

# **GOD ALWAYS MAKES THE FIRST MOVE**

August 12, 2018

WONDERFUL MERCY CHURCH



# IT'S NOT ABOUT US. IT NEVER WAS.

- Our instinct to bring our judgment to the experiences we have in church can be tamed only by changing our starting point: away from our preferences and desires—what *we* want—to loving Him so much we want to give Him what *He* wants
- John 6:35, 41-51 NLT



# WHAT ISRAEL HAD TO LEARN

- God was not at their beck and call as if He was a cosmic bellhop whose job was to fulfill their latest desire
- He hadn't chosen them and then rescued them from Egypt because they were a better nation than all the others
- Bottom line: they didn't choose Him at all. He chose them.



# WHAT ISRAEL HAD TO LEARN

- Their grumbling became a raging chorus and a million or so souls in the desert threw a collective tantrum because they weren't getting their way
- Sons and daughters of God have a long history of throwing tantrums





# JESUS AND THE LEADERS IN JOHN

- The Jewish religious leaders habitually complain about Jesus—what he says, what he does—because they are looking for the kind of Messiah who will give them what they want
- Jesus explains this isn't how God's program of salvation and kingdom life is organized



# GOD'S INITIATIVE, NOT OURS

- **John 6:44a** NLT

“For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me...”

- Father and Son are in complete unity in their wooing, loving, and inviting. Just as no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him, so “*No one can come to the Father except through Me.*” [Jn. 14:6b]





Certificate  
of  
Baptism

This Certifies  
That Graham Sellers

Was by me Baptized  
in the Name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Ghost

On the 22 day of March  
In the year of our Lord 1970

Ken Stephens  
Pastor



# GOD'S INITIATIVE, NOT OURS

- In the end, I didn't come to Jesus because of my Sunday School teacher's flannel board presentation of the gospel
- I came because I was drawn, mysteriously, supernaturally, divinely
- **Ephesians 2:10** PASSION TRANSLATION  
“Even before we were born, God planned in advance our destiny and the good works we would do to fulfill it!”



# UNITY

- Unity is not uniformity; it is a oneness of heart, not a cult-like mind meld
- Unity is elusive when a consumer mindset prevails because my preferences are continually competing with yours
- That's why churches fall apart and split—because competing wants and opinions are at war, and in a war there are always casualties



# UNITY

- This is crucially important for us right now as we ask, “God, what do you want to happen here?”
- Unity will be our portion only if our opinions are secondary to what God wants



# UNITY

- If we are united around and in Jesus, then nothing will be able to divide us, even if, individually, we don't get what we want



**THE ANGEL OF UNITY**  
A PAINTING BY ISABEL RUBIO



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