

Restoring my Soul

A five day devotional guide

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First love

'First love' is a term that Jesus coined in His letter to the leaders of the church in Ephesus. He said to them, 'I have this against you, that you have left your *first love*'. Although Jesus was initially addressing the Ephesian presbytery, He concluded His letter by declaring, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'. Evidently, the call to live in first love applies to everyone in Christ's church.

What is first love? When Jesus admonished the Ephesian leaders for leaving their first love, He was not saying that they had simply lost the feeling of love that they experienced when they first believed. We know this because He called them to 'remember therefore *from where* you [collectively] have fallen; repent and *do the first works*'. We observe that first love is a *place or context* that involves *relationship* with others. Within this context, there are specific works to do.

Some thirty years prior to John's record of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul explained first love to the Ephesian Christians by drawing their attention to the great love of God which was revealed when Christ died on the cross for all men. This offering was the expression of the love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. By joining this offering through baptism, a born-again son of God could be brought back from the death of sin *with* Christ, and raised up and seated together *with Him in heavenly places*. Paul explained that, as sons of God *abide* together in Christ, they are able to do the good works of sonship that God named for them.

References:

Rev 2:4-5, 7 1Jn 4:16
Rom 5:8 1Jn 3:23
Joh 3:16

Further Study: Revelation 2

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 2

Heavenly places

Paul's letter to the Ephesians reveals that the context of first love is *heavenly places*, and that the first works are the *works of sonship* that we are to do in Christ. Where, then, is heavenly places? The answer is simple. Heavenly places is where we have *fellowship* with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and with other sons of God.

Living in this fellowship is only possible for a person who has been born of the Spirit and has joined the offering of Christ through baptism. Offering is the way of life in heavenly places. It is the expression of love that is 'of God'. Living this way is 'heavenly'. It cannot be understood, or achieved, through fallen human, or fleshly, endeavours. This means that, to live in first love, a person must be joined to a process through which their fallen propensities, which Paul identified as the operation of 'another law' within them, are removed from their life.

Living in first love has implications for how a son of God lives and relates personally, within a Christian household, and as a member in particular of the corporate body of Christ. It equally, and necessarily, involves prayer in the secret place, godly living within families, and communing together at the table of the Lord.

The key to understanding first love is to consider *how* we come together for fellowship. This firstly relates to how we participate together as a congregation of believers at the communion table, and then how we present ourselves for fellowship in our families, and minister the life of God as members of the body of Christ. First love is the essential foundation for all aspects of Christian living. A spiritual person who is motivated by first love is able to judge all things; yet, they are judged by no-one according to the flesh.

References:

Eph 2:6

Jud 1:12

Eph 1:3

1Co 2:15

Rom 7:23

Further Study:

Ephesians 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 3

The tree of life

Christ said to the Ephesian church that those who returned to first love, by overcoming what had caused them to fall from fellowship, would be able to 'eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God'. Christ's reference to the tree of life in the Paradise of God, highlights that first love was the culture of life in the garden of Eden before the fall. This point helps us to understand the practicalities of first love in heavenly places, and how Christians can fall from this fellowship. Consider, for example, the reference that Paul made to Eve's transgression in the garden of Eden, as he raised concerns regarding the fellowship in Corinth. He wrote, 'I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ'.

As we consider what life was like in the garden of Eden, we note that Adam and Eve met and conversed with Yahweh Father, Son and Holy Spirit each day, in the cool of the evening. This would have been about the time of day the couple were preparing their evening meal, using the fruit of the trees that were growing in the garden. Of all the fruiting trees that were in the garden, the most important was *the tree of life*. This fruit was the central feature of Adam and Eve's fellowship meal with Yahweh, each day. The fruit of this tree gave life to Adam and Eve as they received the word of God. As they ate, His word sustained their mortal bodies and provided them with wisdom and direction for the works that they were to do each day in the garden.

References:

Rev 2:7
2Co 11:3
Gen 3:8

Mat 24:12-13
2Th 1:3

Further Study:

John 6

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 4

The communion gathering

The tree of life was central to Adam and Eve's fellowship with God in the garden of Eden. Likewise, eating and drinking the communion elements is essential to first love in Christ Jesus. This is because Jesus is the tree of life. He said, 'Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood *has eternal life*, and I will *raise him up* at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood *abides in Me, and I in him.*'

In the same way that the fruit of the tree of life sustained and equipped Adam and Eve as they received the word of God, everything that the communion elements represent for us becomes increasingly substantial in our lives as we receive and obey God's word. It is because of this word that we are able to participate in the fellowship of first love in heavenly places.

Clearly, first love is more than just coming together for a communion service each week. It would appear that the Ephesian Christians were regularly meeting for communion. Yet, there was something about the way they were meeting and functioning together as a presbytery, and as a church, that meant they had fallen from first love.

It is sobering to consider that they were *unaware* this had happened. Their ignorance demonstrated that their capacity to perceive their spiritual condition had been hindered. Similarly, when Paul observed the conduct of the Christians in Corinth, he noted that they did not commune together for the better, but for the worse. This is because, among other factors, they were divided and loyal to various factions; they were inconsiderate of one another; and they showed themselves to be wise in their own eyes. Instead of resulting in blessing, the way in which they were communing together was bringing them under judgement.

References:

1Jn 1:3

Rev 2:2-3

1Co 11:17-21

1Co 3:18-21

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 11

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 5

The calling of God

When a person has been born of God, they receive their name as a son of God, and the Spirit of the Son as their life. Then, through baptism, they are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering. When we consider the implications of new birth and baptism, we observe *two key elements of sanctification*. Through His parables, Jesus described these two elements of sanctification as minas and talents.

It is helpful to understand that a son of God's name, mina and talent, are given to them by God according to their *calling*. The calling of God is His purpose for each person. It is what God has sovereignly chosen, or elected them to be and to do, as His son. The calling of God is not dependent upon the natural capacities that are associated with a person's identity. Concerning this point, Paul wrote, 'For you see *your calling*, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. But *God has chosen* the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.' God did this so that no flesh would glory in His presence.

If a person's calling is who God has chosen them to be, they make their election sure by doing the works that He has prepared for them to do as a son of God. This is what the Scriptures call 'sanctification'. We could say that a person's sanctification is the *expression* of their calling. It involves a person presenting themselves in the authority of their name, by faith, for fellowship in the body of Christ, and multiplying the life of God through offering.

References:

Luk 19:13 1Ti 2:7
Mat 25:15 1Th 4:3
Act 9:15

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 1

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 6

Name and mina

In the first instance, sanctification is revealed through the expression of a person's name as a son of God. Of course, we are not referring to the name that they received from their parents when they were a baby. The name of every person in history was discussed by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and recorded in the book of life, before the creation of the heavens and the earth. This name defined who God planned them to be and the works that they were to do as a son of God. King David described God's thoughts regarding a person's name as 'more in number than the sand'.

A person receives their name by the grace of the Father when they are born from above of incorruptible seed through the living and enduring word of God. Inherent in a person's name is ownership of their identity and the authority to express their sonship. This authority is not their name, but is the mandate to do the works of their named sonship. In this regard, we recall the words of Jesus, who said to His disciples, 'Behold, *I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.*'

The authority of a person's name is typified in one of Jesus' parables as a mina. He taught that 'a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, "Do business until I come".' The reward for multiplying the mina, which each slave received in equal measure, was authority over cities in the new heavens and new earth.

References:

Php 4:3

1Pe 1:23

Psa 139:17-18

Heb 13:6

Luk 10:19-20

Further Study:

Luke 19

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 9

Receiving a mina

A new believer is firstly adopted as a son of God. Then, because they are a son by adoption, the Father births them from above with the seed of His life, making Him the Father of their spirit. At the same time, the Father gives to them the Spirit of the Son of God, through whom they are able to express and demonstrate their sonship as a member of the Father's household. Inherent in the name of a son of God is the ownership of their identity and the authority to express their sonship. The mina represents the authority that has been given to them as a mandate to do the works that belong to their sonship.

In the parable of the minas, we know that the nobleman refers to Jesus. If the mina represents the authority of a person's name that is received from the Father, from whom every name in heaven and on earth is derived, why did Jesus teach that the mina was given by Him? The answer is that the interaction between the nobleman and his servants describes the point at which an *adopted* son of God begins to *confess Christ as their Lord*, by the Holy Spirit. Christ then directs them to the Father to be born again of His word. Regarding this birthing process, Jesus said, 'Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but *the Father abiding in Me does His works.*'

Through the process of being born from above, every believer receives a mina from the Father by the word of Christ. Each believer has the same quotient of authority to be the son whom the Father has named them to be. In this regard, the Father loves and honours each son of God, equally!

References:

Eph 3:14-15

1Co 12:3

Joh 14:6,10

Heb 12:9

Eph 1:5

Further Study:

John 5

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 10

A measure of faith

A son of God can only multiply their mina by faith. This is because *faith* is the capacity to exercise the authority of one's name. As Paul explained, '*Without faith it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a *rewarder of those who seek Him*'. A person pleases God by being the person that He named them to be. The reward associated with pleasing the Father, by multiplying the mina, is authority over cities in the new heavens and earth.

Paul specifically described the capacity to exercise the authority of one's name, as 'a measure of faith' that is allotted to each person by God the Father, once a person has received their name through the process of new birth. This faith *continues* to come to them 'from faith to faith', by hearing the word of God. It is evident that a person has received faith from God when they present themselves to do the works that are associated with their name. As the apostle James testified, 'I will show you my faith by my works'. These works are called 'the obedience of faith'.

Doing the works of sonship in the obedience of faith, reveals 'the righteousness of faith'. The *first* work of the righteousness of faith is to *speak*. A person who stands in faith to speak in the authority of their name, is not seeking empowerment from others for a ministry work. Neither are they seeking to function by carnal ministry modes. Rather, a person speaks in the righteousness of faith because the word that has been preached to them is now in them; it is in their mouth and in their heart. With this faith, a son of God presents themselves in the authority of their name, for fellowship with their brethren.

References:

Heb 11:6

Rom 12:3

Rom 1:5-6, 17

Rom 16:25-26

Further Study:

Romans 10

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 11

A spirit of adoption

A person's viability as a son of God is not proven through self-defined initiatives. This is *not* what it means to stand in faith. A person receives faith by hearing the word of God. Faith is given to them so that they can stand in the authority of their name to *meet and speak* in fellowship with their brethren in Christ. This is the *context* in which they *speak in a spirit of faith*.

Importantly, a person who has received a spirit of faith, is *no longer in bondage to fear*. A person experiences fear when their imagination of what the blessing of God means for their life is not being realised. When their imagined hope is not being realised, their heart becomes sick, or depressed. This state of depression will be evidenced by the frustration, agitation, cynicism, fatigue and partiality they demonstrate as they live their life and interact with others in the church. Motivated by fear, a person will either seek personal validity and empowerment through association with a key figure or group that they perceive to be spiritually pre-eminent; or, they will endeavour to find themselves through their own fleshly, religious efforts.

In contrast, when a person speaks in a spirit of faith, they are demonstrating, with joyful assurance, that they are a son of God. The Holy Spirit, who continues to regenerate and renew their identity, is also bearing witness to their spirit that they are a son of God. For this reason, they press in, by faith, to obtain the inheritance they are entitled to as a son of the Father. They become partakers of the divine nature through participation in Christ's offering. The motivation to participate in this offering is a spirit of adoption, and is expressed through a believer's ongoing and assured cry of, 'Abba! Father!'

References:

2Co 4:13

Rom 8:15

1Co 2:11-12

Pro 13:12

Tit 3:4-5

2Pe 1:3-4

Further Study:

Psalm 116

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 12

Sincere faith

Jesus said that a tree is known by its fruit. The spiritual condition of a person is not dependent upon their comprehension of theological concepts, or their many well-intentioned endeavours, but on their ability to meet, and be met, by their brethren *in one Spirit*. A person who has difficulty meeting, or is difficult to meet, is not walking according to the Spirit. The way they relate with others will be instinctively *strategic*, as they seek affirmation from others for the image that they have of themselves. This complex mode of living and relating is fleshly and deceived. It is an alternative to living and relating to others in sincere faith.

A person who has received the faith of God ceases to live in a spirit of fear. Because they trust their Father, they are able to trust, and openly converse with, their brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the childlike simplicity that Jesus said was necessary for receiving and entering the kingdom of heaven. Specifically, He said, 'Truly I say to you, unless you are converted [turn from living in bondage to fear] and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven'. To become like a little child is to cry, 'Abba! Father!', in a spirit of adoption.

Paul was testifying to this simplicity, when he wrote, 'For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves [lit: we had our conversation] in the world in *simplicity and godly sincerity*, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God [talents], and more abundantly toward you'. Their faith was evident because they presented themselves for fellowship according to their sanctification. From this fellowship of offering, they were able to minister the grace of God to others.

References:

Mat 12:33 Mat 18:3
1Co 12:13 2Co 1:12
1Ti 1:5-6 Rom 8:15

Further Study:

1 John 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 13

Talents

Our sanctification as a son of God includes the name, mina, and talents that we have received from Him. Jesus taught that the kingdom of heaven 'is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.' Talents are from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and are given by Christ. They refer to the four dimensions of God's grace that come from Christ's hand. The four dimensions of grace are the Spirit of God, the life of God, the word of God, and the love of God. Sons of God receive grace through the ministry of messengers, who are in Christ's hand as He walks among His lampstand churches.

Jesus explained that talents are given to a person according to their abilities. These abilities are a feature of a person's identity, which continues to be regenerated and renewed by the Holy Spirit. We know that the abilities of children emerge as they grow and mature. However, they also need to be nurtured through training and diligent application. That said, *abilities are not talents*. While talent is given according to ability, not everyone who has abilities receives multiple talents. Talents belong to a person's calling. Failure to recognise the difference between abilities and talents has been a source of confusion in the church. This confusion has given rise to presumption and corruption within presbyteries and Christian congregations.

It is important to recognise that a person receives the gift of talents from Christ, *after* they have been born of God and come into the house of the Son through baptism. That is, talents are given to slaves of righteousness. Their slavehood to Christ results in their sanctification as a son of God.

References:

Rev 1:20

Eph 4:7, 11-13

Eph 3:8

Rom 6:19

Further Study:

Matthew 25

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 16

Stewarding the grace

A person exercises their talent as a son of God according to the authority of the mina. In this regard, we note the teaching of Paul, who explained that faith grants a person access into the grace of God, in which a believer stands and exults in the hope of the glory of God. This is the hope of receiving their full inheritance as a son of God.

We learn from Paul that the gifts and the calling of God are given without repentance. However, this does not mean that, once a person has received a gift from Christ, their salvation, or sonship, is assured. Jesus was making this point when He said to His disciples, ‘Many will say to Me in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?” And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practise lawlessness!”’

Evidently, the gift of Christ can be used to advance the ministry projection or imagination that a person has of themselves. This is in conflict with their calling, and means that their ministry endeavours are not an expression of their sanctified sonship. Christ did not know these ones, because the exercise of their talent was not according to the sanctification of their name, by faith. Through sanctification, a person and their gift should be the same thing. *They should be the gift.*

As a believer participates in the offering of Christ as a member of His body, they are also multiplying the grace of life as a son of God. Jesus taught that their reward in the new heavens and earth, depends upon the extent to which the talents they received in this age are multiplied.

References:

Rom 5:1-2 Mat 25:20-21
Rom 11:29 1Co 15:10
Mat 7:22-23

Further Study:

Ephesians 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 17

Sober judgement

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul declared, 'I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound [or sober] judgement, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith'. A person who has received a measure of faith demonstrates that they are living by faith when they present themselves for fellowship, according to their sanctification. This is a person who views themselves, and others, with sober judgement. They do not think more, or less, highly of themselves than they ought.

A believer with sound judgement will have cast down, by the Spirit, the imaginations and high thoughts that they have of themselves. Instead of pursuing an alternative image of themselves, or their ministry, they have brought every thought, regarding who they are and how they function, into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Captivity to the obedience of Christ describes our slavehood in the house of the Son. It is only when we present ourselves as slaves of His righteousness, by joining the fellowship of His offering, that we receive a measure of grace from Him. Then, as we make offering with the grace we have received, it results in our sanctification as sons of God.

We can consider 'sober judgement' as 'rightly discerning the body of Christ' and our participation within His body. Paul warned the Corinthians that we must partake of the communion meal with sober judgement; otherwise, we will eat and drink judgement to ourselves. When we do not discern the body of Christ from the basis of sanctification, we become weak and sick, and may even die before our time. However, when we partake of the communion with sober judgement, we receive the grace that is necessary for our work as sons of God and members of the body of Christ.

References:

Rom 12:3, 6-8
1Co 11:28-29
Rom 6:22

1Th 5:8
1Pe 1:13

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Romans 12

Proverbs 18

Worship

A person who thinks with sober judgement is able to properly worth themselves and worth others. This is fundamental to worshipping in spirit and in truth. Jesus taught that 'God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must *worship in spirit and truth*'. When we are born of God, we have the ability to worship the Lord because the Spirit of God is in us. This is evident because the Holy Spirit gives to us the capacity to love and appreciate others. This capacity replaces the self-centredness which, otherwise, gives rise to comparisons and competition, as well as to jealousy and conflict. These fallen attitudes and behaviours cause the wounding of others, and our own alienation from fellowship within families, the church, and the presbytery.

Worshipping in spirit and truth means relating to others *with integrity*. A son of God who has integrity is not attempting to project an image of themselves that is self-defined or created. They are not presenting themselves one way in a particular fellowship context, such as the church, and then engaging in another context, such as their home, in a different manner.

As we are increasingly becoming real about who we are, and recognising the name and grace of our brethren, we are being restored to first love at the communion table and in the presbytery. By this means, *the ground of deceit is undermined*. This means that the truth regarding the names of each person is being made known, and the liberty of the sons of God is being promoted.

It is our ability to worship that enables genuine relationship with our brethren, which is the capacity to be joined together in truth. Relationship is demonstrated by the action of laying down one's life for the brethren in the midst of the fellowship of the body of Christ, and also under Christ's hand in the presbytery.

References:

Joh 4:24 2Co 10:8
2Co 1:12 1Co 9:2
Joh 8:31-32

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 13

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 19

Following another's faith

The foundation of genuine relationship is the *communication of faith*. This communication joins the sanctification of a person's name with the authority of the name, by which an individual stands up and confesses faith in their calling as a son of God. Then, as a firstfruits Christian, they are able to encourage others *to follow their faith*. The apostle Paul exhorted believers, saying, 'Remember those who rule over you [who lead], who have spoken the word of God to you, *whose faith follow*, considering the outcome of their conduct [*conversation*]'.

Every son of God must live by faith. If this is so, how do we 'follow' another's faith? The life and fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit reveals the answer to this question. Each Person in the Godhead says, 'Follow My faith', by presenting Themselves in fellowship to make offering. The nature of each Person's offering, which manifests the works of Their faith, is to *reveal the other*. That is, They follow one another's faith by standing in faith and giving Themselves to reveal another.

We follow another's faith by joining the fellowship of offering in the same spirit of faith that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit demonstrate. We are able to follow another's faith because we are standing in the authority of our name, and are perceiving and receiving the authority of another's name as it is being exercised by their faith. The first step in offering is to receive what others lay down, or minister, to us through their offering. As we receive and live what has been ministered to us in sanctification, the one who ministered it to us, by offering, is revealed. At the same time, our own name, or sanctification, is revealed as we are expressing what was given to us.

References:

Heb 13:7 Heb 6:12
1Co 11:1 Php 3:17
Joh 13:15 1Th 1:6

Further Study: 2 Thessalonians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 20

Fellowship

In worship and relationship, a person is able to have fellowship with their brethren in Christ. The apostle John explained that this fellowship is with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The context for fellowship is called 'the name of the Lord'. This is why Jesus said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them'.

It is only possible for a person to have fellowship with others in Christ when the love of God has been poured into their heart. The love of God is the basis for true fellowship. This will be tangibly evident as brethren encourage one another to sanctification, meet in one Spirit, and show affection and compassion for one another.

Fellowship is where the communication of faith becomes effective in the communion service. This is because the communion service is the place where every member of the body of Christ, who presents themselves in faith, is equipped with grace from Christ for the works of their sonship. The fellowship of the communion extends to fellowship in families and in the presbytery, as sons of God stand and exercise the grace they have received. Writing to his friend Philemon, Paul said, 'I pray that the fellowship [or *communication*] of your faith may *become effective* through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake'. The fellowship of faith becomes effective when it leads to the works of righteousness. How does this happen?

The grace of God is depicted in Christ's parable as talents. Paul described the grace of God as 'Christ's gift'. This gift is ministered by individuals from the fellowship of the four administrations of grace within the body of Christ. In other words, the gifts of grace are ministered from the offering of Christ through the word of graced messengers who have been restored to the hand of Christ as part of a presbytery.

References:

1Jn 1:3

Mat 18:20

Php 1:6

Mat 25:14-15

Eph 4:7

Rev 1:20

Further Study:

Philippians 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 23

Grace from His hand

A presbytery that functions in first love is in the right hand of Christ. It is a fellowship of overseers, deacons and firstfruits brethren, whose relationship with each other is marked by effective communication and dialogue. Although the command that calls for obedience and sanctification is initiated from grace that is given to individual presbyters, it does not come from them as an autocratic demand that takes dominion over the faith of others.

In the body of Christ, the ministry of grace proceeds from a dialogue of fellowship, which is facilitated by craftsmen who are in His right hand. Craftsmen are men who have been given apostolic, prophetic, teaching and evangelistic grace from Christ. They are able to focus the operation of the gifts according to the four administrations of grace.

A person who has presented themselves to participate in this fellowship, is able to receive grace as it is ministered from the hand of Christ by ascension-gifted men who are also part of the presbytery. By this means, they are equipped to minister, through offering, from the basis of the four administrations as well. This is what Paul meant when he said that the saints are equipped for the work of ministry by apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers, and that this ministry results in the building up of the body of Christ.

King David testified to this very principle, when he prayed, 'Now therefore, our God we thank You and praise Your glorious name [the context of fellowship]. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You.' This is literally translated as, 'out of Your own hand we have given You'. David was acknowledging that he was only able to offer what he had received from the hand of God.

References:

Rev 1:20 Act 2:42
Eph 4:12 Gal 2:9
1Ch 29:13-14

Further Study: Ephesians 4**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 24

Offering by faith

A believer who is standing in sanctification, and presenting themselves by faith in fellowship, is able to receive what is being given to them in offering. In faith, when they receive what is ministered to them, *it becomes theirs*. Then, according to sanctification, with the capacities of the talents that belong to their name and abilities, they are able to multiply what was given to them.

They make offering by laying down their life to reveal another, as well as to reveal what has been given to them. They multiply what has been given to them *by trading with their talent*. In reality, this means they are doing the works that the Father fore-planned for them before the creation of the heavens and the earth. By this means, the will of God is achieved in their life.

In the fellowship of offering, the one who has received what is ministered to them, will maintain integrity with those who ministered to them. In other words, they keep faith with their brethren in Christ and with those who deacon the offerings in the house of the Lord. By this means, they reveal, by offering, the grace of God that has been committed to them. This requires relational integrity and diligent application.

A son of God who presents themselves by faith to participate in offering, is presenting themselves for service *as a living sacrifice*. Offering is how they live. Their obedience is evident as they do the work that is given to them to do, in love, and according to their name. It is in relation to a work that has been given to them that a person can show fruitful initiative. Through this mode of offering, the will of God, or one's sanctification, is proven. What is true concerning one's sonship can be affirmed, and what is imagined or projected can be put off.

References:

Mat 25:16 1Co 15:10
Eph 2:10 Php 2:17
Luk 17:10

Further Study:

Hebrews 11

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 25

The example of Jeremiah

The commission of Jeremiah provides a helpful illustration of the elements of sanctification, fellowship and offering. In order to effectively minister the word of the Lord, Yahweh required Jeremiah to stand up in faith, according to his name. The mandate that Yahweh was giving to Jeremiah was consistent with his name. He said, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations'.

Yahweh could not meet Jeremiah, nor engage him in his works, until Jeremiah received faith and then presented himself, by faith, to receive what Yahweh was wanting to give to him. Jeremiah needed to let go of his fleshly perceptions of himself and his inadequacies. He said to Yahweh, 'Alas, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth.' These excuses demonstrated an absence of faith. Like Abraham, Jeremiah needed to be delivered from his fears and receive the faith of God for the work to which he was being called.

To deliver Jeremiah of fear, and grant faith to him, Yahweh said to Jeremiah, "*Do not say, 'I am a youth', because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you*", declares the Lord.' By this means, Jeremiah was receiving the ear and the mouth of a disciple so that, in a spirit of faith, he would be able to participate in the prophetic work to which God was calling him. Jeremiah then recorded that 'the Lord *stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth"*.' We note in this passage that the grace of God was coming from the hand of Yahweh to equip and send Jeremiah as a prophetic messenger.

References:

Exo 3:10-11 1Sa 15:17
1Sa 12:6 Isa 6:8
Jdg 6:14-15 2Ti 1:7

Further Study:

Jeremiah 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 24

Living in first love

The Spirit is calling every Christian to live in first love. First love is not simply an ambition we are to have, which will be realised once we have been made perfect. We are called to live in first love, now!

The capacity to live by love is given to us when we are born of God, are baptised into Christ, and continue to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. The apostle Peter reminds us that 'His divine power has given to us *all things that pertain to life and godliness*, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue'.

We are all in the process of being restored to first love, which will be the context and nature of our life forever in the new heavens and earth. We all need restoration because we have all been affected by the fall. To fall from first love is to live by principles that are not heavenly. They are earthly, or worldly, principles. Paul summarised these principles as 'another law' that is within us because of the fall. It is a law that is other than the law of love that defines the way that God lives.

A person who accepts their need to change and be delivered from living by their own law, and also accepts that the Lord is causing them to grow in the capacity to live in first love, *is already in heavenly places*. This is what Jesus meant, when He said, 'To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God'. They understand that the process for overcoming sin and the other law, is an inherent feature of life in first love.

References:

Rom 5:5
Rom 7:23
2Pe 1:3

Rev 2:7
Rom 8:16-17

Further Study:

Hebrews 10

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 25