# Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3



DECEMBER 2026

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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**December 2026**


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# The word of the cross

The word of the cross that is preached by a watchman does not refer merely to the details of Christ's offering and suffering journey from Gethsemane, culminating in His crucifixion on Mount Calvary. Nor is it simply the proclamation of all the benefits of Christ's offering on our behalf. The word of the cross is *the gospel of God*. **Rom 1:1**. It is the word of the Father that Christ fulfilled by the capacity of Eternal Spirit from the Holy Spirit, in the course of His offering journey. The apostle John described this word as being the witness in heaven of the Father, the Word (referring to the Son), and the Holy Spirit. **1Jn 5:7**. The apostle Paul described this witness as *'the counsel of Their will'.* **Eph 1:11**.

After Jesus had finished His offering and suffering journey and His Spirit was received into the hands of the Father, His side was pierced with a soldier's spear. The Spirit, the water and the blood that flowed from His side was now a witness on earth of what was finished in heaven through His one offering. **1Jn 5:8. Heb 10:10**. This witness was now flowing as a river of life, ministering to every person the eternal implications of Yahweh's offering through which the covenant purpose of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit had been accomplished.

The river of the water of life is the word of the cross that a watchman has been set apart by God to preach. To proclaim this message, a watchman must be restored, as part of a presbytery, to the fellowship of first love that belongs to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is possible only as they receive and drink from the river of the water of life; mourn as they look on Him whom they have pierced; and embrace their fellowship in the cross of Christ. **1Jn 1:1. Luk 9:23.**

**Further reading: 1 John 1**

# Looking upon Him

Through the ministry of watchmen enabled by the Holy Spirit, their hearers are delivered to the choice that was established when Christ was nailed to the cross as a trespass offering. A hearer can choose to participate in Christ's death and to avail themselves, through new birth and discipleship, of the redemption that He accomplished for them as an offering for sin. Alternatively, they can choose to continue to live according to the sight of their own eyes and the understanding of their own heart, leading to cursing in the place of God's forgetfulness.

Prophesying concerning the impact of the cross upon those who receive the message proceeding from Christ's finished offering, 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*.' **Zec 12:10**.

Previously, we have associated this passage solely with the seventh wound, when Christ's side was pierced with the soldier's spear. However, the Scriptures clearly reveal that the crucifixion of Christ was bounded by *two piercings*. First, His hands and feet were pierced through when He was nailed to the cross. This was the manifestation of *the trespass offering*, as well as of the sin offering. We were all connected to Christ as we crucified the Lord of glory through our reproaches against the Father.

Christ's body was pierced a second time when a soldier's spear was thrust into His side. The water, blood and Spirit that flowed from His side is the river of the water of life. It is the word of life proceeding from the offering fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When a person receives this word, they are caused to look upon Him whom they pierced through their reproaches against the Father.

**Further reading: John 19**

# A true believer

The ministry of the gospel of God was exemplified by Jesus, who is the primary Watchman. Following His resurrection from the dead, after His body had rested in the tomb for three days and three nights, Jesus appeared to His disciples in the upper room. Significantly, after He had said to them, 'Peace be with you', Jesus showed them *His hands and His side* – the marks resulting from His two piercings. **Joh 20:19-20**. He then said again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' **Joh 20:21**. The disciples were born again as He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' **Joh 20:22**.

We know that Thomas was not present when Jesus appeared to His disciples this first time. He refused to believe the report of his brethren, saying, 'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' **Joh 20:25**. After eight days, Thomas was present when Jesus again appeared to the disciples. The Lord said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. *Do not be unbelieving, but believing*.' **Joh 20:27**.

Believing in Jesus is possible only as we receive this witness through the proclamation of the word, and look on Him whom we have pierced. Through repentance, and the faith that belongs to sonship, we are joined to the redemptive implications of the sin offering in the fellowship of the trespass offering. *This is what it means to be a believer.*

We note that the manifestation of Christ's pierced hands and feet, and His pierced side, is foundational to the ministry of the gospel through which a hearer can believe and be born anew as a son of God.

**Further reading: John 20**

# The Faithful Witness

It is notable that the apostle John introduced the book of Revelation by identifying Jesus Christ as 'the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth'. **Rev 1:5**.

*Christ is the Faithful Witness* because He was nailed to the cross, and carried in His body the piercings that belonged to His crucifixion. He was brought back from the death of sin by the life of God that was in His blood. **Heb 13:20**. By this means, we were reconciled to God in the body of His flesh. **Col 1:21-22**. *As the Firstborn from the dead*, the Son of Man is the revelation and substance of who we are to become as sons of God who are brought to glory in the image and likeness of God. As *the Ruler of the kings of the earth*, He is the One whom the Father has raised 'far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come'. **Eph 1:21**.

The apostle John continued his introduction to the book of Revelation, saying, 'To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.' **Rev 1:5-6**.

By concluding each of these two statements with 'Amen', John was connecting our washing, our establishment as kings and priests, and seeing Him whom we have pierced, to the 'I AM' dimension of Yahweh *Elohim's* ever-present, offering fellowship. The Son of Man was saying, 'So be it, I AM!' The I AM dimension of Yahweh was revealed in the body of Christ when He was lifted up on the cross. **Rev 1:5-8. Joh 8:28**.

**Further reading: Revelation 1**

# The witness of John and Paul

Jesus was the Faithful Witness because He manifested the piercing of His hands and feet, and of His side. Every messenger who belongs to Christ's administration is to *bear this same witness*. Consider the apostle John. Having recounted the piercing of Christ's side with the soldier's spear, he wrote, 'And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." And again, another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced"'. **Joh 19:35-37**.

We know that John was not only testifying concerning the seventh wound, for the first Scripture that he quoted referred specifically to the beginning of Christ's crucifixion. John was quoting from Psalm 34, where David wrote, 'The LORD is near to those who have *a broken heart* [which was broken when Christ was nailed to the cross and lifted up from the earth], and saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He *guards all his bones; not one of them is broken*.' **Psa 34:18-20**.

Importantly, John was declaring this testimony as a faithful witness, having been established as a watchman in the right hand of Christ. **Rev 1:17**. Significantly, this message ministers the faith that Jesus authored for each person as He finished all their works 'in the lowest parts of the earth'. **Psa 139:15-16. Isa 26:12**. Christ did this during the three hours of great darkness as He hung on the cross.

The apostle Paul was, likewise, a faithful witness. Writing to the Corinthians, he said, 'I determined not to know anything among you except *Jesus Christ and Him crucified*. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.' **1Co 2:2-3.**

**Further reading: 1 Corinthians 2**

# Portraying Christ as crucified

Paul preached the gospel of God, of which he was not ashamed, by *explaining* and *demonstrating* Christ and Him crucified as he carried about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. **Rom 1:16. 2Co 4:10. Act 17:2-3**. By this means, among his hearers, Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. **Gal 3:1**.

Emphasising to his hearers the manifestation of the first piercing of Christ, Paul testified that he was being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of their faith. **Php 2:17**. His testimony, or witness, directly corresponded with the statement that Christ made when His hands and feet were being nailed to the cross. Prophetic of Christ's experience, David wrote, '*I am poured out like water*, and all My bones are out of joint; *My heart is like wax*; it has melted within Me … for dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. *They pierced My hands and My feet*.' **Psa 22:14,16.**

Paul exhorted every believer to receive this message and to become a witness of Christ's piercings by bearing His reproaches. First, he highlighted that Christ suffered outside the camp, bringing an end to the fruitless religious conduct that belonged to the Old Covenant. He wrote, 'We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat [i.e. the food of this altar does not belong to those who live according to the Old Covenant]. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, *suffered outside the gate*.' **Heb 13:10-12**. The sufferings that occurred outside the gate of Jerusalem pertained specifically to the sixth wound – the crucifixion.

**Further reading: 2 Corinthians 4**

# Bearing His reproach

When we are joined to the fellowship of Christ's trespass offering as those who acknowledge that they are crucified with Him, we are recipients of the redemption and reconciliation that Christ accomplished for us on the cross through the shedding of His blood. His blood sprinkles our conscience from the dead works of our fallen default orientation to ourselves, our lives, and others. **Heb 10:22**. We receive grace to serve God and others by love through obedience to the word of God. This is our sanctification as a son of God. In the fellowship of Christ's trespass offering, His life, by which we now live, overflows as grace to others through the renewed conversation and conduct that expresses our testimony.

This fellowship in Christ's trespass offering is, in fact, the implication of eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood as a participation in the *agape* meal of the Father. We know this because the apostle Paul identified these elements of the Father's love feast as a participation in the altar of Christ's sacrifice. **Heb 13:10**. He identified this altar as the crucifixion, explaining that Christ suffered 'outside the gate', meaning outside of the old city of Jerusalem. **Heb 13:12**. This is where Jesus was nailed to the cross. As those who participate in the meal that belongs to that altar, we are to 'go forth to Him, outside the camp, *bearing His reproach*'. **Heb 13:13**.

Bearing Christ's reproach as a participation in the *agape* meal has a particular expression through which Christ is portrayed as crucified in our relational settings. As Paul then wrote, 'Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips [our conversation and conduct], giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good [or the works of obedience that belong to sonship] and to share [lit: fellowship with one another], for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' **Heb 13:15-16**.

**Further reading: Hebrews 13**

# The grief of the Father

When a person is caused to look on Christ whom they have pierced, 'They will *mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn'. **Zec 12:10.** 'The grief for the Firstborn' that leads to salvation is more than the expression of regret by those who recognise the devasting consequences of their actions. It is *godly sorrow*, or the sorrow of God Himself. This godly sorrow, or mourning, is foundational to the work of redemption; to the accomplishment of our salvation; to the proclamation of the gospel; and to the response through which a hearer obtains their salvation. Mourning that leads to repentance and the fruit of godliness is enabled by the capacity of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord, given by the Holy Spirit.

The first expression of godly sorrow is the Father's grief. It is important to appreciate the deep grief of the Father when Adam, and mankind, rejected His fatherhood, giving heed to Satan's alternative word in an endeavour to become the source of their own life and expression. This grief was expressed by the Father in the garden of Eden when He called to Adam, and indeed to the whole of mankind, saying, '*Where are you?*' **Gen 3:9**. The Father was lamenting the rejection of His fatherhood and the loss of all His children to the kingdom of Satan. Moreover, He was grieving for His children who had forfeited the glorious inheritance that He had prepared for them.

The Father's grief was compounded when, in order to accomplish Their Everlasting Covenant purpose, the Father gave to the Son the cup of sin to drink. **Luk 22:42**. In so doing, the Father made the Son an offering for sin. **2Co 5:21.** Now His only begotten Son was forsaken and numbered with the transgressors. **Isa 53:12**. Of course, the Father did this for the purpose of our redemption to our predestination as sons of God. Nevertheless, it was a breach in the Godhead and the cause of great grief.

**Further reading: Genesis 3**

# The grief of the Son

The source of the Son's grief was not the pain of His suffering; nor was it the rejection of men. It was the grief of the good Shepherd and our great High Priest. As Yahweh Son, the Son of God, and the Son of Man, Christ priested Himself as the trespass offering on the cross. Paul said that this was the key focus of his letter to the Hebrews. **Heb 8:1-2**.

The *first* dimension of the Son's grief was mourning *for the Father's* loss as we rejected Him through our determination to become the source of our own life and destiny. The Son was not sorrowful simply because He witnessed the mourning of the Father for the loss of His children. Rather, the Son *bore the grief of the Father's own broken heart*. That is, the Father's grief became the Son's grief.

The *second* dimension of the Son's grief was His sorrow *for mankind*. He mourned the eternal consequences of being forsaken by God. **Psa 22:1**. **Mat 27:46**. Having become sin and been numbered with us, He who knew no sin was fully acquainted with all the grief associated with our eternal separation from God. **Isa 53:12**. As Isaiah prophesied, 'Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' **Isa 53:4. Heb 4:15**.

These two dimensions of mourning belong to Christ's ministry as our great High Priest, 'the one Mediator between God and men', of whom Paul said that He 'gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time'. **1Ti 2:5-6**. Just as the Father made Christ to be an offering for sin, it was the Father who *glorified* the Son to become High Priest, saying to Him, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.' **Heb 5:5-6.** Ministering as High Priest, Christ, by Eternal Spirit, *offered up Himself* as a sin and trespass offering, thereby establishing a bridge between God and mankind. **Heb 7:27. Heb 9:14.** This was the reconciliation.

**Further reading: Isaiah 53**

# The priesthood of Christ

The ministry of reconciliation was possible because, prior to the commencement of His offering journey, the Son was *glorified* by the Father with the glory that He had *before*. **Joh 17:5**. That is, He was *Yahweh Son* who, by Eternal Spirit, could priest Himself as an offering through which the covenant purpose of the Godhead would be accomplished. It was for this reason that it pleased the Father for all the fullness of the Godhead to dwell in the Son. **Col 1:19**.

Essential to Christ's priesthood was His expression as the *Son of God*. When Yahweh Son was begotten as the Son of God by the word of the Father *before*, the Son became the full revelation of the Father. **Heb 1:5. Joh 14:9**. The name and life of every identity, sourced from the Father, was in Him. When all the identities of mankind were lost to the Father through Adam's disobedience, the Son of God not only recognised the grief of the Father but, also, He was able to comprehend and bear this grief *for Him*, because He was *of Him*.

As the *Son of Man*, our great High Priest could be fully united with us in our death on account of sin, and could be acquainted with our grief. However, as the Son of Man, Christ prayed to the Father to be glorified, through offering, as Yahweh in the flesh. He would be glorified through death and resurrection as the spiritual New Man. In the course of His offering journey, He pioneered the pathway of salvation for every son of man. **Heb 5:8-9.** On this pathway, they would not simply be brought back to a position of acceptability before God. Rather, they could be glorified with Him as sons of God and sons of men in the image and likeness of God. **Heb 2:10**.

**Further reading: Hebrews 5**

# The broken heart of Christ

Although it pleased the Father for all of the fullness to dwell in Christ, and He glorified the Son to be Melchizedek, our great High Priest, Christ *priested Himself* as an offering for sin and as a trespass offering. He needed to do this *alone*, by the capacity of Eternal Spirit, for He was the Mediator between God and man. For this reason, the Son testified, 'I have trodden the winepress *alone*, and from the peoples no-one was with Me.' **Isa 63:3**. The treading of the winepress directs our attention to the significance of the shedding of His blood. In this regard, His priesthood was unique in that He did not sprinkle the blood of bulls and goats for atonement, 'but with His own blood He entered the most holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption'. **Heb 9:12**.

The grief, or travail, through which reconciliation and our redemption were accomplished was manifested when Christ was nailed to the cross by our reproaches against the Father. The implications of these reproaches, both in relation to the Father and in relation to mankind, *broke His heart*. When our Shepherd and great High Priest's heart broke, He was brought 'to the dust of death'. **Psa 22:14-15**. That is, His physical heart broke as He was lifted up as a trespass offering.

Describing the death that belonged to this grief, Paul wrote, 'For the death that He died, *He died to sin once for all*'. **Rom 6:10**. Christ died to sin as His heart was broken, bearing the Father's grief and our grief. The breaking of His heart breached all rebellion, and silenced all alternatives to the word of the Father. The death that He died was an exquisite expression of love as Christ, by the power of Eternal Spirit, laid down His life for the Father and for His friends, whom He was not ashamed to call His brethren. **Heb 2:11**.

**Further reading: Psalm 22**

# Sustained by resurrection life

For the six hours that Christ hung on the cross, His physical heart and His natural breath were sustained by the resurrection, or *exanastasis*, life in His blood. He was sustained until He breathed His last, at which point He had brought life and immortality to light. **Luk 23:46. 2Ti 1:10**. Having destroyed sin in the body of His flesh, He was brought back from the death of sin by the life in His blood. **Heb 13:20**. As Paul explained, having died to sin once for all, 'the life that He lives, He lives to God'. **Rom 6:10**.

Wonderfully, Christ, our great High Priest and the Shepherd of our souls, brought us all back to God with Him. By this means, He 'made peace through the blood of His cross', and we who were enemies of God were reconciled to the Father in the body of Christ's flesh. **Col 1:20-22**. Having destroyed the kingdom of darkness through death, He manifested the Light of the world through the life in His blood.

The redemption and reconciliation that Christ accomplished through the shedding of His blood was vicarious. Establishing this point, Paul wrote, '*When we were enemies* we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son'. **Rom 5:10**. However, Christ's blood was not shed simply to cover our sins and to appease an angry God. Rather, it was shed for the purpose of atonement, or to redeem a people from the death of sin and to reconcile them back to the Father and to His purpose for their lives. In this regard, having established that mankind was reconciled to God while we were sinners, Paul was very clear that we are saved only as we avail ourselves of the life that is in His blood. **Rom 5:10**.

**Further reading: Romans 6**

# Choosing our participation

When the word of the cross is proclaimed to a hearer, a spirit of grace and supplication is poured out upon them and they are caused to look on Christ, whose hands and feet were pierced by their reproaches against the Father. By grace, and through this illumination, they are cut to the heart, exposing their heart to the eyes of Him to whom they must give an answer. The answer is their response, which is the outcome of their choice. **Heb 4:12-13**.

The trespass offering ministers to us the opportunity to choose the redemption and reconciliation that Christ accomplished for us through the life in His blood. As we acknowledge that we are crucified with Christ and choose to suffer with Him, He priests to us a participation in the wounds through which His blood was shed. In the fellowship of these wounds, we are made complete for the works that the Father *prepared* for us, and the Son *finished* for us as He offered Himself by Eternal Spirit.

Significantly, the blood is working in us what is well pleasing to the Father, through Jesus Christ. **Heb 13:21**. This is because our conscience, or the faculty of our spirit by which we know ourselves, and can know the Lord, is being sprinkled clean so that we may serve the Living God. **Heb 9:14**. Paul explained that it was for this reason that Christ is 'the Mediator of the New Covenant, by means of death [i.e. through the trespass offering]'. **Heb 9:15**.

In the fellowship of the trespass offering, Christ reconciles us to present us 'holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight'. **Col 1:22**. If we continue in faith, being grounded and steadfast in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, we are delivered from the way of living that causes reproach against the Father! **Col 1:23**. The purpose of this ministry is 'that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance', which is our sonship in the image and likeness of God. **Heb 9:15**.

**Further reading: Hebrews 4**

# Christ's grief during His ministry

While the sorrow of the Son was fully manifested on the cross, mourning was essential to His earthly ministry. Through this sorrow, Christ manifested the virtues, or excellencies, of diligence, giving a defence, indignation, godly fear, desire, zeal and justice. **2Co 7:11**. This was notable, for example, in Jesus' interactions with Mary and Martha. Jesus had fallen short of Martha's expectations of Him, evidenced by her saying, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.' **Joh 11:21-22**. Jesus addressed both her former gospel and her unbelief by saying to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. *He who believes in Me*, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. *Do you believe this?*' **Joh 11:25-26**.

Although Martha confessed that she believed the words of Jesus, her actions belied her confession. She went her way and secretly called her sister, *falsely* saying to her, 'The Teacher has come and is calling for you.' **Joh 11:28**. This was a trespass. **Lev 6:2**. Like her sister, Mary also impugned the Son, saying that if He had come, her brother would not have died. **Joh 11:32**.

When Jesus heard these words and witnessed Mary's sorrow associated with His failure to meet her expectations, 'He groaned in the spirit and was troubled'. **Joh 11:33**. The original text of this statement communicates a sense of *indignation*, and even rage. As one commentator noted, the groaning of Jesus revealed a 'sharp admonition, in words of anger against a person, or in a physical shudder, answering to the intensity of the emotion'. This indignation was a fruit of godly sorrow. **2Co 7:11.** Affirming the point, we note that after He had responded in this manner, 'Jesus wept'. **Joh 11:35**. The weeping of Jesus revealed that His indignation toward the unbelief of Martha, Mary, and those who gathered to the tomb of Lazarus *was the expression of mourning*.

**Further reading: John 11**

# Christ's lamentation

Christ's sorrow was manifested in advance of His offering journey when He lamented over Jerusalem. The Gospel of Luke recounted, 'Now as He drew near, He saw the city and *wept over it*, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation"' **Luk 19:41-44**.

In this statement, we observe that the Son was not grieving because He had been personally hurt by the Jews. Rather, He was distressed by the death and destruction that would be wrought upon the people because they rejected His message.

Jesus grieved for this same reason in the course of His journey from Gethsemane to Calvary. As He carried His cross from the Praetorium to Golgotha, the women mourned and lamented Him. However, prophesying of the destruction of the city at the hands of Titus in AD70, because of the rebellion of the Jews, Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" For if they do these things in the green wood [while the Messenger of the Covenant is among them], what will be done in the dry?' **Luk 23:28-31**.

**Further reading: Luke 19**

# Mourning in the trespass offering

Christ priested, or offered, Himself as a trespass offering. This was manifested when He was lifted up on the cross and His heart was broken by our reproaches against the Father. This was the mourning of our great High Priest as He bore the Father's grief for the loss of His children, and mourned the eternal implications for mankind of being forsaken by God. **Psa 22:1-2. Mat 27:46**.

However, the Father was near to Him, for the Scriptures declare, 'The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.' **Psa 34:18**. Jesus was being saved by the life of the Father that was in His blood, through which He was being brought back from the death of sin. **Heb 13:20**. The breaking of Christ's heart as a trespass offering, when His hands and feet were pierced through with the nails of reproach, meant that the hearts of those who were illuminated to see that He was the embodiment of their sin, and of their exclusion from God, *could also be broken*.

We know that after Jesus had finished His offering, and had committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father, He breathed His last breath. **Luk 23:46**. The soldier pierced His side with a spear, causing blood, water, and a spirit of grace and supplication to flow from His side. **Joh 19:34-37**. Luke recorded that 'the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, *beat their breasts and returned*'. **Luk 23:48**. As they saw the river of the water of life flowing from Christ's side, they were illuminated to see what they had done to Christ. Their hearts were broken as they were joined to His heart, which had been broken in this wounding event. They were being delivered to choice, which was brought to bear on the Day of Pentecost.

**Further reading: Zechariah 12**

# Mourning in hope

Christ's mourning on the cross was not in vain but, rather, was in hope! It belonged to His travail as the Lamb of God and the Father's Seed. He sorrowed as the High Priest and the Shepherd of our souls for the purpose of accomplishing the redemption and recovery of a great multitude to their predestination as sons of God. This was the joy that was before His face as He 'endured the cross'. **Heb 12:2**.

In this regard, the Son was the full expression of sowing in tears and reaping in joy. As the psalmist prophesied, 'Those who sow in tears [with mourning] shall reap in joy [offering the sacrifice of praise and giving thanks]. He who continually goes forth weeping [or mourning], bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.' **Psa 126:5-6**.

Those who lead in the church are called by Christ to be watchmen. Watchmen are ministers who have been restored to the fellowship of Christ's right hand. They have individually sorrowed in a godly manner as they have received the proceeding word and have looked on Him whom they have pierced. **1Jn 1:1**. Their godly sorrow has led to repentance, and is bearing in them Christ's virtues of diligence, giving a defence, indignation, fear, vehement desire, zeal and justice. **2Co 7:11**. They are established in the fellowship of the trespass offering and can be sent by Christ to proclaim the message of the cross.

Watchmen proceed, with mourning, to proclaim the word of the cross. In the fellowship of the trespass offering, they are revealing the two dimensions of the Son's grief through which the reconciliation of God and mankind was accomplished. Paul was referring to this ministry when he wrote, 'Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God'. **2Co 5:20**. Watchmen proclaim the word of the cross so that their hearers might inquire, repent and return to Christ who is the Shepherd and Overseer of their souls. **Isa 21:12**.

**Further reading: 2 Corinthians 5**

# Cut to the heart

In relation to the ministry of reconciliation, we note the example of Peter on the Day of Pentecost. Being full of the Holy Spirit, and enabled by the seven Spirits of God, Peter said to the multitude who were in Jerusalem, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, *whom you crucified*, both Lord and Christ.' **Act 2:36**. This was the ministry of the river of life that was flowing from Christ's side. Peter's hearers were caused to look on Christ, whose heart was broken when He was nailed to the cross by their reproaches. As they were joined to Christ's broken heart, they were, themselves, cut to the heart. They began to mourn, leading to repentance and faith for sonship in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, which is enabled by the Holy Spirit. **Act 2:37-38.**

Stephen is another example of a watchman whose proclamation of the gospel was a remarkable expression of the trespass offering. Notably, his ministry was a foretaste of the ministry of 'the 144 000' in the time of the end. We know that the people were also cut to the heart when they heard his message as he proclaimed, in a spirit of mourning, 'You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? *And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers*, who have received the Law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.' **Act 7:51-53**. They were looking on Christ, whom they had pierced, causing the breaking of His heart. However, instead of joining the grief of Christ, they resisted the grace of God and gnashed their teeth at Stephen. **Act 7:54**.

**Further reading: Acts 2**

# The prayer of the trespass offering

At the conclusion of his sermon, Stephen, whose face had been shining like the face of an angel, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. **Act 6:15. Act 7:55**. He was witnessing the time of the end, when the Father takes His seat and the Son stands up from His throne. Stephen's disposition and countenance was foreshadowing the manifestation of the sons of God at this time as they go forth proclaiming the gospel of God to the whole world. Significantly, as he was being stoned, bearing Christ's reproach, Stephen cried out with a loud voice, ' "*Lord, do not charge them with this sin*." When he had said this, he fell asleep [in Christ].' **Act 7:60**.

With these words, Stephen was ministering the grace of the trespass offering to the Jews, for this is what Jesus prayed as He was lifted up on the cross. **Luk 23:34**. In particular, this grace was extended to a young man named Saul, who consented to Stephen's death. **Act 7:58. Act 8:1**. Through Stephen's prayer, in the fellowship of Christ's travail, Saul was caused to look on Him whom he had pierced through his religious zeal. He was ultimately delivered to a choice on the road to Damascus. Through godly sorrow, Saul, whose name was changed to Paul, was himself established in the fellowship of the trespass offering. This became the culture of His life and the manner of his ministry.

At the end of his life, when all the churches of Asia had departed from him, Paul, like Stephen, prayed for the Gentile churches from the fellowship of Christ's trespass offering. He wrote, 'At my first defence no-one stood with me, but all forsook me. *May it not be charged against them*.' **2Ti 4:16**. Through this prayer, and his words of exhortation to Timothy, Titus, and other faithful men, the seven churches of Asia were recovered, even though they were quite mixed in their culture.

**Further reading: Acts 7**

# Two kinds of mourning

There are two ways in which a person can mourn when they are caused, through the gospel, to look on Christ and to register that they are crucified, or cursed, with Him. They either join the sorrow of God as they acknowledge their reproaches against the Father, which nailed Christ to the cross; or they draw back in unbelief and endeavour to dismiss the messengers and their message. These two responses were exemplified by the two thieves who were crucified with Christ on the day that He was lifted up on Mount Calvary.

The first thief was grieving the death of God's firstborn Son and the associated loss of his self-defined image, expression and future. He drew back in unbelief as he witnessed Christ's crucifixion as the trespass offering. The thief's hopes and dreams were fading because the Man, who had confessed that He was the Son of God, was dying and was not preserving and verifying the thief's self-definition. Revealing the expression of this worldly sorrow, he blasphemed the Lord, saying, 'If you are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' **Luk 23:39**.

The second thief demonstrated the mourning response that leads to salvation. He acknowledged that his sin, which was reproach against the Father, was the reason why Christ was crucified, and that he was justly crucified with Him. Having been illuminated in this manner, he made confession, saying to his companion, '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 23:40-41**. This statement reveals the virtues of Christ that are exhibited by a person who is joined to His sorrow. In particular, through this thief's confession, he gave a defence of the gospel, demonstrated fear, and proclaimed the justice of God. **2Co 7:11**.

**Further reading: Luke 23**

# Born to see and enter

Stephen's hearers were cut to the heart; however, they only grieved the loss of their own righteousness. Their grief, which was worldly sorrow, produced death as they forfeited their salvation and killed the messenger of the cross. **2Co 7:10**. In contrast to this, when Peter's hearers were cut to the heart on the Day of Pentecost, they confessed their trespasses and sought fellowship to understand how they could be recovered to God's purpose for them in Christ.

The water, blood and Spirit that flowed from Christ's side was the fruit of His heart that was broken by reproach. It was made available to us when Christ's side was pierced with a soldier's spear. John explained that the Son of God had come by water and by blood. He was emphasising that the ministry of the faith that the Son authored and finished for us, as He carried our names and finished our works on the cross, is the sum of His life poured out for us by the capacity of seven Spirits from the Holy Spirit. Specifically, he wrote, 'This is He who came [back from the death of sin and mortality] by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.' **1Jn 5:6**.

The water and blood, by which Christ came back from the death of sin and mortality on the cross, enabled and ministered by the Spirit, *is the provision for new birth*. Christ's blood contained the light of life. **Lev 17:11**. Establishing this point, the apostle John explained, 'In Him was life and the life was the light of men.' **Joh 1:4**. Through this blood, which 'speaks better things than that of Abel', a hearer is born to see the kingdom of God. **Joh 3:3.** Through the agency of water and the Spirit, they are born to enter the kingdom of God. **Joh 3:5**.

**Further reading: 1 John 5**

# The witness on earth

The apostle John explained that there are Three who bear witness in heaven – the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and that they are One. **1Jn 5:7**. These Names, or Lights, in heaven are symbolised by the sun, moon and stars. Importantly, the witness on earth was manifested as Christ poured out Himself on the cross. This is the ministry of water, blood and Spirit. As we receive this witness, we are established as sons of light and enter the rest that belongs to Their oneness in heaven. What is true in Them is true in us, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. **1Jn 2:8.**

The prophet Zechariah revealed that this witness on earth was a fountain for sin, and for uncleanness, or trespasses. **Zec 13:1**. Notably, he then explained the effect of the ministry of this river when the word of the cross is received by a hearer. Christ, the Lord of hosts, declared, 'I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.' **Zec 13:2**.

The Lord was revealing that joining the mourning of the Son brings to a person deliverance from the idolatry that causes reproach against the Father. It also brings reformation in households as their familiar spirits are caused to depart from the ground of their houses.

Expressing the same zeal that brought forth this witness, the Lord said, 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervour I am zealous for her.' **Zec 8:2**. He explained that the recipient of this zeal, through fellowship in godly sorrow, is established in the fellowship of prayer. He declared, 'The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, "*Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD*, and seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also."' **Zec 8:21**.

**Further reading: Zechariah 13**

# Let us go with you

The prophet Zechariah declared concerning the days ahead of us, 'Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in [the heavenly] Jerusalem, and to *pray before the LORD*.' **Zec 8:22**. They will be established in the culture of prayer that Jesus taught His disciples. **Mat 6:9-14**.

In the days in which believers are established in this prayer fellowship, men from every language will take hold of a true Jew, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: in those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."' **Zec 8:23**. The Lord was not referring to a Jew who is genetically authentic. The apostle Paul said, 'For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.' **Rom 2:28-29**. Jesus contrasted the true Jew with those who say they are Jews and are not. **Rev 2:9. Rev 3:9**. The false Jew belongs to the synagogue of Satan.

The point that the Lord was making, through the prophet Zechariah, is that a true Jew is one who is joined to the mourning of the Son in the trespass offering. Having made a good confession, they have been delivered from the idols of their heart and have a testimony in themselves of the reformation of their household. Significantly, they have been established by the Spirit in the intercession and travail of Yahweh's prayer meeting. Proceeding from this fellowship of prayer, to which they are joined in the trespass offering, they express the word of the cross. As they testify in this manner, many will take hold of them to receive their witness, and will be joined to the same cleansing, healing and reforming work of the cross.

**Further reading: Micah 4**

# Acknowledging our reproach

The witnesses of Christ, who are joined to the fellowship of the trespass offering, are overcoming Satan by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and, by the capacity of the Spirit, laying down their life to the death. **Rev 12:11**. As their obedience is being fulfilled in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, Satan is being cast out of heaven and trampled under their feet. **Rom 16:20**.

*We are to become watchmen in our houses*. This happens because we mourn in our houses for the loss of Christ our Firstborn. In many cases, we are acknowledging that the loss of our children was the fruit of our reproach of God the Father. The way in which we reared our children has been, for many, a reproach to the Father and His culture of discipline upon the Son, which was manifested in the cross. We have normalised the rebellion of our children against God and against our parenthood, and, in doing so, have reproached the Father and the Son. If we fail to look on Christ whom we have pierced in this manner, we will remain asleep, or deceived, like the foolish virgins. We will be like those who refused to gather to the *agape* feast that the Father has prepared for His Son as our Chief Joy.

The word of the cross is being ministered to us by the Holy Spirit through messengers in the right hand of Christ. It is being poured out as a river, causing us all to look on Him whom we have pierced, and to mourn as for a Firstborn Son. If we draw back in unbelief, we will forfeit our salvation. However, let us heed the exhortation of Paul who said, 'Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.' **Heb 10:22-23**.

**Further reading: Hebrews 10**

# The impact of our default responses

We are all called to become watchmen in our houses. Like those who are called to be watchmen in the presbyteries of Christ's lampstand churches, every watchman in a worthy house bears the reproaches of Christ. This belongs to their fellowship in Christ's trespass offering, which was added to His offering for sin when He was crucified.

In order to bear Christ's reproaches, we must acknowledge the impact of our own reproaches against the Father. The most fundamental expression of these reproaches are our default responses to life, which are the fruit of the fall of mankind. A woman's default is *deception*. **Gen 3:13. 1Ti 2:14**. She believes in the veracity of her perceptions which are drawn from her knowledge of good and evil. Through anxiety, informed by her own deceived perspective, she takes control of her marriage or her circumstances. A man's default is *wrath and doubting* which is manifest as he turns his face from Christ and takes action, either in compliance with, or reaction against, his wife or his circumstances. **Gen 3:12,16. 1Ti 2:8.**

Every thought and action, that is motivated by these default responses, is sourced from our other law. **Rom 7:23**. They are a reproach against the Father. These reproaches were laid on Christ when He was nailed to the cross and lifted up as a trespass offering on Mount Calvary. **Psa 69:9**. Significantly, every person was crucified with Him, for we have all reproached God.

As we receive the word of the cross, we are caused to look on Him whom we have pierced. **Zec 12:10**. That is, we acknowledge that our default responses to life, and others, are the reproaches against the Father that nailed Christ to the cross. By illumination, and through the conviction of the Spirit, we cease from making excuses or giving reasons for our responses, and forsake the condemnation and self-recriminations that belong to self-righteous penance. Instead, we acknowledge that we are co-crucified, or co-cursed, with Christ because of our default responses. This is a true confession.

**Further reading: 1 Timothy 2**


Restoring
my Soul