

# Two modes of existence

According to the Scripture, there are just two ways, or two modes, of existence. On the one hand, there is the 'life and peace' that come through offering. By this means, a person who was lost and dead in sin is remembered again and recovered by being joined to Christ's offering. Alternatively, there is the struggle for survival which results only in death. This is the evil of Babylon which brings anxiety and sorrow, resulting in the 'forgetfulness of exclusion' from the covenant purpose of the Lord.

King Solomon is the 'wise man' who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. He discovered an appalling outcome as he considered 'life under the sun'. Solomon said, 'I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all. For man also does not know his time: like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them.'

The apostle Paul sheds further light on the subject of mankind's state when he tells us that 'the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.' We can say that every mortal creature now travails for survival. The uncertainty of time and chance has become the pervasive principle that undermines all the endeavours of mankind.

## References:

Eph 3:27      Eph 4:18  
 Ecc 9:11-12      Psa 88:12  
 Psa 112:6      Jer 44:21  
 Pro 3:1-2  
 Rom 8:6, 20-23

## Further Study

Ecc 9

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 3

# Anxiety and control

As a result of the sorrow of exclusion from the presence of God, we now have an anxiety that drives us. Anxiety and fear of death motivate the unbeliever for the whole of their lifetime. As Paul rightly said, this is the yoke of bondage; and it is a 'cage' from which we cannot escape, unless we lay hold of the faith of offering. Who laid this anxiety on man? The prophet Amos tells us that Yahweh did. The Lord declared, 'I will do this'.

So what is mankind's answer to the impact of the anxiety that comes from being subject to time and chance? The answer for the unbeliever, motivated and driven by anxiety, is to seek peace of mind by minimising their uncertainty by controlling their environment. There are many different strategies which mankind adopts to establish their viability and sustain their security. The pursuit of science, law, societal institutions, family dynasties, the accumulation of riches and knowledge are pursued in the attempt to provide the means of exercising control over the effects of time and chance.

Some of these endeavours give a semblance of security if we have routines and relational structures. They are effective orders of security, either by exercising control over people or conceding control to them. We are told that, today, sixty-five percent of the community use exercises such as yoga and deep breathing to cope with the uncertainty caused by anxiety! The desire to escape from anxiety is the driving force behind much of what we are taught and learn in our educational institutions. It is also the driving force behind many religious doctrines and endeavours. And yet, despite all of this, God has bound this fear and anxiety upon man as the curse. He has subjected everything to the futility of time and chance in the hope that men will search for Him.

## References:

Heb 2:15      Amo 4:12  
Luk 1:74-75    Pro 12:25  
Php 4:6        Psa 37:5  
1Pe 5:7        Psa 56:3-4

## Further Study

Mat 6

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 4

# The fruit of the fall

Anxiety and fear are the central part of the curse. They are the sorrow that became the inheritance of man because of sin. When we consider 'the fall', we must acknowledge that, in spite of the 'promise' of the serpent, Adam and Eve did not attain to the knowledge of good and evil. Rather, they actually found themselves in fear and terror. They did not discover something new. They didn't find the theology of 'good'. The only new knowledge gained through 'the fall' was that they were outside of the fellowship of Yahweh. To Eve, it was greatly multiplied sorrow. The Lord said to her, 'In pain [sorrow] you shall bring forth children'. And to Adam, it was the promise that 'cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow [toil with anxiety] you shall eat of it'.

Mankind did not gain some kind of new faculty through 'the fall'. Nor was the consciousness of sin the means by which God gave man a conscience. Man already had a conscience by which he could apprehend the will of God. He knew God in all things and all things in God. He knew 'together with himself'; that is, with his conscience. He had no consciousness of sin because he had not sinned. Once he fell, he had consciousness of sin and he also had a conscience that knew what sin was. However, he was not given, nor did he steal, the capacity of conscience.

The preoccupation of mankind apart from God is to alleviate the fear and anxiety that have been bound upon them by God through the curse. The Scriptures tell us that this preoccupation results in the establishment of a city. This city is called 'Babylon'. Babylon could be used as a codeword that sums up all of the mechanisms that spring from anxiety.

## References:

1Co 8:5-6      2Co 11:1-4  
Psa 32:10      Psa 90:10  
Rom 2:15      1Ti 1:5, 9  
Gen 3:8, 10, 16-17

## Further Study

Col 2

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 5

# Locked up to wrath

We remember the account of Nimrod and the Gentiles when they built the tower of Babel to avoid being scattered across the length and breadth of the earth. There is a Scripture that comments on city-building and multi-nationalism. 'Woe unto them that lay field to field ... till they may be placed alone in the earth'. God has pronounced wrath on these endeavours. The whole economy of the world is going to repeatedly build and crash. Repeatedly, the labour and wealth of man is written off overnight. But man never learns. He can't learn, for he is locked up to this wrath unless he makes offering. We either make offering or we will be joined to every mechanism of the Babylonish church.

We need to recognise that the structure of Babylon, with its financial security, is the attempt to minimise fear and terror. It is driven by anxiety. Either we adopt the faith of offering approach for living, or we adopt the model of Babylon which seeks to minimise anxiety and fear. Remember that mammon (money) is the coinage of Babylon. It is the coinage of minimising uncertainty. It's 'the god of this world'.

Those people who are considered to be most successful in the world are the ones who have most successfully minimised the impact of time and chance upon their lives. When we observe the 'successful' ones in the world, we often hear a lament similar to that of King David. 'Why is it that the wicked flourish like the green bay tree?' As Job asked, why is it that 'all of their steps are washed in butter'? They have apparently gained the ascendancy over time and chance; nothing ever goes wrong. There is no travail or fear in their death. But it is not so! Anxiety and fear, nevertheless, grip the heart.

## References:

Psa 37:35    Job 29:6  
 Gen 11:1-9    Dan 4:27-32  
 Psa 92:7    Jer 42:13-17

## Further Study

Psa 49

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 6

# The mark of Cain

For those who have prospered in this life only, they have their reward. They don't understand that, like sheep, they die and fall into the hands of the living God. It appears that no one 'struck them' in this life. However, it is sobering to remember the fate of Cain in this context. No one was allowed to lay a hand on him as he went out from the presence of the Lord into the land of Nod. He actually went out into the land of forgetfulness. He was forgotten and excluded from the presence of God.

To be forgotten would be a most terrifying condition. Cain cried out, 'My iniquity is too much for me'. And he said, 'Anyone who finds me will kill me'. The Lord set a mark on Cain so that no one would kill him, and therefore, he would fall totally and completely into the hands of the living God. What kind of sore judgement is that? What fury! What wrath! This is why the word tells us that it is 'a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God'.

Would you consider this question: do you bear the mark of Cain? No one lays a hand on you and everything you do turns to gold. You might say, 'But I'm prosperous; therefore, I must be right in all that I do'. You may have the mark of Cain. It is much better to fall under the stripes, the afflictions, and the chastening of wicked men. They laid their chastening stripes and tortures upon Christ so that we can fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Rather than falling under that hand of the pure, righteous, loving, jealous wrath of God Almighty on the day of judgement.

## References:

Psa 88:12      Heb 10:31  
Isa 33:14      Mat 10:28  
Php 3:10      Jas 5:1-5  
Gen 4:13-14, 16

## Further Study

Heb 10

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 7

# Minimisation of fear and anxiety

When we study the story of Cain and Abel, we're looking at the story of mankind in micro form. Why did Cain kill Abel? He'd lost control, so he reasserted himself. He was driven by his anxiety, and murder was the result. Cain's initial stance was to excuse and justify his actions on the basis of his anxiety. No doubt he was a very worried man. He wouldn't have viewed himself as being a wicked man who was plotting to slay his brother. He was a worried man, an anxious man, and he was under threat. This was an anxiety-driven, 'just' war.

A person does not normally say, 'I'm very wicked. I'm going to go now and kill my brother.' There are many very anxious, fearful, self-justifying reasons why we end up doing what we do. Men will seek to minimise fear and anxiety, either in themselves or others, as a means of excusing any action they take. They have justified wars, genocide, slavery and every other evil, on the basis that such action will somehow alleviate the fear of death.

We all have struggles in our homes. There are arguments over supposedly male perspective versus female perspective, but that's not the bottom line. The issue is the anxiety that 'feeds' the perspective. We are seeking for an outcome which minimises the worries and the uncertainties. And Scripture is quite clear as to why we remain unresolved. It is because we will not join the offering of Christ who can release us from our bondage to this anxiety. We read in the book of Hebrews, 'In as much then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and release those who through anxiety all their lifetime were subject to bondage.'

## References:

Heb 2:14    Mat 7:7-8  
Joh 4:10    1Ti 6:9-10  
Gen 4:5-12    Pro 28:13  
Isa 31:1    Isa 30:1-3

## Further Study

Jas 4

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 10

# Faith and self-control

Let's consider 'faith', remembering that the fearful, anxious person is often in touch with reality, but unable to control it. 'Anxiety' is the symptom of little or no faith. It is referred to as doubting, double-minded, tormented, and not able to be comforted. Anxiety is evident when we are trying to control our environment and others around us, by imposing our will on them. Control is the mechanism by which we attempt to alleviate this anxiety. However, instead of using control mechanisms, our goal should be finding faith, and therefore, finding self-control. The fruit of the Spirit that brings deliverance from fear is self-control. A person with self-control as the fruit of the Holy Spirit, is not a fearful person.

'Faith' accepts that the natural environment has been subjected by God to time and chance, in hope. But do we truly accept that the whole of creation has been subjected by God to this kind of sorrow and that He did it in hope? We must start accepting this, instead of accusing God every time things go wrong. God doesn't minimise our anxiety. And nor does He allow us to control our environment. Rather, He calls us to come to faith. So where do we find faith? It begins with simple obedience to the word of Christ. We tend to separate faith and obedience, but wherever we find the word 'faith' in the Scripture, it must be understood as 'faith-obedience'. Faith is always expressed by obedience to the word of God. Keeping our eyes fixed upon obedience to Christ is the only way to apprehend faith in the midst of the tumultuous storms of life. Think of Christ walking on the water and how He said to Peter, 'O, you of little faith, why did you doubt?'

## References:

Mat 8:23-27    Rom 4:20  
Jas 1:5-8      Mat 14:31  
1Co 9:25      Heb 11:1, 6, 8  
Rom 8:20, 24

## Further Study

Gal 5

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 11

# Understanding offering

Many of us are still perplexed when it comes to offering. We observe that offering is not something confined to the Christian mindset. There are temples, churches and heathen religions all with their various approaches to offering. So, to varying degrees, most people are familiar with the concept. But have we really understood what offering is in its most basic form?

The pivotal passage of Scripture concerning offering is found in Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome. The apostle was beseeching them, and us, by the 'mercies of God' to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. As soon as we consider this, we are in water so deep, so unfathomable, even the ocean at its deepest point is not deeper than this. But this is also the most basic statement of the Christian faith. Paul exhorts us, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable [priestly] service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'

Paul is saying that offering is the only expression of our 'reasonable' priesthood and we need understanding and illumination regarding how to do this. But he is also making the point that if we will not present our bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable as our priestly service, then the opposite is true; we will be conformed to the world and not have our minds renewed. You know that as you present yourself, you will prove what is good and acceptable. He's saying that you can know the will of God. Then you will be acceptable, reasonable, illuminated, and clear in faith, so you can go sure-footedly through this life.

## References:

Rom 12:1-2    1Pe 2:5  
1Co 6:19-20    Psa 50:23  
1Co 8:5-6    Col 3:17

## Further Study

Rom 6

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 12

# Why are you angry?

If you will do as Paul said and 'present yourself as a living sacrifice', then this will take you all the way to your resurrection body and its glory. However, the first aspect of offering is to 'present yourself' to begin the process of becoming a living sacrifice. There is a process involved. This is demonstrated in both the negative and positive in the narrative of the first offerings recorded in Scripture. These are the offerings of Cain and Abel. The book of Genesis accounts, 'Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.'

In our present day, we could say that Cain went home in a rage that day. He was very upset! Has that ever happened to you? Have you ever been very upset because something you offered has not been accepted? Have you allowed your countenance to fall as you have drawn back from fellowship and kept everyone at a distance? The Lord said to Cain, 'If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.' We know that Cain rose up against his brother and killed him. He lost his firstborn status and was not listed in the genealogy of the sons of God because he did not make acceptable offering. He made an offering, but really had no understanding of the process of becoming a living sacrifice.

## References:

Gen 4:2-8    Heb 11:4  
Job 42:8    Amo 5:22  
Mal 1:10    Pro 15:8

## Further Study

Isa 1

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 13

# Instruction through offering

Now let's carefully consider Cain. Cain's offering was rejected; but this rejection gave him access to God for instruction, enabling and acceptance. However, Cain knew nothing about the substance of offering. When Cain brought his meal offering to the Lord, he was firstly to offer himself. The first offering we make is the inward man, our 'psuche', as a living soul. It has to be the inward man, the heart of the individual, first. Then the inward man (that is, the individual) is asked to present the outward man (his body) as a living sacrifice.

The essence of offering required from Cain was to be his brother's keeper as God's firstborn. But what did this mean? It required a re-orientation of his vocation in life. Cain did not want to be his brother's keeper. He wanted to define his own offering. Saying it another way, he wanted acceptance on his own terms. Abel was a prophet and a shepherd, but Cain was the firstborn. Cain was 'a man acquired from the Lord', but he hadn't understood his own calling and ministry.

In effect, the Lord was saying to Cain, 'Never mind your brother; you make offering and you will be accepted'. The Lord addressed him as an individual, saying, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.' There was mercy and illumination available for Cain if he responded well to the Lord's correction. And there could have been acceptance and relational restoration with his brother. This is similar to the situation where Jesus spoke about bringing a gift to the altar while we have unresolved relational conflict. That is, leave your gift there and go and be reconciled.

## References:

2Co 4:16    Hos 14:2  
Psa 19:14    Exo 13:2  
Num 3:13    Col 1:18  
Heb 12:23    Gen 4:1

## Further Study

Rom 12

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 14

# The faith of offering

The Lord had 'regard' for Abel's offering, but 'no regard' for Cain's offering. This means that He 'looked favourably' upon Abel and his offering. What was the major difference between the two brothers? The offering of Abel was evidently an expression of his faith to be the son of God that he was predestined to be. Cain's offering was not the expression of faith. It was the fruit of his will to be the person he wanted to be and his desire for God to accept his self-definition. We are reminded that without faith it is impossible to please God.

When Cain brought his offering to the doorway, the Lord met with him and spoke to him there. This precipitated the major crisis for Cain. How would he respond to the Lord's adjustment? Would he be willing to have his mind renewed and be redefined by offering? The Lord was not comparing him to his brother. It was simply a case that Abel's calling was different from Cain's. Abel was a prophet and a shepherd, and his blood still speaks. Cain was the firstborn and, as such, he was called to serve before the Lord as a king-priest. Cain's attitude should have been a commitment to present himself through offering and then serve and facilitate the offering of his brother. He was called to serve at the altar, established by the Lord Himself, at the doorway of the garden of Eden.

The Scriptures remind us that the way of Yahweh is the way of offering. This is the way of understanding. The express purpose of offering is achieving the knowledge and substance of our personal predestination. We lay hold of the 'hope' of our eternal sonship by the process of joining Christ's offering. The mystery of the faith is the 'understanding of' and 'participation in' offering.

## References:

Heb 11:1, 4  
Gen 4:6-7  
Gen 22:12  
Rom 6:3  
Pro 14:6, 8-10

## Further Study

1Ti 3

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 17

# Can we take instruction?

If we find our offering rejected by God, can we take instruction from that experience? If we find that we are not accepted, can we receive this as a time of instruction? Or do we rise up in 'murder' against God's servants? It is important to remember that the issue is our personal offering; it is not a church problem. It is a matter of our personal obedience to the call of God upon our lives. The first level of our offering has nothing to do with the leaders. The inward man, by offering, is presenting the outward man as the vehicle of obedience, to demonstrate the fruit of obedience of the inward man. The true heart attitude of the inward man is between us and God. Then, this obedience is demonstrated in the community of the sons of God. Let's be very clear that the first aspect of offering is to do with the life and predestination of the offerer.

Unless we firstly make offering in accordance with our life and predestination, we will never be obedient in the culture of the community of the sons of God. It is a personal lordship crisis that even Cain, the firstborn of all creation, needed to face. Cain needed to be redefined by offering and brought forth into the community of the sons of God as a true firstborn. Every person who desires to be part of the church of the firstborn must be redefined by the process of offering. Just like Cain, there will be times when we find ourselves rejected and resisted. Can we change our perspective during these times? Instead of wallowing in self-condemnation or rising up in anger, can we view this as an opportunity to be instructed concerning our life and predestination as a son of God?

## References:

1Pe 2:5

Joh 3:36

Rom 15:18

Heb 5:8

Isa 29:24

Rom 11:32

2Th 3:14

Gen 4:1, 5-7

## Further Study

Act 9

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 18

# The principle of betrayal

If our offering doesn't produce absolute obedience in us, we will, instead, attempt to turn it to a 'law' to ensure our passage to heaven. And we will 'kill' someone, spiritually, by our own hate, venom and anger. This becomes an act of betrayal. However, if our attitude of offering is not in conformity with God's will, then the life that is betrayed is actually our own life. That's what Cain did! He killed his brother, but he betrayed himself.

If we do not make a true offering of obedience by presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice, we will betray ourselves. When he killed his brother, it was Cain who 'died' that day. Sin, as a lion, devoured him because of his refusal to abide within his predestination. He was eternally dead to God because he had rejected every opportunity to be recovered and restored by offering. We must understand this! Abel's 'blood still speaks' and his predestination is eternally assured as a son of God because of his offering. Every martyr whose blood has been spilled has their eternal predestination assured by the faith of their participation in the offering of Christ.

At the last supper, Jesus said, 'The hand of the betrayer is with Me on the table'. Paul, referring to the communion meal, prefaces his statement with, 'The Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread'. We are reminded of the meal offering of the first betrayer; that is, the offering of Cain. Jesus took bread and, symbolically, 'Cain' was there with Him at the last supper; but now his name was Judas! For we find that Judas, at the last supper, was committing the sin of Cain. It was the same issue. He was about to murder his brother, Christ, and betray himself!

## References:

Psa 73:15  
Gal 2:21  
Luk 22:21  
Gen 4:3, 10  
1Pe 5:8

## Further Study

1Co 11

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 19

# Life and peace through offering

Let's focus our attention on our marriages and our relationships. Can we begin to make a transition away from the minimisation of anxiety by control, to one where offering overflows in life and peace? Unless our marriages are realigned to operate by faith and offering, they are subject to the curse. As we know, God said to the woman, 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you'. Then to Adam He said, 'Cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow [in anxious toil] you shall eat of it all the days of your life'.

The apostle Peter explains the fear and terror which can touch our marriages and our lives. This fear and terror defines the anxiety that gripped the heart of Eve because of her sin. This sin caused her to inordinately encompass her husband so that she could somehow control the terrible uncertainty of time and chance that was now upon her. Marriage is not a man claiming control over the woman and the woman conceding control. And neither is it a man capitulating to the woman to maintain the peace and equilibrium of the relationship. The relationship between a man and woman as 'head' and 'helper' is never one controlling the other. Seeking to exercise control over our relationships and circumstances is the fruit of anxiety. And this will never bring peace to our homes. These mechanisms are just the symptoms of 'the fall'. The only thing that brings peace to our homes is when the word of God is met by offering. We are reminded of the way Jesus instructed His disciples to say to those who received them willingly, 'Peace to this house'.

## References:

Gen 3:16-17    1Jn 4:18  
Ecc 9:11        Pro 31:11-12  
1Ki 21:4-16    1Co 11:3  
Eph 5:25, 28    Luk 10:5

## Further Study

1Pe 3

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 20

# The attitude of stubbornness

In the Hebrew language, part of the root meaning of the word 'sorrow' is 'the attitude of stubbornness'. For Eve, sorrow went straight to stubbornness mixed with anxiety. A woman might say in response to this, 'The stubbornness is because of my anxiety; I have a certain perspective and I want to see my fear or anxiety minimised'. Such a person is responding as a woman who is subject to the curse. They encompass the man so that, through control of him, they can attempt to minimise the effects of time and chance on their lives and reduce their anxiety. This stubbornness and anxiety pursued Adam. A compulsive-obsessive dynamic was let loose upon the marriage because of anxiety. It encompassed him so that he facilitated Eve's perspective in an attempt to alleviate her worry and uncertainty. The Lord has said to Eve, 'Your desire shall be toward your husband'. Yet, because of the double-bind of anxiety and its resulting tension, there was no peace in their relationship.

In complete contrast to this, the apostle Peter discussed wives being in submission to their husbands. He used the example of Sarah calling Abraham, 'lord'. At first glance, we might think that Abraham and Sarah's marriage was the same type of relationship that Adam and Eve had after 'the fall'. We might think that the effect of fear and anxiety upon the marriage of Adam and Eve resulted in a 'head and helper' dynamic operating in their marriage relationship, just as in Abraham and Sarah's. But when we properly understand what Peter is telling us, we see that these two marriages are poles apart. They have two completely different outcomes. On the one hand, we have the 'anxiety driven' model, while on the other, we see the peace of the 'faith motivated' model.

## References:

Gen 3:16-17    1Pe 3:1, 6  
Isa 35:4      Gen 16:2  
Joh 16:33  
Gen 21:1-2, 12

## Further Study

1Ti 5

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 21

# Faith through offering

What is the difference between the two accounts of the Christian family and order of marriage as we see them with Adam and with Abraham? What is that particular element that we do not see in Abraham and Sarah's relationship? There is no fear and no anxiety, for they have been delivered! They have been restored to a proper relational order in their marriage. Peter teaches us that proper relational order and peace are achieved when faith replaces anxiety. Faith is the only answer. Anxiety has to be replaced with faith. How do we obtain faith? It is through offering and trusting in God. Where faith is operative, a man will offer himself in headship and a woman will offer herself to be his helper, according to their predestination.

When Adam and Eve fell, they fell under the curse of corruption and death. The first impact, and the first corruption, was anxiety and terror. But now, through faith and offering, all men and women can be free of anxiety and fear in their marriage. Even in a difficult situation where the husband does not obey the word of God, he can be won by the conduct of the wife when she's making offering in her marriage. And when she is not driven compulsively by anxiety to gain control of her circumstances, her chaste conduct, coupled with reverence, is observed. None of the fear or anxiety of Eve is there. Her conduct is with reverence. It is not the outward adornment of seduction for control. This is the beauty of a woman making offering in accordance with her predestination. She no longer has to live with that corruption, but has the incorruptible beauty of 'a gentle and quiet spirit which is very precious in the sight of God'.

## References:

Gen 15:1      Pro 29:25  
Heb 11:11    1Ti 2:15  
1Pe 3:1-2, 4, 14-15

## Further Study

1Co 11

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 24

# The way of the seed

Let's illustrate the way of offering by considering the way of the seed. The greatest symbol or sign in all the world is a seed; and offering is our participation in the principle of a seed. A seed remains alone, barren, until it falls into the ground and dies. Christ likened Calvary, His offering as the sum of all offerings, to the illustration of a seed. It is the process by which the substance of God's life multiplies. It is the way the divine nature is given to us. The way of the seed, the way of offering, is the process of its death, its germination, its growth and the bringing forth of 'much fruit'. Jesus said, 'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit'. This is the mystery of the multiplication of life by offering.

If we don't understand the way of the seed, we will be consumed by anxiety. We will be constantly worried about the potential to 'lack'. Jesus said, 'Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more valued than they?' And then He continued, 'Observe how the lilies of the field grow'. Let's pause here for a moment. In our anxiety, we race to get to the end point. But we need to 'consider the flower'. We can enter joyfully into the principles of sowing and reaping. There's certainly a lot of work to be done because we need to bring forth firstfruits. But remember that between planting and harvest, there's a flower. We should 'smell the roses' as we make offering, in full faith, without fear. We are not on an anxiety minimisation journey! Our heavenly Father has a predestination for us, and He knows everything that we need. We can stop and smell the roses!

## References:

Joh 12:24,32    Mat 6:26  
Heb 2:10        Rev 7:9  
Heb 11:1        Lev 2:1-2  
Exo 23:16        Lev 23:10

## Further Study

Luk 12

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 25

# The economy of sowing and reaping

As we enter into the economy of sowing and reaping by participation through offering, we will begin to understand prosperity as it is defined in the Scriptures. By contrast, we note that in the world there is a trading economy. Those who are trading are not exercising any faith. In most cases, trading is for the purpose of making a profit. It's not a means of multiplication because it is drawing off someone else for the sake of profit.

It is important to note that the world's economy seems to be close by when the economy of offering is operating. Jesus, at the last supper, was talking with the twelve apostles about who would be the greatest: he who sits at table, or he who serves? Then He discussed the 'lords of the Gentiles', the benefactors; that is, those who trade for profit. So He compared the trading economy with the offering economy of the seed to explain to them how true greatness works.

The Scriptures record that Judas was a thief and had been using the funds of the community of disciples for his own ends. Judas had not understood the economy of the seed. He was operating by the trading economy of the world. And he never understood that Jesus was the Seed who was to go into the ground and die. He did not understand that all multiplication was to come by this mode. Nevertheless, Jesus gave charge of the money to the man who least understood His mode! It was Judas who wanted to sell the anointing ointment provided for Jesus' burial so he could top up the community funds. Judas did not understand that the money had run out simply because Christ's journey had finished. In the end, he found thirty pieces of silver – and it was the price of his own life!

## References:

Luk 22:27    Joh 12:3-6  
Mat 27:3    Psa 126:6  
2Co 9:6    Hos 10:12  
Mar 10:41-45

## Further Study

Gal 6

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 26

# Finding joy

Trading is one means by which we seek to control the uncertainty of life. The person who lives this way is called a 'miser'. The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes have much to say about him. Such a one is so locked up to 'getting' that he can't even have a decent meal. To him, everything is a business deal. He is so consumed with minimising the effects of time and chance by accumulating wealth that he can find no joy in life at all. He does not know that if we live by the way of offering, (that is, by the way of the seed), it is possible to reap one hundredfold and have abundance in this life and in the age to come.

However, we know also that the way of the seed, the way of offering, is the way of suffering. The seed must go into the ground and die before multiplication can occur. As for those of us who join the offering of Christ, 'all day long we're chastened'. For the 'wicked', every business deal seems to work out. But for those who follow Christ, things will not always go as we hope. If we are not careful, this may cause us to stumble. The safeguard for us is our commitment to the way of offering. Like the psalmist of old, we understand 'their' end and we understand 'our' end.

Remember the words of the apostle Paul, 'I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' The travail and suffering of the whole of creation have become the sufferings of Christ. His sufferings are the sum of all suffering. When we suffer with Him, our suffering is no longer in vain. It is producing for us an eternal weight of glory. This is the only way we find joy in the midst of suffering.

## References:

Ecc 6:1-2      Pro 18:11  
Deu 32:31     Psa 52:5-7  
Joh 10:10     Rom 8:18

## Further Study

Psa 73

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 27

# Suffering in this life

It doesn't matter what kind of suffering you're enduring, it's the effect of the fall and the curse. Don't make a distinction, adopting a stance where 'that's of the devil and this is of God'. It's all included in the curse. The sufferings of this present time are the sufferings that sum up the word 'sorrow'. The sorrow of the curse was laid upon Eve and then upon Adam. But the whole world and all of its suffering is not worthy to even be considered beside the glory that is to be revealed in us. We can't even compare the two. 'For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.' When we suffer with Christ, our suffering is like 'one mosquito bite' compared with the amazing reward. And not only that, the whole of creation eagerly waits for our glorification.

When Adam and Eve sinned and fell under the curse of corruption and death, the harmony of creation was dislocated because the principle of mortality and death was imposed on the whole of nature. Every mortal creature now travails for survival. And the creation has been subjected to the futility of time and chance by God Himself. The fear and anxiety that result from this uncertainty cannot be removed by any of the coping mechanisms or strategies that men have developed. The only way to enter into rest is to hear the gospel. Then we must offer ourselves in faith obedience to join the offering of Christ. If we have no understanding, then we need to make offering because in offering, understanding comes. Jesus said, 'If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know'. The call for all of us is to continually join the offering of Christ by faith. Then we will prove the good, acceptable and perfect will of God in our lives.

## References:

Joh 7:17      Job 12:6-10  
Hos 4:3      Ecc 9:11  
Mat 11:28-30

## Further Study

Rom 8

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 28