



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

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APRIL 2025

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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Contents

Monday 31 March	New wine in new wineskins.....	2
Tuesday 1 April	Old understanding of baptism.....	3
Wednesday 2 April	Old understanding of the name.....	4
Thursday 3 April	Believing for sonship.....	5
Friday 4 April	The love of the Father.....	6
Monday 7 April	The grace of Jesus Christ.....	7
Tuesday 8 April	The fellowship of the Holy Spirit.....	8
Wednesday 9 April	Temples for the Holy Spirit.....	9
Thursday 10 April	Becoming co-workers with Christ.....	10
Friday 11 April	The two thieves.....	11
Monday 14 April	The fellowship of Christ's grief.....	12
Tuesday 15 April	The church.....	13
Wednesday 16 April	Looking upon Christ.....	14
Thursday 17 April	Forgiveness and judgement.....	15
Friday 18 April	God who forgives, but takes vengeance.....	16
Monday 21 April	Calling us to worship.....	17
Tuesday 22 April	The need to fear the Lord.....	18
Wednesday 23 April	Presumptuous sin.....	19
Thursday 24 April	The doctrine of Jezebel.....	20
Friday 25 April	Sanctification through the Elijah ministry.....	21
Monday 28 April	The apostle Paul's message.....	22
Tuesday 29 April	Come out and be separate.....	23
Wednesday 30 April	The fruit of un sanctified behaviour.....	24
Thursday 1 May	Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision.....	25
Friday 2 May	Examining ourselves.....	26

New wine in new wineskins

The Lord is presently restoring to us an understanding of the gospel of God. In particular, the Spirit is emphasising the exceedingly great and precious promises contained in the Scriptures. These promises declare our predestination to be born of God's divine nature and to be brought to glory as sons of God and sons of men in the image and likeness of God.

In order for us to receive, live, and proclaim this message, it is necessary to identify, and then forget, our former gospels. **Php 3:13-14**. This is because they unavoidably impact upon our reception of the proceeding word, hindering our capacity to walk in its light. Unless we forget what is 'behind', and walk in the light of present truth, we will be lost.

Warning of this implication of endeavouring to integrate the present-truth word into the framework of our former understandings, Jesus said, 'No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise, the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new *does not match the old*. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, *and the wineskins will be ruined*. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, *and both are preserved*!' **Luk 5:36-38**.

In this season, the word is being proclaimed with increasing magnitude, clarity, and effect upon its hearers. Those who are receiving its illumination, as they keep in step with what the Spirit is saying 'Today', are growing in their knowledge of God and of their own sanctification. **Heb 3:7-15**. Their obedient response to the word, which comes as the former and latter rain upon the ground of their hearts, reveals that they are building on Christ. The prophet Hosea declared, 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord!' **Hos 6:3** KJV. We must follow on to know the Lord, by keeping in step with the present-truth word, *for to know Him is eternal life!* **Joh 17:3**. **1Jn 5:20**.

Further reading: Philipians 3

Old understanding of baptism

As a church movement, our baptismal understandings and practices have changed in the light of the gospel of sonship, highlighting the centrality of baptism to the gospel that we believe. The importance of baptism to one's gospel is acknowledged in most theological and denominational traditions. In fact, many of these traditional understandings have influenced our own former practices and belong to the 'old garments' and the 'old wineskins' that need to be dispensed with.

Baptismal regeneration, for example, has been a theological principle that has influenced the teaching and practices of numerous denominations. The principle of baptismal regeneration holds that a person is born again, or regenerated, *through baptism*. By this means, a respondent is admitted into the kingdom of God as a member of the church. Baptism is considered to be a sacramental sign of new birth, called 'regeneration'.

Identifying new birth, or regeneration, as the *outcome* of baptism, the Westminster Confession states, 'Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptised into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, or his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.'

The importance of baptism to salvation is particularly pertinent to churches that practise infant baptism. This follows, for example, John Wesley's assertion that *in baptism* a child is cleansed of the guilt of original sin, initiated into the Covenant with God, admitted into the church, made an heir of the divine nature, and spiritually born anew.

There are many other theological statements that similarly advance the view that new birth is through baptism and does not happen before baptism. Equally notable is the fact that none of these statements view new birth as a substantive change in the spirit of a believer through the conception of the Seed of Christ, which is the divine nature, in their spirit, by the Holy Spirit. **1Pe 1:23.**

Further reading: 1 Peter 1

Old understanding of the name

Within our own stream of churches, the most recent theological influence upon our understanding of baptism, and what it means to be a Christian, has been the doctrine, or revelation, *of the name*. This hermeneutic was succinctly captured in the song, 'The fullness of the Godhead bodily dwelleth in my Lord', including the line, 'We are complete in Him'.

Salvation in relation to this theological perspective began with conversion. Conversion was necessary for the forgiveness of sins. Regeneration was understood to mean, being made alive to God from the state of having been dead in trespasses and sins. In this regard, 'born again' was this regeneration from the death of sin. A person was then placed in the position of a son by adoption. This understanding of the adoption was reflective of Calvin's notion of adoption as one's designation, or identification, as a son.

In keeping with the Baptist tradition, following the 'great awakening', a believer was baptised *after* their conversion and new birth from the dead, through regeneration. The name, which Christ received at His exaltation, was given to the believer when they were baptised by water into His name. This made them complete in Christ and able to use His name, *by invocation*, to overcome sin and the devil.

Significantly, the divine nature as the fundamental element of the new birth was not at all recognised or appreciated. Without this understanding, a believer was left as a unique member of Christ's body, but indistinct from Him. They were not deemed to be a unique individual with the divine nature as a *separate seed* from Christ. In this regard, they were still an adopted man; not a son of God by regeneration.

Further reading: Colossians 1

Believing for sonship

The gospel of sonship reveals the *love of the Father*, the *grace of Jesus Christ*, and the *fellowship of the Holy Spirit*. Through the unique initiatives of each Person of the Godhead, we are born of God and made in the image and likeness of God. Significantly, new creation is not through baptism or regeneration. Rather, it begins with an adoption. This is not adoption as conceptualised by Calvin, but rather, a whole process that is initiated by receiving the promise of the Spirit through faith. **Gal 3:14**.

For the purpose of highlighting the significance of receiving the divine nature through new birth prior to baptism, let us now consider the implications of the love of the Father, the grace of Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

The Father, at the request of the Son, sends the Holy Spirit into our heart to be with us and in us. **Joh 14:15-17**. Paul called the Holy Spirit, 'the Spirit of adoption'. When He comes into our heart, He convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgement. **Joh 16:7-11**. In doing so, the Spirit is asking us, 'Do you want to be a son of God?' As we say 'Yes!', the Holy Spirit gives to us the faith to believe for what is *absolutely impossible and unthinkable* – we are able to believe that we can become a son of God who is born again of His divine nature! This is the same faith that Abram received when Yahweh, who is the Word, came to him and said, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield [of faith], your exceedingly great reward.' **Gen 15:1**. Abram believed by this faith, and it was 'accounted to him for righteousness', meaning 'sonship'. **Gen 15:4-6**.

Further reading: Genesis 15

The love of the Father

As we believe for sonship, the Holy Spirit adopts us, making us children of God and delivering to us the free gift of righteousness. **Rom 5:17**. By the Spirit of adoption, we are able to call God, 'our Father'. **Rom 8:15**. In response to our cry, 'Abba! Father!', the Spirit of Christ, which is *the divine nature*, is sent by the Father into our spirit (Greek: *pneuma*). In this regard, we could liken our spirit to 'an egg', and the Spirit of Christ to be the Seed of the Father. This Seed is germinated in our spirit by the Holy Spirit, and we are conceived as a son of God in *the womb of the virgin bride of Christ, the church*. When this conception has happened, we receive a new and unique name as a son of God and Christ has become our life. **Gal 2:20**.

Like any conception, our spirit, or identity, has been reborn as a son of God who can uniquely express the life of God. Our identity is not lost through this conception. We are born of the divine nature and have become a totally new creation as a 'zoe-fied' identity. That is, the *zoe* life of God has caused a change in our spirit (*pneuma*). As a consequence, we are *substantively* different from the 'first Adam', referring to those who still belong to the first creation. This reality was expressed by the apostle John, who declared, 'Behold what *manner of love the Father* has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, *the world does not know us*, because it did not know Him.' **1Jn 3:1**.

After we are born again as a son of God, the Father then places us into the church, *by making us a member of the body of Christ*. **Col 1:18**. This is the first dimension of baptism. The body of Christ is the context where we are to grow and mature as Christians. **1Jn 4:7-21**.

Further reading: 1 John 3

The grace of Jesus Christ

Although we are born of the Spirit, and are in Christ, *'the body is [still] dead because of sin'*. **Rom 8:10**. Unless we are joined to the second aspect of baptism, the seed of new creation will die and we will lose our sonship.

The second aspect of baptism is by water into the fellowship of Christ's seven wounding events, wherein we are being saved through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. **Tit 3:4-7**. Christ Himself joins us to His offering journey through the ministry of His messengers who have been made co-workers with Him. **1Co 3:9**. **2Co 6:1**. **3Jn 1:8**. In the fellowship of His offering, the process of regeneration becomes operative in our life, perfecting us in our humanity. We are progressively being made into the image and likeness of God, 'from glory to glory'. **2Co 3:18**.

The work of regeneration and renewing applies to the ground of our heart, referring to the inner man (spirit and soul) so that the seed of our sonship life can grow to maturity. Evidently, the first and most basic lesson of the parable of the sower and the seed is that the ground of our heart needs to be changed through this process. Through regeneration and renewing, we are given a new heart and a new spirit as the stones of law are removed from our heart by the circumcision of Christ. **Eze 36:26**.

Importantly, we, as a new-creation identity, can set our mind, which belongs to our soul life (Greek: *psuche*), on the Spirit or on the flesh. Paul was clear that 'those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.' **Rom 8:5-6**.

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 4

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit

To be spiritually minded is to present ourselves, each day, as 'zoe-fied' identities, for fellowship with Christ in His offering and sufferings. Paul described this as 'coming boldly to the throne of grace' to obtain mercy and grace to secure us in this fellowship, so that we are being delivered from the other law, we are being regenerated and renewed in the spirit of our mind, and we are bringing forth the fruit that Christ has already borne for us through His offering, once for all. **Heb 4:16**. This is the implication of obtaining *the grace of Jesus Christ*. **1Co 16:23**.

Our capacity to journey with Christ in the fellowship of His grace, and thereby fulfil the will of God, is only possible by the capacity, or power, of the sevenfold Spirit of God, which we receive when we are baptised by the Holy Spirit. **Act 1:8**. This is the third dimension of baptism. Once immersed in the Spirit, the Spirit Himself fills us full, *making us His temple*. **1Co 6:19**. This baptism is indicated by the capacity to speak in tongues. **Act 2:4**.

We continue to fulfil the will of the Father, as a member of Christ in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, by the capacity of the Spirit until the day of resurrection. At this time, those who have been born as sons of God with the divine nature, and saved through regeneration and renewing as sons of men, receive *a spiritual body*. This was called, by Paul, 'the adoption, the redemption of our body'. **Rom 8:23**. Their physical body is made immortal and incorruptible by the word of the Son. It is then clothed with their heavenly body, which they receive from the Father. This spiritual body is as physical as it is spiritual, and as spiritual as it is physical.

Significantly, the spiritual body is a temple for the Holy Spirit. In this temple, the Holy Spirit fellowships with our spirit. This happens at the altar of our conscience.

Further reading: Romans 8

Temples for the Holy Spirit

In the new heavens and earth, our spiritual body, which has been made perfect as the temple of the Holy Spirit, will be a vessel for the *full expression of the Holy Spirit*. We will do this as a son of God and a son of man.

At this point, we are no longer just a people who have received a firstfruits of the Spirit as sons of God and members of the body of Christ. Having received the Spirit in full measure, we proceed from Christ to be His bride, the heavenly Jerusalem. Each person is a temple of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the throne of the Father and the Lamb, as the expression of the river of life that flows out from the offering life of Yahweh *Elohim*.

For those who belong to the bride city, the New Jerusalem, this order of the throne is the order of life for the rest of eternity in the new heavens and earth. Significantly, the temple of Christ's body will have completed its work. Its dispensation will end, leaving the Father and the Son, together, ruling from one throne from which the life of God will proceed to us, and from us, as a river of life. The ever-increasing multitude being brought forth in the kingdom of God will be sustained by this river. **Rev 22:1-5**.

We receive the *zoe* life of God through new birth, granting to us our name as a son of God, as we partake of Christ's flesh and blood, and as we become the expression of the Holy Spirit as His temple. This reveals that the Father is the source of the *book of life (zoe)*, in which our name as a son of God is written. The Son is the *Tree of Life (zoe)*, of whom we are partakers, and by whom we become trees of life. The Holy Spirit is the *river of life (zoe)*, of which we are tributaries feeding this great torrent, for out of our bellies 'flow rivers of living water', which refers to the Spirit. **Joh 7:38-39**.

Further reading: Revelation 22

Becoming co-workers with Christ

The offering of Yahweh, revealed through the seven wounding events of Christ's offering journey, is the full provision for our redemption, and for the fulfilment of our predestination as spiritual sons of God and sons of men, in Christ. In Gethsemane, the context of Christ's first wound, the Father joined us all to Christ for judgement and redemption.

In the court of Caiaphas, we are first joined to Christ's buffeting, where His visage was marred more than any man's on account of our iniquitous self-image. Here, the self-image and expression of the zealot, driven by the other law, is either replaced through mourning, repentance and faith, or is judged. These two implications of Christ's suffering were manifest through the responses of Peter and Judas. Peter met Christ eye to eye. He was delivered from his idolatrous zealotry as he received the true image of his name, reflected to him from the face of Christ. In contrast, Judas would not let go of his self-image and was eternally damned.

Once a person has been delivered from the drive to make a name for themselves, they are able to become *a co-worker* together with Christ. This happens through the third wound, as Christ was chastened with rods 'for our peace'. **Isa 53:5**.

Significantly, the apostle Paul explained that, through this wound, the corporate body of Christ was established, writing, '*For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.*' **Eph 2:14-15**.

When a person embraces the fellowship of Christ's chastening, they are able to reveal Christ as a new-creation son and member of His body. Through the ministry of the gospel of God, they are able to birth others, and join them to this same fellowship. **Luk 10:5-7**.

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 1

The two thieves

Two thieves were crucified with Jesus on the day that He died. **Mat 27:38**. Initially, both thieves reviled Him, joining the scorn of those who passed by Jesus as He hung on the cross, and of the chief priests, scribes and elders. **Mat 27:39-44**. However, prior to the sixth hour (12pm), when darkness covered the whole earth, one of the thieves, through prevenient grace, received illumination of the salvation that Jesus was accomplishing for him.

Responding to his fellow-thief's statement, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us', the repentant thief said, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' **Luk 23:39-41**. He then said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' **Luk 23:42**.

Jesus responded, saying to this thief, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.' **Luk 23:43**. Christ suffered for this thief. He suffered his death and relieved his sufferings as they were comforted together in the fellowship grace.

The other thief railed upon Christ. As Esau had done, he viewed himself as the victim of his circumstances, resisting the prevenient grace that was coming to him through the testimony of Jesus. As this man suffered justly on the cross, he demanded to be provided with the benefits that Christ had afforded the people during His 3½-year ministry.

Jesus did not respond to the vociferous demands of the thief. In silence, Christ suffered the grief of the loss of this man who progressively became dead to Him as they suffered together under the judgement of God. The wrath of God, which had fallen upon Christ on behalf of this man, was then progressively transferred from Christ to him *as an eternal judgement*. This happened as the thief hardened in his choice, refusing to submit himself to the predestined sonship that God had prepared for him and was ready to reveal to him on that day – the day that Jesus died.

Further reading: Luke 23

The fellowship of Christ's grief

As co-workers of Jesus Christ, we experience His sufferings. This includes suffering with Him *in His rejection*. As we suffer in this manner, we are to respond as He did. In the fellowship of Christ's grief, we join His silence as the Father and the Holy Spirit transfer the wrath of God, with its condemnation, upon those who refuse to obey the gospel.

Those who do not obey Christ, because they do not believe His word, are under condemnation already. **Joh 3:18-19**. In this regard, we must not come between Christ and those who are rejecting Him as Lord, and who are refusing to submit themselves to the fellowship of His sufferings, in which they would otherwise obtain regeneration and salvation. Our endeavours to intervene, put us at risk of the same judgement as the person who is refusing Christ.

The New Testament apostles warned us against becoming partakers of God's wrath through fellowship with others in their sin, particularly as their rebellion becomes increasingly resolute. For example, Paul wrote, 'Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be partakers with them.' **Eph 5:6-7**.

We note that Christ's work on the cross is progressive. Inasmuch as a person's salvation is progressively obtained as they journey, through obedience to Christ's word, on the pathway He pioneered, the condemnation of the rebellious is progressive as they harden their heart in disobedience to His word. The prophet Isaiah identified the progressive *waypoints of damnation* that belong to the disobedient. **Isa 28:13**.

As a person refuses salvation by rejecting the word of Christ and His invitation to join the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, the wrath of God upon them increases. Having been given the opportunity to repent, there no longer remains for them 'a sacrifice for sins'. As Paul declared, 'For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgement.' **Heb 10:26-27**.

Further reading: Isaiah 53

The church

The body of Christ, the church, is a worldwide institution of sanctified people, who are among the denominations, and even outside of them. These are people who have been born of the seed of the divine nature and baptised by the Father into the body of Christ. This happened when the word of God was spoken to them and they received the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of adoption, and the Father then sent the Spirit of the Son into their heart. The Holy Spirit enabled the conception of the Seed of God, which is the Spirit of Christ, in their heart, whereupon the Father placed them in the body of Christ.

With this in mind, we acknowledge that the Father knows those who are His. As the apostle Paul declared, 'Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His", and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity"'. **2Ti 2:19**. 'Iniquity' is going astray from the pathway of salvation that Christ has pioneered for us because we trust in our own understanding and walk according to the sight of our own eyes. **Pro 3:5. Isa 5:21**. Those who are known by the Father are calling on the name of the Lord and departing from iniquity. That is, they are planted in the body of Christ so that they can join the process of regeneration and become sons of men in the image and likeness of God. **Rom 10:13. Tit 3:4-7**.

How then do we know who belongs to the church, the body of Christ? Jesus was clear that it is by their fruit that a person is known, saying, 'You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.' **Mat 7:16-17**. The good fruit is the fruit of the divine nature, and not a projection of religious good works.

Further reading: 2 John

Looking upon Christ

At this time, the Spirit is calling us all to cease from hiding our faces from Christ so that we can be delivered from the iniquitous projections that impede our participation in the fellowship of *agape*, and can be established in our sanctification. **Isa 53:3**. Thankfully, the Spirit is enabling us to look upon, and to see, the Son of Man.

Emphasising this imperative, the apostle John recounted Jesus' interaction with the man who was born blind. Hearing that the man had been cast out of the synagogue, Jesus found him and said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of God?' The man asked, 'Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?' Significantly, Jesus answered, 'You have both *seen Him* and it is He who is *talking with you*.' **Joh 9:35-37**. In other words, the man had been enabled to look upon and see the Son of Man and was receiving His word as a disciple of Christ. Now illuminated, and filled with faith, the man responded, saying, 'Lord I believe!' and he worshipped Jesus. **Joh 9:38**.

Jesus then summed up the whole matter, which the Spirit is presently highlighting to us, saying, '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**.

When our eyes are opened to see Christ, it is an astonishing interaction. The prophet Isaiah noted, 'Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man'. **Isa 52:14**. A person is astonished when they see that Christ's visage 'was marred more than any man's', and then to understand that this marring was because of *their* fallen projection that had been transferred to Him. This interaction with Christ quickens faith. As a believer 'looks on Him whom they have pierced', as Peter did, they are able to mourn for Christ 'as for a Firstborn'. **Zec 12:10**. This mourning leads to repentance, establishing them on the pathway of salvation. **2Co 7:10**.

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 7

Forgiveness and judgement

A person who is obtaining their sanctification rejoices in the forgiveness of God, but also fears Him. They recognise that He takes vengeance on their sinful deeds. Accordingly, they accept the need to eat the fruit of their own way. They recognise that this belongs to the process for their refinement and maturation as a son of God.

King David exemplified this orientation to the pilgrimage of God's covenant people, particularly after he found forgiveness from God for his adultery and murder. After David confessed, 'I have sinned against the Lord', the prophet Nathan replied, 'The Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die. However, *because of this deed* you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.' **2Sa 12:13-14**. The Lord also said to David, through Nathan, 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house.' **2Sa 12:11**.

As David was fleeing Jerusalem to escape the grievous intent of his son, Absalom, he was abused by Shimei who cursed him and threw stones at him. In response to Abishai's request to take Shimei's head, David said, 'Let him alone, and let him curse; *for so the Lord has ordered him*. It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will *repay me with good* [the fruit that belongs to my sanctification] for his cursing this day.' **2Sa 16:11-12**.

Having this understanding, David prophetically wrote of Christ, the King of kings, saying, 'The King's strength also loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool – He is holy.' **Psa 99:4-5**. The footstool, where we are to worship, is the feet of Christ. This is where the apostle John fell as a dead man when he turned to see the voice that spoke with him, and he saw one like the Son of Man in the midst of seven lampstands. **Rev 1:10-13,17**.

Further reading: Psalm 99

God who forgives, but takes vengeance

The psalmist declared, 'Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was among those who called upon His name; they called upon the Lord, and He answered them. He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar; they kept His testimonies and the ordinance He gave them. You answered them, O Lord our God; *You were to them God-Who-Forgives [El Nasa], though You took vengeance on their deeds.*' **Psa 99:6-8.**

When the psalmist identified Christ as *El Nasa*, he was revealing that He comes close to, forgives, and delivers, those who mourn. He does this by lifting them up with His right hand. **Job 27:11.** We note, in this regard, the words of Isaiah, who testified, 'Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' **Isa 12:2.** Describing the expression of those who have received this salvation, we read, 'The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; *the right hand of the Lord [that ministers this salvation] does valiantly.*' **Psa 118:15.**

Although the Lord does forgive, He also takes vengeance on our deeds. This is part of the ministry from His hand as *El Nasa*, and it looks like lamentation, mourning and woe. Ezekiel learnt this principle, testifying, 'Now when I looked, *there was a hand stretched out to me;* and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were *lamentations and mourning and woe.*' **Eze 2:9-10.** Significantly, as a messenger of the Lord, Ezekiel was directed to eat this scroll, as he further recounted, 'Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.' **Eze 3:1-2.**

Further reading: Numbers 20

Calling us to worship

King David established that the King of kings is the God-Who-Forgives and who takes vengeance on our deeds. David then directed us, saying, 'Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy.' **Psa 99:9**. The holy hill is Mount Zion, the city of the living God. This is the city that belongs to the sanctified elect, meaning those who are departing from their uncleanness and iniquity.

Christ is coming in the midst of the seven churches as *El Nasa*. For example, He addressed the church in Thyatira as, 'the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass.' **Rev 2:18**. Having rebuked the *aggelos* for allowing Jezebel to teach and seduce His servants, Christ said to them, and to the church of Thyatira, 'All the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. *And I will give to each one of you according to your works.*' **Rev 2:23**. That is, He will take vengeance on our deeds, even though He forgives.

Christ then said, 'Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine [of Jezebel], who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. *But hold fast what you have till I come.* And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.' **Rev 2:24-26**.

We are in a season when the Lord is coming among us with 'eyes like a flame of fire and feet like burnished bronze.' **Rev 2:18**. He is addressing our iniquitous projections, revealing the thoughts and intentions of our heart, and calling us to worship at His feet in sanctification on Mount Zion. **Psa 99:4-5**.

Further reading: Psalm 95

The need to fear the Lord

In this season, the Lord has been addressing the issue of sanctification in our families. In this regard, He is coming upon many in judgement because they have not discerned the body in relation to this matter. **1Co 11:29**. Their unsanctified engagement in the community of the church has been the fruit of their arrogance toward the word of the Lord. This is the word of His messengers, proclaimed from the Scriptures that were written by Peter and Paul.

Paul testified that the rejection of his message, by those who heard him speak, was a humiliation. **2Co 12:21**. Likewise, the messengers in this age are humiliated when they preach what is written in the Scriptures, and those who hear the word remain resolute in their iniquity. Instead of obeying the word, these ones cleave to presbyters with deceit. They seek alternative and corrupt counsel, and patronise Christ's messengers who belong to the presbytery and who are given to preach the word. They do this while making complaint against them and their message, privately and, at times, openly.

However, the Lord expects His messengers to continue to proclaim the word faithfully. As He said to Jeremiah, "*The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; and he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?*" says the Lord. "*Is not My word like a fire?*" says the Lord, "*and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?*" **Jer 23:28-29**. Note, that as the messengers of the Lord faithfully speak the word, rather than hit the rock with the rod in frustration, the word itself is like a hammer that breaks the rock into pieces.

We are living in fearful days as the judgements of the Lord come among us. Accordingly, this is the time to fear the Lord as we remember His word that says, 'He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' **Pro 29:1**.

Further reading: 1 Corinthians 10

Presumptuous sin

King David wrote, 'Keep back Your servant also from *presumptuous sins*; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless [as one who walks according to the Spirit], and I shall be innocent of great transgression.' **Psa 19:13.** Presumptuous sins are high-handed, deliberate disobedience that is effected by those in the church. It refers to the attitude and actions of a person who follows after their own heart and their own mind on matters to do with the word and culture in the church. Those who walk in this manner are rejecting their own sanctification and are undermining the sanctification of those who are weak in faith.

Presumptuous sin is demonstrated in the church when a person, particularly one who maintains a leadership demeanour, rejects or reinterprets the word of the Lord proceeding from the presbytery. They do this on the basis of their own understanding of the gospel, and to soften the harm that they perceive is being done to them, and to others, through the proclamation of the word. In this regard, they are empowered by the fruit that they have consumed from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which they feed to others in the church.

A person reserves the right to minister to others in this manner through either assumed authority or on account of their association with those who have received actual authority from Christ. In both instances, these are people who 'cleave to the messengers with deceit' and who gather people to themselves and their own interpretation of the word of the Lord. Those who gather to them, and entreat them, do so because of their own lack of sanctification on a matter, and because they are unwilling to personally meet Christ in repentance, and to know Him by walking in the light of the word that proceeds from His face through the ministry of the presbytery.

Further reading: Psalm 19

The doctrine of Jezebel

A notable example of presumptuous sin within our churches has been the alternative instruction given to families who have had members depart from their household, and from the household of God, in pursuit of their rebellious and often immoral endeavours. The Spirit has been calling every family in the church to be found worthy, which requires their sanctification from the world. Through sanctification, families are able to dignify and honour a person's choice to depart, leaving them to their decision. They are able to maintain their obedience and sanctified participation in the *agape* meal as part of the bride of Christ.

However, there have been a number of supposedly leading brethren and, in particular, wives, who have not maintained their own sanctification in these matters. They have counselled others to continue engaging their rebellious relatives as an expression of God's unconditional love. This is presumptuous sin and brings both those who minister in this way, and those who receive their counsel, under condemnation.

Jesus warned the presbytery in Thyatira about this influence in the church, describing it as the spirit of Jezebel. He said to the presbytery of this church, 'I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.' **Rev 2:20-23.**

Further reading: Revelation 2

Sanctification through the Elijah ministry

The Elijah ministry to the church is a sanctifying ministry. The sanctification of the people of God by this ministry enables them to be called 'the church', because the church is a 'called out' company who are made the elect. The apostle Paul spoke the word of the Father that was given to him by Christ to proclaim to the Corinthian church. This word belongs to the church in this present season. It is the content that belongs to the Elijah ministry, which was first proclaimed to Israel on Mount Carmel, and then continued to be proclaimed by all of the prophets under the Old Covenant, concluding with John the Baptist when he baptised Christ.

John's baptism of Jesus inaugurated the beginning of the New Covenant. At this time, Jesus said to John, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us *to fulfill all righteousness.*' **Mat 3:15.** The baptism of Jesus fulfilled all righteousness because this is when the physical body of Christ was inaugurated as the new Temple of God on the earth. **Joh 2:19.** This happened because the Holy Spirit descended from heaven in His fulness, in the form of a dove, and filled Christ, giving to Him, from the Father, all of the power and capacity of *El Shaddai.* **Joh 1:32-34.** He would minister by this power, which was enabled by the seven Spirits of God given to Him by the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Elijah ministry that has been proclaimed to us in our day is the word of the Lord that is calling us to be sanctified in our marriages and families. The Lord, the Father, through the prophet Malachi said, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord [when the Father takes His seat]. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.' **Mal 4:5-6.**

Further reading: 1 Kings 18

The apostle Paul's message

The apostle Paul declared the message that belongs to the Elijah ministry when he spoke of the unsanctified relationships and behaviours that existed in the Corinthian church. He said to them, and to us, 'O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open [This is the demeanour of messengers in the church]. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections. Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.' **2Co 6:11-13.**

In love, messengers who speak before God in Christ are open to their hearers. They proclaim the word without fear or favour, so that their hearers might not be inhibited in relation to their sanctification. Hearers demonstrate their love for Christ and their affection for His messengers *through obedience to the word*. This is the word of the Father that can bring them to maturity as sons of God.

Paul continued, writing, 'Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness [which is sonship] with lawlessness [iniquity; self-image; projection leading to weariness]? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?' **2Co 6:14-15.** Belial is not Satan or an evil spirit. The word, 'Belial', comes from the Hebrew word for 'worthlessness and unprofitableness'. It is referring to people, or social engagements, that are worthless or unprofitable. These are not the works of obedience that belong to being yoked with Christ, through which we find rest as we cease from striving to find ourselves through our own endeavours. It is, therefore, important to consider whether the activities in which we are engaged are worthwhile or profitable for righteousness. Do they reveal Christ through *agape* fellowship? Are they multiplying our mina and talent, or are they the activities that belong to the pursuit of pleasure?

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 6

Come out and be separate

The apostle Paul said, 'What agreement has the temple of God with idols? *For you are the temple of the living God.* As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people"' **2Co 6:16**. Paul was emphasising a remarkable understanding – we are a temple for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are worshipping in our body and desiring for us to multiply this worship with others. It defines how we relate to one another. For this reason, we must not defile the temple of God. **1Co 3:16-17**.

Having posed his questions, Paul addressed the church, saying, ' "Come out from among them and be separate", says the Lord. "Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters", says the Lord Almighty.' **2Co 6:17-18**. There are three clear directions in this statement – (1) *Come out* from among those who are unsanctified in the church; (2) *be separate*; that is, relationally *separate yourself* from those in the church who live and walk in an unsanctified manner; and (3) *do not touch* what is unclean.

God the Father made it clear, through the prophetic, apostolic ministry of Paul, that He would not receive us, or be a Father to us, if we did not do as He directed us to do. If we call on God as our Father, then He only hears us if we are living and walking in the culture of righteousness that the Elijah ministry declares. This is what it means to be 'a church'. A church is a 'called out' and sanctified community. Jesus said that He would build His church and that it would be made up only of an elect, sanctified people. As we are progressively sanctified and made righteous by, and through, obedience to the word, the fruit of our righteousness will be seen because of answered prayer. **Jas 5:16-18**.

Further reading: 1 Corinthians 5

The fruit of unsanctified behaviour

It is important to recognise that the apostle Paul was writing to the church in Corinth when he directed those with an ear to hear, to 'come out from among *them* and be separate'. **2Co 6:17**. The '*them*', to whom Paul was referring, were those in the Corinthian congregation who were unsanctified. They were not obedient from the heart to the form of doctrine to which they were being delivered. Rather, they were continuing to live according to their own understanding and the sight of their own eyes.

Speaking to these people, Paul said, 'Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? *We speak before God in Christ*. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification. For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits [self-promotion], tumults [instability, complexity, agitation]; lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practised.' **2Co 12:19-21**.

Paul was detailing the fruit that is brought forth by those who are *unsanctified*. They are unclean on account of their disobedience and mixture. **1Th 4:7**. Significantly, he said that they had *not come to repentance*. Without repentance, we are unable to receive or exercise faith to live by the Spirit, who is the Spirit of adoption. **Heb 6:1. Gal 3:14. Rom 8:15**. In this state, our Christian life is 'a form of godliness' without the power of new-creation life. Again, Paul said, 'From such people turn away!' **2Ti 3:5**.

Notably, such people often demand attention from the messengers of Christ, and from others in the body, to ratify their own gospels; to excuse their mixture and uncleanness; and to verify their idolatrous projections. Their motive is the fear of death associated with condemnation and shame.

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 12

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision

Those people who are unwilling to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling often want someone to define the works through which they can be assured of their acceptability. Paul summarised this orientation to the word as choosing the imposed imperative of 'circumcision'. Others who continue to live according to the dictates of their own heart, preference the counsel of false messengers who say, 'You shall have peace' and, 'No evil shall come upon you'. **Jer 23: 17**. Paul called this 'uncircumcision'. However, neither of these motivations bear good fruit. As Paul emphasised, 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, *but a new creation*.' **Gal 6:15**.

Assurance by association is the alternative to faith. We do not obtain faith through engagement with the messenger. We receive faith by hearing the word and receiving it with meekness. **Rom 10:17**. **Jas 1:21**. We then desire fellowship with those who preach the word *because we have already received faith*. **1Jn 1:1-3**. As Paul said, 'And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke", we also believe and *therefore speak*.' **2Co 4:13**.

The conversation of faith is a *confession of sanctification*. This includes confession of the uncleanness from which we are departing, and confession of the obedience to which we are being delivered. Our communication in this fellowship is *with gladness and simplicity of heart* as those who are 'taught the word *share in all good things* with him who teaches'. **Gal 6:6**.

The messengers of Christ, and indeed the members of the body of Christ, *have no obligation to the flesh*. **Rom 8:12**. It is not their responsibility to assure a person of salvation, particularly when a hearer is choosing uncleanness over sanctification. In fact, Paul said that the onus was on each person to *examine themselves and prove that Christ was in them*, writing, 'Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified.' **2Co 13:5**.

Further reading: Galatians 5

Examining ourselves

A key indicator that a person belongs to the kingdom of heaven is that they are a sheep who hears and responds to the voice of the Shepherd when He sends His messengers to proclaim His word to them. Jesus said, 'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one.' **Joh 10:27-30**. They hear His voice and follow Him wherever He leads. Importantly, they are able to be gathered into the fellowship of Yahweh with their brethren.

To examine ourselves, as we are directed by the apostle Paul, let us consider the following questions. **2Co 13:5**. Do we trust Christ's messengers? Are we receiving faith by hearing and responding with repentance to the word? Is our communication expressing sonship by the Spirit of adoption, or is it the emotion of sin driven by the loss of our religious reputation? Is the Spirit of Christ our 'exceedingly great reward', or do we embrace the uncleanness that belongs to the spirit of the world? **Gen 15:1**. Are we beset by sin and its emotions, or are we finding deliverance and healing through regeneration and renewing on the pathway of salvation? Are we contentious, jealous, full of opinion and complaint, confused, anxious, contrary, and demanding, or are we participating in the *agape* meal with gladness and simplicity of heart?

If we are on the pathway of salvation, we are pilgrims who are responding to the call to come out from among the unsanctified. Moreover, we are separating ourselves from those whose culture does not belong to the heavenly city. Pilgrims recognise that their works and sanctification are not yet complete; however, they are being progressively realised as they journey with Christ to Mount Zion. **Isa 35:8-10**.

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 13



Restoring
my Soul