**RECEIVE**

Decisions that Encourage Discipleship

Choosing to intentionally grow into Christlikeness.

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

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

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

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

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

We continue with considering what it means for us to deny ourselves as we follow Jesus, and this lesson highlights denying ourselves of our pride, of consideration of what others might think of us, and of our own self-sufficiency in understanding what is satisfactory to God and what will stand at the White Throne Judgement.

**102-4 TEXT: The Laying on of Hands, The Resurrection of the Dead,**

**& Eternal Judgment**

What is the part that others play in our spiritual development? Why is it that sometimes it is hard for us to allow them to play that necessary role—or even for us to seek their involvement in our lives?

**Romans 1:17a *“…the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith…”***

Last week we looked at the context, vv. 16-17, but this week we stress how we are a part of the Body of Christ, and are called, resurrected, and judged with others. It is sometimes thought that these things, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment are “perfunctory” issues that aren’t worthy of time, effort and consideration.

But the truth is that we vitally do need each other. The faith of others is often the key to spiritual success in our lives! The commitment and confidence of others to pray and lay their hands in prayer on you brings a spiritual dynamic that is often not seen or felt at the time—but in reflection later appears to be a pivotal event. The resurrection of the dead at the end time comes by the authority and power of being “in Christ…,” but there have been witnesses that the power of resurrection is possible today within God’s will through prayer and faith. That we will be judged by not only how we live our lives, but the faith that we have so we can see the Kingdom of God be glorified in our age is the teaching of Scripture. All of this in my mind is wrapped up in the righteousness of God being passed from believer to believer. Like hot coals in a fire pit at the beach, another person’s faith can ignite a cold, wet faith and bring it back to life or back to intensity again!

**The Laying on of Hands**

**II Timothy 1:6** *“****And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”***

This verse has often been used as a foundation for the ordination of persons into the ministry. But in my mind it is not far from the encouragement that many have received at the altar when “saints” have prayed with them, often with their hand on their back, or holding their hands across the altar. It might even be stretched to consider the “embrace” of believers hugging their friends in greeting and in times of departure. We need each other, and touch is a part of our oneness. In the gift of God that is mentioned here, something more transpires, almost a flow of the Spirit from one believer to another, and possibly the passing of the torch if you please.

**Acts 8:17-20** *“****Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’  But Peter said to him, ‘May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!”***

This verse brings our attention to the practice of the “spirit-transfer” in the first century between the Apostles and new believers in receiving the Holy Spirit. I have often seen pastor’s pray a prayer of confirmation as one has come to the altar to commit themselves to sanctification, but seldom have I seen the laying on of hands in the prayer. But the church does often do it at a particular time of concern for spiritual victory in a persons’ life.

This Biblical story was about a prideful person who saw such transformations and power in the spiritual filling of those to whom the apostle’s laid their hands in prayer that he wanted to receive that power by offering money. I think this verse offers a powerful rebuke to those who want to profit in the church over spiritual things. While making a reasonable living from ministry is understandable, a life of opulence must be disgusting in God’s eyes and should be in our eyes as well.

**Acts 9:17*****“And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit."***

Here is another witness of God’s power flowing through not just prayer, but the physical contact of Ananias to Saul. Ananias’ willingness to obey at the risk of his own life was part of his obedience that made this healing possible. The one who came to Damascus to lay hateful hands on Christians received hands of love.

**Acts 13:3*****“Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”***

Here is a missionary commissioning service—sending Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary trip in obedience to what God had revealed in a church prayer. Paul and Barnabas were part of the tremendous evangelism that was happening at Antioch, and it could not have been easy for the church to lose those who had been their leaders. But the church had the correct insight that it was not the leaders, but was the Holy Spirit that had brought the success. In a real sense, they not only honored what God had said to do, but also in this act “went with them” on the missionary trip, and hands joined in prayer are still helpful in ministry.

**Acts 19:6-7*****“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying….”***

This story tells of Paul coming to Ephesus and finding a group of believers who had heard about Jesus, but not about the Holy Spirit. He explains the filling of the Spirit, and then prays…, and in the laying on of hands the Holy Spirit comes upon these believers, a time which many refer to as the “Ephesian Pentecost.” It again shows the transfer of the life of God through the laying on of hands.

**\*\*\*\*\*My Camarillo Healing\*\*\*\*\***

I have a unique story of a healing in my own body through prayer by laying my own hands on my body and seeing God do the unusual in answer to my prayer. Whether it was my hands that were the transfer of God’s healing, or my faith in God to heal, I’ll leave for others to decide. But as far as I am concern, I will never forget the blest deliverance that happened to me on that day.

**The Resurrection of the Dead**

**I Corinthians 15:20-21*****“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.”***

It would appear from this verse that the resurrection from the dead at the judgment only happened because of the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and the reality of His resurrection. It could be argued that there would be no need for a judgment if one could be made righteous by their own living. But we know we need the blood of Christ to overcome Adam’s sin. Enoch was one who was translated to the presence of Jesus without the reality of death, and yet he is presumably included in Hebrews 11:38-39, since he was one of the first ones mentioned in Chapter 11… ***“And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.”***

**John 5:24-29*****"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”***

This powerful verse about the resurrection from the dead and the judgment that is part of God’s revelation tells us that there is more to the story than we will ever understand. The authority for resurrection is clearly in the hands of Jesus, and we never know what He is going to do! The story of Lazarus in John, chapter 11, tells us that the power of resurrection was not confined only to the bodily resurrection of Jesus, but is available at the command of Jesus also. Matthew 27:52-53 tells us that at the resurrection of Jesus, many of the saints were also resurrected and came into Jerusalem as a witness to the power of Christ!!!

I am including a story of what I consider a resurrection when I prayed. I do not include it to call attention to my life, but to the grace of God in answering a prayer of desperation when I was heart-broken. This is one of two times in my life when I have prayed for persons in a hospital that were pronounced dead by physicians and came back to life again. I do not pray such prayers on my own discernment, but only when God directly leads and encourages me.

**\*\*\*\*\* A Healing that Restored Life\*\*\*\*\***

**Eternal Judgment**

**Hebrews 9:27 *“And just as it is destined for people to die once, and after this comes judgment…”* Romans 14:12*****“…So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.”* Matthew 25:46 *“These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”***

We should all constantly remind ourselves of what is in the future for those who believe, and for those who do not believe. The wonders of heaven, and the horrors of hell should motivate all of us not only for our own salvation, but to work so very earnestly to help as many as we can put their faith in Christ, and not only know heaven someday, but have a taste of heaven “today!” It is clear from these verses and others that there is no “middle ground,” or a place for those who only miss it by a little. You are either in Christ, or you are not—and the result is so significant!

John 3:16-18 accurately tells us:

***“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him. The one who believes in Him is not judged; the one who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the Light; for their deeds were evil.***

**I Corinthians 3:10-15*****“According to the grace of God, which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon 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. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.”***

This verse seems to be obvious that there will also be a judgment of our “works.” No one knows everything about this, but the only value of our works that I can understand is that it is something that we can present to Christ in praise to Him.

**II Corinthians 5:10 *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”***

In any case, there is ample evidence that we need to give careful attention to what we do in “the deeds of the body.” Yes, God’s grace forgives and restores. But eternity may reveal the profit for those who receive from God his power to become all that He intentioned for us to be, and His reward that will stand for eternity.

HAVE YOU INVITED THE SPIRIT OF GOD INTO YOUR LIFE?

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