



# Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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*A Five Day Devotional Guide*

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## Rest and refreshing

When we recognise that we do not know how to pray as we should, the Holy Spirit helps our weakness by making intercession for us with groanings that are too deep for comprehension. **Rom 8:26**. As we pray in the Holy Spirit, we join the fellowship of the prayer meeting of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In this fellowship, we are 'edified', which means we are confirmed, built-up and restored. **1Co 14:4**. In other words, we are refreshed and equipped to be led by the Spirit in the works of obedience that belong to our sanctification as sons of God in Christ. For this reason, Jude encouraged us to pray in the Holy Spirit, explaining that through prayer in the Spirit, we are able to build ourselves up in our most holy faith and keep ourselves in the love, or fellowship, of God. **Jud 1:20-21**.

Significantly, once established in this fellowship, we have a participation in the ministry of the gospel, through which others can receive the promise of the Spirit, and can enter the rest that belongs to their predestination as a son of God. **Eph 1:3-6**. By the Holy Spirit, in whom we have been immersed, the seven Spirits of God flow out of our hearts as 'rivers of living water'. **Joh 7:38**. This is the water of the word that brings healing and refreshing to those who receive it. **Eze 47:7-12**.

Prophesying of our participation in the ministry of rest and refreshing by the Spirit, Isaiah declared, ' "Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little." *For with stammering lips and another tongue* He will speak to this people, to whom He said, "This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest," and, "This is the refreshing".' **Isa 28:9-12**.

**Further reading: Isaiah 28**

## Stammering lips and other tongues

The gospel of God is proclaimed, 'precept upon precept' and 'line upon line,' by those who are filled with the Spirit. They speak with stammering lips in the weakness of their fellowship in Christ's travail and with other *tongues*. This word has a polarising effect upon every hearer. Isaiah proclaimed concerning those who would not hear, 'The word of the Lord was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little," that they might go and fall backward, and be broken and snared and caught.' **Isa 28:11-13.**

The ministry of rest and refreshing by the Spirit, through the proclamation of the gospel of God from the bride city, was first manifest on the Day of Pentecost. On this day, 120 disciples were gathered with one accord in one place. Suddenly, there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing wind, and flames of fire rested upon them. They were filled with the Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. **Act 2:1-4.**

Although uneducated and unable to comprehend the content of their own speech, the 120 disciples spoke of the wonderful works of God in the diversity of tongues belonging to 'every nation under heaven'. **Act 2:5-11.** Marking the polarising effect of this ministry, some of those who heard the gospel spoken in their native tongue, asked, 'Whatever could this mean?' This marked their willingness to entreat and receive those who were speaking to them. **Act 2:12.** Others, however, were laughing and joking and ridiculing them, saying, 'They are full of sweet wine and are drunk!' **Act 2:13.**

We know that Peter, with the eleven apostles, then stood and declared the message of the cross to this multitude. Those with an ear to hear Peter's message were cut to the heart. They responded to the conviction of the Spirit with repentance and faith, and about 3 000 souls were established as disciples and fellow citizens of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem. They were entering rest! **Act 2:37-41.**

**Further reading: Acts 2**

## The ministry of the Spirit

The first implication of entering rest, by being born again and being immersed into the name of the Father, the name of the Son and the name of the Holy Spirit through discipleship, was the hearers' participation in the four dimensions of the *agape* meal. As Luke noted in the book of Acts, 'Then those who gladly received his word were baptised; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.' **Act 2:41-42.**

The ministry of rest continues in and from the fellowship of the *agape* meal, by the Spirit. This rest can be proclaimed through tongues. Interestingly, Paul said that a person who speaks in tongues 'speaks mysteries'. **1Co 14:2.** However, speaking in tongues only profits those who hear it, when it is ministered as a gift of prophecy accompanied by an interpretation from another. This is particularly for the benefit of an unbeliever, or an uninformed person. They are able to bear witness that God is among us when they hear the word in their own tongue, as happened on the Day of Pentecost, or when the secrets of their heart are revealed by the word. **1Co 14:23-25.**

The ministry of spiritual gifts in the *agape* meal, publicly and from house to house, are a further expression of the rest and refreshing that belongs to our fellowship together in Yahweh. Paul explained that the manifestation of the Spirit through the exercise of the diversity of spiritual gifts is for *the profit of all*. **1Co 12:4-7.** It is a ministry of blessing. These gifts may include words of wisdom, words of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. **1Co 12:8-10.** Importantly, 'one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills'. **1Co 12:11.**

**Further reading: I Corinthians 14**

## Sincere love of the brethren

In the introduction to his first epistle, the apostle Peter described the motivation of a person who has been born again of the incorruptible seed of God's life. He said that we are motivated to believe, and then to obey, God's word, expecting that what God has promised to give us, He will do. **1Pe 1:13-19**. This expectation becomes our hope and the substance of our faith. **1Pe 1:20-21**. **Heb 11:1**. We are, by these qualities, defined as a believer. We demonstrate that we are a believer when we obey God's word by submitting to the Holy Spirit as He leads us and gives to us both the power and the desire to be an *obedient disciple of Christ*.

As children of God, the first command that we receive from the Father, through Christ, is that we are to purify our soul from carnality by obeying the truth through obedience to the Holy Spirit. We fulfil this obedience by joining, and then following, the Holy Spirit. This desire to be led by the Spirit has been birthed in us! **Rom 8:14**. As we walk by the Spirit as sons of God, we do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. **Gal 5:16**. For this reason, the apostle John declared that 'whatever is born of God overcomes the world'. **1Jn 5:4**.

Everyone who is born of God, loves. **1Jn 4:7**. This expression of God's divine nature is the reason why we follow the Spirit, whose love for God's people was described by Peter as 'sincere love of the brethren'. **1Pe 1:22**. Notice that a sincere love of the brethren is the Holy Spirit's love for God's people; it is not our determined or self-sourced expression of love for others. In order to love in this manner, we must join the *fellowship of the Spirit*, where we grow as a son of God as we continue to receive this capacity from Him. **Php 2:1-2**.

**Further reading: 1 Peter 1**



## The sincere milk of the word

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul emphasised that we grow and mature as sons of God as the love of God is poured into our heart. He wrote that 'hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us'. **Rom 5:5**. With this understanding in view, Peter directed us to 'love one another fervently with a pure heart'. **1Pe 1:22**.

Peter further explained that a person who has a pure heart has laid aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all evil speaking. This is, in fact, the inceptive response of a newborn Christian. **1Pe 2:1**. Their priority is to feed on the *sincere milk of the word*, described by Paul as 'sound doctrine', and to grow as a son of God in Christ. **1Pe 2:2. 1Ti 1:10. Tit 2:1**. Significantly, this is a motivation that is also native to a new-creation son of God, and an expression of their *sincere love* of the brethren which belongs to the fellowship of the Spirit. Evidently, feeding on the sincere milk of the word is a wholly relational reality that belongs to our fellowship in Christ, by the Spirit.

As we come to Christ, we are being built together as a spiritual house upon Him, our living foundation Stone. **1Pe 2:4**. That is, we are living stones who are being built upon one another as a relationally-connected *community*. **1Pe 2:5**. Each stone carries its own load in the house. However, each stone is dependent upon the others in the wall in order to maintain the structure and order of the house, for this house is the Lord's holy temple, the church. Peter then said that we, as a community, are also a holy priesthood whose work is to offer up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **1Pe 2:5**.

**Further reading: 1 Peter 2**

## The example of Christ

Having been established as part of a kingdom of priests, there is a Christian culture that we are to demonstrate in all of the contexts of life. This includes our attitude and conduct in the places of our employment or education. Detailing this expression, Peter said, 'Servants [employees; students], be submissive to your masters [employers; teachers] with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.' **1Pe 2:18-20.**

Peter then highlighted that new-creation life should be evident in our families. In relation to this subject, his first point of address was to Christian wives, writing, 'Wives, *likewise*, be submissive to your own husbands'. **1Pe 3:1.** Just prior to this statement, Peter had explained that Christ suffered for our sakes on His offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary, *in obedience to the Father*. He said, 'For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, *leaving us an example*, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.' **1Pe 2:21-23.**

By directing wives to *likewise* be submissive to their husband, they were to behave toward their husband in the same manner as Christ did to the Father! Importantly, this is a directive to *all* wives, 'that even if some [husbands] do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear'. **1Pe 3:1-2.**

**Further reading: 1 Peter 3**

## The testimony of a godly woman

The apostle Paul addressed the conduct of Christian women in their houses and in the church. Whether they are married or not, he said that their behaviour is to be proper, demonstrating that they are women who are professing godliness with, and through, good works. **1Ti 2:10**. Significantly, Paul did not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man. This directive applied to a woman's conduct in the church, as well as to the conduct of a wife in her house. In the same way that Peter directed a wife to conduct herself 'without a word', Paul instructed women 'to be in silence'. **1Ti 2:12**.

To 'be in silence' does not mean that a woman says nothing in the house; or that she is seen but not heard. Rather, it means that she should not usurp the God-given authority of her husband in the house by presuming to instruct him on what he should, or should not, be doing as a husband and a father. As Peter said, this applies whether the husband is being obedient to the word or not.

When a woman conducts herself in godliness, she has an excellent and essential expression which overflows in testimony to others. As King Solomon declared, 'She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness ... give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.' **Pro 31:26,31**. This communication is not based on her perception of good and evil, which is sourced from her own law. Rather, it is the expression of the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is sourced from the incorruptible seed of God's divine life. **1Pe 3:4**. **1Pe 1:23**.

**Further reading Proverbs 31**

## Sarah's reformation

A Christian woman honours and promotes the order of grace in the church and in her household. By this means, she cultivates fruitfulness in the family through offering. Paul instructed women who are maturing in their sonship, saying, 'The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behaviour, not slanderers, not given to much wine, *teachers of good things* – that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.' **Tit 2:3-5.**

The carnal expression of a woman in a marriage and a household was exemplified by Sarai's endeavour to obtain a child for herself by means of a surrogate. She instructed Abram, saying, 'See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps *I shall obtain children by her*.' **Gen 16:2.** Abram doubted the Lord and His word by heeding the voice of Sarai. The fruit of this endeavour was a child who was born according to the flesh. Relational distress and disharmony flourished in the house. **Gen 16:4,6.**

There was a marked change in Sarah's expression in the house after she received a new name through *El Shaddai's* initiative towards Abraham, and they began to walk blamelessly together. **Gen 17:1-16.** Notably, it was Sarah who initiated the removal of the carnal culture from their house, personified by Ishmael and Hagar. She said to Abraham, 'Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac.' **Gen 21:10.** This statement was very displeasing to Abraham; however, God said to him, 'Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, *listen to her voice*; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.' **Gen 21:12.** We also note that Sarah freed Isaac to go with his father, Abraham, to Moriah to participate in the fellowship of offering.

**Further reading: Genesis 21**

## Not giving Satan an advantage

When a man or a woman defaults in relation to their sanctification, *a spirit of disobedience* gains traction in their life and in their family. This spirit was manifest when Eve brought the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to Adam. Perceiving it to be good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise, she ate the fruit and then presumed to minister this word to her husband. **Gen 3:6-7.**

In contrast to this deceived mode of control, women will find grace to be fruitful if they continue in faith, love and sanctification, with self-control. **1Ti 2:15.** A woman is able to conduct herself in this manner, being clothed with the virtues of godliness and self-control, and being free from anxiety, *because of her faith.* **1Pe 3:6.** It is interesting to note that Peter applied this principle, particularly, to a wife whose husband is disobedient in attitude toward the Father, and does not submit himself to Christ as the Head of his family. In this situation, if a woman conducts herself as a Christian, then Satan is unable to take advantage over her, or over her children, as they walk in faith with her. Her house remains an expression of the Christian community because of her faith and virtue, for she is not driven by anxiety and fear. **1Pe 3:6.**

If this reality is true for a woman who has a disobedient and difficult husband, how much more should this principle apply to a woman who has a *believing* husband. We note, in this regard, a tendency of some women to take advantage of their husband's commitment to the word, presuming to instruct him under the guise of fellowship in the word. However, Peter and Paul were clear that *every Christian wife* should have the same self-controlled virtue that can demonstrate godliness with good works, without usurping the headship of her husband.

**Further reading: Genesis 3**

## The way of understanding

Having addressed the culture of Christian womanhood and, in particular, the conduct of believing wives, Peter then attended to the conversation and conduct of believing husbands. He directed them, saying, 'Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.' **1Pe 3:7.**

To 'dwell with understanding' does not mean that a man patronises his wife or compensates for her. Rather, it means that a husband gives himself to meet and relate to his wife *by offering*. We know this because Christ's offering journey is called, in the Scriptures, 'the way of understanding'. **Pro 21:16. Isa 40:14.** Offering is the action of love which is demonstrated by laying down one's life to reveal another. A man lays down his life in offering for his wife as the vessel of headship. How does a Christian man do this?

Describing the love that a man should have for his wife, Paul said, 'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her ... husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no-one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.' **Eph 5:25,28-29.** A man nourishes his own person by receiving and eating the bread which comes down from heaven. **Luk 4:4.** The daily request for this bread is a key focus of a man's prayer. **Mat 6:11.** As the head of his wife, he then nourishes and cherishes her as they, together, devotionally consider the word of present truth and its implications for their marriage and their household. In so doing, the word of the Lord is established as the agenda of the house.

**Further reading: Ephesians 5**

## Exhortation to men

The apostle Peter exhorted every husband to honour his wife as 'the weaker vessel'. **1Pe 3:7**. A woman's weakness is not referring to a physical inferiority to men but, rather, to her unique connection to *travail*. This association between weakness and the travail through which something is brought forth and multiplied, was exemplified by Jesus. As the apostle Paul noted, 'For though He was crucified in *weakness*, yet He lives by the power of God'. **2Co 13:4**. Christ's crucifixion was the culminating event of His *travailing* journey from Gethsemane through which one Seed became a great multitude of seeds in one Sheaf of firstfruits. **1Co 15:20**.

The apostle Paul instructed Timothy to teach men everywhere to take the initiative in prayer, both in the church as well as in their homes. They are to pray within the boundaries of their sanctification, surrendering their lives, and those for whom they care, to Christ. They are to deal with the issues that they confront in their households, and in the world, through prayer, without anger and disputing. **1Ti 2:8**. This is the implication of their submission to the headship of Christ.

King David exemplified the prayer of a man who was forsaking wrath and doubting, and was submitting himself to the lordship of Christ in the midst of familial distress. In response to the rebellion of his son, Absalom, which was the fruit of his own sin, David prayed, 'Lord, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God". But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head. I cried to the Lord with my voice, and He heard me from His holy hill.' **Psa 3:1-4**.

**Further reading: 1 Timothy 2**

## The spirit of disobedience

The outcome of Adam looking into the face of his wife, and eating the fruit that she gave to him, was that he rose up and ruled over her in anger and dispute. **Gen 3:16**. A man's default response of wrath and doubting reveals the influence that comes from Satan, who is 'the prince of the power of the air'. Furthermore, it illustrates how the spirit of disobedience works in those who are Satan's children, whom Paul called 'the sons of disobedience'. **Eph 2:2**.

In a family, a woman with this same attitude, or spirit, is driven by fear and anxiety. She believes that she needs to take control of her life and of her household. Through the three elements of the knowledge of good and evil – that is, what appears to be pleasing in her sight; what she believes is the food for the family; and her own wisdom – the woman determines to know all the details of her circumstances so that she can allay her anxiety and bring a resolution to every matter. She does this by feeding this information to her husband so that he will become the servant of her initiatives and of her motherhood in the household.

However, when her husband does not submit to her initiative or he reacts against it, she feels that she is not loved. From her perspective, the romantic ideal of their home has been compromised. The woman is not demonstrating faith, for the word that comes from her is sourced from the wrong tree. She has taken hold of this word because of fear and anxiety. The woman reacts as the victim of the circumstance, demonstrating that she does not trust the Lord or her husband. As a consequence, she withdraws to an independent and alienated position. Regrettably, this dynamic is apparent in many families. However, this is not 'the faith of Sarah'; nor is it the culture of the house of Abraham. **Isa 51:2**. It is not the way in which a Christian household lives.

**Further reading: Colossians 3**



## The spirit of Jezebel

A particular expression of the spirit of disobedience is the *spirit of Jezebel*. This spirit is manifest in a church when the wife of a leader, who has usurped his authority in their house, presumes to bring direction and give instruction in the church. Jesus rebuked the presbytery in Thyatira for allowing a woman called Jezebel to teach and seduce His servants through this unsanctified speech. Professing to be a prophetess, her alternative 'gospel' promoted the acceptability of mixture in families and in the church under the guise of Christian love. It was not 'the bread of sincerity and truth' belonging to the true Feast of Passover, but was another food altogether; it was a message celebrating self-righteousness, sophistication and idolatry. **Rev 2:20. 1Co 5:8-9.**

Jezebel loved the projection of her own style of motherhood. Her self-image was not godliness; it belonged to the spirit of harlotry. Christ brought a word to her through His messengers and, in mercy, gave her time to repent. However, she did not repent. Under the judgement of Christ, she became physically sick. Many other disasters came upon her and upon those who maintained her same attitude and opinions. Finally, her children fell away from Christ and died under the judgement of God. **Rev 2:20-23.**

Jezebel was not a woman of faith. Her husband had also defaulted in relation to faith, and was culpable for the destructive effect of his wife's influence in his house and in the church. Faith comes only by hearing the word of God; and this word does not come from the woman. **Rom 10:17. 1Ti 2:11-12.** Faith is a *gift* that comes with the word of God through the order of headship, and it enables obedience. Faith gives to us the freedom to choose to believe the word of truth. Accompanying this choice is the capacity to see the will of God accomplished as we do the works that Christ has already finished for us through His offering and suffering journey.

**Further reading: Revelation 2**

## The importance of prayer

At the present time, through the ministry of the Spirit, Christ is impressing upon us the importance of our participation in *prayer*. Prayer is the intercession and travail that belongs to the covenant fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*. In short, *intercession* is the dialogue of prayer involving the expression, or communication, of one's name. *Travail* is the expression of 'giving-love' that proceeds from this discussion through the action of offering. These two dimensions of prayer, which are enabled by the Holy Spirit, are the means by which the covenant purpose of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is accomplished.

Our fellowship in the intercession and travail of Yahweh's prayer, which is possible only by the capacity that we receive from the Holy Spirit, is corporate *and* individual. Both of these contexts of prayer are necessary for our participation in the fulfilment of God's purpose and will for us as individuals, as households, and as communities of believers. For this reason, Paul exhorted his readers, saying, 'Rejoice always, *pray without ceasing*, in everything give thanks; *for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*.' **1Th 5:16-18**.

Addressing a key focus of prayer for believing men and believing women, Paul wrote, 'I desire therefore that the men *pray everywhere* [or without ceasing], [by] lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; *in like manner also*, that the women [pray everywhere by] adorning themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women *professing godliness, with good works*'. **1Ti 2:8-10**.

We see that a man proceeds from the intercession of prayer by the Spirit by lifting up holy, or sanctified, hands without wrath or doubting. This is his participation in the prayer travail of Yahweh. In the same way, a woman proceeds from the intercession of prayer by the Spirit through the expression of the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, professing godliness through good works. This is her participation in the prayer travail of Yahweh.

**Further reading: Romans 8**

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## Looking upon Christ

It is important to understand that we *pray everywhere* through our individual sanctification by the Spirit; by how we relate to one another in our households; and then by how we relate from house to house. *The travail of prayer is fundamental to, and demonstrated by, the culture and expression of a worthy house.*

To participate in this travail as a household, each person in the family must respond individually to the word of the cross. If they do not resist the Spirit of grace and supplication that accompanies this message, they are caused to look upon Christ whom they have pierced through their fallen, carnal, religious expression in the household. Each individual in a house is able to mourn and grieve for their impact upon Christ, as one mourns for a Firstborn Son.

Summarising the repentant response to the word of the cross as families and as individuals, the prophet Zechariah declared, 'And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.' **Zec 12:10-14.**

**Furthe readings: 2 Corinthians 7**

## A new conversation

Godly sorrow leads to repentance and to the expression of faith obedience that belongs to the household of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed. **2Co 7:10. Gen 28:14.** It is this repentance and faith that a man presents to his wife and family, and that a wife presents to her husband and family, as a foundational expression of fellowship in the travail of prayer. That is, repentance and faith are the basis of the conversation and conduct of prayer by the Spirit in a worthy house.

This reformed conversation and conduct will involve a man submitting himself to the lordship of Christ through obedience to the word of God that proceeds from the fellowship of the presbytery, and through establishing offering as the cultural basis of his life and household. It will involve a woman submitting to her husband in the fear of the Lord and professing godliness with good works, without presuming to instruct her husband on the form of conduct she believes he must demonstrate to ensure the viability and security of their home. Families that fail to respond to the word in this manner inevitably become 'a fortress' wherein the word has little or no effect.

The Holy Spirit is urging men and women to apply themselves to the cultural reformation of their marriages and households. This reformation belongs to, and is necessary for, sanctified prayer. The Spirit is pressing us in this manner so that we will be counted worthy to escape the judgement of God that will come upon the whole earth in the time of the end. With this in mind, we note that, having nominated the signs that signal the time of the end, Jesus said to His disciples, '*Watch* therefore, and *pray always* that you may be *counted worthy* to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.' **Luk 21:36.**

**Further reading: Malachi 3**

## The Bridegroom is coming

The Holy Spirit is the source and capacity of our prayer. He also makes known to us the prophetic Scriptures that apply to the times and seasons in which we live. Accordingly, it is important that we register the Holy Spirit's ongoing insistence upon our consideration of Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish virgins. Clearly, the midnight hour is upon us, for we are presently hearing the Spirit's declaration, 'Behold, the Bridegroom is coming.' **Mat 25:6**. We know that this is what the Spirit is saying because of the present emphasis in the word that is calling for cultural reformation in our marriages and families. This is the appeal, through the ministry of Elijah, for households who belong to the bride of Christ to be made worthy and to grow to firstfruits as part of a network of worthy houses who are ready for the coming of the Bridegroom.

It is notable that all ten women in this parable were identified by Jesus as 'virgins.' That is, they were believers who belonged to the virgin bride of Christ. The distinction between the wise and foolish virgins was evident in their responses to the word of the Elijah ministry calling them to be ready for the coming of the Bridegroom. Clearly, there was a group of believers who were foolish, being slow to respond to this prophetic ministry. In contrast, there was a group of believers who were responsive to this message, who applied themselves, through faithful prayer, to the reformation of their marriages and families, and who were therefore able to join this ministry.

We are counted worthy to escape the judgement of God in the time of the end because we are responding to what the Spirit is saying 'Today', with mourning, repentance and faith, as the Lord comes among the unclean daughters of Zion in a spirit of judgement and burning. **Heb 3:7. Isa 4:1,4.**

**Further reading: Matthew 25**

## Coming to the throne of grace

Those who *apply themselves* to the intercession and travail of prayer, that belongs to cultural reformation in their houses, are coming every day, by the Spirit, to the throne of grace. This is the judgement seat of Christ. Here, they obtain mercy and grace to remain connected to Christ as they are led by the Spirit in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. **Heb 4:16**. Coming to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and grace for fellowship in the travail of prayer does not happen by default. It is an action of faith taken by those who are walking according to the Spirit. This faithful obedience is characteristic of a wise virgin.

In this fellowship, priested to us from the throne by Christ, our great High Priest, we are being delivered from the delusion that is associated with eating our own food (our own gospels and interpretations of the word) and wearing our own apparel (our self-defined expression). Those who are not availing themselves of this deliverance remain deluded as they identify themselves as belonging to Christ (being called by His name) and presume that their reproach is taken away through His vicarious offering on the cross. They cannot be disciplined. This is manifest by their unwillingness to embrace their fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, particularly in relation to the sanctification and culture of their families. **Isa 4:1**.

Without deliverance from the presumption to eat their own food and to wear their own apparel, a person will be surprised when the Father takes His seat and they are unable to enter the wedding feast. As Jesus said, 'Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, "*Lord, Lord, open to us!*" But he answered and said, "*Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you*".' **Mat 25:11-12. Mat 7:22-23**.

**Further reading: Hebrews 4**

## The travail of the bride

Households becoming worthy *through prayer* is *necessary* for their fellowship from house to house as part of the bride of Christ, and for obtaining a double portion of oil as part of a 'wise-virgin' company. **Mat 25:6-8**. This is important to recognise, for we are unable to meet in the fellowship of the Spirit without sanctification in our households, including in our marriages and extended families.

A local network of worthy houses, described in the Scriptures as an 'elect lady', will be praying together as part of a *travailing bride*. **Rev 12:1-2**. The bride of Christ is presently praying by the Spirit in this manner, travailing to bring forth a 'manchild'. **Rev 12:2,5-6**. This manchild is a presbytery composed of twenty-four thrones around the throne of the Father, and the 144 000 firstfruits remnant. Through this administration, the Father's will is accomplished on earth, and the seventh world kingdom is judged. **Rev 4:4-5. Mat 6:9-10**.

The first phase of this 'manchild' is the restoration of a presbytery administration in this day, who have been established in one Spirit and one faith. This administration is suitable for the fullness of the times because it is restored to first love and has obtained an understanding of the mystery of God. It is able to effectively minister the word of grace to the body of Christ, to equip every member for the work of the ministry of the gospel from a network of worthy houses. **Eph 4:11-12**. Through the proclamation of the mystery of God, this company of worthy houses is able to make disciples of '*all nations*'.

The work of messengers who belong to the fellowship of a presbytery, is to make known, by the Spirit, the mystery of God. That is, they are declaring the details of Yahweh's covenant purpose, which is to make men in the image and likeness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the revelation of the name of the Father, the name of the Son and the name of the Holy Spirit. **Mat 28:18-20**.

**Further reading: Revelation 12**

## The travail of the presbytery

Writing to the church in Ephesus, and with this commission in view, the apostle Paul outlined *the prayer focus of a presbytery*. Like Paul, every presbyter is to bow their knee in prayer, asking that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ would give to those whom they address, wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; *that is the mystery of God*. **Eph 3:14**. They are making this mystery clear, ministering in the spirit and power of Elijah, so that their hearers in the church do not remain foolish virgins, but obtain the wisdom and understanding that belongs to the expression of a double portion of oil as wise virgins.

This will require that every hearer is strengthened with might in their spirit and soul (their inner man) through the Holy Spirit, who empowers Christ's messengers with the seven Spirits of God for this ministry. The inner man of a hearer is strengthened for the purpose that Christ, who is the express image of the Father's Person (i.e. the One who reveals and gives the Father to us), may dwell in their heart through faith. By this means, they can be 'rooted and grounded in love' so that they may see and apprehend the love of Christ that passes all knowledge, and so that they may be filled with the fullness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Eph 3:16-19**. Once a person is filled in this manner, the fullness of God, which is the seven Spirits of God, is able to *overflow* from them as 'rivers of living water'! **Joh 7:38-39**.

The work of Christ's presbytery administration, which is presently seven stars in His right hand, and which will move to twenty-four thrones around the throne of the Father, is to give this knowledge and fellowship to the saints as *a double portion of oil*. Here is a key point. The *first* portion of oil is receiving the initiative of God towards us. The *second* portion of oil is manifest when this ministry *flows from us*.

**Further reading: Ephesians 3**



A scenic landscape featuring a dirt path leading up a grassy hill towards a sunset sky with wispy clouds. The path is bordered by a rustic wooden fence on the right side. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and pink, with long, thin clouds. The hills in the background are covered in green grass and some trees.

# Restoring my Soul