

Restoring my Soul

A five day devotional guide

MAY 2017

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Restoring My Soul – No. 115 – May 2017

ISSN: 2201-7542

Published by RFI Publishing

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Abba! Father!

When the Father sends forth the Spirit of the Son into the heart of a believer, Christ becomes their life. The Spirit of the Son cries out within them, 'Abba! Father!' Christ is speaking *in them* to the Father. He is also speaking *to them* and illuminating them regarding their sonship. Because a son of God has received the Spirit of Christ, they are able to express their joyous conviction that God is their Father. Every son of God should receive this illumination and know this conviction in their life.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul reiterated that a son of God is a person who has received the Spirit of Christ. He then encouraged believers by writing, 'You did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the *spirit of adoption* by whom we cry out, "Abba! Father!"' Paul's statement is notable because a person receives the adoption before they are born of the Spirit. They are adopted into the Father's house when they become bankrupt in spirit and receive the faith of God to believe for sonship. With this faith, they personally cry out to the Father to make them a son of God.

In light of Paul's encouragement, we recognise that the cry, 'Abba! Father!', as an adopted son, does not cease once a person has received the inheritance of the divine nature. Instead, because they are a son and belong to Christ, they are personally able to express their acknowledgement of the fatherhood of God in their life. In doing so, they acknowledge that they have been set free from their bondage to sin and have received the faith of the Son that enables them to confidently enter into all that God has prepared for them as His son. While Christ cries out, 'Abba! Father!' within them, they are also personally able to cry out, 'Abba! Father!', in Christ.

References:

Rom 8:9, 14 2Pe 1:4
Eph 1:5 Luk 4:18
Tit 2:14 1Co 2:9

Further Study:

Galatians 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 1

Invoking the name of the Lord

Having been born of the Spirit, a newborn son of God will say, 'What must I do to be saved?' This demonstrates that, as one who is born of God, they are already seeking fellowship. The motivation to fellowship is characteristic of God's nature. True elders will call them to be baptised into the fellowship of the offering of Christ, and also into the fellowship of Yahweh's name as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through baptism, they are joined to the fellowship and offering from which they have been receiving illumination as they have looked into the marred face of Jesus.

In the waters of baptism, elders invoke the name of the Lord *upon the believer*. They do this by laying their hands upon them and baptising them into Christ. At the same time, the new believer is calling His name *upon themselves*. Paul said that a person *clothes themselves* with Christ when they are baptised. This is their confession, and it joins them to the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. They rise to walk in newness of life. Christ's offering delivers them from their propensity to sin, and they receive the life that He made available through the shedding of His blood. It is transferred to them and becomes their life.

Both elements of invocation are necessary. A person cannot baptise themselves. Moreover, a person has not been baptised into Christ if they do not possess the faith to join the offering of Christ. For this reason, when a person is being baptised, it would be appropriate to say that it is upon their faith as a believer that they are being baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their faith for baptism is their willingness to be joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

References:

Act 2:37, 41
Act 16:30
Gal 3:27
Act 8:12

Further Study:

Acts 9

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 2

The activation of a new name

A believer receives their new name as a son of God when they are born again by the incorruptible seed of the Father's word. The name that is invoked upon them when they are baptised is no different from the name they received by new birth. What, then, is the point of being baptised into the name? Through baptism into the Lord Jesus Christ, the believer's name is activated and empowered by the love of God as they are joined to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. This is the context for their sanctification and the expression of their sonship, the outcome of which is eternal life. They are joined to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, which the Scripture calls 'the circumcision of Christ', so that His life is transferred to them by offering.

We recall from the account of Abraham's life that he received his new name from Yahweh before he received circumcision as the sign of the covenant. The mandate to fulfil the will of God in their flesh and to bring forth the promised seed, was resident in the new names that were given to Abraham and Sarah. However, the grace to fulfil this mandate was not *activated* until Abraham joined the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ in his flesh, and joined his wife to the fellowship of the cross of Christ in their marriage. In this fellowship, the love of God was given to them. The love of God cast out all their anxieties and fears concerning their own inadequacies, and made the grace of life available to them in their marriage. The divine power, given to Abraham and Sarah by the love of God, was manifest in the weakness of their mortality as resurrection power. Even though they had no physical capacity to conceive a child in their old age, they were quickened in their mortality, and the promised seed was brought forth.

References:

Joh 17:26

Rom 4:19

Rom 6:22

Heb 11:11-12

1Jn 4:18

Further Study:

Genesis 17

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 3

Changing from glory to glory

The life of Jesus is an immortal treasure. Once this treasure is shone into our heart, it also resides in our physical, mortal body. This life has power in it. It joins us to the offering and sufferings of Christ, giving us the capacity to endure in the fellowship of His sufferings and to demonstrate the dying of Jesus in our mortal body. This life is also resurrection life. It gives us power to overcome the difficulties that we face in our mortality. Moreover, the life of Jesus enables us to live our lives as sons of God in this world. Christ is our life. We do not become the Person of Christ; rather, He shares His life with us.

Christ is also the image of our sonship. The apostle John declared this when he wrote, 'Beloved, now we are the sons of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that *when He is revealed, we shall be like Him*, for we shall *see Him* as He is'. As a person continues to turn their face to Christ, they are able to receive the light of His word that is spoken by the faithful messengers who are in His hand. By this means, the glory of their sonship will be progressively obtained. Paul was explaining this when he wrote, 'We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord'.

When a person is born again of the seed of the divine nature, the substance of their new creation sonship has been conceived within their being. However, they are not brought forth to full stature as a son of God through this initial birthing action. Rather, there is a process of gestation and formation that brings a Christian to a firstfruits expression.

References:

1Jn 3:2
2Co 3:18
Php 3:10

2Co 13:4
Gal 4:19

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 4

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 4

Seek first His kingdom

Once a person has been born again, their new creation sonship should take priority over the priorities and goals of their natural humanity. It was for this reason that Jesus said, 'Do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But *seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*, and all these things shall be added to you.'

Regarding the distinction between flesh and Spirit, Paul explained that 'you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you'. This is true, even though, at times, the fears and priorities that drive our fallen, carnal motivations seem to overwhelm us. We know that it was the Spirit of the Father and the Holy Spirit who raised Christ from the dead. As we are joined to Christ's death, the Spirit of God will give life to our mortal, physical bodies because we are now sons of God.

Through the process of new birth, the reborn spirit of a person receives some new capacities. These capacities are not available to a person who is born only of flesh, even if they are trying to be religious and spiritual. The born-again Christian possesses the Spirit of God and the life of God. Having received the Spirit and life of God, they have the capacity to see and perceive the things that are spiritual. They have received the treasure of God's life in their mortal body. Consequently, in the midst of suffering, they are not destroyed. Instead, through suffering, the deeds of the flesh are being put to death, and they are able to bear the fruits of the Spirit, which include 'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control'.

References:

Rom 8:9-11

1Co 2:14

2Co 4:3-4, 8-10

Gal 5:22-24

Further Study:

Matthew 6

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 5

Children born in covenant houses

In recent years, the Holy Spirit has been restoring to us the wonderful truth that children who are born into covenant households are born of the Spirit in the womb of their mothers. This means that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son come to dwell within them following their conception. In this way, they have inherited the blessing of Abraham. The prophet Isaiah declared, 'They are the children whom the Lord has blessed'.

However, it is important to recognise that the natural human identity that is formed within the womb of a believing mother through procreation is *not* the seed of new creation sonship. Christ was the only Person who was conceived in the flesh with His identity as the new creation Son. This is because Christ's identity was not from the fatherhood of Adam. He already possessed His own identity, and was birthed in the womb of Mary by the word of the Father. Unlike us, Christ did not need to be born a second time to become a spiritual son of God. Moreover, there was no other law within Him that would be susceptible to the manipulations of the law of sin that reside within the fallen, human heart.

Why do the sons and daughters of men need to be born a second time? It is because, as Paul explained, 'The spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual'. Every person is first conceived as a natural identity. This natural identity is then born again in the womb of a believing mother by the word of God the Father. When Jesus said to Nicodemus, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit', He was drawing attention to the distinction between these two dimensions of life.

References:

Isa 61:9

1Co 15:46

Joh 3:6

Isa 65:23

Isa 44:3

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Luke 1

Proverbs 8

Flesh and Spirit

Jesus said to Nicodemus, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh'. The identity of a person is conceived through the natural process of procreation. The spirit and soul of a new child who has been conceived in the womb of a woman, is clothed with a biological body. However, at this point, they have not received anything of God, from above. Their body, soul and spirit come from their natural father and mother. This is what it means to be born of the flesh.

A child who is conceived in a covenant house is then *adopted* by the Father as one of His sons. This occurs immediately following their conception. On account of the faith of at least one of their parents, the Father brings the child into the *position* of a son within His house. As an adopted son in the Father's house, they are entitled to an inheritance. This inheritance is all the wealth that belongs to the Father. It is the divine nature, which is also described as 'the riches of His glory'.

The Father sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in the heart of the child, and they begin to receive the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. This enables their heart to receive the seed of God's word from the Father so that their natural identity is *born again* in the womb. When the word of their name as a son of God is planted in their heart, they are born from above as a spiritual son of God. God has become the Father of their spirit. The Father also sends forth the Spirit of His Son into their heart. At this point, they have been born of water and the Spirit. They have become a new creation who is 'of God'.

References:

Joh 3:5-6

Jer 1:5

Isa 49:1

Gal 1:15-16

Luk 1:15

Eph 3:14-15

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 7

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 9

Grace in a New Covenant household

Within a New Covenant household, Christian parents, under the headship of Christ, receive grace from the Lord for the nurture and admonition of their children. The nurture and admonition of the Lord addresses both the regeneration of their child's 'inner man' and the cultivation of their new creation sonship. The grace that parents receive from the Lord is also for the purpose of helping their children to put off 'the old man'. That is, the children receive the circumcision of Christ through the discipline of their parents to deliver them of the other law that is within them.

Because they come from the seed of Adam, children inherit the natural dispositions that belong to their parents. These physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual dispositions have been impacted upon by the fall of mankind. The washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit addresses the inevitable dysfunctions associated with these dimensions of their being. For the whole of their lives, until the day of resurrection when they receive an immortal body, the process of regeneration is to be at work in their mortal body.

The washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, which children receive through the discipline and instruction of their parents, also addresses the natural identity of the child. This includes the development of their child's abilities that are associated with their identity. It is in relation to these abilities that grace is given to them by God as 'talents'. Through regeneration and renewing, the child is becoming aware of themselves, and is able to clearly recognise and receive the kingdom of God. As they grow, they will begin to present themselves and their capacities for service in the house of the Lord.

References:

Eph 3:16 Mat 25:15
Eph 6:4 1Co 6:11
Tit 3:5-6

Further Study: Hebrews 12

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 10

The priority of sonship

The attention of parents to the natural identity of the child must be in harmony with the cultivation of the child's new creation sonship. That is, Christian parents must accept that when their child was born from above in the womb of the mother, the fatherhood of God took priority over their fatherhood and motherhood of the child. They acknowledge this reality by training their children to seek the Father in the secret place, to receive and love the word of God, and to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. By this means, the child is growing up in their sonship and becoming a viable and functioning member of the body of Christ.

Practically, parents will personally be seeking God for grace to instruct and discipline their children in the way of sonship. Furthermore, they will prioritise the culture and activities of the house of God over their own initiatives to develop the child's natural interests and capacities. Prioritising their own fatherhood and motherhood over the fatherhood of God, is likely to orientate the child towards 'the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things'. Jesus likened these orientations to thorns that grow up in a person's life, which choke the word within them so that it is unfruitful in their life.

As they grow and mature, children who have been born with the divine nature must, themselves, choose the sonship that was gifted to them on account of the faith of their parents. In order to fully possess the blessing of sonship that is rightfully theirs, they must prioritise their sonship over the priorities and goals of a fallen humanity. In this way, they are standing up in their own sonship and getting about their heavenly Father's business.

References:

Mat 6:6, 33
Joh 14:23
Mar 4:18-19

Further Study:**Daily Proverb:**

1 John 2

Proverbs 11

A veil upon the heart

In the introduction to his Gospel, the apostle John noted that Jesus was in the world, and the world did not know Him. This was because the god of this age had blinded their eyes. Jesus came to His own – the Jews – and even they did not receive Him. However, as many as did receive Him, ‘to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God’.

Although the light from Christ’s marred face now shines on every person, not all receive the light. Paul explained that the reason for this is because the gospel is veiled ‘to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them’.

Even after a person has been illuminated by the gospel of the glory of Christ, they can place a veil back over their heart. They do this when they stop receiving the word of God that is preached by Christ’s messengers. This veil upon their heart refers to anything that substitutes for the illumination that comes from the face of Christ, by the Holy Spirit. It represents a person’s unwillingness to turn their face to the Lord and to continue to walk in the light of life that is shining upon them through the preaching of graced messengers. In essence, the veil is a person’s desire to enhance or perfect themselves by pursuing good Christian principles, instead of continuing in the fellowship of Christ’s offering, through which the divine nature is formed within them.

References:

Joh 1:10-12 Mat 11:25
Tit 2:11 1Co 1:18
2Co 4:3-4

Further Study:

2 Corinthians 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 12

The evidence of a veil

The apostle Paul admonished the Christians in Galatia for seeking to be made perfect through the efforts of their flesh. He noted that they were returning to the way of life from which they had been delivered when they had been born from above. They were setting aside the grace of God and seeking, instead, to be made righteous by keeping the law through their natural capacities. There was nothing wrong with the light that was shining on them through Paul's preaching, and neither was there anything wrong with their spiritual eyes. Their problem was a veil that lay over their heart, which was causing them to fall away from the truth.

What will be the indication that a veil lies over the heart of a believer? The first indication will be their inability to understand the word of God and its implications for their life. This is because they have received no illumination. The word is not in their mouth, nor in their heart, as an expression of personal faith. Consequently, they are unable to know how and where to walk as a son of God. Furthermore, because of the pressures of life, they may become fearful, easily frustrated, reactive, envious, divisive, or beset by sin. Paul described these responses as 'the deeds of the flesh'. They are the fruit of pursuing righteousness through one's own efforts, instead of walking by the Spirit in the light that the word of God provides.

A person can receive illumination *if they turn to the Lord*. God is shining upon them as His word is being proclaimed to them. However, they must turn to Him to receive the light. Paul said that 'when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away'.

References:

Gal 3:3 2Co 3:16
Gal 2:21 Isa 29:18
Rom 10:8

Further Study:

Galatians 5

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 15

The veil of intellectualism

A significant veil that has affected Christians for the whole of the church age, is the problem of *intellectualism*. Intellectualism, when engaging with the word of God, presumes that a person can find enlightenment through the pursuit of knowledge. This is, in fact, the basis of the philosophies and religions of the world. Their many adherents claim that their own system of knowledge is the truth. However, Jesus was clear that this is a broad way that only leads to destruction.

Scientific, linguistic principles, upon which these systems of knowledge are based, are not sourced from the Spirit of God. Rather, the science of interpretation finds its origin in the speculations of the human mind. The mind has the capacity for speculation. This is called in Scripture, 'The law of my mind'. The knowledge and thought systems of a person are only as sound as the source from which they come. A fallen person's spirit is in darkness. Consequently, their knowledge can only be collected through their natural senses. Truth, for these people, is based on their own perspective. To them, the importance of truth is in understanding how it will affect their lives.

It is evident that a person has received revelation, or insight, when they confess that 'truth' is what God says it is. The apostle John declared, 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld [or were able to see] His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth'. The 'truth' is referring to the Holy Spirit. As John wrote in his first letter, 'It is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth'. Jesus said that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.

References:

Mat 7:13

1Jn 5:6

Rom 7:23

Joh 16:13

Joh 1:14

Further Study:

Colossians 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 16

Revelation or linguistic interpretation

Jesus declared that the Holy Spirit has been sent to guide us into all truth. It is the Holy Spirit who illuminates the written Scriptures. Nevertheless, a prominent theological educator still claimed that no-one has the right to say, 'The Spirit has shown me thus and so'. He asserted that this is because the only true interpretation of the Scriptures is the linguistic meaning of the words. His assertions imply that a believer does not possess the capacity to discern between the Holy Spirit and a spirit of delusion, unless they are skilled in the science of interpretation. To say this insults the Spirit of grace, and places the presumptions of science above the wisdom of God.

The Spirit of God is the source of the Scriptures, for the Spirit is the Truth itself. John taught that it is possible to test whether a spirit is true or not. He wrote, 'Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.'

Many theologians and philosophers deny that Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh of believers by revelation. We know that their hermeneutics are false, because they are not from the Spirit of truth. We learn this from the Scriptures. This is because the Spirit and the word of God are in agreement. The Scriptures themselves tell us that the Spirit is the revelator and guide into all truth, and that the Spirit gives us understanding in relation to what is written.

References:

Joh 16:13
1Jn 5:6
1Jn 4:1-3

Joh 7:17
2Pe 1:21
Mar 7:6

Further Study:

2 Timothy 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 17

Knowing Him

The apostle Paul taught that 'a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised'. The Spirit of revelation goes beyond the deductive capacities of the human mind, which analyses the information that it receives through the agency of the five senses. The capacity for human reasoning cannot be the final authority or check on revelation. When Christ, the Word, became flesh, people were able to receive of His fullness (grace and truth) and become a spiritual new creation like Him. Moreover, they could be joined to His administration, through which His grace is ministered to others by the Spirit.

The writers of the New Testament teach that it is not what a person believes that saves them but, rather, *knowing Him* in whom they have believed. As He prayed to the Father prior to His passion, Jesus said, 'And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent'. The apostle Paul proclaimed this same truth. He explained that the purpose and grace of God has been revealed by the appearing of Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Paul testified that it was for this reason that he suffered many things. Yet, he was not ashamed of the gospel, nor of his fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, for he *knew* the One in whom he believed. Likewise, the apostle John concluded his first epistle, writing, 'And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.'

References:

1Co 2:14 Joh 1:14
Joh 17:3 1Jn 4:6
2Ti 1:10-12

Further Study:

1 John 5

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 18

Do not say in your heart

In his letter to the Romans, Paul summarised two common and significant alternatives to turning our face to Christ. He wrote, 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)'. Why would a believer say these things in their heart?

A person in whom the seed of the Father has germinated will begin to experience suffering 'because of the word'. When a person receives the word of the gospel of sonship and is born of God, they are joined to the fellowship of Christ's travail. It is through His travail that Christ is formed in their life. Because of the suffering associated with this travail, the new believer may become weary, and even depressed. Under the pressures that they are experiencing, they may be tempted to seek an *alternative* way to the narrow and difficult pathway of sonship that Christ has pioneered for them. This is what it means to draw back in unbelief. Paul reminded his readers of the words of Jesus, who said, 'But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him'.

A person who draws back from the travail and process through which Christ is being formed within them, will have no access to the life of Christ that is available in the fellowship of His sufferings. Furthermore, they will begin to isolate themselves from their brethren in the body of Christ. However, a believer who has received the faith of the Son will testify that '*we are not of those who draw back to perdition [destruction], but of those who believe to the saving of the soul*'. As sons of God receive the word of faith that is preached to them, they are illuminated by the Spirit. The word, then, is in their mouth and in their heart.

References:

Rom 10:6-10
Mat 13:21
Gal 4:9

Further Study:

Hebrews 10

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 19

Who will ascend and descend

A person who asks, 'Who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above)', is seeking an alternative to the pathway of sonship. They want a clergy-style leader to 'ascend into heaven' on their behalf and bring Christ down to them through doctrinal prescription or patriarchy. In return for their allegiance to the leader and their ministry, the believer assumes that they will be acceptable to God. Their loyalty to the leader becomes a substitute for their own accountability to live as a son of God and to be joined to the fellowship of the Father and the Son.

The outcome of receiving, believing and obeying the word of God should be accountable living. A son of God who lives by the proceeding word that is proclaimed by graced messengers will be illuminated regarding the implications of the word for their life. Furthermore, they will be committed to a fellowship in one Spirit with the Lord and their brethren. Only the word that proceeds as light from a functioning presbytery is able to join a believer to the fellowship of the Father and the Son. The word of God that brings illumination does not proceed from independent leadership figures.

A person who asks, 'Who will descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)', is seeking to be delivered from their suffering, from their weakness, and from their condemnation, through a miraculous ministry of the Spirit of God. It is clear that they have no faith for participation in the sufferings of Christ. They do not understand that the Spirit has been given to them to help them to join the travail of Christ, through which they are brought to glory as a son of God. In contrast to this, a son of God who is continually receiving illumination from the word that is preached to them, will be content in every circumstance of life.

References:

Rom 10:6-8
1Jn 1:1-3
Php 4:11

Rom 8:35-37
Heb 5:8

Further Study:

Philippians 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 22

The road to Emmaus

The interaction of Jesus with Cleopas and his friend on the road to Emmaus, provides helpful instruction regarding the way of illumination. These two men were travelling away from Jerusalem following Christ's crucifixion. As they walked, they were discussing the events that had just taken place. Jesus approached them and began to travel with them; however, their eyes were prevented from recognising Him. They were sad, even depressed, because they viewed Christ's crucifixion as the disappointment of their hope. They said to Jesus, 'The chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.'

The inability of Cleopas and his friend to see the risen Son of God, demonstrated that a veil lay over their hearts. This veil represented their own expectations regarding the ministry of Christ, and their attempts together, to make sense of, or rationalise, what had happened. In other words, they had their own gospel concerning the work of the Messiah. The impact of this veil upon them was that their hope had been deferred and their hearts were becoming sick with depression. Furthermore, they were unable to perceive that which was spiritual, namely Jesus.

Jesus noted their condition and said to them, 'Foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' Then, beginning with Moses and the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in the Scriptures. The impact of Jesus' explanation was that their hearts burned within them. This was the evidence that their minds were being opened to perceive something beyond their own comprehension, or opinions, regarding the meaning of the Scriptures. This is amazing, yet they were still unable to recognise Jesus.

References:

Pro 13:12
Joh 21:4
Act 3:22

Joh 5:39
Isa 50:6

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Luke 24

Proverbs 23

Illumination in communion

When Jesus talked to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, their hearts burned within them as they began to understand the Scriptures. However, it wasn't until Jesus shared the communion meal with them that their eyes were opened and they were able to behold who Jesus was. They immediately recognised 'the Lord' when He took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. Christ was ministering to them as Melchizedek, the Priest of God Most High. He was made known to them as He ministered His life to them in the elements of the communion.

The way of illumination is the same for us. Our hearts will burn within us as we receive the word that is ministered by graced messengers. However, this should lead us to the communion, where we eat and drink in faith for participation in the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we partake of His life, we are illuminated concerning our sonship. We know that we are sons of God because we know Christ and the Father who sent Him. Moreover, the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are sons of God. This is the assurance of eternal life.

There is a travail and fight of affliction that results from illumination. As Paul observed, 'After you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings'. This travail joins us to the sufferings that belong to Christ's offering, so that the divine nature can be formed within us. Paul explained this when he wrote that we are 'heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, *if indeed we suffer with Him* [in order] that we may also be glorified with Him'. This is what it means for the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to be a participation, or fellowship.

References:

Luk 24:30-31 1Jn 5:11-13
Joh 17:3 Heb 10:32
Rom 8:16-17

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 10

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 24

The travail of prayer

The Holy Spirit enables us to participate in the prayer meeting of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through this fellowship of prayer, and our ongoing participation in the sufferings that belong to Christ's offering, all things are working together for our good. We are able to see and fulfil the purpose of the Lord for our life as we go through the valley of suffering and death. Like King David, we do not fear evil in these times.

The earth is full of pain and suffering because it has been made subject to the conditions of time and chance. A person who has been born of the Spirit and then baptised into Christ, is no longer subject to time and chance. They still experience the groanings that result from suffering. However, because they have received the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit, their groanings are no longer an expression of hopelessness, pain and despair. It is the expression of a son of God who is joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering. Having been joined to the offering of Christ, sons of God recognise that their sufferings are 'momentary and light afflictions'. These sufferings are working for them an eternal weight of glory.

The Spirit helps us by making our groanings a prayer. They become an intercession for us to the Son - an intercession that is too deep for words. The Son Himself hears our prayer as He searches our heart. Through His own intercession as our High Priest, He then articulates our needs to the Father. Most often, in our distress, we don't know how to pray. However, the outcome of the Spirit and the Son's intercession is that everything we experience each day is contained within its limits by the Father, and is according to His will for our lives. All things, therefore, are working together for our good as sons of God.

References:

Psa 23:4 Psa 88:1-3
Ecc 9:11 Luk 22:44
2Co 4:17 2Co 5:2

Further Study:

Romans 8

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 25

Not drawing back

It is extraordinary to consider that a person who has been born from above, could turn and fall away from the high calling of sonship. However, the apostle Paul lamented that, by the end of his ministry, this very thing had happened in the churches throughout Asia. He said to Timothy that ‘*all* who are in Asia turned away from me’. Although, initially, they had all been born of the Spirit as new creation sons of God, they had turned away from the messenger and his message.

Why did these churches fall away? It was because they began to believe a gospel other than the one that Paul had delivered to them. This alternative gospel was not the gospel of sonship. The Galatian church epitomised this decline. Paul admonished the Christians in Galatia for seeking to be perfected through fleshly principles, rather than by continuing to live and walk in the Spirit. Tellingly, their affections for Paul had waned, and they had begun to withdraw from the ‘first love’ fellowship that he had established with them.

Paul also needed to call the Christians in Corinth back to the simplicity and purity of fellowship that is in Christ. Their departure from the gospel of sonship was evident in their cultural degeneration. Paul noted the strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances, impurity, immorality and sensuality that were among them. And yet, because they came behind in no gift, they expected Paul to demonstrate his authority to speak to them through the manifestation of signs. However, Paul explained that he was speaking to them *in Christ*. As he came in the weakness of Christ, the life and power of God was effective toward them. He challenged them to prove that Christ was in them by joining and continuing in the fellowship of Christ’s offering with him.

References:

2Ti 1:15

2Co 11:3-4

2Co 13:3-5

1Co 1:7

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 12

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 26