

# The need for a new will

Every person's actions are motivated by their will. The exercise of 'will' is a motivation to fulfil the desires that spring from our heart and mind. Through the exercise of our will, we express ourselves, and pursue the things we want. Before we heard the gospel, we were unaware that there was another way to live. Without faith, the motivations of our will were self-centred. We naturally put our energy into self-seeking thoughts and projections. In this state, we were not connected to the purpose of God.

When a messenger proclaimed the word of God to us, we began to realise that God had a purpose and a plan for our lives. As we heard this word and believed it, we received power to proceed and accept what God had promised. In love, God purposed to bring into existence a multitude of sons and, to each one of us, He gives the right to become His sons if we choose to be. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit purposed who we would be and how we would live. They wrote our name and the works of our sonship in Their covenant book of life. The Everlasting Covenant is the expression of the will of God.

When the word of God's Covenant was preached to us, it enabled us to have faith and to receive God's plan for our lives. God gave us the choice to accept our name and works, and the choice to become obedient to His plan. The love of God gave us the freedom to join our will, in faith, to the purpose of God for our lives. The word brings faith and it also brings us into fellowship with God. Once we are restored to fellowship with Him in the body of Christ, He gives His will to us as a gift. God's will becomes our possession and motivates our desires.

## References:

Gal 2:16      Rev 7:9  
Eph 2        Joh 1:12  
Rev 20:12   Joh 4:34  
Rom 10:14, 17

## Further Study

Eph 2

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 3

# The work of priesthood

Jesus came as the Son of God to fulfil the purpose of His heavenly Father. During His earthly ministry, He testified that He had only come to do the Father's will. The Son was fully obedient, doing all the works that the Father asked Him to do. His obedient service was His priestly work. Even at the age of twelve, Jesus told His parents that He 'must be about His Father's business'. Following the example of Jesus, children from a young age can receive and understand what God's will is for their lives.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father, 'Not My will, but Yours be done'. This is perhaps one of the least understood aspects of Christ's pilgrimage. What was Christ teaching us in His prayer? Was there something wrong with Jesus' own will? Not at all. Throughout the whole of His earthly life, He was in harmony with the will of the Father. Jesus was demonstrating to us that He did not serve God from His own initiative or in His own strength. He had received the plan of God for His life, and now He needed to receive 'the will' and capacity to do what God was asking of Him. As He prayed, the will and power of God were given to Him as a gift of grace.

Jesus then proceeded to offer Himself on the cross by the strength that came from God. The strength to obey God and do His will was found in the capacity of Eternal Spirit that was given to Him by the angel of the Lord. Jesus authored the pathway of priesthood and received the grace which enabled Him to complete it. He endured the cross and fulfilled the will of God. He now calls us to walk this same pathway with Him.

## References:

Heb 10:7,9    Heb 12:2  
Luk 2:49    Heb 9:14  
Luk 22:42-43  
Heb 5:2

## Further Study

Joh 5

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 4

# Partaking of the bread of life

Before He suffered on the cross, Christ invited His disciples to partake of the Passover meal with Him. When we become His followers, we are also invited by Christ to partake of the communion meal before we begin our pilgrimage. Communion is essential, and is the first aspect of our relationship with Christ as we begin our journey with Him. Christ wants to fellowship with us and give us the resource of His own life. And He wants to give us the Holy Spirit. Christ shares Himself with us in the communion meal when we eat the bread and drink the wine. He strengthens us with His life and equips us for the journey ahead to Gethsemane and to the cross. We partake of Christ as our spiritual food and receive strength and ability to step forward and embrace God's will for our lives.

During the communion meal, Christ discloses to us the pathway of our personal discipleship. Each of us has a unique journey to make. The will of God for our lives has already been written down as part of the Everlasting Covenant. It is the will of God that we are set apart to our name, and given power to do the works that He planned for us to do. We demonstrate our freedom by doing the works that belong to our name as sons of God. The bread of life in the communion meal is given to us to nourish our spirit. The bread of God strengthens us as we receive the word of God that is spoken to us in the fellowship of the body of Christ. It is important and necessary to participate in the communion table each week. Why is this so? It is because, as we participate, we receive strength to proceed in the way of discipleship.

## References:

Luk 22:15    Rev 3:20  
Joh 6:53-56    Joh 14:16-17  
1Th 4:3    Php 2:1-2  
Rom 8:15-16

## Further Study

Joh 16

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 5

# Participating with Christ in prayer

From the last supper, Christ led the disciples to the garden of Gethsemane and invited them to participate *with Him* in the fellowship of prayer. As disciples, we also must journey with Christ and join Him in the fellowship of prayer in Gethsemane. This is the second part of our journey. Christ says to us, 'Keep watch with Me'. Our great High Priest is teaching us and causing us to understand that the first step of our priestly work is to pray. The will of God is revealed to us as we offer ourselves to God in the priestly service of prayer.

In prayer, we confess that we have no capacity within ourselves to fulfil God's will. As the psalmist expressed, 'My flesh and my heart fail'. Our flesh is incapable of obeying the will of God. Indeed, our flesh is weak. Equally, no matter how religious or willing our heart may be, before we are born of God, we can never attain to, or achieve, the will of God that He has purposed for our lives. We must cry out to God and ask for a new heart.

In Gethsemane, we are reborn and given a new heart when the blood of Christ, that flowed from His body as sweat while He prayed, is sprinkled upon us. This blood was the fruit of Christ's willingness to be the Son that God the Father wanted Him to be. The blood of Christ, when sprinkled on our heart, delivers us from self-centredness and sin, and makes us a son of God. The seed of God's will is then planted within our new heart and begins to grow. The blood of Christ, and the power of the sevenfold Spirit of God, enables us to take up our cross and walk forward with Christ to Calvary.

## References:

Luk 22:39    Mat 26:38  
Psa 73:26    Heb 9:14  
1Pe 1:24     Psa 51:10

## Further Study

Mar 14

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 6

# The work of the Father and the Son

The garden of Gethsemane is the place where Christ offered Himself to God for us in prayer. Christ invites us to join Him in His prayer offering. As we join with Christ in prayer, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all working in us, making us willing and adequate to do His will. In Gethsemane, we are being separated to God's purpose and are becoming the unique person He has planned we should be.

The Father is making us His sons. He is working in us and conforming us to His image. The Father desires that we be conformed to the image of sonship that He intended for us. His work of chastening, training and moulding us, is a circumcising work that is conforming us to our sonship. It is important that we don't resist the Father's work in our lives. He is cutting out of our lives the motivations that belong to our own selfish ambition. If we reject His circumcising work, we will conform ourselves to the way of the world because we continue to be motivated by the desires that spring from our own heart.

The Son's work is to make us priests to His God and Father. The work of a priest is to make offering. When a priest makes offering, he is given access to God. Moreover, he is invited into fellowship with God. The garments of a priest are a symbol of his right and authority to minister before God as His son. The will of God is our clothing as a priest. The work of Christ as our great High Priest is to equip us with the garments of priesthood. We are a community, a holy priesthood, and our work is to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God.

## References:

Php 2:13      Rom 8:29  
2Co 3:18      Heb 12:5  
Rom 12:2      1Pe 1:14  
1Pe 2:5      Rom 13:14

## Further Study

Joh 17

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 7

# Our stewardship

Jesus committed Himself to do the Father's will. This meant that His pathway led Him to the cross where He offered Himself for our sake. He received the will of God and was strengthened in the garden of Gethsemane to achieve God's purpose. Once enabled by the power of Eternal Spirit, Christ went forward and completed the will of the Father. From the garden of Gethsemane, after receiving the will of God, Christ offered Himself in obedience to each suffering that befell Him that day, and finally, died upon the cross. He fulfilled the will of God, and then, through His resurrection, He enabled us to become God's sons and follow in His steps.

Following Christ on the pathway of obedience is the third aspect of our journey. We are to proceed with Christ from Gethsemane, to *do* the will of God. There is a pathway of offering for each of us to walk. As we make offering as sons of God, we are fulfilling our work as priests. This is pleasing in the sight of the Father. God has given us the right to steward our name and works. As stewards, we are to submit ourselves to the leading of the Spirit each day, never presuming that we have graduated beyond the need to hear from God and obey what He says to us.

As we mature and function in priesthood, our will is being conformed to God's will. The Father's will has become our possession. We have received a new heart, and this heart desires to do the will of God. It is no longer an evil heart. The elements of Christ's blood and the Spirit of God are enabling us to do our works. Our freedom as sons of God is evident. As we fulfil God's will, we are being our true selves and are not captive to any other inclination.

## References:

Php 2:8, 13    Joh 8:29  
Eze 36:26    1Sa 15:22  
Heb 13:20-21

## Further Study

1Co 4

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 10

# Pierced to the heart

The word which is proclaimed to us is called ‘the word of the cross’, not because the preacher is necessarily talking about Jesus going to the cross or dying on the cross, but because the impact of the preached word causes us to be connected to the glorious work of the cross. You may recall the first time you heard and received the word that joined you, for the very first time, to the work of the cross. As it sounded forth, you heard the word of God in such a way that you knew that God was speaking directly to you. Its impact upon you was that it caused you to ‘see’ something that you had never seen before about yourself. You were ‘illuminated’ to see that certain aspects of how you had been living were, in fact, completely opposed to the way that God was now calling you.

To be illuminated by the living and powerful word that convicts our heart, brings a kind of sorrow which the Bible describes as being ‘pierced’ or ‘cut to the heart’. In that moment, at the hearing and receiving of the word of the cross, we are caused to ‘come alive’ to the fact that sin is more than a concept or an action that can be assessed or defined. Our hearts are pierced because we begin to see our own sinfulness, our wickedness, and feel the shame of our sin. We begin to see the truth about our real condition before God. For the very first time, we understand that we are lost and without hope. As we receive the Spirit of grace and supplication, it causes us to mourn. Now we express a simple and accountable response; an admission that our sin crucified Christ; and we cry in hope, ‘What shall we do?’

## References:

Zec 12:10     Mat 13:13  
Joh 3:3        2Ti 1:10  
Eph 1:18       1Th 1:5  
Act 2:37

## Further Study

1Co 1

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 11

# To will and to do

Our goal as sons of God is to receive and do the Father's will. We recall the words of Christ in Gethsemane, 'Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Your will be done'. When Christ was praying in Gethsemane, He already knew the Father's will. However, it was necessary to receive the Father's will before He could proceed to actually do the Father's will. This is a key for us.

Christ illustrates for us that we can only live according to the Father's will and not according to our own will. This is not just referring to the content of His will, as if to suggest that a step-by-step set of instructions was passed on so that Christ would follow the script all the way to Calvary. Receiving the Father's will is both 'to will and to do' His will. How important it is that we understand how to receive the Father's will so that it might become 'my' will; and not just assume that the hearing of His will is sufficient before we proceed to do His will. In fact, we have no hope of doing His will unless His will has replaced 'my will'.

As we receive the Father's will, we can proceed to do His will, which is to minister, by offering, according to our name as a son of God. This is a priestly work. The presentation of our bodies as a living sacrifice is a lifelong process through which we prove the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. Our priestly service requires us to continue hearing the will of the Father as it comes to us in the word of the cross, and to receive the Father's will as we continue to stay in the fellowship of Christ's prayer in Gethsemane.

## References:

Luk 22:42    Php 2:13  
 Rom 12:1-2    Tit 3:4-5  
 2Ch 30:12    Joh 3:27  
 Act 13:22    1Ch 29:14

## Further Study

1Co 9

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 12

# Robes of righteousness

The gospel of sonship connects us to our name. When we speak of a person's 'name', we are referring to the name which has been recorded in the Lamb's book of life. However, we do not have this name at our birth. Practically, every person born has possession of their identity, but we only find our name and the works of our sonship once we are in Christ. In the body of Christ, we receive the will of the Father and the capacity to do that will. We are clothed with a robe of righteousness. The robe of righteousness is our mandate and authority to do the will of God for our life. When we consider that someone is 'clothed in robes of righteousness', we are actually saying that they are clothed with the ability of the Father's will. We are referring to their ability to present, or priest, their body as a living sacrifice and prove the good, acceptable and perfect will of God.

The hope of every son of God is to be clothed with the robe of righteousness, which is also referred to as our priestly garment. The significance of being clothed in our priestly garments, or our robe of righteousness, is that we are to do a priestly work. This is the work of offering. The word 'righteous' simply means the 'right way to live'. There is only one right way to live, and that way is not determined by a set of rules or laws that we try to live by. The right way for us to live is defined, solely, by the Father's will. The Father's will is not just a series of commands that we must do. His will speaks to the very essence of who we are to become; our name, our works and the very life by which we will live.

## References:

Isa 61:10      Rev 20:12  
Rom 12:1-2    Rev 19:8  
Mat 5:6        Mat 21:32  
Act 17:31

## Further Study

Rom 6

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 13

# The word proclaimed

In the first chapter of his Gospel, John declared that Jesus was the *Word made flesh* and that He had come from God. By this, John meant that Jesus was coming to proclaim, demonstrate, and provide for God's covenant purpose. The word of this Everlasting Covenant declared our sonship; and Jesus was revealing both what a son of God is and the pathway by which we could become the children of God. Significantly, John testified that as Jesus dwelt among them, they beheld His glory 'as of the *only begotten from the Father*, full of grace and truth'. Through the preaching of the gospel to the multitudes, and His daily interactions with different people, Jesus was revealing the glory of sonship that was from the Father. When Jesus came to people and they received Him, He was able to illuminate them by giving them understanding regarding the pathway of sonship. And with His word came the capacity they needed to commence their journey on this pathway.

Christ is *still* coming to the hearts of hearers through the proceeding word of God. This word is spoken by messengers who are sent as part of Christ's administration. When Christ first comes to our hearts by the preaching of the word, we are filled with great enthusiasm and hope for the future. This was the experience of the multitudes who rejoiced in the words Jesus spoke and the great signs that He performed. Jesus was viewed as the Teacher with the answers to their questions and the solutions to their problems. As a consequence, they began to believe that the promised Messiah had come to deliver them from their bondage to the ruling Roman empire. Jesus was the Messiah, but He wasn't bringing a deliverance that was according to their expectations. He was coming to deliver them from their slavery to sin so that they could be born again as sons of God.

## References:

Joh 1:12-14    Mat 21:9  
Gal 4:4        Joh 8:34  
Rom 6:17      Mat 4:4  
Luk 4:18      Luk 9:2

## Further Study

Act 13

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 14

# Revealing the Father

We can easily view Jesus as the provision for a better life now and in the future. There are many so-called believers who think that Christ came to take away their pain and suffering. They think that He should bless them in this life and receive them into heaven when they die, because they believe in Him. However, this view of Jesus is as misplaced today as it was when He was ministering on earth. Jesus' own testimony was that He had come to do the will of God. Every work that He did was according to the will of the Father and was written in 'the book'. In coming to do the will of the Father, Jesus was *made* a son of God in all respects. He was the *first* among many brethren, meaning that His sonship revealed what we were to become as sons of God. The Word made flesh was revealing sonship, and grace and truth were now available for us to be made sons of God in His image.

On account of their expectations of the Messiah, the people in Jesus' day rejected the work of the Son and became offended because their expectations were not met. Even His closest friends were confused at this point. Peter, for example, determined to fight anyone and everyone to the death, in order to usher in Christ's kingdom; while Thomas did not realise that Jesus was going to prepare a place for him in the Father's house. At one point, in seeming exasperation, Jesus, *cried out*, 'He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me'. Jesus had not come to reveal Himself. Rather, He had come as a Firstborn Son to fully reveal the Father. In so doing, He was the way, the truth and the life through whom a hearer could come to the Father and be reconciled to Him.

## References:

Heb 10:7    Heb 2:17  
Rom 8:29    Joh 12:44  
Joh 14:1, 6, 9    Heb 1:3

## Further Study

Col 1

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 17

# The Father gives us to the Son

When we first hear the word of Christ as it is ministered to our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we come to our senses and recognise that we are lost and destitute. At this point, we are *all like the prodigal son*. The word brings to our remembrance the Father's house and that there is provision for life there. We humble ourselves and cry out in repentance to the Father to be forgiven of our disobedience and rebellion. We come to the Father to be reconciled to Him. However, once the Father has received us, He immediately gives us to the Son who is the Head of His many-membered body. Jesus declared, 'All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out'. And further to this, He quoted the prophet Isaiah, 'And they shall all be taught of God'; and explained, 'Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me'. The Father teaches us that we must join the fellowship of the body of Christ if we desire to become a son of God.

Jesus invited the disciples to eat and drink the first communion meal and join the fellowship of His body *before* He invited them to participate with Him in the garden of Gethsemane. Why is this important? It is because the disciples were *partaking* of the provision for their *participation* in that offering. This was also the experience of Abraham, the father of all who believe. After meeting Melchizedek and receiving the bread and wine of the communion, Abraham was *then* invited to participate in offering. The bread and the wine were the provision of faith for the disciples to continue from the fellowship of the first communion to Gethsemane, where they were invited to join the offering and circumcision of Christ.

## References:

Joh 6:37, 45  
 Rom 4:11  
 1Co 10:16-17

## Further Study

Gen 14:17-24  
 Gen 15:1-21

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 18

# Abiding in the Father's house

When the Father gives us to the Son, it is important to understand that we are not actually leaving the Father's house. Jesus said that we would know that He was *in the Father*, and that we are *in Him*, and *He is in us*. He also declared that the temple was the house of His Father, and that it would be raised as a new temple in three days. To *remain* in the house of the Father, we need to come into the body of Christ. In fact, the Father will not hear our prayer, or continue to provide us with our daily bread, unless we come into the secret place of the Most High. As members of the body of Christ, we are being fitted together and are growing into in a holy temple in the Lord. We belong to the house of God 'if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end'. This means that we need to continue to abide in the Son.

The evidence that we are abiding in the Son and in the Father is that we are bearing good fruit. It is only as we abide in the Vine that we are able to produce the same fruit that the Vine produces. This is the fruit of sonship. Interestingly, Jesus said that if we are not connected to His body, we dry up and are thrown away and burnt. However, if we abide in Him and His words abide in us, whatever we ask for will be done. This is because we no longer ask 'amiss', or according to our own pleasures, or the desires of our flesh. Rather, our preoccupation will be to reveal the Father, just like Jesus did. Jesus said that the Father is glorified as we reveal Him and we prove to be His disciples.

## References:

Joh 14:20    Joh 2:16, 19  
Mat 6:6-13    Eph 2:21  
Heb 3:6    1Jn 2:6  
Jas 4:3

## Further Study

Joh 15

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 19

# The reality of suffering

To varying degrees, and at different times, we all experience suffering and futility in life. Whether Christian or not, every person was born into this world in corruptible flesh. Consequently, every person will suffer. Even at a most basic level, the corrupt principles by which we live mean that we will experience suffering. The decay and then the death of everything in the natural world are guaranteed.

The cause of suffering is not unknown to us. It is the result of sin and the curse of the Fall. When Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a judgement was placed upon them. God had previously warned them that in the day that they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would die. This was the consequence of their disobedience. Eve was told that the pain of childbirth would be 'greatly multiplied'. Adam was told that the ground was cursed because of his sin, and in toil he would eat of it all the days of his life. Thorns and thistles would grow 'for him', and by the sweat of his face he would eat bread. This process of futility would continue until he returned to the ground, because from the dust he was taken and to the dust he would return.

So do we conclude, as the writer of Ecclesiastes did, that everything is meaningless, a futile chasing after the wind? Joyously for us, we have hope. In the cross of Christ, the place of death and cursing becomes a context for our salvation and reward. The apostle Paul declared, 'Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet the inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.'

## References:

Gen 3:16-19    Ecc 2:11  
2Co 4:16-17    Psa 73:26  
Eph 3:16        Act 5:41  
Act 9:16        2Co 1:5-7

## Further Study

Rom 8

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 20

# The purpose of suffering

When we break the law, we suffer the consequences brought about by our actions. If we are foolish enough to break the law of gravity and step off the roof, we will suffer the consequences of our foolishness. There is no merit to this type of suffering. Cause and effect have just produced their inevitable, natural result. But when suffering (be it because of the futility of our own actions or because of sin) is joined to Christ, the result is different. His sufferings are the means by which the law of God is satisfied. As He, in His innocence, took upon Himself the due penalty for our sin, He suffered our punishment and fulfilled the righteous requirement of the law. However, the question remains. If Christ reigned victorious over sin and death once and for all at the cross, why wasn't there an immediate cessation of all suffering?

Peter answers this question when he says, 'Since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live ... no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.' Christ, on our behalf, accepted our suffering and sin as His. Then He asked us to join Him in the fellowship of this suffering. As He suffered the consequence of our sins, by the power of God, He overcame sin within us and restored us to fellowship with God. Simply put, Christ offered Himself in *His* sufferings to destroy the power of sin in *our* lives. As we arm ourselves with His 'same purpose', we are able to see suffering with Him in the fellowship of the cross as a context where we learn to cease from sin and come to show virtue by living as sons of God.

## References:

Mat 5:17      1Pe 4:1-2  
Gal 6:7-8    1Pe 3:17-18  
Psa 119:92    Heb 9:26

## Further Study

Psa 119:49-80

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 21

# Suffering and faith

The apostle Peter brings an essential element to the discussion on suffering when he links it with faith. Peter teaches that suffering is a context in which we learn the merits of faith. Faith is, initially, something that is given to us when we receive the word of God. As we proceed to join Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemane and are born again, we receive faith as the substance of our sonship. This faith is then tried and tested. It is purified through sufferings to manifest the virtues that are part of *its* substance. This process is essential to our lives. It is by faith that we live and overcome the world, knowing that, ultimately, our faith has its eternal reward. And so, in this world, we suffer its trials so that our faith can be manifest as the substance that proves we are sons of God. Once this has been demonstrated to the Father's satisfaction, we proceed to the new heavens and the new earth for our reward.

In the book of Hebrews, it says that the Israelites had good news preached to them, but the word did not profit them because it was not united with faith. The union of the word and faith is essential in the life of a son of God. The 'word' is the word of our predestination that we receive and now live by faith. The word becomes our faith. As we believe, the power of God becomes active within us, enabling us to overcome sin and to live as a son of God. Peter calls this faith 'a precious value'. It is a unique substance that only a son of God can possess. Having received the 'precious value', faith is then purified by testing, and demonstrated as being real. This is the life of a son of God.

## References:

1Pe 1:6-9

1Jn 5:4

1Pe 2:7

Rom 10:17

Heb 4:2

1Th 2:13

## Further Study

1Pe 1

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 24

		<b>Trial of faith</b>	<b>Reward</b>
1	1Pe 2:18-25	Suffering as Christians in the workplace	Cease from striving and from straying
2	1Pe 3:1-13	Suffering in the family	Learn to bless and become a blessing
3	1Pe 3:14-22	Suffering for righteousness' sake	You are blessed
4	1Pe 4:1-11	Suffering the fellowship of the cross	Cease from sin
5	1Pe 4:12-19	Suffering the fiery trial of faith	Eternal reward
6	1Pe 5:1-7	The suffering of elders	Crown of glory/life
7	1Pe 5:8-14	Suffering the attacks of Satan	Eternal glory

# Suffering in the workplace and family

In his discussion on faith and its rewards, Peter outlined seven contexts in which a Christian can demonstrate faith through suffering. He discusses what virtues are to be manifest through faith, what lesson is learned through trial, and what reward is gained through these experiences. Firstly, Peter talks about suffering as Christians in the workplace. The connection to Adam is clear, as the ground was cursed because of him and thorns and thistles grew *for him*. This suffering may include the disappointments that befall us, the cutting off of misplaced ambition, misguided pride in our own competence and natural capacities, and being humbled. When we bear up under the sorrow of suffering unjustly in the workplace, we find the answer of a good conscience toward God. The reward of this trial of faith and suffering is that we cease from striving and from straying like sheep, and we find favour with God.

Secondly, families can be a context within which Christians suffer evil, insult, harm, and deceit from family or clan members. We are to be 'as Christ' in the midst of these sufferings. We are to live by faith so that the blessing can come to our families. The result of blessing will be other family members becoming children of God. In the midst of sufferings in the family, the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer. We are to prove ourselves zealous by doing good and, even when harmed, we are to seek peace. If we endure through patience and faith in the family, and we bless and do not curse, then the result will be that God will give the blessing of sonship to our family. Our reward is that as we learn to bless, we become a blessing.

## References:

Gen 3:17-19  
 Mat 5:10-12  
 2Ch 7:15

IPe 2:18-25  
 1Co 4:11  
 Rom 12:18

## Further Study

IPe 2:18-25  
 IPe 3:1-13

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 25

# Suffering for the sake of righteousness

The apostle Peter made the obvious statement that it is better to suffer for what is right, according to the will of God, than to suffer for doing what is wrong. For the sake of righteousness, we will be intimidated, slandered and reviled. These sufferings will be because of our good behaviour in Christ, maintaining our witness while suffering, and keeping a good conscience. In these things, those who oppose us will be put to shame. Jesus said, 'Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'. The reward for suffering for the sake of righteousness is that we are blessed. This means God's life is being multiplied in us and is being ministered to others through us.

Christ's purpose in suffering death in the flesh was to destroy sin and to multiply sonship life through His offering. We arm ourselves with the same purpose when we join Christ in the fellowship of the cross. As we do this, we enter a process of ceasing from sin and multiplying sonship life. As we join in suffering, we learn to pray and devote our lives to God. A devoted life that is submitted to the will of God does not run with the excesses and lusts of the world. These are replaced by a fervent love for the body of Christ. The body of Christ is a fellowship of love. The apostle Peter taught that this love covers a multitude of sins. As we join the fellowship of suffering, love is evident and sin is ceasing, causing the body of Christ to be built up. The reward for suffering the fellowship of the cross is freedom from bondage to sin. The outcome is that we live a devoted life in the service of God within the body of Christ.

## References:

Mat 5:10  
1Pe 3:14  
Pro 10:12

1Pe 2:20  
1Pe 4:1-2, 8

## Further Study

1Pe 3:14-22  
1Pe 4:1-11

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 26

# Suffering the fiery trial

Salvation and sonship are received in the midst of suffering trial. As we endure the difficulties that come from the trial of faith, we are to entrust ourselves to God as our faithful Creator. We are to accept that the trial of faith is part of God's will for our lives. When we do this, we obtain the outcome of our faith, which is the salvation of our souls. We are to patiently endure in the fiery trial of faith, knowing that its purpose is to test us. This test of fire, when endured in faith by the power of God, perfects our faith, making it more precious than gold. The outcome is to the praise and glory of God. Through fiery trial, we receive the eternal rewards that come from faith.

Further to this, there is an expectation that the elders of the church are to be witnesses and partakers of the sufferings of Christ. As partakers of His sufferings, they walk in suffering according to the will of God. They shepherd the flock of God and show themselves to be examples by their fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. Paul exemplified this attitude when he said, 'That I may know Him ... and the fellowship of His sufferings'. When Paul outlined his sufferings, he ended by saying that apart from such external things, there was also the daily pressure of his concern for all the churches. The elders who suffer according to the will of God are the true shepherds of the flock. The reward of this fellowship in the sufferings of Christ is the unfading crown of glory.

## References:

1Pe 1:6-9  
Php 3:10  
2Co 11:28  
1Pe 5:1-2, 4

## Further Study

1Pe 4:12-19  
1Pe 5:1-7

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 27

# Suffering the attacks of Satan

The seventh aspect of the trial of faith is suffering the attacks of Satan himself. At all times, these satanic attacks are to be resisted by a firm standing in faith. Satan is our adversary, prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. The fiery trial that comes to test our faith, demonstrates that we have a firm foundation of faith that can, and will, resist Satan. In the Scriptures, we read of the courage of those who overcame Satan by being joined to Christ and by the word of their testimony. These ones, in offering, laid down their lives to the death. This kind of purified faith is of precious value, leading to eternal glory in Christ.

We can certainly see that suffering has its place in our lives. It is no longer just the outcome of the curse, leading to death. Now, in Christ, suffering has become an essential element in the life of a son of God. Let's remember that, whether Christian or not, every person will suffer to varying degrees. However, for the person who is born of God, suffering has become the context within which their faith is tried and tested and proven to be of precious value. As we arm ourselves with the same purpose as Christ, finding the power of God made perfect in our weakness, we find the virtues of faith proven in our lives. We find ourselves in fellowship with a great cloud of faithful witnesses. These witnesses are the men and women of faith who endured much suffering to see their faith tested, purified and demonstrated to be of precious value. We are encouraged by their witness and rejoice, knowing the greatness of our eternal reward.

## References:

Rev 12:11    Eph 6:16  
2Co 12:9    Heb 12:1  
Heb 11:1-2, 13, 39-40

## Further Study

1Pe 5:8-14

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 28