



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

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JULY 2026

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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July 2026

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The adequacy of a watchman

Watchmen in the fellowship of the body of Christ must receive, respond to, and express the word of present truth that is ministered in the presbytery through the ascension-gift graces of Christ. Their ministry will be unable to deliver their hearers to salvation if they endeavour to speak from the basis of their former gospels or from their own understanding.

Apollos exemplified the response of a messenger who was able to receive such instruction. As Luke recorded in the book of Acts, 'This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.' **Act 18:25-26.**

Messengers, or watchmen, who remain unresponsive to the word of present truth that is proclaimed in their hearing will, inevitably, become ineffective and misaligned in relation to the work to which they have been called. Although they say that they 'see', they are deceived, and they fail to proclaim the fiery word that reveals God's judgement and the pathway of salvation.

Reflecting on such watchmen, the prophet Isaiah said, 'His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yes, they are greedy dogs which never have enough. And they are shepherds who cannot understand [because they are scorers who do not lift up their voice for understanding]; they all look to their own way, every one for his own gain, from his own territory [or local congregation].' **Isa 56:10-11.**

Further reading: Isaiah 62

Stumbling because of disobedience

A notable cause of despising others, leading to weariness and depression, is holding on to *offences*. In this regard, deliverance from offence is essential to our establishment as a worthy house and to our connection as part of the travelling bride of Christ. Addressing the subject of offences, Jesus said, 'Woe to the world because of offences! For offences must come, but woe to that man by whom the offence comes!' **Mat 18:7**.

Offences are the evidence of the mystery of iniquity at work in our heart, in our marriage, in our house, and in the church. Agur, the son of Jakeh, described *iniquity* as being one of four mysteries that are impossible to understand through reason, identifying it as 'the way of a serpent on a rock'. **Pro 30:19**.

We know, of course, that Christ is the Rock. The apostle Peter directed us to come to Christ, 'the Living Stone'. **1Pe 2:4**. He then explained that, to those who believe, Christ is precious. However, to those who are disobedient, He is "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed'. **1Pe 2:8**. We see that the mystery of iniquity is revealed by stumbling and offences because we are disobedient to the word of Christ the King, who has finished the works that belong to our obedience.

We must all give heed to this matter, for the temptation of offence is common to all people. *Meekness* is both the antidote for, and defence against, offence. The Holy Spirit enables meekness as He assists us in obtaining self-knowledge, and helps us to bypass the law of our mind. The law of our mind is bypassed by praying in the Holy Spirit. Prayer by the Holy Spirit is our access to the fellowship and dialogue that belongs to Yahweh. This is to be the culture of conversation and conduct that belongs in our marriage and in our house, and in the fellowship of the church.

Further reading: Isaiah 28

Job's deliverance from offence

It is helpful to consider the experience of Job, his three friends, and the young man, Elihu. The nature of the conversation within this 'presbytery', which can equally occur in a household, was informed by *the mystery of iniquity*. Although Job and his friends did state some helpful principles that were drawn from truth, this discussion was based on their own causal reasoning. It exemplified the principle of 'gainsaying'. The fruit of this conversation was relational impasse, weariness, and the multiplication of offences.

Notably, through this season of suffering, Job overcame the Devil. However, he was only able to do this because he met and received Christ as the King who addressed him with wrath and fiery indignation. For example, in response to Job's assessments of his situation, 'The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me"' **Job 38:1-3**.

Notably, the final word of the Lord's discourse to Job, as the only One who could legitimately 'gainsay', concerned the great serpent, Leviathan. Christ revealed to Job the principle of the serpent on the rock and instructed him regarding how to overcome Satan. He directed Job to 'remember the battle' and to desist from engaging with the serpent according to the principles of the flesh. **Job 41:8**. The only way of overcoming Satan was to join the King in the fellowship of His overcoming through the cross. To this end, the Lord declared, 'No-one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up. Who then is able to stand against Me? Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine.' **Job 41:10-11**.

As Job responded to the initiative of Christ, the King-Priest, he feared the Lord. He found repentance and faith, enabling him to know, and to believe, the true nature of God's love. **1Jn 4:16. Job 42:3-6**.

Further reading: Job 42

Which death will we die?

Our expectations, carnal communication, and lack of trust in the fellowship of the body of Christ will be evidenced by relational stumbling and offences. To this end, dealing with our offences is fundamental to deliverance from our infirmity and its impact upon our relationships in the church, in our families, and in our marriages.

Our offences are the outcome of judgements that we make about the way that we should be received, heard, and engaged. This demonstrates that we have taken a hold of the Law through the law of our mind. Our emotions that cause relational disharmony reveal that we are stumbling at Christ, the One from whom we have endeavoured to take hold of the Law.

The place of offence is where a death is happening. The absence of rest and peace is not simply our unhappiness at what another has done to us; it is the evidence that we are under judgement for our misappropriation and misuse of the Law. It means that we are growing weak, sick and dying because of offence.

The intensity of this distress is exacerbated by the Holy Spirit who is at enmity with this carnal orientation to life. **Gal 5:17**. The Spirit helps us, through illumination and conviction, to see where we are under the sentence of death because of our misuse of the Law, so that we can choose which death we will die.

The evidence that we have chosen Christ's death is that we come to rest in the fellowship of His burial. Instead of having a fetid attitude toward another, demanding recompense from them, we cease from presuming upon the right to be the measure of ourselves and others. We then receive from Christ the repentance that He has already finished for us, giving to us the capacity to initiate fellowship as an action of pouring out fragrant oil on the ones who have offended us.

Further reading: Luke 23

Our initiative toward fellowship

When the love of God is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit, we begin to judge in a different way. The love of God compels us to judge that ‘if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.’ **2Co 5:14-15**. The resurrection life that we receive, is the capacity for the works of obedience, or love, that Christ has finished for us.

The fragrant oil that is poured out upon another, through our repentance as we make *confession* and *testimony*, is the fellowship of the Spirit. A person who initiates toward fellowship with their brethren, who belongs to *corporate Jesus*, demonstrates that they ‘love much’. Those who do not anoint others in this manner, demonstrate that they ‘love little’.

Jesus also highlighted the importance of reconciliation when a brother has been offended by us. He said, ‘Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you [KJV – ‘ought against you’], leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.’ **Mat 5:23-24**.

Let us be clear that Christ was talking about offences between *brethren*, or fellow sons of God, in the body of Christ. Of course, these relationships include our marriages, our households (three generations), and our brethren in the church. He was not talking about the offences of those who are outside the body. The apostle Paul was clear that we are not debtors [we have no obligation] to the flesh. **Rom 8:12**.

Importantly, it is the Holy Spirit who brings to our remembrance the offences that a brother has against us. We are not just remembering every niggles or contrary interaction that we may have had with others. Discernment, in this regard, requires maturity and spiritual sight.

Further reading: Luke 7

Seeking reconciliation

Spiritual discernment is necessary to appraise the nature of a person's offence. For example, a person's offended response may simply be attributable to their personality or temperament. They may even be having a bad day! In other cases, the accusations levelled against us may be energised by a familiar spirit or the oppression of an evil spirit that has taken hold of a person. We do not need to answer or appease such expressions. We must maintain our own sanctified expression as we receive with meekness the word that enables us to be built on Christ.

A brother who has 'ought against us' is offended by something that we may have said or done. **Mat 5:23-24**. This may be a perceived or a real offence. However, if the Spirit brings the offence to our attention, we must seek reconciliation *in a spirit of fellowship*. This is the ministry of oil that marks our connection to the headship of Christ.

Of course, Jesus was not advocating for a gainsaying conversation that is informed by the law of our mind. This approach to relational recovery in the presbytery, in the church, or in our households, is an expression of the other law and only produces the emotions of sin.

What is our example? We note that Jesus sought reconciliation with Judas in a spirit of fellowship. Judas was offended by the words of Christ, and was offended when Jesus was anointed for His burial by Mary and by the wife of Simon the leper. Yet, Jesus washed Judas' feet and implored him to join Him in the fellowship of prayer in Gethsemane. **Joh 13:2-5,27**.

If we fail to initiate reconciliation when we know that our brother is offended, we sin, even if, according to the Law, we are blameless. Likewise, if the aggrieved brother *remains* offended, *they* sin. The problem for either person is their refusal to reconcile with their brother, and walk together in the light of the word, where the blood of Christ is active to cleanse and to heal. **1Jn 1:7**. For this reason, their sin remains.

Further reading: Psalm 133

The reason for dysfunction

In the light of our present focus in the word, we recognise that our human infirmity is the reason for dysfunction in our relationships.

For a Christian, carnality is the peculiar vulnerability to the infirmity that afflicts mankind on account of Adam's disobedience. A carnal Christian is a person who has been born again but who sets their mind on the flesh. That is, they engage with the word through the law of their mind, which is the expression of their other law.

In the absence of illumination and conviction by the Holy Spirit, our agreement with the word is an action of the other law through the law of our mind. When we engage the word in this manner, the instinct of self-preservation is unavoidably and unconsciously activated.

Self-preservation, associated with the fear of death, drives us to *covet* the life that belongs to the word. This brings us under the judgement of the cross, and sets us at odds with the expression of the life and fellowship of God that should be our culture in our marriages, houses, and relationships in the body of Christ.

When we live in this way, we are, again, *exchanging* the truth for the lie that belongs to our own understanding and the sight of our own eyes. In doing so, we are brought back into bondage to the fear of death under the rulership of Satan. He gains an advantage in our life and in our house.

In this season, we have been learning that our infirmity is revealed through the expectations that we have of one another, particularly in our marriages. These expectations are drawn from the word, or law, and are imposed upon the other. We could describe this dynamic as 'a marriage covenant empowered by romantic intention'.

Further reading: Romans 7

The first marriage covenant

Highlighting the connection between our infirmity and discord in our marriages, houses and churches, the apostle Paul introduced the subject of our infirmity by drawing attention to the problems in Christ's first marriage at Mount Sinai and the new marriage covenant of the Spirit established on Mount Calvary.

The Law, given at Mount Sinai, was the marriage covenant between the Son of God and the children of Israel, whom Stephen described as 'the church in the wilderness'. **Act 7:38**.

The Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, commented on this marriage by saying, 'Behold, the days are coming ... when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, *My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them*'. **Jer 31:31-32**.

The Law was given as a covenant to minister life and blessing to those who kept it and participated in the culture of offering prescribed by the Law. It was a tutor to bring the nation of Israel to Christ. **Gal 3:24**. The life ministered through the Law was not 'zoe', but rather blessing, healing, health and prosperity. **Exo 15:26**.

Men and women who walked in the faith of Abraham obtained this blessing. However, as a nation, the culture of the children of Israel was to walk after the flesh. That is, through the exercise of their knowledge of good and evil, they took hold of God's Law for their own ends. This led only to religious idolatry and cursing. Notably, this fleshly covenant was ended on the cross.

Paul declared, 'For the woman [the church at Sinai] who has a husband [the Son of God] is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives [it is their marriage covenant]. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband'. **Rom 7:2**.

Further reading: Exodus 19

The new marriage covenant

Paul declared that the first marriage covenant between the Son of God and the nation of Israel was finished through Christ's death on the cross. He then proclaimed that there is a new marriage covenant between the glorified Son of Man and the church. Paul said, 'Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ [having died with Him], that you may be married to another – to Him who was raised from the dead [the glorified Son of Man], that we should bear fruit to God.' **Rom 7:4.**

A new marriage covenant, between the Son of Man and the true Israel of God, was established on Mount Calvary once Christ was brought back from the death of our sin. This new marriage covenant is 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.' **Rom 8:2.**

Having been born of the divine nature, we are now able to walk after the Spirit in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. Instead of endeavouring to serve the Lord with our mind, which is fleshly, and inevitably leads to serving the law of sin, we can follow the Spirit. We are obedient from the heart to the word spoken by Christ through His messengers, which the Spirit brings to our remembrance. **Joh 14:26.** By this means, the righteous requirements of the Law are fulfilled in us. **Rom 8:4.**

However, when we choose to walk after the flesh, through our knowledge of good and evil, we come under condemnation. Through the law of our mind, we add the power and fire of the Law of God to our endeavours, to give us strength so that we can prove that we are right, others are wrong, and that God is with us. **Rom 7:25.** This becomes our new form of idolatry, which is evidenced by the accompanying emotions of sin. **Rom 7:5.**

Further reading: Romans 8

The doctrine of Balaam

In previous years, we have identified the doctrine of Balaam as the expression of a presbyter who seeks mutual empowerment and financial gain through the ministry of the gospel. However, in the light of the word revealing the nature of our infirmity, our understanding of this destructive doctrine can be further broadened.

Jesus identified this doctrine in his letter to the church in Pergamos. He addressed the presbytery as 'He who has the sharp two-edged sword'. **Rev 2:12.** He rebuked them, saying, 'I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a *stumbling block* before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.' **Rev 2:14.**

The apostle Peter explained that Christ Himself becomes to us a stumbling stone and a rock of offence when we are *disobedient* to the word of present truth, exchanging this truth for the lie that belongs to our idolatrous projections. These projections are coverings to mask the *shame* of our nakedness as we live by the other law.

Peter declared concerning Christ, 'Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone," and "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." They stumble, *being disobedient to the word*, to which they also were appointed.' **1Pe 2:7-8.**

The apostle Paul quoted this same prophetic Scripture from Isaiah, adding an additional point that connected stumbling to the expression of shame. He wrote to the Romans, 'As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence, and whoever believes on Him *will not be put to shame*".' **Rom 9:33.**

When we consider the doctrine of Balaam, it is important to note that Balaam taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel *because he himself stumbled in relation to his gift and its expression.*

Further reading: Revelation 2

The error of Balaam

When Balak first sent dignitaries to Balaam, asking him to curse Israel, God expressly said to him, 'You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed.' **Num 22:12**. Balak then sent more noble princes to implore Balaam to curse the people, promising him great riches and to do whatever he said. Balaam responded saying, 'I will not go beyond the word of the Lord.' However, God had said, 'You shall not go.' Balaam invited them to stay with him while he waited to see if there was another word.

Although Balaam knew what God had said, he hoped for another word because he coveted the riches and honour that Balak and the princes were offering. This desire revealed the idol in his heart. Significantly, God began to speak to him through his idol, saying, 'If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you – that you shall do.' **Num 22:20**.

God was still speaking to Balaam, and he was exercising his prophetic gift; however, it was now for his destruction because of his stumbling. We know this because the Scriptures say, 'God's anger was aroused *because he went*, and the Angel of the Lord stood against Balaam as an *adversary*, standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand.' **Num 22:22-23**.

The doctrine of Balaam belongs to those with a gift who, themselves, stumble at Christ's word, which is a two-edged sword proceeding from His mouth through the ministry of the presbytery in His right hand. **Rev 2:12**. These men may stumble because of their desire for gain or to maintain a ministry profile; or because of some discontent with the word direction in the presbytery; or because of a relational offence. The word that they speak may be true, but it is not the word proceeding from the fellowship of the presbytery on account of confession and testimony. It is a word that belongs to their own sense of ministry or purpose.

Further reading: Numbers 22

Overcoming the doctrine of Balaam

A messenger who is walking in the way of Balaam demonstrates that they are ashamed of the gospel of God, on account of the shameful pursuit of their own expression. Unavoidably, they minister another gospel that promotes the idolatrous expression of self-righteousness and embraces mixture with other religious cultures. In doing so, those who join their alternative conversation are caused to stumble in relation to their sanctification that is revealed through the word of present truth.

We do not need to stumble in this manner. In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote, 'Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offences [lit: stumbling blocks], contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.' **Rom 16:17**. The key for us all is to receive with meekness the word that is proceeding from the fellowship of the presbytery that invites us to join the fellowship of the presbytery.

Speaking to the church in Pergamum, who had overcome the doctrine of Balaam, Jesus promised, 'To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white [lit: brilliant] stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.' **Rev 2:17**.

The 'hidden manna' is the privilege of knowing and doing the will of Him who sends us. As Jesus said, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know.' **Joh 4:32**. 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.' **Joh 4:34**.

The white stone that we receive is the capacity to reveal the virtue of Christ as a unique son of God! We are called to be living stones who are built on Christ according to our sanctification. Jesus Christ is the elect and precious Cornerstone. As we are built on Him as living, elect, and precious stones, we show forth the excellencies, or brilliance, of Him who called us out of darkness and into His marvellous light. **1Pe 2:9**.

Further reading: 1 Peter 2

Since we have this ministry

In his second letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul described the nature of his ministry as a messenger in the right hand of Christ. He said, 'Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' **2Co 4:2**. This statement is a helpful summary of Paul's testimony as a messenger who had been sent by the Holy Spirit to establish lampstand churches. It must become the testimony of every messenger in the right hand of Christ, and every believing household that belongs to a lampstand church.

When the apostle Paul declared, 'Since we have this ministry', he was referring to the ministry of the Spirit that he had previously described in the first three chapters of his letter. In the third chapter of his letter, Paul specifically contrasted the ministry of the Law Covenant with the ministry of the New Covenant. He described the Law Covenant as the ministry of the letter which had been written upon tablets of stone. Notably, the ministry of the Law Covenant did have a degree of glory, even though it was a temporary glory. **2Co 3:10**. For those who kept the Law, it resulted in the Lord's blessing upon their own life, their family, and the work of their hands. The Lord's blessing included physical healing, emotional wellbeing, and material prosperity.

In this regard, the Law Covenant was glorious. However, it was only a temporary glory because its blessing was confined to this lifetime. It did not have the capacity to circumcise and regenerate the heart of man. And, nor did it have the capacity to give eternal life.

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 4

The Law was a tutor

Paul declared, 'If the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away [temporal], how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.' **2Co 3:7-9.**

Despite the glory of the Law Covenant, the apostle Paul described it as 'the ministry of death' and 'the ministry of condemnation'. In the same way that a person's obedience to the Law resulted in blessing, a person's disobedience to the Law resulted in cursing. Cursing is the judgement of the Law of God. Notably, the judgement of the Law Covenant was not limited to a person's behaviour; it also extended to the judgement of a person's heart. Moses said to the nation of Israel, 'You shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, *to know what was in your heart*, whether you would keep His commandments or not.' **Deu 8:2.**

Even though the heart of man was judged under the Law Covenant, the Law had no capacity to circumcise the other law that had been fathered in the heart of man through Adam's disobedience. Similarly, even though the Law promised to impart a blessing for obedience, it did not give the capacity for obedience to the nation of Israel. Rather, the Law was a tutor, or a schoolmaster, that was intended to lead the nation of Israel to Christ. The offerings that were prescribed by the Law Covenant all foreshadowed the offering of Christ. The men and women who walked in the faith of Abraham, made offering under the Law Covenant, in faith for the coming of Christ and the inauguration of the New Covenant as the outcome of His death and resurrection.

Further reading: Galatians 3

Ministers of the New Covenant

The apostle Paul described the New Covenant as 'the ministry of the Spirit' and 'the ministry of righteousness'. After Jesus Christ was raised from the dead in His spiritual body, it was possible for men to receive the Holy Spirit into their spirit, and to be born again of the incorruptible seed of the divine nature as a son of God. **Joh 20:22. Rom 8:15. 1Pe 1:23.** Furthermore, as a son of God is led by the Holy Spirit on the pathway that Christ has pioneered for them, the grace of Christ's resurrection life enables them to fulfil the works of their sonship each day. The *righteousness of God* is revealed in their life, from faith to faith, as they progressively do the works that Christ already completed for them on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross.

It is the power of the seven Spirits of God, which is ministered to us through the Holy Spirit, that raises us from the dead with Christ, enabling us to complete the works of our sonship each day. Significantly, it is the same power that enables us to become a minister of the New Covenant. Referring to the power of the seven Spirits of God, the apostle Paul rejoiced and said, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.' **2Co 3:5-6.** It is the ministry of the seven Spirits of God, by the Holy Spirit, that multiplies the life of God.

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 3

Great boldness of speech

The ministry of the Spirit is the revelation of the seven Spirits of God that belong to Jesus Christ. The light of the seven Spirits of God that shines from the face of Christ is ministered to His lampstand churches through the messengers in His right hand. When this ministry is received, it enables a person to turn to the lordship of the Holy Spirit so that the veil of their own knowledge of good and evil is removed from the eyes of their heart. Having been delivered from the deception of their own mind, they are free to behold the truth of their sonship in the face of Christ. A son of God who walks after the Spirit, in the fellowship of Christ's offering, will be progressively changed into the image of Christ from glory to glory.

We walk after the Spirit by walking in the light of the word that is proclaimed by the Holy Spirit to Christ's lampstand churches through the messengers in His right hand. Paul rejoiced that he had been given the privilege of being a minister of the Spirit in the right hand of Christ. He recognised that his ministry revealed the glory of Christ and was necessary for his hearers to receive the hope of their sonship, including the inheritance of their spiritual body on the day of resurrection. Speaking about the outcome of the ministry of the Spirit, he declared, 'Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech.' **2Co 3:12**. Every son of God should have the same *boldness of speech* as they testify about the ministry of the Spirit to their family, friends, neighbours, and work colleagues.

Further reading: Acts 4

As we have received mercy

Paul recognised that he had become a minister of the Spirit on the basis that he was a recipient of the Lord's mercy. **1Ti 1:15-16**. The mercy of God has been extended to all men through the offering of Christ. However, it is only received, or obtained, by those who have become bankrupt in spirit because they have met Christ as their Lord and King.

The first dimension of the mercy of God is the forgiveness of the debt that has been accrued, because of our sin, under the judgement of the Law of God. However, the mercy of God is far more than forgiveness. The mercy of God grants us a participation in the fellowship of the seven wounding events that Christ experienced from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross.

In the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, the other law is circumcised from our heart, enabling us to cease from sin. The mercy of God delivers us to a participation in both the dying and the living of our Lord Jesus. It includes both the remission of our sin in the death of Christ, and the capacity to live as a son of God through the resurrection of Christ. The apostle Paul testified, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' **Gal 2:20**.

The mercy of God is new every morning because, each day, we have a new participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. **Lam 3:22-23**. The apostle Paul exhorted us to this daily reality when he wrote, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God*, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' **Rom 12:1**. We will continue to be a recipient of the mercy of God until we receive the inheritance of our spiritual body on the day of resurrection. **Jud 1:21**.

Further reading: 1 Timothy 1

We do not lose heart

Recognising that we are receiving the resurrection life of God in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings each day, the apostle Paul declared, 'We do not lose heart.' **2Co 4:1**. That is, when we experience difficulties, or when we are rejected by men, we do not draw back in unbelief and become depressed. Our testimony is that we have the treasure of Christ's resurrection life in our mortal bodies. Paul reflected on his ministry by saying, 'We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.' **2Co 4:7-10**.

The resurrection life of Christ sustains and strengthens us in our mortality so that we can fulfil the will of God each day. The resurrection life of Christ is also regenerating our inner man. This is the reason why we do not lose heart in the middle of our suffering and difficult circumstances. Paul testified, 'Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.' **2Co 4:16**. Furthermore, the resurrection life of Christ that is regenerating our inner man is also equipping us to minister the same resurrection life of Christ to others.

In the first chapter of his letter, Paul likened the resurrection life of Christ that regenerates our inner man, to the comfort that we receive from God as the outcome of His chastening in our life. Highlighting that our testimony of regeneration becomes a ministry of resurrection life to others, Paul said, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.' **2Co 1:3-4**.

Further reading: 2 Corinthians 1

We have renounced the hidden things of shame

The apostle Paul continued to describe our ministry by saying that ‘we have renounced the hidden things of shame’. **2Co 4:2**. We must be delivered from our self-righteous shame before we are able to be a minister of the New Covenant. It is appropriate to be ashamed about our sin when it is the outcome of the conviction of the Holy Spirit that causes us to look upon Jesus Christ whom we have pierced. However, there is another form of shame that is only the manifestation of *our own judgement* upon ourselves. It becomes the fear of being exposed that motivates us to hide our sin by maintaining a projection that we have created for ourselves. If our sin is exposed, it is the same shame that motivates us towards the recovery of our projection through self-righteous acts of penance.

Prior to the Fall in the garden of Eden, Adam and his wife did not know any form of shame. They walked in the light of fellowship with the Lord at the tree of life each day. However, immediately after they exchanged the truth of God for the lie of Satan, and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they became deeply ashamed of their actions and their fallen human condition. Rather than seeking fellowship with the Lord, their shame motivated them to make coverings for themselves with fig leaves. We can liken the fig leaves to the projections that we make for ourselves. In addition to this, when they heard the voice of the Lord calling them for fellowship, they tried to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees in the garden.

Jesus described the motivation of shame that causes us to maintain a projection and hide ourselves from fellowship, by saying, ‘The light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil.’ **Joh 3:19**. The self-righteous shame that causes us to love the darkness, rather than the light, is a bigger problem than our evil deeds.

Further reading: Genesis 3

Despising the shame

When the word of God is proclaimed to us, and we respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit by walking in open-hearted fellowship with our brethren, the grace to repent from our evil deeds, and to walk in a new way, is found in the fellowship of Christ's offering. The apostle John declared, 'If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.' **1Jn 1:7**.

We know that Jesus has already pioneered the pathway of our repentance, and our obedience, on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. Furthermore, on His offering journey, Jesus Christ has already *overcome the shame* that causes us to recoil to the darkness of our own religious projection. The apostle Paul declared that we are '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 12:2**. Jesus did not despise the fact that He was humiliated because of our sin. He willingly embraced and endured the humiliation of the cross for the joy of recovering us as sons of God. Rather, Jesus despised our *self-righteous shame* which causes us to hide ourselves because we are afraid of humiliation.

The Lord testified about how He despised our shame, by saying, through the prophet Isaiah, 'I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.' **Isa 50:6**. This is a wonderful point. Jesus has already overcome the shame that causes us to hide our face because of our fear of being exposed in the light. This means that when the word of the cross is proclaimed to us, there is grace for us to, likewise, *despise our self-righteous shame* and walk in the light of fellowship with our brethren. We renounce the hidden things of shame when we willingly confess our faults to one another. **Jas 5:16**.

Further reading: 1 John 1

Not walking in craftiness

When we have renounced the hidden things of shame by walking in the light, it means that we do not need to walk in craftiness in relation to our ministry. When Paul said that he was not 'walking in craftiness', he was comparing his ministry to the carnal mode of ministry that was employed by many of the other messengers who had come to Corinth. Rather than walking in the light, they pretended to be messengers of light. Paul described their ministry by saying, 'For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.' **2Co 11:3,13-14. Gen 3:1.**

The mode of Satan is trading. A person who is walking in craftiness will employ the same mode as Satan in their relationships and in relation to their ministry. Rather than laying down their life for people in offering, they will seek to ingratiate themselves in the eyes of other people for the purpose of gaining favour or receiving something in return. A person who is walking in craftiness may use persuasive words of wisdom to convince people to believe their message for the sake of a successful ministry outcome.

In contrast to this, Paul testified to the Corinthians in his first letter, 'I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' **1Co 2:3-4.** Paul was among the Corinthians 'in weakness' because he was joined to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. He ministered to them 'in fear' because he feared God and wanted to please Christ who had sent him. He was not trying to please men, nor was he afraid of being rejected by men. The ministry of Paul revealed the power of the seven Spirits of God because he was poor in spirit and he trembled at the word of the Lord. **Isa 66:2.**

Further reading: 1 Corinthians 2

Not handling the word of God deceitfully

The apostle Paul continued to describe the ministry of the Spirit by saying that we are not 'handling the word of God deceitfully'. **2Co 4:2**. A person will handle the word deceitfully if they *cleave with deceit* to the messengers of Christ who proclaim the word of present truth to them. Rather than receiving the word of God with meekness, and meeting the messengers of Christ in a fellowship, they will view the word as a resource that will empower their own ministry projection. Even though a person may communicate the content of the word to others in an accurate manner, their ministry projection is the expression of a lie. This is the case when there is a discrepancy between a person's ministry profile and the culture of their own house.

Paul explained that the opposite of handling the word of God deceitfully is that our ministry is the 'manifestation of the truth'. **2Co 4:2**. This means that the word of God that we proclaim is the expression of our own testimony. The mode of Paul's ministry was to explain and to demonstrate his message. **Act 17:3**. He proclaimed and portrayed Christ as crucified. **1Co 2:2**. **Gal 3:1**. He was the exemplar of his message as a living epistle of Christ. Our ministry is the expression of our testimony when the truth of our message is demonstrated in our own life, in our own marriage, and in our own family. When we minister in this way, the word that we proclaim is an invitation for our hearers to join a fellowship with us, which is a fellowship with the Father and the Son. **1Jn 1:3**.

Further reading: 3 John

Commending ourselves to every man's conscience

The apostle Paul was not interested in communicating information to his hearers that they could use as a resource. The purpose of his ministry was to multiply the fellowship of Yahweh in lampstand churches. For this reason, Paul said that we are 'commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God'. **2Co 4:2**. We note that Paul did not separate himself from his message. His ministry was an expression of his own offering, for the sake of establishing fellowship between himself and those who received him. Later, in this same letter, he testified to the Corinthians by saying, 'We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. ... Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.' **2Co 6:11,13**.

It is significant that Paul did not commend himself to every person's mind. He was not focused on trying to prove the veracity of his ministry to anyone, or trying to convince anyone to receive his message. He was not concerned by the judgements that the Corinthians made about him and his ministry. **1Co 4:3**. Rather, he commended himself to every man's conscience. The conscience of a person is the deepest part of their spirit. A person's spirit is their identity. Our conscience is the faculty of our spirit that enables us to know ourselves, to know God, and to know one another. It is our capacity for fellowship. When Paul commended himself to every man's conscience, he was saying that he wanted to meet each person, spirit to spirit, for the purpose of fellowship.

When the word of God is proclaimed, the spirit of a person must be illuminated by the Holy Spirit; otherwise, their identity remains in darkness and there is no ground for fellowship.

Further reading: Acts 20

The light from the face of Christ

Paul concluded the description of the ministry of the Spirit by saying that, 'If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age [Satan] has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' **2Co 4:3-6**.

On the day of His resurrection, Jesus Christ was revealed to be the first Man in the image and likeness of God. He is presently seated at the right hand of God in His spiritual body. He possesses the seven Spirits of God. The glory of God, which is the light of the seven Spirits of God, shines from His face. The light that shines from the face of Christ is revealed, by the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of the seven stars in the right hand of Christ. This is the *true light* of the world, which is far more important than the light of the sun that sustains the natural creation. It is the light of the seven Spirits of God that illuminates the darkness of a person's heart, enabling them to see the hope of their calling as a son of God who will be conformed to the image of Christ, so that they can reveal the glory of God forever.

Further reading: Revelation 1

The light of the gospel

Paul testified that the light that shines from the face of Christ had firstly shone into his own heart. **2Co 4:6**. He had been illuminated to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Then, as an *illuminated messenger* in the right hand of Christ, Paul proclaimed the word that revealed the same light to the Gentiles. Paul did not reveal himself. He rejoiced that his ministry revealed Jesus Christ and the light that shines from His face. **2Co 4:5**. Knowing that this light had illuminated his own heart, he was assured that if a person believed the word that he preached, then the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ would also shine into their heart. He recognised that it was only a person's unbelief that prevented them from receiving this illumination. **2Co 4:4**.

In this season, the Holy Spirit is speaking to us a *second time* about what it means to be part of a lampstand church. He is calling every individual and household to believe for the fulfilment of the word that has previously been spoken to us. We are believing to see a lampstand church established in our generation on the foundation of worthy houses. As we are being recovered to the fellowship of first love in our marriages, households, congregations, and in the presbytery, then we will also see the ministry of the Spirit in a new and effective way. The ministry of the households that belong to a lampstand church is to manifest the light of the seven Spirits of God among the unclean daughters of Zion, and then to the world. Jesus said, 'You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.' **Mat 5:14**.

Further reading: Isaiah 60



Restoring
my Soul