

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - April, 2024
Newsletter for January, February, March, 2024
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Web Site: www.Loveliftedmerecovery.com

Here's a little Bible study from the book of Ephesians that should make your day, if you weren't already jumping for joy and blessed in the Lord today. Ephesians 1:5-7 says, "Having predestined us to adoption as sons (children) by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has **MADE US ACCEPTED in the Beloved (Jesus, His beloved Son)**. In Him we have **REDEMPTION** through **His BLOOD**, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His **grace**." We wanted to look closer at the term "accepted in the Beloved." The Beloved is Jesus, God's beloved Son, of course. When you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are placed into Christ, the Beloved One. You are now "accepted" by God the Father because of your relationship to Jesus. However, the word "accepted" means much more than what we think of it sometimes. You might say, "Oh, yes, they accepted me into their group", but were they just allowing you to come in, or were they really welcoming you and overjoyed that you are now a part of their group? In the Bible, this word "**accepted**" means **HIGHLY FAVORED and HONORED with BLESSINGS**. That is so much more than just being **ALLOWED** to enter God's presence or His kingdom. He has welcomed us and showered us with blessings and His **GRACE** and **FAVOR**. Isn't that wonderful? Also, don't forget that these verses above say that "**He has MADE us ACCEPTED**" in Christ. God did it, not we ourselves.

We are not worthy of God's favor and blessings, and we cannot clean up our lives and try to **EARN** His favor. God Himself has to **MAKE** us worthy and **ACCEPTED** and righteous through Jesus Christ.

•**Titus 3:3-6** "For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the **KINDNESS** and the **LOVE** of **GOD** our Savior toward man appeared, **NOT** by works of righteousness which we have done, but **according to His MERCY He saved us**, by the washing of regeneration (being born again) and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior."

•**Ephesians 2:8-9** "For by **GRACE** you have been saved **through FAITH**, and that **NOT of yourselves**, it is the **GIFT of God**; not of works, lest anyone should boast."

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, January 6, 2024 - We had three teams that went out to different places, and they were all some of our regulars: Tom, me, Kaela, Laura, Felipe, Ricardo, Sheldon and Ulysses. We had 180 lunches, hygiene/toiletry packets, socks, used clothing, jackets and coats, and blankets for the homeless, and also dog food for any homeless person that had a dog. Sheldon and I went up to the north end of the Venice Boardwalk, and Kaela and Laura went to the south end of the Boardwalk. Felipe, Ricardo and Ulysses went to the homeless encampments in Santa Monica under the freeway overpass, to a group of people living in their motorhomes in Venice, and other locations in Venice, and to some people who were living in tents in West Los Angeles. Felipe said they "gave out absolutely everything" and had a great time. Felipe looked for homeless people in so many different areas, it reminded us of the Scripture where Jesus said, "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in (meaning into His kingdom), that My house may be filled." Sheldon and I gave a blanket, a large tote-bag-on-wheels, a lunch and some clothing to a man named Matthew, and he just couldn't stop saying "Thank you, thank you." A man named Michael took a lunch, toiletries, and several warm pieces of clothing, and he was very grateful. A young woman who said her name was Nafi took a lunch, several items of clothing and toiletries, and gave us a big smile. We offered a pair of jeans to another woman, and she said she would go to the restroom and try them on. We saw her coming out of the restroom, and she was wearing them. We asked one man if he could wear a pair of size 11½ shoes, and he was so thrilled, and said, "Yes! I

can never find size 11-and-a-half - this is great!" Brian was sitting on a bench, and he was so thankful to receive a lunch, toiletries, and some clothing. Every person who received food and clothing was very happy, and the warm jackets and blankets were especially appreciated in the cold weather. We saw 88-year-old Jean, who lives in her van, and she was as cheerful as ever and said she's always praying for us. The men at the Phoenix House were outside on a break, and they were watching us give food and clothing to the homeless people across the way from them. They're not supposed to take anything from outsiders, so we gave a bunch of gospel tracts to their supervisor. He said, "Are these about Jesus?" and we said, "Yes." He said, "Great! I will give them to all the guys here." Kaela and Laura gave out all the clothing, dog food, and all but a few of the lunches, which they took home to give out during the next few weeks. Kaela said the people who received coats and blankets were very happy, and one man got a blanket for his two dogs. We also handed out gospel tracts to people walking along the Boardwalk, mostly in English, but some in Spanish.

Saturday, February 3, 2024 - Our ministry teams today consisted of Tom, me, Kaela, Laura, Jasmine, Sheldon, Felipe, Ulysses, David, Keith, and Jose. Ricardo was going to come, but Felipe said he'd had a slight stroke, so wasn't up to it (he's okay now). Tom stayed home and kept us all covered in prayer. We had 182 lunches, lots of hygiene/toiletry packets, socks, used clothing, jackets and sweatshirts, knit hats (made with love by my friend Debbie) and shoes for the homeless, and also dog food for any homeless person that had a dog. It had been raining a lot, but the forecast for today was only for rain in the later part of the day. Thank You, Jesus! Several of the homeless people we saw told us they are in shelters now, but were just down at the Boardwalk for the day, but most of them are still out in the cold and rain. Keith, Sheldon and I went to the north part of the Venice Boardwalk, Kaela, Laura and Jasmine went to the south part of the Boardwalk, and Felipe, David, Ulysses, and Jose went to the homeless encampments under various freeway overpasses around West L.A., and Santa Monica, to some people living in their motor homes, and ended up in Lincoln Park in Santa Monica. Everyone seemed to be genuinely thankful and grateful for the food, clothing and other things. The shoes were very much appreciated, and we gave out almost all of the clothing. An older man named Roy got a lunch, and then I asked him if he needed any clothes. He was very happy to get a T-shirt and some pants. Another man named Joshua got a lunch, toiletries, socks, and some shoes. These are just a few examples, and we got lots of big smiles from those who were recipients of all the food and clothing we gave out. One man kept saying, "Thank you for doing this," and we told him we were doing it in the name of Jesus. We also gave out all the dog food. We handed out gospel tracts in English and Spanish, and there is also a gospel tract in each lunch. One man, when he saw me giving a tract in Spanish to another man, came up and asked for one in Spanish for himself. I gave a little tract to a young man who said his name was Chris. He was not homeless, and he asked me what the booklet was about. I said, "it's about Jesus, but in a comic book format." He said, "Jesus, as in Christian?" I said, "Yes, Christian, born-again, Jesus," and he said, "Oh, good! I'm a new believer, and the Lord has done many miracles in my life." He proceeded to tell us how Jesus helped him get sober, and he now had two years' sobriety. I gave him one of our tracts with our ministry information on the back, and told him to look up our website, because we have a Christian 12-Step program. Sheldon talked to a couple for quite a while, because the young lady said she wanted to be baptized. He invited them to his church, and said they could talk to the pastor there about being baptized. We also gave out a bunch of tracts to the supervisor at the Phoenix House, and he said he would give them to the men living there in the program. Kaela said her group saw a lot of their "regulars" and they all had a good time. It was Jasmine's first time, and she really enjoyed it. Felipe said his group gave out all their lunches and clothing, and said it was, "Fabulous!" Felipe also had some boxes of canned food from the local food bank, and he said the people living in tents and motor homes do have can openers. Keith, Sheldon and I had a few lunches left after going down half of the Boardwalk, so we drove up Rose Avenue to the Whole Foods Store up at Rose and Lincoln, where there are a lot of people living in tents on the sidewalk. They were all very happy to see us and get lunches and food for their dogs, too. All in all, we had a great time doing the

Lord's work. Serving the Lord shouldn't be drudgery, and it is a lot of fun for all of us.

**“Serve the Lord with gladness; come before
His presence with singing.” Psalm 100:2**

Saturday, March 2, 2024 - The volunteers who came to help Tom and me were Kaela, Johnny, Lalo, Jacob, Felipe, Ulysses, David, Keith, and Jose. It was raining right before we left to go down to the Boardwalk, and stopped for a while, but later was raining lightly while we were down there giving out the lunches. We had prayed for the Lord to stop the rain altogether, but as we were giving out everything to the homeless, it seemed as if they were even more appreciative that we had come out in the rain to help them, so we just praised the Lord that He had a better plan. Keith, Lalo and I went to the north part of the Venice Boardwalk, Kaela, Johnny and Jacob went to the south part of the Boardwalk, and Felipe, David, Ulysses, and Jose went to the homeless encampments under some of the freeway overpasses around West L.A., and Santa Monica, and to some people living in tents along the streets. We had 180 lunches, lots of socks, shoes, used clothing, hygiene/toiletry packets, and knit hats for the homeless, and dog food for the homeless people who have dogs. We saw 88-year-old Jean, who lives in her van, and a few other people we recognized, but mostly new people. A woman named Areceli (“Sally” for short) got a lunch, toiletries, and some clothing, and she was very thankful. The people who received the shoes were especially happy, and the jackets and T-shirts were popular items, too. One homeless man said his name was River Phoenix, and told us he'd starred in several movies. Well, we knew that wasn't true, but that was the fantasy world he was living in. He was very glad to get a lunch. Felipe said his group was giving away food and clothing to whatever people they found in need on the streets. The rain was off and on, and Felipe said, “We are now wetback people. Our backs are wet from the rain, and everything is going great!” Felipe also said that David saw an elderly man outside of a restaurant and lying on the ground, unable to walk, and he offered him a lunch. We had a few lunches left over, because of the rain (not as many people down at the Boardwalk), so we each took a few, and will give them out to homeless people we see during the week. There is a gospel tract in every lunch, and we also gave out a few tracts to people who were just down at the Boardwalk. I gave gospel tracts in Russian to two elderly Russian women. So, the rain did not stop us from doing God's work, praise the Lord!

Prison Ministry

Oscar Muñoz, R. J. Donovan State Prison, San Diego, CA - “I really want to thank you for sending me the booklet “Creator or Liar?” as I am becoming more and more devout in my beliefs in the Lord Jesus Christ. I could not help but be moved at the illustrations and Scriptures in the story of God and how He created the earth. Wow! I was in tears learning so much more than I knew before. I will get a Bible at church this weekend and will be ready to participate in one of your Bible studies. Sincerely, Oscar”

John De La Torre, Jr., Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, Blythe, CA - “God bless you, your family and ministry, you all have such loving hearts. I want you to know the Step 10 lessons have been a blessing, really encouraging and enjoyable, with knowledge and Scripture verses I'll carry with me for the rest of my life. The love and work you do is God working in you and through you, touching us incarcerated people. Your whole 12-Step program has had a great impact in my recovery. Temptation is all around us, and I'm not sure if without this program I would be where I am now with five years sobriety. I am stronger in my faith, and I see it is my responsibility to do the daily inventory of Step 10. I love God and I'm representing Him and the miracles He's done in my heart and life. God bless, John, Jr.”

Dana Ewell, CSATF, Corcoran, CA - “I sincerely thank you for your Christian 12-Step program and Bible

studies which give me insight into seeking freedom from every “addictive agent” that is outside God’s will for my life. Enclosed are my lessons for the Ephesians Bible study. These are really, really good, especially the commentary on verses contained in the lessons. When I finish Ephesians, I would like to do your Colossians study. When I came to prison, I heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and believed, and God began to transform me from my old way of thinking, and He released me from the shame and disgrace of all my sins. I praise God that I am not my worst sin or my worst decision I ever made; that is NOT my identity as a “new creation in Christ Jesus.” It’s the miracle of our faith that God would transform broken sinners into God-fearing men eager to serve others with joy and hope. In His joy and hope, Dana Ewell”

Gilbert Rosales, Ironwood State Prison, Blythe, CA - “I want to thank you for the hard work both of you are doing for us. I do appreciate it and your work helps me get closer to Christ. It helps me understand more about myself and the relationship I can have with Christ. Through Jesus Christ I learn to be like Him, to be joyful in hope, patient, faithful, humble, loving and kind, to your neighbor and even to your enemies, and praying for them. Sincerely yours, Gilbert Rosales, Jr.”

Abraham Hade, CSP Sacramento, Represa, CA - “Thank you so much for your 12-Step program and ministry. This last lesson, the Step 4 inventory, helped me tremendously to bring out a lot of memories and thoughts I had suppressed within. Thank you for helping me bring these things to the light and allowing me to let go of them in such a healthy way. This was definitely a pivotal moment along my journey of recovery. I look forward to the next Steps, and I truly enjoy all the lessons, and feel my connection with God growing closer every day. I hope to hear from you soon. With love & care, Abraham Hade”

John Arredondo, R. J. Donovan State Prison, San Diego, CA - “It felt good to cry. Thank you for your letter telling me of your mom’s last days, it was so loving and poignant, I could not help but cry. Yes, she’s with God, and Jesus received her proudly. My mother died in 2003, and I did not grieve. I hadn’t seen her since I was five years old, and I had no loving or even good memories of her. My father died in 2007, and I did not grieve for him. He was a totally self-centered, greedy rage-aholic to the end, and a child abuser while I lived under his rule. Yeah, it felt good to cry, and I cried for your mom first, and then I realized I was also crying for my mom and dad. I have been working on resolving my resentment towards my parents. With love in Christ, John”

Charles Langsdon, CSATF, Corcoran, CA - “Your lessons are such a blessing to me and they produce a lot of fruit in my life. Thank you both for your efforts on my behalf, and for ministering to all who are in need. You both are great examples of what God can do with His children if they yield to His Spirit. Love in Christ, Charles”

Sabrina Limon, California Institution for Women, Corona, CA - “Your lessons bring so much insight to my recovery with God’s love, His truth, and the real message of love He wants us to understand. Your Love Lifted Me Recovery program has truly blessed me, and I thank you for everything. God bless you and your love and light you give to others, Sabrina”

Andres Morales, CSATF, Corcoran, CA - “I’m writing this because I want to share something with you. About 25 years ago, I did something really bad. I tried to sell my soul to Satan. I was so desperate, because I never was in jail before and I was very scared. I asked Satan to keep me out of jail, and if he did, I would give him my soul. Well, after about ten minutes, I got down on my knees and asked God for forgiveness. I am now a new creation in Christ Jesus, and God has forgiven me for that moment of unbelief, and for everything I have done in the past. I am thankful that God loves me, even though I don’t deserve it. I know He loves me, and I want to be a fisher of men so I can bring souls to Jesus

Christ. Sincerely, Andres Morales”