

The word of the cross

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that ‘the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God’. This living and powerful word is being preached to us ‘today’. We could call it ‘the today word’ because the writer of the book of Hebrews says, ‘*Today* if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they [Israel] provoked Me’. There is a sense in which the word of the cross is coming to us right now! Peter calls this, ‘The word which is present with you’. If we receive and live by this word, we will be partakers of Christ and will hold our assurance firm until the end.

The word of the cross comes to pierce and convict our hearts. The word illuminates our understanding, giving us knowledge and hope in relation to our calling. We must continue to receive this word each day and obey it. The capacity for obedience does not begin within us. It is in the word that we are receiving. We receive the capacity to obey when faith is given to us. It is evident that as we obey the word by the faith we have received, we are born of God. Our participation in salvation is not a one-time event. It is a pilgrimage, the goal of which is to obtain our sonship. While we have begun to be saved, the Scripture says we are *being saved* only if we *continue* in the way of salvation. Having been reconciled to God, we shall be saved by His life. If we persevere and continue in the way of salvation, God will be our Father and we will be His sons.

References:

1Co 1:18 2Pe 1:12
Heb 4:12 Eph 1:18
Rev 21:7 2Co 2:15

Further Study

Heb 3

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 6

The fountain of life

When a preacher announces the word of the cross to us, it comes to us with power and in the Holy Spirit. The word of the cross is powerful because it brings to us the substance of Christ's finished work. When Christ proclaimed on the cross, 'It is finished', He was declaring that all offering had been fulfilled and summarised into one process. He then died and gave up His Spirit to the Father. His body, left hanging on the cross, was the remains of a fully completed and consumed offering. In this sense, it was like the ashes of an offering. When Christ finished His work, the centurion pierced His body with a spear. The ashes of His finished offering, with the blood and water that came from the wound made by the spear, are the elements through which mankind can be saved and recovered to their sonship.

Zechariah referred to the blood and water that came from Christ's side as a 'fountain for sin and impurity'. This fountain is giving us the power to process and remove sin and impurity from our lives. For the Christian, the issue is often not so much one of dealing with sin, but of coming out from the impurity of the world and its ways, and being sanctified to God. The fountain of life that is flowing from Christ's side is not only giving us the power to deal with sin, but it is also giving the life of God to us. God uses the agency of the water, the blood and the Holy Spirit to give His life to us. It is through the activity of these three elements that we are receiving the life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We call this life, 'the divine nature'.

References:

1Th 1:5
1Jn 5:6
2Co 6:17

Joh 19:34
Zec 13:1
Psa 36:9

Further Study

Heb 9

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 7

Touching what is unclean

The children of Israel became unclean whenever they came in contact with a 'dead body'. In our context as Christians, 'the dead body' represents everything that Christ has passed judgement upon. This is all that is in the world, that is old, and that is passing away. These things are old to us because the finished work of Christ has delivered us from an old way that leads to death, to 'a new and living way'. Paul wrote that the new and living way was established through the veil of Christ's flesh. He was referring to His pierced side. We see, then, that the finished work of Christ's offering is bringing us into a new and living way, into the pathway of sonship.

As we walk on the new and living way, there are many instances where we may interact with, or touch, that which belongs to our old and fallen condition as Adam's children. For example, if we return to our former sinful behaviours after being delivered from them, we will need to be sprinkled with the waters of separation. The same is so if we engage in family cultures or practices that are contrary to the culture of the body of Christ. It also could be as a consequence of simply engaging in worldly practices at school or at work to fit in and to find approval.

We all are in obvious need of the waters of purification as we continue on the new and living way. Availing ourselves of these elements is essential to living as a son of God. This is because we are unable to make acceptable offering as sons while we are unclean. If we do this, we bring our uncleanness into the fellowship of the body of Christ.

References:

I Jn 2:17
Joh 14:6
Joh 6:51
Num 19:9, 12-13

Further Study

Num 31

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 8

Partakers of the divine nature

The apostle Peter declared that, as sons of God, we have become partakers of the 'divine nature'. The divine nature is the life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Godhead is three Persons in the fellowship of one life and one Spirit. And while They share this one life in common, each Person in the Godhead ministers life to us in a specific and unique way.

God the Father is offering His life to us through the water of the word. His word brings us illumination, giving us understanding to know what our name is. His word also gives us the power to be the obedient son whom He named us to be. The word defines the elements of our name and works. When we receive our name and works from the Father, we also receive His life as our own life, and this life enables us to live as a son of God.

God the Son is redeeming us by the life and power that is in His blood. His blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. His blood brings us back from the death of sin, and enables us to live as sons of God. We see, then, that His blood is not only cleansing our hearts from dead works; it is also enabling us to serve God and to demonstrate that we are His sons.

God the Holy Spirit is giving us His life when He gives us power to do the works that belong to our name. There is power in the life that the Holy Spirit gives to us. He gives to us the sevenfold Spirit of God, which is also called 'Eternal Spirit'. Resident in the Spirit of God is the power that joins us to Christ's offering. This enables us to give ourselves to God as a living sacrifice.

References:

2Pe 3:5-7 Act 7:22
1Co 1:18 Heb 2:14
Lev 17:11 Joh 6:54
Eph 3:16 Act 1:8

Further Study

2Pe 1

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 9

The Spirit of grace and supplication

When someone preaches the word to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, God pours out the Spirit of grace and supplication upon us. We recover understanding and faith. We are able to look upon Christ whom we have pierced and mourn for our sin. We see Christ's pierced side and mourn for the loss of our sonship. The washing of the water of separation is the application of the water and blood which flowed from Christ's wounded side, to our lives. These elements are applied to our lives by the word, through the convicting work of the Spirit of God.

The Spirit gives us the ability that comes from grace and power to pray for God's will to be done in our lives. As we pray, illumination is given to us. We are given an understanding of the things that we are to believe for in our lives. We see the pathway ahead, and the process that Christ has established to cleanse us from unrighteousness. In a very practical sense, as we believe in and receive His provision, we are able to obey and participate in the process needed for cleansing to occur. The apostle John wrote and said to us that 'everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure'.

It is important to recognise that the process of purification is only effective as we continue to walk in fellowship with one another. In the context of fellowship, we are able to confess our faults to one another, pray for one another, and be healed from our uncleanness. We are able to inspire one another to love and to do the good works that belong to our sonship. We are encouraged in faith as we continue on the new living way.

References:

Zec 12:10 1Jn 3:3
Jas 5:15 1Jn 1:5-10
Col 3:9-10 Joh 19:34

Further Study

Heb 10

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 10

Eye has not seen

The apostle Paul explained to the Corinthian church that ‘the body is sown corruptible, it is raised incorruptible. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”. The last Adam [Christ] became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.’

Everyone born of the Spirit of God is spiritual. Spiritual people are called ‘sons of God’ because they have been born of the Spirit of God; they are sons of God the Father. Everyone not born of the Spirit of God is natural. Natural people are called ‘sons of men’. Unless a person is born of God and receives the Spirit of God, he is only a natural man who thinks that the things of God are meaningless and irrelevant. They are locked up to the ignorance of the natural realm, which is the spirit of the world. The natural man is blind and deaf to all the things of God. The Scripture says that ‘eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him’. These things of God, which He has prepared for His people, are revealed by the Spirit of God. Only those who are born of the Spirit of God can receive and know the things of God. The natural man does not receive, and cannot know, the things of the Spirit.

References:

Gen 2:7 Jas 3:13-15
Joh 3:3-6 Joh 10:26-27
Rom 8:5-8
1Co 15:42-46

Further Study

1Co 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 13

Jesus is our example

The first step on the journey from the natural to the spiritual is when our ears are opened to hear the word of God and our eyes are opened to see the things of God. We proceed from the natural to the spiritual when we are born of the Spirit of God. We do not have to remain natural and alienated from God. He has opened a way for us to become spiritual sons of God. This is how God always meant things to be. In the same way that being a baby is not something to be ashamed of, we do not need to be ashamed of being natural. However, no one can remain as a baby. It is the same for our Christian walk. We must grow and mature and be changed from natural to spiritual. This is a journey that we must walk for our whole lives.

To become spiritual, we will have to become like Jesus. He is the example of what it is to be spiritual. However, there is a difference between Jesus and us. Jesus was God the Son, which means that He always existed. That is why He says that He is 'I Am'. He never received an identity or came into being through birth. We received our identity and came into existence when we were conceived in our mother's womb. We are born as children of men and have to grow and be trained as we develop into mature adults. However, more than this, we need to become sons of God. Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. The book of Hebrews tells us that He was made like His brethren in all things. This means that He was made to be the Son of God and the exemplar of everything that we are predestined to become as sons of God.

References:

Joh 8:58
Heb 12:2
1Co 14:20

Heb 2:14-17
Joh 3:5

Further Study

Psa 40

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 14

Circumcision and offering

The Bible introduces two separate, but connected, subjects to explain how God the Son became the Father's Son. One is called 'circumcision' and the other is called 'offering'. Together, these explain this mystery to us. Circumcision is the process by which God the Father made God the Son, His Son. Offering is the process by which God the Son gave up His own rights as God the Son and submitted Himself to become all that the Father asked of Him. The Father made the Son a King-Priest. His work was to offer Himself on the cross. By His offering, the Son was to redeem man and multiply the life of God through offering, giving it as a personal possession to everyone who believed in Him. Through Him, they could be born as sons of God.

Circumcision was the work of the Father to conform the Son completely to the Father's will. He was being conformed to an endpoint. This endpoint was a death, in the sense that He ceased to exercise His own initiative as Yahweh Son. While He did not cease to exist as Yahweh Son, Jesus did die on the cross. Paul explained that, having come in the flesh of men, the Son humbled Himself by becoming an obedient Son to the point of death on the cross. His death came after He had declared that all His work was finished. When He said, 'It is finished', He proclaimed that His circumcision by the hand of the Father was complete. This was the endpoint of His circumcision. It was also the end of His offering. He had fully emptied Himself and become the Father's Son. This was the endpoint, or death, of how things had been, and was now a new beginning. More than this, it was the completion and presentation of the new creation.

References:

Joh 19:30 2Co 5:17
Heb 7:1 1Jn 4:9-10
Joh 1:14 Isa 53:10
Joh 4:34 Gal 6:15

Further Study

Php 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 15

Outside of time and in time

To properly understand the offering and circumcision of Christ, we have to consider what God does outside of time, what He does within the bounds of time, and how His purpose is fulfilled in both of these contexts. It is important to note that unless we receive understanding from the Spirit of God, our point of view will only be from a time-bound perspective, because our lives here on earth are bound by time. The circumcision of Christ cannot be understood from a natural, time-bound perspective, only. This perspective will cause us to view the circumcision of Christ as an event that occurred before the world began and then was somehow repeated in time. This would be an error.

It is helpful to recognise three key realities. First, God has no beginning and no end. He just 'is'. The Scriptures refer to the realm of God's fellowship as 'before'. We could ask, 'Before what?' The answer is, 'Before a beginning had been declared by God to bring to pass His plan'. This leads us to the next reality, which is the 'eternal'. That which is eternal, or everlasting, has a beginning point but no end. The Eternal Covenant is our example here. Before the Father, Son and Holy Spirit agreed together to bring forth a multitude of sons, there were no sons of the Father. The Everlasting Covenant of sonship had a beginning point. The sons of God were to be born as natural people and then receive God's life, which would enable them to live forever. Third, we recognise that time-bound, or temporal, things have a beginning and an end. There is, in the passage of time, a sequence of events that occur between the beginning and the end. Things are accomplished. For example, people are given time to choose whether they want to be sons of God, or not.

References:

Heb 7:3 Isa 46:10
 Exo 3:14 Rev 4:8
 Psa 90:2 1Co 2:7
 Heb 13:20 Ecc 7:8

Further Study

Ecc 3

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 16

Today I have begotten you

When Yahweh Father accepted Yahweh Son as His Son in Their Covenant 'before', He said, 'You are My Son, *today* I have begotten You'. The statement 'today' established the beginning of time and the beginning of the Eternal Covenant. Christ had to journey the whole course of the Eternal Covenant and fulfil all its stages. He was conformed by His obedience, and showed at every stage that He was the Father's Son. Christ had to finish the course and accomplish everything that the Father required of Him. The Father gave Him strength and ability at each stage of His development. And, by this means, He was perfected as God's Son. It was not until Christ had died and was raised from the dead, that the Father declared that He was His only begotten Son.

When Jesus was raised from the dead, He was raised as the immortal Son of God. The Father did not declare Him to be His Son until Jesus was fully mature and immortal, and able to inherit the new heavens and new earth. This is also true for us. We must submit ourselves under the Father's hand, and experience His circumcising work in our lives as we fellowship in the body of Christ. We also need to learn from Christ how to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice which is our reasonable priestly service to God the Father. The apostle Paul encouraged every believer to mature in faith and grow up into the full stature of a son of God. If we continue and mature on this pathway of sonship, our bodies will be changed and made immortal when Christ returns. After we receive our spiritual body, we will proceed with Christ to the new heavens and new earth, and live in the family of God forever.

References:

Psa 2:7 Rom 1:4
Eph 4:13 Rom 12:1
Heb 12:5-6 1Co 15:51-52

Further Study

Heb 5

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 17

The circumcision of Christ

As Yahweh Son submitted His will to the Father, the Father then conformed Him to the image of *His sonship*. He conformed Him to the 'image of the sonship' which belongs to the Father. This conforming process is, in fact, what the Scripture calls 'the circumcision of Christ', which happened 'before' and was revealed in time. He was conformed to the image of sonship which we are to become; that is, one that fulfils the will of the Father in heaven. The writer of the book of Colossians calls His circumcision a 'circumcision made without hands'. It happened 'before', by the conforming process of the Father, and not by *the hands of man*. This is what circumcision means in its 'simplicity'. It is the work of the Father to conform His Son to the image of the sonship that is to be the full expression of His fatherhood.

As the Son lives in the fullness of that expression, the Son is fully revealing His Father. When the Father is fully revealed by the sonship of His Son, then the Son is fully revealed by His Father. This is 'offering love' in action. One is of the Other, conformed to the Other, revealing the Other, and then revealed by the Other.

This process and relationship is what we are being conformed to by the circumcision of Christ. From His circumcision comes the heart of a son of God. From His circumcision comes the enabling power, supplied to Him, to be conformed to the will of the Father in heaven. We must join His circumcision to be enabled to do the will of the Father in heaven. Christ was circumcised 'once for all'. Our own circumcision avails us nothing. Only Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God. It is only through Him that we can *draw near to God*.

References:

Col 2:11-13
Heb 12:7
Heb 1:3
Heb 10:19-22

Further Study

Joh 14

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 20

We need a new heart

The Scripture uses the 'heart' to describe the whole inner man, both soul and spirit. The heart is the real substance of a person, which cannot be seen from a natural perspective. The simple reality is that our whole inner man, both soul and spirit, has a tendency to do its own thing! This is the reason why the Scriptures say, 'Take heed', 'watch', 'take care', and 'beware'! Our heart 'turns after its own way'. We all have many justifications for why this is so.

Hearts such as this can never draw near to God! This is further expressed in the book of Ezekiel, where the Lord proclaims that 'no foreigner who is uncircumcised in heart shall enter His sanctuary'. We can easily extrapolate from this that 'no-one who is uncircumcised in heart shall draw near to God'. Only those who are 'circumcised of heart' can draw near to Him. Only those who have been conformed to the will of the Father in heaven, by joining Christ's circumcision, can draw near to God.

From His circumcision comes the heart of a son of God. From His circumcision comes the 'good' heart. This is what the New Covenant has given to us. It has given us a 'new heart', a heart which is the 'good ground'. And it has given us the seed of the divine life, which is to grow in our heart and produce a harvest of righteousness and peace. This is New Covenant life which Christ has made available for every child of God, for every family, and for every household. But we need to take heed to the matter of our heart if we are to enter into all that the Father has predestined for us as His sons.

References:

Jer 31:33 Eze 44:9
Psa 51:10 Eze 11:19
Mar 7:21-23 Mat 13:23
Joh 6:37

Further Study

Eze 36

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 21

Making the pleasant land desolate

Through the prophet Zechariah, the Lord described the nature of His relationship with the nation of Israel from one generation to the next. The Lord declared that they made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which He sent to them by His Spirit through the former prophets. So, He sent great wrath upon them. Describing their relationship, He said that just as *He called* and they would not listen, so *they called* and He would not listen. He scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations that they did not know. And the land was desolated behind them so that no-one 'went back and forth', *for they made the pleasant land desolate*.

This is an interesting statement: 'they made the pleasant land desolate'. For us, the making of *the pleasant land into a desolate land* is a matter of the heart. A heart of flint is a heart that is desolate. It is a heart of stone. It is an 'Old Covenant' heart of law that can never be cut into the New Covenant, unless it is joined to the circumcision of Christ. When affliction comes because of the word, and the suffering of the disciplining hand of the Father comes to conform us to the image of a son of God, we have a tendency to become offended, and our hearts become hard. As it was written in the book of Zechariah, we make our hearts like flint. We actually give ourselves to this! We give our hearts to be offended and hardened, and so they are *made hard*, like flint. The word 'made' is critical here. To 'make' something takes a thoughtful process and application. It doesn't just happen. We are fully accountable for the hardened condition of our hearts.

References:

Isa 48:4 Jer 5:3
Eze 11:19 Mat 13:15, 21
Psa 50:17 Joh 3:19
2Th 2:10-12

Further Study

Zec 7

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 22

The heart is a garden

The Scriptures often refer to the 'heart' as a garden. For Adam and Eve, their 'pleasant land' was the garden of Eden into which God had placed them. It was a rich and fertile ground where seed had grown to produce the most beautiful garden, with many trees that bore much fruit. The fertile nature of the garden of Eden was like the human heart that God had created within them. It was compatible with Christ's heart of flesh, brought forth in Him, by circumcision, in the covenant 'before'. His heart was rich and full of goodness, able to nurture the divine life of God. Christ's heart was a 'good' heart. The heart of Adam was compatible with the heart of Christ while he lived by the obedience of faith. In the fullness of time, the heart of Christ would be given to mankind when they were born of God, by joining the fellowship of His circumcision.

When Eve was deceived by sin, and turned from the Lord and His word, she made her heart hard like flint. Adam also joined Eve in this action, and purposefully hardened his heart as well. This stony heart of unbelief was fathered in Adam and Eve when they received the word of Satan. Neither Adam nor Eve chose to wait patiently in faith, or to endure through the season of trial by God's enabling grace. Rather, they made another way for themselves. And, by doing this, they made themselves the source of their own way. The seed of their disobedience was the word fathered by Satan in their hearts, and its fruit *made their pleasant land desolate*. They became disconnected from Christ's heart of flesh from that moment and were driven out of the 'pleasant land' of the garden of Eden, into desolation. The way to the tree of life was barred to them.

References:

Deu 11:10-12

Isa 1:29-30

Hos 6:7

1Co 15:22, 45

Further Study

Gen 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 23

Resist the devil

Eve acted in presumption and disobedience when she partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is clear that she did not submit to God or draw near to Him because she could not *resist the devil*. The evidence of drawing near to God is that you *resist the devil*. He has no foothold in your life. But Eve did not draw near to God. And Satan obviously did not *flee* from her. This is why Satan kept hanging around in the garden of Eden. He was, in fact, right in the middle of the garden of Eden! Her work was to *resist him*! She was meant to see him *flee* from the garden. That was her *work of sanctification*. She was meant to get a big stick and say, 'What are you doing here? Get away from me, Satan! Get out of my garden!' Does this not sound like the words of Christ to Peter? 'Get behind Me, Satan!'

We are to resist the devil's word, no matter from whom it comes. Satan's word will lead us away from our participation in the circumcision of Christ, which conforms us to the image of His sonship. Eve's heart had already begun to turn to flint when she desired another way, as she listened to Satan's words. Her heart became carnal when she did not remain completely submitted to God and to His will. We are carnal too, when we draw ourselves away from God through unbelief. And Satan is always there with an alternative view that will lead us astray. We read in the book of James, 'Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you ... humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will lift you up.'

References:

Jas 4:7 Joh 14:30
 Eph 6:11-12 1Pe 5:8-9
 Eph 4:25-27 Mar 8:33

Further Study

Mat 4

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 24

Compassion on our desolate heart

We need to *draw near to the Lord*, to understand His ways, and to know Him. This is where our deliverance begins. Why do we justify our own law, and the reasons of our own heart, knowing all the while that the life of God does not come to us from our own way? No matter what our effort, our thoughtful process, or our application, the purposeful work of *our own hands*, will never bring forth the life of God in our heart. And so, the work that is 'made with *our hands*', will only ever make *the pleasant land desolate*.

The simple truth is that in all our hearts, there is some element of 'desolation'. We read in the book of Isaiah that 'the Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; He will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.' Is your heart as the prophet Isaiah has written? Is it in ruin? Is it like a desert, dry and parched, stony and hard? Is it a wasteland, where nothing can grow? The Lord looks upon the state of your heart with great compassion. He looks upon all your ruins and desolate places with compassion.

He wants to give us *a new heart*. Our stony ground and thorny ground hearts need to be removed out of the way. And they can only be removed when we join the circumcision of Christ. And if we will remove them, the Lord will give us *His very own heart of flesh*. It shall be a heart that is like a *well-watered garden*, able to receive, nurture and grow the divine Seed which comes to us as the word of God.

References:

Isa 51:3 Isa 12:1
Isa 54:6-8 Eze 11:19
Eze 36:26 Eze 44:9
Mar 4:5-7 Col 2:9-11

Further Study

Jer 17

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 27

Jesus Christ is the Seed

Jesus Christ is the Seed of the *divine nature*. Speaking of Himself, Jesus said, 'Unless a *grain* of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit'. Later, both Peter and Paul identified Jesus as Abraham's Seed, in whom all the families of the earth shall be *blessed*. We become *partakers* of the divine nature when we are born of God. This is what it means to be *blessed*. We are blessed when we are born of the incorruptible Seed of the divine nature, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

The parable of the sower teaches that Jesus Christ comes to us as the Seed of the divine nature, when sowers, or *messengers*, are sent to us. True messengers are members of Christ's administration, and they are full of faith and the Holy Spirit. The word that they proclaim is the word of *sonship* which comes as a seed of divine life. The words that Christ is speaking, through the messengers whom He sends, are *Spirit* and *life*. The divine nature is the one Spirit and one life of Yahweh that is multiplied and given to us, by offering, as a personal possession.

The parable of the sower further teaches us that the word of sonship is sown into the 'ground' of our *hearts*. We receive the seed of the divine nature when we receive both the messenger and the message into our hearts. Sadly, many reject both the messenger and the message. Jesus said that these ones received the seed by the wayside. In this case, the seed is snatched away because their hearts were hard and they resisted the Holy Spirit. This imagery is helpful. Without Christ, our hearts are hard. They are either hard, wayside ground, or hard, stony ground.

References:

Joh 12:24 Rom 3:25
Gal 3:16 2Pe 1:4
Mat 13:3, 19 Joh 6:63
Act 7:51

Further Study

1Pe 1

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 28

Stony to good ground

Jesus described those who are receiving the word of sonship for the first time as those who are receiving seed on stony ground. Amazingly, the seed of the divine nature can germinate on a hard, stony heart. How does this happen? The seed of the word is living and powerful. It comes with the capacity, or grace, to germinate in a stony heart and bring the hearer all the way to the good ground of the body of Christ. At this point, it is important that we do not confuse receiving the seed of the divine nature with being born of God. We are born of God as a new creation with a new heart, a new spirit, and a new will, once we have come into Christ and have been joined to His circumcision.

It is clear from the parable of the sower that the seed of divine life can only bear fruit on *good ground*. This means that our stony hearts must somehow become good ground. Rather than change our old heart, God has promised that He would give us a *new heart*. 'I will give you a *new heart* and put a *new spirit* within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh'. When does this happen? We receive a new heart when we join the fellowship of Christ's circumcision in the garden of Gethsemane. This circumcision gives us the new heart, the new spirit, and the new will of a son of God through the regenerating work of God's word. We are truly a new creation in Christ. Now that we have received a new heart, the seed of the divine nature can take root and produce the fruit of sonship in us. A believer demonstrates that they are born of God by bringing forth the *fruit* of sonship.

References:

Mat 13:8 Eze 36:26
2Co 5:17 Heb 4:12
Gen 26:12 Joh 15:8
Gal 5:22-23

Further Study

Mat 13

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 29

The offering of Christ

The offering of Christ is the means by which the divine nature is multiplied. As we participate in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, the seed of the divine nature that we have received, bears fruit in our life, showing that we are sons of God. Furthermore, we are able to sow this life so that it becomes the possession of *others*. There are three elements to the multiplication of the divine nature.

Firstly, the life of the seed takes root and grows in *us*. Christ has given us a new heart, and the root of the divine nature is going down deep and then multiplying upwards. We are growing and maturing as a son as we endure tribulation and affliction because of the word. At this point, it is critical that we do not draw back, or God has no pleasure in us.

Secondly, we are joined to the offering of Christ and the seed begins to multiply to become more seed that is given to *others*. This is our evangelistic ministry. As we preach the gospel of Christ and others are born of God, the seed of the divine nature is multiplied again as these new believers join the offering of Christ. In this way, believers are being connected together in the on-going fellowship of Christ's offering.

Thirdly, the multiplied seed of the divine nature becomes bread for eating. This is the bread of *fellowship*. Paul wrote, 'The bread which we break, is it not the communion [lit. *fellowship*] of the body of Christ?' Jesus said that His food was to do the will of the Father. Likewise, the bread is revealing the will of God that is being accomplished individually, and by His many-membered body. The bread is both food for fellowship and food for sustenance.

References:

Isa 37:31 Heb 10:38
1Co 10:16 Act 4:32
Joh 4:34 Isa 55:10-11
2Co 9:10

Further Study

Act 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 30

A well-watered garden

As we consider the heart of man, it is helpful to consider the words of the prophet Jeremiah. Describing God's people, he wrote that 'their souls shall be like a *well-watered garden*, and they shall sorrow no more at all'. The prophet Ezekiel wrote, 'This land that was desolate has become like *the garden of Eden*; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.' These amazing promises are to us!

Our hearts were once stony, desolate, and unable to bring forth the life of God. However, the gospel of Jesus Christ took root in our hearts as a seed of the divine nature. Our stony, desolate hearts were *removed* and replaced with a new heart as we joined the circumcision of Christ and were born of God. The seed of the divine nature was then able to grow on the good ground of our heart, and we were enabled to bring forth the fruit of our sonship and multiply this seed to others. However, we must *continue* to receive a new heart, and this new heart must continue to be *watered*; otherwise, it will become unfruitful once again.

Our hearts continue to be watered as we allow the waters of purification to cleanse us of the flesh and its desolation. This cleansing enables the seed to continue to germinate and bear fruit on good ground. However, we must take care that the seed is not choked by the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. This is the seed that fell among thorns. Through the power of Eternal Spirit, we are able to have our minds renewed so that they can be set on the things of the Spirit, so that we are able to cast down every imagination and high thing in us that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

References:

Eze 36:26, 35
2Co 10:5
Eze 18:31
1Pe 1:14-15

Further Study

Isa 58

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 31