



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

JUNE 2021

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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June 2021

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The word of the cross

To obtain the blessing of the divine nature, which is necessary for bringing forth children who are born according to the Spirit, a couple must respond in repentance and faith to the word of the Lord that calls them to walk before Him and be blameless. This is the word of the cross, ministered by the Holy Spirit, which first addresses each *individual*. **1Pe 1:10-12**. The word calls them to forsake the ways of living and relating which are sourced from the principles of the flesh and mark their rejection of Christ's headship.

We recall that following the fall of mankind, the Lord came looking for Adam who, with his wife, hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, among the trees of the garden. The Lord called to Adam, saying, 'Where are you?' **Gen 3:8-9**. Likewise, Christ comes looking for each of us, seeking our restoration to fellowship with Him and with one another, in Him. This fellowship is the context of life through which a married Christian couple are able to meet, and to participate in the fulfilment of God's covenant will for their lives, individually, and as a couple.

The effect of receiving the word of the cross is that a hearer, under the influence of grace and supplication, is caused to look upon Christ. They see the effect of their fallen relational practices that are at odds with God's order of headship. The head of a family and his wife must mourn *alone*. **Zec 12:12-14**. A husband cannot mourn on behalf of his wife; nor can a wife mourn on behalf of her husband. Each is given the opportunity to respond to the word of the cross and to mourn for their own rejection of Christ's headship.

Forsaking every other covenant

A husband or a wife can only be recovered to a marriage covenant that is blessed with a remnant of the Spirit, if they *forsake every other covenant* that they have made. **Mal 2:15**. For some couples, this may be the sacramental or romantic covenant that they made when they were first married. For others, it will be the secret covenants that they have made through the lusts of the flesh. We note, for example, that Jesus said, 'Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.' **Mat 5:27-28**. It may be the latent covenants of former relationships that have not been disclosed or properly ended.

According to the Scriptures, a covenant can only be annulled through a death. **Rom 7:1-3**. The word of the cross comes to join us to the death of Christ so that we are able to renounce and forsake all other covenants. **Rom 6:2-4**. Unless a person is joined to this process, which involves the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and being conformed to His death, the restoration of their marriage on the ground of headship will be impossible.

The Holy Spirit helps a repentant hearer by turning their mourning into a travail in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. **Rom 8:26**. This is a *personal* connection, by faith, to the process through which they can be delivered from their fleshly relational practices. Unencumbered by these fallen ways of relating, a husband and wife are able to meet one another on the ground of headship, according to their name in Christ. That is, they can meet truthfully, having despised the shame of pursuing their own agendas for life, and having been made one Spirit in the Lord. **Gen 2:24**. Their ongoing *conversation* with one another on this ground of truth demonstrates their faith for reformation in their marriage and family.

Reformed conduct

As a man applies himself to the word that he is hearing, and continues in the fellowship of Christ's offering, he receives grace, or a portion of the divine nature, for his unique expression as a husband and a father in his house. This is how a Christian man nourishes and cherishes his sonship. As one who loves his wife in the same way that Christ loved the church, he invites her to devotionally consider the word *with him*. Through this conversation, her sonship is, likewise, being nourished and cherished. **Eph 5:28-29**. She is able to adorn herself with the remnant of the Spirit that the Lord is giving to them as a couple. **Mal 2:15**.

The Lord is calling for the cultural reformation of both a husband and a wife in a Christian household. However, it is important to note that grace can be multiplied within a family or household through the obedience of faith of one spouse. He honours the faith obedience of each person. This is why Paul said, 'For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.' **1Co 7:14**.

On this point, it is helpful to remember that the conversation of faith that is foundational to the recovery of marriages can equally be understood as the reformed conduct of a hearer. Even if there is no opportunity to converse with a spouse on the points of reformation that the Spirit is illuminating, the transformed conduct of one person can minister grace within the household. The apostle Peter made this point when he wrote, 'Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the *conduct* of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.' **1Pe 3:1-2**.

A husband's response

The foundation of marital reformation for a husband is to turn his face to Christ and receive the light of the word that shines from Christ's face through the ministry of His messengers. **2Co 4:6**. This requires humility as the man accepts that his natural strength and capacity to know and fulfil God's will as an individual, as a husband, and as a father, is a fallacy. He is only able to fulfil God's will by the grace that God gives to the humble in the fellowship of Christ's offering. **Jas 4:6. Heb 4:16**.

Looking into the face of Christ will also require a husband to cease from looking into his wife's face to know himself through her reflections, observations, affirmations, adjustments and directions. The tendency for a man to know himself in this manner reveals that he *doubts* the word of Christ as the source of definition and direction for his life and family. His wife has become the face of God to him. Other men will react in anger against the expectations of their wives. They will either withdraw from relationship with their wife or will endeavour to exert dominion over her. **Gen 3:16**. This anger, or *wrath*, reveals that they are also bereft of grace because of their disconnection from Christ.

It is notable that Adam hid himself from the face of the Lord among the trees of the garden. **Gen 3:8**. Furthermore, both he and his wife clothed themselves to hide the shame of their nakedness from each other. **Gen 3:7**. The trees of the garden were the context of Adam's work, or employment. **Gen 2:15**. For many men, their application to their work can become a means of avoiding the light of fellowship with their brethren in the Lord, and of eschewing the conversation with their wives that is necessary for cultural change in their marriage.

Lifting up holy hands

Although many men may appear diligent in their secular employment, they are, in fact, lazy in relation to the ground of their marriage and family. This is the only context in which they can obtain the blessing of Abraham. **Act 3:25.** King Solomon described a man who is lazy in this manner as 'devoid of understanding'. **Pro 24:30.** As a consequence of a man's laziness, the walls protecting the ground of his household are broken down. It becomes overgrown with thorns and covered with nettles. **Pro 24:31.** Evidently, it is bereft of eternal blessing, even though he may be successful in the context of his temporal employment.

A man who looks into the face of Christ is being restored to the headship of Christ. He is able to receive the word of grace that proceeds from Christ, his Head. The indication that he is receiving this word is his initiative to speak, by the Spirit, in the fellowship of the Father and the Son. **1Jn 1:1-3.** The first context for this speech is *prayer*. We note, in this regard, the exhortation of the apostle Paul, who said, 'I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.' **1Ti 2:8.**

Lifting up holy hands demonstrates that a man is being sanctified to his name within his house as he submits to the lordship of Christ. His angry reactions to the desires and provocations of his wife cease; he is without *wrath*. Having been delivered from *doubting*, the man no longer seeks direction from his wife for his life and family, because he receives and believes the word that comes from Christ.

A husband who is being established in the order of headship will give himself to speak by faith with his wife. He does this wholeheartedly because of his commitment to Christ. He knows that through his obedience to the Lord, he is an heir of the divine nature that God has promised to every family in Christ. **Col 3:23-24.**

FURTHER STUDY 1 TIMOTHY 2

Dwelling with understanding

To 'dwell with understanding' means that a husband gives himself to meet and relate with his wife *by offering*. **1Pe 3:7**. It does not mean that he compensates for any of her real or perceived relational idiosyncrasies; nor does he endeavour to overpower her by demanding her compliance to his directions. Rather, he initiates a discussion with his wife in the meekness and gentleness of Christ. **2Co 10:1**. He speaks from the basis of his fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, which will include the sufferings associated with the relational disharmony that will, at times, arise in their marriage and family. The husband understands that the pain inherent in these conflicts is where grace for healing and relational recovery is found.

Irrespective of his wife's response to this initiative, the man maintains his focus on the Lord, and on what He is saying to him and his family. Being constrained to the obedience of Christ in this way, he forsakes arguing with his wife from the basis of his own fleshly perspective. **2Co 10:4-5**. Furthermore, he is not drawn to respond to the compelling expression of her knowledge of good and evil on matters. Instead, he frees her to her own accountability to respond to the word and direction of the Lord.

Honouring his wife as the weaker vessel is the means by which a man 'names' his wife in relation to the word of God to himself and to his household. Naming her does not mean that he defines the works of her sonship for her. Rather, it means that he lays down his life for her in the same way that Christ laid down His life for the church. **Eph 5:25**.

The vessel of multiplication

The apostle Peter exhorted every believing husband to this conversation, writing, 'Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered'. **1Pe 3:7**.

A Christian man honours his wife as the weaker vessel by acknowledging that, through her participation in offering, she is the vessel of multiplication. Her weakness is not some physical, or natural, inferiority that he accommodates. The weakness of a godly wife is her capacity to multiply life in the family through her fellowship in Christ's offering. As she relinquishes her claim to equality in relation to the direction of the household, she is established in the obedience of Christ. **Php 2:5-8**. She is strengthened by grace in the weakness of her fellowship in His offering. By this grace, which is unique to her name as a wife and mother, she is able to multiply the life and culture of God in the house. She is able to do this 'without a word', which means without the imposition of her own knowledge of good and evil. **1Pe 3:1**.

The Lord's strength is made perfect in her as she offers in this manner. She is able to stand up in the freedom and authority of her name, and to multiply the life that has come to her from the headship of Christ through her submission to her husband. The psalmist described such a woman as 'a fruitful vine in the very heart of her house'. **Psa 128:3**. Her motivation, as one who abides in Christ, is to reveal her husband and to multiply the culture of faith in her children, by being poured out on the sacrifice and service of their faith. **Php 2:17**. This is what it means to be 'a daughter of Sarah'. **1Pe 3:6**.

A wife's response

The grief that a woman experiences, when her initiatives within a family are treated with indifference by her husband, indicates that her end is still in herself. By this, we mean that who she is, and how she expresses herself, are based upon her own knowledge of good and evil. There is no doubt that this is a point of real pain and distress for her. At the point of pain, as a wife acknowledges that she is crucified with Christ, she is able to recognise, and to put off, the desire to cultivate life in her own image. Her confession is, 'It is no longer I who live!' **Gal 2:20**. The works of her self-righteousness are no longer the basis for the verification of her identity. Having been conformed to Christ's death, her end is no longer in herself. She now lives by Christ's life, and her end is in His obedience. **Gal 2:20. Php 2:8**.

Instead of striving for equality through the exertion of her natural strength and capacity, she humbles herself in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. She is able to receive the word and direction of the Lord in submission to her husband, even when the circumstances in her family remain less than ideal. **2Co 12:9-10**. This is the context of weakness in which she is able to obtain grace and adorn herself with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. **1Pe 3:3-4**. This is the unique portion of the divine nature that belongs to her name as a wife and mother in the house. Her faith, which she receives by hearing the word, is enabled by this capacity of love which is poured into her heart by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 5:5**. Her motivation is no longer to reveal herself and her own will but, rather, to reveal her husband and Christ in the context of the home.

An ongoing conversation

The apostle Paul directed husbands to love their wives in the same way that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. Christ gave Himself for the church so that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of the water by the word. He did this in order to present her to Himself as a holy bride without spot or blemish. **Eph 5:25-27**. Paul said that, because Christ loved in this manner, 'husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself'. **Eph 5:28**.

The washing of the water by the word is essential in a Christian marriage relationship so that a husband and wife may be presented to Christ as chaste and pure as part of the church. It involves an ongoing conversation, or discussion, based in the word that proclaims the culture of God's Covenant. This is the word that reveals the fallen, fleshly mechanisms that were fathered within mankind by Satan when the other law became part of our nature, and we were separated from the life of God. **Col 1:21-22**.

Christian couples, who are committed to the culture of marriage intended by God, will give attention to identifying and putting off the mechanisms of the Fall in their lives and relationship, and will pursue the restoration of the true culture of marriage through dialogue and devotional commitment to His word. Commitment to this cleansing and sanctifying activity is necessary in cultivating the divine nature in their children. The testimony of a Christian father or mother who has remained faithful to this process will be, 'Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me!' **Isa 8:18**.

The first man

The apostle Paul described Adam as ‘the *first man*’. **1Co 15:45**. Yahweh *Elohim* formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils ‘the breath of lives’. When the Son of God breathed the breath of life from the Father into the body of man, Adam became the first living soul. **Gen 2:7**. As a living soul, Adam was an eternal spirit, or identity, whose expression was dependent upon biological life. If his biological body expired, his spirit would exist forever, but he would have no life, meaning, he would have no capacity for the expression of his identity.

The multiplication of the identities of the sons of men was not possible until God created a helper comparable to Adam. **Gen 2:18**. The Lord God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He removed a rib from Adam and, with this rib, made woman to be a helper who was comparable to him. **Gen 2:21-22**. From Adam and Eve, through *procreation*, all the identities named by the Father, in the Son, would come into being. Note that an eternal spirit, or identity, is created through the biological process of procreation. Because every identity would come from Adam, he was, initially, the heir of the world and the head of the nations.

When God placed Adam in the garden of Eden, He said to him, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’ **Gen 2:16-17**. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they, and all the sons and daughters of men who would be born after them, were lost to God. *We all died in Adam*. **1Co 15:22**. Speaking of this death, the Lord said to Adam and, by implication, to all of his children, ‘For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.’ **Gen 3:19**.

Abraham replaced Adam

The Lord replaced Adam with Abraham, as the new head of the nations. Explaining this point, Paul wrote, 'And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.' **Gal 3:8-9.**

The Lord first preached the gospel to Abraham when He called him to leave his country, to depart from his family and from his father's house, to enter a land that the Lord would show him. **Gen 12:1.** With this call, the Lord promised a blessing to Abraham, saying, 'I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' **Gen 12:2-3.**

Because Abraham was to become the heir of the world, the prophet Isaiah said that the Lord called Abraham *alone*. **Isa 51:2.** In other words, the fatherhood of Abraham would not be based upon the principles of life that were established in the first man, Adam. He was to leave these behind in order to become the father of *a new humanity*. The same is true for us. The Lord comes and calls every person *alone*. Through the ministry of the gospel, He says to us, 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.' **2Co 6:17-18.**

The Lord replaced Adam with Abraham as the head of the nations when Melchizedek, whom Paul identified as Jesus Christ, brought out bread and wine, inviting Abraham to participate with Him in an *agape* meal. **Gen 14:18. Heb 7:1-3. Gen 14:19-20.**

Your exceedingly great reward

Paul said that Abraham became the heir of the world *through* the righteousness of faith. **Rom 4:13**. This righteousness was revealed when the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield [of faith], your exceedingly great reward.' **Gen 15:1**.

Abraham received faith to believe that Yahweh the Son would become his Son after the flesh. Furthermore, he believed that the life of the Son of God would become his life, and the life of his children, as an eternal inheritance. The Lord likened the children of Abraham – all the nations of the earth who were blessed in him – to the stars of heaven. They would be numerous, and they would be full of the light of life. **Heb 11:12**. Abraham's children would be the citizens of the new heavens and earth. **Gen 15:4-5**. Because Abraham believed this word of promise, Yahweh accounted it to him for righteousness. **Gen 15:6**.

These promises were made to Abraham and to his Seed. Further clarifying this point, Paul wrote, 'He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.' **Gal 3:16**.

Contrasting Jesus with the 'first man', Paul called Him '*the last Adam*', and described Him as 'a life-giving Spirit'. **1Co 15:45**. Jesus was not a Son of Adam, for He did not receive His identity through the process of procreation. Neither did He receive His identity from the Father when He was begotten as the Son of God. Christ's identity *preceded* His birth as the Son of God, as well as His conception as the Son of Man. This is a most significant point. The Son of Man's conception and birth occurred through an *entirely different process* from procreation. It was through incarnation, by the word of God the Father. **Joh 1:14**.

The Word became flesh

The Son of God became Abraham's Son in the flesh, or 'Seed', through incarnation, when Mary, who was the direct descendant of Abraham through King David, conceived and gave birth to Jesus. **Luk 1:26-32.**

The physical body of Jesus was formed in the womb of the virgin Mary once the Holy Spirit came upon her, and the power of the Father, who is the source of the word, overshadowed her. **Luk 1:35. Mat 1:20.** The word, as the seed of God that enabled Yahweh the Son to be born as the Son of God, is the same word that formed His physical body. **Heb 1:5.** The seed of God, in conjunction with the egg of Mary, gave to Christ His human body. **Joh 1:14.** When He was born, He was the natural Seed of Abraham, and the Son of God the Father.

When Jesus was born, He who was the express image of the word of the Father as the Son of God, *had become flesh* and dwelt among us. **Php 2:7. Joh 1:14.** This is a most amazing and foundational truth of the Scriptures. The *zoe*-life that was in His Spirit *became part of His fleshly body*. He was a unique Man. Christ was more than an incarnation; *He was a new creation*. Through new creation, the resurrection life of God had become flesh. This is why Jesus said, '*I am* the resurrection and the life', even before He had been raised from the dead following His offering on the cross. **Joh 11:25.**

In contrast to Adam, the life of Christ's identity was not sourced from His biological body. His life was the divine nature from the Father. We note the testimony of Jesus, 'For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgement also, because He is the Son of Man [by incarnation]'. **Joh 5:26-27.**

FURTHER STUDY JOHN 1

The mortal body of Christ

While on earth, Jesus participated in biological life. His mortal body was nourished by food and by 'the principle of the belly'. **1Co 6:13**. However, His testimony was, 'Man shall not live by bread *alone*, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' Mat 4:4. Jesus ate physical bread to sustain His mortal body, but His *life*, or expression, as the Son of God, was from the word of the Father. **Joh 4:32,34**.

Christ was not born into sin; or with 'another law' in His heart. For this reason, He was *not* under the curse of time and chance; nor was He under the condemnation of death. He was *not* dying in Adam! In fact, if Christ had not been made an offering for sin, He would not have died at all, in the likeness of sinful flesh! For example, Jesus said, '*No-one takes My life from Me*, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.' **Joh 10:18**. Even when the Jews sought to kill Jesus, they were unable to lay a hand on Him until He laid down His life in obedience to the Father! **Joh 8:59. Joh 10:39. Php 2:8**.

The Son of Man joined us in our death when the Father made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. **2Co 5:21**. Jesus Christ became sin when the Father made Adam, and all who proceeded from him through natural birth, to be members of the body of Christ. **Rom 5:14. 1Co 15:22,45**. Through His offering as the Son of Man, and Head over all flesh, Christ was being progressively cursed and cut off from God. Significantly, the whole of the old creation, including all the sons and daughters of Adam, were going out with Him into the sea of God's forgetfulness.

Perfection of exanastasis

As His physical blood was shed through the wounds that He suffered, Christ was being made alive from the death of sin as a *corporate* New Creation. **Heb 13:20**. He was pioneering the pathway of every person's salvation, and He was fulfilling the works of their sonship. **Heb 5:8. Isa 26:12**. Furthermore, the resurrection life in Christ's blood was being multiplied and given to be the life of those who would receive His word and accept their participation in the fellowship of His offering. **1Jn 5:12**.

When the Son of Man's offering journey was complete, *exanastasis* had attained a full perfection and expression in Him. **Joh 19:30**. His Spirit had gone to the Father, yet His physical body remained on earth, where it lay for three days and three nights in a tomb. The reason why Christ's body did not decay during this time was because the *exanastasis* life of the Father had *already* been perfected in His physical body through His offering on the cross. On the day of resurrection, three days and three nights following His death, His body did not need to be changed into a spiritual body. It had already become spiritual through the power of *exanastasis*. When He returned to His body, it was as spiritual as it was material.

Through His offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary, Jesus brought an end to 'the belly' as being the principle of life for mankind. **1Co 6:13**. His physical body was raised to immortality. It is now a spiritual body that is sustained by a different principle; He now lives only by the power of an endless life. **Heb 7:15-16**. This reveals *anastasis* in an immortal body. He is still able to eat and drink natural food; however, His body is no longer mortal and sustained by the principle of biological life. **Luk 24:41-43**.

Receiving the adoption

Paul called the promise of the resurrection to immortality, 'the adoption'. Abraham received the adoption when the Lord said to him, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." **Gen 15:5**. In response to Abraham's query regarding how he would inherit immortality, the Lord invited Abraham to join, in type, the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. **Gen 15:9-18**. The promise of the adoption belongs to Abraham and his natural descendants, as well as to those who walk according to the faith that he had while uncircumcised. **Rom 9:3-4. Rom 4:11-12.**

In Adam, the whole world is in bondage to Satan through the fear of death. However, when we are born of the Spirit as sons of God, we are delivered from bondage to the fear of death. We receive the spirit of adoption, by which we cry out, 'Abba, Father', as sons of God. **Rom 8:14-15**. Paul also referred to the spirit of adoption as 'the spirit of faith', by which a person believes for participation in the process through which the Father raised up Jesus from the death of our sin. **2Co 4:13-14.**

As we live by the faith of the Son of God, the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit, or identity, that we are sons of God and joint heirs with Christ as we suffer with Him in the fellowship of His offering. **Rom 8:16-17**. Paul noted that those who are born of God maintain a daily participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ, awaiting the adoption, which he specifically described as the redemption of their body. **Rom 8:23**. Paul was referring to the body that a son of God receives in the resurrection.

Many mansions

How do we receive the adoption? The answer is simple: in the same way that Abraham did – through fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. We join this fellowship when we receive the gospel that was preached to Abraham. Notably, just prior to the commencement of His offering journey, Jesus said to His disciples, *'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.'* **Joh 14:1-2**. This was the *same* message that Christ, the Word, proclaimed to Abraham when He said to him, *'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.'* **Gen 15:1**.

The 'mansions' of which Jesus spoke are resurrection bodies, in Him. They are the exceedingly great reward of those who live by the faith of the Son of God. **Gal 2:20**. Paul, similarly, used the imagery of 'dwelling places' to explain the distinction between the body that we receive in Adam, and our new creation body, which we obtain in Christ, writing, *'For we know that if our earthly house, this tent [our mortal body which is from the dust], is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens [a mansion Christ has prepared for us]'*. **2Co 5:1**.

Paul continued, *'For in this we groan [or travail in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings], earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.'* **2Co 5:2-5**.

Psalm 139

Although we have identity through Adam, we can only become sons of God who are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem in this age, and citizens of the new heavens and earth, through fellowship in Christ's offering and sufferings. King David summarised this reality in **Psalm 139**. Speaking of his natural birth as a living soul, David testified, 'For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Your works, and that *my soul knows very well.*' **Psa 139:13-14**.

David then testified, 'My frame was not hidden from You, *when I was made in secret, and skilfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.* Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.' **Psa 139:15-16**. We note that David was making a big distinction between his mother's womb and the lowest parts of the earth! In this portion of Psalm 139, he was now speaking about the offering of Christ on the cross. This was when Christ descended to the lowest parts of the earth. Referring to the ascending and descending journey of Christ, Paul explained, 'Now this, "He ascended" – what does it mean but that He also first descended *into the lowest parts of the earth?*' **Eph 4:9**.

Through His offering journey, Christ had prepared a 'mansion', or the substance of David's heavenly body. **Joh 14:2**. Furthermore, He had finished the works of sonship that belonged to his name as a son of God. These works were written in the Lamb's Book of Life. This is a most remarkable point! The resurrection body of David, and indeed of every son of God, will be of the substance of Christ's resurrection body. This is how Christ raises up children to Abraham from the dust! **Luk 3:8**.

The testimony of a pilgrim

The apostle John testified that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day when he heard a voice like the sound of a trumpet, *behind him*. **Rev 1:10**. He *turned to see* the voice that spoke with him. **Rev 1:12**. This was a point of repentance for John, as he turned from his own point of focus and understanding, to receive what the Lord was illuminating to him, 'today'. **Heb 3:7-8**. John was able to 'see the word' that spoke to him. Significantly, the voice that he 'saw' was Christ ministering as High Priest in the midst of seven golden lampstands.

This illumination caused John to fall at the feet of Christ, as though he was dead. **Rev 1:17**. Evidently, John was bankrupt in spirit! **Mat 5:3**. The Son of Man laid His right hand on John. This was the hand that held the seven stars, which are the *aggelos presbyteries* of the seven lampstand churches. **Rev 1:16,20**. Through the ministry of His right hand, Christ said to John, '*Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*' **Rev 1:17-18**. Not only did John receive illumination, but he also received faith for his unique participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering, as part of the *aggelos*.

John's experience will be the same for every presbyter, and indeed for every believer who remains committed to walking in the steps of the faith of Abraham. These steps are a daily fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. This is the implication of participating in a worthy manner in the agape meal that belongs to the Lord.

A voice behind us

The prophet Isaiah declared, 'Though the Lord gives you the bread of *adversity* and the water of *affliction*, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but *your eyes shall see your teachers*. Your ears shall *hear a word behind you*, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.' **Isa 30:20-21**.

As we turn in repentance each day, we are obtaining the blessing that belongs to the poor in spirit. That is, we are the children of Abraham and citizens of the kingdom of heaven. **Mat 5:3**. We are able to walk in the illumination that Christ is granting to us through the ministry of His word, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. **Psa 119:105**.

When we walk in this manner, the fruit of what we are now becoming is the result of repentance, as we turn from what we previously thought was real, and to which we were committed, to obey what we are hearing from the Lord. This leaves us feeling bankrupt in in spirit. However, we are thankful for our deliverance from our own way, so that we are not hindered in our pilgrimage on the pathway of sonship that Christ has pioneered for us.

In this regard, we have no confidence in our flesh. **Php 3:3**. Rather, our confidence is in the Lord, who continues to meet us each morning with mercies new so that, in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, we might be delivered from the power of darkness. **Lam 3:22-23**. Like the prophet Hosea, we confess, 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.' **Hos 6:3**.



Restoring
my Soul