

**Finding our Identity in Christ**  
**Part Three**  
**Finding our Acceptance in Christ**

December 1 and 2, 2018

- *Last week we began looking at the life of Joseph found in the book of Genesis and how God wonderfully used Him. At the beginning of the story Joseph lived quite a pampered life as his father's favourite son, the son of his old age.*
- *As time passed, Joseph suffered many disappointments, rejections, betrayals, and false accusations, beginning as his own brothers rejected him and sold him as a slave to some traveling Ishmaelites.*
- *At the end of the story, God exalted Joseph to the most powerful position in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. In the midst of a seven year famine Joseph's brothers travelled to Egypt seeking food to save themselves and their families from starvation. When they arrived they were shocked to find Joseph, whom they presumed had died as a slave, ruling over Egypt as governor.*
- *Perhaps even more shocking, Joseph was not vindictive or bitter. Joseph unconditionally forgave his brothers for the evil they had done to him, instead, responding with love and compassion.*

**Genesis 50:19-21 NKJV**

<sup>19</sup> Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?"

<sup>20</sup> But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

<sup>21</sup> Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

- *Joseph harbored no ill will toward his brothers who envied and hated him and sold him as a slave.*
- *Joseph was able to look past their sins to see the goodness of God as He providentially directed the course of Joseph's life.*

**"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."**

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- *Amazingly, Joseph not only completely forgave his brothers for the evil they had done to him, but he wanted to comfort and bless them, and provide for all their needs.*

**"Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them."**

- *The question that arises is this: “How did Joseph reach such a place of love and self-sacrifice?”*
- *As we study the story of Joseph’s suffering, we see how Joseph responded to God in his trials and how God worked in his heart to mold him into a godly man. His character had so dramatically changed that God entrusted him to become the saviour of Israel. Joseph is a prophetic picture of the ultimate Saviour of Israel and of all mankind—Jesus Christ.*
- *We might wonder what might have become of Joseph had his brothers not rejected him. We can’t be overcomers unless there’s something to overcome.*
- *The Bible exhorts believers to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 13:14a). The Greek word for “put on” means “to dress, clothe.”*
- *To “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” means that our thoughts, words, and actions should reflect the reality of what has happened within our reborn spirit.*
- *This refers to the sanctification process, where we are to live out what is already in us though our new birth.*

**Ephesians 4:21–24 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup>if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:

<sup>22</sup>that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

<sup>23</sup>and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

<sup>24</sup>and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

- *We see a very important principle in Ephesians 4:21-24.*
- *If we want to be clothed with the new man, our new identity in Christ, we must first take off the old man, our former identity with its lusts and corruption.*
- *We can’t put on new clothes until we’ve removed our old clothes. In a similar way we can’t live out our new life in Christ while continuing to think and live in ways that reflect our former life.*
- *Many Christians become very frustrated because they are not able to walk victoriously in Christ. One reason for their lack of victory is that they haven’t first removed the old man. They are trying to serve God while continuing to engage in ways of thinking and living that are contrary to Christ.*

- *The Bible uses the analogy of clothing or outer garments to speak about our interaction with the world around us, how we perceive the world, and how we perceive ourselves.*
- *In the story of Joseph found in Genesis, three different garments had to be removed from Joseph before he could be clothed with the glorious garments God had prepared for him—faith, hope, and love. (1 Corinthians 13:13).*
- *Each of these three garments reflect a mindset or attitude from which he had to be freed before he could be effectively used by God and fully enter into God’s purposes for his life.*
- *Similarly, there are three “garments” believers need to be willing to have removed, which reflect our old ways of thinking. Then we can fully experience the freedom Christ has for us and enter into the purposes and ministry He has for each one of us.*
- *As Jesus Christ willingly went to Calvary to suffer for the sins of mankind, He also had three different garments removed. Each of these three garments reflect the same “garments” removed from Joseph and in the same order.*
- *In Jesus’ suffering for us He took upon Himself all our sins, sicknesses, sufferings, and injustices so we could be forgiven, healed, and freed.*
- *Joseph had to have three coats removed so he could fulfill God’s will for his life and be the saviour of Israel.*
- *Jesus Christ also had to have three coats removed so He could fulfill His Father’s will and be the Saviour of all of mankind.*
- *Each garment that is removed makes room for a new garment to be worn.*
- *The first coat Joseph wore was the coat of a son. This coat represented his identity as his father’s favourite son. Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other children and he made him a special tunic of many colours.*

#### Genesis 37:3 NKJV

<sup>3</sup> Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors.

- *Joseph’s brothers’ first act of betrayal and rejection of Joseph was to violently strip him of his coat, his coat of many colours, the coat that distinguished him as Jacob’s favourite son.*

#### Genesis 37:23 NKJV

<sup>23</sup> So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped

**Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him.**

- *Joseph's coat represented who he was—Jacob's favourite son. The coat represented his sense of belonging to the family of Israel. The coat represented his identity, the coat of a son.*
- *When Joseph's brothers stripped him of his coat it was more than a gesture of hostility, it was a statement that they rejected Joseph as their brother and wanted to strip away his identity as part of their family.*
- *Joseph did not remove his coat nor did he want his coat removed from him. It was forcibly removed by his brothers who rejected him.*
- *Joseph had to be willing to give up his right to be accepted. Otherwise, he would have spent the rest of his life fixated on the rejection and betrayal he experienced at the hands of his brothers.*
- *As the story of Joseph progresses, we see that instead becoming bitter he grew closer to God. He looked to God as his source of identity and acceptance.*
- *We need to give up our right to be accepted and not feel so entitled that we demand that people accept us. Unless we give up our right to be accepted, we will respond actively with hostility and bitterness, or respond passively by isolating ourselves from everyone around us.*
- *If we blame others, we punish them with anger, hostility, and bitterness.*
- *If we blame ourselves, we punish ourselves by withdrawing into isolation.*
- *Sometimes we respond with a mixture of both reactions.*
- *Sometimes fearing rejection, we reject others before they can reject us. Our fear of rejection prevents us from maintaining healthy, long lasting relationships.*
- *We shouldn't look to be rejected.*
- *We shouldn't expect to be rejected.*
- *However, we must recognize that sometimes we will be rejected by people and when we are, we need to give up our right and not demand to be accepted.*
- *The first coat stripped from Jesus was the purple robe of royalty that the soldiers had mockingly placed on Him. (John 19:1-5).*
- *They placed the purple robe on Jesus to ridicule Him because He declared He was the King of the Jews. After mockingly paying homage to His royalty, they slapped Him and stripped Him of the purple robe.*

- *This represented the people's rejection of Him as their Messiah, their King, and the Son of God. The people cried out, "Crucify Him!" They shouted, "We have no king but Caesar." The Jewish people totally rejected Jesus, in essence saying, "He is no king, He is no Messiah, He is nothing to us."*
- *Jesus did not cause the people to reject Him, but He allowed them to reject Him. He did not demand that they accept Him as their Saviour and King.*

**John 1:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup>**He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.**

**Isaiah 53:3 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup>**He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.**

- *How do we learn to give up our right to be accepted?*
- *How do we deal with rejection and betrayal in a healthy way?*
- *We are all created with the need to be accepted and to belong. That is why rejection and betrayal are so painful.*
- *Acceptance gives us a sense of identity, value, and even purpose.*
- *People who crave acceptance can easily be manipulated and controlled through flattery and feigned acceptance.*
- *The need for a sense of belonging can be so intoxicating that people can abandon any remnant of human decency and carry out unspeakable atrocities and even mass genocide against others they deem as "different" or "inferior." They see themselves belonging to a special nationality, ethnicity, or privileged group. The Nazi movement is an infamous example of the result of wanting to be a "special" race, an Aryan nation.*
- *However, our need to belong and be accepted is a basic human need and one that God created within us.*
- *We shouldn't see our need to be accepted as something that is evil or even as a flaw or weakness. God created each person with a need to be accepted. How we respond to our need to be accepted and belong will determine whether our need to be accepted will be a beneficial or a destructive force in our lives.*
- *How then should we respond and fulfill our need to be accepted in a healthy way which produces the fruitfulness that God intended?*

- *Because we live in a fallen world almost every person has or will experience some degree of rejection in their lives.*
- *Some people will experience greater types and degrees of rejection than others. Some rejections are more severe and traumatic than others. However, rejection is part of the reality of life.*

**Luke 21:16-17 NKJV**

**<sup>16</sup> You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death.**

**<sup>17</sup> And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.**

- *The Bible clearly states that once we receive Christ we will experience rejection and betrayal because of our faith and because we are identified with Jesus. Some who reject and betray us will be those closest and dearest to us.*

**Luke 21:18-19 NKJV**

**<sup>18</sup> But not a hair of your head shall be lost.**

**<sup>19</sup> By your patience possess your souls.**

- *Along with Jesus's warning that we will experience rejection, betrayal, and persecution because of our faith, He provides us with promises to encourage us and fill us with hope.*
- *In the midst of painful times when we are rejected and persecuted because of our faith in Jesus He has promised that He is there watching over us to preserve us. "But not a hair of your head shall be lost."*
- *Jesus's words show His concern for our well-being in even the minutest detail and we can rest in His love, confident that He will lead us safely home to our heavenly destination. The devil cannot destroy us no matter how relentless his attacks.*
- *In addition, Jesus has promised that during times of rejection, betrayal, and persecution, as we turn to Him, He will work something marvelous in our souls that will bring us to a place of victory and fruitfulness for His glory. — "By your patience possess your souls."*
- *The Greek word for "possess" means "to acquire, own, to gain, to procure a thing for one's self." So when it says "By your patience possess your souls" it is speaking about taking control of our emotions, thoughts, desires, and impulses so they don't control us.*
- *Instead of being controlled and ruled by every passing emotion and fickle feeling we are able to control and rule over negative emotions and feelings. God created us with emotions, which are not to be denied, but dealt with in a healthy*

*manner.*

- *We can't selectively deny hurtful emotions and expect to feel only positive emotions. Life is filled with both.*
- *The same Greek word "possess" is used in 1 Thessalonians 4:4 speaking about how believers should be able to rule over their own bodies and not allow fleshly impulses to drive them. — "that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor."*
- *Contained in this wonderful promise of the great victory and freedom we can experience when we are rejected and hurt is one condition that must be fulfilled on our part for God to do His part in our souls. — "By your patience possess your souls."*
- *The Greek word for "patience" means, "cheerful (or hopeful) endurance and constancy."*
- *God can produce good fruit in us when we experience rejection and betrayal if we look past the hurts and disappointments and see His acceptance and love for us and hold securely to Jesus with a cheerful hope.*
- *At some point man will always let us down, but on all points, God will never let us down.*
- *We must be willing to give up our right to be accepted by others and not allow their rejection or betrayal to steal the joy of our salvation or doubt our acceptance into the family of God, who calls us His beloved children.*
- *The Bible instructs us that when we are rejected, slandered, and persecuted for the sake of Jesus not only are we to endure it but we are to rejoice in it.*

**Matthew 5:11-12 NKJV**

<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

<sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- *The reason we are to rejoice in rejection and persecution is not because rejection is good in itself but because as we turn to God it will produce eternal fruit in and through us.*
- *As we joyfully embrace God's love and acceptance during painful times of rejection and persecution our relationship with Christ will grow deeper and more intimate.*

- **“But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.” (Luke 21:13). *The very things the enemy meant to harm and destroy us will produce the fruit of the Spirit within us. Our godly response to our trials will testify to those around us, even our persecutors, to the truth of the Gospel and the reality of Jesus Christ.***
- ***Jesus is our perfect example whom God has called us to emulate.***

#### **1 Peter 2:21-23 NKJV**

<sup>21</sup> **For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:**

<sup>22</sup> **“Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;**

<sup>23</sup> **who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;**

- ***Jesus did not demand that people accept Him. When He was reviled and rejected He did not react with threats or hateful accusations but committed Himself into the hands of His Father.***
- ***How was Jesus able to give up His right to be accepted by those around Him? How did He endure the rejection as His own disciples fled from Him at the moment He needed them most—at His betrayal and arrest in the garden of Gethsemane?***
- ***same needs as we do. Although He is the Son of God, He also became incarnate as the Son of Man. He had the same physical and emotional needs that we have. He felt the pain of betrayal and rejection just as we do.***

#### **John 16:32 NKJV**

<sup>32</sup> **Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.**

- ***Jesus was able to overcome rejection, betrayal, and abandonment because His need for acceptance and belonging was fulfilled in His relationship with His Father. — “you will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.***

#### **Isaiah 59:2 NKJV**

<sup>2</sup> **But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.**

- ***Mankind has been separated from God because of their sins and iniquities — “But your iniquities have separated you from your God.”***
- ***Sin has influenced mankind to turn to other things and to people to find their***

*identity and to fulfill their need to be accepted and belong. This is a form of idolatry.*

#### **Leviticus 13:45-46 NKJV**

<sup>45</sup> "Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!'

<sup>46</sup> He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

- *Leprosy is an analogy for sin.*
- *It is an affliction rooted in the flesh.* — “the leper on whom the sore is”
- *It produces shame.* — “his clothes shall be torn and his head bare”
- *It causes a person to be unclean.* — “he shall cover his mustache, and cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’”
- *It results in rejection, separation, isolation, and abandonment.* — “he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp”

#### **Matthew 8:2-3 NKJV**

<sup>2</sup> And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

- *In the healing of the leper we see a prophetic picture of God's remedy for both sin and rejection.*
- *The first step in dealing with sin and rejection is to come to Jesus—“And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him”*
- *No matter how broken we are or how many times we have failed or been rejected, if we humbly come to Jesus He will receive and welcome us with open arms.*

#### **John 6:37 NKJV**

<sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

- *We are to come to Jesus in faith believing that He is able to make us whole.* — “You can make me clean.”
- *Even if we are struggling with doubts because of past rejections and feelings of inferiority we can come to Him with an honest heart and confess our struggles and doubts about His acceptance of us.* — “Lord, if You are willing”
- *Jesus is moved with compassion by our plight and He responds to our cries for healing and wholeness with a resounding, “Yes! I am willing to make you whole. I accept you!”* — “I am willing; be cleansed.”

- *However, Jesus does much more than speak words of acceptance, healing, and love. He reaches out, touches our uncleanness, and makes us clean. — “Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him.”*
- *Although we were once unclean, untouchable, and rejected, Jesus reaches out and touches us. He takes upon Himself our sins, curses, and hurts and makes us whole. — “Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”*
- *When we spend time in the Lord’s presence and allow Him to touch our hearts with His tender love and acceptance He brings healing and wholeness to our emotions. Then we no longer crave and demand the acceptance of others to meet our need to belong.*

**Psalm 68:5-6 NKJV**

<sup>5</sup> **A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, Is God in His holy habitation.**

<sup>6</sup> **God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; But the rebellious dwell in a dry land.**

- *Our God is there to be our Father—“A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows.”*
- *God not only accepts us; we are His and He makes us part of His family—the Body of Christ. — “God sets the solitary in families.”*
- *In the Gospel of John Jesus makes seven “I AM” statements about Himself.*
- *Each “I AM” reflects a divine attribute about Jesus and reveals a need we have been created with that only He can fill.*
- *The final “I AM” statement is found in John, Chapter Fifteen and deals with our desire and need for acceptance and belonging.*
- *There are four aspects that deal with acceptance:*
  - 1. Acceptance through identity.*
  - 2. Acceptance through the right criteria.*
  - 3. Acceptance through intimacy.*
  - 4. Acceptance through destiny.*
- *Jesus is the only One through whom we can find fulfillment in these four areas of acceptance, so we can thrive and be fruitful.*
- *Two words that dominate John, Chapter fifteen — “abide” and “fruit.”*
- *The word “fruit” is used eight times.*
- *The Greek word for “abide” is used twelve times.*

- *Abide speaks about learning to embrace and dwell in the reality that as believers in Jesus we are in Christ and we are fully accepted by the Father. We belong to Him and we are in the Beloved—His Body—the Church.*
- *Fruitfulness results when we are able to receive His acceptance by faith.*
- *1. Acceptance by Identity:*

#### **John 15:1**

<sup>1</sup> **“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.**

- *Jesus is the true vine, the Father is the vinedresser, and we are the branches connected to the vine, are part of the vine, and belong to the vine.*

#### **1 Corinthians 12:13 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> **For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.**

- *Through our new birth we have become part of the Body of Christ and we are one in Him. Our identity is in Christ simply because we chose to put our faith in Jesus and receive Him as our Lord and Saviour. At the moment we received Jesus the Holy Spirit baptized us into His Body—we are now His forever!*

#### **1 Corinthians 6:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> **But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.**

- *The branches are joined to the vine and are inseparable. Similarly, we who are in Christ are joined together with Jesus and are inseparable.*
- *Our identity is found in Christ! Don't live like you were but live like you are.*
- *2. Acceptance by the Right Criteria*

#### **John 15:3**

<sup>3</sup> **You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.**

- *Our actions, our works, or self-effort do not give us the right criteria to be acceptable to God. It is the word that Jesus has spoken over us that gives us the right criteria. — “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.” (Matthew 9:2b).*
- *It is not anything we do that gives us the right criteria, but what Jesus has already done.*

#### **2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV**

**21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

- *It is faith in God's Word that produces within us our righteous standing before God.*

**Romans 10:9-10 (NKJV)**

**9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**

**10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

- *No matter how many times or how badly we have failed we know that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9). Jesus is always there to speak words of forgiveness and restoration over us because He has given us His Word.*
- *Jesus has given us His Word so we can be confident that through our reborn spirits we have the right criteria in Christ. As we embrace the reality of our righteous standing in Christ He can begin to live out His righteous life through us.*
- *We have the right criteria so we can produce the right criteria—much fruit.*
- *3. Acceptance through Intimacy*

**John 15:7-15**

**7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.**

**8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**

**9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.**

**10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.**

**11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.**

**12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.**

**13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.**

**14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.**

**15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.**

- *The key word to being able to experience acceptance through intimacy is “abide.” Without spending unrushed time in His Presence through His Word and prayer each day, this aspect of acceptance will elude us.*
- *We are to abide in Christ.*
- *How do we abide in Christ?*
- *We are to abide in His Word.*
- *If we do not develop an intimate relationship with God’s Word and learn to treasure and meditate on it we will rob ourselves of precious treasures that God has given to comfort, strengthen, and encourage us. “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you ...”*
- *We are to abide in His love. — “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.”*
- *Begin every day extravagantly rejoicing in God’s love for you. “I (Jesus) am in them and You (God) are in Me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that You sent Me and that You love them as much as You love Me.” (John 17:23, New Living Translation). God loves us as much as He loves His Son, Jesus! As Christians, we have our need for belonging met in the Body of Christ.*

**Psalm 149:3-4 NKJV**

<sup>3</sup> Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.

<sup>4</sup> For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.

- *We also abide in God’s love through obedience. “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”*
- *Disobedience opens the door to shame and guilt and robs us of the ability to abide in God’s love. Disobedience also hinders us from experiencing the wonder of receiving acceptance through intimacy.*
- *We are to abide in His joy. “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”*
- *When we abide in His love for us joy begins to bubble up in our hearts until we are overflowing with uncontainable joy that spills out to all those around us.*

**Psalm 16:11 NKJV**

**<sup>11</sup> You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

- *We will never be able to fully experience God's love and acceptance until we willing give up our right to be accepted by others and unconditionally love and accept them. "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."*
- *To abide in that place of intimacy and friendship with Jesus is to learn to live a life of self-sacrifice where we put God's will and plans ahead of our own. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."*
- *To abide in that place of acceptance through intimacy is to have the delight of hearing God whisper His secrets into our hearts. "but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you."*
- *4. Acceptance through Destiny – Our lives have eternal purpose and value.*

**John 15:16**

**<sup>16</sup> You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.**

- *Through acceptance we recognize that how we live our lives has eternal consequences for us and those around us. God has called us to produce fruit, more fruit, much fruit and fruit that will remain or abide eternally.*
- *God has called us to co-labour with Him to impact the world around us for eternity.*
- *On the cross of Calvary, Jesus took upon Himself our sins.*
- *He allowed Himself to be rejected so we could be accepted.*

**Mark 10:33-34 NKJV**

**<sup>33</sup> "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles;**

**<sup>34</sup> and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."**

- *Through each aspect of Jesus' suffering he experienced betrayal and rejection so we could experience and receive acceptance.*

- *Jesus experienced rejection as the people mocked Him so we could receive acceptance through identity.*
- *Jesus experienced rejection as He was scourged as an evil doer so we could receive acceptance through the right criteria.*
- *Jesus experienced rejection as He was spat upon so we could receive acceptance through intimacy.*
- *Jesus experienced death as they crucified Him so we could receive salvation and a life that has eternal value.*

**Matthew 27:46 NKJV**

<sup>46</sup> And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

- *Jesus experienced rejection and agony as He hung on the cross as our sin offering. He experienced the agony of being separated from His Father so we can be assured of His promise, "For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5b).*
- *Hell is the place of ultimate rejection and isolation—it is the place of total separation from God.*

**2 Thessalonians 1:9 NKJV**

<sup>9</sup> These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

- *"Hell is not a choice of God, it is a choice of man who wants to reject God. The Good News is that we don't have to have man's choice we can have God's choice. The privilege we have is telling people that they don't have to have their choice but that they can have God's choice." Ravi Zacharias*
- *Apostle Paul beautifully summarized what it means to fully identify with Jesus and to fully embrace that we are accepted by God.*
- *"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." (Romans 15:7, NIV).*