than ever before.

**Isaiah 40:31** *“Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”*

What a wonderful promise!

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

Psalm 119 uses a form of the word **revive** 11 times. Obviously this is a key word in this chapter. Use a concordance, cross-references, or Bible software to find these verses and write out the truths you see in them.

Please work on your memory verse for this week: Psalm 119:33.

## Enlarge my Heart, Lord

Day 17 – May 30, 2013

**Psalm 119:32** *"I will run the course of Your commandments, for You shall enlarge my heart."*

**Run my course** means: the act or action of moving in a path from point to point; the path over which something moves or extends; a chosen manner of conducting oneself; a way of acting.

If we will follow the **commandments of the Lord on the course** He has been set before us, He will **enlarge** (to make bigger or more extensive) our hearts.

When we come out of the wilderness, **a path has been chosen for our lives** and it has been planned out for us by the sovereignty of the Lord. He wants our hearts to be enlarged every step of the journey. Remember what we have studied about the wilderness, its purpose is to humble our hearts so we will follow the Lord.

**Deuteronomy 8:2** *"And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, **to humble you and test you**, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."*

**Isaiah 54:1-2** *"Sing, O barren, you who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman," says the LORD. **Enlarge the place of your tent**, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes."*

When He told the woman who was **barren** to sing, this was to encourage her that her dwelling place was going to be **enlarged**. God was pleased to speak these words because He knew the outcome of her path. **He was working patience in her heart as she walked out the promises spoken to her, and as He led her through the course of life He chose for her.**

He also spoke to Sarah as she waited in her barren state for her promised child. We must understand that **God is doing great things in our hearts and lives when we wait on Him in our wilderness/barren place**. He is preparing us and preparing things around us for the journey to come. When we open our hearts to Worship the Lord in our wilderness, looking to His promises, but not yet seeing anything change; our faith in Him grows. This greatly pleases the Lord.

In order for our faith to grow, our hearts need to be tested and tried, like gold. Gold in its natural state is full of impurities, just like our natural hearts. They have to be refined, through the great heat of trials, to bring the impurities in our hearts to the surface and be removed. When we welcome and allow this refining to go on in our hearts, the Lord is pleased!

**1 Peter 1:7** *“that the **genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**”*

King David was a man after God’s own heart, and his son Solomon also had a heart that pleased the Lord. They both were not perfect, but they were humble and repentant before the Lord. When Solomon became king, he told the Lord he did not know how to be a wise king, but that was his greatest desire. This pleased God so much that He gave Solomon wisdom and discernment that was greater than anyone else.

**1 King 4:29** – *“And God gave Solomon **wisdom** and exceedingly great **understanding** and **largeness of heart** like the sand on the seashore.”*

**God enlarged his heart to receive more of God**, not just what he asked for, but abundantly beyond all that he thought possible. God blessed him with peace for his kingdom, prosperity, and honor beyond anyone else.

With each day that King Solomon reigned, he grew in the Lord. With each proverb and Psalm he wrote (1 Kings 4:32), his faith in the Lord grew. Every time he relied on the Lord to lead him in administering justice, His faith grew. As everyone in the kingdom was at rest, his faith grew. When he realized the Lord needed a house, when he was in the middle of building his own, he quickly got the necessary people together and built the most magnificent temple for the Lord in only seven years.

**1 Kings 3:28** *“All Israel...feared the King , for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.”*

**1 Kings 4:25** *“All Judah and Israel lived safely...all the days of Solomon.”*

**1 Kings 5:4-5** *“The Lord my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune. Behold, I intend to build a house for the name of the Lord my God...”*

At the dedication of the temple, King Solomon stood before the altar and prayed before the entire assembly, acknowledging that there is none like his God!

**1 Kings 8:22-23** *“Then Solomon stood before the altar of The Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and **spread out his hands toward heaven; and he said, ‘Lord God of Israel there is not God in heaven***

*above or on earth below like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts'."*

**Please read the entire prayer of King Solomon in 1 Kings 8:12-61.**

When King Solomon stood before the people, he was ministering as a priest to the people and to God. He was interceding for his people before Almighty God, he was extolling the magnificence of God through worship, and he was teaching the people from the Word of God. Solomon operating as **a king and a priest was foreshadowing of the greatest priest/king, Jesus Christ**, when He returns to rule on this earth. But in the meantime, he has made us to be kings and priest in this age.

One thing that King Solomon **prayed was for all the peoples of the earth to know the Lord.**

***1Kings 8:60** " that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other."*

God answered this prayer in a unique way. The fame of King Solomon's wisdom and discernment, and God's favor was evident to all. Kings and Queens came from all over the world to talk to Solomon.

***1 Kings 4:31,34** "He was wiser than all men... and his fame was known in all the surrounding nations...and they came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the Kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom."*

When we open our **hearts to be loyal to the Lord our God, He will extend our territory, our sphere of influence, to bring the lost to see how great our God is in our lives.** We become a testimony for the Lord, just like King Solomon was when all the leaders and wise men came to see him.

**Please Read 1 Kings 10: 1-10.** These are the words of the Queen of Sheba, after she met King Solomon.

She had heard fantastic tales about this king, but she didn't believe them. But something caused her to investigate him for herself. When she met King Solomon, she was overwhelmed by the sweet smelling aroma on him of the presence of God. **She saw the brightness of the light of the Lord in this man and his kingdom, and she wanted it for herself.** She comes to acknowledge the Lord is Almighty God!

As the Lord takes us through our wilderness, the aroma of His presence permeates us and we become a sweet smelling aroma. **We must go out into the darkness of the world and be a light and a sweet aroma of life to those who are perishing without the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**2 Corinthians 2:15** *“For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.”*

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Isaiah 60: 1-9** and see how they tie into what we studied today. We will study about the treasures of these kings tomorrow.

**Continue to work on your memory verse for this week: Psalm 119:33.**

## Establishing the Priestly and Kingly Anointing of God Presence

Day 18 – May 31, 2013

**Revelation 1:5-6** “... Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and **has made us kings and priests** to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.”

Yesterday, we saw that King Solomon was a King and a Priest to his people; and we must know that Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, has appointed all those who come close to Him to be Kings and priests.

As we allow God to cleanse and purify us for Himself, and as we get closer to Him, He wants us to be His priests and His kings. We can all envision what that would look like to be a king, to be a priest; but we need to go to the Word of God and get His wisdom; because His ways are not always our ways. Let's first look at what the Lord tells us about being a priest after His own heart. **Please read Ezekiel 44: 10-24.**

This passage of scripture describes two different groups of priests. We must see that these **two categories of priests represent believers today**. God has called all believers to come close to Him, but the sinfulness of our hearts keeps us at a distance. Believers who have not allowed God to purge and cleanse their lives, who willfully follow after their sinful desires and not the heart of God, they will still be a priest, that does not change; but **there will be consequences**. Verse 10 called it *bearing their iniquity*. They are to be gatekeepers and ministers of the house of God; they shall stand before the people and minister to them. The consequences are in verses 13 & 14: they shall **not come near Me to minister to Me as a priest**; and they will be in charge of the temple, **doing all the work that needs to be done**.

But the second category of priests did not stray into idolatrous ways; they stayed faithful to the Lord. **They are to come near to God to minister to Him!** They are to **keep His charge**.

**Keep** – *shamar* - to hedge about (as with thorns), that is, to guard; to protect, to be attentive to. When a property owner had a valuable piece of land, he would plant a thorny hedge all around it to keep marauding animals and men out.

**Charge** – *mishmereth* - to keep watch, to act as a sentry, observance of duty, to safeguard

When we **keep the Lord's charge**, we deem his Word so valuable that we will do all we can to guard it in our hearts, we will be watchful of everything we do and say, we will observe all His commands, and we will act as a sentry in our homes and churches.

These priests are to teach God's people the difference between the holy and the unholy; and in times of controversy, they are to be a counselor and a judge. These are

the ones who **live out Psalm 119**, by keeping God's laws, statutes, commands, and precepts.

Let's get practical: Look at your walk with the Lord. Is your #1 priority to minister to Him? Do you spend consistent quality time with Him every day? Or is this too hard because of the busyness of your day? Examine what it is you do every day. Most of us as believers fill our days doing good things, works for God and for others; but the problem is **we fill our days** and not make God our priority. **There is a big difference between doing for God and being with God**, and this is the difference between the two groups of priests. If this is a struggle for you as it is for most followers of Christ, we suggest you sit down with Him and set up windows of time for Him and your other responsibilities. If you put God first in your day, and allow Him to direct your way, you will be amazed at the difference in your day.

What does the Word tell us about being a **godly king**? The first thing we need to know is that God has put us in this role as a king.

***Daniel 2:20-21*** "Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; **He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding.**"

All throughout history, God is the one who puts leaders, good and bad, in place. He is the one who gives kings the wisdom and knowledge they need to be king. Whether or not they chose to listen to God, that is another story. **But we need to be the kind of kings that chose to listen to the wisdom of His Word.**

**What is a King?** The Old Testament word of **king** is **melek** or **malak**. It means to reign, to ascend the throne, to take counsel, to be made king or queen.

Webster's dictionary defines king as: the chief or sovereign of a nation; a man **invested with supreme authority** over a nation, tribe or country.

**Authority** - Legal power, or a right to command or to act; as the authority of a prince over subjects; power; rule; sway.

In **1 Samuel 8** the Children of God **wanted to have a king like all the other nations**. God told Samuel to go ahead and appoint a king since "**they have rejected Me from being king** over them." In **1 Samuel 8:10-18**, **Samuel warns the people that earthly kings act very differently than God**. He says they will take your sons and make them be his soldiers, he will make you do his farming, and make weapons for his army, he will take your daughters and make them work for him, he will take your best fields and vineyards and give them to whoever he wants to, he will take your servants and livestock for himself, and **he will make you his servant!** Hasn't this been true all throughout history?

But an earthly king is not the kind of king we are to be, who lords it over his people and commands them to make his life better and more comfortable. **We are to be a king, like the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ.** When he came to earth in flesh the first time, He came as a **servant leader**.

**Matthew 20:28** *“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

Remember Jesus washing the disciples feet, that was the lowest task of the lowest servant, and He was doing it for them! His heart was always for the people, that they would be healed and set free of the bondage of sin.

Jesus walked in great authority, even the religious leaders that wanted to kill Him could see the authority He walked in. It was evident to all!

**Matthew 21:23** *“When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?’”*

**What are we to do with this authority?**

**Matthew 28:18-20** *“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”*

**Matthew 10:1** *“Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.”*

**We have been given the authority as a king over the people in our sphere of influence.** We are to serve them and to lead them in the good way, the way of the Lord’s commandments. This sphere of influence will continue to grow more and more as God enlarges our tent, our heart; through the testings of our faith. Tomorrow we will study more on how to exercise our authority under the anointing of God to be kings and priests.

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Psalm 72** and list all the ways a good king is to act for his people.

When an Israeli King took the throne, he was to write the Torah, the first 5 books of the Old Testament on a scroll, so he would know the Word of God. He was then to read his scroll every day.

We encourage you to continue to read **Psalms 119:25-48**, and to memorize **Psalm 119:33**.

## Revive the precious stones

Day 19 – May 31, 2013

Last Sunday, in 3pm prayer, the Lord spoke through us about something very dear to his heart. He spoke with passion and urgency for those who are lost. His heart is for the lost, for all who do not know Him. He wants to be their Loving heavenly Father, their Savior, and their comforter. As we have cried out to the Lord to know His heart and walk in His heart, we must have the same passion and compassion for those who are in spiritual darkness and death. He desires that NONE will perish; do we have that same heart?

**John 3:16** *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*

**2 Peter 3:9** *"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, **not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**"*

God loves the whole world; that means every person on this planet, no matter what they believe now about God, no matter what they have done. He loves them ALL and He wants all mankind to come to Him in repentance. We are all sinners; we have all fallen short of the righteousness of God. But God, out of His love for us and His desire for us to come close to Him to minister to Him; He sent His Son Jesus to take the punishment for all of our sins. He broke the bondage of sin and set us free to shine for God's glory.

We can all agree that we live in a world that is getting progressively darker and more evil. We should not be surprised at that. God has warned us that as the time draws near for the Lord Jesus to return, darkness will abound as never before.

**2 Timothy 3:1-4** *"But realize this, that **in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be** lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."*

In **Isaiah 60:2**, He tells us again that **deep darkness will cover the earth** and the people on the earth.

What are we to do? Cower in the darkness and wait for it to pass? NO! We must understand that **we are the light in the darkness**. God has taken us out of our darkness, He has purged and cleansed our hearts, He has robed us in righteousness, and armored us with His Holy Spirit. He has put His love in our hearts, and we are to shine.

**1Peter 2:9** *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who **called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**”*

**Please read Isaiah 60: 1-7.**

What are we to do with this light in us? **We must rise and Shine**; the glory of the Lord rests upon us, and we must not hide that light. Jesus told us that we must not hide our light under a bushel basket, we must not hide it under a bed, but we must put it up on a lampstand for all to see. To see us, NO; but to **see the light of God in us and be drawn to it.**

Isaiah 60 talks about the lost, great and small, being drawn to this light. When we glorify God in all we do and say, when we live our lives for Him, and when we love Him with all of our hearts, we will shine. This light is evident to the world. Just as the aroma of God’s presence on us is like incense, a sweet smelling aroma to those around us.

**It is time for the Body of Christ, the Church, and the followers of Christ to be very noticeable to the world, to be a bright light in the darkness.** We have spent too much time trying to look like the world, and all it has done is dull the light. We are different than the world and we must be excited about that. The way of the world is death, but **the way of the Lord is life!**

**As priests, we must give out the aroma of life, the aroma of God’s presence. As kings, we must shine brightly so those in darkness can see the light and come to it.** We must not discount the light that we have. We must stop comparing ourselves to others who have great big lights. I guarantee they did not start out that way. We must know that even one tiny light dispels darkness. Think about a candlelight service. All the lights are out, and it is dark. But as soon as the first candle is lit, the darkness begins to flee. You can see; dimly, but you can see. But as soon as your light ignites another light, the light is doubled, and so to goes all around the room. The radiance of the multiplied light is glorious to see. We must **all** shine our lights into the darkness.

**Please read 1 Kings 10:1-10.** The Queen of Sheba heard about the wisdom of King Solomon that he attributed to his God. **He was a shining light in the darkness of the world.** His kingdom was different than all the others in the world. His people were content, safe, and prosperous. The Queen of Sheba had probably sent envoys to find out what was so different about King Solomon, but she still could not believe their reports. **She was drawn to the light of King Solomon,** and she made the journey to see for herself what was different. As she spent time with the King, she was touched by his openness and his genuine wisdom. **She acknowledged the source of his “light” was Almighty God!** As a tribute to God, she gave King Solomon “a very great amount of gold, spices, and precious stones.”

Let's go back to **Isaiah 60: 5-7**. Do you see the same thing here? As the lost are drawn to those who have the light, they offer up great treasures to the Lord, all to praise and glorify Almighty God.

Now, before our mind goes to a treasure chest full of gold and precious jewels, we must put on God's mind, and see the treasure for what it represents. When God spoke to us last Sunday, He told us that **the "lost" are treasures to Him, precious jewels**. Right now they are filthy, and everyone thinks they are trash; worthless stones that have been thrown away. But God see us as living stones, coming together to be built into His temple.

**1Peter 2:5** *"you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

When Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, he used stones that had been reduced to rubble, trash. They were heaps of dirty and burned rocks, seemingly useless. Sanballat and Tobiah mocked Nehemiah for using these worthless stones. (Nehemiah 4:1-3) But Nehemiah saw their value and used them to build the great walls of Jerusalem.

The enemy wants us to ignore the lost, those who have been discarded because of their sins or the sins of their families. These living stones do not look very good, but neither did we until the Lord picked us up out of the rubble of our lives and cleaned and polished us. Just like a diamond or a ruby, they start as ugly rocks that most of us would not even know were valuable. It isn't until they are cut and polished that their true worth and beauty emerges. Think of a pearl, it begins with a grain of sand, something very ordinary. But over time, the irritation and discomfort of the sand, produces layer upon layer of luminous pearl. We can see the same thing in our lives. We do not become shining Christians when we ask the Lord to come into our hearts. We look the same as the ordinary rock. But when we let the Lord cut things out of our lives, tests us with irritating trials, cleanse and polish us with His Word, and then put His love and the light of His presence in us, then we shine.

**Isaiah 54: 11-12** *"O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted, Behold, I will set your stones in antimony, and your foundations I will lay in sapphires. Moreover, I will make your battlements of rubies, and your gates of crystal, and **your entire wall of precious stones.**"*

We have become beautiful precious jewels to the Lord, to be placed in the walls of His temple.

**1 Corinthians 3:16** *"Do you not know that **you are a temple of God** and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"*

God has asked us to build a second wall, with His Word and wisdom. We must see that this wall is different than the one we build at the beginning of the year. **God wants us to use our God given authority as Kings and priests to bring the lost to Him.** When we shine as His precious jewels, reflecting His light in the darkness, the lost will see it and be drawn to it. God is asking us to **position ourselves in the midst of the lost, so they can see the light.** He will bring them to us and **we must touch the lost with His love.** We must love them and tell them God loves them. We must say the words He gives us and trust Him with the results. As Kings, we must find these hidden treasures of the dark places, and set these precious stones in place on the wall. **Once they are set into the wall** (walking in obedience to His Word and walking in God's wisdom), **they will shine.**

**What type of wall are we building these 52 days?** Let us build it with gold (faith) and precious stones (redeemed souls), that will be strong and beautiful, able to withstand the coming fire of judgment.

*1 Corinthians 3: 11- 13 "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work."*

#### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please continue to read Psalm 119:25-48, and memorize Psalm 119:33.** We must hide God's Word in our heart.

Spend some serious time alone with God with this word, and ask Him how He wants you are to walk out touching the lost with His Love, loving and valuing the discarded stones.

## Ambassadors for Christ

Day 20 – June 1, 2013

**Psalm 119:38** *“Establish Thy Word to Thy servant, as that which produces reverence for Thee.”*

God has been speaking strongly to us through His Word to awaken us to our roles as the remnant in this age of preparing for the return of our Savior, Jesus Christ. **We as the remnant are to be God’s kings and priests, His ambassadors, to the body of Christ, and to the lost.**

**2 Corinthians 5:20** *“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”*

**Ambassador** - A **minister** of the highest rank **employed** by one prince or state, at the court of another, to **manage the public concerns** of his own prince or state, and **representing the power and dignity of his sovereign.**

Ambassadors are ordinary, when they **reside permanently at a foreign court**; or extraordinary, when they are **sent on a special occasion**. They are also called **messengers**.

Jesus, the King of Kings, has put us in the world, although this is not our permanent home. We are here temporarily, to manage His concerns. What are His concerns? People, His creation. From the very beginning of time, in the garden, when God created everything, He set one thing above all else, that would be the focus of His concern and love. From the very beginning He has desired to have intimate fellowship with human beings. Oh, if we could ever truly understand the love He has for us, and for all mankind.

As His ambassadors, we are to represent Almighty God to the people in this world. If His major concern is loving the people, then as His ambassadors, that is to be our major concern. **We are to love the people in this world, the saved and the unsaved, through the power and dignity that the Lord has for all mankind.** This is a huge task, a huge responsibility. We feel weak and overwhelmed with our lives so much of the time, how can we be a **powerful** ambassador for God? We must understand it is not by our power or persuasive words or our charisma, but by the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through us at all times. He will direct our path to those we are to talk to, and He will give us the words to speak.

God shared that **His people are perishing and the lost are dead.** The word perishing means extremely cold. Through the words the Holy Spirit gives us, the wisdom of His Word; we must revive the weak and languishing, and revive the dead bones of the lost.

**Psalm 119:25, 28** *“Revive me according to Thy Word...Strengthen me according to Thy Word.”*

God will revive and strengthen us so we can strengthen others, and then salvation can come to all the ends of the earth.

When we love the people of this world with **dignity**, we will be respectful of them, and we will **esteem and honor them because they are all precious jewels to the Lord**.

The definition of ambassador is so rich. Did you notice there are two kinds of ambassadors? Those that stay in one place, who have a home base; and others that are sent out from time to time for special assignments. So often we only think those He has called to the mission field are to be His ambassadors to share the gospel to the lost, to share His love with those who are weak and hurting. But no, we all are to be His ambassadors. **We must all be ready to go wherever He needs us**; whether it is in our homes, our churches, our schools, nursing homes or hospitals, needy areas of our cities, or on the mission field across the country or the world. **Every place we go is a potential mission field**. Are our spiritual eyes and ears attuned to the leading of the Holy Spirit to take advantage of what is needed in that person's life?

**Why does this put a tinge of fear and anxiety in us?** Webster's Dictionary defines **fear** as a painful emotion or passion excited by an expectation of evil, or the apprehension of impending danger. **Fear is accompanied with a desire to avoid** or ward off the expected evil. **Fear is an uneasiness of mind, upon the thought of future evil likely to befall us.**

When we do not know what **might** happen to us, we are fearful and we worry about all sorts of things that might go wrong. These thoughts swirl in our minds and usually stop us from doing what is on God's heart for us to do. In Francis Chan's book, Crazy Love, he wrote about worry. **“Worry implies that we don't quite trust that God is big enough, powerful enough, or loving enough to take care of what is happening on our lives.”**

The antidote to fear is love, so we must ask the Lord to put His love in us in overflowing abundance. This love the Bible calls lovingkindness.

**Psalm 119:41** *“May Thy lovingkindnesses also come to me, O Lord, Thy salvation according to Thy Word.”*

Our prayer needs to be **Luke 1:74-75**. Lord, grant us that we might serve you without fear. You have rescued us from all our enemies. May we truly serve you all the days of our life in holiness and righteousness.

When we receive God's love and walk in the power of His Word and the Holy Spirit, we can be His ambassador, His fragrance, to those who know the Lord and to those who do not. **(2 Corinthians 2:15)**

## **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:18-20.**

Take some time with God to talk to Him about you being His ambassador. Think back to times you have been His ambassador and times when fear has stopped you.

Ask the Lord what He would like you to do in your Jerusalem (your home and local area); and what He would like you to do even to the remotest parts of the earth as His ambassador.

We must awake out of our spiritual slumber, for the time of His return nears. We must be prepared, and we must participate in the preparation of all people for His glorious return. We must walk in the wisdom of God's Word. May we live our lives with **Psalm 119:30** as our rallying call, ***"I have chosen the faithful way, and accounted Thine ordinances worthy."***

## Turn my Eyes from Looking at Worthless Things

Day 21 – June 3, 2013

**Psalm 119:37** *“Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, and revive me in Your way.”*

The Hebrew word for **vanity** in this scripture is **shav-** worthless, useless, false, evil, idolatrous, or destructive.

This might be a scripture we might easily pass over because we think, ‘we have our eyes on the Lord, not on evil or false things’. The Lord put a heavy burden on our hearts for this scripture, and we pray you will let Him **search your hearts** as He has ours; to remove the false ways in our lives, **so we can walk in His way**.

Webster’s Dictionary defines **vanity** as: emptiness; want of substance to satisfy desire; uncertainty; fruitless desire or endeavor; trifling labor that produces no good; untruth; empty pleasure; vain pursuit; idle show; unsubstantial enjoyment.

The Lord has given us eyes to see the things all around us, and He has put in us a curiosity for our environment. These are wonderful gifts that the Lord has given to us. But these gifts have been misused by mankind since the beginning of time. We want to see more and we want to know more. Think what happened in the garden. Eve was tempted to know more, to see more than what was in front of her. This urge was obviously in Adam too, because he ate also.

**Genesis 3:6** *“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a **delight to the eyes**, and that the tree was **desirable to make one wise**, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”*

In our first week we saw in **Psalm 19:13** *“Also keep back Your servant from **presumptuous (zud – arrogant, proud, presume) sins**; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of **great transgression**.”* (revolt, rebellion, sin)

**Presumptuous:** Supposition of the truth or real existence of something without direct or positive proof of the fact, but grounded on circumstantial or probable evidence which entitles it to belief. Blind or headstrong confidence.

**Arrogant:** Assuming; making or having the disposition to make exorbitant claims of rank or estimation; giving one’s self an undue degree of importance; haughty; conceited.

Man has let a spirit rule over him for too long; and this spirit greatly saddens and burdens the Lord. **This great transgression, this great rebellion against the Lord, is the spirit of voyeurism.**

**Voyeurism** - Nosiness, inquisitiveness, prying, questioning, snooping, curiosity (desire for knowledge, desire to know what is going on), the practice of spying on people, someone who gains pleasure from watching others, especially secretly, a fascinated observer of distressing, sordid, or scandalous events, often watching for sexual satisfaction.

In this definition, we can see a progression from curiosity of things going on in other people's lives, to sexual perversion. Let's look at some examples of voyeurism.

The TV shows we watched years ago always seemed to have a **nosy neighbor** wanting to know what was going on in the other person's life. It was stuck in for comedy because it was so ridiculous the lengths they would go to see into the day to day lives of their neighbors.

**Rubbernecking:** Often when we are driving on the freeways in a large city, traffic comes to a crawl or even a stop for some time. We figure there must be a wreck on our side of the road that is blocking traffic. But after a long time, we get to the flashing lights and see that the wreck is on the other side of the divided highway, not impeding us at all. So why the slow down? Most of the people on our side of the highway want to see what happened. How bad was the crash, can we see the suffering and bleeding people? The more details we can collect as we are crawling past the wreck, the more we can tell people what we saw.

**24/7 news stations:** We as humans have a natural curiosity about the world around us, but when it comes to natural and man-made disasters, and the failures of men, the **spirit of voyeurism takes over and we just have to know what is going on.** Let two fire trucks go by you on the road and how many of you are tempted to follow to see what is going on?

Being informed as to what is generally happening in the world today is a good thing, but our culture has become so ravenous for every single detail, real or supposed, of a news story. With technology, **we want to SEE everything.** How many times do they need to show a picture of a bomb going off maiming people, or a tornado ripping apart a neighborhood? It's sick, the more gruesome something is, the more we want to watch it and tell others about it.

**Gossip** is mentioned many times in the Bible as a great sin, and even listed as one of the big sins in the last days, the eleventh hour that we are living in.

**2 Timothy 3:3-7** *"But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; **Avoid such men as these.** For among them are those who*

*enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*

**The word gossip in the Greek is diabolos.** Yes, it comes from one of the names of satan. Diabolos means a traducer, someone who propagates a story, keeps it going by changing it little by little. A gossip's words are often very critical or disparaging of somebody; falsely accusing someone, or slandering them. **A gossip is one who runs from house to house, tattling and telling news. An idle tattler uses many words with little meaning,** to tell tales and to communicate secrets.

This can happen so quickly. In elementary school, we used to play a game where someone would say a sentence, and then it would be whispered in other's ear, and so on around the room. The sentence was always changed and always much longer. We hear something, and we want to share it, but we want it to sound a little better to the next person, so we add things.

In the spirit of voyeurism, **we want to HEAR everything** that is being said, real or imaginary.

**Celebrity gossip:** This industry makes a fortune off of this spirit. We are fascinated by the unreal lives celebrities lead, the more sinful the better. We know this by the all the atrocious lies plastered on the front covers of magazines. Going through check-out lines at the supermarket, our eyes are bombarded by pictures and words of what is going on in the lives of celebrities. Even if we would never buy one of these magazines, our eyes are still drawn to them. This is a spirit of voyeurism.

**Proverbs 20:19** *“He who goes about as a slanderer (rakiyl - a scandal monger, one traveling about carrying tales, a talebearer) **revels** (galah - to shamelessly uncover) **secrets** (sod - something said in close or intimate conversations), **therefore do not associate** (arab - intermix, barter , engage , put your trust) **with a gossip.”*** (words that go into wide open spaces).

When I saw the definition of gossip used in this scripture: **words that go into wide open spaces**, I immediately thought of **Facebook**; every word and every picture goes out into the wide open spaces of the cyber world. Why is Facebook so popular? Why does almost everyone have a Facebook account? Why do most products you buy today have a Facebook account? People put things about their lives on their Facebook page to show people what is going on in their life. They in turn can see what is going on in yours and all your “friends” lives. It sounds so good, but it is just the spirit of voyeurism in a convenient and pretty package.

Those are ways we snoop into people's “real” lives; but the sad thing is, there are **many “pretend or made up” things we spend a great deal of time with as a voyeur.**

Why are “**reality**” **shows** so popular? Think about it? It is all because we want to see what is going on in the lives of others and if we peek in their windows and stalk them, we will get arrested. All we have to do is sit in our recliner with a remote in our hands, and watch to our hearts content. But the sad thing is, almost all “reality” shows are not real, but we still love them!

Another thing people live precariously through, pretending to be something they are not, is **computer games**. You can experience the “thrill” of warfare, killing and being killed, yet have no link to reality. Stop and think about this, does it make sense that a human being created by God, who is commanded to love others, would get enjoyment out of playing game of killing everyone in sight. This is a spirit of voyeurism to experience the emotions of war and killing without actually doing it.

Why do people like **disaster and horror movies**? Again the spirit of voyeurism is at work in us here. We get a thrill when we see disasters; it turns on something inside of us. We never want to be in a disaster, but we are curious as to what it would be like to go through one.

As if the spirit of voyeurism isn’t bad enough, there is another real problem with these movies. They are getting more and more graphic, more and more outlandish, because **we are desensitized to what we keep seeing and this spirit wants more and more**. Now when someone comes to us with a disaster in their lives, we downplay it because it is not as bad as the last disaster we saw in a movie.

Let’s look at the definition of voyeurism again. It is the practice of spying on people, someone who gains pleasure from watching others, especially secretly, a fascinated observer of distressing, sordid, or scandalous events, often watching for sexual pleasure. **This escalation of voyeurism has led to the most prevalent of sins we see in the church today – pornography**. There is such easy access to this today, for both men and women. This sin destroys those who are bound to it and their families; and so many leaders in the church have fallen into adultery, destroying their congregations.

**Please Read this stern warning of God’s wrath.** It applies to all who are controlled by the spirit of voyeurism.

**Romans 1:18** *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who **suppress the truth in unrighteousness**”*,

**Romans 1:25** *“For they **exchanged the truth of God for a lie**, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”*

**Romans 1:28-32** *“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things*

*which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; **they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.***"

We know this message is convicting because this spirit is an accepted part of our culture today. It is normal, it is accepted, but it is WRONG! **So, what do we need to do?**

First, we need to not let this spirit reign in our bodies any longer. Please read **Romans 6:12-14**. And do not let the spirit of condemnation join the party. God is here to forgive our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness

Second, we need to **trust God in all things**. Part of our desire to know everything that is going on around us is us wanting to have some kind of control over things. The more information we have, the more we think we can handle the situations we face. This sounds ridiculous when you say it out loud, but that is the bottom line. **There is so much freedom in letting God know everything, and being content to be on a need to know basis from Him!** We can trust Him that He will tell us everything we need to know when we need to know it.

Third, we need to **know and live *Philippians 4:8-9***.

*"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise,  **dwell on these things**. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me,  **practice these things**, and the God of peace will be with you."*

With so much information at our disposal today, we need to be more diligent than ever to keep our way pure, *"by keeping it according to the Word of God"*. **Psalm 119:9**

We must always let God guard our hearts and our minds. We must consciously be aware of every word we hear or say; and ask of the Holy Spirit, "Is this true? Is this honorable? Is this right? Is this pure? ..." Yes, this is laborious, but it is so worth it. We have been under the spell of this spirit our whole lives and for many of us this was also a passed down iniquity. It will take time and it will take discipline, but it can be defeated.

## **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Let the Holy Spirit shine His light into the deep recesses of your heart and search for this spirit.** Let Him expose the things that must go first. Remember, He removes these things little by little (Deuteronomy 7:22).

**Please read Psalm 119:20-24, 28-32.** Look up the following key words:

Arrogant  
Reproach  
Contempt  
Observe  
Grief  
Faithful Way

**Personally pray Psalm 119:20-24 and 28-32** back to the Lord. Great repentance will come out of it and a renewed hope in the power of God's Word.

As this spirit of voyeurism is leaving your heart, let God enlarge your heart for a greater presence of the Holy Spirit.

## Give Thanks to the LORD, for He is Good!

Day 22 - June 4, 2013

Please read this week's passage from **Psalm 119: 29-72**.

Our memory verse for this week is **Psalm 119:58**. *"I sought Your favor with all my heart; Be gracious to me according to Your word."*

The word **favor** means **kind regard**. We are asking the Lord to look at us with kindness, because we are striving to love Him with all of our heart.

The word **gracious** means friendly; **to do good**; to express kindness and favor; to be merciful; disposed to forgive offenses and impart unmerited blessings. We are asking the Lord to remember His promises written His Word for those who keep His commandments with all of their heart.

The word **good** is used 5 times in our verses for this week. Remember when the Lord repeats things, He is trying to get our attentions. As we begin our 4<sup>th</sup> week of building a second wall with the Wisdom of God's Word around our families, friends, communities, and nations; let's stop and reflect on **how good our God is!**

The Hebrew word for **good** used in these scriptures is **tob** - to be pleasing or good; pleasant, agreeable, beautiful, beneficial, delightful, favorable, generous, pure & right, splendid. It is from **tub** - good things, best things. One verse uses the word **yatab** - to be good, well, glad, or pleasing.

Webster's dictionary has over 50 definitions for **good**. Let's look at a few of them.

- not weak or defective; having strength adequate to its support
- Complete or sufficiently perfect in its kind
- Conformable to the moral law; virtue applied to actions.
- Well adapted to the end
- Convenient; useful; expedient; conducive to happiness.
- Sound; perfect; uncorrupted; undamaged.
- Suited to strengthen or assist
- Pleasant to the senses
- Useful; valuable; having qualities or a tendency to produce a good effect.
- Kind; affectionate; faithful
- Promotes happiness; pleasant; agreeable; cheering; gratifying.
- Honorable; fair; unblemished; a man of good fame or report.
- Genuine
- Benevolent; merciful; gracious.

Most of the verses speak of the good we will receive when we keep God's Word.

**Psalm 119:66** *"Teach me **good** discernment and knowledge, for I believe*

*in Your commandments.”*

**Psalm 119:71** *“It is **good** for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.”*

The word **teach** used in verse 66 is **lamad**, means to teach by goading with a rod. And verse 71 talks about the good we get from affliction. We think that good means everything is easy and delightful, but the process to getting there is not. Our flesh seeks its selfish good, not the good of our Heavenly Father. He has to use whatever means are necessary to get us on the right path to intimacy with Him. Our flesh is stubborn and rebellious; it hates the ways of God. **So God, in His kindness and mercy, leads us through times of rebuke and trials – all for our good.**

**Psalm 119:72** *“The law of Your mouth is **better** to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.”* This scripture uses the same Hebrew word **tub**.

**The word of God does us more good than money;** because in it we learn to draw closer to Him, and there we will find true joy.

The other time **good** is used in this section of Psalm 119 refers to **how good God is!**

**Psalm 119:68** *“You are **good** and **do good**; Teach me Your statutes.”*

**King David loved to tell God how good He is.** He has a favorite phrase he used in worship over and over again. **“Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.”** He wrote this praise 43 times in the Word of God, and then Solomon, Ezra, and Jeremiah used it also. David went through many trials, testings, and teachings in his life; and in them he learned that God is always good, and that His lovingkindness is everlasting. He worshiped God with this phrase all throughout his life.

**Please read Psalm 118 and Psalm 136.** These psalms extoll the goodness of God over and over again. Don’t just read them, but make them a prayer and worship to the Lord! He takes great pleasure when we pray and sing His Word back to Him.

**2 Chronicles 5:13** *“in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the LORD saying, “He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting,” **then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud,**”*

When the temple was built, King Solomon assembled the leaders and the priests and they watched the Levites carry the Ark of the Covenant into the Temple. Then the priests carried it into the Holy of Holies. When the priests came out of the Holy of Holies, all of the singers and musicians began praising the Lord saying, “He indeed is

good for His lovingkindness is everlasting." Instantly, the temple was filled with the Shekinah glory of the presence of God. **God is very pleased when we praise Him as good!**

When we are in a trial or a testing, we do not always feel that God is good. But rejoice, **God never changes, and He is always good** and He is always working things together for our good if we obey His word.

***Romans 8:28** " And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."*

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Jeremiah 32 and 33.**

God's people were going into captivity because they had not loved the Lord with all their hearts and they had not kept His commandments. But out of His lovingkindness, God promised good will come back to His people.

***Jeremiah 33:11** "the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say, 'Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, For the LORD is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting'; and of those who bring a thank offering into the house of the LORD. For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were at first, says the LORD."*

**Let the promises of good for God's people go deep into your soul** (your mind, will, and emotions), so that when you are tried, you will be able to stand firm on the goodness of God.

**"Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting."**

## Our Hope is in the Lord

Day 23 – June 5, 2013

**Psalm 119:49-50** *“Remember the word to Your servant, on which You have made me hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, that Your word has revived me (given me life).”*

**HOPE** is a desire of some good, accompanied with at least a slight expectation of obtaining it, or a belief that it is obtainable; to place confidence in; **to trust in with confident expectation of good**. Hope differs from wish and desire in this, that it implies some expectation of obtaining the good desired, or the possibility of possessing it. **Hope therefore always gives pleasure or joy**; whereas wish and desire may produce or be accompanied with pain and anxiety.

There were two people in the Old Testament who spent a period of their lives without hope. They started their lives with hope in the Lord, and then they were severely tested. For a moment they sunk into hopelessness and despair. They found themselves hating their lives and questioning God.

The first was **Naomi**. Her husband moved his family away from her family to a foreign land. While there, her husband and then her two sons died. She was now a childless widow in a foreign land. She sunk into depression and even changed her name to Mara, meaning bitter, because she considered her life to be hopeless and bitter.

**Ruth 1:20-21** *“She said to them, ‘Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?’”*

The second was **Job**. He was a righteous man whom God had abundantly blessed. God allowed him to go through very severe trials to test his faith. He started out strong and then he lost hope for a while. **Please read Job 19:6-21**

**Job 19:10b** *“He has uprooted my hope like a tree.”*

When we go through trials in our life, we sometimes lose our hope in God. It is easy to trust Him when things are going well, but when the trial is extremely hard, we often stumble. It is comforting to read God’s Word about the hard times His people have gone through. We tend to pretend we are perfect Christians who always have our hope fixed on the Lord. But that is not always the case. Life is hard and then the testings of our faith are harder still.

**What should we do when we see a dark cloud of despair and hopelessness heading our way?** Let’s seek wisdom in the Word.

**Romans 12:12** “rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer”

The answer to this question is **PRAISE, PERSEVERANCE and PRAYER.**

### **PRAISE:**

**Psalm 43:4-5** “Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and upon the lyre I shall praise You, O God, my God. Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? **Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.**”

**Please read Psalm 71.** David is asking the Lord to help him over and over in this psalm. He has been through so much that people marvel at his joy and peace. It is all because he knows His God and he worships Him at all times.

**Psalm 71: 7-8** “I have become a marvel to many, for You are my strong refuge. My mouth is filled with Your praise and with Your glory all day long.”

**Please read Psalm 146.** It starts out and ends with **Praise the Lord!** In between these praises we see hard times, but in **verse 5** we see the reason for the praise, “Our hope is in the Lord!”

It should be no surprise that we looked at three scriptures from Psalms for this section. David was a worshipper and he knew the **power of lifting depression with worship to Almighty God.** His first job in the palace of King Saul was to play his lyre to break the depression that would overtake the king. The next time you even begin to feel without hope, stop what you are doing and worship the Lord!

### **PERSEVERANCE:**

**Please read Lamentations 3:1-18.** This is a very good description of the emotions we all go through when we are without hope.

**Lamentations 3:17-18** “My soul has been rejected from peace; I have forgotten happiness. So I say, my strength has perished, and so has my hope from the LORD.”

But then the light begins to dawn. **Please read Lamentations 3:19- 26.** He cries out to the Lord, and remembers who God is. He is good and He is righteous. Humility and repentance comes; and then HOPE. He remembers the lovingkindnesses of the Lord never cease. God is faithful, therefore he has hope.

**Lamentations 3: 25-26** *“The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the LORD.”*

The Hebrew word for **hope** is **yachal**. It means to wait patiently with trust.

Don't we sometimes make more of a mess of our trials when we don't wait upon the Lord's perfect timing? Waiting patiently is very difficult, especially when we are hurting. But our trust in the Lord is built this way.

**Romans 5:3-5** *“... we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that **tribulation brings about perseverance**; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and **hope does not disappoint**, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”*

**Psalms 62:5-8** *“My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken. On God my salvation and my glory rest; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.”*

Did you notice two of these scriptures mention **waiting silently** for God to deliver them? This is not only a quietness of their mouths that want to complain, but a silence of their souls – their minds and emotions. It is a call to peace in the midst of the storm that only comes from the Lord.

**Romans 15:4** *“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that **through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.**”*

## PRAYER:

**Psalms 31:22-24** *“As for me, I said in my alarm, "I am cut off from before Your eyes"; Nevertheless You heard the **voice of my supplications when I cried to You**. O love the LORD, all you His godly ones! The LORD preserves the faithful and fully recompenses the proud doer. **Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD.**”*

We see David in a trial and his panic is beginning to go into hopelessness; but he stopped it by praying to the only One who could help him.

**1 Timothy 5:5** *“Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and **continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.**”*

This woman was a widow like Naomi, but she had her hope fixed on God as she spent her days and night in prayer to the Lord. He was the focus of her life, not her emptiness as a widow.

**Jeremiah 29:11-14** *“For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. ‘Then you will **call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.** ‘You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. ‘I will be found by you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.”*

Almighty God is the One we must pray to at all times, but especially in our trials. If we do not pray, praise, and persevere; the darkness of hopelessness and depression will overtake us. **Hopelessness comes to destroy us, while hope brings us life.** Please remember, every trial we go through is to purify us to bring us closer to the One who loves us with an everlasting love.

**1John 3:1-3** *“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And **everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**”*

## **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Psalm 119:49-72.**

Continue to work on your **memory verse, Psalm 119:58.**

Please spend some solemn time with the Lord asking him where you are weakest in your times of trials. Do you need strengthening in your prayers, in your praise, or in waiting patiently? He desires to strengthen us in all of these. Call upon Him and He will answer you, because He is a good God and He desires us all to walk in hope!

## The Prophetic Voice of God's Forerunners

Day 24 – June 6, 2013

As we have been studying Psalm 119 these past few weeks, it is obvious that God desires us to value His Word and to **gain wisdom** for our lives from it. This wisdom is not for us to amass as a great treasure and then put it in a treasure chest for us to gaze at from time to time; but for us to **use to help others come to know the Lord and to grow in a deeper relationship with Him.**

In order to prepare for the Lord's return, He is raising up forerunners. Webster's defines a **forerunner** as **one who goes before others to prepare the way for something that is coming.** They bring news to the people of what is to happen. They are a **messenger sent beforehand to give notice of the expected approach of someone.**

In the days of medieval kings, a forerunner would ride a day's journey before the court when traveling, to make preparations for lodgings and other accommodations. They would **make sure that everyone knew the king was coming and that all was prepared for his arrival!**

That is what forerunners are to do in this age. **The King of kings is coming soon to visit all the people of the earth, face to face.** He has called His remnant to awaken and take up the charge to be forerunners for His return. He is coming soon and **we must get instructions from Him and follow them with complete obedience so we and others will be prepared for His return!**

God is looking for tender hearts that will listen to Him with obedience and come into their rightful positions. In 2 Kings 22, when God desired to bring restoration and change to His people, He chose a child to be king with a tender heart that would hear His Words and be obedient to what he heard. **Please read 2 Kings 22.**

The High Priest Hilkiah found the Word of God in the damaged temple King Josiah ordered to be restored. The scribe Shaphan read the Word to the King. He was overcome with repentance for himself and his people when he heard the words. The king then ordered the priest, the scribe, and Asaiah, the king's servant to go ask the Lord what he needed to do. They went to the prophetess Huldah and this is what God said through her:

**2 Kings 22:19-20** *"because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you, declares the LORD. Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see all the evil which I will bring on this place."*

King Josiah's heart was tender and it sprang to life when he heard the commandments, judgments, statutes, precepts, and instructions of the Lord. The Word of God was not just words written on a page, but it became living to the king. His tender heart was forever changed for the Lord; and throughout his reign, there was peace in his kingdom because he restored the Word, Worship, and Worthy Prayers back into the House of God.

In order for the king to come to the full realization of the Word of God, he brought a team together. He wanted to know what the Lord wanted them to do now. Was it too late to walk in His ways? **2 Kings 22:12** shows us the team: "Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant to the king."

When we look at the meanings of these names, we get a **message**:

*God is our portion. He is raising up brothers to gnaw away the entanglements of His people. Who is like God? His people are on the brink of knowing that He has made all things.*

It is interesting to see who was on this team: a **priest**, a **scribe**, a **servant** of the king, and members of the **younger generation**. They joined with a **prophetess** to make the group complete. In preparation for the King of king's return, He is requesting these positions to be filled by His remnant, His forerunners to bring life to all people on the earth.

**Please read Acts 6:1-4.** There was a time in the early church when the number of people in the church started to grow very large, and the disciples could not do all the work that was needed. They came before the congregation and divided up the responsibilities. They, as the priests of the congregation, would focus on prayer and ministry of the Word; while other men, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, would be appointed to serve the people's needs

**Priests** are to focus on **prayer and ministry of the Word**. They find the truths in God's Word and present it in a way that **brings life** to the congregation.

***Ezekiel 44:15-16** "But the Levitical priests ... shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood (intercession)," declares the Lord GOD. "They shall enter My sanctuary; they shall come near to My table to minister to Me and keep My charge.*

**Scribes** are teachers and writers who are skilled in God's Word. They **define the truths found in the Scriptures** and present it in a clear way to show God's followers **how to live**.

**2 Timothy 2:15** *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”*

**Prophets** are those who **hear the voice of God and speak His truths** to the people. They **make the Word of God living**.

The men King Josiah sent to inquire of God, asked a prophetess to join their group, because they knew the importance of her position. Huldah was known as one who heard from God. The name Huldah comes from the Hebrew root cheled, which means to glide swiftly. Perhaps Huldah's name reflects her **quickness of mind** and her **ability to swiftly and rightly discern** the things of God. God used her prophetic voice to share His coming judgments to His people, and spark one of the greatest revivals in Israel. A prophet must be able to quickly discern what God is speaking in these last days.

**Servants** are men and women filled with the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, who are appointed to serve the people's needs. In King Josiah's time, they were administrators, accountants, project managers, doorkeepers, workmen to repair the temple (carpenters, builders, masons), and suppliers of wood and stone. In the early church as well as now, they take care of the people's needs, whether it is physical needs, emotional counseling, spiritual teaching, or comforting prayer. Servants know God's Word and are **obedient to the truths** found in it; they **live the Word of God**.

**James 1:27** *“Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”*

God's messages must go out to all people to repent and prepare for the return of the Lord. **Forerunners must operate in the authority God has given them to gather and call out the Next Generation to Arise!**

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

Tomorrow we will look at some forerunners in the Word of God. **Make of list of who you consider to be forerunners in the Word of God.**

Please **continue to read Psalm 119:49-72**. We hope you are seeing how vital it is for us to have the Word of God living inside our minds and hearts.

Continue to work on your **memory verse, Psalm 119:58**.

## The Lifestyle of a Forerunner

Day 25 – June 7, 2013

We saw yesterday that God is raising up forerunners, **messengers whom He is sending beforehand to prepare the way for Jesus' return**. These messengers will operate as priests, scribes, servants, and prophets. God is looking for tender hearts that will listen to Him with obedience and walk with authority in their appointed positions. Jesus is coming soon and **we must get instructions from Him, and follow them with complete obedience, so we and others will be prepared for His return!**

**Let's look at some forerunners:**

Just like King Josiah, **Samuel** had a tender heart towards God and he was called to be a prophet to bring restoration to God's people. He replaced the Judges and set a king and a worshipper in place to rule and administer justice. He anointed **David** at a young age to grow up to be King of all Israel. He and his son **Solomon** were not just kings, but kings with a priestly anointing.

The gospels make it very clear that **John the Baptist** was a forerunner. He came to prepare the hearts of the Jews to receive the salvation of Jesus Christ.

***Mark 1:2-4** "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: 'Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.' **John the Baptist** appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. "*

There are specific **qualities all forerunners must have**.

- Must have the **lifestyle that glorifies God**. The way we live our lives reflects the reputation, influence, respect and character of God. This lifestyle comes from knowing God and His Word and choosing to follow after Him with all of our heart.
- Must be **led by a leader who has the authority to cover you**. We must be active in a local church and accountable to the leaders there. We cannot be lone rangers in this season. We will be picked off by the enemy.
- Must dwell in a place chosen by God and **be positioned** to be used in His time.
- Must listen to **hear from God** to receive direct orders from His heart.
- Must have **wisdom and understanding** that only comes from a close relationship with the Holy Spirit. We must be skilled to discern the voice and heart of God.

**Forerunners, great men and women of God who exhibit these qualities, are being called to prophetically speak to the chosen ones who will bring restoration, redemption, and salvation to God's people when great judgment comes upon the earth.**

Let's look at another forerunner, **Simeon**, who was called to speak a word to a King that was chosen to bring restoration, redemption, and salvation when great judgment was pending for His People. During this time the prophets were waiting for the consolation and salvation of the coming King, the Messiah. The Lord had spoken to them as forerunners to speak into existence the Word that would bring life to all. The Lord raised up prophets and prophetess to speak His heart into the earth. As they spoke His words, God's words were fulfilled for that season and time of destiny.

**Luke 2:25-26** *"And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel (the Messiah), and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ."*

Simeon's name means **heard**. **Simeon heard the voice of God**. The Holy Spirit revealed Himself to Simeon by speaking to him what was going to happen with the coming of the Messiah. The **Holy Spirit prompted him to come to the temple** the day Jesus was being dedicated to God as the first born son of Mary and Joseph. He took Jesus in his arms and blessed God. He then prophesied about Jesus being the salvation for the Jews and the Gentiles.

**Luke 2:32-35** *(Jesus will be ) "a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel. ... Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed; and a sword will pierce even your own soul, to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."*

At that same time another forerunner, **Anna**, was present. Her name means **favored**.

**Luke 2:36-38** *"And there was a **prophetess, Anna** the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She **never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers**. At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and **continued to speak of Him to all** those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem."*

**Father God always sets prophets and prophetess in place before the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ.**

We cannot ignore again the **character of the person who carries a very important Word and mission for the Lord**. Let's look at the words used to describe Simeon and Anna.

**Just** - morally right and fair; faithful to an original; conforming to a standard of correctness; acting or being in conformity with what is morally upright or good; righteous

**Devout** - deeply committed to a cause or belief; expressing devotion or loyalty; devoted to a pursuit, belief, or mode of behavior; serious, earnest; warmly sincere

**Patient in Waiting** - to accept and tolerate delay, trouble, suffering without getting angry. Forbearance - patience with self-control, long-suffering; to stay in place in expectation of something; to remain stationary in readiness or expectation; to look forward expectantly.

**Faithful in serving God** – Firm in adherence to the truth and to the duties of serving God. True fidelity and allegiance; loyal; constant in the performance of duties or services; exact in attending to commands, as a faithful servant; constant, not fickle

Simeon and Anna were righteous and faithful, fully committing their lives to the coming of the Lord. They heard from God and believed His words. They were devoted to pursue that which they believed and heard from the Holy Spirit. They were willing to accept and tolerate the long wait, and accept the suffering that came with the waiting. They had great expectation in the waiting, always being ready and available for God to use to speak life to those around them about the coming King.

We must not only be available, but we must be in position so the Holy Spirit can reveal Himself to us in the perfect timing of the Lord. **He will lead and position us to be ready to speak into the lives of those who have been chosen to walk out the redemption of the Lord.** The consolation of Israel refers to the comfort the Messiah would bring to His people - redemption and salvation.

***Isaiah 40:1-3** "Comfort, yes, comfort My people says your God. Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice is calling, **Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**"*

Verse 3 is our responsibility as forerunners, who have been called with the prophetic voice, to be the coming messengers for Christ.

***Malachi 3:1-3** "**Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me.** And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in who you delight. Behold, He is coming, says The Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi..."*

**God is calling His prophets and priests to come into their rightful place in these last days.** Let us pray the words Simeon spoke to the Child Jesus and His parents

*This is our prayer, O Lord, that you will let your servants depart with peace because we have done all that You have spoken in our hearts to do: to share the gospel of peace to the lost, and to raise and disciple Your saints to know Your love. For our eyes have seen Your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all people. The lost will see Your light and You will reveal Yourself to them. May the glory of the Lord be upon Your Bride as You so desire. This we pray, O Lord, in the Holy Name of Jesus. Amen.*

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Isaiah 40.** It is a good message from God's heart for us today.

Continue to work on your memory verse, **Psalm 119:58.**

## Why Do We Question God?

Day 26 – June 8, 2013

*Psalm 119:57 “The Lord is my portion; I have promised to keep Your words.”*

**Almighty God, created us to live in the Garden with Him;** a very good and perfect place where we commune with Him daily. As believers, this is to be our portion, our inheritance; a place where our needs are met and we are satisfied. He desires to plant us in the best place of His heart. **So WHY do we Question that which is good for us? WHY do we question the commandment to love Him and one another? WHY do we not trust Him for our lives?**

*Song of Solomon 6:2-3 “My beloved has gone to his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed his flock in the gardens and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mind. He feeds his flock among the lilies.”*

God gives us the fragrance of His heart which produces worship that causes us to gather His chosen ones. He comes to comfort them with His love. The garden was chosen for us to have pure love, rest, and peace. But because we question His provision we are removed from the garden, and our hearts become hardened to the Love of Christ.

*Genesis 2:8 “The Lord God **planted a garden** eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.”*

The Garden of Eden was a real, not an imaginary place. God had prepared a specific place for Adam and Eve on the eastern side of Eden. God has prepared a garden for each one of us, a place He has chosen for us to be planted.

**Planted - placed or fixed in a specified place**, even a secret place. To put or set in the ground **for growth**; to set or sow with seeds; establish, settle, institute, to place firmly; conceal, to covertly place for discovery, publication, or **dissemination** - act of spreading something.

**Garden** - piece of ground used for growing; a plot of ground where herbs, fruits, flowers, or vegetables are cultivated; a rich well-cultivated region.

**The Lord has placed, established and settled man in a place for discovery to spread His love to all mankind; a cultivated place for multiplication and growth.**

*Genesis 2:9 “And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”*

God's desire is to put us in a fertile and cultivated place where we can be planted and established for the purpose of growth. But because our hearts are free to choose, we often choose to **disobey** the commandments of God, just like Adam and Eve. God told them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but they did anyway. We are the same. We read His commandments in His Word; we choose to obey some and to disobey others.

This disobedience has caused God to put us out of the special garden He has cultivated for us, just like Adam and Eve.

**Genesis 3:23** *“therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.”*

Because of our sin, because of our disobedience, our eyes are opened to evil and we are sent out of the garden God had prepared for us. In our sinful states, the land we are in now is difficult. It is not fertile ground, it has not been prepared, yet we have been planted there.

Everything in the garden God had chosen for us to grow was good. We were allowed to freely eat of the fruit that was good for us; but He put a commandment to avoid eating the fruit of one tree, just one. This commandment was for their safety and protection. God has given us commandments in His Word for our good, for our protection; but because we do not trust Him and His Word, we choose what we think is good and right for ourselves. **We question God and His goodness and tell Him what we think is best.**

**We must be careful in questioning God when He knows what is best for us.** The commandments were not given to us put us in bondage, but to **cause us to have life and to grow in Him.**

God created the garden to be an intimate place for Himself and man. His desire is for man to see His love; and out of this intimate love the heart of man would long for God. **When we see only Him and trust only Him in this Love then we have a heart that:**

- will be **obedient** to His Love with a **renewed** mind by faith.
- will **desire** for His Love with a heart that will **receive** it by faith.
- will **accept** this Love with a heart that will **respond** by faith.

God desires a changed heart from us, a heart of obedience and respect, out of our love relationship. **Even when we do not see or understand what God is doing, we should be like Simeon and wait patiently until we receive the answers.**

We question God with the WHY? **Our response in our testings should not be "WHY", but “we trust You for this season of our life”.** When God give us a commandment, we must trust Him in that command knowing that **He knows what is best for us.** **When we ask WHY, we question God's love towards us.** In the difficult times of waiting and trial, we don't see His love the same. We are in pain and

our thinking is skewed. But God never changes; His thinking and His actions are never skewed. He is love and He will never tell us to do something that would hurt us. After the waiting and after the trial, we will see that this was the best thing for us. But we question God in the "waiting" or "the do not", or "now right now", or just "NO."

**God's heart is filled with pure love for us and it comes to keep us in perfect peace and cause much growth.** The enemy comes with the negative questions and thoughts, causing us to question God and His love and care for us.

The enemy knew that if Adam and Eve would disobey God, they would die just as God told them. The enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy. He **stole (to take without permission)** the **comfort/consolation** of the garden, he **destroyed (put an end to)** perfect **rest/peace** of the garden, and he **killed (cause death)** perfect **complete/continuous love** fellowship with Father God.

When we do not have the **presence** of the Garden, we become **discouraged** and filled with distress. This distress can lead to **depression** and **discord** in our soul, which becomes hardened and **darkened** with hate, envy, jealousy and **division**. When this happens, we have No Comfort, No Peace, and No love. This is the enemy's strategy to steal, kill and destroy our place of intimacy with God in the garden.

***Philippians 2:1** " Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy; fulfill my joy."*

**Please read Genesis 4:1-16.** The first child of Adam and Eve was Cain, whose heart was a product of their sin. He and his younger brother came before God with offerings. Abel's offering was pleasing to the Lord, where Cain's was not. Cain became very angry in his questioning of God. God gives him a warning, to check his heart. Sin was lying at the door of his heart, and it desired to destroy Cain. God tells him he has the power and opportunity to rule over his anger. When we disobey God, sin comes and lives in our hearts and we take on the nature of the enemy, our flesh. We become angry. God is encouraging us that if we do not give into our sin-driven emotions, and press through; we will overcome him (sin).

But Cain did not listen to the Lord. He once again did what he thought was best for himself. He had the question WHY ME ringing in his mind? Why did God not accept my offering? **As the question kept rolling around in his mind, his heart turned cold and he devised evil against God and his brother.** When we sin against our brother, we sin against God. Now once again God send a man out from His presence, and Cain dwelt in the land of Nod to the east of Eden.

**Nod means a vagabond or wanderer.** Cain roamed around in a place where there was no rest, no peace, and no consolation from the Lord. It was a dark place of distress, an unfruitful place with no fulfillment. Many of us wander from place to place

like a vagabond that has no home. **We are homeless because we are not obedient to the voice of God. We do not trust Him in the time of testing and trial.**

Adam and Eve were tested to see if they would be obedient to the voice of God, without the question "WHY"! Their son Cain was tested to see if he would follow the voice of God; but his heart was hardened when he questioned God not accepting his offering. It **was a heart issue for man in the beginning and it is a heart issue for us now.**

***Genesis 6:5-6** "Then The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart."*

Our hearts become hardened and evil when we open the door of sin, envy, covetous, and division. God had placed His love in the hearts of men, but they rejected it and filled their hearts with evil.

**In order for our hearts to stay pure in the garden, we must serve the Lord without asking the question WHY.**

#### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Pray through Psalm 119:49-72**, with a heart of repentance for your questioning of the goodness of God and His commandments.

Our **memory verse** should be hidden in our hearts. Let the truths in it go deeply into our minds and hearts.

***Psalm 119:58** "I entreated Your favor with my whole heart; Be merciful to me according to Your word."*

If you find yourself outside the garden of God's presence and perfect will, repent and ask for His favor to bring you back in or to bring you closer to His heart. Trust Him and His Word, He is merciful and He desires that none will perish.

## Bringing Us Back to the Garden

Day 27 – June 9, 2013

We saw yesterday that when Adam and Eve rebelled against God in the garden, sin entered into the hearts of all mankind.

**Romans 5:12** *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”*

One of the **consequences for their sin was to be removed from the garden**, away from the presence of the Lord; and we all have the same consequence when we sin. God is a holy God and He cannot abide with anyone who is unholy. As believers, when we choose to go our own way, when we question His ways and follow our way, we are not allowed access to the garden. But out of His love for us, He made a way for us to return to the garden – through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. **Jesus came to our wilderness, to the earth as a man, to reconcile us to Almighty God.** His sacrifice atoned for our sins, all of them. But there is something we must do in this process, **we must repent** daily of our sins. We live in a dirty and sinful world, and we need to repent daily of the decisions we have made without Him. We need to be washed with the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ.

The book of Hosea compares God’s people to a harlot, who had forsaken her husband and sought her own way; following after her lovers. She faced consequences for her decisions, but God out of His love for her, seeks a way to have her return to Him.

**Please read Hosea 2**

**Hosea 2:14** *“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness and speak kindly to her.”*

**He brings her into the wilderness** to remove the temptations and distractions of her life. Once there, she is able to hear His voice and take comfort in the kind words He speaks to her. The next thing you know, he places her in a garden (vineyard), while she is still in the wilderness. Many times in God’s Word He shows us His delight in changing the barren place of the wilderness into a lush garden.

**Psalms 107:35** *“He changes a wilderness into a pool of water and a dry land into springs of water.”*

**Isaiah 35:1-2** *“The wilderness and the desert will be glad, and the Arabah (desert) will rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it will blossom profusely and rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy...”*

In this wilderness garden that the Lord provides for us, He comforts us with His presence, as He pours out His love upon us and betroths us to Himself as a beloved husband. As we spend time with Him in the secret place of His prepared garden, He cleanses us of our sins, teaches us His ways, and gives us His peace; all so we can know Him and His love more and more. As we respond to His love with whole-hearted love for Him, He will respond and make our garden grow bountifully with grain, new wine, and oil. He will be provision for us and for others.

**Isaiah 51:3** *“Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; **He will comfort all her waste places.** And her wilderness He will make like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; **joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and sound of a melody.**”*

God wants all mankind to live in the garden, a place of growth, joy, gladness, and rest. When we are in this place with the Lord, thanksgiving and joyous worship will be as natural as breathing.

**With sin and distress are in our lives, we cannot see the comfort and consolation of the Lord.** Yesterday we read about Simeon seeing the salvation and consolation of the Lord. He saw that through the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s heart desired to restore and return all mankind back to His original plan. We are like sheep that have gone astray, we have left the safety and rest of the garden the Lord has prepared for us, and being the Good Shepherd that He is, He will use whatever methods are necessary to bring us back to His original plan. We must see His rod and staff as a comfort.

**Psalm 23:4** *“Your rod and Your staff, they **comfort** me.”*

**Psalm 119:50** *“This is my **comfort** in my affliction, that Your word has revived me.”*

The word **comfort** in Hebrew is *nacham* - to console, **extend compassion**, to breathe intensely because of deep emotion. In some references, the word is translated repent, the idea being that regret casual deep sighing (taking a deep breath of expressing sadness). In its sense of comfort, *nacham* does not describe casual sympathy, but rather **deep empathy** (ability to understand the pain of another).

Webster’s Dictionary defines **comfort** - to strengthen; to invigorate; to cheer or enliven; **new strength; relief from distress of the mind; consolation.**

**Consolation** is that which comforts, or refreshes the spirit.

This garden is a glorious place, but it is not just for us. It is the place where we receive the comfort and consolation of the Lord. **But as God comforts and consoles us in our garden, we must reach out to those we see who are in need of God’s comfort.**

**Isaiah 40:1** *“Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God.”*

**Please read Isaiah 40.** As God's forerunners, we must see Isaiah 40 as our instructions in this age.

- **Offer comfort;** strengthen and encourage all who are weak or do not know the salvation of the Lord. (verse 1)
- **Speak kindly to the heart of the Jews;** tell them that Jesus is the Messiah. He offered Himself for their sins and He has come to bring them peace. (verse 2)
- **Be a voice** that calls out to the Church and the world that the **Lord Jesus is returning soon**, and He loves them. (verse 3 – 5)
- **Stand on the Word of God** that stands forever. (verse 8)
- Be a **bearer of the Good News;** boldly share the gospel with all. (verse 9-11)
- **Let people see God in you.** (verse 9)
- **Speak of the awesomeness of God;** the greatness of His might and the strength of His power. (verse 12 - 26)
- **Speak repentance;** God sees and hears all. (verse 27)
- **God is the source of our strength and understanding.** (verse 28-31)

#### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

Using a concordance or the cross-references in your Bible, **look up verses to accompany the nine instructions to forerunners in Isaiah 40.**

Please read **Psalm 119:49-72**, and notice the comfort we receive when we study and observe God's Word.

Is your memory verse memorized yet? **Psalm 119:58** You have one more day to work on it.

## **Comfort Cry Out**

Day 28 - June 10, 2013

We are starting our fifth week of building a second wall with the Word and Wisdom. We pray that you are sitting with the Lord and His Word every day, letting His messages go deep into your hearts. This week we need to **read and study Psalm 119:73-104**, and our **memory verse is Psalm 119:76**.

***Psalm 119:76-77** “O may Your lovingkindness **comfort** me, according to Your word to Your servant. May Your **compassion** come to me that I may live, for Your law is my delight.”*

**Comfort, Comfort, Comfort.** This word keeps coming up in our studies, and the Lord wants to spend another day to give us wisdom on this concept.

**When we in this modern age think of comfort, we think of all the things that make our life easier and more enjoyable;** a soft warm bed, a roaring fire on a cold and rainy day, luxurious transportation, a big house full of luxurious furnishings, enough money in the bank to feel secure, knowing we can pay for anything we need or desire; comfort food (tastes great, but isn't good for you), a relaxing vacation where you do nothing but rest and be waited on, self-medicating with addictions to keep anxiety under control...

**When we are comfortable, we have a sense of well-being. But this “comfort” is always temporary, because we are the ones producing it.**

**The “comfort” the Lord is talking about is much different;** and it meets a much deeper need, one deep down in our soul. The comfort we can offer ourselves only satisfies our flesh, and only for a short time.

***1 Peter 1:24** “For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off,”*

Our flesh cannot produce long term comfort. The only long term thing our flesh produces is sin. If left to itself, our flesh will sin every time.

***Romans 7:14** “...but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.”*

***Romans 7:18** “For I know nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh...”*

***Romans 8:6** “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.”*

***Lamentations 1:8-9, 16** “Jerusalem sinned greatly, therefore she has become an unclean thing...She did not consider her future. Therefore she*

*has fallen astonishingly; **She has no comforter.** See, O LORD, my affliction, For the enemy has magnified himself! ... For these things I weep; my eyes run down with water; because **far from me is a comforter, one who restores my soul.** My children are desolate because the enemy has prevailed."*

**When we sin, our comfort is gone and we fall into distress. Our flesh convinces us that there will be comfort in sin.** Someone says something critical to us, and our flesh says, "Let them have it. You will feel so much better once you set them straight. Send the full force of your anger against them." Instead of finding comfort in the defense of ourselves, we are in greater distress. Distress is extreme anxiety, sorrow and pain. We must stop believing the lies of the enemy, our flesh.

### **What does the comfort of God look like?**

The Hebrew word for **comfort** is *nacham*. It means to console; to extend compassion; to breathe intensely because of deep emotion and empathy (ability to understand the pain of another).

Webster's defines comfort as **relief from pain or distress**. The word signifies **new strength, or renewed life**. It is consolation and **strong support** through distress, difficulty, danger, or infirmity.

**When we sin, God sighs with a deep breath, and says to Jesus, "We must comfort My children.** They have strayed from Me because of their desires and sins. They have strayed away because of the pain of their forefathers who were wounded, and because of the pain of their own wounds. They have sought their own comfort in their flesh, and have found none."

Remember when we studied Luke 2 and saw that Simeon was looking for the consolation of the Messiah, someone who would bring restoration and salvation to all mankind. Remember when we studied Hosea 2 and saw God luring Gomer into the wilderness, away from the temptations of her flesh, to bring her salvation and restoration.

***Isaiah 51:3** "For The Lord will **comfort** Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her **wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord;** joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody."*

God will bring us to a safe place of His love, the garden of His presence. This is a place of growth as we study His Word; a place of peace and joy as we worship Him; and a place of healing as He binds and heals our wounds. He will send the Comforter to us, the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 9:31** *“So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the **comfort of the Holy Spirit**, it continued to increase.”*

**Philippians 2:1-2** *“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.”*

When we are in the comforting presence of God, we receive **encouragement** from Jesus Christ, we receive **love** from our Heavenly father, and we receive **fellowship** from the Holy Spirit. **The affection and compassion (comfort) we receive from them makes us full of joy as we are united in love. Now we can follow and walk out the desires of His heart for our lives.**

**Psalm 119:76-77** *“O may Your lovingkindness comfort me, according to Your word to Your servant. May Your compassion come to me that I may live, for Your law is my delight.”*

Pure and lasting **comfort only comes from the lovingkindness of the Lord** (His steadfast love). His word is full of this promise, and only His comfort is a comfort to us! Out of the comfort we have received, out of the lovingkindness we have received, God desires us to reach out and comfort others. The times we are living in are getting darker and darker, people are in deep sin; seeking comfort, but finding none. Will we receive the comfort of the Lord and in turn, comfort others?

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4** *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, **who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.**”*

**Isaiah 40:1** *“Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God.”*

When we see pain and distress in the lives of those around us, we need to speak comfort, peace and life into their lives. When we do, we are preparing the way for the Lord to come into their hearts and bring His perfect comfort to them. We are knocking down the high places of the enemy in their lives, smoothing out the rugged terrain of their wounded hearts. Then His glory can be seen. We must prepare the Way!

**Isaiah 40:3-5** *“A voice is calling, ‘Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; then*

*the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

**We leave you with this prayer:**

*Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)*

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Psalm 103. List the comforts (benefits) the Lord gives to those He loves.**

## Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord

Day 29 – June 11, 2013

Misty Edwards sings a song *Prepare Ye the Way of the Risen Lord*. This is a song for us in this age. Notice she sings, prepare ye – that means all of us need to be actively participating in the preparations for the Lord's return. The preparations are not just for a few, but for all believers.

The last words Jesus spoke on earth after His resurrection were a response to a question the disciples asked. They asked Jesus now that He was resurrected and had returned to the earth, if this was the time when He would restore the Kingdom to Israel. In other words, is this when He would defeat the oppressive Romans and set up His kingdom here on Earth? He told them it is not for them to know the time of this coming event; but He gave them, and all believers after them, a task to prepare the way for His return.

*Acts 1: 8* "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

All of us are to be His witnesses in our families, in the town we live in, the country we live in, and even to the ends of the earth. You may say, I do not have the gift of evangelism and I have not been called to be a missionary to the remote parts of the world. Yes, these are gifts and callings, and we all have different ones; but that does not change the Word. **We are all to be His witnesses to all the peoples of the earth.** Matthew records these same words of Jesus, but with a little more elaboration.

*Matthew 28:19-20* "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The phrase **go therefore** in Greek means, **as you travel or journey through your life**. As you go about your life, do this... We may be called to be a missionary, and the gift of evangelism might be developed in us as we mature in Him; but we must keep in mind that in everything we do and everywhere we go in our lives, we are to be a witness of Jesus Christ!

### So what are we to do?

1. **We are to be a witness.** Simply stated **witness** means a testimony; telling others of a fact or event; furnishing evidence, proof, of all essential facts; telling others of an important event in your life.

To be a witness of Jesus, all we have to do is share with others what He has done in our life and how His love and presence have changed us. We talked earlier about being a light in the darkness around us, and to be a sweet smelling aroma to God and to those around us. When we are these things, we stand out from the world. This is being a testimony, because others will know that there is something different about you. We must be ready when opportunities open up for us to share the love of God with those who want to know why we have so much peace and joy.

Yesterday we saw that God is the God of comfort, not to make our lives easy and exceedingly pleasant, but to give us encouragement, love, peace and joy in the midst of what we are going through. As He has comforted us, we are to comfort others, all for the purpose of bringing them closer to the Lord. When we see pain and distress in the lives of those around us, we need to share our testimony with them, encouraging them that God is faithful and He will love them as He has loved us. When we give them hope, and point them to the Lord, we are preparing the way for the Lord to come into their hearts and bring His perfect comfort to them. We are knocking down the high places of the enemy in their lives, smoothing out the rugged terrain of their wounded hearts. Then His glory can be seen. This is preparing the way for the Lord!

***Isaiah 40:3-5*** “A voice is calling, ‘**Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.**”

2. **Make disciples.** A **disciple** is a follower of the doctrines of another. When we make disciples of the Lord, we are showing them the truths of God in His Word and encouraging them to get involved in a church to be fed, and in small groups for accountability. From the definition of a disciple, we are to follow Christ and His doctrines, but we cannot be a disciple of Christ if we do not know Him. Part of making disciples is to show them how to get to know the Lord better; explaining how and why to pray, worship, and study the Word.

***Isaiah 50:4*** “The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of disciples, that I may **know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens me morning by morning, He awakens my ear to listen as a disciple.**”

3. **Baptize them in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.** This speaks of the outward sign of our repentant hearts, and it is right to encourage all believers to make the public profession of their faith by baptism. The word **baptize** means to be fully immersed. We might not physically baptize them, but we can help them to be fully immersed in the fullness of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Ephesians 3:19** *“and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”*

4. **Teach them the Word** – We are building this second wall of the Word and Wisdom so all will have a desire to know His Word and to follow it with all their heart. It is our responsibility to be students of the Word, so God can use us to speak His truths into the lives of others. Teaching can be in the formal setting of a Bible Study or a conference; but it can also be in a conversation with a friend over the phone or over a cup of coffee. We as believers are always listening to a lot of messages, but they are not just for our edification, they are to be shared with those who need to hear the truth of God’s Word for the situations they are facing.

**2 Timothy 2:15** *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”*

Last winter, the Lord spoke to us in a powerful way; and we recorded and wrote down the words He gave us. Here is a part of what He spoke on January 25, 2013, from *Psalms From God’s Heart, I am Returning*.

***I have chosen you to take Me throughout the nations.***  
*They do not know, they do not know this love that is growing  
and growing and growing deep inside of Me, so deep.*  
***But where can I find one that will carry Me, that will carry Me to thee.***  
*To those who I love, who I love, and I pour My love from above.*  
***Where, where can I go, where? And who will take Me?***  
*And who will die to all that hear; hear what seems to appear to be your place,  
But this is not your place, this is not your place of rest.*

The people of this world, believers and non-believers, do not know the love of God, so they are powerless in their walk. They are easy targets for the enemy, and the Lord wants all to walk victorious in Him. **God is asking us to carry Him to the world, one person at a time.** We must prepare the way for the Lord, by being His shining witness, making disciples, leading them into the fullness of God, and teaching them the truths of His Word.

## **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Psalm 119:73-96.**

Continue to work on your memory verse for this week: **Psalm 119:76.**

Spend some quality time with the Lord asking Him to help you be a better witness to those near and far. Ask Him to remove all fear in sharing the great things He has done in your life. Listen and write down the things He asks you to do to prepare the Way for His return.

## **Keys to God's Heart**

Day 30 – June 12, 2013

King David was called **a man after God's own heart**. Was He perfect all the days of his life? NO, but God still considered him to be a man after His heart. That means that David knew God's heart and knew what it took to stay right with God.

God asked Samuel to raise up David to be king after He removed Saul. From the **beginning** of our acquaintance with David, God considered him to be a man after His heart.

**Acts 13:22** *"After He had removed him (Saul), He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.'"*

Towards the **end** of his life, God praised David for doing right in His sight and promised great blessings to his son, Solomon.

**1Kings 15:5** *"...David did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite."*

**We know David's life was not perfect, because his failures were written in God's Word for all to see and be encouraged. Why can we be encouraged by his failures? Even with his great sins, God always considered David to be a man after His own heart. When we study the words of King David, we can learn the keys to living our lives as men and women after God's heart.**

**Please read Psalm 119:73 – 104.** As you read this week's passage, make note of the many times **David is crying out to the Lord for help**. Sometimes He is confused and is asking the Lord for understanding and wisdom, sometimes he is overwhelmed by the trials of his life and needs God's comfort, sometimes his enemies are closing in on him and he is asking for help and justice, and sometimes He is confessing his sins and asking God to forgive him. **All of these are keys to God's heart.**

**Seeking God for Wisdom and Understanding:**

**Psalm 119:73** *"Your hands made me and fashioned me; **give me understanding**, that I may **learn** Your commandments."*

**A key to obtaining the wisdom of God is to genuinely worship the Lord**, praising Him and acknowledging that He is the only One who has the answers to all of life's questions.

**Psalm 119:89 -91** *“Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations; You established the earth, and it stands. They stand this day according to Your ordinances, for all things are Your servants.*

Do we just ask for wisdom and understanding, and then we are wise? No, it's not that easy. We must learn God's Word, which means we are to **study it and then walk it out in obedience**. That makes us wise!

**Psalm 119:97- 100** *“O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your **commandments make me wiser** than my enemies, for they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. **I understand more than the aged, because I have observed Your precepts.**”*

**Psalm 119:103- 104** *“How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! **From Your precepts I get understanding**; therefore I hate every false way.”*

### **Seeking His Comfort in our Trials:**

**Psalm 119:76, 82** *“O may Your lovingkindness comfort me, according to Your word to Your servant.” “My eyes fail with longing for Your word, while I say, ‘When will You comfort me?’”*

We have talked about this key the last few days. When we are going through hard times of testings and trails, we must not seek the comforts of this world, because they will not satisfy us. Only God can offer us the comfort we need.

### **Seeking Justice Only from God:**

**Psalm 119:81** *“My soul languishes for Your salvation (rescue); I wait for Your word.”*

We all have natural and spiritual enemies (our flesh, the world, and the devil). As our enemies come against us, instead of lashing out and fighting them in our strength and wisdom, we must **ask God to intervene**. In the asking, comes a **waiting**. This is hard because we don't like to wait. We want instant relief from whatever is wrong. In the waiting God is doing great things; primarily building our trust and reliance in Him.

Notice in the verses in our section of Psalm 119, that every time David is talking about his enemies, he also talks about God's Word. **When he is under attack, he goes to the Word of God and is strengthened.**

**Psalm 119:78-79** “May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie; but **I shall meditate on Your precepts**. May those who fear You turn to me, even those who know Your **testimonies**.”

**Psalm 119:84-87** “How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute **judgment** on those who persecute me? The arrogant have dug pits for me, men who are not **in accord with Your law**. All Your **commandments** are faithful; they have persecuted me with a lie; help me! They almost destroyed me on earth, but as for me, **I did not forsake Your precepts**.”

**Psalm 119:92-95** “If **Your law had not been my delight**, then I would have perished in my affliction. **I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have revived me**. I am Yours, save me; for **I have sought Your precepts**. The wicked wait for me to destroy me; I shall diligently consider Your **testimonies**.”

**Offering God Repentance when we sin:**

**Let's look at 1Kings 15:5 again.**

*“...David did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case (matter) of Uriah the Hittite.”*

In our minds, David's dealings with Uriah were no little matter. He committed adultery, lying, and murder. Yet, God could still say, “David did what was right in My sight”. How is this possible? Through probably **the most powerful key to God's heart - repentance**.

David was a humble man, who would admit his sins and ask for the Lord to forgive Him. He did not spend his time making excuses or falling into condemnation. He would confess his sins before God and man; he would repent (turn from his sins) and ask for the Lord to forgive him. He would then ask the Lord to cleanse his heart, and bring restoration to their relationship.

**Psalm 119:75** “I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are righteous, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.”

**Psalm 119:88** “Revive (restore) me according to Your lovingkindness, So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth.”

**Psalm 119:101-102** “I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not turned aside from Your ordinances, for You Yourself have taught me.”

When you find yourself in sin, please go directly to Psalm 103 and remember God's promises for all who repent. And then REPENT and be restored!

**Psalm 103:8-13** *“The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has **He removed our transgressions from us**. Just as a father has compassion on his children, so **the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.**”*

#### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Psalm 51.** David wrote these powerful words of his repentance and God's forgiveness after the “matter” of Uriah. Please study this section; there are many treasures here about this powerful key to God's heart.

## Fashioned by God for His Purposes

Day 31 – June 13, 2013

**Psalm 119:73** *“Thy hands made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments.”*

**In the beginning, God created... EVERYTHING!** Still to this day, He is our Creator.

**Revelation 4:11** *“Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; **for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.**”*

We were fearfully and wonderfully made by the Creator, Almighty God. He made and fashioned each one of us in the wombs of our mothers. (Psalm 139:14-15) We are all unique, yet made in His image. Our uniqueness is very evident when we look at people. We all come with different hair, eye, and skin color; different shapes and sizes, and different languages. As different as we are on the outside, the differences inside each one of us are even more strikingly different. I wish we could see what God has put into each person. We were all given different personalities, temperaments, talents, abilities, likes and dislikes... Then when we accept Jesus as our Savior, He gives us the Holy Spirit to live inside of us. He comes with an even greater variety of gifts, ministries, and callings.

**1 Corinthians 12:4-11** *“Now there are **varieties of gifts**, but the same Spirit. And there are **varieties of ministries**, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, **distributing to each one individually just as He wills.**”*

These gifts of the Holy Spirit, along with the Fruit of the Spirit, are not given to us in a full-grown state. Just as our outsides have to grow up and mature, so too do our insides. We might have been born with a fiery temperament; but as we mature, we cannot let it go into anger, but it must be shaped and molded into its true purpose—passion to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God makes us all very different, giving each of us different combinations of these “inside things”. Psalm 139: 16-17 tells us that as God created our entire body, inside and out, He had a plan and a purpose for every trait and talent and gift He placed there. He puts

much thought into the uniqueness of each individual He creates; because He loves us so much and because He has great purpose for our lives. He not only created us, He also is heavily involved in our maturity. Let's look at our first scripture more closely.

**Psalm 119:73** *"Thy hands made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments."*

The Hebrew word for **fashioned** is *kun* – to stand up erect, to grow up, to be established, to be prepared.

David is acknowledging that God created Him, but that He also is the one who shaped and molded him to be the man God created him to be. David was the youngest of eight sons, and he had the least prestigious job growing up – tending his father's sheep. In this time, he learned to be humble, he learned how to lead those who did not want to be led, and he learned to be a valiant warrior, all the time leaning on the Lord for his instruction. It took many years to actually be king after he was anointed to be the new king. God had much more "fashioning" to do in his life to prepare him for his purpose.

**Psalm 138:8** *"The LORD will accomplish what concerns me; Your lovingkindness, O LORD, is everlasting; do not forsake the works of Your hands."*

**The Lord is actively involved in all of our lives**, even when we mess with His plans with our rebellion, ignorance, and disobedience. David's cry for understanding of God's Word should be our lifelong cry. **The wisdom we need to grow up to God's purposes for our lives is found in His Word.** Are we willing to trust God and His plans for our lives?

Our next scripture is addressed to a man whose purpose is to be a farmer. Notice his partnership with God.

**Isaiah 28:23-29** *"Give ear and hear my voice, Listen and hear my words... For his God instructs and teaches him properly... This also comes from the LORD of hosts, who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great."*

The Holy Spirit was given to us to be our teacher; to open up the Word of God to our hearts and minds, to train us in righteousness, to mold our character into the image of Jesus Christ. God also uses the trials and testings of our lives to mature us, all the time preparing us for His purposes.

**Isaiah 46:9-11** *"... I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good ...Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it."*

God has great purposes for every person He has created, not just the ones who love Him. King Nebuchadnezzar was a very evil king in Babylon. He conquered and destroyed Jerusalem and the entire country of Israel. He enslaved God's chosen people all for God's purposes. They had strayed into idolatry. They had not listened to the prophets, so He sent King Nebuchadnezzar. This evil man captured a young man named Daniel, and eventually through their God-ordained relationship, King Nebuchadnezzar bowed to God and declared that He is the only God! God had several purposes for this man, and He does for us too.

**The outcome of God's fashioning us and teaching us His Ways, is that we become skilled in the giftings, talents, and abilities God has given us.** We do not become "skilled" to be famous, but to glorify God and prepare the church and the lost for the return of Jesus Christ, our Bridegroom. This is always God's purpose.

When God instructed Moses to build a Tabernacle for Him, He gave Moses very detailed instructions. He even called out by name the lead craftsmen.

***Exodus 35:30 - 35 ..."See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel... and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship; to make designs for working in gold and in silver and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings and in the carving of wood, so as to perform in every inventive work. He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and Oholiab... He has filled them with skill to perform every work of an engraver and of a designer and of an embroiderer, in blue and in purple and in scarlet material, and in fine linen, and of a weaver, as performers of every work and makers of designs."***

Bezalel and Oholiab were famous in the skill they possessed in all work they accomplished. They were mature in their craft, and were called upon to do the important work they had been prepared to do for the Lord and by the Lord.

***Exodus 36:1-2 "Now Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skillful person in whom the LORD has put skill and understanding to know how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall perform in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded. Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skillful person in whom the LORD had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him, to come to the work to perform it."***

The Hebrew word for **craftsmanship** is **melakah** - deputyship, that is, ministry; abstract or concrete work. It is from the root word **malak** – to dispatch as a deputy, a messenger or ambassador to the king; a prophet, priest, or teacher. A **deputy** is a person appointed or elected to act for another, especially a person sent with a special commission to act in the place of another.

A craftsman is not only an artist, but an ambassador of the Lord to a world that does not know Him. **A craftsman is a messenger of the Lord; operating as a prophet, a scribe, a priest, or a king.** (see message from Day 24) In order to be considered a craftsman, we must be filled with the Spirit of God in wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and skill to perform every work the Lord asks of us.

Don't you see, this is what God has been doing in our lives, especially these 52 days. **He is building a wall of His forerunners who are to arise and go forth to prepare the way for His return.** But in order to do that, **we must be skilled** in what we have been given to do. And we must be willing to step out and operate in them. **God has been preparing us and is now calling us out by name to be His craftsmen.**

King Solomon undertook to build a house for God, the Temple. He contacted the King of Tyre, who had supplied quality building materials and laborers to King David. He ordered a huge quantity of wood and stone, and then asked for a recommendation for a man to head up the building project. These are the qualifications King Solomon asked for:

***2 Chronicles 2:7** "Now send me a **skilled man** to work in gold, silver, brass and iron, and in purple, crimson and violet fabrics, and who knows how to make engravings, to work with the skilled men whom I have in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided."*

He was very specific in the skills he required, and the King of Tyre responded with:

***2 Chronicles 2:13-14** "Now I am sending Hiram-abi, a **skilled man, endowed with understanding**, the son of a Danite woman and a Tyrian father, who knows how to work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone and wood, and in purple, violet, linen and crimson fabrics, and who knows how to make all kinds of engravings and to execute any design which may be assigned to him, to work with your skilled men and with those of my lord David your father."*

This is what is going on in heaven right now. **Father God and Jesus are making plans for His return, and seeing who to send to accomplish the required work.** One king (Father God) is requesting what is needed and one king (Jesus) is recommending the perfect skilled person to do it. When God calls upon us to do a work for Him, will we do it, or will we make excuses that we are not ready? Please know this, God is preparing us and when He asks us to go and do for Him, we are ready. Remember, we are not left alone; the Holy Spirit dwells in us and He will empower and guide us in all we do.

## **DIGGING DEEPER:**

There are many example of God fashioning, raising up men and women for His purposes, and not all of them were His chosen people. God has purposes for all

people. Please read about these men and women and the purposes He had for their lives.

Pharaoh - Romans 9:17, Exodus 10:1-2

Cyrus – Isaiah 45:1-3 (this prophecy was 175 years before he was born)

Esther – Esther 4:14

Nebuchadnezzar – Jeremiah 27:6-8

Think about how God prepared Moses to be the leader of His people.

## **Pray for Salvation**

### Day 32 – June 14, 2013

***Psalm 119:81** “My soul languishes for Your salvation; I wait (hope) for Your word.”*

The Hebrew word for **salvation** is **teshuah** –rescue; deliverance; help; safety; victory; set free.

Webster’s defines **salvation** as the act of saving; preservation from destruction, danger or great calamity. The redemption of man from the bondage of sin and liability to eternal death, and the conferring on him everlasting happiness. Deliverance from enemies. Remission of sins.

Without the salvation of the Lord, our souls would perish; but we can find hope in His Word.

All mankind needs salvation from eternal death. Our sins separate us from the Lord and condemn us to eternal damnation. But God, out of His love for us sent His Son to bring us salvation. To rescue us out of the pit of hell and bring us into His glorious presence for all eternity!

We also need salvation from the attacks of our enemies: the devil, the world, and our flesh. The devil was defeated when Christ died and rose from the dead. When we accepted the salvation of the Lord, the chains that bound us to the devil were unlocked and we were set free. Unfortunately many of us are still bound, walking around dragging unlocked chains.

We need salvation from the ongoing effects of living in this world. We need God’s daily cleansing and deliverance from the lure of the things of this world.

We need salvation from the sinfulness of our flesh. Our sins have been forgiven, but unfortunately we still sin. The Holy Spirit comes to strengthen us and to train us in righteousness, so we are set free from our fleshly desires. Deliverance comes as we call upon the Lord to set us free.

Salvation is powerful, bringing restoration to our souls. We need to be like David, and long for it to the point of languishing.

The word **languish** means: to lose strength or animation; to become dull, feeble or spiritless; to pine; to grow heavy; to wither; to fade; to grow dull; to be no longer active and vigorous.

**Psalm 42:1-2** *“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?”*

All too often we try to find salvation for our problems on our own, but without the Lord, we lose strength and are worse off. The answer to our cries for salvation is in the second part of our verse for today: “I wait for Your word.”

It is vital that we know the Word of God because it is full of the faithfulness of God to bring salvation to His people. It brings us hope that what we are going through is for a moment, and we will be closer to the Lord when it is over. The power of His salvation is clearly displayed bringing restoration to our souls. Do we long incessantly for His salvation in all of our trials and temptations? Do we long for His salvation for those who do not know it?

**Please Read Isaiah 62.**

**Isaiah 62:1** *“For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning.”*

Zion is a place where God positions Himself. Our position in Him is to pray until the hearts of all people come to their rightful place. God is looking for a resting place in His people, a place to dwell. Even though He loves all mankind, He can only rest in a heart that is filled with God in righteousness, justice, holiness, and peace. When we allow God to dwell in us, salvation burns like a torch in us; and all will see the fire of the dwelling place of God burn with passion for Him.

**Isaiah 62:6-7** *“On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; and give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”*

As we have found salvation, we must pray for the salvation of those who are still bound. God is setting His remnant as watchmen on the city walls to pray. He longs for all of His people to come and pray for the salvation of the lost; but we seem to be distracted and asleep. We have lost the fire of our salvation. We need to regain that passion and understand the overwhelming passion God has for us to come to this place.

He wants us to cry out to Him night and day, taking no rest for ourselves nor giving Him any rest from hearing our prayers until He makes Jerusalem a praise on the earth. God will make this happen, there is no doubt! Will you join the watchmen on the wall, and pray? We have been chosen for this in this hour.

The Lord's Watch is being established all over the world, with 24-hour houses of prayer. They are positioned in cities to pray for the city and nations, as well as developments in heaven itself.

In **verse 8-9**, the Lord swears by His right hand and by the arm of His strength that He surely will deliver and redeem us, bringing us salvation from our enemies. All those who gather to hear His voice in this hour will drink the living waters in the courts of His sanctuary.

***Isaiah 62: 10** "Go through, go through the gates, clear the way for the people; build up, build up the highway, remove the stones, lift up a standard over the peoples."*

We are given Instructions in this verse. Notice that twice He repeats words of instruction, but they have slightly different meanings.

- **Go through**- move to the other side. We must step out in faith to build the wall of salvation with our prayers.
- **Go through the gates** -make an opening in the gates. Pray for all to repent and return to the Lord with a heart of love.
- **Clear the way** - make ready the way for the people to come to the Lord, with prophetic Words of encouragement.
- **Build up** - **bring together** the Body of Christ to come into unity with God.
- **Build up the highway** - build connections between churches, denominations, cities, and nations.
- **Remove the stones**- pray that every hindrance will be removed for all to come to salvation.
- **Lift up a standard over the peoples**- A standard is a flag that carries the name of the army you are in. The name of Jesus Christ must be lifted up in worship all over the land. His standard will be the rally point for all to gather and pray.

The Lord is calling us to step out in faith to follow His lead to pray for all the peoples of the earth. We must pray that the hearts of the lost will be open to receive the Lord, and pray for God's people to have hearts of repentance and returning to their first love. As our prayers prepare the way, God will send His prophetic Word to strengthen and encourage. Our prayers will build up the Body of Christ by bringing us together in unity so we can be the voice to build up the spiritual highways of connection between churches, cities, and nations. As the Church and the lost are redeemed, the Lord will open up the doors for more watchmen to follow the instructions of the Lord.

## **DIGGING DEEPER:**

Please read **Psalm 119:73-104**.

Continue to work on your memory verse, **Psalm 119:76**.

## Make Our Way Straight

Day 33 - June 15, 2013

**Jeremiah 31:3-4, 9** *"The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. Again I will build you and you will be rebuilt...With weeping they will come, and by supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, **on a straight path in which they will not stumble'...**"*

We have the most amazing God! His love for us is everlasting; and He does not stop there. When we stray, He draws us back to Himself with His lovingkindness! What has been torn down in our lives, He will rebuild to His original plans. As we see and experience this love and restoration, we humbly come to Him with the weeping of repentance, praying for His perfect leading in our lives. Confessing that we have gone astray, we have gotten off-course, and we need Him to lead us in the straight path for our lives. This path brings us by streams of living water, where we will be strengthened and refreshed all along our journey with Him.

So often we think that if we purpose to walk on the straight path with Him, we will not have trials and testings, but that is not the case. We have already looked at the eternal purposes of our testings, to bring us closer to the One who truly loves us. But the straight path that the Lord wants us to walk has a different connotation.

**Proverbs 2:13-15** tells us that those who leave the paths of righteousness (living according to God's ways), walk in the ways of darkness; they delight in doing evil and their paths are crooked.

When something isn't straight, it is crooked, bent, or distorted from its original design. When our way is made straight, we no longer have a path that is full of frustrating and exhausting twists and turns, it is no longer distorted. We are free to move continuously in the right direction, into the loving presence of Almighty God. In order to walk in a straight way we must be set **free from the iniquities of our past, and all that we have being going through as a Body of Christ**

Iniquities are sins, evilness in our hearts, faults, sins, guilt, blame, moral illness, perversion, or crookedness.

The Hebrew word for **iniquities (avon)** is derived from **avah- to bend** (shaped into a curve) **or distort** (twisted out of shape).

Thus **iniquity is the evil bent within human beings, or the crooked** (bent, twisted, out of shape or place) **directions or warped** (bent and twisted out of shape) **deeds of sinners**. Iniquity is too heavy for us to bear; only Jesus could take our iniquities and set

us free of them. God promised that **His Suffering Servant would bear the iniquities of all His people.**

***Isaiah 53:10-12*** “But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would **render Himself as a guilt offering**, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; **by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.** Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet **He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.**”

**When something is distorted, it is twisted, forced out of its natural or proper shape.** In the garden when sin entered the world, we as humans were forced out of our intimate relationship with God. Then another force (enemy) came to cause our hearts and minds to be bent and distorted. Now we are operating in sin that has been produced by the enemies in our hearts. We also have open doors that our forefathers had opened up in their hearts that brought iniquity to our families, causing us to go in a crooked way. We don't know the right way, so our hearts needs to be prepared for the Lord through repentance. He will turn us around and place us on the right path that was chosen for us from the beginning.

***Isaiah 53: 6*** “All of us like sheep have gone astray; each of us has **turned to his own way**; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

**The Lord saw our bent and crooked way that we could not change without Him.** It was going to require a turning away from the old crooked ways and being open to the new way by repenting and being washed from our sins. But the Lord knew that it would take a people who heard the voice of God and would prepare the hearts of His people to receive Him through this washing and changed lifestyle.

God is looking for one who will be set apart in the wilderness, in a hard, lonely and dry place. This voice has to have an obedient heart for Father God, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In order to make His people ready for His return, we must live a sacrificial lifestyle of consecration. The Lord is looking for such a one in this eleventh hour. **We in this generation were born to prepare the way and make straight through repentance what was crooked and bent.** Let's look at this message God has prophesied throughout the scriptures

***Isaiah 40:3*** “A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.”

God is asking the prophetic voices of the wilderness to cry out and prepare the way, to make ready the people to come into oneness with the Lord.

**Malachi 3:1** *“Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear (prepare) the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts.*”

**Matthew 3:1-3** *“Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’. For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight!’”*

Repentance is **preparing the way**. There must be a voice that has lived separate from the world, in a wilderness lifestyle of consecration. John the Baptist is a great forerunner for us to see and emulate. Are we willing to let God prepare and make us ready to walk the straight path of the Lord, the path of righteousness?

**Psalm 119:74** *“May those who fear You see me and be glad, because I wait for Your word.”*

We are called to bring the glad tidings of the Lord’s return. The words we are to speak will bring refreshing and freedom to all who hear and receive. We must understand the incredible privilege we have been given in this generation to lead the world to the Lord before His return.

## **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Mark 1:1-8, Luke 3:1-18, John 1:19-40**

These passages are about John the Baptist, making straight the way for the Lord. As you read these passages notice the lifestyle and actions of this forerunner.

**Continue reading psalm 119:73-104**

Have you **memorized Psalm 119:76** yet?

## **The Lord is Sending His Envoys to Speak His Coming Judgment**

Day 34 - June 16, 2013

In this hour, we have been called to hear the voice of the Lord and **to warn the people of the Return of Christ**. Many things will happen during this time and the Lord is preparing us for whatever comes, so we can be **His end time's prophets, messengers for His return**.

Let's look at another prophet that was preparing the way for the Lord, Obadiah.  
**Please read Obadiah1.**

***Obadiah 1:1** "The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom-- We have **heard a report from the LORD**, and an envoy has been sent among the nations saying, 'Arise and let us go against her for battle'"*

**Obadiah**, whose name means **the Lord's servant**, was a prophet of the Lord and he was given a vision concerning Edom. It was a vision of God's judgment coming against Edom. A messenger is being sent among the nations to tell of the coming judgment.

Obadiah makes a statement in **Obadiah 1:15**

*"For **the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations**. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head."*

**The Day of the Lord is a season when the judgment of God and divine justice will come to all nations.** "The Day of The Lord" is used by Old Testament prophets to signify a time in the history of mankind **when God directly intervenes to bring salvation to His people and punishment to the rebellious**. By it God restores His righteous order in the earth.

**The first Coming of Christ ushered in the church age which began another phase of the Day of The Lord.** As participants in this aspect of the Day of The Lord, the church can call on the risen Christ to cast down spiritual forces that hinder God's work in this present world and to bring about innumerable blessing. **The Second Coming of Christ will introduce another aspect of the Day of The Lord, during which Christ will personally come to earth and set up His righteous and worldwide kingdom.** This is the day the Jews have been looking forward to since the prophets talked about it. **They missed the servant Messiah, because they wanted the conquering Messiah.** But these are both sides of our Messiah. Jesus sacrificed Himself so we could draw near, and He desires to conquer our hearts with His lovingkindness. When our Messiah returns to earth this time, He will restore God's order to the earth.

The ultimate fulfillment of the Day of The Lord is **the return of our Lord Jesus Christ as the glorious Bridegroom of the church**. When this happens, we will see the full

arrival of the prophecies in Ezekiel 47 and Revelation 22, about the pure river of living waters. **We are seeing a partial fulfillment now as the Holy Spirit is producing rivers of His presence all over the globe.** The rivers will set the atmosphere so we are able to **go, build, and prepare for His return. We cannot do the work He has for us without the rivers of living water.** Wherever the river flows, the Holy Spirit will bring deliverance and healing to the nations.

The water will flow from the mountains, so we must pray, worship, and remain in the Word of God so holiness can be on the mountain for those who is crying out to the Lord.

***Obadiah 1:17*** "But on Mount Zion there will be deliverance, and there shall be holiness."

The mountain where Jesus will eventually set up His kingdom will be a sacred place

***Isaiah 2:2-3*** "Now it will come about that **in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it.** And many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways ad that we may walk in His paths'. For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

God has been speaking to us in this season of preparation to come up the mountain to learn His ways. While we are on the mountain the Lord shall establish His Word and it will come from the mountain to the valleys and cause the people to be established in this season. Jesus will return and we must hear His voice and respond to it now. We must walk in holiness and possess the hearts of His people by crying out for repentance and redemption.

We must make His path straight by bringing forth the river and the fire of God through the instructions in the Word of God.

***Obadiah 1:18*** "Then the house of Jacob will be a **fire** and the house of Joseph a **flame**."

We see two generations here. The older generation who has carried the fire for a while will ignite the flame of the younger generation to carry it to the nations. Notice, two different words were used for burning: fire and flame. The Hebrew word for **fire** used here is **esh**, which means a hot fire, a fiery one. Fire is often used as a symbol of God's divine presence, either as approval or judgment. The older generation represented by Jacob carries the presence of God, and His presence in their lives will ignite a flame in the younger generation, represented by Joseph. The Hebrew word used here for **flame** is **lehabah**, derived from **lahab**. These words point to a flaming spear or a flaming sword. The flame denotes excitement and purity. This new generation is called to holiness, and with the strength and excitement of their youth, they will carry the flaming

sword of the Word of God to the nations, cutting through the darkness and bringing the lost to the Lord in the greatest numbers the world has ever seen. They will fulfill the great commission and take the Word to all the people in the world.

Simeon and Anna were the older generation that was called to speak life into the next generation about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the prophets were stirred by the words from God about His coming to the earth. Do we feel the same stirrings of the return of Christ?

Do we feel His passion to establish the mountains of Zion with 24/7 prayer houses all over the earth?

Will we personally go up the mountain and let the living waters of His holy river cleanse and strengthen us in the Word of God?

Will we make **Zion a place of Worship** that all of the Body of Christ will praise Him? Will we, the bride of Christ, join with the Holy Spirit and sing, Come Lord Jesus, come?

***Revelation 22:17*** ***“The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let the one who hears say, Come. And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”***

***Obadiah 1:21*** ***“The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be the Lord’s.”***

God is raising up deliverers, those who will bring His gospel of salvation to all who are lost and living in spiritual darkness. These are ones who have come up His mountain to drink from the rivers of living water. These **deliverers** are those who have responded to the voice of God and are taking action to reestablish His holy mountain. These are the **warriors and worshippers who are willing to speak the Word of truth.**

These deliverers will also judge the mountains of Esau, which is also Edom as referred to in verse 1. Esau/Edom represents the flesh. The people who are on the mountain of Esau are those in the church who are full of pride, envy, jealousy, division, and discord; in other words they are controlled by the flesh and not the Spirit. The fleshly mountain is the mountain of false religion. These are the brethren who have not established themselves on the holy mountain and have not taken heed to the warnings of the prophets.

**The Lord is sending His envoy, His messengers to the church on the mountain of Esau, to speak of God’s coming judgment.** They will bring the fire and the flame of God’s judgment to either cleanse or destroy. The Word of God will speak through them from the heart of God.

We must see God is speaking very loud to us in this hour to get ready and respond in obedience to the heart of God. The Day of The Lord is Coming!!!!

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read 2 Peter 2 and Jude 1:11-19** and see what the Word of God says about those who will be judged as false teachers in the end times. God is very clear in what He feels about them.

**Please read Psalm 119:100.** How does it relate to what we have studied today?

## **Wait for the Lord**

Day 35 – June 17, 2013

**Please read Psalm 119:105-128.** Our **memory verse** for this week is **Psalm 119:105.**

As we are beginning the sixth week of building the second wall with the Word and wisdom, we want to encourage you to persevere in your well doing. We all grow weary, but the Lord comes to strengthen us with His Word. Along with His strengthening He brings great promises for those who persevere and wait upon Him.

The word **wait** is used several times in Psalm 119.

**Webster's defines wait** – to stay or rest in expectation of the arrival of something; to rest in expectation and patience; to stay and not depart; to be ready to serve and obey; and to attend and accompany with submission and respect.

There are several Hebrew word for waiting. The main one used in Psalm 119 is **yachal**: to be patient, to hope. Because our hope is in the Lord, we can stay steadfast in our circumstances.

***Psalm 119:43** “And do not take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for I wait for Your ordinances.”*

***Psalm 119:74** “May those who fear You see me and be glad, because I wait for Your word.”*

***Psalm 119:81** “My soul languishes for Your salvation; I wait for Your word.”*

***Psalm 119:114** “You are my hiding place and my shield; I wait for Your word.”*

***Psalm 119:147** “I rise before dawn and cry for help; I wait for Your words.”*

In all of these verses, David was calling out for help; and then he would say, I will wait for Your Word. He is acknowledging that the spoken and written word of God is the answer, and that he would wait for the answer from God before he moved. His hope and trust were in the Lord.

***Psalm 147:11** “The LORD favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness.”*

As we study God's Word, we see His faithfulness and lovingkindness to His people, causing us to rest in His sovereignty. The more we understand this, the more we can

rest in our waiting. When our souls are at rest in the midst of our waiting, we can accompany the Lord and attend to what He is asking us to do with submission and respect.

**Psalm 119:105** *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*

God’s words, those He speaks to us through His written Word and though His spoken word to our hearts, are to give us clear understanding in the way we are to go. His Word gives light to our lives. **It is a lamp to our feet.** The word **lamp** means a candle; a small personal light that gives light for each step we take, one step at a time. It is also **a light for our path.** The word for **light** means illumination, like the sun. It brightens up a large area so we can see the way the Lord wants us to travel. In our waiting, God will give us illumination, sometimes one step at a time and at other times He will show us a bigger picture of the way we are to go.

Another Hebrew word for waiting is **chul**. It means to wait patiently; to writhe in anguish, to become weak with waiting, to labor and give birth.

**Psalm 37:7** *“Rest (waiting silently) in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.”*

**The Lord acknowledges that waiting is painful for us.** We do not like to wait, and then to wait in silence, not complaining, that is agony. Our flesh tries to take comfort in complaining; but that is not the way of the Lord. **The following verses are great to memorize when we are waiting. They refocus our attention to the Lord and not to the pain of our waiting.**

**Psalm 27:13-14** *“I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD.”*

Here are two other scriptures to help you wait in hope and silence.

**Lamentations 3:24-26** *“The LORD is my portion, says my soul, therefore I have hope in Him. The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the LORD.”*

**Psalm 62:5-8** *“My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken. On God my salvation and my glory rest; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah (praise the Lord). ”*

Sometimes waiting is hard because of the injustices we see in our lives and the lives of others; and we want to charge in and fix the situation. When we feel this way, we need to go to the Word of God and be strengthened.

**Proverbs 20:22** *“Do not say, ‘I will repay evil’; **wait for the LORD, and He will save you.**”*

**Isaiah 30:15** *“For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, ‘In repentance and rest you will be saved, **In quietness and trust is your strength.**’ But you were not willing,”*

Mankind has been talking about the return of the Lord for over 2000 years, and we are eagerly awaiting it as we see the time is near.

**Habakkuk 2:3** *“For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay.”*

The Hebrew word for **wait** used here is **chakah** – to adhere during the long wait. We must stick closely to the Lord and His Word in this time of waiting for His return.

The New Testament has a word for **patiently waiting - hupomonē**. It means cheerful or hopeful endurance; constancy; enduring, patiently waiting under a burden. Look at the **wonderful promises for those who wait**.

**Hebrews 10:35-38** *“Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of **endurance**, so that when you have done the will of God, you may **receive what was promised**. For yet in a very little while, he who is coming will come, and will not delay. But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”*

**Galatians 6:9** *“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.”*

In our patient waiting, much fruit is produced.

**James 5:7-11** *“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too **be patient; strengthen your hearts**, for the coming of the Lord is near. **Do not complain**, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured. You have heard*

*of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that **the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.***”

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

Please read **Matthew 25:1-30**. We need to be like the ten wise virgins, and the faithful servants who were prepared and ready for the Lord's return.

Please read these parables and let their wisdom shine light into your life. Are you ready, or are you leaning on the preparation of others?

## Refrain From Making Vows

Day 36 – June 18, 2013

**Please read Psalms 119:105 – 128.** There are several references to the words David spoke to God in this passage; and we will look at two in the form of **oaths and prayers**.

**Psalm 119:106** *“I have sworn (made an oath) and I will confirm it, that I will keep Your righteous ordinances.”*

**Psalm 119:108** *“O accept the freewill offerings of my mouth (prayers), O LORD, And teach me Your ordinances.”*

Oftentimes when we are praying to God about something that is very important to us, especially if it is something we have prayed about for a long time, we add something to our prayers. We make an oath or a vow to God; **“God if you will do \_\_\_\_\_, then I will do \_\_\_\_\_.”** God is a faithful God, and when He accepts our vow, He does His part. **We are very sincere when we make our vow**, but sometimes after God does His part, we don't keep our part. We break our vows, we are double-minded.

In the Old Testament, there were laws written about making vows to God.

**Deuteronomy 23:21-23** *“When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the LORD your God will surely require it of you. However, if you refrain from vowing, it would not be sin in you. You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God, what you have promised.”*

Webster's defines a **vow** as a **solemn promise made to God**, promising to do something for Him after He has done something for us. Vows are sincere promises to God, and the violation of them is a most heinous offense. To give, consecrate or dedicate to God by a solemn promise.

**An oath** is a solemn affirmation or declaration, made with an appeal to God for the truth of what is affirmed; and we invoke the vengeance of God if we should fail to fulfill it. A false oath is called perjury.

A vow or an oath is very serious to God. He always keeps His vows and He expects us to do what we promised.

Let's look at some example of oaths in the Bible.

**Deuteronomy 5:27-29** *“ (the sons of Israel told Moses) ‘Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says; then **speak to us all that the LORD our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do it.**’ The LORD heard*

*the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken. Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!'"*

The sons of Israel wanted to know what God wanted from them and they promised to obey all the words of God. God loves to bless His people, and He was so happy with the **vow they spoke to Him**. Unfortunately they did not keep it, and strayed many times from the commandments of God.

As Joshua was preparing to lead the people across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land, **God makes a vow** to Joshua and all the sons of Israel. He promises to be with them and give them great success if they will obey His Word. **Joshua 1:3-8** lists His promises.

- I am giving you every place where your foot treads
- No man will be able to stand before you
- I will be with you as I was with Moses, I will not fail you or forsake you.
- Do not be afraid, be courageous, for I am with you wherever you go.
- Be careful to do according to ALL the law which Moses commanded you, so that you may have success wherever you go.
- Meditate on My Word day and night, being careful to do all that is written in it.

**Joshua 1:16-18** *"They answered Joshua, saying, 'All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you as He was with Moses. Anyone who rebels against Your command and does not obey Your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous'."*

They were very radical in their vow back to God; and unfortunately they broke this vow also.

**Read 1 Samuel 1 and Judges 11.** These are two stories about desperate people making a vow before God. They made conditional vows to God; "If You do this for me, I will do this for You". Both kept their vow before God, but with difficult consequences; losing a relationship with their child. **It would have been much better if they had simply gone to God with their requests and waited for Him to answer them.** When we make a conditional vow to God, we are trying to show Him how desperate we are (something He already knows); and we are trying to manipulate Him to do what we want.

When Jesus was giving His Sermon on the Mount, He talked about the vows people made in the past and the written laws about these vows. He tells the people, **there is a better way; make no vows at all.**

**Matthew 5:33-37** *"Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not make **false vows**, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.' **But I say to you, make no oath at all**, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your statement (words) be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil."*

The Greek word for **false vows** is **epiorkeo**, which means to commit perjury. Perjury is lying under oath. **When we break a vow to the Lord, we are lying to Him.** In society today, lying is so common place we don't think it is a big deal. We tell ourselves we don't mean to lie; but if it is more convenient to lie, we go on as if nothing was wrong. Let's see what **God's says about lying** in His Word.

**Colossians 3:9** *"Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices"*

**Lying is part of our old sin nature**, and God calls it an evil practice. Let's look at Jesus' own words about the source of all lies, the devil.

**John 8:44** *"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. **Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**"*

We must get rid of all of our old sin nature, because it is an abomination to God. In the book of Revelation, God is very clear of how detestable lying is to Him. It is on the same level as murder and sorcery. He says that those who practice those things will not enter the gates of New Jerusalem.

**Revelation 22:14-15** *"Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and **everyone who loves and practices lying.**"*

We are all sinners, and we have all lied. Our sins, past, present, and future are all forgiven; but when we sin, we must repent. Before condemnation tries to overtake us, we must get before God and repent. We must turn from our lies and ask God to purge this sin from us; asking Him to strengthen us so we will no longer be bound to lies.

Let's go back to **Matthew 5:33-37**. Jesus says, make no vows and let your yes be yes and your no be no. The Greek word for **vow** is **horkos**- an oath, to be fenced in, a restraint. When we make a conditional vow to God, we are both fenced in and we are both bound to the vow. **But if we simply ask God to move in a situation, He is not fenced in.** Since His ways are much better than we could ever imagine, He can work all things for our good and His glory. Think of how different the outcome would have been for Jephthah. Remember this the next time you feel an urge to bargain with God with a conditional vow.

***Deuteronomy 23:23** "You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God, what you have promised."*

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Spend some solemn time in prayer with the Lord, discussing vows you have made to Him.** Ask Him to bring them to your remembrance, and how you can fulfill your vows to Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be much more careful of every word that comes out of your mouth.

Please work on your **memory verse for this week: Psalm 119:105**. Let His Word truly be a light to your path.

## Fragrance of God's Presence

Day 37 – June 19, 2013

As the time for the Lord's return draws near, **we are called to come closer and closer to the Lord, so we can touch the heart of God like Moses and Abraham.** We are called to stand in the gap with His mercy and love, **praying the heart of God for all people.** When our hearts are filled with His heart, and we live holy lifestyles, our prayers and worship change the atmosphere around us, like fragrant incense.

We are in a season where God wants us to go deeper into His Presence. Let's look again at the Tabernacle/Temple, which is a picture of our developing relationship with God. **There are three main areas of the tabernacle, three places of prayer and worship that the Lord has called all believers to enter into; places where we are to ask, seek, and knock.**

***Matthew 7:7-8** "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."*

The first area of the Tabernacle is the **outer court** with the Bronze Altar for burnt offerings and the Brass laver for cleansing. In the outer courts we are dealing with our flesh, our issues. This is a place of repentance and warfare, a place for us to die to our flesh. **We come to God asking Him about our issues.** There are many distractions in this place so we often get stuck in our prayers; repeating the same prayers over and over. If we shun the altar of death to our flesh and the laver of cleansing, we will stay stuck in unrepentance, hurt, depression, and self. Our prayers will be all about our issues.

***Psalm 119:107** "I am exceedingly afflicted; revive me, O LORD, according to Your word."*

Passing through the first veil is the second area, the **Holy Place.** This area contains the Golden Lampstand, the Golden Table of Showbread, and the Golden Altar of Incense. In the Holy Place we are seeking the Lord. To **seek** is to pursue, to practice, and to be still. When we seek Him we will find His heart and be strengthened. Our soul will be quiet and calm. Our words are now few, filled with praises of our heart. **We seek to know what is on His heart so we can pray His will.** In this place there is liberty, but not intimacy.

***Psalms 40:1-2** "I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm."*

The third area behind the second veil is the **Most Holy Place**, which contains the Ark of the Covenant, the place where the presence of God dwells. This is the place where we are knocking on the door. To **knock** means pounding, to submit, prostrate, and silence. This is a place of intimacy with the Lord, where we are quiet as **God is talking to us**. As we prostrate ourselves before Him, our hearts are pounding with love and reverence. This is a place of flowing communion and heart to heart fellowship with Almighty God.

*Psalm 42:7 "Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls; all Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me."*

**Where are we in our prayer life? Where do we position ourselves each day?** We must get out of the outer courts so we can intercede for the people as we are called to do. We must daily position ourselves to go into the Most Holy Place to pray the heart of God.

The closer we get to God, the more we can sense the fragrance of His presence. When we spend intimate time with Him, His fragrance comes on us and it is evident to all around us. As we receive the fragrance of His presence, we must carry it to others.

Let's look at four of the spices used to make fragrant incense. These spices point to the fragrance God's presence produces in our lives.

- **Cinnamon** points to God being zealous and jealous for His children. We respond in obedience to His Love, as our minds are transformed by His presence, and we seek to please Him.
- **Calamus** points to our brokenness to sin, and the purging and cleansing He brings. We desire His Love and our hearts receive His presence and comfort.
- **Cassia** points to our response to His love. Our will accepts His presence, resulting in complete worship.
- **Myrrh** points to our intimacy in His love. Our heart longs for His presence, His love, and His suffering.

When priests would burn incense on the golden altar of incense, they would take coals from the bronze altar and put them in a censor. Incense would be mixed with oil and then sprinkled on the coals; resulting in a pleasing fragrance.

The **fire from the coals** is the Father's Heart, one of zeal and jealousy for His children. The **censor** is the heart of Christ Jesus that carries the heart of the Father. The **oil** is the Holy Spirit, and the **incense** is the Bride of Christ, the Church; who has been crushed and then placed with the Holy Spirit to produce a sweet smelling aroma.

We are priests to the Lord and we must be in position to be cleansed and covered with holiness. We must be in position to be clothed in our ephods to hear His voice. We must be in position to please Him so we may see His mercy and love for His people.

**Leviticus 16:12** *“Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine and bring it inside the veil.”*

The censer (Jesus) is filled with the heart of the Father (zealous and jealous love) and in His hand is His Bride full of sweet incense. She has been tested and tried with suffering and is now brought inside the veil, into the presence of the Lord.

**Leviticus 16:13** *“And he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die.”*

**Through our lifestyle of holiness and worship as a sweet smelling aroma before God in the secret place, a fragrant cloud is produced that covers the mercy seat.** This is where those who have entered into the Most Holy Place hear His heart and respond to His heart with mercy.

We pay a price for this kind of a lifestyle of worship and prayer; it is rare like the ingredients of the holy spices and oils. **A heart of worship must come from a heart that is filled with His love, love that is only for Him!**

When the fire does not come from the Lord, our hearts are not for him, which will cause death.

**Leviticus 10:1-3** *“Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and **offered profane fire** before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, **and they died before the Lord.** And Moses said to Aaron, this is what the Lord spoke, saying: *By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.*”*

They took their censers and put strange or foreign fire in them. This fire was from an idolatrous heart of worship. Apparently they had taken fire for their censers from a place other than the Bronze Altar fire, which was the only legitimate fire for prayer and worship. **What kind of fire is in our heart to touch the heart of God?** Is it zealous for Him alone!

**Please read Numbers 16.**

There was a great rebellion against Moses and the Lord. Two hundred and fifty men came and said they were just as holy as Aaron and Moses and they should be allowed

to go before the Lord. Moses told them to come the next day with censers and incense, and God would choose who He would bring near to Himself. Their hearts were filled with rebellion and division, not the pleasing aroma of obedience and love. Fire came out from the Lord and He consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense. **We must be very careful with the prayers and worship we offer up to the Lord.**

On the next day, all the people continued to grumble and rebel. God's anger was kindled and He sought to consume them instantly. Moses tells Aaron to run and take His censor full of coals from the Lord's altar and take incense and offer up prayers on the golden altar to make atonement for them, to stand between the living and the dead. **We must be like Aaron and come before the Lord in the way that is right and pleasing to the Lord and make intercession for mankind.**

***Revelation 8:3-5** "Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and **much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.** And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake."*

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Which part of the Tabernacle do you spend the most time in during your times of prayer and worship?** Search your heart for any profane fire you have offered up to the Lord, and ask for His forgiveness and cleansing. Position yourself to get closer to His heart every day.

Please read **Psalm 119:105-128** and let God's Word strengthen and encourage you to come closer.

Remember to work on your memory verse: **Psalm 119:105**

## Responding to Distractions

Day 38 - June 20, 2013

**We saw in yesterday's study that when we are in the outer courts, there are many distractions for our eyes, ears, and minds.** Distractions make it difficult to hear the voice of God. The Outer Court of the Tabernacle was where everyone gathered to offer their sacrifices to the Lord; either in repentance for their sins, to thank God for answered prayer, or to worship Him. It was a time of corporate gathering with a lot of activity. It was a noisy and dirty place, with people and animals all over the place. Much of our lives as Christians are spent in the Outer Courts, and this is necessary. This is where we gather as the corporate body of Christ. We must come together to pray and worship the Lord.

Too often, we are satisfied to only come to the Outer Courts in our relationship with the Lord. We are grateful to be in the Kingdom of God and around other believers. It is so much better than when we were outside the gates, in the world. We are content; not really understanding the intimate relationship the Lord desires to have with us. We also are unaware of the purposes of the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

**When we are in the Outer Courts, there are many people and many activities, and with that there can be many distractions.**

Webster's defines **distraction**: to draw apart; to pull in different directions, and separate. To divide, separate, throw into confusion. To turn or be diverted from any point, towards another point. To perplex, confound, or harass.

When distractions come, we are drawn apart from the plan God has for our life. We are pulled down a different path, going in a direction away from the Lord instead of closer. This throws us into confusion.

Think back to a time in your life when a distraction came, especially after a great move of God in your life, or after you have made a decision to get closer to the Lord. Or think of a time when you had plans to spend the day with the Lord, and you get a phone call from a friend or family member that is going through something. Distractions can be valid concerns we need to get involved with, or they can be unnecessary things we get tangled up in. **Distractions are not really our problem, our response to them is!**

**When distractions come, they are often tangled up in strong emotions and great urgency.** If we are not careful, we will get on the emotional runaway train with them. God is the answer to all the problems and needs of our distractions. But we cannot stay in the Outer Court because it is hard to hear from God. When we are surrounded by distractions, they are too loud to hear God clearly or our emotions mixed with our flesh speak contrary to the voice of God. We become perplexed, trying to sort out the voice of God and the voice of our emotions.

**Psalm 55:2-5** *“Give heed to me and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and am **surely distracted**, because of the voice of the enemy, because of the pressure of the wicked; for they bring down trouble upon me and in anger they bear a grudge against me. My heart is in anguish within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me.”*

The Hebrew word for **distracted** is **hum**. It means to make an uproar, to agitate greatly, to destroy, to move. It comes from the word **hamam**, to put in commotion; to disturb, drive, destroy; to break, consume, crush, destroy, discomfit, trouble, vex. Distraction is a whole lot of noise that comes to disturb us and ultimately destroy the purposes of God in our lives, if we let it. The noise is in our ears, our minds, and our emotions.

It is interesting that the word for **voice** of enemy means a cackling of geese or the bleating of sheep and goats. The next time you are distracted, try to visualize yourself in the outer courts of the Tabernacle surrounded with all the noisy animals, and remind yourself of the truth of distractions.

We must get out of the Outer Courts and get to a quieter place. We have to stop feeding our emotions and feed on the Word of God. We need to go into the Holy Place. This is a place where we are accompanied with one or a few mature believers, and we enter into this place for the sole purpose of intercession and worship. As we quiet our souls, and as we lift up our prayers to Almighty God, His presence comes and we are at peace. Worship fills our lips and His presence grows greater. We are now assured that He has heard our prayers and is answering our prayers.

**Psalm 107:28-30** *“Then **they cried to the LORD in their trouble**, and He brought them out of their distresses. **He caused the storm to be still**, so that the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad because they were quiet, so He guided them to their desired haven.”*

When we get to this place of quiet with the Lord, knowing that He is handling all the issues with our distractions, we can now come closer to His presence. We can enter into the Most Holy Place to be alone with God.

**Psalm 119:114** *“You are my hiding place and my shield; I wait for Your word.”*

In this place with Him and Him alone, we can sit quietly waiting to hear the wisdom He longs to teach us. He will redirect our steps, and shine His light upon the way we are to go.

**Psalm 119:124** *“Deal with Your servant according to Your lovingkindness and teach me Your statutes.”*

Once we have been given wisdom from the Lord, and once we have been strengthened by the Lord in the secret place of His presence, **we are ready to go back to the Outer Courts and encourage our brothers and sisters in the Lord.** We can return with joy in our hearts knowing that we have been with the Lord and He is taking care of the circumstances that caused our distraction. We can return with confidence, knowing that when the next distraction comes, and it will, we will run to God much quicker. We are also able to encourage others of the power being in the Presence of the Most High God! When they are facing the uproar of the distractions in their lives, **we can lead them into the quiet place of intercession and worship in the Holy Place.**

*Isaiah 40:31* “Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”

#### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

Continue to read the wisdom in **Psalm 119:105-128**, and work on your **memory verse, Psalm 119:105.**

**Please read Psalm 91** and see the promises God gives to those who come into the secret place of the Most High God, the Most Holy Place, the intimate place with the Lord.

## Discipline not only Desire will Determine our Destiny

Day 39 – June 21, 2013

In the eleventh hour before the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will need discipline to bring us closer to God so we can know His heart. In order for us to come out of the Outer Courts and enter into the Holy Place, we must **learn how to wait on the Lord**. We must **learn to listen for His heart** with the spiritual ears of our hearts. Only the Holy Spirit can give us the strength and discipline we need in our prayers to come closer to the heart of God. The journey of walking closer with God can be compared to a trek. **A trek is a long difficult journey, especially on foot and often over rough or mountainous terrain.** We will get weary on this trek from time to time, but as we go up His holy mountain, He is with us every step to strengthen us. God never gets weary, and He never feels like giving up. His love for us drives Him to continue with us and to encourage us to keep moving, to keep coming closer and closer to His heart.

***Isaiah 40:28-31** “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, **the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired.** His understanding is inscrutable. **He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power.** Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet **those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.**”*

As we wait for God in the Holy Place, we will be **strengthened. We will become stronger in our bodies, souls (minds, wills and emotions), and spirits.** The Holy Spirit will strengthen our hearts and anchor us in His love. All the empty areas in our hearts He will fill with His love!

***Ephesian 3:16-19** “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, **being rooted and grounded in love,** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to **know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge,** that you may be **filled up to all the fullness of God.**”*

Back to Isaiah 40, we will **mount up on eagle’s wings** and soar to a high place in His heart. Eagles are large birds that soar through the air on very long and broad wings. **Their wings can soar, keeping the eagle moving with very little effort; but they can also fly very fast, directly to where they want to go.** Anyone who has seen an eagle flying through the air is struck by its grace and strength.

Some birds, like vultures, fly in circles, taking their time going where they want to go; but eagles are known for their direct and fast flight. **Direct** means extending and moving from one place to another by the shortest way without changing directions and stopping. **When we wait on the Lord we will get closer to Him much more quickly than we realize.** The Lord looks at our hearts as we wait, and then He moves us from one place to another by the shortest way without changing our direction. He desires for us to come into the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, and when we wait upon Him, He will bring us straight there. When we wait for the Lord to act on our behalf, or to give us insight and instructions, our trust in Him is increased. We become stronger and then we will be able to run and not be weary, nor faint in His presence. We must continue to pursue Him in this season. We must know that God looks for one who will wait and stand before Him. Then we can stand in the gap (intercede) for our situations and the situations of others.

### **GOD IS LOOKING FOR:**

- those who will **position themselves in His Holy Place.**

*Psalm 42:7 "Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me."*

The deep heart of God is calling us by the sound of His waterfalls. A waterfall is a cascade of water falling from a river on a mountain. The sound we are hearing in this season is the sound of the river of the Holy Spirit cascading down the Holy Mountain of God's presence. It is falling in waves and billows. A **billow** is a great wave or surge of water; or a rolling mass of flame or smoke that resembles a high wave. These living waters cause us to be still and lie under the waves and great surge of water from Heaven. **The depths of His heart cause the depths of our heart to respond to the sound of the living waters.** The Holy place requires a longing from us. Do we have a passion to do whatever it takes to position ourselves to be in the holy Place?

- those who will **prepare themselves to minister to Him.**

*Ezekiel 44:15-16 "But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood," declares the Lord GOD. They shall enter My sanctuary; they shall come near to My table to minister to Me and keep My charge."*

As we respond to God's heart we will be a holy priest that will **draw near to the Lord in the Holy Place and minister to Him.** We will offer up sacrifices that He has chosen for us in this hour. **Minister** means to give aid, to serve, to help and assist. We are to partner with the Lord to assist in the preparation for the return of His beloved Son. We are His hands and feet here on earth while He is still in heaven. We are to be his

ambassadors, speaking His words and loving all with His heart. Have we prepared ourselves to minister to the Lord?

- those who will **pray as an intercessor for Him.**

***Isaiah 59:16** “He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him and His own righteousness, it sustained Him.”*

**God is looking for hearts who will pray the desires of His heart**, not just what they think should be prayed. No longer can we pray human prayers, we must only pray as the Spirit leads us. **We must discipline our hearts to only pray what is on God’s Heart.** In order to do this, we must pray in the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place, away from the distractions of our lives that make it hard for us to hear the Lord. As we pray His heart, the atmosphere is filled with the aroma of His love. We are now comforting His heart and fulfilling His heart here on earth as it is in heaven. Do we have a passion to see the body of Christ and the Lost come close to the Lord?

- those who will **pray and be chosen in the eleventh hour.**

***Revelation 8:3-6** “Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the **smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God** out of the angel’s hand. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake. And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.”*

God had always wanted our hearts to be filled with His heart. Our lifestyle will be the incense that would produce prayers and worship that would change the atmosphere. **We are called to have His heart to stand in the gap with mercy and love** that will touch the heart of God like Moses and Abraham. They had a heart for God and a heart for the people, when God wanted to bring His wrath and judgment to the earth. God is bringing judgment to the earth before His Son returns. Will we stand in the gap for mankind?

***Revelation 8:1** “When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.”*

Notice that there was silence in heaven before the heart of the father was revealed. **Revelation 8 reveals the seven trumpets that will announce severe judgments coming to the people of the earth in response to the prayers of the saints.**

**This is the time and hour that God will reveal His plan; judgment is coming to the earth.** Jesus is returning and the saints should be praying for His return because the heart and scripture of God must be fulfilled. We must know His heart so we can pray it in the times of coming judgment. **We must pray for hearts to be opened and changed so that all will come to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.** He has been preparing us as His bride to hear the sound of His heart and pray it back to Him. We must understand **heaven is partnering with us in these prayers.**

- those who will **participate with heaven to fulfill His Heart.**

**Revelation 5:8** *“When He(Jesus) had taken the scroll, **the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb**, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the **prayers of the saints**. And **they sang a new song**, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.’”*

The 4 living creatures and the 24 elders are worshiping Jesus. They are holding golden bowls full of the prayers of the saints. These prayers are the fulfillment of God’s heart for the return of His Son and for the entire world to know of his Son. Those in heaven and those on earth are participating together to bring about the return of the Lord.

**Revelation 4:8** *“And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and **day and night they do not cease to say**, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.”*

We should be like the heavenly host who will **not rest day or night as they worship our living Savior.**

They sang new songs about how worthy Jesus is to open the seal of the scroll. We must praise Him for what He has done for us in our lives and what He is about to do in His return. Jesus will sit on the throne forever and ever. As soon as the battle begins, He will sit in position, ready and equipped to conquer.

**Isaiah 62:6-7** *“On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; **all day and all night they will never keep silent**. You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; and **give Him no rest** until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”*

The Father is looking for watchmen, men and women who have drawn near to Him, and who will passionately cry out for the souls of men. Because they know His heart, they will cry out to Him until He establishes all of His people in His love, and we all send up praises to Him.

## **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Spend some time alone with God in the Holy Place, asking Him to search your heart for answers to the following questions.**

Do we have a heart of prayer and worship that will cause us to cry out day and night to the Lord?

Do we long for the return of our Lord Jesus, so He can fulfill the heart of God?

Are we disciplined to draw near to the Father's heart in the Holy Place, to not only hear His heart but to pray His heart, so we can fill the golden bowls with His fragrance of prayers?

Are we so far in the Outer Courts that we cannot participate in the prayers that are placed in the golden bowls in the Holy Place? If so, ask Him what you need to do to change your desire into your destiny.

Please **memorize Psalm 119:105** and let Him light your way. He has a perfect plan for all our lives, will we follow it?

## Understanding God's Plan of the Tabernacle

### Day 40 – June 22, 2013

During the last 40 days and for the remaining days of our 52 days we have been building a second wall with the Word and wisdom. We have been studying Psalm 119 which extolls the greatness of God's Word and the incredible value it is for all who walk by it.

The wall that we have been building through the daily bible studies is for us, the remnant. A **wall** is a structure of stone, brick or other materials, built to some height, and intended for a defense or security. As we study God's Word, He has become our strong tower, our security and defense. As we are getting closer to Him, He is sharing His heart with us to prepare us for the return of His beloved Son. **This wall is for the remnant, those who have been awakened to what the Lord is speaking to the church in this eleventh hour. We must be built up with God's Word and with the wisdom in it.**

**With each study He has given us, we are growing in the wisdom needed for this age.** Webster's Dictionary defines **wisdom as the right use or exercise of knowledge**; discerning or judging what is most just, proper and useful; wisdom is true religion; godliness; piety; the knowledge and fear of God, and **sincere and uniform obedience to His commands**. We become wise as we study and then obey the commands, precepts, ordinances, testimonies, judgments, and ways of the Lord.

God is showing us that after the wall has been built for the defense and security of the remnant, once we are rooted and grounded in the Word of God; then we will be able to hear and speak God's heart to the bride of Christ in our cities, nations, and all over the world. **The church must awaken; it must arise and be a light in the darkness. We must speak the truths of God's Word and God's wisdom to all who have called on the name of Jesus Christ.** The church is asleep and she must arise and go out to all the earth to proclaim the good news to all mankind. This is the will of God, this is His plan. We must arise and do the things the Lord has asked us to do. Judgment is coming and we must be ready.

In preparation for what the Lord is calling the remnant to do, we are going to be studying three books after these 52 days, and we encourage you to put these on your summer reading list:

***Healing the Wounded Heart*** by Thom Gardner

***Beyond the Veil*** and ***Psalms from God's Heart*** (these can be obtained from the Coming Messenger, bookstore tab)

One of the books, *Beyond the Veil*, teaches on the Tabernacle God asked Moses to build. God spoke much wisdom to Moses when he and the children of Israel were in the wilderness. **He promised great things for His people if they would follow His ways with all of their heart.** Moses would **go up on the mountain** and talk to the Lord.

God gave Moses many promises, commands, precepts, ordinances, and judgments; but the most amazing thing He gave Moses was a **plan for all people to come closer to Him. This plan was demonstrated in the Tabernacle**, and later in the temple. No wonder King David so desperately wanted to build the Temple for the Lord himself; he had a very close relationship with the Lord and he understood the deeper significance of the tabernacle.

We can gain much wisdom from this structure Moses erected in the wilderness. God's desire from the beginning of time is for all mankind to live in close intimacy with Him. He loves us so much that He wants us to be close to Him. **The tabernacle of God was a structure that God personally designed as His dwelling place in the midst of His people.**

***Exodus 25:8-9** "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them, according to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle."*

Two chapters in the Bible are devoted to creation, yet fifty chapters are devoted to the detailed descriptions and instructions God personally gave Moses for building the tabernacle. **We must understand the importance the Lord puts on us drawing closer to Him!**

The tabernacle was the focal point of Israel's community and life, with the 12 tribes camping around its four sides. The encampment was about 12 square miles. The tabernacle served as a visual reminder to Israel that they served the true and living God. For the next few days we will **walk through the tabernacle step by step** and uncover great treasures of God's plan for our lives.

As we have talked about already, the tabernacle was divided into 3 areas: the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place, also called the Holy of Holies. The outer court was enclosed with white linen curtains. **The white curtained walls acted as a barrier between God and man. All of us start outside the Tabernacle, separated from God's presence.** God, out of His love for us, is inside calling us to come in and be with Him. He longs to lead us on the greatest journey we will ever take.

***Jeremiah 33:3** "Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know."*

On the east side of the Tabernacle there was a beautiful fabric gate, which was the only entrance into the tabernacle. These curtains contrasted with the white curtains because these were woven of red, purple, and blue linen, making the entrance obvious to all. **Just as there is only one way into the tabernacle, there is only one way into the Kingdom of God.**

***John 14:16** "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me"*

The one way into the tabernacle is also narrow. Of the four hundred fifty feet of walls surrounding the tabernacle, only thirty feet make up the entrance, and even that is divided into four sections, so only one person could enter at a time. **Choosing Jesus Christ as our Savior is a personal choice, one we must enter into by ourselves.**

***Matthew 7:13-14** "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."*

Once through the gate, we enter into the Outer Courts. This is a large open courtyard where the people come to offer sacrifices to God. This is a gathering place, and a place of corporate worship and prayer. When we become Christians, we are so excited to be in the family of God. We feel less vulnerable than when we were outside, we feel like we belong for the first time in our lives.

We don't know much, if anything about God and the Bible, so we go to church. We listen to other Christians talking about what they read in God's Word, or giving a testimony of God providing for them, or a gift God gave them, or a word they actually heard whispered in their heart from God. We think these things sound good, but then **we reason in our minds that if God wants us to experience these things, He will come here in the outer courts and give them to us. But this is not God's plan for our lives. God dwells in the Most Holy Place and He wants us to begin the journey into the fullness of His presence.**

God wants us near; His heart is breaking over our distance from Him. We talk about Him and to Him, but not with Him; and we sing praises to Him; but we are so far from Him. Why are we keeping this distance between us? **God wants us close so He can whisper in our ear, to lead us in the coming days.**

#### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Psalm 119:105-128.** What can you tell about David's relationship with the Lord?

## Purpose of the Bronze Altar

### Day 41 – June 23, 2013

From the day we said “Yes” to Jesus and gave our life to Him, we have embarked on a journey with the Lord. Sometimes the journey has been a delight and sometimes it has been a difficult trek. All along the journey Almighty God shapes us into the image He created us to be from the beginning of time. All of our paths are different because He needs to prepare us all differently for the various tasks He has for us to do in preparation for the return of His Son.

The pattern of the Tabernacle takes us through God’s divine plan for preparing us to come closer to the Lord and revealing His purpose for all of His children. Yesterday we saw that our sins keep us separated from Almighty God; but once we accept His free gift of salvation, we were able to enter into the Outer Courts of the Tabernacle through the one narrow gate. **The tabernacle has three main areas: the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place, which correspond to the three realms of experiencing God.** We will look at the Outer Court today and tomorrow. **Even though God’s desire is for us to come close to Him in the Most Holy Place, we must see the value and purpose of the Outer Court and the Holy Place.** We will look at each of these over the next few days. Let the Holy Spirit open up our minds to receive the wisdom the Lord has put into every detail of the plan of His tabernacle.

The Outer Court was a large outdoor space separated from the camp by tall white curtains. This is where the people would gather to honor the Lord with worship and prayer, and to offer sacrifices to Him. With all the people and the animals they were offering for sacrifice, it was a very noisy place with lots of activity. This is a place with many distractions. The first object in the Outer Court was the large Bronze Altar, where offerings were presented to the Lord and then burned.

The purpose of the Bronze Altar was for animal sacrifice. The practice of animal sacrifice originated in the mind of God and was intended to **provide atonement and forgiveness for sin so that His people could approach Him.** The bronze altar was always open to repentant Israelites so they could be forgiven of their sins; and once again draw near to God.

**Romans 3:23** *“all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

**The first sacrifice was actually performed by God,** when He killed animals to make a covering for Adam and Eve after they sinned in the garden. After they sinned they realized they were ashamed of their nakedness, so God killed animals and made clothing of their skins for Adam and Eve. There had never been any death in the Garden of Eden, so the death of these animals to cover their shame was to show them how serious their sin was.

**The second recorded sacrifice was offered by Cain and Abel.** Abel offered up to God the first born lamb of his flock, where Cain offered God some grain at the end of his harvest. Cain's sacrifice was not acceptable to God because it was not a blood sacrifice (blood is necessary to atone for sin), and also because it was not given at the beginning of the harvest, but at the end. The Bible talks much **about offering God our First Fruits to show Him we trust Him for our provision.** This can be exhibited in our lives by giving God the first of our day in our quiet times or in our tithing.

There were many different types of offerings given to God on the Bronze Altar, with two main categories: Non-Sweet Offerings which deal with man's sin and shame; and Sweet Offerings that are not offered because of sin, but voluntary out of love and respect to God.

There were three main sweet offerings: Burnt, Grain, and Peace Offerings. With **burnt offerings**, the entire animal was burned to remind the people of their **unconditional surrender and consecration to God.**

With **grain or meal offering**, grain mixed with olive oil and frankincense or unleavened bread was offered to God. Part was burned as a sweet aroma to God's nostrils and part was given to the priests to eat. **These offerings were an expression of thanksgiving and recognition of God's sovereignty over them.**

With **peace offering**, animals were sacrificed, but only the fat and the kidneys were burned, and the meat was given to the priests to eat. **This was symbolic of our reconciliation and fellowship with God, and the ensuing peace that He brings to us.**

The two main types of non-sweet offerings were sin and trespass offerings. With a **sin offering**, an animal is killed; its blood is sprinkled in front of the Holy of Holies, smeared on the horns of the altar of incense and on the horns of the Bronze Altar.

***Leviticus 17:11** "it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul".*

The fat and kidneys were then burned on this altar. The rest of the animal was taken outside the camp and completely burned. **This offering was a substitute to make atonement for sin.**

With a **trespass offering**, an animal was killed and its blood is sprinkled on the inside of the Bronze Altar. The fat, kidneys and rump were totally burned, and the rest of the meat was for the priests to eat. **This offering was to offer satisfaction and reparation for wrongs committed against God or others.** If the person offering this sacrifice sinned against another person, they were first to offer restitution and then bring this offering before God.

***Matthew 5:23-24** "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,*

*leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.”*

The sacrificial system foreshadowed the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the spotless lamb. We are declared righteous once for all time by the blood shed by Jesus on the Cross for our sins.

**1 Peter 3:18** *“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit”*

Even though our sins, past, present, and future are forgiven by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, we still have a responsibility to **repent** of our sins. **The altar of the church is always open for us to go before God and repent. The altar gives us atonement so we can have access and fellowship with God.**

**We can offer up these same five offerings when we come to the altar of our churches today.** When we confess our sins and ask for forgiveness, we are offering up sin and trespass offerings. Burnt offerings can be seen when we commit to living a consecrated lifestyle of fasting and separation from the sinful pleasures of the world. When we thank God for His sovereignty in our lives, that He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving; we are offering Him a Grain offering. Peace offerings are when we trust God in all things, and He gives us His peace. This comes from a lifestyle of seeking to know God.

#### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

We see in the New Testament that **God requires another kind of sacrifice from believers today. God requires us to live lives that are different than the ones we lived before we came to believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior.** We are to offer up our whole lives as a spiritual sacrifice to Almighty God.

**Please read Romans 12:1-2, Romans 8:6-8, 13, and Ephesians 5:1-2.**

Spend some time in prayer asking the Lord to reveal practical ways you can be a living and holy sacrifice?

Living out this lifestyle takes total reliance on the Holy Spirit to lead and strengthen us every step of the way.

This is our last day to memorize **Psalm 119:105.** Please let this scripture encourage you of the Holy Spirit’s continual presence in your life.

## Sanctify us with Your Truth Day 42 – June 24, 2013

We have begun our 7<sup>th</sup> week of building the second wall. **Our Scripture reading for this week is Psalm 119: 129-152.** King David's heart is beautifully revealed in these scriptures. He knows God's Word is pure, yet he confesses that he is a sinner.

**Psalm 119:140** *"Your word is very pure, therefore Your servant loves it."*

**Psalm 119:136** *"My eyes shed streams of water, because they do not keep Your law."*

Today we are going to continue our study of the tabernacle. We will spend one more day in the Outer Court, looking at the **Brass Laver**. This is a large shiny brass basin filled with water for the priests to wash off the filth of the day, before they entered into the Holy Place to minister to God. Remember the outer courts are a very dusty and messy place; people and animals kicking up the dust, smoke and ashes falling from the sacrifices... Not to mention the conditions they encountered outside the tabernacle walls.

We live in a dirty and dark world and every day we are exposed to so much filth. **God wants us to be holy, pure, and consecrated; yet still live in this fallen world.** Jesus knew this would be a problem, and that is why He prayed and continues to pray for us.

**John 17:11-18** *"I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are... I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."*

**God's plan for His holy people living in an unholy world is sanctification.** Webster's defines **sanctification** - to cleanse from corruption, to purify from sin, to make holy by detaching the affections from the world and its defilements. **Sanctification is patterned in the Brass Laver in the Tabernacle.**

The Brass Laver was to be used only for the **cleansing and purification of the priests** who would be going through the Veil into the Holy Place to minister before God. They needed to clean their hands of the blood of the sacrifices and their feet from the dust of the ground. They were to wash off the defilement from their hands and feet before entering the inner tabernacle to serve and worship God. This cleansing was very important to God.

**Exodus 30:20** *“When they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire sacrifice to the LORD. “*

We must know that we are priests before the Lord and we too are to symbolically use the Brass Laver before entering into God’s presence to minister to Him. We too are covered in the filth of this world. As we walk each day we are covered with the dust of the ground, the dust we kick up (our sins) and the dust others kick up (those who sin against us). We must be spiritually and physically clean before entering God’s presence.

**The bronze altar was for our justification; the brass laver was for our Sanctification.** Sanctification is the **daily process of ongoing repentance and forgiveness, asking the Holy Spirit to wash us from our sins and the offenses of others.** When we encounter things that want to defile us, we must ask the Holy Spirit to erase these things from our mind.

The New Testament speaks of another kind of washing, **the symbolic washing of baptism.** Baptism is the outward sign of our decision to put to death the old sin nature and to put on the new man who is being renewed day by day.

**Mark 1:4-5** *“John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.”*

John baptized with water, but Jesus **baptized with the Holy Spirit.**

**Matthew 3:11** *“As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”*

The Holy Spirit is given to each of us when we ask Jesus to be our Savior and Lord. He resides inside of us, teaching us about God and leading us in what is right. But the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is different. It is to empower us for His service.

**Acts 8: 14-17** *“Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.”*

The Holy Spirit is given to us for many purposes. He is to be our Helper to show us the truth, **to be our teacher.**

**John 14:16-17, 26** *“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you... But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things**, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”*

The Holy Spirit **helps us when we pray**. There are so many times when we do not know what to pray. He will give us the words we need to pray either through whispering in our ear or by praying through us in our prayer language.

**Romans 8:26-27** *“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we **do not know how to pray as we should**, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”*

The Holy Spirit gives us the power to operate fully in the Spiritual gifts He has given us and to speak God’s truth boldly to all. Next time you are sharing the Gospel with someone, ask the Holy Spirit to give you the words to speak with great confidence and boldness.

**Acts 4:31** *“And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to **speak the word of God with boldness.**”*

The Holy Spirit **sanctifies us and cleanses us**, preparing us for service in Christ, through giving us instructions in how we are to walk and please God.

**1 Thessalonians 4:7** *“For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.”*

**Sanctification is holiness, being set apart from sin for divine service.** It is evidenced by a behavior that displays we are separated from the world. The Holy Spirit is the one who enables us to live this kind of life.

**Sanctification is an on-going process in our lives.** It begins at salvation, when we enter through the one gate, asking Jesus Christ into our hearts. Only by the atoning work of Jesus’ blood on the cross (altar), we are recognized as holy in God’s eyes. Each day we must come to Him and ask to be sanctified. This involves repenting of our sins and asking for God’s forgiveness. **As we daily separate ourselves from sin by calling upon the Holy Spirit to cleanse our minds and bodies from the filth of the world, He will continue the sanctification process.**

**2 Timothy 2:19-21** *“...The Lord knows those who are His, and everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness. Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”*

#### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Our memory verse for this week is Psalm 119:130.**

The Brass Laver is briefly described in just a few verses in Exodus. **Please read Exodus 30:18-21, Exodus 38:8, and Exodus 40:30.**

The laver was made of highly polished brass. **Why do you think God chose that metal for the laver?**

Every article in the Tabernacle was given a precise size, except the laver. No dimensions were ever given for it. **Why do you think God did not give a size for the laver?**

## Walk as Children of the Light

### Day 43 - June 25, 2013

**Please read through Psalm 119:129-152.** Notice all the wonderful attributes and benefits of opening up the Word of God. When we approach the Word with an open mind, the Holy Spirit pours into us the wisdom we need for each day, to give us the light we need to walk with the Lord in a manner that is pleasing to Him. When we walk this way, we are cleansed and ready to come closer to Him.

***Psalm 119:130** “The unfolding (opening) of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple (open minded, childlike).”*

**Let’s journey into the Holy Place today.** Please take a moment and pray for the Lord to wash you and cleanse you with His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to open up your mind to the wisdom He desires to impart to us this day.

The Holy Place was an enclosed room 30 x 15 feet. The walls and ceiling were woven curtains of blue, purple, and red linen. They were covered with three other layers of skins and materials to keep it waterproof. There was one entrance, just beyond the Brass Laver, through the first veil. There were no windows, and you would expect this to be a very dark place; but **the entire room was filled with a soft golden light from the Golden Lampstand** which reflected off the other two golden objects in the room. Twice a day, a priest would cleanse himself in the brass laver and enter into the Holy Place to tend to the Golden Lampstand. The light was never to go out, so they were careful to keep the lamps filled with oil and wicks trimmed.

The Golden lampstand points to four things. First, **Jesus is the light of the World.**

***John 8:12** “Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.’”*

The world we live in is in great darkness, and until we ask Jesus to come into our hearts, our lives are characterized by deeds of darkness and sin. We live in fear and confusion, having no purpose or direction in our lives. Jesus comes to give us eternal life and to enlighten every step we take while we are here on earth. When His light begins to shine in our hearts, the darkness around us flees along with our fears. As He illumines the path He has for us to walk, we find kingdom purpose for our lives.

Second, **God’s Word gives us light.** When we do not know the way God has for us, studying His Word will be the light we need to show us the way.

***Psalm 119:105** “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.”*

**Psalm 119:130** *“The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.”*

Third, **the Holy Spirit is the flaming oil in the lampstand.**

**Revelation 4:5** *“Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder, and there were **seven lamps of fire** burning before the throne, which are the **seven Spirits of God.**”*

The seven Spirits mentioned in the book of Revelation can be found in Isaiah 11:2 and Isaiah 28:6. They are the Spirit of Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Strength, Knowledge, Fear of the Lord, and Justice.

The Holy Spirit is often referred to as the oil in a lamp, the fuel that causes a flame to burn. The Holy Spirit is given to each believer to burn in our hearts. He longs to teach us about these seven Spirits so we will come to know the love of God and be equipped to do all He has for us to do. As believers we are to be lit with the brilliance of the anointing and giftings of the Holy Spirit, to provide illumination in our lives and the lives of those around us. **Without the “oil” of the Holy Spirit we cannot minister effectively to the Lord in studying His Word, praying prayers that are His will, or worshipping with proper attitudes.**

Forth, **the Church is to be a lampstand.**

**Revelation 1:12-20** *“Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands... the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”*

In chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, Jesus walks among the lampstands, the churches, commenting on the deeds He sees them performing. **As lampstands, we are to carry the light of Christ and to shine His light in this dark world.** We are to glorify Jesus in our bodies. To give glory to is to reflect back the character of someone to others. If Jesus is light, we are to reflect light back to the world.

**Isaiah 60: 1-3** *“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the LORD will rise upon you and His glory will appear upon you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.”*

We all start as little lights, but God wants us to be filled more and more with the fire of the Holy Spirit so we can be blazing torches for His glory. In order to be filled with Him, some things must be emptied out of our lives, so we can be a vessel of honor for His glory and a tool of light in God’s hands.

**Matthew 5: 13- 16** *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**”*

Often Christians keep the light within hidden from the world around them. God knew we would have this tendency so He encourages us to arise and let our lights shine. As lights for His glory, we are to be raised up off the ground and put in a lampstand, so people can see the light. What good is the light if no one can see it?

One way to be a light is to **share the Gospel** with those who do not know the Lord.

**Acts 13:47** *“For so the Lord has commanded us, **I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth.**”*

God has sent us to open the eyes of those who do not know Jesus, so they may turn from darkness to light. To be an effective and bold witness, we must know God’s Word. Many people are hesitant to witness because they feel they do not know enough scriptures. It is good for us to memorize key salvation scriptures, so we are always ready to share them with others. If we are faithful to study His Word, the Holy Spirit will be faithful to remind us of His Word when we need it. **We must all pray that God will give us a love for the lost so that we care about their eternity and are moved to share the light God has given us.**

Another way to be a light is to partner with God to offer a **prophetic word** to someone God knows is struggling.

**2 Peter 1:19-21** *“So we have **the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**”*

Prophecy is a very misunderstood word in the body of Christ. Simply defined, prophecy is God speaking to us. It is a gift the Holy Spirit gives to us. It is not reserved for a few guys in the Old Testament. Paul tells us we should all earnestly desire the spiritual gift of prophecy; because when we speak a word from God to others they are edified, exhorted, and consoled. When we share God’s heart to another through prophecy, the darkness around them is suddenly overcome and the brightness of the Lord’s Love now shines in their hearts.

Letting the brightness of our spirit impact all the people around us should be the lifestyle for all believers. Priests trimmed wicks and filled the oil for the lamps every morning

and evening to make sure the light did not go out. Do we do this? Are we this vigilant to check ourselves every morning and every night to see if our light is still shining? We must continue in our walk of consecration, abstaining from the deeds of darkness, so more and more of His light can shine in us.

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Ephesians 5.** This chapter encourages us to walk as children of the light.

## **Come to the Table and Eat**

Day 44 - June 26, 2013

***Psalm 119:151** "Thou art near; O Lord, and all Thy commandments are truth."*

As we continue in our journey through the Tabernacle, we are getting nearer to the Lord's Heart. This is where we need to spend more of our time. As the days grow near for our Lord to return, severe judgments will be coming to the people of the earth. He needs us to stand firmly with Him in those days, so we can be a light and stability to those around us; all to bring them to the salvation of the Lord.

***Daniel 11:32-33** "... but the people who know their God will display strength and take action. Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days."*

God desperately wants us to know Him so we can be strong and take the actions He needs us to take in the difficult days to come. We are to be His messengers to the church first and then to the lost. We must gain wisdom from the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place in this age.

**We will continue in our study of the Holy Place, a special area designed exclusively for the priests to minister to the Lord, away from the distractions of the crowds.** There are three golden objects in the Holy Place: the Lampstand, the Table of Showbread, and the Altar of Incense. Two of these represented times of one on one ministry and fellowship with the Lord; but one, **the Table of Showbread involves a small number of consecrated priests coming together to minister corporately to the Lord.** We will look at the Table of Showbread today.

Every Sabbath, 8 priests were chosen to attend to the Table of Showbread. Two priests would **gather 12 loaves of freshly baked bread** from the best baker in each of the 12 tribes. They would enter into the Tabernacle through the one gate and wash in the Brass Laver, before going through the first veil into the Holy Place. Another priest carried **hot coals from the brazen altar** in a small shovel, and a fourth priest carried in a **golden cup of frankincense**. The four priests stood on one side of a beautiful golden table. Four more priests entered the Holy Place. They stood on the opposite side of the table. Two of the priests removed two golden plates of bread that had been on the table, at the same time as the fresh bread was put on the table. **They worked together in unity to make sure there was always bread on this table.** The priest who brought in the frankincense sprinkled a little of this white powder on the bread, filling the Holy Place with a wonderful aroma. The 4<sup>th</sup> priest set the burning coals on the Altar of Incense, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> priest sprinkled the rest of the frankincense over them. Immediately a thick white smoke curled up towards the ceiling, filling the entire room with a delightful fragrance. **They would then pray and worship the Lord.**

After a while, one of the priests in the 2<sup>nd</sup> group took the older bread, **broke the bread and offered a large piece to each of the priests**. Then another priest in the 2<sup>nd</sup> group gave each priest a **glass of wine** to drink with this bread. As they ate and drank, they would **fellowship with one another, sharing their struggles and joys in this safe and intimate place**.

The Table of Showbread and the ceremony that the priests partook in, symbolize so many things to us as believers. **The first points to Communion, our observance of the Lord's Supper**. We think of this as a New Testament ritual, pointing to the shed blood and broken body of our Savior Jesus Christ. God foreshadowed the atoning death of Jesus Christ in the Table of Showbread.

***Mark 14:22-24** "While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, 'Take it; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, 'This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.' "*

Why do we partake of communion every week or every month in our churches? To remind us afresh that Jesus came to offer His body as the perfect sacrifice for our sins, all so we could be forgiven and brought into close fellowship with the entirety of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

***1 Corinthians 11:23-26** "...do this in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."*

**His death brought forgiveness of all sin, reconciliation with Almighty God, and a way for us to have an intimate relationship with God.**

**The Table of Showbread also points to our fellowship with fellow Christians, enjoying each other's company as we share the triumphs and struggles in our lives.** As we share the goodness of God with each other our faith is built and we break out into wonderful rejoicing, proclaiming how good our God is!

***Hebrews 10:23-25** "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."*

God's Word is so clear about the vital importance fellowship with other believers is to our walk with the Lord. **Just as the priests would treasure this intimate gathering with their fellow priests in this quiet place, so should we.**

Do you regularly fellowship with a small group of believers who are dedicated to the Lord; sharing your joys and struggles all the while encouraging each other in the group as you all feed on God's Word? Do you make time in your busy schedule to attend Christian retreats throughout the year? Do you gather with other believers just to worship God, to share in the joy of the Lord?

Or do you stay away from other believers, because they have either hurt you in the past or not lived up to your expectations of helping you? If you find yourself saying, "I just want to spend ALL my time alone with the Lord"; watch out, you are putting a huge target on your back for the enemy. Think about when a lioness is searching for prey to devour. She looks for an animal that is alone; and if they look injured or weak, all the better and she pounces. If we are hurt from others, we need to get with a mature believer to help us get healing for our hurts. Our wounded heart will only get worse when we are alone. It is in those times when the enemy has an easy time putting bitterness and unforgiveness in our hearts, which separates and weakens us even more. If we are not regularly feeding on the Word of God, we will become weak.

**We must get together with mature believers on a regular basis.** They need you to encourage them and you need them to encourage you. We all have struggles and triumphs that have built our faith, and sharing these with others encourages them to persevere in their struggles.

*Hebrews 3:13* "But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

**The third and most important symbolism of the Table of Showbread points to our fellowship with Jesus Christ and the spiritual nourishment we get when we spend time with Him.**

*John 6:35* "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.'"

**Today many Christians are spiritually starving. Jesus is standing in the inner courts waiting to feed His priests (all believers).** But most do not enter in to get what He is offering. **They stand in the outer courts, thinking they are alright.** Jesus wants everyone to eat the spiritual bread of God's Word, which will strengthen us for His service, and help others feed on God's Word. **He also wants us to drink the wine of the Holy Spirit so we can have joy and be filled with His power.**

*Psalms 119:103* "How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

We are to take the Word of God and eat it, to delight in it, and to savor it. Not just to read it as a Christian duty, to check off that we have done it; but to read a passage, chew on it, and delve into what it means to us personally at this time in our life. Jesus wants us to taste the sweetness of His Words.

**Psalm 119:162** *“I rejoice at Your word, as one who finds great treasure.”*

One of our goals as believers should be to become the Word of God to those all around us.

**2 Corinthians 3:2-3** *“You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.”*

But if we do not know the Word of God, how can we become it? I think we all at some time in our lives think God will just hit us with a magic wand and “poof” we become the Word of God. Not so, **we must spend time in fellowship with the author and perfecter of our faith, Jesus Christ.** We do this by reading and studying His Word. He wants us to know His Word so well that it is written on the tablets of our hearts. That means that **as we read and study His Word, we become His Word.** As we do this we will come to know God and His character and His will for our lives. We become encouraged as we are taught what is right and wrong. We can use it for prayer, and to encourage and teach others.

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

Please work on your memory verse: **Psalm 119:130.**

**Psalm 119** is all about how wonderful and useful God’s Word is for our lives. Please take time to read this week’s scriptures: **Psalm 119:139-152.** Study David’s enthusiasm for God’s Word and the benefits he found in knowing it. Go back over some special verses that we have studied in Psalms 119, chew on them again and let them go deep within your heart.

## **Privilege of Prayer**

Day 45 – June 27, 2013

As a believer in Jesus Christ, we must understand that God has chosen us to be a priest for His own possession so we can proclaim the excellence of God to those who do not know Him. **He is calling us to come closer to Him, out of the outer courts and into His very Presence, to minister to Him.** In the Tabernacle, only the Priests were allowed to do that.

***2 Chronicles 29:11** "My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before Him, to minister to Him, and to be His ministers and burn incense."*

**The Levites were to stand before the Lord to minister to Him (worship), to be His ministers (of the Word), and to burn incense (prayer).** This is to be our responsibility also. We must be strong in all three areas of Worship, the Word of God, and Prayer. If we are strong in only one area, we are not as stable as we could be if we were strong in all three. Think about the unstableness of a unicycle or even a bicycle; yet a tricycle with three wheels is very stable. There must be a balanced focus on all three of these areas in our lives as priests to the Lord.

**All Levites**, no matter their responsibilities **were to be holy, consecrated, and dedicated to God.** Numbers 8 describes the Levites, and says they are to be cleansed, presented to God, qualified for His service, separated for the Lord, given wholly to the Lord, are to make atonement for the people, and were to keep all the Lord's commandments. **They had many responsibilities, but God was to be their number one priority.** They were to walk worthy of the Lord in all humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Ezekiel 44 records an interesting facet of God's forgiveness and sovereignty with His Levites. In the years between King Solomon and Ezekiel, many priests went astray and followed idols, because the kings did evil in the sight of God. Instead of cutting the Levites off, God reassigned their responsibilities. Those who rebelled were to have oversight of the gates and slaughter the burnt offerings. **They were not to come near to God to serve Him as a priest, but they were to minister to the people. They were to stay in the outer court.**

**But the Priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept faithful to God, were told to "come near to Me to minister to Me". They were the only ones who were allowed to enter God's sanctuary, to be in His presence.**

**Hebrews 10:22** *“let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”*

**How do we get to be in the group that ministers to God?** The answer lies in the group that was not allowed to enter into God’s presence. Even though they were priests (even though we are believers and part of His eternal kingdom) they strayed from God. They worshiped and sacrificed to idols; they did evil in God’s sight, not obeying His commandments; they led others astray; they were not faithful to God. **In order for us to come into His presence, we must live lifestyles that are pleasing to the Lord.** We do this by knowing God and what He requires for our lives. We do this by having a lifestyle of repentance for our sins, and by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us in all we do. **The Holy Spirit is with all believers, even in the Outer Courts. The question is, “Do we listen to Him?”** He is our teacher who will lead us to live holy lifestyles. Our flesh hates God and fights against us coming into the Holy Place with the Lord.

**Romans 8:5-9** *“For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”*

**We must understand the battle that is raging in our bodies for control. The Holy Spirit dwells in all believers.** We are set free from the bondage to sin; it no longer has complete control of our lives, because satan was defeated on the cross. But we **still have our fleshly nature** trying to keep as much control as it can; and it must die. Little by little, with the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Lord will shine the light of His truth (Golden lampstand) into our minds and hearts to expose the deeds of the flesh and purge them from our lives. He often does this through the wise words of mature Christians He has placed around us (Table of Showbread). He will then cleanse us so we can draw close to Him. This is His ultimate desire, for us to abide in the Most Holy Place with Him. We must know the power to overcome the flesh is in us; it is the power of God manifested in the Holy Spirit.

**Have you noticed the different materials used in the Tabernacle?** The outer Court used bronze, and then polished brass. These are alloys, a mixture of metals. **The Holy Place and the Most Holy Place are made of pure gold. There was no mixture.** How can we think we can come before the Lord, to dwell in His presence with mixture in our hearts? That is why the Lord desires all people to no longer be bound with sin, and why He is especially hard on those who lead others to sin by their example!

Today in our study of the Tabernacle, we are still in the Holy Place and will look at the Golden Altar of Incense. It was a form of worship and prayer that a priest would perform twice every day. He would enter the Holy Place in the tabernacle carrying coals from the Bronze Altar in container and sweet incense on a golden plate. **As the incense burned, he would offer up prayers for the people and praise to God.** These would mix with the smoke of the incense as a column of smoke, going up to God as a sweet aroma to His nostrils. This aroma is one that should be on us at all times when we spend intimate time with the Lord, noticeable to those around us.

The Golden Altar of Incense was located in front of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Veil going into the Holy of Holies; it was the item closest to God's presence in the Holy Place. God placed much importance on this altar, calling it "most holy to the Lord". In the final tabernacle where Jesus will sit on His throne, the Golden Altar is in the Holy of Holies, again showing the importance God places on prayer.

***Hebrews 9:2-4** "For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden Altar of Incense and the Ark of the Covenant."*

**Revelation 8:3-4** says that in the future tabernacle the Golden Altar of Incense is placed before His throne, as an **everlasting testimony to the prayers of believers that have ascended to God from all time.**

God loves our prayers; they are very close to His heart. There is a direct correlation between our prayer life and our intimacy with the Lord! It is through prayer and worship (the two go together) that we are able to come into His Presence.

***James 5:16b** "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."*

We all want our prayers to be effective, meaning they are heard by God and accomplish what we pray. How can we do this? **For prayer to be effective, it must be prayed according to God's will.** To do this, we must have an ongoing intimate relationship with God where we are ever in conversation with Him, so that we know what is on His heart and we can pray for it.

**Do we cherish this holy privilege that allows you to enter the throne room of God and converse with Him in prayer at all hours of the day or night?** The word **privilege** means a benefit that is not available to everyone; a special honor; freedom, pleasure, and joy. This important privilege is often minimized in our walk with the Lord. Other things seem to take priority of our time, but prayer should be a priority in our lives.

One final thought on prayer. Often we start out strong and committed in our prayers, and then we get distracted. It is vital that we do not become weary in our prayers. We must pray for strength against the destructive onslaught of Satan.

**Mark 14:38** *"Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

**Without prayer, Christians become spiritually weak and eventually powerless in their walk before the Lord and their testimony before others.**

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Psalm 119:145-152.** This section highlights King David's prayer life. Study this passage to get more insight into prayer. Remember, David was a man after God's own heart; he was a man who spent much time in prayer with God!

**How often should we to pray?** The Word of God places importance on dedicated times of prayer. Let's look at a few of these:

Exodus 30:7-8

Psalm 63:6

Daniel 6:10

Acts 3:1

Acts 10:9, 30

1 Thessalonians 5:17

After you have studied these scriptures, please spend time in the Holy Place at the Golden Altar of Incense asking the Lord what He desires your prayer life to look like.

## Upright are Thy Judgments

Day 46, June 28, 2013

Before we can finish our study of the Tabernacle and journey into the Most Holy Place, our hearts must be right before the Lord. God must be treated as holy, and any rebellion in us, no matter how small it seems to us, is a hindrance to us going into the Most Holy Place.

**Deuteronomy 32:51-52** *“because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel. For you shall see the land at a distance, but you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving the sons of Israel.”*

Moses did so many amazing things with God, yet his one act of rebellion kept Him from going into the Promised Land. God is holy, and when we do not treat Him as holy, we invite others to rebel against Him also. There will be judgments for all of our rebellion.

**Psalm 119:137** *“Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.”*

**We are so excited when we come to the Lord.** We have been outside the tabernacle walls and now we belong to God’s family. This is great! We tell everyone we know about Jesus and about how great it is to be a Christian, even though we really don’t know what that entails. We sign up for every work that can be done in the church, in the Outer Courts, to show God how much we appreciate Him. **But we never move from the Outer Courtyard.** We are busy working for God, but not getting to know Him. Because of all these self-efforts to prove to God that He made the right choice to let us into His family, we get hurt and wounded and burned out from serving the people, all in the name of God. **Somewhere along the way we lose our zeal for the Lord.**

**We hear a message about coming closer to the Lord and we say, “NO thank you. This Christian life is hard enough as it is, I will stay right where I am.** I can placate my wounded heart and my exhausted soul with the pleasures of this world. God loves me and He will forgive all my sins, I live under His grace. And anyway, most Christians are in the same place I am, so what is the big deal?”

**We might not say this out loud, but our sinful lifestyles shout this attitude very loudly to the Lord.** We are to be a light, yet we partake in the deeds of darkness. We are to be holy, set apart from the world; yet we look just like the world. We are to come into the Most Holy Place, into the Presence of Almighty God to minister to Him; but we are content to stay in the Outer Court where we want others to minister to us.

**Zephaniah 3:1-2** *“Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, the tyrannical city! She heeded no voice, she accepted no instruction. She did not trust in the LORD, she did not draw near to her God.”*

**The Lord has been sending His prophets to the church**, inviting His people to come into His presence, to abide with Him, and to fellowship with Him; yet she has not listened to them. **The Lord has poured out His Holy Spirit** on the church as never before, all to bring her close. But instead the church has argued over who is greatest in the kingdom, who has the greatest gifts and callings; causing great disunity.

The time is getting short and the Lord, out of His love for all mankind, is bringing discipline to our lives, since we lack it. A few weeks ago we had a study entitled, **Discipline, not Desire, Determines our Destiny**. God has called us to a lifestyle of discipline, but we have not walked it out; so He is now going to send His discipline to us. **His judgment is coming to shake us to an awareness of His love for us and a desire to draw us close**. He is trying to get our attention.

**Hebrews 12: 5-11** *“...do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives. It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”*

Because of the wounds of our childhood, we do not understand that God disciplines us because He loves us. His discipline is always just; it is always out of love. He is the perfect Father who disciplines His sons and daughters perfectly. When we are going through discipline, it doesn't feel good. We feel sorrow for getting caught and for sinning. But we must understand **discipline is to bring us closer to the Lord**. He is a holy God and only those who are holy can approach Him to come in to His presence. Discipline is for our training and if we endure through the discipline, the fruit of righteousness will be produced.

You may say, I am declared holy by the blood of Jesus Christ; I can live my life any way I wish. No, we are declared not guilty of our sins, and a way is made to come close to God. But we have to walk out the path of holiness and righteousness to come into His presence. Just like with the tabernacle. All of God's people were invited into the Outer Courts of the Tabernacle, but only the priests could enter into the Holy Place and the

Most Holy Place to be with God. We are to be priests unto the Lord. Jesus came to make it possible for the process of sanctification and purification to start.

Will we listen to the voice of God's prophets today when they speak of His coming judgment? They are speaking to the church first. God is determined to bring us close to Him. **How gently God's judgment falls upon us is dependent on us. At first it will be gentle, but if we ignore His discipline, it will get more intense.**

In our previous passage from Hebrews 12, we see three levels of God's judgment for those He loves.

**The first level of judgment is reproof.** The Greek word for **reproved** is **elegcho-** to admonish, rebuke, or to tell of a fault. Rebukes are **verbal warnings about a poor choice we have made.** They are meant to spare us further pain and separation. They can come to us in several ways: a prick of conscience from the Holy Spirit; a timely word from another person; a scripture passage we read; or the words preached by our pastor. We must always have our ears open to hear His reproofs.

***Job 5:17** "Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproveth, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty."*

**The second level of judgment is discipline or chastisement.** The Greek word of **discipline** used here is **paideuō-** to train up a child; to educate; to chasten. **Chasten means to correct by punishment; to inflict pain for the purpose of reclaiming an offender; to afflict by other means; to purify from errors or faults.**

When our hearts become hardened to our sins, chastening causes us to go through emotional anguish, anxiety, frustration, and distress. Pressures increase at home, work, health, finances... What used to bring us joy, no longer does. We fail to see this as judgment, so we blame others for what we are feeling. We feel unfulfilled at church, critical of Christian friends, and on the outs with God. Our relationship with God seems blighted by an emptiness we can't trace. When we find ourselves feeling this way, we need to look for ongoing unforgiveness and sin in our lives.

***Jeremiah 31:18** "...You have chastised me, and I was chastised, like an untrained calf; bring me back that I may be restored, for You are the LORD my God."*

**The third level of judgment is scourging** - to physically whip, to inflict punishment, to cause excruciating pain. When we live in open sin with a flagrant disregard for what we know is right, and when we have not heeded God's previous attempts to rescue us from our rebellion; He must resort to intense pain to bring us back to our senses. God takes long-term sin very seriously. He must get our attention. God doesn't allow His children to sin successfully.

**2 Samuel 7:14** *"I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,"*

When we see that we are going through times of judgment from the Lord, we must understand they are from the Lord. We only have ourselves to blame. We must get back our zeal for the Lord and repent. Remember, He is doing this out of His love for us, so we can come closer to him. We must endure the judgment until it is over. He has much to teach us all the way through. We must allow His judgment to result in a positive change in our lives. We are cautioned in Hebrews 12 to not let bitterness spring up, because it will only cause us more trouble.

**Revelation 3:19** *"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent."*

We must repent and turn wholeheartedly back to the Lord. Repentance is a lifestyle, not a one-time act. Every time a priest would go into the holy Place, he would wash in the brass laver, every time. There is not a limit as to how many times we repent in our lives, just that we do repent! When we repent and turn from our sins, He purifies us so we can draw near to Him.

**Titus 2:11-14** *"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."*

Christ died to redeem us from our sins, **will we let Him purify us for Himself, so we can come close to Him?**

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

Please spend time with the Lord asking Him to shine the light of His love into your heart to expose the areas of rebellion that are keeping you from coming into His presence.

Please read and then pray **Psalms 119:129-152** to the Lord today, as an act of repentance.

Remember our memory verse: **Psalms 119:130** *"The unfolding of Thy words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."*

## The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?

Day 47 – June 29, 2013

**Psalm 119:137** “ My zeal has consumed me, because my adversaries have forgotten Thy words.”

Judgment is at the door of the church; and we must be prepared to awaken those who are still asleep to the sound of the trumpet being blown in this hour. Christ is returning for the church, His pure and spotless bride; but if He was to return today, how many would He find ready to receive Him? The Lord is revealing His heart to the remnant, to those who are awake.

**Amos 3:7-8** “Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets. ...The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?”

These messages we are receiving from the Lord are not only for our personal consumption, but to share with the body of Christ all over the world. We are compared to a watchman, one who has discerning eyes and ears to see what is coming in the distance and then they will sound a warning. As the Lord speaks to us about the coming judgment preceding His return, we must share His words of encouragement and rebuke. We are to be a prophet like Hosea, and **put the trumpet to our lips**. (Hosea 8:1).

The word for trumpet is *shophar*. This trumpet made from a curved animal horn was used by a watchman to warn a city of danger or the approach of a messenger. The voice of the prophet was compared to this trumpet.

**Ezekiel 3:17** “Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me.”

When we have to speak a word of judgment to someone, we feel like we have cut them to ribbons, severely wounding them. But if we speak the truth and speak it with the aroma of God’s love, it will shape them in to the person the Lord is seeking.

**Hosea 6:5** “Therefore I have hewn them in pieces by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth; and the judgments on you are like the light that goes forth.”

**Hewn** means to cut and made smooth or even; to shape by cutting or by a chisel; to cut down, to make something new by carving, to cut some pieces out from something. God is sending His prophets to shape an individual, church, city or nation; but if the truth is rejected the people will have to pay the penalty of the judgment that must follow.

Habakkuk knew as a prophet he had a responsibility to God to speak His Words to the people, and not be moved by the circumstances or the people. He would be concerned about the words of judgment that were being spoken, but he had to stand firm on who God was.

**Habakkuk 2:1-3** *"I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart; and I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, and how I may reply when I am reprov'd. Then the LORD answered me and said, 'Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets that the one who reads it may run. For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay.'"*

We see great instructions for watchmen in this passage.

- We must stand on our guard post, to remain faithfully on the wall, not moved by the people we speak to.
- We must station ourselves on the ramparts (wall), living with Him in a special place of prayer, worship, and the Word.
- We must keep watch to see, looking for Him to speak to us in dreams and visions.
- We must keep watch to listen to His words as we regularly spend time in His Word.
- We must write down and send out what He is saying, sincerely making His words plain for all the read.
- We must wait on the Lord, laying down our agendas, to hear what is on His heart and what we need to do. .

Hearing the voice of God is important for us in this hour. We must enter into the Most Holy Place and take a humble posture before God that enables us to hear His voice.

**Jeremiah 6:17** *"And I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.'"*

We must share the word of the Lord with those the Lord tells us to, we must sound the trumpet, no matter what their response might be. God needs us to be faithful to what He is telling us to do in this hour. This is why He must deal with the wounds of our hearts. We cannot have any issues of rejection, fear, worthlessness, shame, insecurity or hopelessness. Our wounded hearts must be healed, so they do not hinder the work the Lord needs to be done. If we have any of these issues, and someone mockingly rejects the truth, we will be very hesitant to tell the next person the Lord assigns us to warn.

Moses had issues with fear and rejection that the Lord had to heal Him of. They came to light when the Lord called Him to speak to Pharaoh. He made many excuses for himself. The Lord assured him by saying, I am the One who made your mouth, I know

what you are capable of doing. I will give you the words you need to say; just go and do what I say and trust Me in the doing.

**How many times has the Lord asked us to do something and we come up with excuse after excuse or ask Him to ask someone else?** Fear and lack of trust hold us back. The Lord will be with us every step and He will give us all we need to share the truth with those the Lord has put before us. **We must trust in His strength and not our weaknesses.**

Do we realize the anger of the Lord will arise against us if we don't go when He says go? **We have been called to be His watchmen in this hour and we must take this responsibility very seriously.**

Please read Ezekiel 33:1-11. This passage is a warning to the watchmen and to the people being warned. If the truth is spoken and heeded, life; but if it is not spoken or not heeded, death!

***Ezekiel 33:5-7** "He heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning; his blood will be on himself. But had he taken warning, he would have delivered his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman's hand. Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth and give them warning from Me."*

People are responsible for the sins they commit, and the Lord will judge them accordingly, but we are to warn them! God is pleading with us as his watchmen to warn all the people of the coming judgment for their sins. He does not want any to perish, but they will if they do not repent!

***Ezekiel 33:11** "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'"*

## **DIGGING DEEPER:**

### **Please read Isaiah 50:4-5**

Pray this to God as a commitment as His watchman. Write it down and put it in a place where you will see your commitment to the Lord.

God desires for us to encourage others with His Word. We must be positioned every day to receive instructions from the Lord. We walk in disobedience if we are not seeking the Lord every day. His Word needs to pierce our hearts first so we are

changed from the inside, and then ready to share the word with others in our day, strengthened by His presence to give words of encouragement without the fear of rejection.

**Please continue to read Psalm 119:129-152 and work on your memory verse: Psalm 119:130.**

## Overcomers will be Sealed

Day 48 – June 30, 2013

**Psalm 119:132** *“Turn to me and be gracious to me, after Thy manner with those who love Thy name.”*

When we read the book of Revelation, and when we hear the voice of God speaking judgment for His church in preparation for the return of His Son, our flesh puts us varying degrees of panic. But know this; God is gracious to those who love Him with whole-hearted abandon. The book of Revelation has great promises and instructions for us in the days we are in, if we but open up our ears to what God is speaking.

**Revelation 2:7** *“He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes...”*

As the time of Jesus' return nears, God will release His presence more and more upon His people. God's remnant will display great wisdom and power for the purpose of inviting all people to come closer and closer to the saving and sanctifying knowledge of Jesus Christ. **But with this manifested presence, more and more will be required of us. We must walk with a higher standard of obedience.** This is why God is speaking so sternly and urgently to us in this hour. Judgment starts with us, and we must be overcomers. To overcome means to subdue, conquer, prevail, and gain victory. We must conquer and gain victory over everything that is contrary to the Lord, everything that hinders our whole-hearted devotion to God.

**Please read Revelation 2 and 3.** These chapters are letters written to seven actual churches in Asia Minor. As these churches are described, we can see the churches of today. These messages are for us, instructing us how to partner with Jesus in his worldwide preparation of the church for His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. Jesus is showing us the kind of church that He is building and what His agenda is. We have built our own churches our way for too long, now is the time to do it God's way!

During these 52 days, we have seen that this preparation will take a **greater spiritual maturity, faith, and level of obedience** than the church has ever walked in. These messages define the truths and focus necessary to equip us to walk in love for Jesus and for one another. Our **faithfulness** to God is of great value. We express our love for Him as we obey His commands, heed His warnings, and believe His promises, especially His eternal rewards to overcomers. **In these end times, there is a deeper truth that we must pursue and it will take the supernatural help of the Holy Spirit to understand it.** We must be overcomers.

An overcomer is one who matures in the specific areas that Jesus emphasizes in their life. Overcoming does not mean attaining perfection in our character, but rather walking

in a disciplined lifestyle that is **constantly reaching for victory in the areas we are struggling in.**

**Let's look at what and how the churches mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3 were to be overcomers.**

For those like the church at **Ephesus**, overcoming means to return to our first love for Jesus, until the end of your life! We are to exhibit Christian love to God and to others. We are to intimately know the love of God and to be a faithful witness of God's love. We must not be so busy that we miss out on intimacy with God. **Ephesus will overcome and gain victory through intimacy with God.**

If we see ourselves in the church of **Smyrna**, overcoming means to be faithful in persecution, even to death. Know that the suffering in our lives has great purpose; it is a testing of our faith to bring us to maturity in Christ. **Smyrna will overcome by being faithful and persevering through their trials.**

Overcoming for those like the church of **Pergamum** means to resist immorality and idolatry for the rest of our lives. The church at Pergamum had great mixture of false teachings and truth. We must guard the Word of God. We must know the Word of God and live by it. **Pergamum will overcome by knowing and living out the revealed truth of the Word of God.**

Those like **Thyatira** must overcome by resisting immorality and idolatry for the rest of our lives. We must be a light to the world, and not blend in to the darkness. We must expose the deeds of darkness. **Thyatira will overcome by resisting immorality and idolatry, and be a light to the world.**

If we see ourselves in the church of **Sardis**, overcoming means to be watchful by developing a strong prayer life; and to hold fast the things that God entrusted to us. We must be careful to keep ourselves separate from the world. **Sardis will overcome by being careful to keep themselves separate from the world, living holy and consecrated lives in prayer:**

Those like the church of **Philadelphia** might think they are overcomers already. But in order to overcome, we must persevere in mature obedience for the rest of our lives. We must take on the character of God, and hold fast to God's faithfulness. Philadelphia was known for its healing waters, so we too must be living water to those around us. **Philadelphia will overcome by coming into mature obedience.**

The church in **Laodicea** must overcome their lukewarmness. They must see that God has what they need, and that He has the true riches we seek. Laodicea was known for their eye salve, even though they were blind to the truth. May we overcome and see the truth clearly. Repent. Know that those whom God reproves He loves! If we repent and become overcomers, we will be clothed in purity and righteousness. **Laodicea will**

**overcome by being zealous to repent of their love of the world, and then see the truth of God clearly.**

Let's look at one of the promises made to the church of Philadelphia. This is a promise to for all who overcome and come to the full knowledge of Jesus Christ.

**Revelation 3:10** *"Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."*

The word **keep** means to be guarded, to keep an eye on, and to hold on to tightly. In the coming times of judgment upon the entire earth, things will be very unsettled, and life will be very difficult. People will be under so much grief and suffering they will want to give up and die. God is sending judgment to get them to repent and come to Him, but unfortunately most will not repent.

**Revelation 9:6, 20-21** *"And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them." ... "The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, **did not repent of the works of their hands**, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts."*

But those who have come close to the Lord and persevered in mature obedience during their times of testing and judgment, will be kept from this time of worldwide judgment. God will keep them very close, always watching them, and holding on tightly to them.

**Let's look at several cross-references to this time of separated protection.**

**Isaiah 43:1-2** *"...Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you."*

God promises that overcomers will not be hurt by the flames as others. Those who love God, He will turn to us and be gracious to us; He will put His seal upon our forehead. We will be marked out for protection.

**Revelation 7:3** *"saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."*

**Revelation 9:4-5** *"They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but*

*to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.”*

In the end times, all will have a mark; either the seal of the Lord or the mark of the beast. **There will come a day when every person on earth must choose who they will serve.** This scripture will seriously come to life in those days.

**Malachi 3:16-18** *“Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name. **They will be Mine**, says the LORD of hosts, on the day that I prepare My own possession, and **I will spare them** as a man spares his own son who serves him. **So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.**”*

**Joel 2:32** *“And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape, as the Lord has said, even among the survivors (remnant) whom the Lord calls.”*

We are heading into difficult times, where we will all suffer hardship, but all who are overcomers will be comforted by the Lord, having His peace in their hearts.

David Wilkerson said, “No hiding, no mountain cabins of escape, no caves, no shelter, no stockpiles of food, no weapons, no water; God's holy remnant can look death right in the face and say, ‘I fear you not. There is no sting, no more terror; I am ready to be offered’.” When we try to preserve ourselves we are still connected to the world and the earth.

God is warning and preparing us for such a time as this. **Let us be steadfast in our trust in God and let Him keep us in perfect peace.**

**Isaiah 26:3** *“The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You.”*

## **DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Ezekiel 9.** Look at the correlation between these verses and the ones in Revelation. Make note of what the Lord is doing and why.

## Judgment Begins with the Leadership

Day 49, July 1, 2013

We are in our final week of our 52 Days of Building the Second Wall with the Word and Wisdom. **Please read the final three sections of Psalm 119:153-176.** Our memory verse is **Psalm 119:165.**

**Please read Numbers 8.** This passage talks about the Levites. They were one of the 12 tribes of Israel, and they were **set apart to be priests to the Lord.**

**Numbers 8:14** *"Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the sons of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine."*

The Levites were to serve in the tabernacle of Moses, and they were an example of what our present day ministry should look like. They were dedicated to the Lord, consecrated and set apart from the rest of the people. We are priests to the Lord and everything we study about the lifestyle of the Levites we should relate to our service in ministering to the Lord.

**1 Peter 2:9** *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."*

God made a covenant with the Levites, and all who were His priests. **It was a covenant of life and peace.** He gave it to us as an object of reverence, so we would revere and stand in awe of Him. **Levites are to stand in the midst of the people in perfect peace and purity, shining the brilliance of Christ into the darkness of this world, no matter what was going on around them.** They were to influence those around them for good, not to be influenced by them for evil.

The covenant the Lord made with the Levites included total dedication to the Lord, living lifestyles of purity and separation from the world. But in Malachi, we see the Levites were far from this.

**Malachi 1:6-10** *"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, **where is My honor?** And if I am a master, **where is My respect?**' says the LORD of hosts to you, **O priests who despise My name.** But you say, 'How have we despised Your name?' "You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we defiled You?' In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.' "But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the*

LORD of hosts. "But now will you not entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us? With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts. **"Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you."**

They had not honored or respected the Lord as Almighty God. They had not taken their responsibilities seriously, and they had lived the way they wanted to, not the way the Lord commanded. God tells them He is very displeased with them; and the blessings they once had will be turned into curses.

**Malachi 2:2** "If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name, says the LORD of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings; and indeed, I have cursed them already, because you are not taking it to heart."

**Malachi 2:6-7** shows us that the Levites were to be instructors of the Lord's truth; speak no unrighteous words; walk with the Lord in peace and righteousness; turn many back from iniquity; preserve knowledge with their words; and be messengers of the Lord. Men would seek to be taught by them.

**We are the messengers of the Lord and our lips should preserve knowledge.** We should know, treasure, and teach the Word of God. **From our lifestyle, people should seek to be taught by us, because they see the peace of Christ in us.**

But the minister, who stands in the pulpit, while living in adultery, has iniquity in his lips; he is not walking as an example of holiness. He is breaking the love commandments of the Lord, and causing many to stumble.

**Malachi 2:8-9** "But as for you, **you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble** by the instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi," says the LORD of hosts. "So **I also have made you despised and abased before all the people**, just as you are not keeping My ways but are showing partiality in the instruction."

**Judgment is coming strongly against the leaders in the church.** God will not tolerate our sinful lifestyles and the hypocrisy of our lies. Millions of Christians all over the world have a lifestyle of adultery, fornication, pornography, and divorce. These are an abomination before God. They are trapped in a satanic snare of lust, drunk with a strong drink of deception and lust. They think these are private sins they can hide and no one will know or be hurt by them. They are so deceived!

**Isaiah 29:15** "Woe to those who deeply hide their plans from the LORD, and whose deeds are done in a dark place, and they say, 'Who sees us?' or 'Who knows us?'"

We are deceived when we think we can hide what we do behind closed doors; but God sees everything we do and He will bring judgment for every unrepentant sin! **When we engage in these activities, we put a curse on the ministry we are leading. The ministry might look good on the outside, but it is rotten on the inside and will fall.**

Let's look at two leaders who were captivated in the deception of lust; Sampson and David. Sampson's affair was very public, everyone knew of his lustful affair with Delilah. It being such common knowledge led to his enemies bringing him down. David's affair was private, no one knew, except the Lord. He revealed it to a prophet who confronted David. Neither one got away from God's judgment of their sins. But only one lost his life, what is the difference?

**Sampson had a spirit of lust that caused him to be bound to his lover.** He was **completely blind to his sins and had no conviction for his sins.** It wasn't until his eyes were physically blinded that he was able to be set free from his lust and see God clearly. He repented of his sins before he died.

**David had a weakness of lust, but he was not bound to it.** He was attracted to Bathsheba for the moment, and this weak moment led him into the sin of adultery and murder. When confronted, **he was convicted of his sin and repented.** He still faced judgment for his sins, but it was not unto death.

**We see the key to David's heart in the first and last scriptures of this week's passage of Psalm 119.**

***Psalm 119:153** "Look upon my affliction and rescue me, for I do not forget Thy law."*

***Psalm 119:176** "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant for I do not forget Thy commandments."*

The word **affliction** means misery over sin. He was convicted when he sinned and this caused him to repent. Sampson on the other hand never gave it a thought that he was sinning.

The word **astray** means to vacillate, to stagger, or to roam from one side to another.

The words **not forget** mean you are not oblivious to something.

When David sinned, he was led astray by his lusts, but he vacillated between sin and God. David had studied God's Word and he knew what it said about those who sinned. He was aware of his sin and he came before God and confessed his sins and asked for God's forgiveness. We must learn from the scriptures and humble ourselves before the Lord and repent of our sins!

**1 Peter 4:17** *“For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”*

**In Ezekiel 9, the Lord brings judgment to His people, beginning with the priests.** Anyone who signed and groaned over the abominations being committed in their midst was to be marked and not destroyed. But those who committed the abominations were to be utterly destroyed. God shall bring their conduct upon their heads.

**Why is God bringing judgment to the leadership first?**

**In Ezekiel 11,** two men, Jaazaniah and Pelatiah had devised iniquity and gave evil advice in the city. **They had great influence in the city** and led many to imitate them. They had not walked in God’s statutes or executed His ordinances. God declared he would judge these two men so all would know that He has the Lord. As soon as Ezekiel finished prophesying to them, Pelatiah died! **Pelatiah** means **Yahweh's Remnant**. Ezekiel fell to his face and cried out to God, are you bringing the remnant of Israel to a complete end?

Leaders lead and the people follow. If leaders have sinful lifestyles, no matter what words they speak, the people will follow their sinful ways. We are like sheep, we are blind and we will follow blind leaders over the cliff to our deaths! If we continue in our sinful ways, the very people we are supposed to be leading to peace and life, we are leading to death!

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

**Please read Ezekiel 11:14-25 to see God’s reply to Ezekiel’s cry.**

## Held to a Higher Standard Day 50 – July 2, 2013

Yesterday we looked at the example of the Levites who are a pattern for us in this age. As believers in Christ, we are to be instructors of the Lord's truth to those around us by our words and our actions, turning them back from iniquity. We are to walk with the Lord in peace and righteousness, speaking no unrighteous words. We are to know the Word of God and guard it in our hearts. We must be ready at all time to be messengers of the Lord.

**God is holding us to a higher standard than the world, just like He did His Levites.** We have seen over and over in Psalm 119 that **the Lord has given us His Word**, His law, His precepts, His commandments, His ordinances, His statutes, His testimonies, and His judgments **to show us how we are to live.** God's Word lays out the standard we were to follow in our lives, but we have all fallen short of God's Word and sinned. We could not attain the righteousness of God with our good works, because they are mixed with our sins.

God's desire from creation was to live in close fellowship with mankind; but our sins kept us apart from Him. He is holy and He cannot lower Himself to fellowship with sinners. So He implemented His plan He had from the beginning (Genesis 3:15). Almighty God sent His Son to die and atone for our sins. We were declared not guilty of our sins so we could come close to the Lord. **But the story does not stop here**, even though most Christians live their lives like it does. Once we accept the free gift of Salvation, **we are to put on Christ; we are to become like Him- we must be sanctified.**

***Ephesians 4:24** "and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."*

It would be nice if we could put in our new self like we put on clean clothes after a shower. But to be a new man, we must first put to death our old self, our flesh; and this is a life-long process.

***Colossians 3:10** "and have put on the new self who is **being renewed** to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him"*

The verb tense used in **being renewed** points to a continual action – as long as we have breathe in our bodies, we are to continue to be renewed and become more and more like Christ. Our flesh dies not want to die; it is one of our main enemies that fight against God to hinder us from developing intimacy with Him. **Paul was very open and honest about his struggles with his flesh.** He knew the Word of God and he knew what was expected of Him, but **he was having a hard time walking it out.**

**Romans 7:14-25** *“For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. **For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.** But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. **Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!** So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.”*

How often have we felt the same way? But Paul's answer to his dilemma was Christ. He kept his focus on his Savior, and persevered to become more and more like Him each day.

**Philippians 3:12-14** *“Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, **I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**”*

The Lord has sent us warning, the age we are living in now is coming to an end. We must be disciplined to lay aside the deeds of darkness, and walk in the light.

**Romans 13:12** *“The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.”*

We know in our heart what the right thing to do is. We know we are to look like Jesus to those in the world, so they will want to know Him too. **God does not make us be perfect, but He encourages us to make the right choices and remove everything that is an abomination to Him.** This is a slow process as He removes the detestable things in our lives one by one. As they are removed, He changes our hard hearts into soft hearts, full of His love. We then are drawn close to His heart.

**Ezekiel 11:18-21** *“When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone*

*out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I will bring their conduct down on their heads, declares the Lord GOD.”*

We have a choice, and when we choose sin, judgment will come down on our heads.

**Please read Psalm 119:153-176.** There are two words that are repeated 3 times each: **revive and salvation.**

The Hebrew word for **revive** is **chayah** which means to bring back to life, to be healed, to be restored.

Webster’s Dictionary defines **revive**: to recover new life or vigor; to be reanimated after depression; to recover from a state of neglect, oblivion, obscurity or depression; to raise from depression or discouragement; to awaken; to bring into action after a suspension.

The Hebrew word for **salvation** is **yeshuah**- deliverance, aid, victory, help. It is from the word **yasha** - to be free, to be safe, to be delivered, to be rescued, to gain victory.

**Revive is used 11 times in Psalm 119.** David knew he was a sinner, He knew this hindered his relationship with the Lord so He often cried out for the Lord to restore him and bring him back to life spiritually.

**Vs. 25** “My soul cleaves to the dust; Revive me according to Your word.”

**Vs. 37** “Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Your ways.”

**Vs. 40** “Behold, I long for Your precepts; Revive me through Your righteousness.”

**Vs. 88** “Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth.”

**Vs. 107** “I am exceedingly afflicted; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.”

**Vs. 149** “Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your ordinances.”

**Vs. 154** “Plead my cause and redeem me; Revive me according to Your word.”

**Vs. 156** “Great are Your mercies, O LORD; Revive me according to Your ordinances.”

**Vs. 159** “Consider how I love Your precepts; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness. “

**David knew where his help came from, it came from the Lord.** When he would sin, he would quickly run to the Lord to gain victory over the sin that wanted to destroy him. **His hope for salvation was in the Lord and when he sinned he longed to be set**

**free. He would ask God to revive him** according to His Word, in His ways, through His righteousness, according to His lovingkindness, and according to His ordinances. Let's follow David's example and let God's word instruct, strengthen, and purify our hearts so we can come closer to the Lord.

***Psalm 119:165** "Those who love Your law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble."*

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

When we are weighed down and ensnared with sin, we are hindered from coming closer to the Lord. God's judgment is coming first to the body of Christ.

**Please read the following scriptures and let God search your heart.**

**Deuteronomy 7:36** What abominations do you allow in your home?

**Psalms 1:1** Who do you hang around with that is disrespectful of God?

**Psalm 101:3** What worthless things do you put before your eyes?

**2 Corinthians 6:14** Who or what do you yoke yourself to?

**2 Corinthians 6:16-17** What idols do you have in your life and put before God?

**Ephesians 5:3-16** What deeds of darkness do you still partake of?

## **Build My Temple**

Day 51, July 3, 2013

The Lord has asked us to build a second wall with the Word and Wisdom. With the two walls built, He is transitioning us into a new season. He is telling us **it is time to build the temple**. As we enter into this new season of building, let's keep in mind what the temple is. First, it is our physical bodies, and it is the church.

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** *“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”*

**Ephesians 2:19-22** *“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”*

**Ephesians 4:16** *“from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”*

**All Christians are to carry the presence of the Living God in their bodies; and we are to come together to build up the church. Jesus is our firm foundation and we are to all come together with our unique gifts and talents to build his dwelling place.**

Let's look at a rebuilding process of the temple in the Old Testament, but a little history first to see **why it had to be rebuilt**. God gave Moses very detailed plans to build a portable tabernacle in the wilderness, before His people entered into the Promised Land. God manifested His presence every day by appearing as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. These pillars came from the Most Holy Place, the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant. God had Moses set apart one of the 12 tribes to be priests unto the Lord and to serve Him in the tabernacle. The Levites were to be set apart from the things of the world. They were to live holy and consecrated lives unto the Lord. This tabernacle was used for 400 years after they entered into the Promised Land. King David desired to build a permanent structure for the Lord's presence to dwell. He made all the preparations for his son Solomon to build a beautiful temple for Almighty God. (1 Chronicles 22:11-19).

For the next two hundred years, the temple stood in Jerusalem; **but the kings, priests, and the people fell into sin and idolatry, they forsook the Lord.** God promised Solomon that if he and future kings loved Him above all else, He would pour out His blessings upon His people. But if they forsook Him and turned to the idols of the land, He would send judgment.

**1 Chronicles 28:7-10** *"I will establish his kingdom forever if he (Solomon) resolutely performs My commandments and My ordinances, as is done now. So now, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, observe and **seek after all the commandments of the Lord your God so that you may possess the good land and bequeath it to your sons after you forever.** As for you, my son Solomon, **know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.** Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be courageous and act."*

God sent judgment in the form of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, and the remnant of the people who were not killed was taken as slaves into Babylon. They were there for 70 years.

The Persian Empire defeated the Babylonians and God's people were now ruled by a Persian king. But this king was called out by name 175 years prior to his birth in Isaiah 45:1. Let's look at how God used this pagan king.

**Ezra 1:1-5** *"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying: Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, **The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.** Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. Every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem. **Then the heads of fathers' households of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites arose, even everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up and rebuild the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.**"*

God stirred the heart of King Cyrus to send the remnant of Israel back to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and to repopulate the city. Ezra was chosen as a leader to gather

and encourage the remnant who had returned from captivity. He encouraged them to begin and to complete the temple construction in the midst of much opposition from their enemies. **In the coming weeks, we will be studying from the book of Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah;** as well as going through the book, *Beyond the Veil* as the Lord leads us how to rebuild His Temple.

**Ezra's** name means **the Lord has helped**. We all can say the Lord has truly helped us these last 52 days. God also sent prophets (Haggai and Zechariah) to support and encourage Ezra and the people to complete the task.

**Ezra 5:1-2** *“When the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them, then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the **prophets of God were with them supporting them.**”*

**Ezra 6:14** *“And the elders of the Jews were **successful in building through the prophesying** of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they finished building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.”*

Ezra also dealt with the sins and immoral practices of the people. The message God gave him was God's faithfulness and man's unfaithfulness.

**God will be faithful in our next transition to give us instruction, if we are faithful to Him.** During our prayer time He told us to get ready, and He will provide everything we need, just like David did for Solomon.

**1 Chronicles 22:11-13** *“Now, my son, **the Lord be with you that you may be successful, and build the house of the Lord your God just as He has spoken concerning you.** Only the Lord give you discretion and understanding, and give you charge over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the Lord your God. Then you will prosper, if you are careful to observe the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord commanded Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and courageous, do not fear nor be dismayed.”*

This was what God told Solomon through His father David. God also promised David that He will be a Father to Solomon. **We cannot build these temples if we do not know that the Father promises to be with us.**

**1 Chronicles 22:18-19** *“**Is not the Lord your God with you? And has He not given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the Lord and before His people. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your**”*

**God; arise, therefore, and build the sanctuary of the Lord God, so that you may bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the holy vessels of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the Lord."**

**In verse 12, God wants to give us wisdom and understanding to keep His Word and His statues.** For the last 52 days we have read and prayed Psalm 119 over and over again about keeping His law, statues, and judgments. **Now it is time to put into practice what we have read, memorized and prayed.** We must let the Word of God go deep in our hearts. **We need the let the Lord Jesus deal with our sinful and wounded hearts so He can build the foundation of His temple in us.** Yahweh will remember His promises to us if we just endure the wilderness of our season and know He is faithful to bring us out with the sweet aroma of worship. **We will then go deeper to seek His heart in the Most Holy Place.**

**God is raising us up with a prophetic voice and is bringing the prophetic voice to us in this season.** That is why Zechariah was there to help Ezra to remind him and the people that Yahweh remembered the Covenant He made with them. He encouraged them to build with good courage and not be afraid. We must not fear what is ahead in our next journey; He will bring the healing and deliverance we need in this time of preparation. **He is preparing and reminding us as the remnant to stay faithful and endure.** In Zechariah He challenges us to **complete the task God has given us.** This entails **repentance** for neglecting the buildup the house of God, personally and corporately.

**Zechariah 1:3-4** *"Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return to Me, declares the Lord of hosts, that I may return to you, says the Lord of hosts. Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets proclaimed, saying, thus says the Lord of hosts, return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds. But they did not listen or give heed to Me, declares the Lord."*

**God is challenging the Body of Christ.** We have become complacent and distracted by the world and our flesh which makes it difficult to hear the voice of God and to obey His Word. We must hear His voice and walk in obedience to it in order to build His temple. Our obedience to His Word gives us our sure foundation.

**Please read 1Corinthians 3:1-16.** Paul challenges the church by rebuking them and warning them that they were behaving badly because they were controlled by their flesh. We should be mature believers, but because we do not obey the Word of God we are still fighting amongst ourselves and causing division in our homes and churches. **We are still operating with a spirit of envy and strife. But God has called us to be His temple according to the grace of God. He wants us to be wise master builders.**

Jesus Christ must be the only foundation we build God's temple with. Whatever works of ours that are not built upon Him will burn when judgment comes. We must **repent**

**and return, so when judgment comes and revival comes, we will be ready and prepared for the Master.** He is telling us He is with us in this time of building, and He will not leave us or forsake us.

**We must arise; it is time to build the Temple of the Lord.**

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

***Psalm 119:167** “My soul keeps (guards) Your testimonies, and I love them exceedingly.”*

It is time for the Body of Christ to guard the Word of God, and to love God with all obedience!

Please take time today praying **Psalm 119:153-176** back to God. **Ask Him to give you the instructions you need to build the temple of God personally and corporately!**

## Into His Presence

### Day 52 – July 4, 2013

We cannot close out these 52 Days without studying the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle. We took a break from our study to deal with issues of our heart. We tend to casually try to come into God's presence, not revering Him as Holy.

**Leviticus 10:3** *"...By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored."*

The presence of God has left many churches because He has not been honored and glorified. This is not God's plan. He desires to live among us, to receive our worship and devotion. He longs for intimate fellowship with each Christian.

Let us explore some of the unique features of the Most Holy Place, the Holy of Holies, because there is so much significance in each item. We will start with the veil, **the final barrier that was set up between a Holy God and sinful man.**

The **Veil** was made of blue, purple and red linen, embroidered with gold cherubim, and it was hung from four golden pillars. It served as a partition between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The colors are representational of Jesus Christ. The Blue demonstrates that Christ came from heaven to earth, the Red signifies Christ's blood that was shed for us, and the Purple represents Christ's royalty.

The embroidered Cherubim are symbolic of God's protective presence over the Holy of Holies. It is as if God put a guard there and said thus far, but no further. Remember the cherubim God placed at the entrance to the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve were set out of it? We need to sense the presence of the angelic host around the presence of the Lord, so that we are more aware of the holiness of this position with the Lord.

At the time of the Lord's death, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom, signifying that the torn body of Christ makes it possible for mankind to enter into the presence of God and fellowship with Him. At that time, the Shekinah presence of the Lord had not been in the tabernacle for hundreds of years. The manifest presence of God in the form of Jesus Christ had been in the tabernacle for 3 years, but they did not know it!

**The only item in the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant.** The Ark was symbolic of **God's throne and presence.** The Tabernacle was designed by God for His presence to reside among His people. **God's presence would manifest in the form of a cloud by day and a column of fire by night.** Now remember that this smoke and fire originated in the Holy of Holies and miraculously traveled undisturbed through the four layers of animal hides and fabric, and was seen by all over the top of the tabernacle. Another amazing thing is that the fire did not burn the coverings! The

next time you have trouble believing God for the impossible in your life, remember the ceiling of the tabernacle, and know nothing constrains Him.

**The Ark was a wooden box**, made of acacia wood, covered inside and out with pure gold. It was 3'9" x 2'3". It had a gold rim around the top. Four golden rings were attached to the sides used to attach two golden poles. These poles were never to be removed, and they were used to carry the Ark of the Covenant when the Tabernacle was moved.

On top of the Ark was **a lid of solid gold, called the Mercy Seat**. On this lid were two cherubim sculpted from one piece of solid gold. They were facing each other with their faces looking at the ark. Their wings were touching each other as they were stretched out over the ark. God promised that from this mercy seat, He would meet and speak with the High Priest.

***Exodus 25:22** "There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel."*

**The Mercy Seat has also been called the throne of God, where His presence rests;** while the **Ark itself was a box**, a container for very specific items, which He called the testimony.

***Exodus 25: 21** "You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you."*

**The Ark was to contain three items: a golden jar containing Manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments.** These testify as to who God is to be in our lives and how we are to respond to Him.

The golden pot of Manna symbolized God's **provision** for man. When Moses and the Children of Israel were in the wilderness for forty years, God provided food for the millions of people each and every day in the form of Manna. **God desires us to rely upon His provision.** This takes faith and trust in Him. The Manna also symbolizes that Jesus is the true bread from heaven.

Just as we need physical food every day, we also need the spiritual food that Christ offers us. **When we read and study God's Word, when we have conversations with the Lord, we are nourished and strengthened.** Do you partake of this spiritual manna every day? Or do you try to store it up for a few days? God wants to give us fresh food, a fresh word every day.

The second item in the Ark was **Aaron's rod** that he would use for walking. In Numbers 16 and 17 there was a revolt against Moses and Aaron, challenging their positions as leaders, especially Aaron as the High Priest. This revolt was led by Korah,

Dathan, and Abiram. They incited two hundred fifty leaders from the twelve tribes to rebel and challenge the authority God placed on Moses and Aaron. God opened up the ground and swallowed up these men and sent fire from heaven to totally consume their possessions.

Incredibly, the very next day, more grumbling took place in the camp, once again challenging Aaron and Moses. God instructed Moses to select a representative from each of the twelve tribes to bring a rod, with the name of their tribe engraved on it. Aaron represented the tribe of Levi. All twelve rods were put in the tabernacle before the Ark of the Covenant. God said that the rod of the man He had chosen to lead would blossom. The next morning, only Aaron's rod had budded and blossomed, and even produced fruit in the form of almonds. His rod was placed in the ark as a sign against the rebels that Aaron and his lineage alone had the right to be a high priest.

**A rod represents authority for the person holding it.** A shepherd uses it in many ways: to aid in walking over difficult ground, to lead and discipline his sheep, and to protect his sheep from attack. Many times Jesus referred to mankind as sheep that need a shepherd. We as sheep are to be in submission to our leaders. They are put there to lead us and help us. We are to submit to God first and foremost and then to whomever God puts over us. Do you have a problem submitting to leadership? If you do, talk about it with God and ask Him to help you see His divine order for leadership in our homes, churches, and countries.

The third item in the Ark was the **Tablets of the Ten Commandments**. This is the second set that God made after Moses broke the first one. Along with the tablets were the writings of Moses, which are the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These two items represent the law of God, and what He expects from His people, to provide mankind **instruction and guidance**.

Psalms 119 is such a treasure, continually refocusing us to see the value of God's Word.

***Psalm 119:162*** "I rejoice at Thy Word as one who finds great spoil (treasure)."

**The three items placed inside the Ark are three things we all need to be able to abide in the presence of God: to feed and be strengthened on the Word of God daily, to be disciplined and led in love by our Heavenly Shepherd, and to know the truth of what God expects for our lives and how to walk in it.**

What is God's plan for all believers, what is the most important thing for us to do? A very learned man, a scribe, asked Jesus "what is the most important commandment for us to follow", and here is His answer.

***Mark 12:30*** "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."

This is ministering to God, when we come to know Him and what pleases Him, not just to work for Him, but to minister to Him. Does this mean we are not to minister to the people? No. Jesus said there are two great commandments, and the second one is: “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The word **love** used in these two commandments is the same Greek word, **agapao**. It means to welcome someone into our lives and homes, to entertain, to love dearly, to cherish, and to want to be with.

We are to love God and all people with the same love; the only difference is that God needs to be placed first. **Is He first in your life?** Do you love Him with ALL your heart, soul, mind, and strength? **Do you welcome Him into every part of your life, or are there some rooms in your heart that are “off-limits” to Him?** Every room in God’s Tabernacle is pure, holy, and consecrated for Him. Every room is important and we must pay attention to the lessons in each one.

Can we say, “Yes, I love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength 100% of the time”? No, we cannot; but we need to be aware of God’s plan for us in this regard and daily strive to get closer and closer to the mark. God longs for all His people to come close to Him, to fellowship with Him.

**1 John 1:3** *“...indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”*

God’s plan from the beginning of time is to fellowship with the men and women He created. He walked with Adam and Eve in the garden each day, and He longs to fellowship with us each and every day. The word used in the New Testament for **fellowship** is **koinonia**. There are several facets to this word. Fellowship is **companionship**, where there is a mutual association of people who are on friendly terms with one another, and they enjoy being together. It also means a **partnership**, where people with joint interests come together with one purpose working together, yet each having their own part to do. Fellowship is also **friendship**, being attached to one another by esteem, respect, and affection leading us to desire to be together. Fellowship is **intimacy**, or familiarity with each other. As you share your hearts with each other with open and frequent communication, you develop complete trust and confidence in your relationship.

God implanted the desire for **koinonia** with Him in each of us. Whether we are aware of this or not, we spend our lives seeking to be loved, accepted and a part of an intimate relationship with the people around us; yet not with Him. Yes, we can have satisfying fellowship with each other, **but true fulfillment of this koinonia longing only comes through our intimate relationship with the Lord.** He is calling all of us to come closer and behold the beauty of a very special eternal relationship with Him!

During one of our times of Sunday prayer the Lord shared that **He was sending us the rain, the cloud, and the fire for our protection.** He has sent the rain to cleanse us of our sins so we will be sanctified. He has invited us into His Holy chambers, the Most Holy Place. In that place He manifested His presence with a pillar of cloud by day and a

pillar of fire by night. He was showing us He desires His presence to return to His people. **Now He is placing a double wall around us.** He has placed a wall of fire around us to separate us from the things of this world. This fire will burn up everything that is hindering our intimacy with the Lord. And then He has placed a second wall of the cloud of His Shekinah glory inside of the wall of fire, to bring us closer to Him.

This is where He desires to talk to us, to strengthen us and to equip us to be His sanctified priests, to take His messages to the world.

**Hebrews 12:28-29** *“Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.”*