



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

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NOVEMBER 2018

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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November 2018

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The source of all life

God (Elohim) the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are three Persons who are, and who possess together, one Spirit and one life. They exist and express Themselves as one God, by offering. This is the nature of Their one life. They minister this life to one another, in love, through the fellowship of offering. Each Person in the Godhead lays down His life, according to His unique name, to reveal the other two. The other two lay down life, according to Their names, to reveal the one. As each One, in turn, reveals the Others, Their offering is so complete that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one. They are fully manifest as one God, called 'Yahweh'.

It is most important to understand that each Person does not have Their own life by which They can live independently from the Others. If this were so, Their end would be in Themselves. Any one of Them would cease to exist if They endeavoured to have life apart from the fellowship of Yahweh.

God is the source of all life. Through offering, Their life is multiplied and extended beyond Themselves, to creation, as a gift. As Paul explained, Yahweh God 'gives to all life, breath, and all things'; and, in Him, all 'live, move, and have [their] being'. **Act 17:25,28.**

God created man in His image and according to His likeness. **Gen 1:26.** Man's life and identity came from Him. However, Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because they desired to be the source of their own life and destiny. This pursuit only separated them from the fellowship of Yahweh. This is why Adam and Eve died in the day that they ate the fruit. **Gen 2:17.** They were not being punished by God. Rather, mankind's death was the inevitable consequence of Adam and Eve separating themselves from fellowship with God, who is the source of all life.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: JOB 38

Separation from God

When Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, mankind's disconnection from the fellowship and life of Yahweh became permanent. This is because the desire to be the source of their own life and destiny became the principle of their life. It became part of their identity, affecting their perception of themselves, and their fundamental motivations for life. Paul called this fallen principle within us, 'the other law'. **Rom 7:23**.

The other law is a delusion. Satan had deceived Eve into believing that she would be able to sustain her own life apart from God. He said to her, 'You surely will not die.' **Gen 3:4**. Moreover, he proposed that, by eating, Eve would become like God. Specifically, he said, 'God knows that in the day you eat of it [the fruit] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' **Gen 3:5**.

Satan is the evil one. **Luk 11:4. Joh 17:15**. He was seeking to plant this evil proposition within the spirit of man. When Adam and Eve gave heed to Satan's alternative word, the desire to be like God, and to have life apart from Him, was aroused within them. They ate the fruit to satisfy this desire. This is when Satan's evil was planted within them as another law. In this regard, we recall the words of Paul, who wrote, 'I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good'. **Rom 7:21**.

The other law motivates a person to self-centred identity projection. They endeavour to create and project an image of who they are, and how they would like to be viewed and received by others. Man does this because he inherently believes that he has the wisdom to create what is good, and to deal with what is evil, as one who has the capacity to distinguish between these elements of existence. This pursuit, however, only maintains man's disconnection from fellowship with God and His life.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: **GENESIS 3**

The law of life

The offering of God is the expression of love, because it involves laying one's life down to reveal another. In this regard, God's life is defined by His Law. God's Law is summed up in two commandments – love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind; and love your neighbour as yourself. **Mat 22:37 40.** Jesus said that if a person kept these commandments, they would live. **Luk 10:27.**

Adam and Eve desired to become like God through the use of His Law as the code of their life. However, once they were cut off from the offering of Yahweh, which is a fellowship of love that is expressed through giving, the Law no longer ministered life to them. Paul himself testified, saying, 'And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.' **Rom 7:10.**

The power of the Law, which is the capacity to love, does not reside in the spirit of man when he seeks to live independently from God. The power of the Law resides in the Spirit that God is. Paul called this 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus'. **Rom 8:2.** This law of life, which motivates love, is the only thing that can free us from the law of sin and death.

Jesus came into the world so that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. **Joh 10:10.** How do we come to receive His life? Jesus said, 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.' **Joh 6:53 54.** We 'eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood' by receiving and believing the word that He ministers to us at the communion gathering. **Joh 6:61 64.** This word grants to us access and faith for participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering. **Rom 10:17. 1Co 10:16.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY: ROMANS 8

In Him was life

Once we are connected to the offering of Christ, the life of God is made available to us. We attain to this life by knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection, by participating in the fellowship of His sufferings, and by being conformed to His death. By this means, we attain to the resurrection from the dead. This is exanastasis – resurrection ‘out from among the dead’, while we are still in a mortal body. **Php 3:10 16**. This attainment of resurrection life in our mortal bodies is a demonstration that we have been reconnected to the life of God through the offering of Christ. Christ’s offering has the capacity to deal with our sin and other law in a progressive way, as we walk together with Him through the experiences of life.

Referring to Jesus, the apostle John wrote, ‘In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.’ **Joh 1:4 5**. We recall that the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened to see their nakedness and shame when they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, when the word of God is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit anoints our eyes to see that life is in Christ, and that this life is the light of men.

The faith that comes with the word, by the Holy Spirit, enables us to see and lay hold of the life and destiny that God is giving to us in Christ. As we see and understand, we, in faith, return to Christ to eat of Him, as the Tree of Life; that is, we eat His flesh and drink His blood, which is the substance of His life. By this means, we are joined to the fellowship of His offering and, by offering transfer, His life becomes our life. We are able to live by the life of God. This means that we are able to live by offering in the fellowship of Yahweh. Of course, this is only possible in Christ.

Faith for fellowship

The gospel of sonship was proclaimed to Abraham and to the children of Israel, even before the Son of God had come in the flesh as the Son of Man. The apostle Paul wrote that '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**. Through the word of the Lord, Abraham received faith to believe and obey God. **Gen 15:1**. And, because of this, God accounted it to him for righteousness. **Gen 15:6. Gal 3:6**.

When Abraham made offering in obedience to the word of the Lord, he demonstrated that he believed God by faith. This was first evident through his obedient and committed response to God's command to sacrifice a three year-old heifer, a three year-old female goat, a three year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. **Gen 15:9**. Later, Abraham's faith was tested by God when he was called to sacrifice his son, Isaac, as a burnt offering to the Lord, on Mount Moriah. **Gen 22:2**. Figuratively, both of these offerings were a participation in the offering of Christ on the cross.

The gospel that Abraham received and believed was the same message that Moses declared to the children of Israel, who were 'the church in the wilderness'. **Act 7:38**. However, unlike Abraham, the children of Israel did not receive the faith of God in the word that was proclaimed to them. **Heb 4:2**. The implication of failing to obey God's word by faith was that the Holy Spirit would not allow that generation to enter the Lord's 'rest'. **Heb 3:7,11**. The Lord's rest refers to the kingdom of God that belongs to His children. It is the inheritance of the sons of God.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: HEBREWS 3

A great cloud of witnesses

The men and women of the Old Testament who received the word of the Lord lived by faith. Their faith was the substance of the sonship that they hoped for and that had been promised to Abraham. **Heb 11:1**. Having received the faith of God in His word, they had seen the promise of sonship from a distance. By faith, they believed God's word, and confessed that they were strangers and exiles on earth. Such a confession indicated that they were looking for a kingdom in which they would dwell as citizens of a heavenly city. **Heb 11:13 16**.

The substance of their faith was evident in their willingness to suffer with Christ. They could see that the promise of eternal sonship would be obtained through Christ's resurrection from the death of sin. **Heb 11:35**. For example, Paul recounted that Moses, by faith, 'refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward'. **Heb 11:24 26**.

The men and women who died in faith for the promises that were available in Christ were 'the cloud of witnesses' who came back from the death of sin with Him. **Heb 12:1**. Because we have this cloud of witnesses as an example of how we should live and walk as Christians, Paul said that we are to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who authored the pathway of our salvation from the death of sin. **Heb 12:2**. In other words, Paul was exhorting us to journey with Christ on this pathway, in order that we progressively lay hold of the promise of sonship, for which the Old Covenant men and women died in faith. On this journey, we are part of the great cloud of witnesses who are inheriting the kingdom of heaven that Christ received following His death, burial and resurrection.

Continual incense

We receive faith in the word that is ministered by Christ through the presbytery that is in His hand. By this faith, we are able to believe God's word and to speak as a son of God. The Scriptures refer to this as our 'conversation'. **Psa 50:23. Heb 13:7.** Significantly, in both the Old and New Testaments, the word that is translated 'conversation' is equally, and often, translated as 'conduct'. In this regard, speaking by faith in fellowship includes the way in which we live as sons of God, in Christ. The first context in which we speak in this manner is the secret place of prayer. This is the beginning point of our conversation, or conduct, in the fellowship of Christ's offering. **2Co 4:13. Mat 6:6.**

Our connection to the fellowship and offering of Yahweh is symbolised by *incense* in the Scriptures. The incense that was offered in the tabernacle of Moses was comprised of four sweet spices – stacte, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense – in equal measure, to which salt was added. **Exo 30:34 35.** These four spices, with salt, represented the four dimensions of God's grace – word, life/light, Spirit, and love – that we receive through the ministry of the word, by the Spirit.

In the tabernacle of Moses, the incense was to be offered on the golden altar, which was also called 'the altar of incense'. The golden altar was placed in front of the veil that separated the holy place from the most holy place. **Exo 30:6.** Every morning, when the high priest tended the lamps of the lampstand, he was to burn incense on the golden altar. Then, each evening as the lamps were lit, he again was to burn incense on the golden altar. The Lord said that the morning and evening offering of incense was to be 'a perpetual [or continual] incense before the Lord throughout your generations'. **Exo 30:7 8.** This was to signify that the fellowship of prayer in the true tabernacle is *continual*.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: EXODUS 30

Praying without ceasing

In his letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul exhorted all believers to 'pray without ceasing', as part of fulfilling the will of God in Christ Jesus. **1Th 5:17 18**. Obviously, we cannot spend the entirety of each day in a prayer closet, on our knees. So, what did Paul mean? How do we 'pray at all times'?

In Moses' tabernacle, on the Day of Atonement, the golden altar was taken into the most holy place. The priest then placed two handfuls of incense on the fire of the golden altar that was before the Lord. This created a 'cloud of incense' that covered the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant. **Lev 16:12 13**. The high priest met Yahweh in the cloud. **Exo 30:36**. After the cloud of incense covered the mercy seat, the priest sprinkled the mercy seat seven times, first with the blood of a bull, and then with the blood of a goat.

During this process, the mercy seat was not moved from the most holy place. In contrast, when Christ inaugurated the New Covenant, the blood was sprinkled seven times on Himself through seven wounding events on His journey from Gethsemane to Calvary. Christ is the Mercy Seat, or Propitiation. **Rom 3:25. 1Jn 2:2**. This means that, from Gethsemane, the cloud created by the incense moved with Christ as He journeyed to the cross.

Grace is the incense that established the fellowship of offering in Gethsemane. The grace of God gave Christ the ability to accomplish the work of atonement on our behalf. Through the wounds that He received on His offering journey, sin was being destroyed, our iniquity was cut from Him, and the life of Yahweh was made available as His blood was shed, and fell upon His body. **Heb 2:9**. By this same grace, we are enabled to journey with Christ in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. We are able to pray without ceasing because we are abiding in the fellowship of Christ's offering each day.

Entry to the grace of God

The faith that we receive by hearing the word of God grants us entry to the grace of God. Paul said that we are to stand, or abide, in this grace in order to obtain the hope of sonship. **Rom 5:2**. Each day, our entry point into the grace of God is the fellowship of prayer, in Gethsemane. This is where the throne of grace is. With this in view, Paul exhorted all believers to 'come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need'. **Heb 4:16**.

Drawing from this passage of Scripture, many people presume that God's grace is given to a person when they are experiencing various difficulties in life. From this perspective, they consider grace to be a special capacity from God that is given to a believer to strengthen them when the weakness of their flesh is being exposed by their suffering. In effect, they consider God's grace to be a supplement to their flesh, so that they can fulfil His will.

Others presume to come to the throne of grace when they are aware that they have sinned and fallen short of God's righteousness. They view the throne of grace as the place where God's forgiveness can be sought and received by a penitent believer. God has mercy upon them because of Christ's offering on their behalf. Their acceptance by God is the implication of His grace, or unmerited favour.

Neither of these perspectives explains the grace of God. In fact, both of these understandings are fundamentally self-righteous. Grace is not a supplement for the weakness of our flesh; nor is it God's willingness to accept a person irrespective of their spiritual condition. God's grace is who He is. It reveals the nature of His one life, which is offering.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 2 CORINTHIANS 4

Help in time of need

Paul said that we receive His grace to help in time of need. **Heb 4:16**. Our 'time of need' is our mortal life. Unless we are delivered from our self-centredness and sin, and receive God's life, we will die in our sin, physically and eternally.

So, how does the Lord help us? The Greek word that is translated 'help' in this passage is *boetheia*. This word literally means, 'a rope, or chain for tightly binding a vessel'. With this understanding, we see that grace is given to us to tightly bind us to the fellowship of Christ's offering as a member of His body. In this fellowship, we are passing through the waters of judgement that God declared upon mankind.

Through baptism into Christ, we were joined to His death, burial and resurrection. In this fellowship, our sin is being destroyed, and our other law is being cut from our heart. The blood that was shed on His body is being sprinkled on our heart. By this means, His life is becoming our life and motivation. Paul described this change in motivation as having our heart sprinkled from an evil, or self-righteous, conscience, so that we are able to serve God. **Heb 10:22**. **Heb 9:14**.

As we continue each day in the fellowship of Christ's offering, the grace that we receive through prayer sustains us, enabling us to continue in the fellowship of Christ's body, and to be obedient to God so that His will is accomplished in our life. We are joined, by grace, to the obedience of Christ as He submitted Himself, in prayer, to the Father, saying, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done.' **Luk 22:42**. In this way, we have become part of the sweet aroma of incense, which is the fragrance of Christ's obedient submission to the Father.

The fire of God's presence

The baptism of the Holy Spirit brings with it the fire of God's own presence. We recall, for example, that when the disciples were filled with the Spirit, flames of fire sat upon each person, and they began to speak with other tongues. **Act 2:2 4.** We can only approach the presence of God with the fire of the Spirit. The deaths of Nadab and Abihu, under the Old Covenant, should serve as a strong reminder that we must not bring 'strange fire' into the presence of God. **Lev 10:1 3.** We bring strange fire into the presence of God when we pray from the basis of self-righteousness and anxiety, rather than by the Spirit.

Praying in the Spirit is the fire that ignites the incense of worship with thanksgiving. Because of this, we are able to offer ourselves willingly to God. That is, we become the incense offering itself. We become the cloud that is the sweet fragrance to God as we serve as a living sacrifice in His temple, the church. This is what King David declared when he wrote, 'Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of Thy power'. **Psa 110:3.** This literally means, 'Your people will be freewill offerings'. They will be part of the fellowship of Yahweh's own offering.

Paul testified to the Corinthians, writing, 'For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.' **2Co 2:15 16.** Evidently, Paul saw himself as the aroma, or incense, of Christ, as he ministered the gospel as a son of God who was joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering. He was the sweet aroma of Christ to those who received the word, and was the aroma of Christ's rejection and death to those who were perishing.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: ACTS 2

Praying in the Spirit

When we begin to pray in the Spirit, we are joining the fire of God's presence. We are coming to fellowship with God. At this point, we do not know what we should pray for, or how we are to offer ourselves. It is important that we recognise and accept that this is true. Otherwise, our prayer will be from the basis of self-righteousness. However, if we are poor in spirit, acknowledging that we do not know how to pray as we should, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. As we pray in tongues, we are cooperating with the Spirit as He intercedes for us according to the will of God. **Rom 8:26**. Through His intercession, we receive grace to surrender to God's will in every circumstance of the day.

We recall that when Jesus was praying, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done', to the Father, He was strengthened with Eternal Spirit from the Holy Spirit. **Heb 9:14**. He then began to pray even more earnestly. This is when He began to sweat great drops of blood. **Luk 22:42-44**. This sprinkling of Christ's blood marked the removal of the self-will that governs the motivation of us all as a result of our fallen humanity. It is also the means by which His life is given to all who are in Christ, so that they are able to obey their heavenly Father.

The Holy Spirit joins us to this fellowship of prayer. Just as Jesus began to pray more earnestly when He was strengthened with Eternal Spirit, the Holy Spirit burns within us with more vehemence, enabling us to pray more earnestly in fellowship with Christ. Christ searches our heart with His eyes, bringing illumination to our understanding regarding our motives, which may be corrupted with self-righteousness and sin, and therefore, need to be put off, in Him. We also receive understanding regarding the will of God in which we are to walk. **Rom 8:27**.

Praying with understanding

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul explained that, as we pray in the Spirit, we progress from not knowing how or what to pray, to praying with understanding. He wrote, 'For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.' **1Co 14:14 15.**

Having begun to pray in the Spirit, we are enabled to pray with understanding. This is how the fire ignites the incense of worship with thanksgiving. It demonstrates that we have obtained grace through prayer in the Spirit. As Paul explained, 'For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.' **2Co 4:15.**

Thanksgiving is also the fruit of faith, which is demonstrated by obedience. **Rom 16:26. Jas 2:17.** Paul exhorted believers to be 'established in the faith ... abounding in it with thanksgiving'. **Col 2:7.** As the Holy Spirit enables our prayer, we are able to speak by faith and to proceed to walk by faith in the fellowship of Christ's offering and circumcision. The fruit of faith obedience is thanksgiving, which abounds to God in the midst of every circumstance of our day.

In this regard, our worship is our own prayer. We are praying with understanding and thanksgiving. This is how we become the incense, and part of the great cloud of witnesses who are journeying with Christ. Our expression as incense becomes a ministry to others as we continue in the fellowship of Christ's offering throughout the day. **2Co 2:15 16.** This is also an aspect of praying at all times in the Spirit. **Eph 6:18.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY: REVELATION 1

Watching and praying

Essential to our daily and continual participation in the offering of Christ is our obedience to His call to watch and pray with Him in Gethsemane. Jesus said to His disciples, 'Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' **Mat 26:41**. Jesus was not merely saying that we need to stay awake. He was saying that we need to watch how we pray and how we journey with Him in the fellowship of His offering.

In this regard, we are to look and see whether we are praying and offering in the flesh or in the Spirit; that is, whether it is from the basis of the other law or according to our name as a son of God. As we have already considered, we can only know this in the fellowship of Christ's offering. In this fellowship, we can learn from Christ how to pray, and how to minister in holiness as a son-priest. **Mat 11:29**.

The communion meal grants us a participation in the offering of the Lamb of God. The call to watch and pray with Jesus is the invitation to watch, and to remain connected to, the pathway of priesthood that He pioneered for us through His offering as the Lamb of God. Our fellowship in this offering is to be our daily reality. This means that, in the midst of the events of each day, we are walking by the Spirit, who is the expression of our sonship. We are not being driven by fear and anxiety.

'Watching' also means that we are mindful of what is coming into our houses. In this regard, heads of households should be watching what comes into their houses, including media content, alternative philosophies, fears, and so on. If fathers are not watching in this way in relation to their own house, they will certainly be unable to see what is coming into the church.

Not falling asleep with sorrow

Anxiety, frustration, depression and spiritual fatigue are indications that we are praying and functioning by the flesh; that is, according to a righteousness of our own. If we persist with the flesh, we will fall asleep from sorrow and will be unable to endure in the day of tribulation. However, if we humble ourselves and walk according to the Spirit, who is speaking to the churches, the Spirit Himself will be the expression of our sonship. We will be able to remain in one Spirit with the Lord and with our brethren, and our love will not fail in the season of lawlessness and tribulation that is upon us. **Mat 24:9 12.**

This is why Jesus said, 'But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down [or, your spirit becomes fatigued] with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.' **Luk 21:34 36.**

Jesus was making the point that, if we walk according to the desires of our flesh, which is the other law, our heart will become sorrowful, and the day of Christ's appearing will come upon us suddenly. For this reason, we must watch and pray in order to be counted worthy of escaping this condemnation.

In His letter to the church in Sardis, Jesus said, 'Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.' **Rev 3:3.** Jesus was saying that 'watching' refers to how we receive the word that He is bringing to us, and how we are repenting.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: DANIEL 10

Praying for one another

The call to watch how we pray also applies to the way in which we pray for each other, as well as the way in which elders lay hands on those who are sick. In this regard, the apostle James wrote, 'Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.' **Jas 5:14 15.**

When hands are laid upon the sick, they are being separated to join the offering of Christ. This should be the faith of elders when they pray for the sick. It should also be the faith of those who are requesting prayer. However, this has not been our understanding of laying on of hands; nor has it been the mode of elders as they have prayed for the sick. Instead, our approach has been for the elders to lay hands on those who are suffering, in order to see them delivered from their distress. The Scriptures teach us that the laying on of hands separates a person to their participation in the offering of Christ. We see this, for example, when hands were laid on Paul and Barnabas after the Holy Spirit had set them apart for the work to which they had been called. **Act 13:3.**

Healing is found in the fellowship of Christ's offering. **Isa 53:5. 1 Pet 2:24.** Christ's life was given to be our life through this offering. In this offering, every impediment to our priestly work can be moved out of the way. This may involve our healing; or it may involve deliverance from the self-righteous perspectives that impede our capacity to love the Lord and our brethren, through true service as a son-priest.

Delivered from self-righteousness

The apostle James said concerning our deliverance from self-righteousness that, 'the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.' **Jas 5:15**. Living according to our self-righteous perspectives is the reason why we sin, and come under the judgement of God. Through Christ's offering, we receive forgiveness. In the fellowship of His offering, the propensity to sin is being removed from us.

The Lord is helping us to make a cultural shift in the way that we pray. We must cease from 'lobbying' the Father to withdraw His hand from the lives of those who are suffering. Such an approach to prayer is not dissimilar to the interventions of some women who address their husbands for dealing too harshly with their children. This way of praying is an affront to the Lord. It is ignorant of the way in which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are bringing Their covenant purpose to pass in relation to the life of every individual son of God. In this regard, we must receive illumination from the Lord concerning our propensity to think and pray in this way. We must turn in repentance in order to participate in the fellowship of His offering.

Every Christian needs to heed the word of the Lord in this season. This word is calling us to 'wake up' to repentance, and to remain 'awake' in the fellowship of Christ's offering. **Eph 6:18. Matt 26:41**. That is, we must remain awake in the midst of the operation of God, through which the propensity to self-righteousness is being cut from us. The operation of God involves the removal of the other law from our heart, through fellowship in the circumcision of Christ. **Col 2:11-12**. We can only remain awake, and endure in the fellowship of Christ's circumcision, by the capacity of Eternal Spirit, which we receive from the Holy Spirit.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: PHILIPPIANS 3

True Christian piety

The Scriptures use the term 'piety' to describe the culture of godliness that should characterise the life of a son of God. Christian piety is the expression of godliness. It is interesting to note that Ananias, the man whom the Lord sent to minister to Paul following his conversion on the road to Damascus, was described as a pious, or devout, Christian. **Act 22:12**. Piety is most commonly defined as 'religious devotion' or 'reverence'. However, when understood from the perspective, or doctrine, of godliness, piety is the culture of being connected to the offering and circumcision of Christ.

In the fellowship of the offering and circumcision of Christ, we receive resurrection life, which causes us to be born again from the dead. We are passing from death to life, and resurrection life is in us. This is because we have received the word of Christ, and believe in God. As Jesus declared, 'He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life.' **Joh 5:24**.

Because we have passed from death to life, our dying and our living is now for the glory of Christ. Jesus revealed this principle when He raised Lazarus from the dead. This was also a feature of Peter's recovery to sanctification on the shore of Galilee. Having called Peter to tend and feed the sheep of His flock, Jesus spoke to him concerning the death by which he would glorify God. **Joh 21:15 18**.

Through His offering, Jesus gathered up our death – the death of sin – into His death. When we are joined to His death, we are being delivered from the death of sin, and we reveal His death. It is by this means that Jesus Christ is glorified, and all things – our living and our dying – are working together for our good. **Rom 8:28**.

Godliness is worship

True piety is the culture of a Christian who continues in the fellowship of the offering and circumcision of Christ. Their life reveals the living and the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ and, by this means, Jesus is glorified through them.

To glorify God is to worship Him. We note, then, that piety is godly worship. Our worship is much more than singing spiritual songs of praise and devotion to the Lord when we meet together for communion. In fact, our body ministry will be little more than the sound of clanging cymbals if worship is not a cultural foundation in our life. **1Co 13:1**. In this regard, we note that Christ's offering in Gethsemane began with the offering of Himself to God through prayer and worship. This was the offering of incense, and is the first of the offerings by which a person may approach God to participate in the fellowship of the burnt offering.

Similarly, we recall that Abraham and Isaac joined the offering of Christ on Mount Moriah when they went up the mountain to worship. **Gen 22:5**. They were being called to join the burnt offering of Yahweh Himself.

The apostle Paul exhorted us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and acceptable to God. He explained that this is an expression of our spiritual worship. **Rom 12:1 2**. Participating in the offering and circumcision of Christ on a daily basis is our spiritual worship, and is the means by which we are being perfected. This activity is according to the doctrine of godliness.

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul explained that presenting oneself to God as a holy and acceptable offering means living a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. Notably, Paul made it clear that such a pious person is coming to a knowledge of their sanctification. **1Ti 2:1 4**. In other words, the life of God is being manifest in their flesh.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: GENESIS 22

The doctrine of godliness

In his letter to Timothy, Paul taught that godliness, or Christian piety, is fundamental to living as a Christian in this age and in the age to come. He said, 'Bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness [or being connected to the offering and circumcision of Christ] is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.' **1Ti 4:8**.

Paul warned that there were some teachers and leaders in the church who denied the necessity to join the offering and circumcision of Christ. They did not consent to the doctrine which accords with godliness. In fact, through disputes over words, they directed others away from fellowship with the Father and His Son. Specifically, Paul wrote, 'If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.' **1Ti 6:3 5**.

Godliness involves our daily appropriation of the chastening love of the Lord, in Christ. This is true piety. In this way, godliness connects us to Christ's righteousness. **1Ti 4:8**. We are to seek this righteousness. Christ exhorted us this way, saying, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.' **Mat 6:33 34**. As we seek first the kingdom of God by priesting ourselves as a living sacrifice, we will experience trouble from day to day. This is part of our participation in the dying and the living of the Lord Jesus Christ. By this means, He is being glorified.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 2 PETER 2

He whom You love is sick

The principle of Christ being glorified through the sufferings and death that are experienced by His disciples is particularly illustrated through the account of the death and resurrection of Lazarus. We recall that, during His ministry on earth, Jesus established hundreds of house-groups throughout the region of Judea. The household of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary was one of the leadership households in this administration, and Jesus was personally fond of them.

Opening his account of the resurrection of Lazarus, the apostle John wrote, 'Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore, the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick"'. **Joh 11:1-3**. The message that Martha and Mary sent to Jesus was, in essence, a prayer message. They were praying, 'Lord, he whom You love is sick.' Many of us pray for our loved ones in a similar manner, drawing the Lord's attention to the suffering, need or problem that a loved one is experiencing.

When Jesus heard this prayer, He did not send any word back to the sisters. Instead, He said to His disciples, 'This sickness [with its accompanying suffering] is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.' **Joh 11:4**. Although it seemed as though Jesus was not answering the prayer of the sisters for their sick and suffering brother, Jesus said that this suffering event would rebound to His glory. In other words, Jesus would be glorified through the death of Lazarus. Challenging the possible perception that, by failing to attend to the sisters' request, Jesus had not cared for Lazarus, John made it clear that 'Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus'. **Joh 11:5**.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 11

I am the resurrection and the life

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming to Bethany, she went out to meet Him. As the friend of Jesus, she said to Him, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.' **Joh 11:21**. Martha knew that Jesus had been at Bethabara and could have made the journey to Bethany before the death of her brother. **Joh 10:40. Joh 1:28**. Recognising that He had decided not to come prior to the death of Lazarus, she asked Jesus why He had come following his burial.

Even though Martha was upset that Jesus had not answered their prayer, and had not come earlier to heal Lazarus, she still believed in Him and accepted Him as her Lord and God. She said to Jesus, 'But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.' **Joh 11:22**. Martha was indicating that she was open to receive whatever Jesus would minister at that time and in their situation; however, she had no expectation that Jesus was going to raise Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus said to Martha, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha responded by acknowledging that Lazarus would rise again in the resurrection on the Last Day. She had said her goodbyes to her brother and expected to see him again on that day. **Joh 11:24**.

Jesus then spoke to her these famous words, which the apostle John wrote down for us to read. He said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.' **Joh 11:25**. In this statement, Jesus promised to raise from the dead all who believe in Him.

Jesus then said, 'Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.' **Joh 11:26**. By this, He meant that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ already has resurrection life abiding within their spirit. Jesus was saying to all of us who believe in Him, that He has already given resurrection life to us.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 6

You will see the glory of God

After Jesus had met Martha, she went and called her sister Mary to come to Jesus. Jesus was deeply moved in His spirit, and troubled in Himself, when He saw Mary, and the Jews who were with her, weeping. He asked to be taken to the tomb. As Jesus wept, the Jews recognised how much Jesus had loved Lazarus, and wondered why the man who had opened the eyes of the blind had not healed His friend, whom He loved. **Joh 11:35 36.**

Jesus asked that the stone be removed from the mouth of the cave. Martha objected to this, for obvious reasons, saying that Lazarus had been dead for four days. In reply, Jesus said, 'Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?' **Jn 11:40.**

Lazarus, Martha and Mary believed in Jesus. Through Lazarus' death and resurrection, Christ was glorified. **Joh 11:4.** We know this because, after Lazarus had been raised from the dead, 'many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him'. **Joh 11:45.** Because resurrection life was already in Lazarus, Christ was able to be glorified through Lazarus' dying and living.

When Jesus met Peter on the Sea of Galilee, He said to him, ' "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." This He spoke, signifying by what death he [Peter] would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me".' **Joh 21:18 19.**

Because eternal life is already in us as resurrection life, God, through Christ, is able to be glorified in our lives on a daily basis. In fact, this is the purpose for which we continue to live, after we have been raised from the death of sin.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 12

She is only asleep

In the Gospel of Mark, we read about a synagogue official named Jairus. Jairus asked Jesus to come to his house so that Jesus could lay His hands upon his daughter and heal her. As Jesus, His disciples, and Jairus made their way to the house, word was sent telling them that the girl had died. They said, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?' **Mar 5:35**. Evidently, the people acknowledged that Jesus could have healed the sick girl, but raising the dead was a different proposition. However, Jesus said to Jairus, 'Do not be afraid any longer, only believe.' **Mar 5:36**.

When they arrived at the house, there was a great commotion. People were weeping and wailing. Jesus entered the house and said to them, 'Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep.' **Mar 5:39**. At this point, those people who were in the house began to laugh at Jesus. It was amusing to them that the One who could heal the sick was apparently unable to recognise when a person was dead. **Mar 5:40**.

Jesus put them all out of the room, and He took the parents and His disciples to the girl's room, and said to her, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' 'Immediately the girl rose up and began to walk, for she was about twelve years of age.' **Mar 5:41 42**. In the same way that Lazarus' death was 'a falling asleep' because resurrection life was already in him, Jairus' daughter was only 'asleep' because her parents believed in Jesus.

The resurrection of Lazarus, and also of Jairus' daughter, revealed what was available, under the Old Covenant, to those men and women who believed in God. If they believed in Jesus, who was God in the flesh, they already had resurrection life in their spirit.

The confession of our faith

Having met and believed Christ, we are walking with Him through life, and are growing in maturity as a son of God. Every issue and every circumstance become an opportunity where Christ's life, power, and resurrection life are operative within us, enabling us to demonstrate resurrection life in all situations. Christ is able to be glorified in our lives on a daily basis.

Now that we are in Christ, God, through the Holy Spirit, has taken charge of the events that take place in our lives. He works all things – the good and the bad, success and failure, health and sickness – together for our good. In all these things, we can be more than conquerors through faith. **Rom 8:37**.

Faith for a Christian is not some kind of positive, optimistic, self-affirmation by which we finally 'win through'. Rather, faith is our trust in God that He is in control of our life. He is ordering our life so that we learn what virtue is, and how to live as a son of God in the midst of our difficulties, as well as in prosperity. **Php 4:12**. We simply live as sons of God in all circumstances of life.

God sets these things – prosperity and suffering – over against each other in our lives so that we do not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead. He has delivered us, and will deliver us, from 'so great a death'. **2Co 1:9-10**. As we live in this way, Christ is glorified in our lives.

Every time that circumstances seem insurmountable, we can pray and thank the Lord, and then ask Him to help us to walk through the trial in the way that He has planned for us. The circumstances then become insignificant, and our focus is shifted to the works of faith that the Lord has called us to do in Christ. He gives us His grace, which is the resurrection life that He has placed within our hearts.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 2 CORINTHIANS 1

