

A finished work

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul explained that while we were dead in our transgressions, God made us alive together with Christ, and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The point to note is that when Jesus declared from the cross, 'It is finished!', and then committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father, the full work of our salvation had been completed. This was while we were dead in sins and enemies of God. The offering of Yahweh had been made once, for all.

The gospel message invites every hearer to receive their salvation by accessing this finished work as an event of history. Through baptism, communion, and by the Holy Spirit, we are joined to the fellowship of this offering. Although Christ travelled the way of salvation alone and once for all, we are able to join the pathway of salvation that He pioneered. Our participation in the offering of Christ, through fellowship, is fundamental to our salvation. Unless we journey with Christ, we will by no means receive the promise of eternal life.

Fundamental to our understanding of salvation is the truth that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were all involved in the fulfilment of our salvation. It was not just an action of Christ on behalf of the Father or the Holy Spirit. Neither is our experience of joining the finished work of our salvation an action of the Father toward us that is followed by an action of the Son, followed by an action of the Holy Spirit. They are all working together for the fulfilment of Their covenant purpose in relation to each waypoint of salvation. It is this integrated understanding that reveals the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of God for us.

References:

Eph 2:5-6 Joh 19:30
Rom 5:10 Rom 6:10
Heb 10:10 Eph 3:18-19

Further Study: Hebrews 4**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 28

The Father gives life

We know that Yahweh is three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – who live in a fellowship of one life and one Spirit. To be ‘of God’ is to be joined to this fellowship. For this to happen, we must receive the life of God as it is specifically communicated, or expressed, by each Person of the Godhead. They Each have a specific contribution to make to the process of bringing us to glory as sons of God. Yahweh Father is the source of all giving. He possesses the capacity to bring forth new identities, to whom He is able to give gifts. In this regard, His unique capacity is to be the source of all life. James explained that ‘every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights [or identities], with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow’.

The Father is able to regenerate and renew our heart and spirit by the water of His word and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. A person’s fallen identity, which is inevitably marked by dystrophy because of sin and death in their life, is able to be recovered through the process of regeneration. Further to this, the Father then gives us His life through the process of *birthing*. We are born of the incorruptible seed of the divine nature through the living and enduring word of God. The life that we are born of is eternal life. It is the life of our unique sonship that the Father predestined for us before the heavens and the earth were created. The seed of this life is, therefore, *specific* to the name and identity of each son of God. Highlighting the uniqueness of each son of God, the apostle James explained that the Father brought us forth as His sons by the word of truth so that each one of us might be a *certain kind* of firstfruits of His creation.

References:

Jas 1:17-18 Rom 4:17
1Pe 1:23 Joh 17:2
Joh 6:27 Joh 14:6

Further Study: John 5

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 29

The Son shares His life

The apostle John declared that our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son. The Father gives identity and life to us through His word. In contrast to this, the Son shares His identity and life with us by offering. We know that His blood was poured out through offering. *His life is in His blood*; it is the life and identity of *His* sonship. Having been baptised into Christ and joined to the fellowship of His offering, our personal sonship that we received from the Father through the process of birthing, is to be hidden with Christ in the bosom of the Father. The life that we now live and express is to be the life of the Son. It is His sonship that we are to reveal as members of His body.

Jesus said that unless we partake of the flesh of the *Son of Man* and drink His blood, we have no life in ourselves. By referring to Himself as the Son of Man, Jesus was highlighting the sufferings He would experience in His *mortality*. It was through these sufferings that Christ's blood was shed so that the life in His blood could be given to us. This is the principle of atonement. 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls.' Eating and drinking the elements of the New Covenant gives us access to this fellowship so that, as we suffer with Him, we receive the life that is in His blood. Jesus continued by saying, 'He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood *has eternal life*, and I will *raise him up on the last day*. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood *abides in Me, and I in him*.'

References:

1Jn 1:3

Joh 1:18

Lev 17:11

Joh 6:53-56

1Jn 2:4-6

Further Study: Colossians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 30

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the fellowship of Yahweh. His life gives us the capacity for worship and for fellowship. We do not receive this from the Father or from the Son. It is the Holy Spirit who joins us in one Spirit to the fellowship of Yahweh. Paul said that ‘the one who joins himself to the Lord is *one Spirit* with Him’. Paul also explained that ‘by *one Spirit* we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of *one Spirit*’. It is because we have received the Person of the Holy Spirit that we are able to be joined in one Spirit with each other.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of sanctification. This is because He sanctifies each person to their name, and enables us to know and appreciate the names of our fellow brethren. By being who we are, and respecting who God has made others to be, we maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. He is ‘the Spirit of truth’ through Whom we are able to worship in Spirit and truth.

Paul summarised the outcome of receiving the life of the Holy Spirit when he wrote, ‘Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose’. Our capacity to give and receive encouragement in Christ, consolation of love, fellowship, affection and compassion are the evidence that we have received the life of the Holy Spirit. Because we have received His life, we are able to be united in love, spirit and purpose.

References:

1Co 12:13 1Co 1:10
1Co 6:17 Joh 16:13
2Th 2:13 Php 2:1-3

Further Study:

Ephesians 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 31

Hidden with Christ in God

It is a wonderful truth that we can be born from above as sons of God. However, this is only the beginning of the pathway of salvation. Jesus said, 'He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.' In this passage of Scripture, Jesus was talking about a person who had been born again of the life of God. They had *found* new creation life, having previously been *dead* in trespasses and sins. However, Jesus was explaining that the new believer would lose this life if they were not baptised into Christ. Through baptism, we are joined to the pathway of salvation that He pioneered from Gethsemane to Calvary. To take up our cross is to be joined to the fellowship of His offering and to follow Him on this pathway.

Paul explained this very principle in his letter to the Christians in Colossae, saying, 'You have died [with Christ in baptism] and your [new creation] life is *hidden with Christ in God*. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.' Although Paul's statement is simple, it is rich in its implications for our Christian experience. To understand these implications, we must consider where Christ is *hidden*.

We recall that after Jesus had declared from the cross that the work of our salvation had been 'finished', He committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father. The Father received the Son, by embrace, into His bosom. This is where Jesus remained hidden while His body was preserved in the tomb by the Spirit of the Father for three days and three nights. The bosom of the Father is also called 'the Father's house'.

References:

Mat 10:38-39 Luk 23:46
Col 3:3-4 Eph 2:1
Joh 19:30 Rom 6:3-5

Further Study:

1 John 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 1

A place prepared

Before His passion commenced in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus explained what He would do for His disciples when He went to the bosom of the Father. He said to them, 'In My *Father's house* are many dwelling places [mansions]; if it were not so, I would have told you; *for I go to prepare a place for you*. If I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again and receive you to Myself*, that where I am, there you may be also.' Jesus was explaining to His disciples that He would prepare a dwelling place in the house of the Father for every son of God.

When Jesus went to the bosom of the Father, He took all our names as sons of God with Him. He was preparing a place for each of these sons in the heavenly house of the Father. In this regard, He was the Seed that had gone into the ground and was coming up as a great multitude of new creation sons. When He rose from the dead, His body had been changed to an immortal body. As He promised, Jesus had come again to receive His disciples to Himself. He was making them members of His corporate body that He had created on the cross from the flesh of humanity, so that *where He was*, they would be also.

Jesus explained to His disciples where *He would be*, saying, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God'. Accordingly, when Jesus went into heaven after appearing to His disciples, He went back to the bosom of the Father. Paul explained that Jesus is now seated in heavenly places at the right hand of the Father. The Father put all things in subjection to Him and *gave Him* as the immortal Head over the church and His corporate body.

References:

Joh 14:2-3

Col 3:3

Joh 12:24

Joh 1:18

Joh 20:17

2Co 5:1

Further Study:

Ephesians 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 4

Revealing the life of Christ

When we are baptised into Christ, the life of our new creation sonship is hidden with Him in the bosom of the Father. Our sonship rests in the bosom of the Father in the hope of its full revelation in the age to come. The life which we now live in the flesh is Christ's life. Paul summarised this by saying, 'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God'. This is important to understand because, unless we live by Christ's life as a member of His body, we will not receive the full glory of our sonship in the new heavens and earth. In the positive, Paul said, 'When Christ, *who is our life*, is revealed, then *you also will be revealed* with Him in glory.'

Paul described our earthly body as a 'tent', and explained that when we were born again, we received a heavenly body. How we live and what we do in our mortal body will affect the glory of our spiritual body that we receive on the day of resurrection. We can be encouraged, however, that God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us to journey in a manner that is worthy of the reward of eternal life. Our bodies, therefore, are also a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to be joined in one Spirit with the Lord and each other, and urges us to keep the unity of the Spirit as members of Christ's body on earth. Paul implored us to 'put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.' This is the mindset of a person who is committed to living as a member of Christ's body.

References:

Col 3:4-5 1Pe 1:3-5
Col 3:14-15 1Co 6:19
Gal 2:20

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 5**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 5

Fruit for eternal life

We are to be the physical body of Christ on earth by expressing the life of His sonship through the deeds that we do in our mortal bodies. In fact, Paul called our physical bodies ‘the members of Christ’. As we do the works of His sonship on earth, we receive the wages, or fruit, of eternal life. By this means, our own heavenly dwelling is *being* made more glorious.

Paul reminded us that ‘we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each one may be *recompensed* for his deeds in the [mortal] body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad’. This is when we receive the wages that we accrued in heaven for the deeds that we did in our mortal bodies on earth. Significantly, the ‘goodness’ of our deeds has nothing to do with the expression of our own sonship. Good works can only be done in the body of Christ by those who are living by His life. The glory of our spiritual body will reflect the wages that we earned while in our mortality.

In this regard, we can expect that people will have differing glories in the age to come. This will be dependent on how they lived and served in the body of Christ on earth. Some will bring forth the fruit of eternal life that is the equivalent of a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Paul warned us not to be deceived, saying, ‘God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.’ We can be assured that, as we do the will of God as members of the body of Christ, we are already reaping wages and gathering fruit for eternal life.

References:

2Co 5:10

1Co 6:15

Eph 2:10

Joh 4:36

Mat 13:23

Gal 6:7-8

Further Study:

 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 6

Talents and minas

The parables of Jesus concerning the kingdom of sonship, help us to understand how we receive the reward of our immortal body as a son of God in the new heavens and earth. We recall that Jesus likened His life to talents and minas that were given to the slaves in His house. Jesus, the Master of the house, expected to receive an increase from the labours of His slaves as they traded with His possessions in the broader kingdom.

When a person comes into Christ through baptism, they are made slaves in His house and receive talents and a mina. Talents are given in varying volumes according to each person's ability. We can liken talents to the varying capacities of individual members of Christ to express His sonship. In contrast, one mina was given to each slave. The mina represents the authority of each person's name.

As slaves trade with their talents and minas by doing the works that Christ gives them as members of His body, the life of Christ's own sonship is being multiplied. While everyone who comes into Christ receives a talent and mina, we recognise that not everyone will exercise themselves to multiply Christ's sonship. These ones choose to work or live by a different principle. This is the principle of 'another law' in their flesh. From the basis of this law, some people will busy themselves with many activities that reveal their own sonship, while others may withdraw from participation in the life of the body of Christ. This would be like saying, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body'.

In both parables, the master of the house came and settled accounts with his slaves. This event was referring to the day when we all must appear before the judgement seat of Christ. Our eternal reward will be commensurate with the multiplication of Christ's sonship in this age.

References:

1Co 12:11,15

Rom 12:3

Luk 19:13

Eph 1:5

1Co 3:5

Further Study: Matthew 25:14-30

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 7

The essence of the Old and New Covenants

Central to the gospel message is the transition that every person must make, from living under the conditions of an Old Covenant and coming into the New Covenant that Christ established through His offering and priesthood on the cross. It is, therefore, important that we understand the difference between these two covenants. *The law was the essence of the Old Covenant.* God said that if a person obeyed His word and was careful to do all of His commandments, they would receive the blessing of His life. In other words, if a person kept the law, they would become a viable son of God. However, there was not one person under the Old Covenant who was justified by the works of the law. On account of the inadequacy of the flesh to keep the law and fulfil the righteousness of God, every person is condemned by the law and under the penalty of death.

When Christ took the Old Covenant, consisting of its decrees against us, out of the way through His death on the cross, He also removed the priesthood of the Law Covenant. In its place, He became the Mediator of a New Covenant. Christ gave us *the Holy Spirit as the essence of this covenant*, enabling us to walk after the Spirit as sons of God. When a person dies to the law with Christ, they are able to be motivated in a new way. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets them free from the law of sin and of death. Instead of the use of the law in the hands of the carnal person being the source of their motivations and actions, leading to sin and death, they are able to serve God *‘in the newness of the Spirit’*.

References:

Deu 28:1-2 Gal 2:16
Rom 7:6,10 Rom 8:2
Rom 3:20

Further Study:

Colossians 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 8

The mind set on the flesh

After a person has been baptised into Christ, they can still bring themselves back under the law, even though there is no longer any present covenant that God will honour with the flesh if a person keeps the law. We recall the exasperation of Paul with regard to the Christians in Galatia, who had chosen to pursue life by the keeping of the law. He called them 'foolish' and asked them, 'Having begun by [with] the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things [in the fellowship of Christ's suffering] in vain – if indeed it was in vain?'

It is important to recognise that 'setting our minds on the flesh' is not the same condition as that of the wretched Christian who, with their mind, wants to serve God, but is unable to do so because the other law within them has not been removed. A person who has 'set their mind on the flesh' is rejecting the Spirit and choosing another way. This results in hostility toward God. Summarising the point, Paul declared, 'The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God'. Finally, to be hostile toward God is to be of the spirit of antichrist.

This does not need to be our attitude. Instead, we can humble ourselves and return to the fellowship of Christ's mortal body and His immortal body. This simply means that, in relation to Christ's physical body, we accept that it is necessary for us to suffer with Him. We receive the chastening and discipline of the Lord in our lives by the capacity of the Spirit, and set our minds on revealing the sonship of Christ as a member in particular of His immortal body. Our repentance will be that we will return to living by the capacity of the Spirit in the fellowship of the body of Christ. Consequently, we will reign in life by His grace, and we will 'become the righteousness of God in Him'.

References:

Gal 3:3-4

Rom 8:6-8

2Co 5:21

Php 3:9

1Co 11:32

Further Study:

Romans 7

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 11

Two marriages

To explain the difference between the Old and New Covenants, Paul described them as two marriages. The first, or 'old', marriage was the covenant that Christ made with the flesh when the law was given to Israel through Moses. By this means, the nation of Israel became, as Stephen described them, 'the church in the wilderness'. As the church, they were married to Christ. Isaiah highlighted this point, stating, '*Your husband is your Maker, whose name is the Lord of hosts*'. This was Jesus Christ.

Israel, the church, was supposed to have been a light to the whole earth so that every person would receive God's word and become an extension of the church. When the law was given to Israel as a covenant, the whole of humanity was brought under the jurisdiction of the law. The law became the condition, or basis, of the marriage of Christ to the flesh. In this regard, we were all bound by the Law Covenant in the same way that a woman is bound by marriage to a husband.

The second marriage is a New Covenant between Christ and the church. Christ firstly brings the church forth from His pierced side, just like Adam's wife, Eve, came from his rib. Paul introduced this theme to us when he described Adam as 'a type of Him who was to come'. Having brought His bride forth, Christ then sanctifies and cleanses her with the washing of the water by the word, so that He might present her to Himself as a glorious church. Paul referred to this as 'a great mystery'. The fulfilment of this mystery is detailed in the book of Revelation. The apostle John described the bride as 'the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband'.

References:

Rom 7:1-3

Col 1:16

Act 7:38

Rom 5:14

Isa 54:5

Rev 21:2

Further Study:

Ephesians 5

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 12

A new marriage covenant

When a person first hears and responds to the word of the covenant, their relationship with Christ is full of romantic optimism and fervour. Like the children of Israel, they say, 'All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do!' This is common to all, because we all have another law within us by which we are motivated to pursue life through the exercise of our flesh. We soon become aware of our complete inadequacy to fulfil God's law by this means. All our motivations to obey and serve God are hindered by the sinful passions of lust within us that rebel against the directions that the law gives to us. Consequently, our rebellious behaviour only produces sadness, sickness and death in our bodily members.

To deliver us from the sickness and death that is caused by our inability to fulfil the conditions of the Old Testament marriage covenant, Christ decided to make a *New Covenant* with the members of His bride, the church. The New Covenant would enable us to serve Him in the *newness* of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. By this means, we would no longer be bound by the flesh to serve in the energy of our own religious and romantic ideas. Instead, we would be enabled to walk and serve in the 'newness of the Spirit'.

The annulment of our old marriage covenant required a death. 'For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband'. Christ was born under the law for this very purpose. However, Paul was very clear that we needed to die to the law through Christ, so that we could be married again on a new basis. Explaining this point, Paul wrote, 'Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another'.

References:

Exo 24:3 Hos 2:19-20
Rom 7:2,4,6 Isa 62:5
Gal 4:4-5

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 11

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 13

Body to bride

Our old marriage to Christ was ended when He died under the judgement of the law. We, also, were crucified and died with Him through baptism. This is what Paul was explaining when he said, 'Through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God'. After the Son was raised from the dead, we were betrothed to Him again as His bride so that we could bring forth the fruit of everlasting life instead of the fruit of death.

Adam and Eve were the very first married couple. We recall that Eve was taken from the flesh of the 'first Adam'. The book of Genesis accounts that 'the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man'. This established the principle of marriage; that 'a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh'.

Paul quoted this very passage of Scripture in his explanation of Christ's new marriage covenant. He wrote, 'This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church'. Paul was drawing our attention to the fact that the bride of Christ was to come from the flesh of His body. To be a part of the bride of Christ, we first need to become a part of the flesh and bones of His corporate body. Christ was creating this corporate new man on the cross, from the 'soil' of the flesh of humanity. Paul called this corporate new man, 'the last Adam'. When we are baptised into Christ, we are joined to the new man. Just as the rib of Adam was formed into a bride, when Christ's side was pierced with a spear, a new and living way was established through which we could be sanctified, or made, His church. His church is His bride.

References:

Gen 2:21-22 Gal 2:19
Eph 5:32 Gal 6:15
1Co 15:45

Further Study:

Ephesians 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 14

The headship of Christ

We can see that there are two aspects of our corporate life: we are members of His body, and members of His church. These are not separate entities in the sense that we can be a part of one fellowship but not the other. Rather, they express particular aspects, or expressions, of our participation in God's covenant will.

Paul explained that in the body of Christ 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus'. The headship of Christ is expressed in the body through the fivefold ministry gifts. This is for the purpose of equipping every member of Christ's body for their specific service. By this means, we are able to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the Head. This is the expression of the headship of Christ *in His body*.

Those with ministry grace from Christ are also jealous over *the church*, in order that it might be presented to Christ as a chaste virgin. The apostle Paul's jealousy particularly concerned the content of the preached word. On this point, he explained, 'I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your *minds* may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.'

There are some important and practical implications of the distinction between the body and the church. When a man and a woman in the body of Christ marry, they establish a new home as members of Christ's *church*. This is because their marriage has been established in the *order of headship*. In this regard, Paul wrote, 'For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Saviour of the body'. We note, then, that the 'order of headship' belongs to the church, the bride. This order is not an aspect of the life of the body of Christ, because, as we noted earlier, there is no distinction between male or female in the body of Christ.

References:

Gal 3:28 Eph 5:23
Eph 4:15 Isa 62:4
2Co 11:2-3

Further Study:

Revelation 21

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 15

Children born sons of God

A most significant implication of marriages that are established within the order of headship in the church, is that the children who are conceived as sons of God can be clothed in flesh as sons of men and joined to the body of Christ. How does this happen? At conception, a child receives their identity, or soul, *from the man*. In this regard, we recall that ‘the first man, Adam, became a living soul’. From him, every other living soul came into being through the process of procreation. James explained that ‘every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights [or identities]’.

Through the faith of the husband and wife, or either, a newly conceived identity receives the seed and name of the divine nature from God the Father. By this means, they are born from above and receive a heavenly house that is part of their new creation identity. The Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of the Son and the Holy Spirit are all involved in this birth from above. Paul was communicating this wonderful point, when he wrote, ‘For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now *they are holy*’.

In the order of headship, Paul taught that the man is the image and glory of the Father and the woman is the glory of man, that is, the glory of mankind. It is through the woman that a newly conceived son of God is clothed with flesh as a son or daughter of man. Because of this, the child is able to be brought forth and joined to the physical body of Christ. As they continue in the fellowship of Christ’s mortality and immortality, they are able to obtain their eternal inheritance in the age to come. This is a most significant and glorious contribution to the fulfilment of God’s covenant plan.

References:

1Co 11:8,12
1Co 15:45
Jas 1:17

Psa 22:9-10
1Co 7:14
Mal 2:15

Further Study:

Isaiah 44

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 18

Bringing forth fruit

The apostle Paul declared that we were made to die to the law through the body of Christ so that we might bear fruit for God. In the first case, the fruit we are to bear is the fruit of Christ's sonship. Paul described this as 'the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God'. This righteousness is the will of God being fulfilled through the expression of Christ's life by the members of His body. As we are faithful to express and multiply His life as slaves of His righteousness, we are receiving wages and gathering fruit for life eternal. We receive these wages as the glory of an immortal body on the day of resurrection.

The parable of the vine and branches helps us to understand this principle. Jesus taught that He is the Vine and that the branches of the vine are the individual members of His corporate body. He made the obvious point that a branch cannot bear fruit unless it is connected to the vine, saying, 'He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing'. The fruit we are to bear is the manifestation of Christ's own life. He warned that if we do not abide in Him and bear the fruit of His sonship, we will be cut off from the Vine by the Father, and cast into the fire and burned.

Further to this, the 'fruit for God' is also the bringing forth of sons of God. This is speaking about the children who are born into covenant households. This is the outcome that God desires from the restoration of every household to the culture of faith. The Lord declared through the prophet Malachi, 'But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring [seed]. Therefore, take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.'

References:

Rom 7:4
Php 1:11
Joh 4:36

Mal 2:15
Pro 4:23

Further Study:

John 15

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 19

The principle of sin

Central to the restoration of each person to God's plan is our deliverance from sin. The Scriptures teach that sin is within us because of the Fall and our connection to Satan's fatherhood. He is the source of sin. However, as Christians, sin is *dead* within us. It only becomes active when we, from our own carnality, take hold of God's law and endeavour to live by our own self-centred motivations. As Paul testified, 'When the commandment came, sin revived and I died'.

The apostle John explained that 'the one who practises sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning'. We recall that Cain's countenance fell because his offering was rejected by God. Cain's mode of offering demonstrated the principle of 'another law' within him. He wanted to be acceptable to God, but on his own terms. The rejection of his offering provoked in him the sinful passion of anger. He was not willing, nor able, to master sin that was crouching at the door of his heart. As a consequence, he killed his brother. Through this action, Cain was doing the works of his father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning.

It was the carnality of the other law within Cain that led him to sin. The apostle James explained this principle, when he wrote, 'But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust [carnal desires, motivated by the other law]. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.' A new-born Christian has this other law, or propensity to sin, within them. The Holy Spirit urges this new-born Christian to come into Christ so that they can be delivered of this principle that is resident within their flesh.

References:

Joh 8:44 Gen 4:6-8
Rom 7:9, 23 Jas 1:14-15
1Jn 3:8 Act 13:10

Further Study:

Luke 11:34-54

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 20

Dying to the law

Christ was born under the law, and His parents circumcised Him on the eighth day in accordance with the law. In this regard, they brought Him under the Covenant of the Law. As Jesus grew up in their house, He was subject to His parents and increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men. At no time in His mortal life did Christ take hold of the law to fulfil it through the exercise of *His own fleshly initiative*. Instead, Christ only did what the Father gave Him to do. Unlike the Pharisees, He did not seek to reveal His own righteousness according to the law, through the works of His flesh. His perfect obedience to the Father was the means by which He fulfilled the law. When He was made sin on our behalf, the Father laid the iniquity of us all on Him. That is when Christ died to the law.

When we died with Christ through baptism, we were under the law with Him. Those who live by law are under its condemnation. However, Paul said that ‘through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God’. Christ’s death was the means by which all law was removed by Him. It was taken out of the way when it was nailed to the cross with Him. It was also the means by which the carnal motivations, called ‘the flesh’, were circumcised from our new creation identity.

When we died with Christ through baptism, our new creature was hidden with Christ in God and, therefore, needs no further circumcision. In this regard, our heavenly bodies are resting in hope. Our physical bodies, on the other hand, were made part of Christ’s corporate body on earth. As members of His body, we have an ongoing participation in Christ’s circumcision and suffering so that the carnality and sin that still resides in our *fleshly members* can be removed from our lives.

References:

Joh 8:28-29 Gal 2:19
Mat 5:17 Col 2:14
Gal 4:4

Further Study:

Romans 6

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 21

Christ's mortality and immortality

When the Son of God was on earth, His body was *mortal*. It bled and could obviously be wounded or injured. However, Paul explained that Christ did not come according to the law of a *fleshy* commandment, but according to the *power of an endless life*. As Christ offered Himself by the capacity of Eternal Spirit, and shed the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, His body was sustained by the Spirit of the Father. It was the Spirit of the Father that raised Christ from the dead, and preserved His body while it lay in the tomb. It was this same Spirit by which Christ's body was transformed from mortality to immortality. We know that when Christ rose from the dead after three days and three nights in the tomb, His body was *immortal*.

Christ was appointed as a Priest after the order of Melchizedek by the Father, for the very purpose of abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light. The reason for this whole process was that, according to God's Everlasting Covenant, we were also to be brought to life and immortality *with Him* and *in Him*. To receive this inheritance of an immortal body that is suitable for the new heavens and earth, we must join the fellowship of Christ's mortality and His immortality.

Through baptism, we are joined to the death and suffering that Christ experienced in His mortal body from Gethsemane to Calvary. This is what it means to know the fellowship of His sufferings and be conformed to His death. Equally, through baptism, we are raised and seated with Christ in heavenly places, *in Him*. Our life is in heaven, but our body is on earth as a member in particular of His corporate body. The marvellous promise of the Scriptures to those who belong to Christ is that the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead and gave Him immortality, will give life to our mortal bodies.

References:

Heb 5:6,10 Heb 9:14
2Ti 1:10 Heb 13:20
Rom 8:11 1Co 15:54

Further Study:

Hebrews 7

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 22