

The love of God

The most important thing that we must know and learn from Bible study is the lesson that we first learned when we decided to commit ourselves to Christ and become a Christian. What was the lesson, or message, that we heard at the beginning of our Christian life? The lesson that we learnt was *God is love*. 'God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.' The apostle John called this 'first love'. We are told by John that if we let the love of God abide within us, we will abide in the Father and Son and have eternal life.

God makes His abode in us when His love is given to us by the Holy Spirit. We are born of God as we receive the love of God. Our fears are cast out by His perfect love. Before we received the love of God in our heart, our greatest fear was the punishment of death. Under its slavery, we were completely self-centred and driven to control our environment in a vain attempt to delay our inevitable end. Having been born of God, we can, and must, let go of fear and control.

A life lived by control can appear quite religious. A Christian who tries to live this way is seeking to be saved through the satisfactory fulfilment of a set of actions, through which God is obliged to save them. They are not availing themselves of grace or walking according to the Spirit. In the absence of grace, and acutely aware of the weaknesses of their flesh, it is little wonder that Christians can begin to disqualify themselves.

References:

1Jn 4:7, 16, 18

1Jn 2:24

Joh 14:23

Rom 5:5

Gal 5:16-18, 25

Further Study:

1 John 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 31

Relationship and understanding

The outcome of the love of God being poured into our hearts is *relationship*. We are made part of the body of Christ, the church, and come into the family of God. Having been delivered of fear, our interest is no longer in avoiding death, but rather, living for God. The preoccupation of our life completely changes. If we love the Father, we will also love His family, the church, in *deed and truth*. This is how we know that ‘we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things’.

Having been born of God, we are now able to fellowship with others about the kind of love that God the Father has given us. His desire that we become His sons is the ‘great love’ that He has for us. This new understanding that is given to us by the Father and the Son, needs to be fully comprehended and appreciated in relation to all its expressions and implications.

When the love of God is poured into our hearts, we also come to an understanding of how God deals with us as sons. He is our Father and deals with us in love, to deliver us from sin and cause us to grow and mature as His children. We must never forget the admonition and instruction of the Lord that He speaks to us at the beginning of our induction into His family. These instructions are called ‘the first principles of the doctrine of Christ’ and are essential as part of our initiation into the culture of His household.

References:

2Co 5:14-15 Eph 3:17-19
1Jn 4:20-21 Heb 12:7-11
1Jn 3:1, 18-20 Heb 5:12

Further Study:

1 John 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 1

Predestined to adoption

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul proclaimed that the Father predestined us to adoption as sons, through Jesus Christ, before the foundation of the world. According to the Father's will, the promise of adoption was given to Abraham. This promise gave Abraham the hope of sonship and he believed in that hope. This was true for all the Old Testament saints. A spirit of adoption rested upon them and they lived by faith as the substance of things hoped for. However, they did not yet possess the adoption.

Paul was clear that the adoption was not available for mankind until the work of redemption on the cross was complete. He wrote to the Galatians, 'When the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, so that He might redeem those who were under the law, that *we might receive adoption as sons*'.

Once a person has been adopted as a son of God, they are a joint heir with Christ and able to receive the inheritance that belongs to an *authentic* son of God. This inheritance is the divine nature. Peter declared that this inheritance of the divine nature is the outcome of God's precious and magnificent promises. Because a person is a son by adoption, the Father sends forth the Spirit of His Son into their heart crying, 'Abba! Father!' This is the cry of a newly born son of God. The Holy Spirit also bears witness with their spirit that they are a son of God.

References:

Eph 1:4-5 Act 7:17
 Heb 11:1 Rom 4:13
 Gal 4:5-6 Heb 6:13
 2Pe 1:4 Gal 3:18
 Rom 8:15-16

Further Study: Ephesians 1

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 2

A righteousness apart from the law

Jesus Christ was born under the law so that He could redeem those who were under the law. In his letter to the Romans, Paul established that the righteousness of the law has made the whole world guilty before God. No person can be justified before God by doing the works of the law. He then continued, 'But now the righteousness of God apart from the law has been revealed'. The righteousness of God apart from the law, was revealed by the offering of Jesus Christ on the cross.

The offering of Jesus Christ on the cross was the sovereign work of God to redeem mankind. Paul said, 'God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were *still sinners*, Christ died for us'. And further to this, 'If when we were *enemies* we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life'. The offering of Jesus Christ on the cross has made a way for every person to be released, or redeemed, from their slavery to sin and death.

Jesus Christ was the messenger of God, proclaiming from the cross that sons of men can be redeemed, adopted, and born of God. This was the testimony and the message of His blood that was shed for us. He has preached peace to all who are afar off and those who are near. He has given all men access by one Spirit to the Father to receive adoption as sons and then be born of God. In His blood, Jesus Christ has established a New Covenant for a new humanity.

References:

Rom 3:20-21 Gal 2:16
Rom 5:8-11 Tit 2:13-14
Eph 2:17-18 Gal 4:4-5

Further Study:

Romans 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 3

The cost of redemption

Jesus Christ proclaimed that He came to give His life, or His soul, as a ransom for many. His work of redeeming mankind began in the garden of Gethsemane when His blood began to be shed for us, and concluded when He declared from the cross, 'It is finished!' It is important to recognise that the redemption of mankind was a *costly work*. There was a cost to the Father in offering His only Son for us. And there was a cost to the Son in enduring the suffering and judgement of the cross.

The shedding of Christ's blood on the cross was an essential element of Christ's offering. And the shedding of Christ's blood involved and required suffering. Unlike the offerings that were placed on the altar under the Old Covenant, Jesus Christ suffered and His blood was shed as a *living sacrifice*. For this reason, we cannot separate the blood of Christ from His suffering. Each wound that was inflicted upon Christ was a specific point of suffering and caused His blood to be shed for our redemption. When His blood was shed, life was made available on the altar to redeem us and bring us back from the death of sin.

The blood of Christ was the *treasure* that redeemed or ransomed us from the power of sin and death. It was the coinage that *gave life* to us when we were dead in trespasses and sins. The precious blood of Christ redeemed us back from the death of sin and from the condemnation and curse of the law. The apostle Peter declared that we have been redeemed with 'precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ'.

References:

Mar 10:45

Mat 20:28

Joh 19:30

1Pe 1:18-19

Eph 1:7

Rom 8:2

Gal 3:13

Further Study:

Hebrews 9

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 4

He has given us an understanding

The apostle John declared that the Son of God has come and ‘given us an understanding so that we know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.’ This verse is a helpful summary of the gospel. In this section, we will consider the first part of this verse. A new believer is born of God when they have a personal interaction with Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He personally gives them an understanding so that they know the Father; that is, Him who is true. In his Gospel, John said that the Son of God is the ‘true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man’.

This personal revelation of Christ is more than the illumination that a person receives when a Christian first shares the message of the gospel with them. We recall that John the Baptist was sent by God to testify that Jesus Christ is the true Light of the world. Jesus described John as a burning and shining lamp. He bore witness to the truth, and many people rejoiced in the light of his message for a short time. However, his word was not able to deliver the people from their sins and give them the right to become sons of God. The work of John the Baptist was to bear witness that Jesus Christ is the Messenger of God and Saviour of the world.

Jesus said that His testimony was greater than the testimony of John. He did not receive His testimony from man, and nor did He need John the Baptist to confirm the truth of His own testimony as the Son of God. Jesus had received His testimony from God the Father. The works that He did also bore witness that He was the Son of God.

References:

1Jn 5:9, 20
Joh 1:8-9
Joh 5:33-36

Further Study:

John 5

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 7

A personal interaction

Every Christian must have a personal interaction with Jesus Christ as the Son of God. It is not sufficient for a person to receive the testimony of men or simply believe in a doctrine. The apostle John wrote in his first letter, 'If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son'. The Son of God is the only One who can reveal the Father. He is the only One who is the Saviour of men and the Seed who comes into the hearts of men, enabling them to be born as sons of God.

The apostle Paul constantly resisted the inclination of people to follow him, or turn his word into a doctrine that could be believed without them personally meeting Jesus Christ. This problem was evident in the Corinthian church when they said, 'I am of Paul' or 'I am of Apollos'. Paul said that both he and Apollos were only servants *through whom* the Corinthians believed, when Jesus, the Lord Himself, gave an understanding to each person.

A new believer receives the testimony of God when the Father sends His Son to *personally* give them His life. When a person receives the life of the Son of God into their heart, they also receive the illumination or understanding of His life. John declared, 'In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men'. The life of the Son of God illuminates a person so that they *personally* know the Father and can relate to Him as *their* Father. This illumination and understanding will completely change their perspective on life. Having become a son of God, they will begin to look at issues, respond to situations, and relate to others as a son of God.

References:

1Jn 5:9, 20

1Co 3:4-5

Joh 1:4

Mat 11:27

Joh 6:40

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

1 John 5

Proverbs 8

The word of the cross

What is the work of a Christian who is sharing the gospel with their family, friends, neighbours, or work colleagues? Their first and foremost work is to simply introduce a person to Jesus Christ who is the Messenger of God. He is the Son of God and He is the Saviour of the world. Jesus testified, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me'. A Christian shares the gospel by bearing witness to Jesus Christ and His offering on the cross for all men.

The testimony of a Christian about Jesus Christ and His offering is called 'the word of the cross'. Paul declared to the Corinthians, 'I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified'. Paul did not deliver this message with persuasive words of wisdom, but rather in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. He testified that he had been sent by Christ to 'preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void'. The word of the cross is living, active, and powerful. It is foolishness to those who are perishing; but to those who are being saved, it is power of God.

When the word of the cross is communicated by a Christian, Jesus Christ is portrayed as 'lifted up' or crucified. The anointing of the Spirit of God upon the word enables anyone who receives it to see, by spiritual illumination, the same thing that the apostle John saw when he witnessed the soldier thrust the spear into the side of Jesus. In this way, Paul identified that Jesus Christ had been publicly portrayed as crucified before the eyes of the Galatian church, even though they had not been in Jerusalem to witness the historical event of Christ's death.

References:

Joh 14:6
1Co 2:2
1Co 1:17-18
Joh 19:34-35

Gal 3:1
Joh 12:34
Isa 61:1

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 1

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 9

Receiving the word

When a person hears the word of the cross, they will choose whether or not they will resist the word. God has given every person the dignity of this choice. When the word is preached, the Holy Spirit will begin to convict the hearer of sin, righteousness, and judgement. However, this work of the Holy Spirit can be resisted and the word can be rejected. This is why the Holy Spirit says, 'Today if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts'.

If a person does not 'harden their heart' to the message of the cross, then 'a spirit of grace and supplication' from the Father begins to be poured out upon them by the Holy Spirit. This is the same spirit of grace and supplication that was poured out upon all those who stood at the foot of the cross to witness the death of Christ. It is a spirit of grace that enables a person to receive the word, and be illuminated by the word, even while they are dead in trespasses and sins.

When a person *receives the word*, they also receive the faith to *believe the word*. Paul declared, 'Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ'. The faith to believe the word does not originate in the person receiving it. Faith is a gift that comes from God in the word itself. This is the same quality of faith that was given to Abraham, who is called the 'father of all who believe'. It is this faith that enables a person to believe the word and motivates them to receive the substance of what has been promised to them.

References:

Joh 16:8
Psa 95:8
Heb 3:7-8, 15
Heb 5:7
Zec 12:10

Rom 10:17
Eph 2:8
Rom 4:11
Joh 12:40
Rom 5:5

Further Study:

Hebrews 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 10

A spirit of grace and supplication

A spirit of grace enables a person to look upon the blood and water flowing from the side of Christ *and believe*; while at the same time, a spirit of supplication causes them to look upon Him whom they have pierced *and mourn*. This is the ongoing fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah. We know that Zechariah's prophecy will have a particular fulfilment for the Jews in the end of the age. However, we read in the book of Revelation that this prophecy is relevant for all nations. John declared, 'Every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and *all the tribes of the earth* will mourn over Him'.

A person who recognises that Christ suffered and died for their sin, will mourn over Him like one who mourns over the death of a firstborn son. This needs to become the personal experience of every believer. Zechariah declared that every family, every man, and every woman will mourn alone. Every person who looks upon Christ whom they have pierced will experience godly sorrow. This is a unique kind of mourning because it *includes a hope*. It compels the person to flee for refuge, to seek forgiveness, and to lay hold of the hope of becoming a son of God.

It is the spirit of grace and supplication from the Father that draws the hearer to Christ. Jesus said, 'No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me *draws him*; and I will raise him up on the last day'. Paul called this influence on a person, '*a spirit of adoption*'. A spirit of adoption is the strong motivation and compulsion that comes from the Father, through the Holy Spirit, that leads a person to Christ in the faith of becoming a son of God.

References:

Rev 1:7 Joh 12:32
 Zec 12:10-14 Joh 6:44
 1Th 4:13 Rom 8:15
 Heb 6:18 Joh 19:34

Further Study:

Zechariah 12

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 11

Coming to the Father

Jesus said, 'No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him'. The process of the Father drawing a person to Christ can happen quite quickly for some people, while others will be drawn to Christ over an extended season of interaction and relationship with those who are sharing the gospel with them.

When a new believer comes to the Father through Jesus Christ, the first thing they request is forgiveness. The Father forgives them because Christ's blood was shed for them. However, He forgives them on the condition that they forgive those who have sinned against them. This is an essential condition for receiving the forgiveness of God. Jesus was clear that if a person is not willing to forgive others, then the heavenly Father will not forgive them.

A new believer demonstrates their repentance by their willingness to forgive others and their earnest desire to turn from their sinful activities. They will also seek to make amends, where possible, for the impact of their sin on others. Jesus said that we must 'bear fruit in keeping with repentance'. Repentance is the first step on the journey toward genuine deliverance and salvation from sin. Paul said that godly sorrow produces repentance, which leads to salvation.

It is the mercy of God that enables a person to repent and demonstrate the fruit of repentance. The mercy of the Father toward a person who is dead in trespasses and sins is much more than His willingness to forgive them. Mercy is not simply a passive action where a person does not receive the penalty of judgement which they deserve. It is the active initiative of God toward a person to deliver them from their bondage to sin and death.

References:

Joh 6:44 Mat 18:32-35
Eph 1:7 2Co 7:10-11
Heb 9:22 Mat 3:8
Mat 6:12, 14-15 Eph 2:1

Further Study: Matthew 18:21-35

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 14

The mercy of God

In his letter to Titus, Paul identified that the mercy of God is shown toward a person by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. The *washing of regeneration* is the work of the Father, by the water of the word, to regenerate their human heart. The heart describes their whole inner person, including their mind, will and emotions. The *renewing by the Holy Spirit* is the work of the Father, by the Holy Spirit, to renew and strengthen their spirit. Their spirit is their unique identity as a person that has been given to them by God. Many Christians can testify of miraculous healing and deliverance when the mercy of God was first expressed toward them in this way.

The outcome of the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit is that a believer receives a new heart and a new spirit. The Lord declared through the prophet Ezekiel, 'I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.'

A person needs to receive a new heart and a new spirit before they can receive the life of Jesus Christ into their heart and receive the Holy Spirit as a personal possession. The evidence that a person has received a new heart is their willingness and eagerness to believe the word and obey the word of their sonship. The evidence that a person has received a new spirit is their ability to be genuinely accountable for the word that they have received.

References:

Tit 3:5
Eze 36:25-26
1Co 2:12

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Titus 3

Proverbs 15

The Father strengthens the inner man

The washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit are part of the work of the Father to strengthen a new believer in the inner man. Under the New Covenant, this strengthening work of the Father does *more* than recover what was lost by mankind because of Adam's sin, and what has been lost by each person as a consequence of their own sin and rebellion. The Father begins to strengthen each new believer in the inner man, by His very own Spirit and power, so that Christ can dwell in their heart by faith.

The Father personally strengthens each new believer with *resurrecting power* in their mortality, when He receives them as adopted sons. This is the same resurrection power that strengthened Jesus Christ in His mortality, in the garden of Gethsemane. The apostle prayed that the Ephesians would be illuminated to know the greatness of the Father's power toward those who believe. He declared that this was the same mighty power that the Father used to raise Christ from the dead.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul said that when a new believer is introduced to the Father through Jesus Christ, they gain *an introduction* by faith 'into this grace in which we stand'. This is more than the grace that enables a person to receive the word and believe in God when the word of the cross is first proclaimed to them. It is the particular grace from the Father that strengthens a believer in their humanity, to stand in the place of an adopted son. This grace continues to strengthen the humanity of each believer for the entirety of their lives so that they can participate in the sufferings of Christ. The apostle Peter called this 'the true grace of God' and exhorted us to stand firm in it.

References:

Eph 3:16-17 Rom 5:1-2
 Luk 22:43 1Pe 5:10,12
 Eph 1:19-20 2Co 4:16

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 4

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 16

Born of the Spirit

The disciples were born of the Spirit when Jesus breathed His life upon them after His resurrection. On the day of His resurrection, we recall that Christ spoke with the women who visited the tomb and commissioned them as His first witnessess. He said, 'Go to My brethren and say to them, "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God".' Christ ascended to the Father and was then sent by Him to the disciples, so that the disciples could receive His life and become sons of God.

When Jesus stood among the disciples in the upper room, He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. There were two distinct actions here. Jesus breathed 'His life' upon His disciples. He then gave them the Person of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were born of the Spirit when the Father sent Christ to give His Spirit and life to them. It is for this reason that the apostle Paul calls Jesus the 'life-giving Spirit'. This fulfilled the promise that Jesus had made to His disciples, 'I will not leave you as orphans; *I will come to you ... You will see Me; because I live, you will live also.*'

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit all come and take up residence in the heart of a person who is in the process of being born of God. Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make *Our home* with him'. Further to this, Jesus said, 'I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may be *with you forever*'. The Father sends the Holy Spirit, through the Son, to dwell in each son of God as the essence of the New Covenant. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of their eternal inheritance as sons of God.

References:

Joh 20:17,22

1Co 15:45

Joh 14:16, 18-19, 23

2Co 1:22

Eph 1:14

Act 1:4-5

Act 2:4

Further Study:

John 14

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 17

Born of incorruptible seed

When Jesus Christ comes to dwell in a person's heart, they are born of the incorruptible seed of the divine nature. The life of the divine nature becomes their personal possession when Christ comes to them *personally* as a seed and takes up residence in them. The Spirit of the Son comes into their heart as the seed of His life. The apostle Peter declared, 'You have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God'.

Jesus Christ is the full revelation of the word and the life of the Father. He is both the Messenger of God and the embodiment of the message of God. When the Father sends the Son of God, who is the Word, into the hearts of men, the Son brings both life and understanding to those who receive Him. We recall the words of John, 'In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men'. In this regard, Christ is much more than a messenger who communicates a message. He embodies the message and He gives the substance of the message to those who receive Him as life! It is this life that enables those who receive Him to be born of incorruptible seed and receive illumination as sons of God.

What is the difference between the life of Christ in the seed, and the life of Christ in His blood? The seed is the life of Christ that has been given to a believer as their personal possession of the divine nature, as an individual son of God. The blood is the life of Christ that has been shed for their redemption and is given to them when they join *the fellowship* of His sufferings. A person only possesses the blood of Christ as part of a fellowship with Him and with others in the many-membered body of Christ. It is the *fellowship of His life*.

References:

1Pe 1:23

Joh 1:1-4

2Pe 1:4

Php 3:10-11

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 15

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 18

The illumination of a son of God

The first and most obvious evidence that a person has been born of God is *illumination*. This is *not the same* illumination they experienced when the word of the cross was first preached to them and the spirit of grace and supplication was poured out upon them. That initial illumination caused them to look upon Him whom they had pierced, mourn, and come to the Father seeking forgiveness. It led them to repentance. However, there is a further illumination that a person receives when the Father sends forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts so that they are *born* as a son of God.

The illumination that comes to a newly born son of God is the understanding given to them by the Son of God when He gives them His life. John declared, ‘We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true’. He is the true Light who has come into the world to enlighten every man. When the Son of God gives His life to a new believer, it gives them the ability to see, comprehend and apprehend the amazing reality of being a son of God. It causes their perspective on life to change completely. They begin to see in the way that a son of God sees things, and respond to the issues of life in the way that a son of God responds.

Great joy and enthusiasm are the outcome of the seed of God’s divine nature germinating within a person. The Light of life begins to dawn in their heart and they ‘exult in the hope of the glory of God’. They have been born of God and become a partaker of the divine nature. They have received the seed of new creation life as a personal possession, and new life has begun to be evident in their lives.

References:

Gal 4:6
1Jn 5:20
Joh 1:9
Mat 13:20
Rom 5:2, 11

2Pe 1:4
Zec 12:10
2Co 7:9-11
Rev 1:7
Joh 8:12

Further Study: Galatians 4

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 21

Reigning in life

A believer who has received the word of the cross and exercised the right to become a son of God is the recipient of an *amazing gift and provision*. The blood that has been shed by Christ's offering on the cross has enabled them to be justified by faith. It has reconciled them to the Father so that they have been forgiven by God and have peace with God. Their heart has been regenerated by the washing of the word and their spirit has been renewed. They have gained an introduction, by faith, into the grace of God which enables them to stand and walk confidently as a son of God.

In this blessed position, they have received an abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness that enables them to reign in life. They have been born as a son of God. This is the outcome and the benefit for every believer because of the offering of Jesus Christ on the cross for us. Paul described the offering of Christ on the cross, for our sake and on our behalf, as 'one Man's righteous act' and the demonstration of 'one Man's obedience'. The grace of God has abounded toward many sons because of this one offering of Christ.

A newly born son of God has received the Spirit of the Father who is strengthening them in the inner man, the Spirit of the Son who has been given to them as a seed of the divine nature, and the Holy Spirit who is pouring the love of God into their heart.

References:

Rom 5:1-2, 5, 10, 17-19

Tit 3:5

Eph 3:16

Gal 4:6

Further Study:

Romans 5

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 22

What shall we say then?

When we consider all of the various elements of how a person is born as a son of God, it is certainly an amazing gift that has been given to us by the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What more could there possibly be?

Paul also recognised this amazing reality of having been saved by grace and born of God. He also asked, 'What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?' Of course, his answer was, 'May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?' Unless a person is baptised into the death of Christ, so that their natural inclination and propensity to sin is removed from their life, the seed of the divine nature will die and it will not produce the fruit of sonship.

This is the lesson of the parable of the sower. The seed of the divine nature will die within a person if they do not join the fellowship of Christ's death by baptism, so that they can be raised by the Father to walk in newness of life. Jesus likened those who have received the benefits of Christ's offering but do not want to participate in the fellowship of Christ's death, as those who have received the word on *stony ground*. They rejoice for a little while in the life of God that they have received, but they stumble at the need to join the fellowship of the cross.

References:

Rom 6:1-4
Mat 13:20-21
Rom 7:7
Php 3:10

Further Study:

Romans 6

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 23

Motivated to be baptised

When a new believer has been born as a son of God, they will be motivated to be baptised by the faith in their own regenerated heart, by the life of Christ within them, and the love of God that has been poured into their heart through the Holy Spirit. For this reason, there are many examples in the Bible where believers were born of God and then immediately baptised. We read in the book of Acts that three thousand people heard the gospel and were baptised on the Day of Pentecost. One of the most vivid examples of someone who wanted to be baptised immediately was the Ethiopian who said to Philip, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptised?'

The purpose and meaning of baptism has been the subject of much religious debate over the centuries. It has often been reduced to an argument about baptismal methods or formulas. However, the most significant point regarding baptism is that it joins us to the death of Christ. In his letter to the Romans, Paul began his discussion on baptism by saying, 'Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus have been baptised into His death?' It is evident that Paul expected every Christian to know this. This is the fundamental meaning of baptism. It joins us to the historical event of the death of Christ. We need to be joined to the historical event of the cross so that the redemptive work of the blood of Christ is effective in our lives.

References:

Act 2:41

Act 8:36

1Ti 6:3-4

Rom 6:3

Rom 5:5

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Acts 2

Proverbs 24

Joined to the cross

The blood of Christ has only been shed once in the history of the world. It began to be shed in the garden of Gethsemane when His sweat became like great drops or clots of blood. It continued to be shed all the way to the cross. After His physical death, the last of Christ's blood was shed when the soldier pierced His side with a spear. Once His body had been taken down from the cross, the flow of Christ's blood had ceased. It was no longer being poured out. This is an important point. We recall the word of the Lord to Moses, 'The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar'. The blood of Christ has been given to us on the altar of the true tabernacle. The only way the blood can be applied to our lives today is if we *personally* join the death of Christ in history.

In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul emphasised the importance and significance of the historical event of the cross. He said that all the sacrifices under the Old Covenant, that were offered day after day and year after year, had no capacity to cleanse the conscience or remove sin. In contrast to this, Christ was *offered once* to bear the sins of many. He offered 'one sacrifice for sins for all time'. According to the will of God, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ '*once for all*'. This is why baptism is so important for every Christian. It personally joins us to the 'one offering' of Christ that occurred 'once' for all time.

References:

Luk 22:44

Joh 19:34

Lev 17:11

Heb 9:9, 28

Heb 10:10-12

Further Study:

Hebrews 10

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 25