

August-September 2005

The Gathering Net - 2005

Dear Saints,

Greeting in the name of our great King and Master, Jesus Christ. Recently, I was reading a portion of text from the Old Testament. In **II Chronicles 30**, the writer, most likely Ezra, a priest, was describing the purification of the desecrated temple through King Hezekiah. It was a glorious event, much like a revival of today, which lasted only a short while. This era in Judah and Israel was sadly wrought with wickedness and idolatry, particularly promoted by the evil kings.

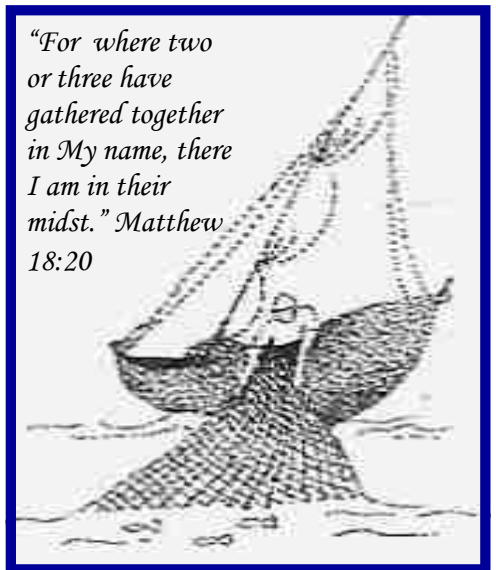
Now back to chapter thirty. This was the first time in years they had celebrated the Passover meal. Previously, the Lord had instructed them through Moses how to prepare them for the Passover meal. Let's read the verses that caught my eye and spirit regarding the surprise move by God. **II Chronicles 30:16-20:**

"And they stood at their stations after their custom, according to the Law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood which they received from the hand of the Levites. For there were many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves; therefore, the Levites were over the slaughter of the Passover lambs for everyone who was unclean, in order to consecrate them to the Lord. For a multitude of the people, even many from Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover otherwise than prescribed. For Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the good Lord pardon everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though not according to the purification rules of the sanctuary. So the Lord heard Hezekiah and healed the people."

Amazing! God has His rules, and principals and statues. But, He may do things that we either don't understand or we might say, "That's not fair!" God will never compromise His absolutes...such as His attributes or His nature. **For He is the same yesterday, today, and forever** as it says in **Hebrew 13:8**. But in **Psalm 135:6** it states, **"The Lord does what He pleases"** for the ultimate good of His Divine purposes and to His Great Glory. If that is hard to understand or if some of you get miffed by what I have just said; then you need to get to know Him better. Many of the people from North Israel and different parts of Judah came to this event but were not able to consecrate themselves. Again, the word states they had not purified themselves, YET they were able to eat the Passover meal because of two things. (1.) King Hezekiah interceded and prayed for them and (2) their hearts were right even though their provisions were not. God heard Hezekiah's prayer and saw their hearts and healed them. What a classic case of New Testament mercy and grace showing up in the Old Testament. This was a "sneak peak", if I may say, of the future redemption of Jesus. These people literally had a "taste of the nature of God." **Psalm 34:8**

I would now like to address certain aspects of this event. First of all, it would behoove us as believers to never presume or assume on God! Just because God did it a certain way one time or for a certain person does not mean He will do the exact same thing this time for you in this way. This is not 'lack of faith,' but it is using wisdom. Let me briefly define (1.) **presumption: to take what is supposed to be true or entitled to belief without examination or positive proof** and (2.) **assumption: almost the same as presume except it has an attitude with it: to take what is not just, to take with arrogant claims, to assume haughty airs or unwarrantable powers.**

"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst." Matthew 18:20



WOW!! The key words here are arrogance and attitude. Sadly, I see some of this in the hyper-faith movement. Some of these beloved saints feel superior to other saints because of their “faith in faith” and not ‘faith in the Lord.’ Frankly, I don’t think this is sanctified spirituality but is a religious spirit. This grieves the Holy Spirit. We are never to compare or compete with our brethren. Each has been given by God a measure of faith and grace. **Romans 12:3; I Cor. 3:10**

One of the reasons I am exhorting you not to presume or assume on God is for your own protection. Let me explain. If we think God is going to do something the same way He has in the past, and then He doesn’t do it; we will foster an attitude toward Him and think He is not who He really says He is. We then will develop bitterness, resentment and anger toward God. This is **not** wise or healthy. We may even speak about God in a negative way to others which slanders His person and impugns His veracity! May it never be!

He is good, faithful, and a God you can count on. We know this because of two of His attributes that we brought up previously. **First** is mercy which is simply defined as ‘**not getting what we deserve.**’ **Second** is grace defined simply as ‘**getting what we don’t deserve.**’ As I finish this I would like to look at these two words in a greater measure. I will share some quotes from some other individuals and let you decide what ministers to you. By the way, as you read please realize God has extended **both** of these to you.

MERCY: Noah Webster says,

“It is to treat an offender better than he deserves; the disposition that tempers justice; to forbear punishment, or inflict less than the law or justice will warrant.

Lastly, it is “benevolence, compassion and clemency.” Thank you Lord that you have applied mercy to our lives.

GRACE: “free and unmerited favor of God.”

Bill Gothard says, “It is the desire and power to do God’s will.”

Jerry Daley says, “God doing for man, what man should do for himself but can’t.”

Lastly, this quote by G. S. Bishop is so profound. He states, “Grace is a provision for men who are so fallen that they cannot lift the axe of justice, so corrupt that they cannot change their own natures, so averse to God that they cannot turn to Him, so blind that they cannot see Him, so deaf that they cannot hear Him, and so DEAD that He Himself must open their graves and lift them into resurrection.”

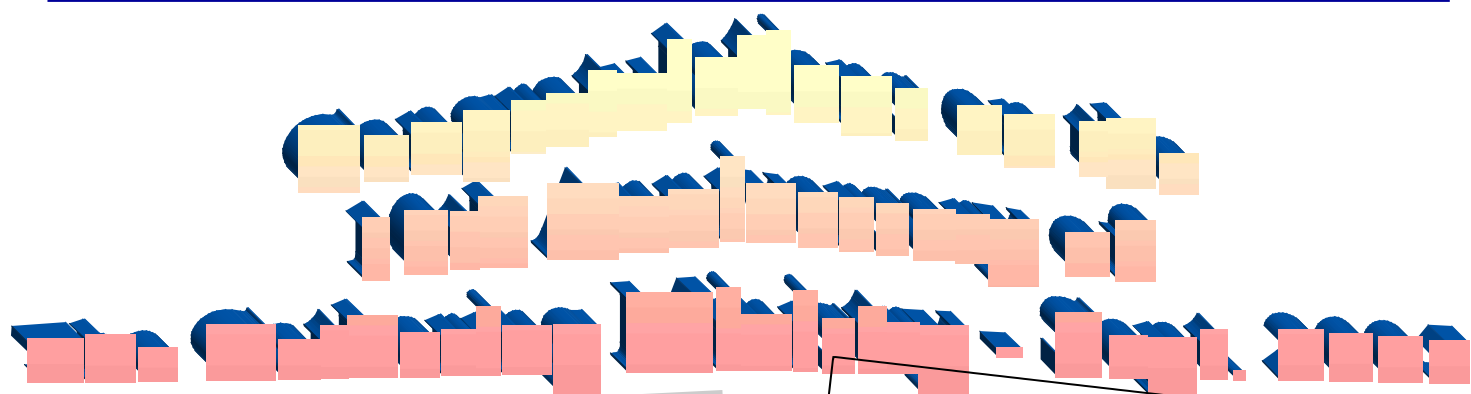
WOW, what a deal! That quote just described my past, now praise God, I am free in Him. How about you? What a merciful and graceful God we serve.

This last nugget about God’s sovereignty is so relevant for today that I must share it with you. Calvin, the great reformer says that “**we must always be reminded that all events, great and small, are embraced in God’s sovereign providence. The people of God must suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock and recognize that while the turbulent state of the world deprives us of our judgment, God, by the pure light of His own righteousness and wisdom, regulates all these commotions in the most exact order, and directs them to their proper end.**” Can you believe He said this in about 1550 A.D. ? This should encourage us today that even though things seem so out of control, nothing new is under the sun. **Ecclesiastes 1:9**

We are so blessed to serve and belong to a covenant keeping sovereign God. HE REIGNS!

Thankful I’m His,

Carmen



August/September Ministry Schedule

Wednesday, August 17: Servant Leadership Team
and John 17 Pastors' Luncheon

Friday, August 19: Landmark Church Men's

Retreat

Thursday, August 25, Noon: Beasley/Allen Bible

Study

Friday, August 26, Wedding Rehearsal—Tallassee,

AL

Saturday, August 27, 8:30—Noon: Central AL
Prayer Leaders' Network (CAPLN) Quarterly
Training Event at 1st Baptist Church, Mtg, AL

Saturday, August 27, 6 PM: Officiate Wedding in

Tallassee, AL

Sunday, August 28, Noon: Speak for Frazer Prayer
Ministry Luncheon, Montgomery, AL

Sunday, Sept. 4, 9 am: Minister at Living Water

Church, Lake Martin, AL

Tuesday, Sept. 6, 10 am: Radio Interview for
FAITH Radio, Montgomery, AL

Wednesday, Sept. 7, 8:15—11:15 am: Teach at
Canaan Land for men at Autaugaville, AL

Thurs.—Mon. Sept. 15 –19 Ministry Respite:
Boone, North Carolina

Wednesday, Sept. 21, 10:30 –11:30: Servant
Leadership Team Meeting at Frazer UMC

Wednesday, Sept. 21, 11:30—1:00: John 17
Pastors' Luncheon at Frazer UMC

Thursday, Sept. 22, Noon: Beasley/Allen Bible

Study

Thursday, Sept. 29, 9 am and 7 pm: City Convener
for "Narnia's sneak peak movie" at Frazer

UMC

**Happy Anniversary
to You Both
on September 7th**



Carmen and Elaine Falcione
celebrate 37 years of marriage.

Doug and Jacque Lunsford
celebrate 31 years of marriage.

**Happy 60th Birthday
to Carmen
on September 16th!**

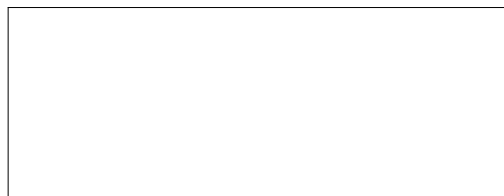
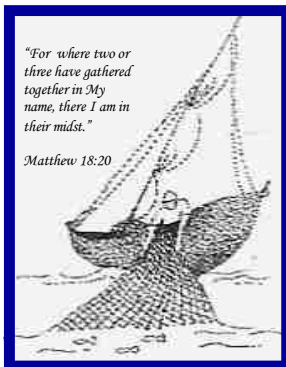


THE GATHERING IS A MINISTRY OF UNITY AND RECONCILIATION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST!

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What is "ONE Montgomery"?

Come find out this Saturday (August 27)
with the
Central Alabama Prayer Leaders' Network

Training Focus:
Making Our Cities One in Christ!

Where: 1st Baptist Church
305 S. Perry St.
Montgomery, AL

Come in Scott St. Entrance to
Sr. Adult Fellowship Hall.

Time: 8:30 Registration, Refreshments
9:00—Noon Teaching and Prayer

Speakers: Rev. Kyle Searcy, Jo Hancock, Jane Ferguson, Jan Niel, Rev. Carmen Falcione

RSVP to Ellie Ficken at (334) 272-8835 or
eficken@charter.net.

the prayer closet - ***"Brethren [and sisters], pray for us." 1 Thess. 5:25***

- * ***Praise God for the faithful ministry of The Gathering for the past 10 years. Thank Him for Carmen and Elaine and ask Him to bless their anniversary and his birthday in special ways. What a month of celebration!***
- * ***Pray for the Servant Leadership Team as they seek God's future purposes and direction for John 17.***
- * ***Pray for Carmen as he helps Jay Wolf and Kyle Searcy in the leadership of "One Montgomery."***
- * ***Pray for the CAPLN event this Saturday at 1st Baptist (see left) and for Carmen speaking at Frazer this Sunday, both focusing on "One Montgomery."***
- * ***Pray for a special time of rest and reviving for Carmen and Elaine during their vacation to North Carolina in mid-September.***
- * ***Pray for Carmen's leadership in the city concerning the Narnia Movie.***