

GRACE & PEACE to each of you from GOD our FATHER & our LORD JESUS CHRIST, our soon coming KING. I trust that in spite of any adversities or afflictions (Ps. 34:19) you may be experiencing, you can still SHOUT, ìPRAISE THE LORDî anyhow. (Ps.18:3; Ps. 50:23; Ps. 34:1; & Ps. 100:4). GOD inhabits the PRAISES of HIS people! (Ps. 22:6). PRAISING is what I was doing ALL month! PRAISE, WORSHIP & THANKSGIVING got me through March as I had a cold/flu/virus that really hit me hard.

I traveled to Kalamazoo, Michigan for my nephew Adam & Wendyís marriage. It was a beautiful wedding & I stayed with my dear brother Robert & his wife, Frances. There were several nieces, nephews there & two lovely cousins, Kris & Margie, that I hadnít seen in 21 years. Even though I was sick, it was a great & joyous time. I also praise GOD for blessing me with a loving brother Robert & his wife, Frances, who is like a sister. I flew back Monday at 4 p.m. & had a home Bible Study at 7:30 p.m. & eight showed up on a very wet & rainy night. That is commitment!

On Tuesday I spent 5 Ω hours at the L.A. County Jail counseling & ministering a service that had a very nice harvest of souls. March had four days of ministry at the L. A. Co. Jail. The riots have stopped, prayerfully for good. The harvest of souls at the services & counseling were huge this month. On Wednesday I did the noon service at the L.A. Mission to a packed house & another big harvest. I went home & packed to fly Thursday to Portland, Oregon to my daughter Leaís marriage to Doug Jacobson. I left Detroit in snow & arrived in Portland to snow. Brrrrrrr.

Lea & Dougís wedding was beautiful & 230 people attended. She was absolutely beautiful & radiant & I struggled not to cry as I walked her down the isle. My other daughter, Nikol, was the maid of honor. We went to Salem, Oregon for the wedding & everything worked out perfectly. I even asked GOD for a sunny & warmer day (LORD, if I find favor in your sight?), & HE gave us a great day. On the 31st of this month, I fly to Pahrump, Nevada for ministry with commanders Dion & Arlene Torrez of the Salvation Army.

With the 3 trips to 3 different states, I was still able to do 19 services with over 300 giving their hearts to JESUS, or rededicating. Chino womenís prison service was a blessed night of ministry, as were all the Skid Row Mission Services. It was a hectic but very fruitful month. My brother Robert & I had fun needling Pete, his son-in-law about the delicious Super Bowl victory of the

Pittsburgh Steelers, whom we rooted for since we were children.

Then I thought, it seems like most of us are obsessed with keeping score. Who won the Super Bowl ? World Series? By what score ? Did the stock market move up or down? What does the profit & loss statement indicate? How were the grades last semester? Accurate barometers of performance are necessary for many endeavors. With the weekly average of 16 phone calls, I have seen far too many Christians who unconsciously & inappropriately apply this type of cultural gauge to their walk of faith. It can prompt disturbing questions: "Is GOD pleased with me today?" "How can I come joyously into the LORD'S presence when my behavior has been so erratic, even sinful?" Such thinking sets the Christian on a rather miserable spiritual journey of doubt & mediocrity.

The Scripture is emphatically CLEAR that JESUS' life, death & resurrection CLEARED our sin account with GOD once for all. II Cor. 5:19 says, "Namely, that GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world to HIMSELF, NOT counting their trespasses against them." GOD IS NOT A SCORE KEEPER OF SIN. Our WORTH before HIM NEVER shifts or alters. HIS LOVE for us is constant, even when our behavior is erratic. The righteousness of CHRIST has actually been PERMANENTLY credited to our personal account with GOD. Our sin - past, present & future - was fully FORGIVEN when we placed our FAITH in CHRIST for Salvation. SEE: Ps. 103:10; Romans 4:7, 8; Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:34B. GOD always relates to us according to HIS MERCY & GRACE, never treating us as we deserve. Now, that doesn't mean we are free to sin. We are eternally forgiven of sins' guilt & penalty, but there are plain & sometimes painful consequences to sinful actions. We are to confess our sin to HIM (I John 1:9) & repent. Repentance is a life long exercise. GOD always blesses obedience & desires it. (I Sam. 15:22 & II Cor. 5:9, 10).

Still, our sin account with GOD has been cleared through CHRIST'S sacrificial death. There's NO condemnation of the believer before GOD (Rom. 8:1) and since GOD is not counting our sins against us, we, like CHRIST, are NOT to hold grudges against those who offend us (Eph. 4:32; I Cor. 13:5; Matt. 6:14, 15). The Old Testament prophet Micah describes the forgiving, compassionate HEART of GOD in Micah 7:19. GOD does NOT have a scorekeeper mentality BUT we do have HIS LOVE & ACCEPTANCE. Until next month, may GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU. To you who sent LOVE offerings & prayers, a 100-fold blessing.

In His Majesty's Service,

Mel Novak