



# Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

---

JANUARY 2021

---

# Restoring my Soul

A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

---

JANUARY 2021

---

# **RESTORING MY SOUL**

*A Five Day Devotional Guide*

**January 2021**

## **Contributing Authors**

Victor Hall

Peter Hay

## **Compiled by**

David Baker

# Contents

---

Monday	4 January	Eyes like a flame of fire .....	2
Tuesday	5 January	Our need for illumination .....	3
Wednesday	6 January	Stars and lampstands .....	4
Thursday	7 January	The light from His face.....	5
Friday	8 January	One presbytery .....	6
Monday	11 January	Fellowship in the presbytery.....	7
Tuesday	12 January	The work of the presbytery.....	8
Wednesday	13 January	Taking heed .....	9
Thursday	14 January	That you may have fellowship.....	10
Friday	15 January	Standing in the grace .....	11
Monday	18 January	The unity of the Spirit.....	12
Tuesday	19 January	Faith working by love .....	13
Wednesday	20 January	Receiving the presbytery.....	14
Thursday	21 January	The fellowship of communion .....	15
Friday	22 January	Sanctified by prayer .....	16
Monday	25 January	The testimony of Jesus .....	17
Tuesday	26 January	The ministry of reconciliation .....	18
Wednesday	27 January	Speaking to one another.....	19
Thursday	28 January	It is a fellowship.....	20
Friday	29 January	An <i>agape</i> meal.....	21

## Eyes like a flame of fire

In this season, we are considering the culture of fellowship that we are to exemplify as sons of God in the body of Christ. This is what the Spirit is saying to our fellowship of churches as Christ is coming among us to search our hearts with eyes like a flame of fire. **Rev 2:18**. He is coming to us this way to make our sin known to us. Unless we find this deliverance, our sin remains, and we are estranged from Christ and from His 'so great salvation'.

Initially, Christ's eyes are confronting to us as they reveal our sin and self-centredness. However, if we do not draw back from His gaze, we realise that they express His love and mercy to us. This is because, unless we see our sin, we are unable to repent and to find deliverance from sin and from God's judgement upon us. In this regard, it is important for us to recognise that Christ's judgements are also among us at this time. He has said that He will give to each of us according to our works. **Rev 2:23**

In coming to us with eyes like a flame of fire, Jesus Christ has joined Himself to us. This is how He enables us to join His offering and the fellowship of His crucifixion so that we can be saved. Because of His initiative toward us, we can say, 'I have been co-crucified with Christ.' **Gal 2:20**. To speak this way is to confess that we need sight so that we can see what needs to be circumcised, or removed, from our hearts in order to be saved from sin and death.

The Lord desires to make our sin known to us so that we can confess our sins to one another. In the light of this fellowship, He will establish us in His way, and we will, indeed, be found without spot and blameless at His appearing. **1Ti 6:13-14. 2Pe 3:14**.

## Our need for illumination

The apostle John taught that if we confess our sins, Jesus is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **1Jn 1:9**. However, we cannot confess what we do not know, and we are unable to know our own condition.

We note, for example, that until King David received a word from outside of himself, through the prophet Nathan, he remained justified in his own sight regarding his dealings with Bathsheba and Uriah. **2Sa 12:1-14**. If David had died before receiving illumination and finding repentance before God, he would have been condemned to hell because of his adultery and murder.

We all need to receive the illumination and the conviction of the Holy Spirit that is ministered to us when Christ looks into our heart. **Heb 4:12-13**. If we harden our heart and resist the Holy Spirit when Christ addresses us by His word, we will, inevitably, become locked up to self-righteousness and will remain under condemnation. However, if we will receive illumination, and confess our sins under the conviction of the Spirit, we will receive forgiveness and cleansing from our sin.

Christ speaks to us through presbyteries. **1Th 2:13**. The apostle Paul used the term 'presbytery' to describe a fellowship of overseers, elders and deacons whom the Father has called to care for the church. **1Ti 4:14**. As believers receive the word proclaimed by God's messengers who are part of a presbytery, the Holy Spirit joins them to the fellowship of the presbytery. This fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. **1Jn 1:3**. It is important that we understand the nature and work of the presbytery, and how to walk in the light with them so that the blood of Christ is effective in our lives. **1Jn 1:7**.

## Stars and lampstands

Understanding and participating in the fellowship of the presbytery as part of the church requires illumination. This is because it is a spiritual reality that Jesus described as 'a mystery'; it is hidden from the sight of natural man, and is by no means comparable to the way in which worldly administrations operate. **1Co 2:9-11. Joh 18:36. Luk 22:25-27.** Jesus said to the apostle John, 'The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.' **Rev 1:20.**

We see that Christian churches are symbolised by seven golden lampstands. The lampstand in the tabernacle of Moses was crafted in the form of an almond tree with seven branches and twenty-two blossoms. The blossoms of the lampstand were receptacles for seven lamps. The petals of these flowers were designed and fashioned to reflect and focus the light of the lamp, in much the same way as the mirror, or lens, of a torch shines light in front of itself. **Exo 25:37.** Each blossom on a lampstand represents a local congregation. The petals of the blossom symbolise the individuals who are part of that congregation.

In this regard, a lampstand church comprises many local congregations. This means that a single congregation is not, itself, a lampstand. Rather, it should be part of a fellowship of churches. Jesus explained that the seven stars in His right hand are the seven angels of the seven churches. It is important to understand the function of the stars in the right hand of Christ. The seven stars in His hand are messengers who minister illumination to those who hear and receive their word. **Gal 4:14.** The prophet Daniel described these messengers as 'those of the people who understand' and who 'instruct many'. **Dan 11:33.**

## The light from His face

'Star messengers' proclaim the word of God the Father. Their message is the gospel of God, declaring the sonship of every believer. **1Th 2:8-9**. God is the source of this word. It proceeds from Him as light that shines out of darkness. **2Co 4:6**. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God – which is the knowledge of our sonship – shines from Christ's face and into the hearts of hearers when it is proclaimed by the star messengers who are in His hand. **2Co 3:12**.

The relationship between the light shining from the face of Christ and the ministry of the light-bearing stars in His right hand was revealed by Moses. He said, 'The Lord came from Sinai, and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, and He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones; at His right hand there was flashing lightning for them.' **Deu 33:2**. The dawn is the rising of the sun. The apostle John noted that the face of Jesus was 'like the sun shining in its strength'. **Rev 1:16**. The flashes of lightning from the hand of the Lord refer to the points of illumination that are ministered by those who are part of a star in the hand of Christ.

Each star in the right hand of Christ is an 'angel' of a lampstand church. The Greek word for 'angel' is *aggelos* (pronounced an-gel-os). An *aggelos* of a church is not one person; nor is it an angel, like Michael or Gabriel. We know this because of the way that Jesus addressed the angel of each church. For example, writing to the angel of the church in Pergamos, Jesus said, 'And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.' **Rev 2:13**.



## One presbytery

The angel of a church is a fellowship of believers whom God the Father has named and set apart to oversee, lead and care for the church. **Rom 16:3-5. 1Co 16:15-16.** It is the presbytery of a lampstand church. Significantly, Jesus identified one angel, or presbytery, for each lampstand. It is the presbytery for all of the local congregation 'flowers' that comprise a lampstand church. We note, therefore, that there is not a presbytery for Brisbane Christian Fellowship and a separate presbytery for Melbourne Christian Fellowship or for Perth Christian Fellowship. There is one angel, or presbytery, for these and other associated congregations.

While there is not a presbytery for each local congregation, the Lord appoints overseers and elders in every local congregation to shepherd the flock. **1Pe 5:1-2.** These men belong, firstly, to the angel of the whole lampstand. Their fellowship in one Spirit, as part of the presbytery, ensures that the lamp that is set in each local congregation flower is alight. In this regard, the lamp that is set in a local congregation is not a presbytery. Rather, it is the light of the word, ministered as the seven Spirits of God from the presbytery. **Rev 4:5.** The Scriptures describe the fulness of seven Spirits as the one Spirit of Yahweh. **Isa 11:2.**

If those who are supposed to care for a local congregation are not joined in one Spirit with a presbytery, the lamp that belongs to a local congregation remains in darkness. They have no light, because they are not practically connected in one Spirit to the *aggelos*. Their ministry is not the fruit of first love with their brethren. It is, instead, based on, or informed by, their religious traditions and historical doctrines. Jesus described this approach to ministry in the church as placing a lamp under a basket or a bed. **Mar 4:21.** The light of the gospel of sonship is not being ministered in that congregation.

## Fellowship in the presbytery

A common question among believers in our stream of churches is, 'Who belongs to the presbytery?' The most fundamental qualification for participation in the presbytery is 'firstfruits'. A firstfruits believer is a person who is born of God and is joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings as a member of His body. They are obtaining the blessing of life that Christ came to give through His offering on the cross, and are sharing this life with others. Of course, this should describe the life of every Christian. **Jas 1:18**. However, not every firstfruits believer is called by the Father, and equipped by Christ, to oversee and care for the church.

The work of overseeing and caring for the church is according to a person's sanctification as a son of God. They come to know God's will regarding the work of shepherding as they faithfully make offering in the fellowship of the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit sets them apart for the work of ministering as an overseer, to which others in the presbytery and the church are able to bear witness. We note, for example, Paul's commendation of Stephanas. He said, 'I urge you, brethren – you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints – that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labours with us.' **1Co 16:15-16**.

This fellowship of firstfruits believers is to oversee the church through the work of eldership and deaconing. Among this fellowship of overseers are men who have received ascension gift grace from Christ – some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastor-teachers. **Eph 4:11**. They have been set over the church to feed those who are in the church with their portion of food in due season. **Luk 12:42-44**. The apostle Peter described this food, ministered in due season, as the word of 'present truth'. **2Pe 1:12**.

## The work of the presbytery

The ministry of the word of God by the presbytery is the means by which every person in the church is equipped for their work of ministry as a member of the body of Christ. This ministry is exercised when believers commune together from house to house. Through this ministry, the whole body is edified, and each person is able to 'come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'. **Eph 4:11-14.**

The Scriptures also refer to overseers as 'watchmen' because they have the capacity to see and minister the truth. It is notable that, in the book of Revelation, the four living creatures, symbolising the four ascension gift ministries of Christ, are described as 'full of eyes in front and in back ... around and within'. **Rev 4:6,8.** These 'eyes' are the seven Spirits of God that are sent out into all the earth. **Rev 5:6.** Watchmen have sight because they are full of the Holy Spirit. They are able to hear and receive what the Spirit is saying to the churches, and to proclaim it to those who have an ear to hear.

The apostle Paul exhorted the elders of the presbytery in Ephesus to take heed to themselves and to all the flock among whom the Holy Spirit had made them overseers. He said that if they did not take heed to themselves, they would be unable to guard the flock against savage wolves. This is because they would neither recognise them, nor possess the weapons to war against them. Presbyters who fail to take heed to themselves are also susceptible to rising up and ignorantly speaking perverse things that draw disciples after themselves. In summary, they are unable to function effectively as watchmen. **Act 20:28-31.** This also causes the light of a lamp that is set in a local congregation to be diminished.

## Taking heed

The exhortation to take heed to one's self applies to every presbytery. **Act 20:28. 1Ti 4:16.** Presbyters take heed to themselves by walking in first love with one another. They entreat the word and fellowship of their brethren, and are committed to knowing and caring for their brethren in like manner. Practically, they open their hearts and houses to receive adjustment from their fellow overseers in relation to their ministry, their marriages and their families. This active commitment to meeting and receiving one another is the action of 'washing one another's feet'. **Joh 13:14.** In this fellowship, they are able to hear from one another and to receive clarity regarding their sanctification.

Unless presbyters take heed to themselves in this manner, they will, inevitably, fall from the four elements of Christ's communion, or *agape* fellowship, which He called 'first love'. To this end, Jesus rebuked the presbytery of Ephesus, saying, 'I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place – unless you repent.' **Rev 2:4-5.**

There was no problem with the works, labour, patience or spiritual gifts of the Ephesian presbyters. However, they had become collegial. They were work colleagues who were empowered by association with the presbytery to minister in the church as they saw fit. They obviously did not know each other, nor care by washing one another's feet, because Jesus had said that they had left their first love. For this reason, they were not eating from the Tree of Life, which is the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Rev 2:7.** Instead, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had unwittingly become their food and the source of their ministry.

## That you may have fellowship

The apostle John testified that he and his fellow presbyters heard and received the word of God that was ministered among them; were illuminated by the Spirit; turned in repentance from their own understanding to look into, and receive from, the face of Christ; and continued to break open and minister the word according to their sanctification. **1Jn 1:1-3.**

Fellowship is foundational to the Christian life. It is the way in which sons of God live together in the body of Christ, because it is the way that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit live. **1Co 1:9.** It is the culture of love, which is demonstrated by offering. This culture should be exemplified by the presbytery, whose work is to minister the word through which we have our participation in the fellowship of the church. Their culture should be our culture. For the presbytery, and for the church more broadly, the ground, or context, of our fellowship is established by the word of God. **1Jn 1:1-3.** This means that the capacity to participate in fellowship requires our diligent application, through repentance and faith, to the word of present truth. **2Pe 1:12.**

Paul was referring to this fellowship of faith when he said, 'Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.' **Heb 13:17.** The washing of the water of the word is essential to our adequacy to priest ourselves as a living sacrifice in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. **Heb 10:22.** It is in this fellowship that Christ's blood avails for us and is efficacious in our life. If we are unwilling to walk in the light with those who minister the word, we remain in darkness, and in captivity to the law of sin. Jesus said that, in this state of disconnection, we have no part with Him. **Joh 13:8.**

---

FURTHER STUDY JOHN 17

## Standing in the grace

The apostle Paul described fellowship as the grace of God in which we are to stand and make offering in the body of Christ according to our name as a son of God. **Rom 5:1-2**. Our access into this grace is by faith, which we receive by hearing the word of God that is ministered by those with ascension gift grace. **Eph 4:11-12. Rom 10:17**. By this faith, we present ourselves to meet and relate with our brethren among whom God the Father has placed us. **2Co 4:13**. This is where we make offering. Offering involves giving ourselves to reveal and care for one another. It is not simply fulfilling a role in the church.

Fellowship requires us to know who we are as a son of God. Of course, we do not yet fully know our name. As Paul explained, we know 'in part'. **1Co 13:9**. To the degree to which we have attained to a knowledge of our name, we give ourselves to meet and relate with our brethren in Christ. **Php 3:16**. In this regard, we are not trying to be more than who God has named us to be; this would be a projection. Neither are we drawing back from fellowship to be less than who He has named us to be; this would also be an endeavour to conceal the shame of our nakedness from the light of fellowship.

When we meet and walk with our brethren in the light of the word, the will of God, which is our sanctification as a son of God, is being proven. **Rom 12:2. 1Th 4:1-3**. We are able to see and know ourselves more clearly as we are being delivered from the darkness of our self-definition. Our motives for service as presbyters and as members of the body of Christ are sprinkled clean by the blood of Jesus, and we are able to put off our self-righteous initiatives which undermine our participation in the community of the church. **1Jn 1:7. Heb 9:13-14. Eph 4:22-24**.

## The unity of the Spirit

Our fellowship together is only possible by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit pours the love of God into our heart, by which we are able to lay down our life to reveal one another. **Rom 5:5**. Furthermore, He is the expression of our name as a son of God in a firstfruits measure. Importantly, the Holy Spirit enables us to be in one Spirit with the Lord and with each other. **1Co 6:17. 1Co 12:13**. Note that we cannot be one Spirit with the Lord without being one Spirit with our brethren in Christ. When we presume to live as a Christian without a commitment to the unity of the Spirit, we are not discerning the body of Christ, and are in danger of shipwreck. **1Co 11:29-30. 1Ti 1:18-19**.

A troubling mode of ministry in the church is empowerment through association with graced messengers. This is the manner of a person whose function in the church is primarily dependent upon directives from an overseer or because of their personal connection with this graced individual. A person who operates in this way, preferences their connection with an overseer over their relationships with those among whom they live. They endeavour to impose upon others, the directives that they have received, in an autocratic manner, which is not dissimilar to the way in which worldly businesses or governments operate. Jesus described those who presume to serve in this way as 'benefactors'.

Jesus said, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called "benefactors". But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.' **Luk 22:24-26**. An overseer or elder who is not established in first love as part of the presbytery will inevitably function as a benefactor within the local congregation of which they are a part.

---

FURTHER STUDY 1 CORINTHIANS 12

## Faith working by love

Faith working by love is the culture of fellowship. Remember the words of Jesus to the disciples: 'Greater love has no-one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.' **Joh 15:13-14**. He also said that, if we obey His commandments, we abide with one another in His love. **Joh 15:10**. The presbytery is a fellowship. It is not a committee whose members report to one another on the work or initiatives of faith that they exercise in their local settings.

The first and primary expression of faith in the fellowship of the presbytery is for each man to 'speak' according to their name. This means that, by faith, and according to their name, they lay down, or present, their initiatives regarding the care of their local congregations in the midst of the presbytery. **Gal 2:2**. In this context, others who are part of the presbytery are able to speak to these matters according to their sanctification. By this means, the offering of each presbyter can be properly ordered. In other words, hands can be laid on them, setting them apart for this work. **Acts 13:2-3**. Their offering becomes an obedience of faith, through which life and blessing are being multiplied in the context of their work and ministry. **Rom 1:5-6**.

If presbyters do not take heed to themselves in fellowship with one another, they will be little more than empowered, professional clergy. They will be unable to shepherd the flock of God that is among them because they are not examples to the flock of the very fellowship that they are supposed to steward. In this regard, we note the exhortation of the apostle Peter, 'Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.' **1Pe 5:2-4**.



## Receiving the presbytery

How do we receive and participate in the fellowship of the presbytery? The most basic and essential response is to receive and believe the word that is ministered in the local congregations in which God the Father has placed us. **1Co 12:18**. This means that we must receive the word that is proclaimed by Christ's messengers as the word of God, and not merely as the word of men. Paul rejoiced that the Thessalonian Christians received the word in this manner, writing, 'For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.' **1Th 2:13**.

The evidence that we have received the presbytery will be our response to the word of God. Our response will be repentance and the obedience of faith. **Act 2:36-38**. Our desire will be to share and testify to others of the application of this word in our life. This commitment to fellowship demonstrates that we have received faith by hearing the word, and that we are continuing steadfastly in the four dimensions of grace that are foundational to fellowship in the body of Christ. **1Jn 1:7**.

Our motivation to converse 'by faith' will also involve open and easy relationship with those whom the Lord has set as overseers and elders in our local setting. These ones are part of the presbytery that belongs to the whole lampstand church. Our conversation with these overseers is how we invite the presbytery into our house and join their fellowship. In the same way that presbyters 'wash one another's feet', we must make ourselves available to receive these watchmen when they offer to speak to us and bring adjustment to our lives and families. **2Co 7:14-15**.

## The fellowship of the communion

As we receive the word proclaimed from the presbytery, we are joined, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, to the fellowship of the presbytery, which is the fellowship of the Father and the Son. **1Jn 1:3**. Having received this anointing, we know how to participate in the four dimensions of grace that are foundational to the communion. We do not need anyone to instruct us or to script us regarding our participation. **1Jn 2:20,27**.

We commune together as we participate in '*agape meals*', from house to house. **Act 2:46**. We participate by giving thanks to God through prayer, and by expressing faith through confession and testimony in relation to the word of present truth. These four dimensions of fellowship – the word of present truth, the fellowship of offering, breaking bread, and prayer – are foundational to the communion. **Act 2:42**. Importantly, our participation in communion is not because of something supernatural being added to the bread and the wine. Nor is our participation in the communion priested to us by a clergy-style leader. Christ Himself is the great High Priest of our confession. **Heb 3:1**.

What does this mean for our participation in the communion? The word of God and prayer are foundational to the communion meal. They sanctify each element of fellowship. **1Ti 4:4-5**. This is the purpose of saying grace before we eat our meals. We note, for example, that after receiving the word of Jesus as they journeyed to Emmaus, Cleopas and his friend insisted that Christ abide with them. As He sat at the table with them, He took bread, blessed it through prayer, broke the bread, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him. **Luk 24:30-31**. Similarly, in the midst of a great storm, the apostle Paul invited the crew of their doomed boat to commune with him. **Act 27:35-36**.

## Sanctified by prayer

In his pastoral letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul reminds us that ‘nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer’. **1Ti 4:4-5**. Saying grace before a meal is more than simply giving thanks to God for the food that sustains our natural bodies. We are committing ourselves to have fellowship with one another. Through prayer, we acknowledge that our point of meeting is a table that belongs to Christ, to which we have access by faith, because we have received His word into our hearts and our homes. We are also giving thanks for the meal and for our fellowship with one another in the name of the Lord.

This ‘conversation’ of prayer, which is in one Spirit, should continue throughout the meal, because ‘grace is on our lips’. **Psa 45:2-3**. We note the words of Paul, ‘Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt [meaning, ‘in the Spirit’], that you may know how you ought to answer each one’. **Col 4:6**. By praying together in one Spirit, we are joined in fellowship to the offering of Christ. As we meet and share with one another by the Spirit, the Son, who is our High Priest, searches our hearts, for He knows what the Spirit is saying. Christ then makes intercession for us according to the will of God. **Rom 8:26-27**.

This means that He ministers to us our participation in His finished offering. Christ, through His Melchizedek priesthood, has already lived the life of each of us and, through His death, has accomplished our righteousness. That is, He has already atoned for our sins, and has finished the works that belong to our sonship. **Heb 2:17**. **Isa 26:12**. The Lord has done this by doing the works that the Father gave Him to do on our account. These are the works that the Father prepared for us to do in Christ.

## The testimony of Jesus

Christ's blood was shed as a consequence of the wounds that He received in the course of His offering journey. Through the shedding of His blood, the life of God that was in His blood was multiplied, and given to become the life of every son of God. We are able to give and receive this life as we fellowship together as members of the body of Christ, because we have the testimony of Jesus. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. **Rev 19:10.**

Evidently, prophecy will be an element of our ministry to one another as we break bread from house to house. Helpfully, in relation to communion, Paul explained that 'he who prophesies speaks edification, exhortation and comfort to men'. **1Co 14:3.** We note that this has a broad application in relation to our conversation as Christian households.

The implications of this prophetic initiative were demonstrated by Paul through his interactions with the apostle Peter in Antioch. Paul specifically addressed Peter in relation to how he was eating and drinking with the Christians in that city. He recounted, 'Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.' **Gal 2:11-12.**

In front of the whole community of believers, Paul said to Peter, 'A man is not justified by the works of the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; for by the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified.' **Gal 2:16.** Through his own testimony, Paul specifically connected Peter to the sixth wound of Christ, which was His crucifixion. **Gal 2:20-21.**

## The ministry of reconciliation

In the context of an *agape meal*, Paul proclaimed the Lord's death to Peter. The eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ were searching Peter's heart through the word and testimony of Paul. Through this ministry, Peter was being washed and connected to the fellowship of Christ's sixth wound. In the fellowship of this suffering, as Peter was cursed, with Christ, in the eyes of his fellow Jews, he was being delivered from the curse of the Law, and established in the truth. **Gal 3:13.** This was a ministry of reconciliation to Peter.

Paul exhorted us all to this ministry, saying, 'Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.' **2Co 5:18-19.** Christ was the High Priest of both Peter's and Paul's confessions.

As great High Priest, Christ ministers in a white garment. He said to the presbytery of Sardis, 'You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.' **Rev 3:4-5.**

Paul's garments were being made white through his fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Peter's garments were spotted because of his partiality and his observance of the Jewish Law. He needed to receive the washing of the water of the word from Paul, and to have his garments made white in the blood of the Lamb through his ongoing fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. **Rev 3:4. Rev 7:14.**

## Speaking to one another

Paul gave Timothy instructions regarding how to speak to others in the fellowship of the church. For example, he said, 'Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.' **1Ti 5:1-2**. Timothy was commanded by Paul to be an example to the believers 'in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith and in purity'. **1Ti 4:12**. For this reason, Paul's instructions to Timothy should, likewise, apply to our interactions with one another, house to house.

Fellowship connects us to Christ's one offering and to His enabling priesthood. It is important to understand that no priest or leadership figure is required to 'transubstantiate' the bread and wine of communion to us as the body and blood of Christ. In other words, our participation in the communion is not because a priest or leader prays over the elements and ministers them to us as the body and blood of Jesus. The communion is not another 'sacrificial event' that somehow contains the elements of Christ's one offering.

When we eat and drink in fellowship, remembering, through dialogue, our participation in the offering of Christ, the food and drink of the meal is not being changed into the body and blood of Christ. Rather, we who are eating and drinking in the name of Christ are being changed because of our participation in the offering of Christ. This participation gives us access to the divine nature, which is becoming the nature of our life. **2Pe 1:3-4**. This is why Paul said, 'We, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.' **1Co 10:17**. Furthermore, he testified that he was being 'poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service' of the Philippians' faith. **Php 2:17**.

## It is a fellowship

In this present season, the Lord has been addressing our church movement regarding fellowship and the sacramental nature of our communion services. We have come to see that our sacramental perspectives and practices are contrary to the teaching of the apostle Paul. He taught that the communion meal is *fellowship*, or participation, in the offering of Christ.

The Greek word for 'communion', used in the Scriptures, is *koinonia*. This word can equally be translated 'fellowship', 'participation', and 'sharing'. For example, Paul wrote, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [*koinonia*] of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion [*koinonia*] of the body of Christ?' **1Co 10:16. 1Jn 1:3.**

Communion is not a sacrament at all; it *is* the fellowship of the body of Christ. Sacramentalism denies, and even wars against, fellowship, because it promises that a person will receive blessing from God *apart from* participation in offering as a member of Christ's body. In response to the word of the Lord, we are returning to the tradition that was laid down by the twelve apostles as they established the Jewish church in Jerusalem. **Act 2:46.** This is the same tradition that the apostle Paul and his fellow apostolic messengers established among the Gentile churches. **1Co 11:2. 2Th 2:15.**

Importantly, our participation in communion is *not* because we specifically eat a piece of bread, and drink wine; or 'remember' the historical event of Christ's crucifixion. Nor are these elements, in any way, 'transubstantiated' into the body and blood of Christ when they are blessed for us by a clergy-style leader. The communion is *not* another 'sacrificial event' that somehow contains the elements of Christ's one offering, from which we can draw for our benefit. Christ Himself is the great High Priest of our confession. **Heb 3:1.** He priests to us a daily participation *in His* offering and sufferings.

---

FURTHER STUDY PHILIPPIANS 1

## An *agape* meal

We *commune* as we participate together in what the Scriptures describe as ‘a love feast’, or ‘*agape* meal’. **Jud 1:12**. These were the meals that were eaten from house to house by Christians in Jerusalem. **Act 2:46**. Paul spoke to the Corinthian church regarding the proper ordering of the *agape* meal, which they were to eat and drink together as a whole church. He received these instructions directly from Christ, who instituted this meal as a thanksgiving celebration that churches were to observe when they assembled for fellowship. **1Co 11:23-26. 1Co 10:16**.

As we eat and drink an *agape* meal in the name of the Lord, we commune by giving thanks to God through prayer, and by expressing faith through confession and testimony in relation to the word of present truth. We remember, through dialogue, our *participation* in the offering of Christ. Significantly, it is the word of God and prayer that sanctify our meal as communion, or fellowship. **1Ti 4:5**. In summary, the four dimensions of fellowship – the word of present truth, the fellowship of offering, breaking bread, and prayer – are foundational to the *agape* meal. **Act 2:42**.

Importantly, the food and drink of the *agape* meal are not being changed into the body and blood of Christ in us as we eat and drink together. Rather, we, who are eating and drinking in the name of Christ, *are being changed* because of our participation in the offering of Christ. The wonderful point that the Lord is restoring to us in this season is that we are to be the unleavened bread and drink offering *to one another!* **1Co 10:17. Php 2:17**. The first and vital *practical* expression of this ministry is to eat and drink a meal with one another. When sanctified by the word of God and prayer, this fellowship (*koinonia*) is in the name of the Lord who is, Himself, in the midst of us. **Mat 18:20**. We are participating in the Lord’s table.





Restoring  
my Soul