

Restoring my Soul

A five day devotional guide

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Three covenants

To understand the implications of entering and living as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, it is helpful to consider again that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit each makes a covenant with us as part of Their Everlasting Covenant. These covenants are specific to each Person of God, but are not made independently of one another. Together, the covenants of the Holy Spirit, the Father, and the Son are necessary for making us in *Their* image and after *Their* likeness.

The Holy Spirit is the Helper. His Covenant is to pour the love of God into our heart so that we can be joined in one Spirit with the Lord and each other. He empowers each son of God to worship in Spirit and sanctification. Sanctification is the capacity to express the love of God in fellowship with the Lord and one another according to our name as a son of God. As we live and walk according to the Spirit, we, through sanctification, fulfil and exemplify God's royal law, which is love.

The Covenant of the Father involves the giving of two seeds. First, we receive the incorruptible seed of our name through the living and enduring word of God. By this means, we are born as a new creation son of God. The second aspect of the Father's Covenant is that He sends the Spirit of the Son into our heart as the substance of our new creation sonship. This is the Person of the Son, who is both the 'only begotten' (or Seed) of the Father, and the seed of Abraham. It is important that we note that receiving the Spirit of the Son is part of the Father's Covenant. It is *not* the covenant that the Son makes with us, even though it is His Spirit that we receive.

References:

Jas 2:8
1Pe 1:2, 23
Gal 4:6

Joh 3:16
Gal 3:16

Further Study:

John 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 31

The Covenant of the Son

Jesus said that the covenant that He makes with us is a *fellowship* in His body and His blood. We join this covenant through baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The communion becomes our continual commitment to this covenant. The bread of the communion is Christ's body. We eat the bread in faith for our ongoing participation as members of the body of Christ. We drink the cup in faith for participation in the blood of Christ. The life of Christ was made available to us as His blood fell on His body from the wounds that were inflicted upon Him. When we join the fellowship of Christ's death by baptism, we are able to receive His life in the fellowship of His body, which is the church. As we continue to fellowship in His sufferings, His life is being given to us, and it is becoming our life.

The life of the Son's offering was first made available to us in the fellowship of the Everlasting Covenant, before the foundation of the world. In the fellowship of this covenant, Yahweh the Son emptied Himself to make room for us, and then poured out His life to the Father so that it could be shared with us by offering. He became the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Peter explained that this offering, from before the foundation of the world, has now been manifested in time. This occurred when Christ offered Himself to the Father and His blood was shed from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. We are able to receive His life now, by joining the fellowship of His death and sufferings. As we join the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, His life is given to us to replace the capacity of our human life to live and serve God. We are being saved by His life as this exchange takes place.

References:

Luk 22:19-20 Rev 13:8
1Co 12:27 1Pe 1:20
Lev 17:11 Rom 5:10

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 10

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 1

Members of His body

It is important to recognise that there is a distinction between Christ coming into us, and us coming *into* Christ. Both are *essential* to our salvation and our lives in the new heavens and earth. Although a person receives the divine nature when Christ comes into their heart by faith, it is only active and sustained in them as they join Him in the fellowship of His offering. In fact, we learn from Jesus' parable of the sower and seed that the sonship we received through the Covenant of the Father will die away unless we are *planted* in the body of Christ.

When we are baptised into Christ, our sonship is to remain hidden with Christ in God, and our works are to reveal the sonship of Christ as a member of His body. We are joined to a *corporate* expression of the Son's life. We are able to do this according to our name, by the Holy Spirit. When we are baptised in the Holy Spirit, *He* reveals our sonship life in us, in a firstfruits measure. He is the expression of our sonship in the kingdom of God and as a member of the body of Christ. As we walk by the Spirit, we are able to reveal Christ's life as a member of His body, according to our name.

As we do this, we receive of His fullness and *grow up* as a son of God into Christ, who is the Head of His body. At the same time, we are storing up the treasure of our own sonship in heaven. In the new heavens and earth, we will receive our sonship as an eternal inheritance and will also *continue* to be part of the corporate expression of the Son's life.

References:

Joh 15:4 Gal 2:20
Rom 6:5 Eph 4:1
Col 3:3

Further Study:

Mark 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 2

The sufferings of Christ

Christ suffered when He was being wounded. Isaiah the prophet, speaking of Christ, said, 'He was pierced through [wounded] for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our wellbeing was upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed'. Every kind of wound that Christ endured cut His body open, causing His blood to be poured out. Christ's blood was the element within His body that contained His life. As Christ suffered and His blood flowed from His body, the life that was in His blood was given to us as a possession. The life of Christ is given to us on the condition that we suffer with Him, in order that we may be glorified together with Him.

Christ made covenant with us in His blood and body at the last supper. The covenant then became *active* when His blood began to flow from His body as He agonised for us in prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. Regarding the *inauguration* of this covenant, Paul taught, 'For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the *death* of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without *blood*'.

From Gethsemane to Calvary, the blood that Christ shed flowed all over His body. He was both the Mercy Seat and the Altar, upon which the blood was being 'sprinkled'. As the Mercy Seat, the shedding of His blood was a propitiation for our sin. As the Altar, the shedding of His blood was giving to us a share in His life. He was the Mediator of a new covenant so that, through His death for our sake, we 'who have been called may receive the promise of eternal life'.

References:

Isa 53:5 Luk 22:44
Lev 17:11 Rom 3:25
Rom 8:16-17 Jjn 2:2

Further Study:

Hebrews 9

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 3

The death of Christ

It was on account of our carnality and sin that Christ was wounded. Christ wants us to meet Him, make covenant with Him, and then join Him in fellowship, at the point in time when God the Father laid on Him, as our sin offering, the punishment for our transgressions and iniquities. There was no carnality in Christ's offering. Rather, it revealed the perfect love of God. For this reason, His death, and our participation in it, is profitable. Paul reminds us that 'if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing'.

Christ was not, in any way, carnal. Nevertheless, in the garden of Gethsemane He numbered Himself with us, the transgressors, and was *made sin*. He drank the cup of the wrath of God and was cut off from God, having come under judgement with us, as the Sin-bearer. This revealed both the priesthood of the Son and His offering. He was our Priest, offering Himself to God for our sin. And He was God's Priest, offering Himself so that we could be reconciled to God and restored to Their Everlasting Covenant purpose for us.

From the point where Christ died and was cut off from God, He was *progressively* put to death in the flesh in the stages of His suffering, from Gethsemane until He was lifted up as a mercy seat to die on the cross. As He suffered, and His blood flowed from His body, He was being made alive again in the Spirit; and we were coming to life again, with Him, as sons of God. Christ was our great Shepherd and we were coming back, with Him, from the death of sin and alienation from God. Atonement was made for us by Him, and His life was given and transferred to us to become our life.

References:

Isa 53:6
1Co 13:3
2Co 5:21

Heb 13:20
Mar 10:38-39

Further Study:

Hebrews 7

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 4

The blood purges our conscience

As new creation sons of God, we are to die with Christ. There is no room for the expression of our carnality, or self-interested initiative, in this death. This is because, when we are joined to Christ's death and suffer in fellowship with Him, we know that a circumcision is happening to our heart. This is the process by which we are being delivered from our carnality. Motivations and attitudes that are detrimental to us are being cut from our lives. We are not trusting in ourselves while we suffer, but in God who raises the dead. Furthermore, the blood of Christ is purging our hearts from an evil conscience, which is the basis of our carnal motivations.

In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul wrote, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' 'Purging' is a combination of suffering and the power of the life of Christ to cleanse the heart. Christ's wounds were His suffering, and caused His blood to be poured out. The apostle Peter reminded us that by His wounds we are healed.

The blood is the element that contains Christ's life, and His life is given to us in the fellowship of His offering. His life is a treasure that sustains us in the afflictions we suffer, so that we are not crushed or destroyed. At the same time, Christ's life contains the full expression of all that He is; that is, His motivations are given to us. These cleanse our hearts from evil, selfish motivations, enabling us to serve God as His priests.

References:

2Co 1:9

Heb 9:14

Rom 6:22

2Co 4:7-8

1Ti 1:5

Further Study:

1 Peter 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 7

Disciples of Christ

Christ's life causes the love of Christ to *control our motivations*. This is what Paul was saying when he wrote, 'For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf'. When we join Christ in the fellowship of His suffering, we are joined to more than just a participation with Christ in the suffering that we caused Him on account of our sin. The suffering that is caused by the sin of others also becomes *our portion* of Christ's sufferings so that, through it, we are perfected. We are beheld as new creation as we show forth the life of Christ as a member of His body.

By joining Christ in the fellowship of His sufferings, *we become His disciples*. Jesus asked us to take His yoke and learn of Him. His sufferings are a training context for us. Through suffering, Jesus was personally putting into effect all of the principles of offering that are part of His identity as the Son of God. By this means, He was perfecting knowledge through experience. Isaiah said, 'By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many'.

Christ wants to share this knowledge with us. The Father has not only reconciled us to Himself through Christ, to whom He gave the ministry of reconciliation, but He has also given to us the ministry of reconciliation. The specific aspect of the ministry of reconciliation that has been committed to us is 'the word of reconciliation'. The message that we are to proclaim is that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. We are now ambassadors for Christ. God is using our voices, on behalf of Christ, to proclaim the word of reconciliation.

References:

2Co 5:14-15, 17, 19
Mat 11:29
Isa 53:11

Further Study:

Hebrews 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 8

Ambassadors for Christ

As we proclaim the word of sonship in this world, we will experience tribulation and affliction. This will be the same 'contradiction of sinners' that Christ endured against Himself. These experiences are how we manifest, in a real way, the dying of Christ in this world. And, by this means, the life of Jesus is being manifest through us to others.

Paul said that God 'always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.' To one, we are an aroma of death to death, and to the other, an aroma of life to life. We are the aroma of death to those who are afflicting us, because they seek our destruction. However, to those who are receiving and responding to the life that we are sharing with them, we are the aroma of life. We are carrying in our body the dying of Jesus so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. The effect of our participation in the sufferings of Christ is that, as His death works in us, the life of Jesus is ministered to others.

Our faith is that, as we die with Christ in the fellowship of ministering His life to others, we will also be raised with Him to the reward of eternal glory, as the result of our labours. As Paul explained, we are 'heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, *if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him*'. This kind of affliction is called by Paul, 'momentary and light', and produces for us a permanent, glorious, and solid reward that is out of all proportion to our pain. Our reward will be beyond all comparison.

References:

Heb 12:3 Rom 8:17
2Co 2:14-16 2Co 5:20
2Co 4:10, 17

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 1

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 9

Five different bodies

Jesus testified that a body had been prepared for Him by the Father, in which the will of God would be fulfilled. The Son was referring both to His personal *physical* body, which He received when He was born of Mary as the Son of Man, and to His *corporate* body. We note here two different types of bodies that are fundamental to the fulfilment of God's will – a physical body and a corporate body. As we consider the theme of the body in the Scriptures, we can, in fact, distinguish five different bodies that are essential to the fulfilment of God's Everlasting Covenant purpose for us. These are: the earthly body, the heavenly body, the spiritual body, the body of Christ, and the bride of Christ.

The physical body of Adam was created by the Lord God from the dust of the earth. Paul described this body as 'earthly' and as an 'earthen vessel'. Once the Lord God had fashioned this physical body, He then breathed into it the breath of 'lives', and man became a living soul. The spirit and soul of a person is called their *inner man*. Their body, into which God breathed, is called their *outer man*. This earthly body is mortal, meaning that it is subject to death. Because of the fall of mankind, the outer man is decaying, and returns to the dust of the earth when we die.

Our deeds, or works, are performed through our body. These works are not without consequence. When a person's soul and spirit return to God, they are judged for the deeds done in the body. Paul made this clear when he wrote to the Corinthians, saying, 'We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his *deeds in the body*, according to what he has done, whether good or bad'. For this reason, we should fear God.

References:

Heb 2:14 Gen 2:7
1Co 15:40 Ecc 3:20
2Co 4:7, 16 2Co 5:10

Further Study:

Hebrews 10

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 10

The heavenly body

The second body that Paul discussed is the *heavenly body*. He observed that ‘there are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another’. Appreciating the distinction between these two bodies and their glories is fundamental to our understanding of how we receive our eternal inheritance as a son of God in the age to come. When our physical body dies, ‘we *have* a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens’. This ‘building in the heavens’ is our heavenly body. Paul was highlighting the truth that, when a son of God dies, they *already* have this house, or body. This is because it was being built while they were still living in their mortal body. How is this so?

Jesus spoke of this heavenly body when He said to His disciples, ‘Do not let your heart be troubled; *believe in God, believe also in Me*. In My Father’s house are *many dwelling places*; if it were not so, I would have told you; for *I go to prepare a place for you*.’ This is a place that has been prepared for every named son of God. On the cross, when Jesus committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father, He went to the Father’s bosom, while His body rested in a tomb for three days and three nights in hope of the resurrection. He brought all our names as sons of God with Him to the bosom of the Father. By this means, He was preparing a place for each of these sons in the heavenly house of the Father. He was the Seed that had gone into the ground and was coming up a great multitude of sons.

References:

1Co 15:40 Luk 23:46
2Co 5:1 Act 2:24-25
Joh 14:1-2 Joh 12:24

Further Study:

John 17

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 11

Hidden with Christ in God

When Jesus Christ rose again, His body had been changed into an immortal body. As He promised, Jesus had come again to receive His disciples to Himself. He was making them members of His corporate body, so that *where He was*, they would also be. Jesus is now seated in heavenly places at the right hand of the Father. The Father has put all things in subjection to Him, and has *given Him* as the immortal Head over the church, which is His corporate body.

When we are baptised into Christ, we are raised and seated in heavenly places *with Him*. Our name, life and glory as a son of God are to be *hidden with Christ in God*. The bosom of the Father, which is the Father's house, becomes our dwelling place. Our sonship rests in the bosom of the Father as an eternal inheritance, in the hope of its full revelation in the age to come. For this reason, we do not need to worry about revealing our own sonship. It is already secure in heaven. The life which we should now live in the flesh is Christ's life.

Only those who have received the incorruptible seed of the word of God, which contains their name, and have been born as sons of the Father, have a dwelling place in His house. This dwelling place is their heavenly body. In this regard, our heavenly body comprises our name, life and glory as a son of God. While our sonship remains hidden with Christ in God, we are to live by, and reveal, the life of the Son as a member of His body. As we reveal Christ's life as a member of His body, our heavenly body is continuing to be built and made more glorious *by the Father*.

References:

Joh 14:3
Eph 1:20-23
Col 3:3-4

Gal 2:20
1Pe 1:3-4

Further Study:

Ephesians 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 14

Members of Christ's body

When we are baptised, we become a physical member of Christ's corporate body on the earth. Paul stated that we are made members of His body – His flesh and bones. This corporate body is the third body that we note in the teachings of Paul. The apostle Paul said, 'Do you not know that *your bodies are members of Christ*?' Elsewhere, he wrote, 'Holding fast to the [immortal] Head, from whom the entire *body*, being supplied and held together by the *joints* and *ligaments*, grows with a growth which is from God'. Christ is in heaven and is the immortal Head of His body, and we are the flesh and bones of His body on earth.

Members of the body of Christ must be *tangibly* connected to one another in their localities, for this is where the Father has placed them. We cannot be members of Christ apart from being members of one another. For this reason, Paul implored believers to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. When we fail to do this, it demonstrates that we are not joined to Christ in one Spirit. This is the same point that the apostle John was making when he asserted that we cannot say that we love God if we hate our brother.

Further to this, Paul said that, as a member of the body of Christ, we are not free to engage in wicked deeds with our body. When we received the Holy Spirit into our heart, we became a temple of the Holy Spirit, and He enabled us to be baptised in one Spirit into Christ. We are one Spirit with the Lord and with the members of the body of Christ. As members of the body of Christ, we do not have the liberty to join ourselves to fallen, fleshly ways. Rather, we are to glorify God in our body.

References:

Eph 5:30
Col 2:19
1Co 12:18

Eph 4:25
Rom 12:5
1Jn 4:20

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 6

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 15

Building our heavenly house

Paul declared that if our earthly tent is torn down, we have a building from God. The Father is the Builder of our heavenly dwelling. He is the One who birthed us and gave us the elements of our heavenly body. To build our dwelling place, the Father uses building materials that we accrue on earth. These building materials, with their value and glory, are gained on earth by those who trade with the precious possessions of Christ's life. We receive this life when we are baptised into Christ and are joined to the fellowship of His suffering.

Through His parables, Jesus likened His life to the currency of talents and minas that were given by Him to the slaves in His house. The Master commanded His slaves to trade and do business with His possessions while He was away. When He returned, He asked them to give an account for their labour with His talents and minas. The reward that the slaves received from the Master was commensurate with the increase from their labours. It is this increase that the Father is using to build our heavenly house, and it is given to us as our eternal reward for the age to come.

The talents and minas represent various aspects of Christ's own sonship. By offering, the Son has given us a share in His life. This life proceeds from the Father. We remember that Jesus said, 'For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself'. Christ's life is in His blood and it is given to us on the altar of His body. We only have an ongoing share in the life of the Son as we continue in the fellowship of His body and the fellowship of His sufferings.

References:

2Co 5:1
Heb 11:10
Mat 25:15
Luk 19:13
Joh 5:26

Further Study:

Matthew 25

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 16

The pledge of our inheritance

As Christians, we must understand how to live as a son of God and as a member of the body of Christ, so that we are revealing Christ and not ourselves. To seek our own expression as a son of God is fleshly. The only alternative to living this way is to set our mind on the Spirit and, by this means, walk according to the Spirit every day.

John the Baptist said that Jesus would come and baptise His disciples with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The Holy Spirit and fire are the two elements that enable us to reveal the sonship of Christ, multiply His life, and obtain an eternal reward. The Holy Spirit is given to us as the expression of our sonship. By the Holy Spirit, we are able to reveal Christ's life according to our name, without this work being an exercise of our flesh. When we are baptised with the Holy Spirit, the Father seals us as a son of God *in Christ*. Paul explained that 'you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory'.

A 'pledge' is a down-payment that is given in *lieu* of a total amount that is to be fully paid at a later time. It is a guarantee of the full payment. It is amazing to consider that the Holy Spirit is given to us as a down-payment of our eternal sonship. He is given to us as a firstfruit of our inheritance, so that we are able to trade with and multiply Christ's life according to our name, and through the works that were prepared by the Father for us to do.

References:

Rom 8:6 Mar 1:8
Eph 1:13-14 Heb 6:4-6
Gal 5:16

Further Study: Colossians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 17

The seal of the Holy Spirit

The seal of the Holy Spirit is, in the first instance, the guarantee that we are a son of God and will receive an inheritance in the age to come. The seal also signifies the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our life as He leads us in the truth of who the Father named us to be as a son of God. The third aspect of this seal is that the Holy Spirit is given to us as the expression and authority of our name as a son of God. This is vitally important. It means that we are able to express the life of Christ as a member of His body, rather than seeking to express our own sonship. This is what it means to remain hidden with Christ in God. As we live Christ's life by the power of the Holy Spirit, our works are not an exercise of the flesh, leading to death. Rather, our works are 'of the Spirit', leading to eternal life.

The Holy Spirit knows our weaknesses and helps us to pray, so that we are delivered from our fleshly propensities and are enabled to fulfil the will of God through the works that are set before us each day. Paul reminded us that 'we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words'. Moreover, the Holy Spirit enables us to travail in the same way that He does. 'We ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body'. This is the travail of a son of God who desires to be released into the glorious freedom that belongs to their sonship, and also to be clothed with their dwelling from heaven.

References:

2Co 1:21-22 Mat 5:16
Rom 8:23, 26 Eph 4:30
2Co 5:2

Further Study:

Ephesians 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 18

Another law in our earthly body

John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptise us with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The 'fire' speaks of the refining work of God in our life as we are joined to the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. In this fellowship, we are being delivered from our carnality and cleansed from an evil conscience, so that we can serve God as His priests and be given a share in the life of the Son. This is the life we are to reveal as members of Christ in the kingdom of God and in His body.

To help our understanding of this work, it is important to recognise that our heavenly body does not have any carnality in it. The apostle John affirmed this point, when he wrote, 'Whoever abides in Him [the Son] does not sin', and 'whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God'. However, John also clearly pointed out that 'if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us'. This is because we still have another law at work in our body, which is on earth. It is this other law within us that motivates us to attempt to fulfil the will of God our own way. This is what it means to live by the flesh.

A spiritual son of God understands that they must labour for their heavenly dwelling now, so that they are not found unclothed on the day of resurrection. We must, therefore, set our minds on the Spirit through prayer, and do all things that are before us 'as to the Lord'. At the same time, we accept that the Spirit is leading us according to the will of God, and that the things that befall us each day are working together for the good of our sonship.

References:

2Co 5:4 1Jn 3:6, 9
Eph 6:5-8 1Jn 1:10
Rom 8:28

Further Study:

Romans 7

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 21

The fire tests our work

Our participation in the sufferings of Christ achieves two key outcomes for us. First, these sufferings are our fellowship in the *circumcision of Christ*, through which these carnal propensities are being cut from us. Furthermore, the blood that we share in, as a result of this cut, cleanses our conscience so that we are no longer motivated to serve God our own way. Rather, we are able to present our body as a living sacrifice that is holy and acceptable to God.

At the same time, the sufferings of Christ are also the fire of God's *testing* upon us to reveal the nature of our labours as a son of God. Paul likened the works of our flesh to building with wood, hay and stubble. In contrast, we only have an enduring reward if we live by the Spirit and build with the precious possessions of the life of the Son. These are described as gold, silver, and precious stones. The way that we are building is revealed through the fiery trial. As Paul noted, 'If any man's work which he has built on it remains, *he will receive a reward*. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.'

As we do the works of Christ's sonship on earth, we receive the wages, or fruit, of eternal life. By this means, our own heavenly dwelling is *being* made more glorious. On the other hand, if we insist on expressing our own sonship through our unwillingness to be joined to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and to walk according to the Spirit, the glory of our eternal reward will be greatly diminished. As was the case for the Pharisees, we will receive our reward in this age. Furthermore, our Christian experience will be plagued by agitation, judgements and discontent, demonstrating that our own sonship is not resting in hope with Christ in the bosom of the Father.

References:

Rom 12:1
1Co 3:12-15
Mat 6:2
1Pe 4:12-13

Further Study:

Malachi 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 22

The spiritual body

The fourth body that Paul identified is the *spiritual* body. He introduced this body, and the means by which we receive it, by explaining that we are *sown* a natural body (speaking of our earthen vessel) and *raised* a spiritual body. The spiritual body is our immortal, *resurrection body*, and it is ours forever in the new heavens and earth. We receive the spiritual body on the day of resurrection.

Concerning this day, Jesus said, ‘Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which *all* who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgement’. We note that *only* those who do the works that were prepared for them by the Father, as His sons, receive an immortal body. This is ‘the resurrection of life’. Those who rejected God’s predestination are cast into the lake of fire, where their soul and spirit are tormented for eternity. This is ‘the resurrection of judgement’.

On the day of resurrection, the sons of God will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Paul explained, ‘For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.’ Regarding this event, we note that when the Lord descends from heaven, those who have died in Christ before this time will be raised first. This raised mortal body will be clothed with their heavenly body, in which they already reside. When their physical body is clothed with this heavenly body, they are a spiritual and immortal son of God. Their body is suited to their life and works in the new heavens and earth.

References:

1Co 15:44, 52-53
 Joh 5:28-29
 1Th 4:16

Further Study:

Philippians 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 23

Differing glories

The Scriptures teach us that there are different glories in heaven. We learn that ‘there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory’. Paul was speaking here about the glory of the Father, and the glory of the Son, and the glory of the Holy Spirit. These glories are Their unique expressions of the one covenant life of Yahweh. These expressions of glory are equally necessary for bringing many sons to glory in the image and likeness of the glory of God.

Having noted the different contributions of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to our glory as a son of God, Paul then taught that the resurrection bodies of the sons of God would vary in glory from one son to another. This is what he meant, when he said, ‘For star differs from star in glory’. We recall that Abraham’s children – the sons of God – were likened by God to the stars of heaven. The glory of our spiritual body will depend on the glory of the heavenly body with which we are clothed. The glory of this heavenly body depends on how we have traded with the possessions of the Son as a member of the body of Christ, while still in our mortal body.

God has made every provision for each son of God to receive a full inheritance; however, we are accountable for how we receive this provision and what we do with it. For this reason, Peter exhorted Christian believers to be ‘even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’.

References:

1Co 15:41
 Heb 2:10
 Gen 1:26
 Gen 15:5
 Rev 21:23-24

Further Study:

2 Peter 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 24

The bride of Christ

The fifth body that the Scriptures refer to is the bride of Christ. Like the body of Christ, the bride consists of individual members who are corporately one body. Paul explained that the bride of Christ is His church. He reminded us that Christ offered Himself for His church, that He might sanctify her, cleanse her by the washing of water by the word, and present her to Himself in all her glory.

We recall that the first man's wife, Eve, was formed from a rib that was removed from the side of Adam. The same is so for the second Man, Christ. The bride of Christ comes forth from the side of Christ's body, which was pierced when He offered Himself on the cross. We can see that those who are part of the bride of Christ are also part of Christ's corporate body. When Paul was referring to all the glory of the bride of Christ, he was speaking of a company of people whose expression of glory was perfect, or full. We could say that it was 'one hundredfold'.

In the new heavens and earth, the bride of Christ is called 'the New Jerusalem'. John testified of her, writing, 'I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband'. The New Jerusalem becomes the administrative headquarters of the new heavens and earth. Here, those who are part of the bride company will serve the Lord forever. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit predestined every person to be a part of this bride company. A person who has been joined to this company is called 'the elect'. We note, for example, that the apostle John wrote to the church, addressing her as 'the elect lady and her children'.

References:

Eph 5:25-27
Joh 19:34
Col 1:18

2Jn 1:1
Eph 1:22-23

Further Study: Revelations 21**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 25

The Son's possessions

The parables of the talents and minas teach us that each slave in the Son's house receives a quotient of His possessions with which to trade or do business. A slave in the Son's house is simply a son of God who has come into Christ through baptism. The possessions that the Son gives to His slaves are *His* sonship life and the authority to trade with, or express, this life. Paul was explaining this point, when he wrote, 'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, 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 up for me'.

The Son expects His slaves to trade with and multiply His sonship life. If we do not multiply His possessions, our heavenly house is not being built, and we will have no glory in the resurrection. On the day of judgement, if we have lived this way, the Son will describe us as 'wicked' and 'slothful', and we will lose our salvation. Jesus made it clear that there is no excuse for failing to multiply His sonship as a member of His body. In this regard, a person can even qualify for a minimal resurrection through usury or putting the talents and minas that they have received in the bank.

At this point, it is important to note that the parables of the talents and minas are not simply alternative accounts of the same parable. They are two different lessons concerning the conduct of slaves in the house of the Son. When we consider these parables *together*, we understand that the slaves who received one talent, two talents and five talents, respectively, *also* received one mina each.

References:

Gal 2:20

Mat 25:26-27

Rom 6:16-17

Col 3:22

Further Study:

Luke 19:1-27

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 28

Talents and minas

The first and most obvious difference between talents and minas in the parables of Jesus is their monetary value. One talent was the equivalent of between fifteen and twenty-two *years'* worth of wages. This is referring to a life's work. In contrast, one mina was equivalent to about one hundred *days'* wages. This is referring to the wage for a specific season of labour.

In the parable of the talents, Jesus taught that different measures are given to the slaves in His house, 'each according to his own ability'. The ability of a person is an aspect of their identity that is recovered by the Father through the process of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. Also, when a person is born from above by the seed of the Father's word, they receive their eternal name, along with their predestination as a son of God. Their predestination is who they are to be and the works they are to do, not only in this world but also in the world to come.

The varying talents can be understood as a quotient of the divine nature that belongs to the Son, and is given to us according to our abilities. This is life that has been given to the Son by the Father, so that it can be given to us. On this point, Jesus testified, 'For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself'.

We learn from Jesus' parable that the slave who received five talents had gained five more talents, while the slave who had received two talents had gained two more. Both of these slaves had *doubled* the quotient of the Son's possessions they had received. This was the return from a *full* application to trading with the possessions they had received from the Son.

References:

Mat 25:15, 20, 22

Tit 3:5

Joh 5:26

2Co 8:11

Further Study:

Luke 12:16-59

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 29

Minas

In the parable of the minas, there was no disparity in the amount each slave received. They were each given *one mina*. Yet, we know that the number of minas the slaves generated through their business transactions differed. One slave generated ten minas, while another generated five minas. The mina that is *given* to each slave represents the authority of their name to labour with the talents they have received from the Son. In this regard, we recall from the teaching of Jesus that the reward for being faithful with a mina in this age is *authority* over cities in the age to come.

We can understand the mina as two aspects of the life of God that the Son gives to us from the Father. *Regeneration* is the first aspect. Through the process of regeneration, the abilities associated with our identity are recovered so that the dimension of ‘talent’ that we also receive from the Son can be utilised ‘according to ability’. The second aspect of the life of God that we receive is *the Holy Spirit*, as a down-payment, or pledge, of our sonship. Paul taught that we were sealed in Christ ‘with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory’. Our name is the sonship that the Father predestined for us.

The mina that we receive in Christ is the regeneration of our ability, and the possession of our name as a firstfruits quotient, through which we are able to take initiatives and trade with the talents we have received. This work is in the context of the kingdom of God in which we live and have been established by the Father. It includes, for example, our neighbourhoods and the places where we work or study.

References:

Luke 19:16-19
Eph 1:13-14
1Pe 4:10
1Co 4:1-2

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 12

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 30

Working with talents and minas

Paul taught that in all contexts of life we are to conduct ourselves in a particular way in order to receive the reward of our inheritance. He wrote, 'Whatever you do, do your work heartily [from the soul], as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.' This passage helps us to understand how we multiply the life of the Son each day. Through baptism, we have died with Christ and our sonship is hidden with Him in the bosom of the Father. This is what it means to be raised and seated with Christ in heavenly places.

The 'bosom of the Father' is also called the 'secret place'. Jesus taught that we are not to practise our own righteousness before men to be noticed by them. Rather, we are to fast and pray to remain 'in secret' with the Father, so that we are able to do the will of God as a member of the body of Christ. The opportunity and capacity to do the will of God in Christ and, by this means, to multiply the life of the Son, is how we are 'rewarded openly' by the Father.

Talents and minas are only given to members of the body of Christ. A member of Christ is a slave in the house of the Son. However, as slaves, we do not trade with our talents and minas in the house. Rather, we labour in the context of the kingdom of God according to our name as a son of God, by the capacity of the Spirit. We are to bring the increase of our trading into the house of the Son as offerings. Our works, therefore, are as members of Christ who are slaves of His righteousness, *and* as sons of God. These dimensions of our labour are interdependent and in complete harmony.

References:

Col 3:3, 22-24
Eph 2:6
Mat 6:6
2Ch 31:21

Further Study:**Daily Proverb:**

Romans 14

Proverbs 1

Led by the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is called 'the Spirit of truth'. Jesus said that when He comes, He will guide us into all truth. This is the truth of our name. To walk after the Spirit, then, is to exercise the authority of our name according to how the Spirit is leading us. Jesus also explained that the Spirit, who is guiding us into all the truth, will 'glorify the Son, for He will take of what is the Son's and disclose it to us'. The Holy Spirit leads us and gives us the capacity to live and function as firstfruits Christians, doing the works that belong to our sonship. These works, in this age, are to reveal Christ's sonship as members in particular of His body, resulting in a multiplication of His life, and the fulfilling of the will of God.

We know, from the parable of the sower and the seed, that the fruit of eternal life is brought forth some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold and some one hundredfold. This is speaking of the reward that a person receives in the age to come on account of the wages they have accrued in this present age. Jesus taught, 'Already he who *reaps* [grain] is receiving *wages* and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together'. The principle of the seed, and the parables of the talents and minas, communicate the *proportional* return that a person can generate from their labours in the kingdom of God. The increase that is gained by a slave from this labour is built into their heavenly house and the glory of their name. We can be assured that God wants every Christian to gain an abundant entry into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

References:

Joh 16:13-14

2Pe 1:11

Mat 13:23

Rom 8:14

Joh 4:36

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 9

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 2