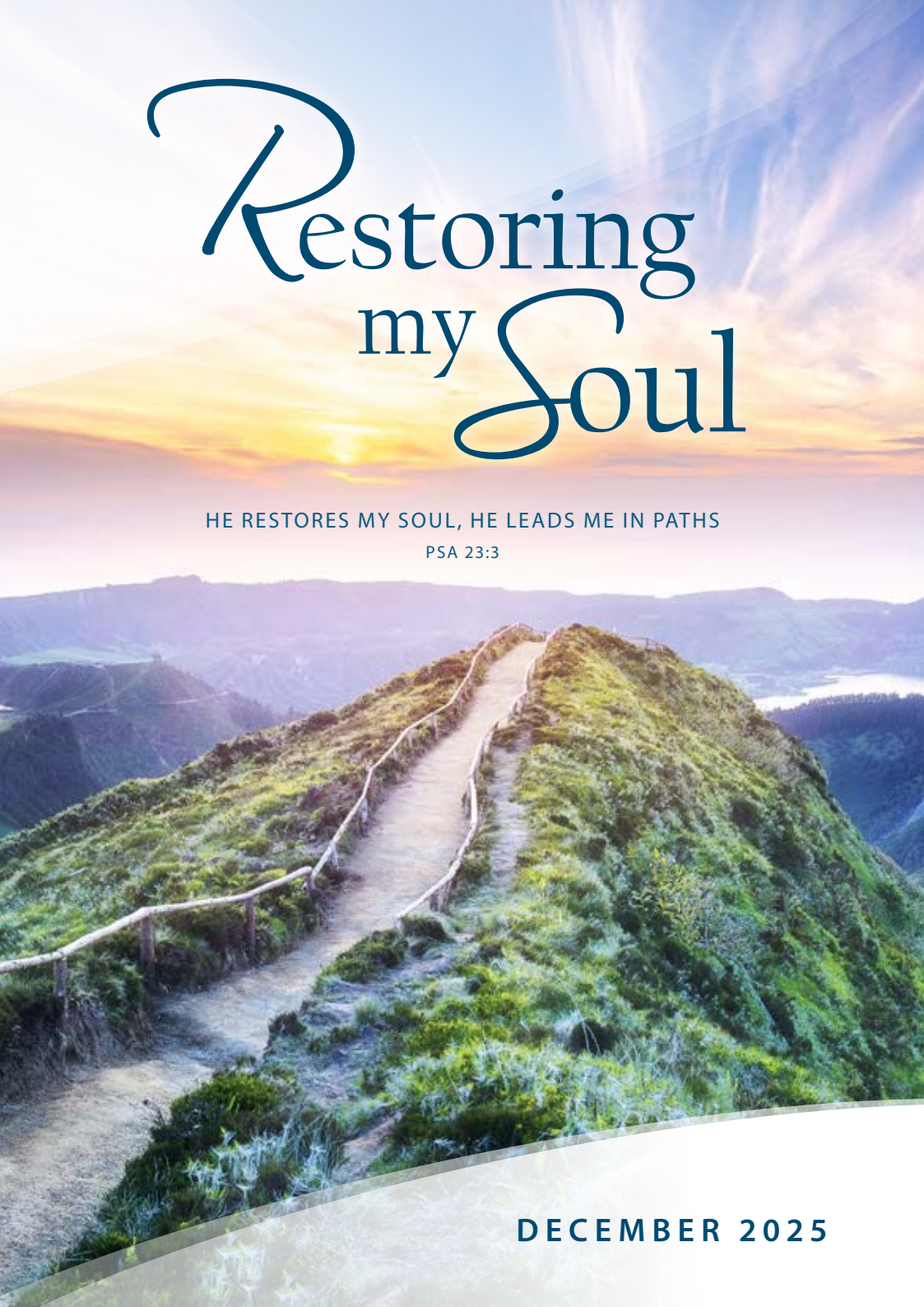




Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

DECEMBER 2025

Restoring my Soul

A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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RESTORING MY SOUL

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December 2025

Contributing Authors

Victor Hall

Peter Hay

David Baker

Contents

Monday 1 December	The secret of the Lord	2
Tuesday 2 December	The word of the Son	3
Wednesday 3 December	The ministry of the Spirit	4
Thursday 4 December	The word in a season	5
Friday 5 December	Applying ourselves to the word	6
Monday 8 December	Bitter in the belly	7
Tuesday 9 December	Learning morning by morning	8
Wednesday 10 December	The promise of rest	9
Thursday 11 December	Entering rest	10
Friday 12 December	Partakers of Christ	11
Monday 15 December	Impediments to entering rest	12
Tuesday 16 December	The impact of shame	13
Wednesday 17 December	The symptoms of shame	14
Thursday 18 December	Recognising our weariness	15
Friday 19 December	Recovered to our sanctification	16
Monday 22 December	Journeying with Christ	17
Tuesday 23 December	The fellowship of His death	18
Wednesday 24 December	The fellowship of His burial	19
Thursday 25 December	Resting in hope	20
Friday 26 December	The Anchor of our soul	21
Monday 29 December	The expectation of the righteous	22
Tuesday 30 December	Yoked to Christ	23
Wednesday 31 December	Eating and drinking	24
Thursday 1 January	The bread from heaven	25
Friday 2 January	The capacity for fellowship	26

The secret of the Lord

Yahweh *Elohim's* covenant purpose for mankind was described by the apostle Paul as a 'mystery'. He explained that this mystery is made known through the preaching of the gospel, writing, 'Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith – to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever'. **Rom 16:25-27.**

It is notable that Paul identified the mystery of God, revealed through the gospel, as a '*secret*'. Concerning this secret, King David declared, 'The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant.' **Psa 25:14.** 'The secret of the Lord' is the word of each person's predestination as a son of God and as a man in the image and likeness of God. This word, proclaiming our name and destiny as a son of God, is a great treasure. The Lord Himself said, 'I will give you the treasures of darkness and *hidden riches of secret places*, that you may know that I, the Lord, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel.' **Isa 45:3.**

Inasmuch as the secret of the Lord communicates the riches of our name and life as a son of God, it is equally the place where we abide in the fellowship of Yahweh as part of the true Israel of God. In fact, we are unable to live as a son of God without abiding in this fellowship. The secret place is where we abide in the Father's house and participate, by the Spirit, in the intercession and travail of Their prayer fellowship. It is a place of safety and provision. **Psa 91:1-2.**

Further reading: Psalm 91

The word of the Son

Christ Himself is the Word who makes the secret of the Lord known. John, the apostle, introduced his Gospel by identifying the Son as the Word, stating, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' **Joh 1:1,14.** Yahweh Son became the *substance* of the word of the Father when He was begotten as the Son of God. **Heb 1:5.**

As the Word, the Son is *the sum of the Scriptures*, which have been written down by the Lord's apostles and prophets. From His throne, the Son has communicated the word of the Covenant to the holy prophets through the angel, Gabriel. As the prophets wrote down what they were caused, by the Holy Spirit, to hear and see, their writings became the Scriptures. **1Pe 1:12.** Verifying this principle, the Lord Himself said, 'Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He *reveals His secret* to His servants the prophets.' **Amo 3:7.**

Further illustrating the order by which the Scriptures were written, we note the testimony of the apostle John in the book of Revelation. He opened his prophetic book, writing, 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God [the Father] gave Him to show His servants – things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.' **Rev 1:1-3.**

Further reading: John 1

The ministry of the Spirit

Apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures are merely a book. However, the Scriptures speak to us through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Explaining this work, Jesus said, 'He [the Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.' **Joh 16:14-15**. This statement reveals the means by which the word of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit's Everlasting Covenant proceeds to us from Their fellowship.

Christ, who is the substance of the Father's word, speaks to the church from the written Scriptures, by the Spirit. This implication of 'One' revealing 'Another' through offering is exemplified by the letters to the seven churches of Asia. We know that the words of Jesus, written down by the apostle John in the book of Revelation, became the Scriptures. **Rev 1:11,19. Rev 22:18-19**. At the end of each letter, Jesus exhorted every person who belongs to His lampstand churches by saying to them, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' **Rev 2:7**.

Clearly, the Holy Spirit is the agent through whom Christ speaks to the church from the Scriptures. It is the Spirit who makes what is hidden, or invisible, known to us. Explaining this point, Paul said, 'No one knows the things of God *except the Spirit of God*. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.' **1Co 2:11-12**.

Further reading: Revelation 2

The word in a season

In addition to enabling the revelation of the mystery of God, the Spirit also makes clear, from the prophetic Scriptures, what applies to a particular generation and time. With this in mind, it is apparent that the midnight hour of this present earth is upon us, for the Spirit continues to insist upon our consideration of Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish virgins. He is declaring, 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming'. **Mat 25:6**. We know that this is what the Spirit is saying, because of the present emphasis in the word calling for cultural reformation in our marriages and families. This is the appeal, through the 'Elijah ministry', for households, who belong to the bride of Christ, to be made worthy and to grow to firstfruits as part of a network of worthy houses who are ready for the coming of the Bridegroom.

The Holy Spirit ministers the words of Christ, and makes known to us the prophetic Scriptures that apply to the times and seasons in which we live, through messengers who belong to the fellowship of a presbytery. Their work is to proclaim the gospel of God from the Scriptures as the word of present truth. **2Pe 1:12**. Within the presbytery, Christ has given to some men ascension-gift grace to illuminate, from the Scriptures, what the Spirit is saying to the presbytery and the church. **Eph 4:11-12**. Importantly, these gifts are not for the purpose of laying another foundation by adding to, or reinterpreting, the writings of Paul and the other apostles. Rather, through their ministry, and then the ministry of the presbytery, each hearer is able to build on the foundation that the apostles have laid. **1Co 3:10-11**. In this regard, ascension-gifted presbyters are to minister in the mode of Timothy and Titus.

Further reading: Matthew 25

Applying ourselves to the word

Every time that the Lord speaks, it is straight from the Scriptures, by the Holy Spirit. For this reason, Christ's messengers must be *spiritual*. That is, they must be able to receive the ministry of the Spirit in the fellowship of the presbytery and proclaim this word through testimony. This is essential to their sanctification and the efficacy of their ministry. Significantly, their qualification and capacity to proclaim the mystery of God is not their formal training, nor their natural capacities. Rather, it is the grace of God, which is multiplied by offering in the fellowship of the Spirit. As they maintain their participation in this fellowship, they are preserved from the form of ministry that Paul described as 'peddling the word of God'. **2Co 2:17**. They do not exceed what is written in the Scriptures, nor do they avoid passages of Scripture that challenge the carnal expectations and conduct of their hearers in order to appease them.

Everyone who receives the words of Christ, through the ministry of His messengers, is illuminated by the Spirit and joined to the fellowship of the presbytery. The presbytery's fellowship is with the Father and His Son. **1Jn 1:1-4**. The prophetic word is confirmed in our hearts as we hear the message and *apply* ourselves to search out the Scriptures as a participation in the fellowship of the word. **Act 17:11-12**. Describing the importance of applying ourselves in this manner, Peter wrote, 'And so we [as a presbytery] have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit'. **2Pe 1:19-21**.

Further reading: Hebrews 2

Bitter in the belly

By applying ourselves to know and understand the proceeding word of God, we are eating the bread which comes down from heaven. **Joh 6:51**. This word will initially be sweet in our mouth, but then bitter in our belly as we walk in the light of the word and are processed by the word. **Psa 105:19**. We demonstrate that we are a believer and are fulfilling the works of God when we live in this way! **Joh 6:29**. Wonderfully, through this process, we are being established in the fellowship of the presbytery, and the word is becoming the expression of our life. This is what it means to be a firstfruits household. **1Co 16:15**. We are able to express this word as a testimony to others. Notably, 'firstfruits' is a fundamental qualification for eldership. **1Ti 3:2-7**.

It is notable that the Lord equipped His prophets for their ministry by giving to them His word to eat. For example, the apostle John testified, 'Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth." So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth"'. **Rev 10:8-9**.

It is important to recognise that our appreciation of the word, and even our agreement with the word, is not eating the bread of heaven. Highlighting the distinction between one's appreciation of the word, and their application of the word through obedience, the Lord said to the prophet Ezekiel, 'They come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain.' **Eze 33:31**.

Further reading: Genesis 22

Learning morning by morning

Morning by morning, as we devote ourselves to prayer and to the word of present truth, the Holy Spirit enables us to know and understand how to walk with Christ as a disciple. He does this by bringing to our remembrance the word through which the secret of the Lord is made known to us. Describing this work of the 'Helper', Jesus said, 'But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.' **Joh 14:26**. This 'help' is not merely for our sake. It is equally for the purpose of equipping us to speak to those who are weary in, and beyond, our houses.

Jesus Himself received this same help from the Spirit during His earthly ministry. He testified, 'The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned [meaning 'disciple'], that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away. I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.' **Isa 50:4-6**.

We know that this was Jesus speaking. In the court of Caiaphas, He gave His back to those who beat Him with rods as He was chastened for our peace. He also gave His cheeks to those who plucked out His beard and spat in His face as He was bruised for our iniquity. **Isa 53:5**. It is amazing to consider that Jesus identified Himself as a disciple whose ear was opened by the Spirit to hear the word of the Father defining His obedience. He testified that He learnt this word, through the things which He suffered, so that He could speak a word in season to those who are weary.

Further reading: Psalm 143

The promise of rest

In the Scriptures, the term 'rest' refers to an inheritance that is given by God. He called it 'My rest'. **Psa 95:11**. This inheritance is promised to those who receive God's initiative to make them His people. For example, the land of Canaan was an inheritance that was given to the nation of Israel. It had been promised to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Lord said to the children of Israel, 'I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage [inheritance]: I am the Lord.' **Exo 6:8**.

The 'promised land' symbolised citizenship of an everlasting kingdom as a son of God. This inheritance will be obtained in full on the day of resurrection. At this time, having been made in the image and likeness of God through the process of adoption, the sons of God will receive a spiritual body and will live in fellowship with Yahweh, forever. This will be the consummation of the 'promise of the Spirit', identified by the apostle Paul as the 'blessing of Abraham'. **Gal 3:13-14**. The Lord described this promise to Abraham, saying to him, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them ... so shall your descendants be.' **Gen 15:5**.

Abraham recognised that the true inheritance that was promised to him and his children, in Christ, was eternal citizenship of a heavenly city. Significantly, the Scriptures describe this place of eternal abiding as 'Beulah land', meaning 'the land of marriage'. **Isa 62:4**. Abraham's understanding of this promise was highlighted by the apostle Paul, who noted that Abraham dwelt in tents in the land of promise 'for he waited for the [bride] city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God'. **Heb 11:10**.

Further reading: Hebrews 3

Entering rest

It is important to understand that a person 'enters rest' by receiving the inheritance that was promised to Abraham and to his Seed, Christ. **Gal 3:16.** *This is what it means to be blessed.* The blessing is obtained through obedience to the word of God.

We know that the generation of Israelites who had been delivered from their slavery in Egypt, failed to 'enter rest' because they hardened their hearts and were disobedient to God's word spoken by His messengers, Moses, Joshua and Caleb. They denied the word of God because they feared the giants in the land. Paul, quoting from Psalm 45, reminded his readers of this fact, writing, 'Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, '*They shall not enter My rest.*'" **Heb 3:7-11.**

Having been born of God, we enter His rest and progressively obtain the promised blessing by walking on the pathway of salvation that Christ pioneered for us. We walk on this path through obedience to the word of Christ that is proclaimed by His messengers. **Heb 5:9.** Paul described an obedient believer's progressive attainment of this blessing as 'partaking of Christ'. Writing to the Hebrews, he said, 'Exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become *partakers of Christ* if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.' **Heb 3:13-14.**

Further reading: Hebrews 4

Partakers of Christ

We partake of Christ by participating in the *agape* meal in a *worthy manner*. The implication of this participation in Christ's body and blood is our fellowship in His offering and sufferings as those who are being immersed in the name of the Father, the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Spirit *through discipleship*. **Mat 28:18-20**.

A person who is entering rest has ceased from their own works, which are informed by the sight of their own eyes and the understanding of their own heart. **Heb 4:10**. This is because they trust Christ and their brethren, having taken His yoke upon themselves. They bear the fruit of life and peace as they journey with Christ in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. **Rom 8:6**. This fruit is manifest in their life and in their family, who are being restored as part of the bride city. Significantly, the Lord enables them to eat the *agape* meal as a citizen of the heavenly city, the bride of Christ, saying, 'If you are willing and obedient, *you shall eat the good of the land*.' **Isa 1:19**. In doing so, they are being delivered from bondage to fear. As the prophet Jeremiah declared, 'Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, and no-one shall make him afraid.' **Jer 30:10**.

At times in our Christian pilgrimage, we can find ourselves feeling weary. Weariness is a sign that we are failing to enter God's rest. A key indicator of weariness is *stumbling*. Significantly, we are stumbling at Christ and His word. The apostle Peter noted that, instead of being built on Christ as part of the wall of the bride city, He becomes to us 'a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence'. We stumble being disobedient to the word to which we were appointed. **1Pe 2:8**.

Further reading: 1 Peter 2

Impediments to entering rest

Jesus' parable of the seed and grounds reveals two key impediments to entering rest, resulting in the weariness of *a son of God*. The first impediment is 'the stones' of law in our own heart. Paul described these stones as 'another law' in our person. **Rom 7:23**. This law is the source of our own righteousness. It is also the basis of the judgements that we make about ourselves, about others, and about the relevance of God's word to us. Notably, Jesus said that people who find no deliverance from the other law have 'no root in themselves'. He said that 'when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they *stumble*'. **Mar 4:17**.

A person who is receiving the word and is engaging in life through the prism of their other law is the measure of their own good and evil. In response to the word, their thoughts accuse or excuse them. **Rom 2:15**. This proclivity for self-assessment is marked by an inability or an unwillingness to testify of personal, marital or familial reformation in the light of the word. The stones of law within their heart impede their ability to be rooted and grounded in love. This is because their affections are contingent upon the affirmation that they receive from others, and are often informed by comparison. **2Co 10:12**. **Jas 3:13-14**. For this reason, those likened to stony ground are easily offended and often feel victimised.

A second key impediment to entering rest, which causes weariness, includes the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things. **Mar 4:19**. These endeavours represent alternative yokes, or agendas, that are in competition with the works that belong to our sanctified obedience. Jesus likened these pursuits to 'thorns' that choke the word so that we become unfruitful in our expression as a son of God. Instead of bearing the fruits of the Spirit, which indicate blessing, we can become distracted and anxious and beset by the prickly passions of sin. **Rom 7:5**.

Further reading: Romans 7

The impact of shame

Jesus stressed the fatiguing effect of alternative agendas and interests upon a believer when He said, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be *weighed down* with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day [of God's judgement] come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.' **Luk 21:34-35**.

The conversation and conduct that are characteristic of both stony ground and thorny ground are motivated by *shame*. Shame is the fruit of our failure to obtain the righteous life and expression that we desire for ourselves.

Shame was first manifest after Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Significantly, eating this fruit did not deliver to Adam and Eve a capacity or knowledge which they did not already possess in *agape* fellowship with Yahweh at the tree of life. Identifying the new knowledge that they did acquire through their disobedience, Moses wrote, 'Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and *they knew that they were naked*'. **Gen 3:7**. Their nakedness revealed the inadequacy of their self-definition and their vulnerability.

In response to the knowledge of their nakedness, Adam and Eve made themselves coverings by sewing fig leaves together, and they hid themselves from the fellowship of Yahweh. **Gen 3:7-10**. We know that these were actions motivated by shame, because Moses noted that, prior to the Fall, 'they were both naked, the man and his wife, *and were not ashamed*'. **Gen 2:25**. As a consequence of the Fall, covering ourselves with figurative fig leaves is the default initiative that every person who lives according to the flesh takes toward their life. These 'fig leaves' are projections used to cover the shame of our failing self-image.

Further reading: Genesis 3

The symptoms of shame

Disappointment, discouragement, discontent and distrust, when our good endeavours founder or are not affirmed by others, indicate our shame. In this condition, we are being weighed down by our unfulfilled expectations and are vulnerable to the snare of sin. Although we may feel 'poorly' or 'low', this is not the bearing of a person who is 'poor in spirit'. Rather, 'poor in spirit' is the demeanour of a person who is accepting Christ's yoke and is learning from Him. In contrast, shame motivates us to recover ourselves through *penance*. These are the actions that we take to affirm our religious self-image and to assure ourselves of our acceptability before God. These actions, whether self-prescribed or defined in a pastoral encounter, are an attempt to obtain this acceptability on our own terms.

Penance is *not* repentance and, therefore, cannot lead to faith obedience and rest. The only answer is for us to turn again to the Lord and embrace our participation in His offering and sufferings as a member of His body. With this in mind, Paul exhorted us, writing, 'Let us *lay aside every weight*, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, *despising the shame*, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God'. **Heb 12:1-2.**

Unless we find deliverance from the way of shame, we will become increasingly weak and sick, and will fall spiritually asleep under the judgement of God. This is because we are unable to participate in the *agape* meal in a worthy manner, 'not discerning the Lord's body'. **1Co 11:29.** This means that we cannot discriminate between the obedience that is defined by the word, and our self-righteous 'good'.

Further reading: Job 7

Recognising our weariness

When we are deceived, we believe that what we see and understand about ourselves, and our life, is consistent with the word that is being proclaimed to us. This state of deception is evidenced by our lack of repentance and faith in response to the word.

Helpfully, the physical, emotional and spiritual fatigue that we feel when we live according to the flesh reveals our situation. For this reason, Paul exhorted us to examine ourselves and our condition, and to recognise that our weariness and discouragement, particularly in the midst of suffering, is the evidence of God's judgement in our life. We are being judged in this manner because we have *forgotten* the exhortation that addresses us as sons: '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.**

Through the ministry of His word, the Lord comes to meet the weary in order to recover them to 'rest'. In this regard, we recall the invitation of Jesus, who said, 'Come to Me, all you *who labour and are heavy laden* [that is, are 'weary'], and I will *give you rest*. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find *rest for your souls*. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.' **Mat 11:28-30.**

Jesus speaks these words to us as the Shepherd and Overseer of our soul. **1Pe 2:25.** He is the Overseer of a royal priesthood, and the Overseer of His house, 'whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end'. **Heb 3:6.** As the great Shepherd of the sheep, Jesus calls each of us *by name*. **Joh 10:2-5.** We are led by the Shepherd as we turn from self-definition and, instead, respond in faith obedience to the word of our name.

Further reading: Hebrews 12

Recovered to our sanctification

When Jesus Christ, who is the great Shepherd of the sheep, calls us by our name, His word defines who we are in relation to Him and in relation to those who belong to His flock.

The first initiative of the Shepherd is to find us and to recover us to our sanctification. We recall that the disciples were scattered to their homes when Christ, the great Shepherd, was smitten. Our houses, in fact, are where we must respond to the word that is addressing our weariness, or stumbling, in relation to the word of the cross. Jesus Himself said, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: "I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered". But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.' **Mat 26:31-32.**

It was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee that Jesus regathered the disciples and, particularly, called Peter to his sanctification as a shepherd of Christ's sheep. He explained that the Spirit would enable Peter to be yoked to Him, saying, 'When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.' **Joh 21:18.**

Later, because Peter had been yoked to Christ and had learned his sanctification from Him, he was able to direct the presbytery to this same work, writing, 'Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, *but being examples to the flock*; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away'. **1Pe 5:2-4.**

Further reading: John 21

Journeying with Christ

When Jesus says to us, 'Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me,' He is inviting us to join His offering and suffering journey. **Mat 11:29**. Each wounding event in the course of His journey was a *travail* involving death, burial and resurrection. Through this travail, Christ *died to sin* as He laid down His life for us and fulfilled the works of obedience that belong to our sonship. **Rom 6:10**. **Heb 5:8-9**. Significantly, *Christ was being restored* at the end of each wound in preparation for the lesson and the multiplication of life that belonged to the next wound. **Heb 12:2**.

When Christ calls us to be yoked to Him, we are being delivered to a *choice*. This is the choice: 'Do you want to be a son?' The Holy Spirit, who dwells *with us*, brings this conviction to us. **Joh 14:16-18**. **Joh 16:8**. The response of those who are poor in spirit is, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!' **Mar 9:24**. This is the expression of a person who wants to be a son, but recognises their inadequacy for this calling.

In response to this request for help, the Spirit, who is our Helper, enables us to confess, 'Abba, Father'; 'You are my Father'. That is, we confess that we have a name, and that we have works to do in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings as a member of His body. We understand this because the Spirit, who is in us, bears witness with our spirit that we are a son of God. As a son, we are an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ. We receive this inheritance as we are glorified with Him, as long as we suffer with Him in the fellowship of His travail. **Rom 8:15-17**. By the Spirit, we come boldly to the throne of grace where we obtain mercy and grace to bind, or yoke, us to Christ. **Heb 4:16**. We also receive the capacity of Eternal Spirit, from the Holy Spirit, to participate in the travail of Christ.

Further reading: Romans 8

The fellowship of His death

The first implication of Christ's yoke is that we *embrace our fellowship in His death*. Christ's death has two elements, symbolised by the scapegoat and the Lord's goat, which were offered as part of one sin offering on the Day of Atonement under the Law Covenant. **Lev 16:7-10.**

'The scapegoat' represents the dimension of Christ's death in which sin is destroyed. In the distress and mess of life that belongs to our weariness and discouragement, we accept our yoke to this aspect of Christ's death as we acknowledge that we are under God's judgement. As we judge ourselves in this way, we are illuminated to see that Christ is dying with us under the condemnation that belongs to our sin. We begin to fear the Lord and to cease from being a victim of our circumstances. Judging ourselves this way, *we reckon ourselves dead to sin* as we acknowledge our self-righteous judgements and the pursuit of self-satisfaction that belongs to the thorns that are growing up in our life. **Rom 6:11.** In Christ's death, we can put these off. As we judge ourselves in this manner, our sufferings are commuted from judgement to chastening, which is bringing us to maturity as a son of the Father. **1Co 11:31-32. Heb 12:6-7.**

'The Lord's goat' represents the death of emptying through which life is multiplied in the fellowship of Yahweh. This is the death that we die as a new creation, as we lay down our life, through offering, to reveal another. This expression of love is contrary to the motivation of the other law (which is self-centred) and the pursuit of the cares of this world, typified as 'thorns'. It is the expression of the seed life of which we are born. By the mercies of God, we are to present ourselves for this expression of love in the contexts of life in which the Father has placed us, including our families, the church, and the broader community. **Rom 12:1-2.**

Further reading: Romans 6

The fellowship of His burial

‘Burial’ is the next implication of being yoked to Christ. This is the context in which we learn from Him the obedience that belongs to our sonship, and we find rest for our soul. Initially, the context of burial can feel extremely lonely and limiting. However, burial is the context in which we meet Christ, *personally*. We confess, ‘Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death [the place of death and burial], I will fear no evil; *for You are with me*; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.’ **Psa 23:4.**

The belly of the great fish, where the prophet Jonah found himself after he embraced his death with Christ under the judgement of God, provides a vivid picture of burial. In this place of burial, Jonah prayed, ‘I went down to the moorings of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever; yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God.’ **Jon 2:6.**

‘The moorings of the mountains’ refers to the lowest parts of the earth. It was here that Christ, as the substance of our sonship, fulfilled all the works that belong to our name as a son of God. This happened on the cross during the three hours of great darkness, as He was manifest as ‘I AM’. **Joh 8:28. Mat 27:45.** Illuminated to this great truth, King David testified, ‘My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skilfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.’ **Psa 139:15-16.**

The evidence that we have accepted our burial with Christ is that *we come to rest*. Even though our circumstances may be constraining and painful, we cease from striving for our own expression, and we accept the limits of our sanctification.

Further reading: Jonah 2

Resting in hope

We must acknowledge that the limits of our sanctification have been defined by the Father and established by the Son. Abiding in these limits belongs to the blessing of our inheritance as a son of God. Our confession is, 'O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance.' **Psa 16:5-6.**

By this means, we are obtaining the testimony of Jesus, who confessed in relation to His burial, 'Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; *my flesh also will rest in hope.* For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures *forevermore.*' **Psa 16:9-11.** This is the confession of a person who is learning the paths of life from Christ through the word that proceeds from the presbytery in His right hand.

A person comes to rest because they have been illuminated to the hope of the resurrection. Christ is their 'living Hope'. **1Pe1:3-4.** He is the One who has pioneered the pathway of their salvation and is the substance of their resurrection, spiritual body. He has now ascended to the right hand of the Father in the most holy place of Yahweh's fellowship. The Lord sets this hope as an anchor in their heart, securing them to Himself and to His finished work. As the apostle Paul declared, 'This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.' **Heb 6:19-20.**

Further reading: Psalm 16

The Anchor of our soul

When Christ becomes the Anchor of our soul, He secures us with Him in the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Anchored in this way, He remains committed to the accomplishment of His finished work in us, even when we, at times, are faithless and stray from obedience. In fact, the only way that we can be separated from the love of Christ is if we deny Him by choosing to cut ourselves off from Him and from the fellowship of the presbytery. Declaring this principle, Paul wrote, 'This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.' **2Ti 2:11-13.**

Significantly, to be anchored to Christ, with the Father, in the fellowship of the Spirit, is to be secured in fellowship with our brethren. Evidently, burial is the place where we are being *rooted and grounded in love* with all the saints! Our fruitfulness as a son who has been born of God's life depends upon being established in the love of God through burial. **Eph 3:17-19.**

The apostle Paul declared that 'we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in *newness of life*'. **Rom 6:4.** The 'fruit' of Christ's death and burial is *resurrection life*. This is the capacity to fulfil the works of obedience that Christ learned for us through the things which He suffered. We can liken this life to the light of a new day in which we are to walk as we emerge from the 'evening' of our fellowship in His death and burial. We are being regenerated, and our soul is being restored. We are joined to this timeless reality of the cross because He is I AM. **Joh 8:28.**

Further reading: Ephesians 3

The expectation of the righteous

The fellowship of Christ's travail is painful. As Paul observed, '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**. This can be a time of weeping that endures as though 'through the night'. However, joy comes 'in the morning'. **Psa 30:5**. This joy belongs to what is made *new*, which has been brought forth in our life and understanding.

The word of the messengers, which is a light to our path, reminds us that travail and restoration are to be a daily and lifelong reality for us. We note, in this regard, the words of Isaiah, who declared, '*The watchman said, "The morning comes, and also the night. If you will inquire, inquire; Return! Come back!"*' **Isa 21:12**. As we have just considered, 'the night' speaks of our fellowship in Christ's death and burial. 'The morning' is the light of a new day in which we walk by resurrection life.

As disciples, we are awakened each morning by the Spirit to hear the word of Christ as He teaches us our obedience as a son of the Father. **Isa 50:4**. We understand that walking in the light of this word, with Christ, is our fellowship in His death and burial. That is, our morning is followed by an evening. We are not rebellious but, in the fellowship of Christ's death, we embrace the chastening of the Lord for our peace. Moreover, we accept the blows to our reputation as fellowship in His bruising for our iniquity. **Isa 50:5-6. Isa 53:5**. As surely as morning follows evening, we receive the light of life for our obedience, as the dawning of a new day. This is our expectation as those who have taken Christ's yoke upon us.

Further reading: Psalm 30

Yoked to Christ

The rest that we receive, as we remain yoked to Christ, marks the end of anxiety and of other emotions of sin that arise when we live according to the flesh. Rest belongs only to those who are properly yoked to Christ. *This yoke is the headship of Christ.* The Lord is calling every man to be yoked to Him. He is calling every woman to be yoked to Him. If we are being yoked to Christ in the order of headship, we will be properly yoked to each other in our households and from house to house. We will be finding rest for our soul as we show forth the virtues of Him who called us out of darkness and into His marvellous light. **1Pe 2:9.**

The testimony of those who are yoked to Christ is, 'The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. *He makes me to lie down in green pastures* [find rest for my soul]; He leads me beside the still waters. *He restores my soul*; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.' **Psa 23:1-3.** This is the implication of walking with Christ in the fellowship of His travail. As King David then testified, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil [because I fear the Lord]; for You are with me [as He was with the repentant thief]; Your [chastening] rod and Your staff, they comfort me.' **Psa 23:4.**

Both elements of *rest* and *travail* meet in the Father's *agape* meal, which is the provision for our daily journey with Christ. Acknowledging this reality, King David further said, 'You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.' **Psa 23:5-6.**

Further reading: Hebrews 13

Eating and drinking

Our fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ depends upon 'eating His flesh' and 'drinking His blood' in a 'worthy' manner. **1Co 11:27-30**. Partaking of this meal is fundamental to receiving the substance of Christ's life as *exanastasis* in our mortal body 'today', and to obtaining the full inheritance of a spiritual body in the resurrection, or *anastasis*, at the last day. As Jesus Himself declared, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, *you have no life in you*. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will *raise him up at the last day*.' **Joh 6:53-54**.

Clearly, we must 'eat' Christ's flesh and 'drink' His blood. The question we need to answer is the very question that the Jews asked – 'How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?' **Joh 6:52**. We know that the food and drink that we are to consume is not the natural material that was brought forth from the womb of Mary, for this is when the Son *became our flesh*. **Joh 1:14**. Concerning this material, Jesus said, 'It is the Spirit who gives life; *the flesh profits nothing*. The words that I speak to you are Spirit, and they are life.' **Joh 6:63**.

To understand how we truly eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood, we need to ask for wisdom! **Jas 1:5**. This is necessary, for Paul wrote, '*I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say*. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [lit: fellowship, or participation] of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion [lit: fellowship, or participation] of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. Observe Israel after the flesh: *Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?*' **1Co 10:15-18**.

Further reading: John 6

The bread from heaven

Christ's flesh is the bread which comes down from heaven. **Joh 6:51**. His blood is the cup which we drink. It is the fruit of the Vine. **Joh 15:1-4**. These elements, along with foot washing, belong to the *agape* meal, which Jesus established as the first step of His journey back to the Father. **Joh 13:3-5**. Significantly, Paul explained that these elements of Christ's body and blood are a fellowship, or participation. More specifically, they join us to the altar, or context, of Yahweh's offering, through which Christ, the Seed, fell into the ground and died and rose again as the substance of the new humanity, having been made, through this process, in the image and likeness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All three Persons of the Godhead were working together, by offering, to bring forth the new creation. We see that our ongoing participation in the *agape* meal is an implication of our baptism into the name of the Father, the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Spirit, by which we are brought forth as new creation in the fellowship of Their offering. **Mat 28:19-20**.

When Christ rose from the dead, the one Seed had become a Sheaf of firstfruits, full of seed for *sowing*, and also bread for *eating*! The prophet Isaiah connected this 'seed' and 'bread' to the word of God, saying, 'For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it'. **Isa 55:10-11**. We eat bread by receiving the word of the Lord spoken by His messengers. This is fundamental to the way we live as covenant people today, and to receiving the resurrection at the last day. **Isa 55:2-3**.

Further reading: Isaiah 55

The capacity for fellowship

As we walk in the light of the word, which is seed for sowing and bread for eating, we have fellowship with the Lord and with each other, and we are progressively manifest as new creation. The evidence of partaking of this bread and participating in the cup is that we show forth the substance of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Practically, we are changing from one degree of glory to another. Moreover, we are finding reformation in our marriages and households as part of the bride of Christ, who is proceeding from Christ.

Clearly, participation in the *agape* meal is fundamental to our fellowship in the offering of Yahweh through which we will obtain our spiritual body on the day of resurrection. It is for this reason that the apostle Paul exhorted us all, saying, 'And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.' **Heb 10:24-25.**

We are able to participate in the Father's *agape* meal, and to journey with Christ in the fellowship of Yahweh's offering, *because* of baptism into the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives to us the capacity of seven Spirits, which is necessary for our participation in the intercession and travail of Yahweh's prayer fellowship. This is the context of rest and refreshing that we enter as those who are born of God and established in the community of Christ's bride, the New Jerusalem.

The rest that we have entered is expressed through the prayer language that we receive from the Holy Spirit. Paul described prayer by the capacity of the Spirit as 'groanings' that are too deep for comprehension. **Rom 8:26.** Through tongues, we have a participation in the intercession and travail of Yahweh's prayer fellowship.

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 4

A scenic landscape featuring a dirt path that winds up a grassy hill. The path is bordered by a simple wooden fence on the right side. The hill is covered in lush green grass and some small shrubs. In the background, there are rolling hills and a valley with a body of water. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and pink, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is peaceful and inspiring.

Restoring my Soul