



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

MARCH 2024

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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The gospel of peace

The apostle Peter declared the gospel of peace to the household of Cornelius. He explained to them that this was the message introduced by John the Baptist and then substantiated through the ministry of Jesus Christ and His messengers. Specifically, Peter said, 'The word which God sent to the children of Israel, *preaching peace through Jesus Christ* – He is Lord of all – *that word you know*, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.' **Act 10:36-38.**

Peter's statement, 'that word you know', is notable. It highlights that the message introduced by John the Baptist, ministered by Jesus, and then borne witness to by His messengers – the twelve and the seventy-two – was *widely known* throughout the whole region, even among the Gentiles. **Mar 1:28.** This message had a profound and compelling effect on the inhabitants of the land. For example, even without the witness of miraculous signs, 'all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem', went out to John. Confessing their sins, they were baptised by John as they were introduced to the gospel of peace. **Mar 1:5.**

John the Baptist, ministering in the spirit and power of Elijah, prepared the way for Jesus Christ, whom the prophet Malachi identified as 'the Messenger of the Covenant'. **Mal 3:1.** John's message, which Jesus advanced, and then fulfilled through His offering on the cross, was, 'All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.' **Isa 40:6-8.**

Further Study MARK 1

The axe is laid to the root

John the Baptist prepared the way for the coming of Christ to the nation of Israel. The preparatory dimension of John's message was exemplified through his interaction with the many Pharisees and Sadducees who came out to him to be baptised. He said to them, 'Brood of vipers! *Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.' **Mat 3:7-10.**

When John said, 'The axe is laid to the root of the trees', he was proclaiming the judgement of God on all flesh, which is as grass. In particular, John was highlighting that the temple and offering economy that belonged to the Law Covenant, which the Lord made with the flesh on Mount Sinai, was coming to an end. The promise of eternal life would no longer be afforded through physical circumcision and the observance of the Law. **Gal 5:6.** With this message, John was preparing the way before Jesus, the Messenger of the Covenant. **Mal 3:1.**

At the commencement of His ministry, Jesus identified His physical body as the temple, making Herod's temple and its Old Covenant practices redundant. He said to them, 'Destroy this temple [referring to His body], and in three days I will raise it up.' **Joh 2:19,21.** The Jews understood that Jesus was saying that His body was replacing their physical temple and its administration of offerings. For this reason, they sought to discredit and destroy Him. **Mat 26:59-61.**

Further Study GALATIANS 3

The place of judgement and mercy

Continuing his proclamation of the gospel of peace to the household of Cornelius, Peter said, 'And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, *whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up on the third day*, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.' **Act 10:39-41.**

Through Christ's offering journey, culminating in His crucifixion on a tree at Calvary, the judgement of God was executed on all flesh. This principle of life, and its fallen righteousness, was destroyed. It was revealed to be as transient as the grass and the flower of the field, becoming chaff, the end of which is eternal burning. We see that the cross was the place where every person, because of the flesh, was no longer one of His people. **Hos 1:9.**

However, through the prophet Hosea, the Lord declared, 'In the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," there it shall be said to them, "You are sons of the living God." Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and appoint for themselves one head; and they shall come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel!' **Hos 1:10-11.**

Likewise, the gospel of peace proclaims that in the place where all flesh is as grass, those who are born again through the enduring word of God, are joined to a process through which they are made part of a new humanity, through the Spirit. Significantly, Hosea declared that the people who received this message – whether Jew or Gentile – would be gathered into one body, under one Head. Hosea was highlighting that sons of God would be established as part of the body of Christ! **1Co 12:12.**

Further Study HEBREWS 4

Coming to Christ

In his first epistle, the apostle Peter detailed the implications of the gospel ministered in the spirit and power of Elijah. He identified this message as, *'All flesh is as grass ... but the word of the Lord endures forever'*. He then said that this is the word by which the gospel is preached to a hearer. **1Pe 1:24-25**. Through the preaching of the living and abiding word of God, a hearer can be born again of the incorruptible seed of the Father. The seed, which is the word of God, is germinated in the heart of a hearer by the Holy Spirit, who is the life of the seed. **1Pe 1:23**. As Jesus Himself explained, 'It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.' **Joh 6:63**.

A person who is born again is joined to a process through which they are able to lay aside 'all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all evil speaking'. **1Pe 2:1**. The apostle Paul described this process as 'the circumcision of Christ'. **Col 2:11**. The circumcision of Christ is an implication of a believer's baptism through which they are established as a member of the body of Christ. A newborn son of God, who is choosing this fellowship, will desire the pure milk of the word by which they can grow, departing from their carnality, to walk by the Spirit. **1Pe 2:2. 1Co 3:1-3**.

A son of God who is being delivered from their carnality through fellowship in Christ's offering and sufferings, as a member of His body, will be coming to Christ, the Chief Cornerstone, to be built on Him. **1Pe 2:4-8**. The accompanying reformation in their marriage and family indicates that they are being brought forth from the body of Christ as part of the bride of Christ.

Further Study 1 PETER 2

You will follow afterward

The work of Christ is accomplished through His body, which is the temple of God. Jesus said concerning His own physical body, 'Destroy *this temple*, and in three days I will raise it up.' **Joh 2:19**. The temple in Jerusalem was annulled when Jesus declared that His own physical body was the temple through which the righteousness of God was fulfilled.

Through seven wounding events from Gethsemane to Calvary, Jesus priested Himself as a living sacrifice. The full function of the temple, including its furniture, was manifest in His physical body through this offering. For example, through seven wounding events, as Christ's blood was shed, the altar and mercy seat of the temple were sprinkled seven times, fulfilling the true Day of Atonement. **Lev 16:14**.

Just prior to the commencement of this suffering journey, Jesus said to His disciples, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.' **Joh 13:36**. This is most significant. Jesus finished this journey and fulfilled all things, alone. When He declared His offering journey, finished, He had been brought back from the death of sin, and His physical body was now immortal and incorruptible. **Joh 19:30**. Importantly, it was not yet a spiritual body, for He had not yet been clothed with His heavenly body from the Father. **2Co 5:1-3**.

After He yielded His Spirit into the hands of the Father, He remained in fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit, while His immortal and incorruptible physical body rested in the tomb for three days and three nights. After this, the Father declared, a second time, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' **Heb 5:5**. The Son returned to His immortal and incorruptible body, which was also clothed with His heavenly body from the Father. He was manifest as the glorified Son of Man in the image and likeness of God.

Further Study MATTHEW 16

Able to follow Christ

In the evening of the day of His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples, who had assembled together in a closed room. 'Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained".' **Joh 20:21-23**. Through this word, the disciples were born of God and were established as members of Christ's corporate body.

Significantly, the disciples were now able to join the journey that Christ had finished for them. What He had accomplished through His offering journey could now be fulfilled in them as they journeyed with Him as members of His body, *which was now corporate*. **1Co 12:14**.

A case in point is the apostle, Peter. Although Peter was with Jesus in the court of Caiaphas, and saw, in Christ's marred face, the grotesqueness of his own iniquitous self-righteousness, this fleshly propensity was not processed from his life through this encounter. **Luk 22:61**. Rather, Peter was illuminated to see his true condition and was enabled to become bankrupt in spirit. Jesus was only able to process Peter after he had been born again and been joined to Christ's body. As Peter communed with Christ and his fellow disciples on the shore of Galilee, Christ addressed his self-righteousness. It was beginning to be processed from him. Moreover, Peter was established by the Lord in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, through which he could be delivered from his carnality and could fulfil the works that belonged to his calling. **Joh 21:15-19**.

Further Study JOHN 21

How do we see Jesus?

It is important for us to understand how we meet and know Jesus during our lifetime. The apostle Paul declared that following His ascension, Jesus was seated at the right hand of the Father. **Eph 1:19-20**. However, this is not how we presently see Jesus. Rather, Paul explained that we *presently* see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. **Heb 2:9**.

We do not see Jesus 'made a little lower than the angels' because of a personal revelation of Christ's offering and suffering on our behalf. We see Jesus made a little lower than the angels because we are joined to the fellowship of His sufferings as members of His body, *which is now corporate*. We can only see Jesus in the fellowship of His corporate body. **2Co 3:18**.

We are the temple because of our connection to Christ's body, which is the Mercy Seat and the Altar. Establishing this point, Paul declared, 'We have an altar from which those who serve the [Old Covenant] tabernacle have no right to eat.' **Heb 13:10**. Christ's body is the Altar from which we eat. We eat from this Altar because we abide in His body. As Jesus Himself, said, 'He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me [as a member of His body], and I in him.' **Joh 6:56**.

There is no redemption, no process, and no change in our life unless we are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings as a member of His body. In other words, relational disconnection from His corporate body is disconnection from the process through which we are brought to glory as sons of God and sons of men in the image and likeness of God. **Rom 8:29**.

Further Study HEBREWS 2

Members of the body and bride

For the whole church age, Jesus, our immortal and great High Priest, is establishing us as members of His body by priesting to us a participation in His offering work on the cross. In particular, we are made members of His corporate body, as part of a new creation, in His third wound. **Eph 2:14-18**. As we continue to participate in every element of His offering journey, we are raised with Him. **Eph 2:6**. From this dimension of the temple, we find our dwelling place in the bride city as overcoming, blameless people. That is, we come forth from His body as His bride in local churches. This is true in every generation, and for every believer.

The work of Christ, through His ascension-gift ministers in the presbytery, is to bring forth the bride of Christ from the body of Christ so that it will become the administration of the throne of God and the Lamb in the new heavens and earth. **Eph 4:11-13**. In the time of the end, as the work of Christ is being *completed*, the temple will be moved into the throne of God the Father and the Lamb. This is a significant point. When this happens, the temple of Christ's corporate body is not shut down or made obsolete. Rather, its expression proceeds from the throne of the Father, and reveals the Father to the world.

As the will of the Father is progressively accomplished in the time of the end, the *processive work* of the temple is progressively shut down, stage by stage. In this regard, we note that there is no temple in the bride city when it becomes the throne room of the Father and the Lamb in the new heavens and earth. **Rev 21:22**. That which is perfect will have come. **1Co 13:10**. God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – will be all in all. **1Co 15:28**.

Further Study 1 CORINTHIANS 12

Progression from body to bride

We come into the body of Christ, through baptism, to join the offering of Christ. **1Co 12:13. Rom 6:3-4.** As we are joined to the offering of Christ, we are made – whether man, woman, or child – a particular member of Christ. **1Co 12:27.** We then show forth His death and life in our mortal bodies until He comes. **2Co 4:10. 1Co 11:26.** The body of Christ is the context in which we are processed, individually, and together, by the word of present truth that is being proclaimed to us by Christ, from the presbytery.

The focus of the body is our individual sonship. As we remain connected to Christ, like branches on a vine, we are sustained by His life and are able to bear the fruit of righteousness which He brought forth for us through His offering. **Joh 15:5.** Moreover, we are chastened by the Father to bring us to maturity as sons of God. **Joh 15:2.** This chastening and pruning happens as Jesus Christ *priests* to us a participation in His sufferings as members of His body, the *temple*.

The word of present truth is processed in our lives through communication; through testimony and prayer in *agape* fellowship; in public gatherings; in our families; and from house to house as we care for one another. When we live this way, we are walking in the light. As we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ delivers us, and cleanses us, from our sin and familiar ways. **1Jn 1:7.** We are then blameless in the sight of God because we are living sanctified lives. **Php 2:14-15. Rom 6:22.**

When we, as a local community of Christians, live together as a church in this way, we then emerge from the body of Christ into the world as the bride of Christ. Our homes become a context for bringing forth godly children. Moreover, they are a place for care and the evangelism of others who do not know Christ.

Further Study ROMANS 6

Overcoming the world

The bride of Christ is a blameless, sanctified community in the world. **Php 2:14-16**. They are an overcoming people. They are overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil. Overcoming is a definitive characteristic of believers who are part of the bride of Christ. To this end, the apostle Paul exhorted his readers, writing, 'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good'. **Rom 12:21**. Paul was not exhorting his readers to perform good works according to the flesh. This is not the righteousness of God. Rather, he was commending them to the good that belongs to sons of God who are revealing the Father through fellowship in the offering of Christ, as members of His body. Accordingly, the apostle John noted, 'Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith [which works by 'offering love']. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?' **1Jn 5:4-5**.

With this in mind, we recognise that no person, claiming to be a Christian, who is cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, a murderer, sexually immoral, a sorcerer, an idolator, or a liar will be part of the bride of Christ. **Rev 21:8**. **Rev 22:15**. Anything that defiles or causes an abomination or lies shall, by no means, enter the bride city. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life have a place in this city.

Having obtained deliverance from slavery to sin, the citizens of the bride city are an obedient and undefiled people. **Rom 6:22**. **Rom 16:19**. They are a blessed people who have been given the right to eat of the tree of life in the *agape* fellowship of the body of Christ. This is a pivotal point, which we must all understand. They are entitled to proceed forward from the body, to enter through the gates of the city of God, as a blameless, sanctified and overcoming people. They are part of the bride of Christ. **Rev 22:14**.

Further Study EPHESIANS 2

The body is a place of process

The body of Christ is where we are processed in or out of the kingdom of God. In this regard, Christ's body is the context in which the work of the cross is manifest through His seven wounding events. A person who is being established in the body of Christ is participating in the seven elements of His offering, suffering journey. There is no life through the cross apart from fellowship in the body of Christ. **Joh 6:53**.

We participate in the *agape* fellowship of the body of Christ in either a worthy or an unworthy manner. If we participate in an unworthy manner, we come under the judgement of Christ. **1Co 11:27-29**. This judgement becomes a chastening that presses a person to respond in obedience to the word of present truth; or it becomes a polarising event, causing them to become offended at Christ and His messengers. Those who remain offended then depart from the body of Christ, which is the temple of God, the church. When a person departs from the body of Christ, they have their part in the lake of fire, which is the second death. **Rev 21:8**.

Those who are members of the body of Christ are also described as a temple of living stones who are built on *one foundation*. This foundation is Christ. **1Pe 2:4-5**. The apostles, Paul and Peter, warned us to take heed as to how we build our lives, marriages, families, and relationships on Christ. **1Co 3:10-15**. **1Pe 2:4-10**. If we build with fleshly elements, likened to wood, hay and stubble, then the fire of God will test our work and we will suffer loss. However, when this happens, we are given the opportunity to become wise. We can cease from our immaturity, and our foolish ways, and rebuild with spiritual materials, described as gold, silver and precious stones. If we continue in our folly, then, finally, a flood will come upon us, and we will be swept away. **Mat 7:27**. No place will be found for us in the bride city.

Further Study ROMANS 12

Proving that Christ is in us

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul declared, 'For your obedience has become known to all ... and the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly'. **Rom 16:19-20**. Satan is only bruised under our feet while we live and walk in obedience to the word of present truth. The apostle Paul, in his final address to the Corinthian church, spoke to them of an earlier letter that he had sent to them, addressing those among them who had sinned. Writing again, he said that he was coming a third time to address those among them who continued to sin. **2Co 13:1-2**.

The apostle defined their carnality as sin. He described it as contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults, uncleanness, fornication and lewdness. **2Co 12:20-21**. Paul had already taught them that those who practise these things do not have eternal life. **Rom 1:32**. He then urged the Corinthians to examine themselves to see if they were, indeed, in the faith. In this regard, he was asking whether they were Christians at all. They needed to test themselves to see if Christ was in them. If they could not prove, by demonstration, that the life of Christ was in them, then they were reprobate and lost. **2Co 13:5**.

We demonstrate that Christ is in us by manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. **Gal 5:22-23**. This fruit belongs to those who are crucifying the flesh, with its passions and desires, through fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ as members of His body. This reveals the faith of those who are being made worthy of the kingdom. A worthy house is a part of the *agape* fellowship of a local church, participating in the house-to-house fellowship and care of the local community.

Further Study 2 CORINTHIANS 7

Dealing with valleys and mountains

When a person receives the message that belongs to the ministry of Elijah in a worthy manner, every 'valley' in their life can be exalted and every 'mountain' can be brought low. **Isa 40:4**. The valleys in our life refer to the identity flaws and frailties that we have on account of sin, the influence of familiar spirits, as well as historical hurts. The mountains refer to our projections and their associated wealth, which have been accrued through trading within the economy of Babylon. These mountains are an impediment to our entry into the kingdom of heaven. As Jesus noted, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God ... With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.' **Mar 10:25,27**.

The apostle James addressed this implication of the ministry of Elijah, writing, 'Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation [valleys exalted], but the rich in his humiliation [mountains brought low], because as a flower of the field he will pass away. For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.' **Jas 1:9-11**.

The rich man glories in his humiliation because he is thankful that he is being rightly measured to the truth of his name as a son of God. The poor man rejoices in his exaltation because the identity frailties and flaws that undermine his capacity to meet and relate with others, and to express his identity according to his name, are being healed. He is no longer a victim of his circumstances and is able to make straight paths for his feet. **Heb 12:12-13**.

Further Study ISAIAH 42

Serpents and scorpions

The authority to trample on serpents and scorpions belongs to the ministry of Elijah. Granting this ministry to the seventy-two, Jesus said, 'Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' **Luk 10:19-20.**

Serpents and scorpions refer to demonic and familiar spirits within families that control the agenda of the household. **Num 33:55-56.** It is evident that these influences are present when a person gets angry, reactive, or withdraws from the messenger as the word is being ministered to a house. They are unable to hear and meet the word of their name which calls them to stand on their feet.

Characteristically, a household that is beset by serpents and scorpions is unable to fellowship from house to house with *open communication*. **Pro 22:5.** There are 'no-go' matters that, if broached, provoke a prickly reaction.

In this regard, those who are beset by these oppressing spirits are like thorns. They cannot be entreated by the messengers who are proceeding from the hand of Christ. **Eze 2:6.** King David noted this implication of those who resist the word, saying, 'But the sons of rebellion shall all be as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands. But the man who touches them must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, and they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place.' **2Sa 23:6-7.** The influence of serpents and scorpions, rendering a hearer as 'thorny', chokes the messenger word so that the household is unable to bear the fruits of the Spirit, which are life and peace.

Thankfully, the Lord has given His messengers the authority to trample serpents and scorpions underfoot. In order to trample them underfoot, messengers must make sure that their feet are shod with the *preparation* of the gospel of peace. **Eph 6:14-15.**

Further Study EZEKIEL 2

Having our feet shod

The preparation of the gospel of peace means that we have applied ourselves to understand the gospel of God. We are not continuing to minister from the basis of our old gospels. Equally, having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace means that the gospel is at work in our lives, bringing reformation, personally, in our marriages, and in our families. **Mat 5:16**. The gospel is demonstrated by the way in which we walk, or conduct ourselves. **Col 2:5-7**. By this means, our peace is able to rest on those who receive our testimony, bringing healing and deliverance to those who receive us. **Luk 10:6**.

In this regard, we note that peace with God is not just a legal position of reconciliation. It is a vital connection with God. It is fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Spirit. This is what the messengers of Christ are bringing to houses. They are not just bringing an information message. They are bringing the substance of fellowship to a house. **1Jn 1:3**.

It is important to recognise that, as messengers walk in this manner, it is the God of peace, Himself, who crushes Satan under their feet. **Rom 16:20**. We see that the ministry that Jesus has given to the order of seventy-two is from the Father. Satan is crushed, and his power over individuals, marriages, and families is broken, as the household receives a messenger whom Christ sends with the gospel of peace. The demonic and familiar spirits that control the agenda of the family are crushed and removed from the house.

The peace that accompanies the gospel, proclaimed in the spirit and power of Elijah, compels what belongs to the kingdom of darkness to vanish. The fallen culture of the house is replaced with the fruit of the Spirit, which is the fruit of sonship. Faith, which replaces the fear of death that keeps a person in bondage, is demonstrated by relational obedience to the gospel. **Rom 16:19**.

Further Study 2 CORINTHIANS 5

Jesus and the centurion

The centurion pleaded with Jesus, saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralysed, dreadfully tormented'. **Mat 8:5-6**. The centurion knew that he needed a healing in his house in relation to those who served, because they were sick and tormented, presumably by serpents and scorpions. Jesus responded by saying to the centurion that He would come to his house to heal his servant so that he could again serve in the house. Christ was the centurion's messenger, coming to him from God, looking for a worthy house. If the centurion was found worthy, his house could become a unit, or context, for fellowship and service in the Father's kingdom.

The centurion responded to Christ, the Messenger, saying, 'Lord, *I am not worthy* that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority'. **Mat 8:8-9**. Jesus marvelled at the response of this man, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!' **Mat 8:10**. Jesus then explained that those who possessed 'like faith' would sit and eat of the Father's *agape* meal in the kingdom of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He warned that those who were not found worthy, even though they were born into the kingdom, would be cast out into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **Mat 8:11-12**.

Drawing from this account, we note that a worthy person is first illuminated that they are not worthy of the gospel. Instead of presuming to be the measure of the word, they fall down at the messenger's feet, and then need to be encouraged to stand up and meet the word of their name, which is coming to them, bringing healing and deliverance. **Act 10:25-26**.

Further Study MATTHEW 8

Peter and the house of Cornelius

When the apostle Peter entered the house of Cornelius, he met Peter and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. **Act 10:25**. He demonstrated the same faith as the centurion whom Jesus had encountered. This man did not assess Peter's credentials, nor consider himself to be Peter's equal or superior. Rather, he considered himself unworthy of the messenger and worshipped at his feet. This was a man who was rejoicing in his humiliation as the word was proclaimed to him in the spirit and power of Elijah. **Jas 1:9-10**.

In response, Peter said to Cornelius, 'Stand up; I myself am also a man.' **Act 10:26**. Peter's statement indicated that he had come in the spirit and power of Elijah. He was affirming to Cornelius that he was a man of 'like passions.' **Jas 5:17**. Significantly, when Peter himself was first commissioned by Jesus, he also confessed that he was not worthy to receive the messenger. He fell at the feet of Jesus, and said to Him, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!' **Luk 5:8**. The Lord said to him, 'Do not be afraid. From now on, you will catch men.' **Luk 5:9-10**.

After the Day of Pentecost, Peter continued to minister in the spirit and power of Elijah. This is the spirit in which he came to the house of Cornelius. Accordingly, Peter's peace, which was the fruit of the Lord's process in his life, could rest upon Cornelius' household. We note that the Lord was dealing with Peter just prior to receiving Cornelius' request to visit his house. The Lord said to him three times, 'What God has cleansed, you must not call common.' **Act 10:9-16**. As Peter embraced this process, he was able to minister the gospel of peace, through testimony, to Cornelius and his family.

Further Study ACTS 10

Our response to the messenger

A hearer is brought into contact with Christ through the unction of the life and peace that Christ has given to His messengers. It is given to Christ's messengers so that they can give it to those who receive them. **Joh 13:20**. When a messenger who comes from Christ is received, the peace that comes to them and their house, through the word that the messenger brings, makes them a worthy Christian.

The illumination that a person receives from a messenger is that they are not worthy of God's mercy and the illumination that He is bringing to them. They, figuratively, fall at the feet of the messengers whom Christ has sent. They are able to become bankrupt in spirit and turn in repentance from their own way and understanding, and receive faith to obey the word that they are hearing. **Psa 34:18. Rom 10:17**.

It is important to note that the only Man, at whose feet we fall, is Christ Himself. Evidently, a person who responds in this manner recognises that they are meeting the face of Christ. We note, in this regard, that Jesus said to His disciples, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.' **Joh 13:20**. We see that receiving the messenger is receiving Christ and the Father.

However, when a person falls at the feet of a messenger who comes in the spirit and power of Elijah, the messenger will call their hearer to stand up and meet their name, affirming to their hearer that they are a person of like passions. They do not take dominion over the faith of the one who is receiving the message. **3Jn 1:9**.

Equally so, the direction to a hearer to stand on their feet is not an invitation to collegiality with, or among, the presbytery. Rather, a person is called to stand and measure themselves to their name, which is proclaimed to them through the gospel.

Compelled to make a response

When the gospel is proclaimed in the spirit and power of Elijah, it compels a hearer to make a judgement concerning, or a response to, the word. Jesus Himself said that this was the reason why He came to minister on the earth. Specifically, He said, 'For judgement I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.' **Joh 9:39**. That is, through His ministry, He was forcing, or compelling, everyone to make a judgement. **Joh 5:22-24**. They were pressed by the word either to respond with illumination or to respond from the darkness of their own gospel understanding. **Joh 9:40-41**. Responding in this manner makes a person unworthy of the gospel.

Some households, through compromise in relation to their culture and connection with those who have become enemies of Christ, choose to remain in the flesh. They remain socially engaged in the fellowship of the church, but continue to bear the fruit of the flesh. Their familiar and thorny expressions are indicative of their condition. **1Co 3:2-3**.

In this state, they presume to bring forth sweet water, but their bitterness cannot be concealed. The apostle James said that a person cannot bring forth both sweet and bitter water from the same spring, declaring, 'Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.' **Jas 3:10-12**.

Within a household, or marriage, one spouse may receive the word and build on Christ, while the other rejects the word and continues to stumble at Christ. In these instances, the house is sanctified by the one who responds in a worthy manner. **1Co 7:14-15**.

Further Study JAMES 3

The privilege of prayer

The Father declares to us, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!' **Psa 46:10**. Instead of constantly petitioning the Lord for answers in relation to our fear-driven needs, we must heed this direction from God as we engage in the fellowship of prayer.

Prayer joins us to the travail of the Holy Spirit. He is travailing to bring forth the sonship defined for us in the seed of the Father that has been sown by Christ in our hearts. The apostle Paul rejoiced that 'the Spirit helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered'. **Rom 8:26**. The Spirit is the life of the seed that is germinated in our hearts, causing us to be born of God. **1Pe 1:22-23**.

The travail of the Spirit births us each day into the service of priesthood. Our service is to do the works that belong to our name. We must let the active travail of the Spirit do its work in our hearts as we travail together in prayer, praying in the Spirit. He then enables our obedience each day.

The fellowship of prayer, with the travail of the Spirit, is to bring us forth into the new creation, which is the body of Christ. In Him, all of our works have already been accomplished. **Isa 26:12**. We are then joined by the Spirit to our works, which Christ has already accomplished for us in time and for eternity. **1Co 12:11**. Faith is connected to our works. **Jas 2:18**. Faith is expressed as active obedience to the word that defines our works. This way of living and serving is freely chosen, for it is the freedom of the sons of God.

Further Study ROMANS 8



Restoring
my Soul