**RECEIVE: Going Further**

Decisions that Encourage Discipleship

Choosing to intentionally grow into Christlikeness.

*“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” Hosea 4:6*

Church Website…http://cacnaz.org. & teacher’s email address…fstone7777@gmail.com.

**Unit 101 Choosing to leave the place where Jesus finds me.**

*(Luke 9:23a) “if anyone will come after me…”*

Hopefully we have made the decision to come after Jesus and to be His sheep that follows the Shepherd. But like the disciples who initially left what they were doing and began to follow Jesus, we don’t have much of an idea what our Shepherd is going to want us to do and to be at first. That uncertainty about the future continues even as we become mature in the days ahead. It is the story of Abraham…

**Hebrews 11:6 *“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he left, not knowing where he was going.”***

**Unit 102 Choosing to Serve Jesus where He Leads me.**

*(Luke 9:23b) “…let him deny himself…”*

This unit that we are considering in these six weeks is pointed right at the main area that we discover in God’s plan for our life—it is found in the Lord’s prayer…

**Matthew 6:10** ***“Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”*** At least in America, we are taught to “hue out our own kingdom.” It is told to us that “what the mind can conceive, the will can achieve!" An interesting insight is that in that verse the word for "on" and the word for "in" is the same Greek word! I am convinced that the prayer of Jesus was that the will of God that is absolutely obeyed in heaven might be absolutely obeyed in our bodies—which is made from earth and will return to earth.

In the 1970’s when I became a lead pastor in Southern California, the “Jesus Revolution” was emerging—especially around the ministry of Chuck Smith and Calvary Chapel in Santa Ana. That church had a praise team named, “Love Song” and a verse that they often sang was… (according to my memory!)

**“I’ve been sitting in the front seat, tryin’ real hard to be the driver, thinking I was making real good time, and always ending up a “late arriver.” Now I’m sitting in the back seat, and I’m leavin’ all the driving to the chief! Whoa… sittin in the back seat and leavin’ all the drivin to the Chief!”**

It is precisely that change that I believe God’s Spirit calls us to make as we follow Jesus. It is not that what we desire is always so evil. The enemy of the excellent is always the good! Jesus knows not only what is best for us, but more importantly, what is best for the world and those around us. Only the shepherd can guide and guard us to that place where the Father knows we should be, and what we should be doing. Often, we don’t see that looking ahead, but instead, find it looking back.

**102-2: Deciding to Explore Adoption & Embracing Sonship:**

**Romans 8:14-17** ***“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons and daughters of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”***

\*\*Being led by the Spirit of God…

As I read the Scriptures, I don’t find the disciples telling Jesus where they should be going and what they should be doing. In fact, the few times they tried to do that they were severely rebuked by Jesus (Matthew 16:23, Mark 8:33, etc.) I am amazed at how many people I have known that have not caught that concept!

\*\*The Spirit of slavery and the spirit of adoption:

The Roman world was very familiar with slavery, and there were even different types of slaves. But no slave compared to being a son or daughter. As a son, you might be under the authority of the Father, but you had a whole different future as part of the family. There was a commitment of the Father to his children, and it was expected to have that commitment would be returned to Him by his children.

\*\*Sons and daughters that cry out, “Abba Father!”

There have been many interesting studies about what does it mean to cry out, “Abba Father.” In a technical sense, abba is the Hebrew word for father, and so you could regard it as a double emphasis, much like, “Verily, Verily…” It is not totally incorrect to understand abba as a word an infant would use for their dad. But probably the best meaning is, “Father, I will obey you!!!”

\*\*Heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ…

I think it is obvious what an heir is—and a fellow-heir is like a husband and wife who both have title to their home—but if one dies, the other has total ownership. Thankfully, since Jesus died once, death will not ever affect him! (Romans 6)

\*\*Suffering with Him so that we may be glorified with Him!!!

This phrase is the link between the thought of Romans 8:1-16 and the next section of the chapter which we studied last week. To be a son or daughter does not mean that you are exempt from hardship or sacrifice, but that you have a wonderful future to anticipate. None of us can imagine what it will be like to be glorified with Him in eternity in a place we call heaven.

**\*\*\*\*\*See: Filled with the Spirit—My Story\*\*\*\*\***

While I have not experienced actual “adoption” in this life, I have experienced this life story that has some of the same dynamics. I present it to you as a witness of what the term adoption means to me.

**Exploring Adoption**

**Ephesians 1:5-6 “*In love He predestined us to adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He favored us in the Beloved.***

\*\*Predestination (Romans 8:29, *“…for those whom He foreknew….”*

I think that there is much confusion about what the term predestination means in the Bible. Notice, that in this verse, predestination is based on the knowledge God has before anything happens. God is totally different than you or me. He is at the beginning and the end of time simultaneously. If you can’t comprehend that, join the club! But that is what Scripture says. Predestination too often means to some that God knows because he caused. This verse says God knows before it happens.

An illustration: Most of us can recall a mistake that we have made in that past five years. If ten years ago, God would have told you that you were going to make that mistake, you probably would have argued, and said, “I’m better than that!” I know I would have. But now we have to agree that it is me, “standing in the need of prayer!” I think so much of this life is proving to us how much we need God and His forgiveness and cleansing.

\*\*Adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ…

This has already been addressed in the verse above (Romans 8:14-17). But it is useful to see that this is the promise of God throughout Scripture. This verse emphasizes the great love of God that would, as creatures so different and undeserving, take us into His family and inheritance.

\*\*The good pleasure of His will…

We know that God is good, but here it is shown to us that this goodness that is displayed in His will for us actually brings Him pleasure. We usually think of the pleasure and wholeness that God gives us, not realizing that we are the delight of His life and bring Him pleasure. How incomprehensible is the will of God!!!

\*\*To the praise of the glory of His grace….He favored us in the beloved….

This phase shows our purpose—that we are to be witnesses of how good God is, how glorious is His grace to redeem us, to walk with us, to share with us, and to provide for us. Truly He has favored us in His mind that could be called the “Beloved." O what glory there is in His grace.

**Galatians 4:5b: “…*that we might receive the adoption as sons and daughters.”***

Here is another emphasis of the truth that we have the opportunity to be adopted as His sons and daughters. It is something that we are to receive because God sent His Son to this earth for us.

**Embracing Sonship**

**Matthew 5:44-45 *“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may prove yourselves to be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.***

Nothing shows the family trait of being a son or daughter of the Father more than having his character of love…not only when it is normal and returned in some way, but when it is out of character, the exact opposite response of what others might expect when we are persecuted, rejected, and ridiculed. If we are to be like our Father, no other trait is as important as this one.

That brings us to the issue of sin. There are four places in the Bible where it tells us outright what sin is…and it is interesting to me that the same letter (I John) written to the same readers from the same writer gives us two different definitions that has divided much of the protestant faith:

**Sin: A Transgression: (a willful transgression of a known law….)**

\*\* I John 3:4 *“sin is lawlessness” /* Romans 14:23 *“whatever is not from faith…”*

Here are two different verses implying disobedience of previous knowledge.

**Sin: A Falling Short: (a falling short of the glory of God….)**

\*\*I John 5:17 *“all unrighteousness is sin”* James 4:17 *“…and does not do it…”*

Rightly understood, here are two challenges to be like Jesus Himself.

You might consider the first two verses as a “minimum” standard. The next two verses as a challenge to attempt to try for the maximum that is available for us. In my life-studies, I have come to hope that those who meet the minimum will be found in heaven, but also come to understand that those who try to meet the maximum possible will surely help many more possess an eternity with God.

**I John 1:6-9**  ***“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin….”***

\*\*Notice in these first two verses we have two “if’s” that are contrary to each other—and the promise is cleansing from all sin for the second “if!”

***…“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”***

\*\*Notice in these two verses we also have two contrary “if’s”—but our confession not only brings forgiveness of sin, but cleansing from anything short of the glory of God—cleansing from all unrighteousness.

**Matthew 6:6** ***“But as for you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”***

\*\*The one who is confident in his relationship with the Father as His son, can trust his inner life and prayer because of that relationship. He knows that the Father will give that which is good, because the Father is good! (Matthew 7:11)

**I John 5:14-15 *“This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked….”***

\*\*The one who has embraced his sonship with the father has a confidence that as we ask according to what we know is God’s will, He will hear us, and we will have that which we have asked. He also knows that his earthly knowledge cannot fully comprehend what is the will of God at any one time on this earth.

Confidence in our sonship overcomes disappointment in our delayed answers.

**Philippians 4:6-7 *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”***

\*\*Anxiety and fear is warned against throughout Scripture. The evil one rules his kingdom by these two temptations. Instead we are to be communing with God and even pleading with him in a spirit of thanksgiving. Our requests are already known by God, but we need to know that we have communicated them to our Father. The peace that comes from a confidence in sonship surpasses any attempt to comprehend, or communicate it to others, but it does guard our life of emotions and our failures to understand.

**Luke 18:1 *“Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not become discouraged…”*** (The Widow’s case)

\*\*This parable is one of the most interesting ones in Scripture. Jesus likens our Father to an unjust judge just to make the point even more ridiculous. The widow in that day had no recourse, except her bothersome requests. Here again the parable exaggerates our condition in prayer, just to show how we ought to pray.

**I Thessalonians 5:16-18 *“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”***

\*\*These three concepts 1) continual rejoicing, 2) continual prayer, 3) continual thanksgiving are presented to us as God’s will for us as sons in His family. These admonitions exist in a wonderful paragraph of directions for our lives as children of the heavenly father:

**I Thessalonians 5:12-22 *“But we ask you, brothers and sisters, to recognize those who diligently labor among you and are in leadership over you in the Lord, and give you instruction, and that you regard them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. We urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek what is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit, do not utterly reject prophecies, but examine everything; hold firmly to that which is good, abstain from every form of evil.”***

\*\*In our own strength, these admonitions would seem impossible. But the very next verse tells us how it can become reality in our living:

**I Thessalonians 5:23-24 *“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will do it.”***

HAVE YOU INVITED THE SPIRIT OF GOD INTO YOUR LIFE?

**GO FOLLOW JESUS THIS WEEK!!!**