



# Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

SEPTEMBER 2023

# Restoring my Soul

A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

SEPTEMBER 2023

# **RESTORING MY SOUL**

*A Five Day Devotional Guide*

**September 2023**

## **Contributing Authors**

Victor Hall

Peter Hay

## **Compiled by**

David Baker

# Contents

Monday 4 September	A new marriage covenant . . . . .	2
Tuesday 5 September	Nurturing spiritual sons of God . . . . .	3
Wednesday 6 September	The maze of carnality . . . . .	4
Thursday 7 September	The other law and the law of my mind . . . . .	5
Friday 8 September	The desires of the flesh and the mind . . . . .	6
Monday 11 September	The pursuit of serenity . . . . .	7
Tuesday 12 September	The fear of the Lord . . . . .	8
Wednesday 13 September	A project of deliverance . . . . .	9
Thursday 14 September	Justification . . . . .	10
Friday 15 September	Access by faith into grace . . . . .	11
Monday 18 September	The fruit of sanctification . . . . .	12
Tuesday 19 September	Embracing chastening . . . . .	13
Wednesday 20 September	Making straight paths for our feet . . . . .	14
Thursday 21 September	The growth industry of condemnation . . . . .	15
Friday 22 September	A carnal way of living . . . . .	16
Monday 25 September	Choosing the Holy Spirit as Lord . . . . .	17
Tuesday 26 September	Count all things loss . . . . .	18
Wednesday 27 September	The Holy Spirit is our Helper . . . . .	19
Thursday 28 September	Our new focus . . . . .	20
Friday 29 September	Our participation . . . . .	21

## A new marriage covenant

The church is the bride of Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem. **Eph 5:25-27. Rev 21:2.** In Chapter 7 of his letter to the Romans, Paul explained that to become part of the bride of Christ, we must be baptised into the death of Christ. **Rom 7:4. Rom 6:3-4.** Through fellowship in Christ's death, we die to the Law and are delivered from our obligation to this covenant. Consequently, we are able to be married to Christ. This, for us, is a new covenant.

In this chapter, Paul was highlighting that the New Covenant, by which we are married to Christ, defines a new way of relating to Christ and God. The Law, now, is no longer a carnal commandment to us. **Heb 7:15-16.** It was a fruitless covenant because it had no power to achieve righteousness. We now serve the Law in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. **Rom 7:6.** We no longer depend on the strength of our own motivation to fulfil the will of God.

The apostle Paul emphasised the necessity for deliverance from the Law Covenant to one's citizenship and ministry as part of the bride city, writing, 'Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another – to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God'. **Rom 7:4.**

The fellowship of first love within a family, and from house to house, is the expression of the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem, on earth. A covenant family is the place where children are born and receive the divine nature as sons and daughters of God. Believing families belong to the heavenly Jerusalem, giving nurture, discipline, and instruction to these children who now belong to God and to Christ.

Further Study      ROMANS 7

## Nurturing spiritual sons of God

The bride of Christ includes families who are raising their children, as sons of God, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. **Eph 6:4**. Furthermore, the church, as the bride of Christ, also has an evangelistic ministry from house to house. Believing households are a primary context for hearers to be born again as sons and daughters of God, and to be delivered from the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of the Son. **Col 1:12-14**.

The bride is to be a helper comparable to Christ in His work of bringing forth and nurturing sons of God who are spiritual. Essential to this work is the capacity to pastor those who are babes in Christ so that they come to maturity as sons who are bearing the fruit of sanctification. **Rom 6:22**. Paul explained that a person remained immature, or like a babe in Christ, on account of carnality. He wrote, 'I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ'. **1Co 3:1**. Accordingly, Paul introduced his explanation of the carnal condition by addressing his readers as those who should be the bride of Christ, exhorting them to serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. **Rom 7:6**.

The ministry through which a person is delivered from their carnality to grow as a spiritual son of God, is described as 'the pure milk of the word'. This is the ministry of the bride of Christ, the mother of us all. **Gal 4:26**. We note, in this regard, the apostle Peter's encouragement, 'Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious'. **1Pe 2:1-3**. A person is only able to participate in this ministry if they are, themselves, joined to the process through which they are coming to maturity.

Further Study      1 PETER 2

## The maze of carnality

We can liken the carnal condition to a maze from which a person is unable to deliver themselves through their own strength. Their situation appears to be hopeless. Acknowledging this predicament, Paul himself lamented, 'O wretched man that I am! *Who will deliver me from this body of death?*' **Rom 7:24**. This maze has many elements which include the Law, the law of sin, the other law, the law of my mind, the desires of the flesh, and the desire of the mind.

The Law, which is God's word, offers life. However, through the Law we acquire the knowledge of sin. **Rom 3:20**. It proclaims our guilt before God, and our condemnation, when we inevitably fall short of its expectations. As the apostle James noted, 'Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all'. **Jas 2:10**. The Law can only be served and fulfilled in our lives when we live by the Covenant of the Spirit.

In the carnal condition, a Christian is brought back into bondage to the law of sin. **Rom 7:23**. Living by this principle, their desire for life is a self-centred and covetous pursuit, motivated by the fear of death. Although they are born of the Father, the way that they live is no different from 'mere men'; it is of the spirit of the world. **1Co 3:2-3. 1Co 2:12. Col 1:9-10**.

Contending for life, which is a defining practice belonging to the law of sin, is exemplified by a person's pursuit of religion. The carnal Christian pursues religion because of condemnation associated with their shame. Their condemnation may include a feeling of lostness because they do not know, or have not embraced, who the Father has named them to be. Through religion, they seek for *transcendence* above their sinful condition, believing to have life through acceptance by God and by others. However, this form of conduct is inevitably accompanied and informed by comparison, envy, competition, divisions and complaint, indicating their bondage to the law of sin. **1Co 3:3**.

Further Study      1 CORINTHIANS 3

## The other law and the law of my mind

Living by their other law, a person endeavours to craft an expression for themselves on the basis of their knowledge of good and evil. This is the basis of their self-righteousness. They seek for the validation of their self-righteous position through the acknowledgement, acceptance, and affirmation of others. Without deliverance from their other law, they are brought into bondage to the law of sin and death. **Rom 7:23.**

The mind is a faculty of the soul. By the law of the mind, a person endeavours to know and to express themselves according to the information that they collect and process through the natural senses that belong to their biological body. They understand themselves, and view others within their physical and social environments, through reason. **Ecc 7:25.**

The law of the mind can be in conflict with a person's other law. **Rom 7:23.** In these instances, a person comprehends and agrees with the word, concluding that it is indeed the way to life. However, motivated by their other law, their self-righteous endeavours to have life by keeping the law through their religious practices brings them under its judgement. **Rom 9:30-32.** This outcome is contrary to the deductions they have made through their deliberations concerning the word.

Often, a person who is governed by this law is plagued by pernicious mind chatter and emotional distress as the mind finds itself in conflict with the dictates of the conscience. The conscience is a faculty of one's spirit, through which they are able to know themselves, without reason. This is because, for a son of God, their conscience bears witness in the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth. **Rom 9:1.** However, the mind set on the flesh, rather than the Spirit, usurps the conscience. Accordingly, through cognitive appraisal, the carnal person accuses or excuses themselves, presuming to be the arbiter of truth. **Rom 2:14-15.**



## The desires of the flesh and the mind

The lusts of the flesh refer to one's desire for, and engagement in, things that compete with God's will for their life. Jesus likened these things to thorns that grow up and choke the seed. **Mar 4:18-19.**

A person who lives by the desires of the flesh is governed by the insatiable appetites of the flesh. These may include lifestyle pursuits, money, properties, vocational success, power, and many forms of physical gratification. These appetites drive their behaviour in a similar way to the instincts of animals. Hence, the Scriptures liken a person who lives by the desires of the flesh to 'brute beasts'. **2Pe 2:12-14. Jud 1:10.**

Paul noted that these people have a disagreeable influence upon others in the church, writing, 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly [lit: appetite], and whose glory is in their shame – who set their mind on earthly things'. **Php 3:18-19.**

The desire of the mind also has an unavoidable effect upon the conduct of a person. Motivated by this desire, a person takes action on the basis of their reasoning through which they believe they can know themselves and can have life. This is the definition of a 'soulish' person who is unable to receive the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness to him. **1Co 2:13-14.**

In the Scriptures, the epitome of a 'soulish' person is the 'scorner', or 'scoffer'. In this regard, Solomon noted, 'A proud and haughty man – "Scoffer" [equally, scorner] is his name; he acts with arrogant pride'. **Pro 21:24.** They presume to be the measure of what is true on the basis of knowledge, experience, and rational thought, expressed through thesis and argument. This is the basis of their authority within relational settings, including the family, house to house fellowship, and the church.

Further Study      2 PETER 2

## The pursuit of serenity

The result of the various influences upon the carnal Christian is *irrational confusion*. Noting this implication of the maze, Paul said, 'For *what I am doing, I do not understand*. For what I will to do, that I do not practise; but what I hate, that I do.' **Rom 7:15**. Our irrational confusion results from our moral weakness and from the emotions which are enflamed by sin because of our incapacity to deliver ourselves from this condition.

Our self-righteousness causes our heart to condemn us as we hopelessly endeavour to negotiate our way out of the maze. Under condemnation, the *fear of death* then motivates our religion, confession, and prayer. These fear-driven practices are foundational to the conduct of the carnal Christian; they are dead works. However, these are the practices advanced by an old gospel, which is peddled by those whose loyalty to the old gospel marks them as a minister of a synagogue of Satan within the church. **Rev 2:9**.

The carnal Christian engages in these self-righteous practices in pursuit of *serenity*, which they confuse with the peace of God. The peace of God, which passes understanding and guards a person's heart and mind, can only be found in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. **Php 4:6-7. Eph 2:14-16**.

A person who is exercising faith, by the love that the Holy Spirit pours into their heart, will walk in the light with their brethren. Speaking about our *agape* fellowship, James said, 'Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.' **Jas 5:16**.

In contrast to this, the confession of one's sins to a counsellor is a self-righteous action that does not lead to justification or life. Rather, it leads to condemnation and further corruption. These confessions are a self-justifying and assuring exercise that are often ignorant of the true impact of one's sins upon others. Prayer, similarly motivated, is also self-righteous and ineffective. Prayer is only effective when it is by the Spirit and according to the will of God. **1Jn 5:14-15**.

## The fear of the Lord

The fear of God is not the fruit of self-righteousness. The fear of God belongs to the Eternal Spirit of God with which Christ was anointed, enabling Him to be the Father's Melchizedek King-Priest on earth. Jesus confessed, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me'. **Luk 4:18. Isa 61:1-2.**

The Spirit of the Lord is the sevenfold Spirit of God, and includes the fear of the Lord. As Isaiah prophesied, 'There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and *of the fear of the Lord!* **Isa 11:1-2.**

We receive the Spirit of the Lord, including the fear of the Lord which is necessary for our deliverance from the motivation of the fear of death, *from Christ*. It is the anointing that is upon Him, which flows from Him to us if we hold fast to the Head as a member of His body. **Psa 133:1-2.**

When Paul asked the question, 'Who will deliver me from this body of death?', we could likewise ask, 'How can we be delivered from the maze?' The answer, or course, is, through the Law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus. **Rom 7:25. Rom 8:2.** This Law is administered by the Holy Spirit *who is Lord*. As Paul noted, 'Now the Spirit is Lord; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty [or deliverance from the maze]'. **2Co 3:17.**

We are illuminated to our sin through the conviction that the Spirit brings to our conscience and mind, enabling us to find repentance and to turn from carnality to the Covenant of the Spirit. He enables our obedience and manifests our righteousness. **Rom 8:1-2.** Those who are obedient through the capacity of the Spirit are sons of God and have entered the kingdom of God.

Further Study      PSALM 34

## A project of deliverance

Individuals and families who are encumbered by besetting sin, must make a project of their deliverance from this slavery. Such a project may entail, for example, a season of regular prayer and fasting; the employment of supervision software; the removal of unhelpful devices or activities; and regular fellowship regarding one's progress. In this regard, a person, or family, must apply themselves with all diligence to the works that belong to the process of sanctification. **2Pe 1:5-7.**

The question is, how can a person initiate such a project without it being a carnal endeavour that only serves to compound their condemnation? The answer is, by faith, through the Spirit.

A believer first receives faith when Christ breathes on them, and they are born of the divine nature. They are born to see the kingdom of God. **Joh 3:3.** However, at this point, they have not yet received a new heart and a new spirit. Rather, they have received faith to be connected to the New Covenant of the Holy Spirit.

Through baptism in water and by the Spirit, a son of God is immersed into, and enabled for, their fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. **Rom 6:4.** The new heart and the new spirit are progressively attained through a believer's ongoing fellowship in the seven wounding events that belong to Christ's offering and sufferings.

Through the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord outlined this implication of journeying with Christ, saying, 'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.' **Eze 36:26.** A person joins this journey through baptism in water and with the Spirit.

Fellowship in the finished offering of Christ is the implication of one's *justification*, which they obtain by faith, and through which they are born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. **Joh 3:5.**

## Justification

The first implication of receiving faith, is a person's *justification*. **Rom 5:1-2**. This is a tremendous point! Their justification is that, through Christ's offering journey, He has finished everything to do with their particular life and works as a son of God, forever. The Holy Spirit joins them to Christ, where they are set as members of the body according to the will of the Father. **1Co 12:13,18**.

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit enables their fellowship in Christ's offering. By this means, as branches of Christ, the Vine, they are able to bring forth, or express, the fruit that He has already accomplished for them, forever. As Jesus declared, 'I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.' **Joh 15:5**.

When we accept justification, we can walk in sanctification. Sanctification becomes our eternal life. **Rom 6:22**. Justification is the sanctification that Christ has already accomplished for us, which we are to walk in for eternity. This means that justification is not an action that gives deliverance from judgement based on Christ's substitutionary work; it is the whole work of sonship that He has already accomplished for us.

Justification is the first implication of receiving faith, because a person needs faith to join the fellowship of Christ's offering journey, which has already been accomplished by Christ for them, personally. They are being born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom, receiving reconciliation and peace with God. As Paul explained, 'Therefore, having been *justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' **Rom 5:1**. They are no longer an enemy of God; they are now part of a kingdom of priests to their God and Father. **Exo 19:5-6**.

Further Study      ROMANS 5

## Access by faith into grace

It is important to recognise that peace with God, as those who are justified, is *through* Jesus Christ. That is, it is only available to us as we are joined to the seven wounding events through which Christ accomplished our justification. This was Paul's point when he wrote, 'We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand [equally, are appointed to abide], and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.' **Rom 5:1-4.**

We see that faith grants us access to grace for life as we abide in Christ according to the appointment of the Father. **1Co 12:18.** The evidence that we have entered this grace is that we glory in the tribulations of Christ, which belong to the fellowship of His offering. Glorifying in this manner means that the fruit that Jesus bore for us through His offering and sufferings, is becoming ours as we journey with Him. Our character is changed as we persevere in this fellowship. In this regard, as we are ceasing from sin, and we are fulfilling the works of obedience that Jesus learnt and finished for us, the hope of attaining our sonship is being realised; it is not being disappointed. **Rom 5:5.**

Most significantly, Paul emphasised that the hope is realised because the motivation of love is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 5:5.** This love activates our faith. **Gal 5:6.** This is our faith through which we obtain justification. That is, it is faith to join the journey that Christ has already accomplished for us. In the fellowship of this offering, which is a daily and ongoing reality for us, we are demonstrating, or fulfilling, the works that He finished for us. **Jas 2:14-26.**

Further Study      HEBREWS 10

## The fruit of sanctification

The Holy Spirit leads us on the pathway that Jesus Christ has pioneered for us. On this pathway, we are receiving the grace that is necessary to fulfil the works that Christ has already accomplished for us. We enter the rest that belongs to those who have ceased from the fruitless pursuit of their own way and are participating in a finished, fruitful work.

For those seeking deliverance from besetting sin, the works of faith to which they apply themselves, by the Spirit, produce the fruit of sanctification, the end of which is eternal life. **Rom 6:22**. The apostle Peter exhorted his readers to this application, writing, 'But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, *add to your faith virtue* [or, moral excellence], to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love'. **2Pe 1:5-7**.

Peter continued, by saying that if we did these things, we would be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. **2Pe 1:8**. Notably, Paul testified that he had to suffer the loss of all things, and count them as dung, in order to obtain this knowledge and be found in Christ not having a righteousness of his own. **Php 3:7-9**. Peter further exhorted his readers, saying, 'Be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' **2Pe 1:8-11**.

We build ourselves up in our most holy faith by praying in the Holy Spirit. **Jud 1:20**. As we set, or apply, our mind in this way, we not only obtain faith to choose the pathway of sanctification, but we are also enabled, by the Spirit, to journey with Christ on the pathway of sanctification.

Further Study      2 PETER 1

## Embracing chastening

In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul drew attention to the chastening effect of *scourging*. This chastening initiative belongs to the fatherhood of God, for Paul said, '*My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.*' **Heb 12:5-6.**

Under the direction of Pilate, Jesus was scourged in the Praetorium for the sake of our healing. **Joh 19:1. Isa 53:5.** Commonly referred to as 'the cat o' nine tails', the whip that was used to scourge Jesus was a terrible instrument comprised of nine strands of leather, each set with four or five pieces of sharp bone or metal. A full beating of thirty-nine stripes would bring an individual to the brink of death, having caused approximately 1600 wounds to their back.

After Christ was scourged, He manifested the peaceable fruit of righteousness. He endured this wound entirely for our sake. He was then able to be seen as Melchizedek, the King-Priest, in the Praetorium. Significantly, His name means, King of Righteousness and King of Peace. **Heb 7:1-2.** Here He was crowned with thorns, bearing the curse of sin and the curse of the ground resulting from Adam's rejection of the order of headship. **Gen 3:17-18.** Christ was taking captive everything that belonged to the curse of sin.

As we, by faith, receive and embrace our fellowship with Christ in this aspect of suffering, we obtain and express the fruit that Jesus produced when He was scourged. Highlighting this point, Paul wrote, '*Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*' **Heb 12:11.**

Further Study      HEBREWS 12



## Making straight paths for our feet

If we draw back from Christ in unbelief when we experience the judgement and chastening that belong to this wound, we have no connection with Him, nor with the consolation of the Spirit that would otherwise sustain us. **2Co 1:3-5**. As Paul reminded the Hebrews, 'Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.' **Heb 10:38**. Christ's soul has no pleasure in a person who draws back from their fellowship in this aspect of chastening, because nothing of His suffering work is effective for them or in them. The sufferings that belong to these people are the harbinger of their eternal judgement.

Those who embrace, by faith, their fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, including the scourging that belongs to the chastening of the Father, are able to make straight paths for their feet. That is, by the capacity of the Spirit, they are able to apply themselves to the project of their deliverance from besetting sin. Having exhorted his readers to embrace their scourging from the Father, in fellowship with Christ, Paul then said, '*Therefore* strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.' **Heb 12:12-13**.

Self-righteous motivation cannot, through condemnation, achieve virtue. The apostle Peter declared that the supply of virtue in a person's life is only through the diligent exercise of faith. **2Pe 1:5**. A believer must not look for someone to be a priest for them in relation to their condemnation. Such a pursuit is carnal and only multiplies the corruption of both the confessor and the one who entertains and answers their confession, bringing them both under condemnation. **Eze 14:1-11**.

Further Study      PROVERBS 4

## The growth industry of condemnation

Even before his death, the apostle Paul lamented that the whole Gentile church had turned away from him and from his gospel. **2Ti 1:15**. This departure from the culture of *agape* was formalised by the early church fathers who rejected the Holy Spirit as the New Covenant, replacing the command to walk after the Spirit with ascetic ordinances and regulations. Paul noted the ministry of this alternative and carnal gospel, writing, 'These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion [lit: will worship], false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.' **Col 2:23**.

The early church leaders formalised the carnal gospel, presenting it as the truth. They promoted ascetism as the means by which so-called Christians could be made holy through *transcendence*, thereby denying the power of the Spirit and the cross. 'Transcendence' refers to the quality of excellence that surpasses some objects below it, as human nature transcends the irrational creation. Their self-righteous pursuits even led to the promotion of martyrdom as necessary for entry into heaven. The reinforcement of the carnal gospel substantiated the power of church leaders, generating an entire economy driven by condemnation and self-righteous endeavours.

These carnal pursuits, including the confession of sins to a leadership figure in the church, and the granting of absolution, are driven by the fear of death. They do not belong to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Concerning the Spirit, Jesus said, 'And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement.' **Joh 16:8**. The conviction of the Spirit endows us with grace which enables us to both see our sin, to own our sin, and to seek repentance. The Spirit helps us to be accountable for our sin, and joins us to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings through which we are not only delivered from our sin, but are able to fulfil the will of God and become the righteousness of God in Christ. **2Co 5:21**.

Further Study      COLOSSIANS 2

---

## A carnal way of living

To be carnal means that we are motivated by our other law. **Rom 7:23.** We endeavour to take hold of the Law (God's word) and fulfil it, because we perceive it to be good for us as the means by which we can have life. Although we want to be spiritual, our emotive reactions to life demonstrate that we are carnal. We are doing the works of the flesh that we hate! **Gal 5:19-21.**

These emotions of sin are provoked within us because the Holy Spirit is frustrating our carnal endeavours to have life. Noting this implication of the Spirit within us, Paul wrote, 'For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish'. **Gal 5:17.** This is a source of turmoil within our mind.

This carnal way of living is self-righteous; it is governed by a view that we have of ourselves. In general, as evangelical Christians, our self-righteousness is the measure and motivation for our actions. When the Holy Spirit calls us to make a simple obedient response in humility to His directive, we measure His directive by our own self-righteous perspective.

Our perspective is the rightness of our own self-preservation culture as a Christian, including how we have lived, and how our actions could be viewed by others. **Rom 10:3.** We refuse to obey what the Spirit is directing us to do in order to preserve the self-image, or projection, that we have of ourselves.

When the Holy Spirit is Lord of our life, He confronts us by asking us to humble ourselves and obey Him in relation to some specific matter. What He asks us to do conflicts with the self-righteous view that we have of ourselves. We are concerned about how we will be perceived by others if we obey what the Holy Spirit is requesting of us. **Php 3:8-9.**

Further Study      GALATIANS 5

## Choosing the Holy Spirit as Lord

When we are carnal, we do not understand our own responses and reactions to the directions of the Spirit. **Rom 7:14-15**. The emotions of sin that are aroused within us cause us to refuse to be obedient to the voice of the Spirit. However, even though we are resisting the Holy Spirit, through prevenient grace, He disempowers our reactions, making us aware of the eternal consequences of our actions if we continue to pursue the culture of self-righteousness.

Under the conviction of the Spirit, we are left with the choice as to whether or not we will accept His lordship in our life. Choice, prior to an encounter with the lordship of the Spirit, is compliance. Unless it moves to obedience, this compliance can become part of our self-image and self-righteousness as a Christian. Many of us do not realise that, because of the way that we have been raised in Christian homes, it is sin that motivates us, through the other law in our heart, to presume that a culture of religious compliance is righteousness. This is darkness. **Eph 5:5-6**.

The Holy Spirit confronts us on this point, asking us to choose Him as Lord, over and against our own self-righteous, religious disposition. Under the influence of His conviction, we can choose Him as Lord, and we can choose to be obedient. However, having chosen His lordship, and obtaining a will for obedience, the next lesson we must learn is that we are unable to obey. The apostle Paul testified, 'To will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.' **Rom 7:18**.

As we are brought to the point of being bankrupt in spirit, we recognise our need for help and ask the Holy Spirit to help us. **Mat 5:3**. Becoming bankrupt in spirit makes a lasting breach upon the other law in our heart and the self-righteous image that we have created for ourselves. The Holy Spirit is then able to lead us on a new pathway of obedience. **Joh 21:18**.

Further Study      2 CORINTHIANS 3

## Count all things loss

The apostle Paul identified two common gospels within the church which are contrary to the gospel that brings salvation. He said, 'For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.' **1Co 1:22-24.**

The first gospel that Paul nominated, commands observance on the basis of accompanying signs and the exercise of spiritual power. The second is a gospel that claims to be the truth on the basis of scholarship and theological reasoning.

Jesus Christ, through the Spirit, has been calling the church to turn from these carnal gospel expressions, to receive the word of the cross. **Rev 1:17-19.** The gospel of Christ crucified invites every hearer to join the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings through which they are able to obtain the wisdom and power of God for salvation.

To receive this gospel, and to lay hold of the treasures it offers, we must count all other pursuits that are gain to us – worldly and religious – to be loss. These are the things that we desire, or lust for. We must count them as loss so that we can be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of our own. We cannot walk the way of righteousness in our own strength. We need to be connected to the strength of Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

Paul himself testified of this attitude, saying, 'But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him.' **Php 3:7-9.**

Further Study      PHILIPPIANS 3

## The Holy Spirit is our Helper

As sons of God, we were born with the divine nature and then placed in a conflict zone between flesh and Spirit. Noting this conflict, Paul wrote, 'For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.' **Gal 5:17.**

God, in grace, and through the Holy Spirit, keeps sending His word to us through the preaching of messengers. He does this to give us direction for our life. The Holy Spirit is our Helper who enables us to walk in obedience to the word that is proclaimed to us. **Joh 14:26. Joh 16:13.**

When the word comes, the Spirit also helps us in our infirmities. **Rom 8:26.** Our infirmities are our struggles with our choices and decisions. These choices and decisions become infirmities because sin, that is in us, motivates our other law to strongly desire to do something, or take something, that will, in the end, only hurt and destroy us.

The Holy Spirit disempowers the motivation of sin that is lusting within us so that we are able to hear the voice of what is born of God within us. This normally happens as we hear God's messengers who preach the word of God to us, by the Holy Spirit. **1Pe 1:12.**

We have been born from above as sons of God. The motivation of God's life within us desires to do the will of God and to overcome sin and the world. As the apostle John explained, 'Whatever is born of God overcomes the world.' **1Jn 5:4.**

Under this convicting action, the Holy Spirit then calls us to obedience. He asks us to obey His voice as He leads us in the way of truth, which is the reality of how we can live a successful Christian life. **Joh 16:13.**

Further Study      JOHN 14

## Our new focus

The Holy Spirit does not force us to walk in the way of truth. Rather, He helps us because in our own strength – that is, by the strength of our own flesh – we are not able to obey the Holy Spirit. All we have to do is to ask Him to help us. He then gives to us the power to live an overcoming Christian life.

We build ourselves up each day by praying in the Spirit. As we do this, the evil lusts within us, which provoke us to go astray, are neutralised. Jude, the brother of Jesus, encouraged us to this prayer, writing, 'But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' **Jud 1:20-21.**

The new focus that the Spirit is bringing to this generation is the need to be worthy, which means blameless. He wants us to be worthy to partake of the *agape* wedding supper of Christ and His bride. **Luk 14:16-24.** This meal will be the Father's initiative when He takes His seat to rule the world in the end of the age.

What is this *agape* meal to which the Spirit is directing our attention? It is a participation in the life of Christ that sustains us as members of His body. The life of Christ, symbolised as His body and blood, is the Spirit of Christ, which we received through new birth. **Gal 4:6-7.** It is also His own resurrection life that He makes available to us, to become our life, as we fellowship together and serve one another, as an expression of our love for each other. **Php 3:7-11.**

Further Study      LUKE 14

## Our participation

When we are rightly connected to Christ's offering journey, the Father joins us to the fellowship of Christ's body, the church. In the fellowship of His offering, the Son multiplies His life and gives it to us so that it becomes our life.

We multiply this life as we serve one another by offering. Offering is the work, or expression, of love, which is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 5:5.** The Father gathers the fruit of Christ's life, which is multiplied as we serve one another by love, and places it in our heavenly body. It becomes part of our eternal glory on the day of resurrection. The point that we must understand is that eternal life is only accrued through our participation in the fellowship of the *agape* meal.

When the Father takes His seat, He will spread His tabernacle over all the inhabitants who remain in Mount Zion. Under the shadow of the Father's tabernacle, the fellowship of the *agape* meal will become the great wedding feast that the Father has prepared for Christ and His bride in the time of the end. **Isa 4:4-6.**

In the parable of the great supper, Jesus noted the excuses of those who failed to participate in this *agape* feast, even though they already had an invitation, or the right, to the meal. Their alternative priorities, through which they spurned their access to this fellowship of life, included lifestyle pursuits; vocational pursuits; extended family cultures; and romantic relationships. **Luk 14:18-20.**

These people failed to participate in the *agape* feast of the Father because they did not count these other pursuits as loss for the excellence of gaining Christ and being found in Him. **Php 3:7-11.** Consequently, they have no access to the life and glory that is necessary for obtaining a resurrection body. They are like the one-talent man who buried his talent in the ground. **Mat 25:18.** They are not known by the Lord on the day of judgement. **Mat 7:23.**

Further Study      ISAIAH 4





Restoring  
my Soul