

Restoring my Soul

A five day devotional guide

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A messenger of Christ

Receiving and believing the word of God is the beginning point of sonship for every person. Christ sends His disciples as messengers to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of heaven to those who are dead in their trespasses and sins, and afar off from God. The disciples of Christ are members of His body who have received the treasure of His word in their hearts. Accordingly, they have been established in the culture of the kingdom, and are able to share the gospel with others.

Christ's disciple-messengers do not preach in order to reveal themselves. Rather, they are His ambassadors and witnesses on the earth. Jesus said, 'He who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me [the Father]'. The words that are in their mouths are the words of Christ. These words are from the Father, and are accomplishing His work as Christ's messengers preach the gospel *by the Holy Spirit* who is sent from heaven. Their ministry is not merely the communication of information. Like the apostle Paul, they are able to *travail* for others so that Christ may be *formed* in them.

Christ has given to His disciples the ministry of reconciliation, through which their hearers can receive the forgiveness of sins and be recovered to God's plan for them. When this message is first received, the hearer begins to be *converted*. Conversion is a whole process through which a hearer can be delivered from their slavery to sin and death, and established in the glorious freedom of the sons of God. The travail of disciple-messengers, through prayer and word, continues throughout this process. In this regard, disciple-messengers are participating in the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to see a new believer established as a fruitful son of God and a member of the body of Christ.

References:

Rom 10:14-15 Joh 14:10
2Co 4:7 1Pe 1:12
Joh 13:20 Gal 4:19

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 5

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 3

Grace and supplication

When the gospel is shared by a disciple-messenger of Christ, the Holy Spirit pours out a spirit of grace and supplication upon the unsaved hearer. The spirit of grace comes to an unsaved person before they choose to receive it. This means that it is 'prevenient grace'. God's grace is necessary for them at this point because they are dead in sin and have no capacity to hear the word, or even to choose whether or not they will receive it. Regarding this grace, Paul wrote, 'For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared [given light] to all men'. Through the Holy Spirit, grace enables every person to receive the light of the gospel, even though, in themselves, they have no capacity to see or receive the things of God.

God's prevenient grace frees a person from any influence that may otherwise affect their capacity to choose the call of sonship that God is offering to them. These influences may include, for example, sin and its consequences in their lives, their personal histories and traditions, lusts, bondages, addictions, hurts, anger, depression, protective reflexes, demonic oppression, and even their 'other law'. Through God's grace, they *can* be completely freed to choose whether they will accept the call to be a son of God, or refuse Him and continue in their own familiar ways and sin.

However, the grace of God is *not* irresistible. As the grace in the word begins to release the hearer from these influences upon their life, they can still *choose* to close their ears and harden their heart to the word. When they do this, they choose to remain in the darkness of their separation from God, rather than receive the light that is coming to them in the word of God for their salvation. The word that is proclaimed, the sight that is available, and the freedom it has offered them, make them fully accountable for their decision.

References:

Zec 12:10

1Co 2:14

Joh 16:8

Rom 8:5

Tit 2:11

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 4

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 4

Conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement

Jesus explained to His disciples that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement. He pours out a spirit of grace and supplication upon a person when the gospel is shared with them by a disciple-messenger of Christ. By this means, the hearer is enabled to look upon Jesus Christ whom they have pierced. At this point, either they will receive the illumination that is coming to them concerning their sin, righteousness and judgement, and begin to mourn; or they will resist the Holy Spirit by hardening their heart to Christ's word. We recall, for example, the preaching of Stephen, who noted that the Jews had *always resisted the Holy Spirit* and were responsible for the death of the Son of God. Upon hearing this, they were cut to the heart. However, instead of crying out for forgiveness, they gnashed their teeth at the messenger, stopped their ears to his word, and put him to death.

If a person does not resist the Holy Spirit, the conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement causes them to be illuminated concerning the truth of their predicament. That is, they are made aware of their sin and lawlessness; they accept their guilt for being the enemy of God and piercing Christ; and they realise that, on account of their sin, they lost the sonship that God had predestined for them. This illumination is the effect of the love of God being streamed to the hearer by the Holy Spirit, as disciple-messengers proclaim the word of reconciliation. It is the lovingkindness of God that is bringing His mercy and grace to them. Concerning this work, Jeremiah wrote, 'The Lord appeared to me from afar, saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have *drawn you with lovingkindness*".'

References:

Joh 16:8

Neh 9:30

Rev 1:7

Jer 31:3

Jer 17:23

Further Study:

Acts 7

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 5

Won by love

In his letter to Titus, the apostle Paul declared that ‘when the *kindness* of God our Saviour and His *love* for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy’. The effect of the love of God upon the unsaved hearer who receives the word is that they begin to believe what is being preached to them. The believer’s heart is being won by the love of God that is coming to them in the word, by the Holy Spirit.

God is love. This describes the fullness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in a fellowship of one life and one Spirit. In love, They predestined every person to be born of Their life and joined to Their fellowship. This love, and the capacity for its fulfilment, is communicated through the word by the Holy Spirit. This is the capacity to be one Spirit with Yahweh. For this reason, the apostle John wrote, ‘Whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected’. The word first illuminates a person to see the great love of the Father that calls them to be His son.

As they receive the word, the Spirit then begins His sanctifying work. He is the Spirit of sanctification, and He begins to sanctify them *from* the world and its uncleanness so that they can be joined to the fellowship of the Father and the Son. The Spirit brings the word of the Father that says, “Come out from their midst and be separate”, says the Lord. “And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me.”

References:

Tit 3:4-5

2Co 6:17-18

1Jn 2:5

Eph 2:4-5

1Jn 3:1

Further Study:

Romans 5

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 6

Bankrupt in spirit

When a person is illuminated to look upon Christ whom they have pierced, the conviction of the Holy Spirit causes the hearer to recognise the *wretchedness* of their bondage to sin and their self-centredness. As a slave of sin, they have attempted to have life apart from God, through the works of their flesh. They are acknowledging that they are unable to save themselves, and have evidently become *poor in spirit*. Through grace, they have let go of the right to define their own life and righteousness, and have accepted that they are unable, because of their bondage to sin, to be obedient to the word of God that calls them to enter the kingdom of heaven.

When a person comes to this point of bankruptcy, Christ is setting them free from sin. This is not yet the glorious freedom of the sons of God. Rather, they are being set free so that they can enter this glorious freedom once they have been born of the Spirit. Their freedom is from bondages, such as addictions and other destructive behaviours and thoughts, that would otherwise keep them bound in sin. In a sense, the prison doors of their captivity to sin are being opened, and the kingdom of heaven is theirs to enter.

However, as we noted above, the hearer who has become poor in spirit does not know how to move beyond their impoverished spiritual condition. Neither do they possess the capacity to be the son of God He is calling them to be. Consequently, they begin to cry out in the same manner as those who were converted on the Day of Pentecost – ‘Men and brethren, what must I do [to be saved]?’ The first thing that the messenger calls them to do is to *repent*.

References:

Rom 7:24 Psa 6:6
Mat 5:3 2Ti 2:25
Act 2:37-38

Further Study:

Psalm 38

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 7

Mourning

A new believer who has become 'bankrupt in spirit', will know godly sorrow. This leads to repentance. Paul described their sorrow as 'according to the will of God' so that they may not be lost to Him. He explained that godly sorrow 'produces a repentance without regret, *leading to salvation*'. It is demonstrated through the mourner's diligence, clearing of themselves, indignation, vehement desire, zeal and vindication. They cry out to God for forgiveness, turn from their sinful activities, and make amends, where possible, for the impact of their sin on others.

God sees and hears the cry of the penitent believer, and they receive the forgiveness of their sins on account of Christ's blood which was shed for the reconciliation of all, while we were yet sinners. Having received forgiveness, they are able to testify like King David, who said, 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.' They are no longer His enemies and under condemnation.

Under the influence of the spirit of supplication from the Holy Spirit, the believer's mourning now shifts from a *godly sorrow* for the consequences of their sin, to the *travail* of one who desires to be made adequate for what God has planned for them. This is a travail of labour for something new to be birthed in their life. They are *joining* the travail of the Spirit and the travail of the messengers who have been labouring to see Christ formed within them. Their travail is epitomised by the statement, 'I do believe; *help my unbelief*'.

References:

2Co 7:10-12

Mat 3:8

Heb 9:22

Rom 4:7-8

Rom 8:26

Gal 4:19

Further Study:

James 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 10

Help my unbelief

The Gospels record the account of a boy who had been afflicted by an unclean spirit since his childhood. The boy's father cried out to Jesus for help. When Jesus said to him, 'All things are possible to him who believes', the man immediately replied, 'I do believe, help my unbelief'. A new believer who has become poor in spirit, will make this same cry for help. Whilst they believe in God, and also believe the word that calls them to be a son of God, they recognise that this call is *extraordinary*. It is not of this earth. From their fleshly perspective, being born as a son of God is *impossible*. Nevertheless, they are choosing what God is bringing to them through His word. This is why they petition the Lord to help their unbelief.

As they choose what is being proclaimed to them in the word, the Father reckons them to be His son. This is what it means for God to reckon, or impute, righteousness to them. This righteousness is not on account of any of their works. Because they are poor in spirit, they know this to be true. They are now in the position of a son, and an heir of all that God has promised to the sons of God.

Writing to the Christians in Galatia, Paul reminded them that faith has now come through Jesus Christ, so that a hearer can be a son of God through faith in Him. In addition to righteousness, God also imputes the faith of the Son of God to the hearer, so that they can believe for what the Father has purposed for them; that is, to be born from above as a new creation son of God. Now able to believe and rejoice in this promise, the believer is justified by the faith of the Son of God.

References:

Gal 3:25-26

Rom 5:1

Rom 9:8

Rom 4:3, 22-24

Further Study:

Mark 9

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 11

Receiving the Holy Spirit

Jesus began His famous sermon on the mount with what is often called the 'beatitudes'. He explained how a person will inherit the blessing that was promised to Abraham. Jesus began by saying, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'. He then continued, 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted'. What kind of comfort was Jesus referring to? At the same time as the righteousness of faith is imputed to the new believer, they receive the Holy Spirit, who is called the 'Comforter'. Jesus said that a person who has received and believed His commandments, can ask Him anything in His name and He will do it. The one thing that a person who is truly bankrupt in spirit will want, is 'help'. In response to their earnest request for help, Jesus asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit to be *in* their heart.

The believer receives the Holy Spirit into their heart when Christ breathes on them, as they continue to receive His word through His messengers. We recall that Jesus said to His disciples concerning the Holy Spirit, 'You know Him because He abides with you and *will be in you*'. Once the Holy Spirit has come into a new believer, He begins to pour the love of God *into* their heart. This love is the capacity to be in one Spirit with the Lord. It is restoring us to fellowship with Him. Furthermore, the faith of God that was imputed to them now begins *to work by the love* that is being poured into their heart. These works of faith are righteousness. The first work of the righteousness of faith is to begin to speak. It is to confess Christ as Lord.

References:

Joh 14:16-17
Joh 20:22
Rom 5:5

Gal 5:6
1Jn 4:12-13

Further Study:

1 John 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 12

Confessing Christ as Lord

God has faith for His covenant purpose to be fulfilled. This means that He has a plan and purpose for every person, and believes that we can all become the sons of God He predestined us to be. Once the hearer's faith *in* God has become the faith *of* God, they are able to *believe what God believes about them*. This is the faith that comes by hearing the word of God.

The faith that the believer has received will be evident through some specific works. Regarding this point, Paul wrote, 'Having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I *believed*, therefore I *spoke*", we also believe, therefore we also speak'. What is it that a person speaks? It is the confession with their mouth that Jesus is Lord! This is not some symbolic statement or gesture that they make to identify themselves as a Christian believer. The confession of Christ's lordship is *only* possible because the Holy Spirit is now in them. As Paul said, 'No-one can say, "Jesus is Lord", except by the Holy Spirit'.

From the moment they are confessing that Christ is the Lord of their life, they are beginning to be transferred, or translated, from the domain of darkness, in which they live according to their own way, to the kingdom of the beloved Son in whom they have redemption and the forgiveness of sins. In the kingdom of darkness, the believer was a slave to sin and lawlessness. However, they became *obedient* from the heart to that form of teaching to which they were committed. It is Christ, their Master, who commits them to this teaching. He has taken them captive to Himself and they are now a slave in His house.

References:

Rom 10:8-9
2Co 4:13
1Co 12:3

Col 1:13-14
Eph 4:8

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Romans 6

Proverbs 13

Disciples of Christ

A new believer who has received the love of God into their heart and confessed that Jesus is their Lord, will be able to love Christ and keep His commandments. Practically, this means that they will submit themselves to those who, as His ambassadors, are bringing the word of Christ to them. Their submission is demonstrated through their obedience. Paul called this ‘the *obedience of faith*’. At this point, they have been made a *disciple of Christ*. We recall the words of Jesus, who said, ‘If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you *free*’.

No doubt, this will be a new thought for many. How can a person be a disciple, or follower, of Christ, *before* they have been born as a son of God? The most obvious examples of this reality are Christ’s twelve disciples. He called them to follow Him *before* they had been born from above as sons of God. Their willingness to follow Christ cost them everything. Jesus said to them, ‘Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times [lit: one hundred times] as much, and will inherit eternal life’.

We note the connection of this statement to Jesus’ description of the good ground in the parable of the sower and the seed. He said that people who were like good ground brought forth fruit – some thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold. Jesus was speaking about the fruit of sonship. The important implication here is that discipleship should *lead* to fruitfulness as a son of God, in this age and in the age to come.

References:

Joh 14:21 Mar 4:20
Joh 8:31-32 Rom 16:26
Mat 19:29

Further Study:

Luke 14

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 14

The new birth

When a new believer has become a disciple with the promise of an inheritance, they are the recipient of what Paul called 'the adoption'. This is the *promise* of sonship. They are brought into the position of a son. However, at this point, they are not yet in possession of the inheritance that belongs to an authentic son of God. This inheritance is the divine nature and it is only received by new birth.

To understand what it means to be born again as a son of God, it is helpful to recognise that, when something is born, it is *new*. It has not been seen before. Concerning the new birth, the apostle Paul reminded us, 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him'.

In His discussions with Nicodemus, Jesus identified three dimensions of the new birth. He said that a person needs to be *born to see* the kingdom of God. Having seen the kingdom, they then need to be *born of water and born of the Spirit*, if they are to enter the kingdom. Each of these dimensions of being born of God establishes *something new* in the life of the believer.

What is the beginning of this process? Now that the Holy Spirit is within the believer, they receive the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. Through the word of God, by the Holy Spirit, their identity as a son of man is being recovered. This is specifically referring to the regeneration and renewing of their inner man (soul and spirit) by the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, they are being reconciled in one Spirit to the fellowship of the Father and the Son.

References:

1Co 2:9

Joh 3:3-5

Tit 3:5

Eph 2:18

1Jn 1:5-7

2Co 5:17

Further Study:

1 Peter 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 17

Born to see - regeneration and renewing

The apostle Paul declared that 'He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit'. These actions cause a new believer's spirit, which Jesus described as 'the eye [spiritual sight] of their body', to be restored. Consequently, their whole being – body, soul and spirit – is able to be full of light. They are now able to walk in the light of fellowship with God, who is Light.

When the human spirit, or identity, of the believer has been made alive through regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, they have been *born from above to see the kingdom of heaven*. They will know what it means to be a son of God, and how to enter into all that God has prepared for His sons and daughters in this age and in the age to come. This is summarised by Paul who wrote, 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God'.

In the first instance, the restoration and enlightenment of a person's inner man, through regeneration and renewing, restores their capacity to know God and to receive His word. In this regard, they are being restored to the capacity for fellowship that Adam and Eve had with God in the garden of Eden before the fall. However, if this was all that 'being born to see' entailed, then it would not be new. Unlike Adam and Eve, who had the anointing of the Holy Spirit on them so that they could relate with Yahweh 'in Spirit', a person who is born to see receives the Holy Spirit *in them*. This is new. The capacity for fellowship and expressing the love of God is now in them.

References:

Tit 3:5
Mat 6:22
Joh 3:3

1Co 2:12
1Pe 2:9

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 18

Born of water - a new creation

Once a believer's identity has been recovered, they are able to receive the incorruptible seed of their name as a son of God. The seed comes in the Father's word, through the preaching of Christ and His messengers, by the Holy Spirit. This seed is not Christ; it is the *word* of Christ. We recall the teaching of Jesus, who said, 'The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but *the Father abiding in Me does His works*'. The Spirit of the Father is in the word, and causes the seed of sonship to germinate in a person's heart. We note that the power is in the word itself to bring a person to birth as a son of God.

When the seed of the Father germinates in the renewed heart of a believer, the outcome is a *new creation*. They have been born as a son of God according to the name that was foreknown by God before the heavens and the earth were created. The seed of God's life has come alive in the regenerated heart of a son of man. They are now more than just a son of man. They are also a son of God. This is why they are a new creation. As the apostle John declared, 'See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are'.

At this point, a new believer has been born of water. In the same way that a seed in nature contains all the potential of a fruiting plant, the incorruptible seed of the Father contains the potential sonship of the newborn son of God. This includes the works that have been planned for them to do in this world and also in the age to come.

References:

1Pe 1:23

Joh 14:10

1Jn 3:1

Joh 3:5

2Co 5:17

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Galatians 6

Proverbs 19

Christ dwelling in the heart

When the seed of sonship germinates in the inner man (or heart) of the believer, the Spirit of the Father strengthens them with His power so that Christ, the Person, may dwell in their heart by faith. The Father sends forth the Spirit of the Son into their heart as the *substance* of their sonship. When the Father first sends the Spirit of His Son into the heart of the believer, they will cry out, 'Abba! Father!' as little children. The substance of Christ's sonship is the divine nature. It will continue to be formed in them until they reach full maturity as a son of God. Before this point, they did not have the divine nature within them. This is new.

It is important to note that when the Father sends Christ into the heart of a believer, this is *not* the incorruptible seed of the word. The incorruptible seed is the word that Christ proclaims through His disciple-messengers, with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. However, when the Father sends the Son into the heart of the believer, it is the Person of Christ who is coming in them as the Seed (or Son) of the Father and of Abraham. He comes to share the substance of sonship with new creation sons of God. In this regard, we can see that there are *two seeds*. The first seed is the word of God. The second Seed is the Person of the Son.

Once Christ dwells in a person's heart by faith, the believer can live by a life that is not their own. We recall the testimony of the apostle Paul, 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by [the faith of] the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me'.

References:

Eph 3:16-17 Gal 2:20
Gal 4:6 Joh 6:56
Gal 3:16 Joh 14:23

Further Study:

1 Peter 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 20

Born of the Spirit

A person has been born of the Spirit once all three Persons of the Godhead are dwelling within their heart. We note that it is the Holy Spirit who takes up residence in their heart first, regenerating and renewing them in the inner man. This is followed by the Spirit of the Father, who comes to bring them to birth as a new creation through the incorruptible seed contained in His word. Finally, the Spirit of Christ comes to dwell in their heart as the substance of their sonship. This means that they can live by a life that is not their own. It also means that they will no longer be trying to demonstrate their own righteousness. They will begin to demonstrate the righteousness of Christ by the power of His life within them. They have not been able to live this way previously.

Jesus provided an explicit description of what it means to be born of the Spirit. He said, 'The wind [spirit] blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit'. Jesus was explaining that when a person is born of the Spirit, they are able to relate to the Spirit and to others 'in the Spirit'. Together, they are able to know and move with Him in one Spirit, as He leads according to His own intrinsic substance and will. In contrast, a person who lives by the principles of the flesh is nothing like the wind. They know where they are going and how they will go about it, because their initiatives are all *sourced in themselves*. Their desire for control over their life, and the lives of others, is the antithesis of the nature of the Spirit.

References:

Joh 3:8

Php 3:9

1Pe 1:23

Jas 4:13-14

Gal 2:20

Further Study:

Romans 8

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 21

Baptism into the Lord Jesus Christ

Having been born of God, a son of God will begin to experience tribulation because of the word. However, they should not be surprised when this happens. This is because they are being invited to join the fellowship of Christ's offering and suffering through baptism. At this point, a person who has been born of water and the Spirit will desire to be baptised into the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see that it is a new creation son of God who dies with Christ. When they are baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, they begin to exercise the *right* that Christ has given them to share in His life and become members of His body, the church. This now defines the way they live and relate with others in all contexts of life.

For these reasons, a son of God exults in tribulations. This is because tribulation is a fire that refines their life, producing perseverance within them. Perseverance demonstrates that they believe in the word of sonship which they have received. It is the proven character of a son of God that is being demonstrated in their life as they truly believe in the hope of sonship. As they manifest His life through sanctified living, God's will is being done in their lives. They are fulfilling God's will then, as members of His body.

Through baptism, a believer becomes a participator in Christ's offering and His sufferings. This demonstrates their faith to receive the *circumcision of Christ*. In the fellowship of His sufferings, Christ's life is transferred to them as a saving and justifying capacity. This is how they are saved by His life. The fellowship of His sufferings is also the means by which they are delivered from the law of sin and the other law within their flesh.

References:

Joh 1:12 Col 2:11-12
Rom 5:3, 10 Rom 6:6
Heb 10:10 1Pe 4:12

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 24

Hidden with Christ in God

In his letter to the Christians in Colossae, Paul said, 'You have died [with Christ in baptism] and your [new creation] life is *hidden with Christ in God*. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.' When a son of God is baptised into Christ, it is their new creation life that dies with Him. The life of their sonship is hidden with Him in the bosom of the Father. The bosom of the Father is also called 'the Father's house'. Now they have been raised to sit with Christ in heavenly places. As a son in the Father's house, their citizenship is in heaven, even though their work is on earth as a member of Christ's body.

When they are hidden with Christ in God, the Christian's life is no longer theirs to express as they see fit. Their sonship rests in the bosom of the Father in the hope of its full revelation in the age to come. The life which they now live in the flesh is Christ's life. This is important to understand because, unless a person lives by Christ's life as a member of His body, they will not receive the full glory of their sonship in the new heavens and earth.

Although the complete motivation of a son of God in Christ is to reveal His life as a member of His body, they have been given the Holy Spirit as the firstfruits of their inheritance as a son of God. Through the Holy Spirit, they are able to express this sonship in firstfruits measure, without being motivated by their own fleshly desire to be revealed or to dictate how they should be received by others. This is how they are able to do the works according to their name, even though their named sonship is hidden with Christ in God.

References:

Col 3:3-4
Joh 14:2-3
Gal 2:20

1Jn 3:2
1Jn 2:15

Further Study:

Romans 13

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 25

Sealed with the Holy Spirit

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is called 'the *heavenly gift* of God'. When a son of God is baptised in the Holy Spirit, they are immersed in Him. The Holy Spirit is the *seal of sonship* for those who have been born of the Spirit. Paul wrote, 'Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption'.

Paul also explained that the Holy Spirit is the pledge of a son of God's eternal inheritance. A pledge is a down-payment that is given in lieu of a total amount which is to be fully paid at a later time. It is a guarantee of the full payment. It is amazing to consider that the Holy Spirit is given to a son of God as the down-payment of their eternal sonship. He is given to them as the firstfruits of their inheritance. This means that they are able to trade with and multiply Christ's life according to their name, by doing the works that were prepared for them by the Father.

The seal of the Holy Spirit is, in the first instance, the *guarantee* that we are sons of God and will receive an inheritance in the age to come. The seal also signifies the *sanctifying work* of the Holy Spirit in our life, as He leads us in the truth of who the Father named us to be as a son of God. The third aspect of this seal is that the Holy Spirit is given to us as the *expression* and *authority* of our name as a son of God. This is vitally important. It means that we are able to express the life of Christ as a member of His body, rather than seeking to express our own sonship. This is what it means to remain hidden with Christ in God.

References:

Heb 6:4

Eph 4:30

Act 1:8

Eph 1:14

Rom 8:23

Further Study: 1 Thessalonians 4

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 26

Walking according to the Spirit

When we are converted, we will readily recognise that we do not even know how to pray as we ought to pray. Paul explained that ‘the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words’. The Son comes to the aid of the Holy Spirit. The Son is the One who searches our heart and knows what the mind of the Holy Spirit is. As He searches our heart, Christ seeks to know, from the Holy Spirit who is within us, what He should be praying to the Father for in relation to our sonship and pilgrimage.

The Son intercedes for us to the Father, praying according to the will of God. He petitions the Father to strengthen our spirit with His (the Father’s) Spirit. The Father answers the prayer of the Son through His word which, if received, continues to bring regeneration and renewing to our lives so that we grow in the capacity to live the life of Christ. As we pray in the Spirit, we are enabled to show forth the virtues of Jesus Christ as members of His body. This becomes an ongoing dimension of our lives. This ‘prayer meeting’ describes how we are to walk according to the Spirit.

The Father also gives us grace to participate in the sufferings of Christ. Through the power of Eternal Spirit, which is the sevenfold Spirit of God, Christ was able to offer Himself in the midst of His sufferings without spot or blemish to God. This same capacity of Eternal Spirit is made available to us. Our sufferings are ‘according to the will of God’. This is why Paul said that we should not despise the chastening of the Father. ‘He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.’

References:

Rom 8:25-27 1Pe 4:19
Rev 2:23 Rom 13:14
Heb 9:14

Further Study:

Hebrews 12

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 27

Firstfruits believers

The goal of the gospel is to see every believer established as a *firstfruits* Christian. A firstfruits Christian is a person who has been born of God, planted in Christ's body and joined to the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, and has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Because of this, a firstfruits Christian is able to bring forth the good fruit of the righteousness of God. God's righteousness is being revealed in them as they are sanctified to their name as a son of God by walking after the Spirit.

Sanctification now defines the entire life and culture of a son of God - in the body of Christ, in their family, and in the contexts of the world in which they live. Paul summarised the outcome of our sanctification by writing, 'But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive [have] your benefit [fruit], resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, *eternal life*. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Importantly, as firstfruits Christians, we have the ministry of reconciliation. Because we have received the message ourselves, and have this treasure in our hearts, we are now called to minister the word of reconciliation to others. By this means, our hearers have the opportunity to be delivered from their bondage to sin and death, and to experience the joy of being restored to the magnificent and high calling of sonship. Paul declared, 'Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and *He has committed to us the word of reconciliation*'.

References:

Rom 6:22-23 Act 26:18
2Co 5:18-19 1Co 6:11
Rev 14:4

Further Study:

James 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 28