



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

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JANUARY 2025

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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Contributing Authors

Victor Hall

Peter Hay

David Baker

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Watch and pray

Jesus said to Peter, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' **Luk 22:31-32**. Later, in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus invited Peter to join the fellowship of this same prayer. He said to Peter, 'Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' **Mar 14:37-38**.

We do not pray for our self-righteous, religious image to be upheld under pressure. Rather, we are watching and praying so that, when our projections are undone under the sifting of Satan, we will not draw back from Christ's face in unbelief and endeavour to recraft for ourselves another image through penance.

Peter followed Jesus to the house of Caiaphas because his self-defined image was as a disciple of Christ. Jesus had called Peter to be a disciple, and Peter believed in his adequacy for this call. He said to Jesus, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.' **Luk 22:33**. However, as Jesus was being bruised for Peter's iniquitous self-image, he began to deny that he knew Jesus. Under pressure, Peter renounced his image as a disciple of Christ because he was resisting humiliation. Peter did not want to be humiliated with Christ and, thereby, lose his reputation in the broader Jewish community or church.

Peter's self-image, which was associated with his standing in the community as a Jew in identity and name, *predated his call to be a disciple of Christ*. When Peter was called by Christ to be a disciple, he believed that he was going to be a better version of a Jew; that he was going to be a more successful Jew. In this regard, throughout the season of Christ's earthly ministry, he had been cleaving to the Son of God, the King of the Jews, with deceit. His discipleship was an advancement of his base, carnal image.

Further reading: Matthew 26:1-46

Peter was sifted three times

When put under pressure by the servant girl, by the servants and officers, and then by a servant of the high priest, Peter became increasingly adamant. He cursed and swore, saying that he did not know Christ; nor was he in any way connected with Him or was anything like Him. **Mar 14:71**. As he denied Jesus, Peter swore an oath in an endeavour to protect himself, and his self-image, from humiliation in the Jewish community. **Mat 26:72**. Peter's denial of Christ was motivated by fear as part of his fight for survival. Clearly, loss of reputation is a form of death, and Peter was afraid of 'dying'.

After the rooster crowed, and Peter had denied Jesus for a third time, he met Jesus eye to eye. From the eyes of Christ, Peter received *no accusation*; only an eye to eye understanding of his iniquity and incapacity for obedience. He learned, through illumination, what Jesus had earlier spoken to him. That is, Peter was caused to remember that Jesus had said that his own motivations and faith as a zealot would not be able to sustain him as a disciple of Christ when he came under the intense sifting pressure that Satan would exert upon him when Christ began His offering journey. **Mat 26:74-75**.

This understanding was impressed upon Peter as he denied Christ with increasing intensity, marked by cursing and swearing. Under pressure, the true nature of his heart was exposed, and his angry self-righteousness was witnessed by all who warmed themselves by the fire in the courtyard of Caiaphas. We note that, in this relational setting by the fire, *Satan 'sifted' Peter three times*.

Peter found that he was *incapable of repentance* as he cursed and swore. The whole situation was happening too quickly for him to regain his composure under pressure. The remembrance of Christ's words, prompted by the crowing of a rooster, reinforced his knowledge of his own bankruptcy.

Further reading: Matthew 26:47-75

From condemnation to illumination

When Jesus looked at Peter, it enabled him to move from self-condemnation to illumination! That is, he experienced condemnation as he was being sifted three times by Satan, but he was delivered to illumination as Christ looked on him and he met the Lord eye to eye. Every believer must experience this crisis of deliverance from condemnation to illumination in order to find repentance that leads to salvation.

Meeting Christ eye to eye is not a mystical or imagined experience. Rather, it means that we meet Him, personally, spirit to spirit. We know this because the Scriptures teach us that the spirit of a man is 'the lamp of the Lord'. **Pro 20:27**. Jesus explained that this lamp, which is the spirit of a man, is the eye of their body. This is the eye with which every person must meet Christ. Specifically, Jesus said, 'The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore, take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.' **Luk 11:34-36**.

As Peter met Christ face to face, he obtained the capacity of faith to believe the words of Jesus, which he *remembered*. Matthew recounted Peter's illuminating encounter, writing, 'Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter *remembered* the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.' **Mat 26:74-75**. This was the faith that Jesus had prayed would 'not fail' as Peter was being sifted by Satan. The faith that was being generated in Peter's heart was the substance of the hope of becoming a son of Abraham as part of a new creation.

Further reading: John 3

Judas' penance

Judas also saw his iniquity being laid on Christ. However, this was not an encounter that led to his salvation, even though it caused him considerable distress. **Mat 27:3-5**. Judas' grief was because of the failure of his self-image. It was not godly sorrow. We know this because he did not find repentance but, rather, exercised penance in a futile endeavour to reform his shattered projection. The first thing he did was to confess his sins to the chief priests and elders. Then he sought to make restitution by repaying the thirty pieces of silver. Then, in a final, defiant endeavour to be the source of righteousness, he judged himself worthy of death, and killed himself. This was not a redemptive action; it led to his eternal damnation. This is the outcome for every person who chooses penance over repentance.

How do we respond when our self-image is humiliated or fails? Is this the cause of our grief? Do we then try to recover ourselves through penance – perhaps through confidential confession, acts of restitution and apology, or a battery of good works? When we live in this way as Christians, we inevitably become discouraged in our souls. We are becoming weak and sick, and are in danger of losing our salvation because we are unable to discern our true participation in the fellowship of the *agape* meal as part of the body of Christ. **1Co 11:29-30**.

Our inability to discern our true, or sanctified, participation is the deluding effect of our projections, which act as a veil over our face, impeding our capacity to receive the light of the knowledge of our sonship from the face of Christ through the ministry of His messengers. *We cannot be obedient*. With this in view, the apostle Paul wrote, 'For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls'. **Heb 12:3**. We must join the fellowship of this wound where our self-crafted reputation is taken from us so that we can receive our name that defines our sanctification.

Further reading: Acts 1

Mourning and singing

Peter did not draw back from Christ through penance, but found repentance as he began to mourn with godly sorrow. **2Co 7:10**. Peter's mourning was not without *hope*. Rather, having met his Redeemer, called Wonderful Counsellor, Peter went to his house with a song planted in his heart. *He went mourning and singing*, 'I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth – "Praise to our God"; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord.' **Psa 40:1-3**. This is when Peter was secured in his sanctification as he possessed his name, 'rock'. Christ was no longer a stumbling stone and a rock of offence for Peter. He was being built upon the Rock!

At the conclusion of this season of mourning, by the Sea of Galilee, Peter received further faith from Christ for the works of sonship that belonged to his sanctification. This was beside *another fire* in the context of an *agape* fellowship meal, given to him and his fellow disciples by Christ. In this fellowship setting, Peter was not being sifted as wheat by Satan; rather, *he was being sifted by Christ*. Three times, Jesus asked Peter, 'Do you love Me?' This sifting process that occurred by the fire as they participated in an *agape* meal together was part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread that Peter and the other apostles were keeping, as the leaven of their zealot years was being purged from their lives. This purging happens as we walk in the light that proceeds from a lamp fellowship. **Luk 15:8-10**.

Further reading: Psalm 40

Jacob met the Lord

The psalmist explained that a person whose self-expression has been brought to nothing, and who obtains faith to seek the Lord, remembers that God is 'their Rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer'. **Psa 78:35**. Likewise, the prophet Isaiah declared that 'the Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob'. **Isa 59:20**. Jacob's transgression was that he was a deceiver. Through actions sourced from his own image, he endeavoured to obtain the blessing that was associated with his calling as a son of Abraham. He found deliverance from this propensity when he wrestled with the Lord at Jabbok and received from the Lord his name, Israel, meaning 'prince with God'. In this regard, Jacob's wrestle was the same experience that Peter had in his encounter with Christ in the court of Caiaphas.

Jacob met the Lord face to face when he wrestled with Him through the night, until the breaking of the day. The Lord was mercifully resisting every carnal initiative, sourced from Jacob's fallen self-image, by which he sought to enter the land of blessing. Importantly, if Jacob had entered the land without this conversion, he would have been killed in the land by Esau. In this regard, Esau typified Satan. In this circumstance, Jacob was being 'sifted by Satan'. 'The land of promise' is where Satan is walking about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. **1Pe 5:8**. Every person who presumes to participate in the kingdom while maintaining their religious projection makes themselves, and their household, vulnerable to the oppression of Satan and his principalities and powers. Unless they are converted from living carnally to walking spiritually in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, they will be overtaken by him and will lose their salvation.

Further reading: Genesis 32

Jacob obtained faith

The Lord touched Jacob's hip, joining him to the weakness of the cross, when He saw that Jacob was not letting go of his carnal endeavours to enter the land. By touching Jacob's hip, the Lord broke the strength of his fleshly image and expression. Jacob's struggle to obtain the blessing of life through his own endeavours failed, and he drew near to hold on to Christ. In this face-to-face interaction, Jacob confessed that he was 'Jacob', the deceiver, or projector. The Lord then proclaimed to Jacob his name as a son of God, saying, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel [meaning, 'prince with God']; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.' **Gen 32:28.**

When the Lord said to Jacob, 'You have struggled and prevailed with God and with men', He was acknowledging that Jacob *had obtained faith*. We know this because the apostle John said, 'For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.' **1Jn 5:4.** Jacob received the capacity of faith as he wrestled with the Lord through the night of his trial of faith. He received the *substance* of his hope. The apostle Peter wrote, 'In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love.' **1Pe 1:6-8.**

We note that, through this fiery trial, Jacob's faith was being built up as he continued to meet Christ face to face; he did not draw back in unbelief. Mercifully, the Lord continued to wrestle with him through the trial. By dawn, Christ brought Jacob all the way through to the full trial that belongs to salvation, by having him limp for the rest of his life.

Further reading: 1 Peter 1

Walking as an overcomer

As Jacob continued to journey with Christ, he limped as an overcomer. He was learning his obedience as 'prince with God', and was being changed, from glory to glory, through regeneration and renewing. Notably, Jacob viewed the potential tribulation that was brought about by the testing of Satan as being his fellowship in Christ's suffering. He embraced this fellowship as the context of his participation in the will of the Father. This was evident as he approached Esau, bowing seven times before him, and testifying, 'I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God.' **Gen 33:10.**

This new way of walking was the implication of Jacob *calling on the name of the Lord*, which he did when he said to the Lord, '*Tell me Your name, I pray.*' **Gen 32:29.** We remember that the apostle Paul said, 'Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' **Rom 10:13.** Importantly, 'calling on the name of the Lord' is not the sinner's prayer; nor is it when we are born again to see the kingdom. Paul was clear; we are saved through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit as we journey with Christ in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. Obviously, our fellowship in this saving work is possible only as we are joined to the fellowship of the Lord's name.

To 'call on the name of the Lord' is to desire to be established in the fellowship of the name from which our sonship has been declared. This is the fellowship of Yahweh, which becomes our fellowship as citizens of the kingdom of God. Having met Christ personally, we participate in the fellowship of Yahweh by *walking in the light of the word* that is ministered from the presbytery, and by *joining* the fellowship of the presbytery. **1Jn 1:1-3.** Having been delivered from the drive to project a good image, our engagement with the presbytery is no longer a penitent action to galvanise our self-image; it is a context of offering and sanctification.

Further reading: 1 John 1

The valley of Achor

The house of Caiaphas is both the place of judgement and the door of hope for every person who is born of God and is receiving the call to come to Christ to be built on Him. The prophet Hosea said, 'Therefore, behold, I will allure her [the bride of Christ, the church], will bring her into the wilderness [the place of judgement, or forgetfulness], and speak comfort to her. I will give her her vineyards from there, *and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope.*' **Hos 2:14-15.** The Valley of Achor was the place where the nation of Israel, through judgement, found the substance of repentance in relation to sanctification.

We recall that Joshua and the children of Israel had been directed by God to destroy Jericho. As Israel marched around the city for the seventh time, on the seventh day, Joshua said to them, 'Shout, for the Lord has given you the city! Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction [*cherem*] ... And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.' **Jos 6:16-19.**

Following the destruction of Jericho, the children of Israel proceeded to take the next step in entering the kingdom. They sent a small army to conquer the town of Ai, which was few in number. However, they suffered a surprising and heavy defeat at the hands of this modest company. The men of Ai pursued and struck down thirty-six Israelites, causing the hearts of the people to melt and to become like water. **Jos 7:2-5.**

It is interesting that thirty-six is half of seventy-two. We recall that Jesus sent the seventy-two disciples 'before His face' into every city and village where He was going. **Luk 10:1.** Their work was to find sons of peace and to establish worthy houses. Through the defeat at Ai, half of this ministry capacity within the nation of Israel was, symbolically, lost.

Further reading: Joshua 6

The sin of Achan

After the Israelites had been defeated by the men of Ai, Joshua tore his clothes and, with the elders, fell to the earth on his face before the Lord, until evening. The Lord answered Joshua, saying, 'Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My Covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both *stolen* and *deceived* [coveted and projected an image]; and they have also put it among their own stuff. Therefore, the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. Get up, *sanctify the people*, and say, "*Sanctify yourselves* for tomorrow, because thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you' ". **Jos 7:10-13.**

It came to light that Achan had seen and coveted among the spoils, a beautiful Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels. He hid them in the ground in the midst of his tent, or household. The Babylonian garment typified a mandate to exercise priesthood from the basis of a mixed culture, sourced from a fallen self-image. It was supposed to be destroyed. In the unsanctified presumption that accompanies a fallen projection, Achan took what belonged to the treasury of the Lord – the silver and gold. That is, he presumed to minister as part of a kingdom (gold) of priests (silver) from the basis of a projection, helping himself to the provision that belonged to the Lord.

Further reading: Joshua 7

The need for sanctification

Achan's deception and presumption brought judgement upon the house of Israel. Joshua and the people took Achan, the detestable items, his sons and daughters, and all that he possessed, and brought them to the Valley of Achor. There they stoned Achan *and burned everything with fire*. Through this action, the congregation was commending Achan and his household to the fellowship of Christ's offering in which everything accursed was being taken out with Christ, in judgement. They did not compensate, in any way, for Achan's corruption.

This account of Achan's deception is a stark illustration of the reality that if one member of the body suffers, or sins, in relation to the fellowship of the *agape* meal, then all of the members suffer. **1Co 12:26**. The impact of this corruption is shared by a whole community of believers. With this in view, we acknowledge that the Lord is presently sanctifying through judgement, 'elect ladies' in every city and town, in a very acute manner. We must give heed to this sanctifying initiative and seek the Lord for the salvation that belongs to deliverance from our religious presumption.

The apostle Paul highlighted the wickedness and blindness within a church where leaders and congregations remain leavened by former gospels and carnal expectations of the Christian faith. He wrote, 'It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles – that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, *and have not rather mourned*, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.' **1Co 5:1-2**. On account of this leaven among them, they were unable to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread; their *agape* meal was not true participation in the Passover. **1Co 5:6-8**.

Further reading: 1 Corinthians 5

Saved through fire

In the same way that Joshua, the elders, and the people commended Achan to the fiery trial, through which sanctification within the nation could be restored, the presbytery and church in Corinth were to cease from embracing the immoral man under the guise of *agape* love, and were to commend him to the process of sifting, through which he could find salvation.

Specifically, Paul directed the Corinthians, saying, *'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.'* **1Co 5:4-5.**

'The day of the Lord Jesus' is His offering and suffering journey. From the fellowship of the name of Christ, which is the fellowship of the presbytery, Paul was delivering this man to 'the court of Caiaphas'. In the same way that Peter met Christ in the fiery trial that was associated with the sifting of Satan, this man was being delivered to Satan for the destruction of his religious image that had produced the deeds of the flesh. It needed to be destroyed through fire so that he could build again on Christ.

Describing this process, Paul had earlier written, *'Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.'* **1Co 3:12-15.**

Further reading: 1 Corinthians 3

The door of hope

The man in Corinth did find salvation, for the apostle directed the Corinthian church to receive him again into the fellowship of their *agape* meal. He said, 'This punishment which was inflicted by the majority *is sufficient for such a man*, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore, I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.' **2Co 2:6-8**. This restoration is possible when a person has a testimony of deliverance to the pathway of regeneration and renewing, upon which they are obtaining repentance as they participate in the obedience that Christ accomplished for them.

Every Christian community must deal with the matters of corruption that undermine their sanctification, releasing one another to personally meet Christ and to find deliverance from their self-definition, so that they can meet in sincerity and truth. Instead of embracing corruption and mixture in the name of love, or *agape*, they must dignify one another by commending each one to the process of refinement through which they can be delivered to salvation.

In this present season, our blindness is being confronted, and we are being forced to make a judgement as to which image we will choose. Do we endeavour to use our religion, and all of the resources of God, to establish our *own* image?

We do not know our own blindness and bankruptcy as Christians *until* we come to 'the house of Caiaphas', *which is for us the Valley of Achor*. In this place, the Lord first says to us, 'You are not My people', on account of the idolatry that belongs to living according to our self-image. This self-image is being destroyed in the fire of Christ's offering and death. However, as we acknowledge that we are under the judgement of God, with Christ, He says to us, 'You are sons of the living God!' **Hos 1:9-10**. This is 'the door of hope' that belongs to the judgements of God that are among us in this season.

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 7

Sanctification is eternal life

In this season, the Holy Spirit is urging us all to be established in our sanctification as sons of God and members of the body of Christ. The Scriptures are clear – *our sanctification is our eternal life*. Stressing this point, the apostle Paul declared, ‘Pursue peace with all people, and holiness [lit: sanctification], *without which no-one will see the Lord*.’ **Heb 12:14**. Similarly, he taught that ‘having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness [sanctification], and the end, everlasting life.’ **Rom 6:22**.

As a consequence of the deluding effect of their carnality, many Christians have not understood this point. Significantly, they have not recognised that their efforts to be acceptable to God are the primary impediment to their sanctification. These works belong to their self-sourced image, which has been crafted on the basis of their knowledge of good and evil. This is iniquity and leads only to death, no matter how sincere or pious they may be.

Deliverance from iniquity is a particularly important consideration for a young adult as they emerge from the covering of their parents’ faith and begin to carry the weight of accountability for their own life. Their natural propensity will be to find themselves through what they do and how they are received by others. This approach to life is an investment in a projection that only brings them under condemnation. These projections are not just a futile endeavour to know oneself. If a person is not delivered from this way of living, these projections will become a means of concealing one’s sin and the true condition of their heart, thus fortifying their condemnation.

Our deliverance from the iniquitous self-image that brings us under God’s judgement is through the cross. We must *meet Christ* personally, and must embrace our *fellowship* in His offering and sufferings, wherein we are being saved through regeneration and by the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Further reading: 2 Thessalonians 2

What should our demeanour be?

As we 'consider Christ', and 'look on Him', our grotesque fallen self-image is mirrored to us. **Heb 12:3**. This is uncomfortable, and many people default to self-condemnation at this point. However, the apostle Paul declared, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.' **Rom 8:1**. What, then, should be our demeanour and expression? Should we be euphorically positive all the time; or should we demean ourselves on account of our sin? The answer is found in the daily implications of our baptism.

Paul explained that, although there is only one baptism, there are *two distinct aspects of baptism*. **Eph 4:5**. He signalled these two elements in his letter to the Romans, writing, 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' **Rom 6:1-4**.

Paul's question, 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?', focuses our attention on the *first* aspect of baptism, which is associated with *new birth and membership of the body of Christ*. Paul highlighted this aspect of baptism writing, 'Those who are in the flesh [not having been born of the Spirit] cannot please God [because they remain an enemy of God]. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. *Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His*.' **Rom 8:8-9**.

Further reading: Romans 8

Two dimensions of baptism

A person who is spiritual, having been born of the Spirit, has received the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of Christ, which is the divine nature. Paul was clear that if they have received Christ, they are His, meaning that they are *in Christ*. By being born of God by the Spirit, a believer is immersed, or *baptised*, by the Father, *into Christ*. They are set in the body of Christ by the Father, as He pleases. **1Co 12:12,18.**

Although the believer has been born of the Spirit, and is in Christ, *'the body is [still] dead because of sin'*. **Rom 8:10.** Unless a person is joined to the second aspect of baptism, they will find themselves in a wretched condition, being beset by sin. Noting this condition, Paul wrote, 'But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into *captivity to the law of sin* which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! *Who will deliver me from this body of death?*' **Rom 7:23-24.** The answer, of course, is *through regeneration and renewing in the fellowship of Christ's dying and living.*

Paul was highlighting this *second* aspect of baptism when he wrote, 'How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were *baptised into His death*? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' **Rom 6:2-4.**

Having been baptised into Christ by the Father, we then need to be baptised in *water* by a messenger who has been sent by Christ to make disciples. We are baptised into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus to walk in a new and living way by which regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit are at work in us. This is necessary for our salvation. **Tit 3:4-7.**

Further reading: Romans 6

Our demeanour in Christ

Referring to the daily implications of our baptism into the death of Christ, Paul said, 'But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also *give life to your mortal bodies* through His Spirit who dwells in you [delivering to us a new heart and a new spirit, and enabling us to fulfil the works of obedience that Christ has already finished for us]: **Rom 8:11**. In this fellowship, we are finding deliverance from the other law and are participating in the works that Christ has already fulfilled for us.

With the two aspects of baptism in view, Paul described how we should live as Christians, joyfully declaring, '*We are the circumcision*, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' **Php 3:3**. Paul was saying that we are a people who are to live and walk each day in the reality of our *baptism*. We know this because he had explained to the Colossians that 'in Him you were also circumcised with *the circumcision made without hands*, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him *in baptism*, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead'. **Col 2:11-12**.

Paul explained the daily implications of our baptism, and the reason for rejoicing in Christ Jesus as those who belong to the true circumcision, by testifying to the Galatian Christians, 'I have been co-crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.' **Gal 2:20**.

Further reading: Philippians 3

Co-crucified with Christ

We were co-crucified with Christ when we received the Spirit of the Father and the divine nature, which is the Spirit of the Son, and were immersed by the Father into the body of Christ. As those who are co-crucified with Christ, we recognise that, on account of our sin and iniquitous self-image, we are cursed and condemned with Him. Being illuminated to our sin and iniquity, we put no confidence in our flesh. However, having been baptised into Christ's death, we are able to reckon ourselves dead to sin. We no longer live in the pursuit of our own expression and destiny. Rather, by the faith of the Son of God, we embrace the process of regeneration and renewing that Christ pioneered for us. We are able to live the life and to fulfil the works that *He finished for us*.

Our demeanour should reflect these two dimensions of baptism. We do mourn with godly sorrow as we see our sin and the impact of our iniquity upon Christ. And yet, as we reckon ourselves dead to sin with Christ, we rejoice as we are enabled by His life to fulfil our obedience as sons of God and members of His body. We are changing from glory to glory into the image of the Son. **2Co 3:18**.

When the apostle Paul testified, 'I have been co-crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me', he did so *as the chief of all sinners!* **Gal 2:20. 1Ti 1:15**. Paul was saying that he had been more evil than you or I could ever be. For this reason, we have no excuse to be more pathetic than Paul could have been. If he could find salvation, then we can find it as well. Let us, therefore, change our confession from 'defeat' to 'faith' and, instead, live as sons and daughters of God!

Further reading: Galatians 2

Take His yoke upon you

Through the proclamation of the word, Jesus comes and calls every person to be yoked with Him. He says, 'Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.' **Mat 11:29-30.**

Jeremiah, whom the Lord called to be a prophet in his youth, understood the importance of responding to this call. Joined to the fellowship of Christ's travail, or godly sorrow, he confessed, 'It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth [that is, to be yoked to Christ]. Let him sit alone and keep silent, because God has laid it on him; let him put his mouth in the dust [like Job and the apostle Peter did, having met Christ eye to eye] – there may yet be hope. Let him give his cheek to the one who strikes him, and be full of reproach.' **Lam 3:27-30.**

A person who is in Christ, and is established as a disciple on the pathway of salvation that Jesus Christ pioneered for them through His offering and suffering journey, is beholding, as in a mirror, the glory of their sonship as it shines from the face of Jesus Christ. This word illuminates their heart, as Paul explained, writing, 'For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' **2Co 4:6.**

As we *behold*, and *receive*, and then *walk in*, the light that proceeds from the face of Christ, we are being progressively transformed into the image of Christ, *by the Spirit*. **2Co 3:18.** Note that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of regeneration and renewing, who is active within us as we journey with Christ in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings as a member of His body. **Tit 3:4-7.**

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 4

The confession of an overcomer

Messengers of Christ, from the Father, enabled by the Spirit, are sent to proclaim the gospel of God. The gospel of God brings salvation by joining those who receive it to the offering and sufferings of Christ. In this fellowship, we have a daily participation in the regenerating process that Christ accomplished for us on His journey from Gethsemane to Calvary. The fruit of this ministry is *faith*! It is the faith of the Son of God which enables us to remain connected to Christ and to live by His divine life through fellowship in His offering and sufferings.

In this regard, our confession is, 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.' **Gal 2:20**. Our testimony, as those who obtain this faith, is demonstrated as we overcome Satan and 'the spirit of the world'. We do this by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of our testimony, and by loving not our lives to the death. **Rev 12:11**.

By confessing that we have been co-crucified with Christ, we are acknowledging that we are *cursed with Christ*. The Scriptures declare, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.' **Gal 3:13. Deu 21:23**. Because of this, we are not God's people. However, drawing from the prophet Hosea, Paul reminded us that 'it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," there they shall be called sons of the living God'. **Rom 9:26**. Wonderfully, having acknowledged that we are crucified with Christ, and are not the people of God, *nevertheless*, we live! We no longer live according to our own definition and expression. Rather, by the faith of the Son of God, we live by His life. This is what it means to be called 'a son of the living God'.

Further reading: 1 John 5



Restoring
my Soul