

Restoring my Soul

A five day devotional guide

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The gospel to the Gentiles

The apostle Paul was appointed by the Lord as an apostle to the Gentiles. The Lord commanded him saying, 'I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth'. Paul testified that he had been 'appointed a preacher and an apostle as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth'. He also testified that he had received the gospel, that he preached in every place, directly from Jesus Christ. It was the same gospel that Christ had preached during His earthly ministry. It was the gospel of sonship.

Paul recognised that the gospel he had received from Christ and preached among all the Gentile nations, had firstly been preached to Abraham. In his letter to the Galatians, he said that 'the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you".' Paul continued by saying that those who are 'of faith are blessed with Abraham the believer'. This was the word that was proclaimed to Abraham and then ratified by the word of the oath on Mount Moriah. The Lord declared, 'In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice'.

The gospel preached to Abraham is the gospel of sonship that must be preached in all nations. Every believer is called to receive the same faith that Abraham received and walk in the same steps of faith that he walked, as the father of all who believe. The gospel that was preached to Abraham has significant implications for every individual son of God, but it also has significant implications for how sonship is received and appropriated in every covenant household.

References:

Act 22:21

Act 13:47

Gal 3:8-9

Rom 4:12, 16

1Ti 2:7

Gen 22:18

Further Study:

Galatians 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 27

Full of grace

The book of Genesis records that the Son of God appeared to Abraham on a number of occasions. Stephen referred to the first of these interactions when he said that the ‘God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia’. The ‘God of glory’ is one of the many names that belongs to the Son of God. He is the full revelation and manifestation of the glory of the Father. The apostle John declared concerning Jesus Christ, ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and *we beheld His glory*, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth’.

Every Christian must behold the glory of the Son of God by illumination. When John declared that Christ is ‘full of grace’, he was referring to the four dimensions of grace that belong to Yahweh – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Scriptures teach us that God is Spirit, God is Life/Light, God is Word, and God is Love. These four dimensions of grace are fully revealed in the face of Jesus Christ who is full of grace and truth.

These four dimensions of the grace of Yahweh are ministered from the face of Jesus Christ into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul explained that ‘it is the God who commanded 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’. He likened the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the work of a ‘mirror’ that reflects and focuses the light that shines from the face of Christ into our hearts. Because of the effective ministry of the Holy Spirit, the apostle John could testify that we have beheld the glory of the Son of God and ‘of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace’.

References:

Act 7:2
Joh 4:24
1Jn 1:5
Joh 1:1, 14, 16
1Jn 4:8, 16
2Co 4:6

Further Study:

John 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 28

The promise of sonship

The first interaction between Christ and Abram is recorded in Genesis chapter 12. In this interaction, Christ appeared to Abram as the God of glory and gave him a sevenfold promise. He said, 'Go forth from your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and so you shall be a blessing, and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.'

When Christ gave Abram this sevenfold promise, He also gave him the grace of the Spirit of God. This was the outcome of the ministry of the face of the lion toward him. The Spirit of God upon him gave him illumination and power. He was able to lift up his eyes and behold, by illumination, the land that God had promised to give his descendants as an inheritance. The Lord told him to walk the length and breadth of this land.

Abram began to possess this land when he defeated the four kings who had conquered five other kings and taken his nephew captive. With only three hundred and eighteen of his own men, he pursued these four kings and their armies all the way from the plains of Sodom in the south to Damascus in the north. This superhuman feat was only possible because of the Spirit of God upon him. When Melchizedek met Abram as he returned from this great victory, He confirmed that it was God who had delivered all of his enemies into his hand. This was the fulfilment of God's promise that He would make his name great. Abram had become the king of kings of the ancient world, by faith.

References:

Gen 12:1-3
Gen 13:14-17
Gen 14:20

Further Study: Genesis 14

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 1

The blessing of sonship

The second interaction between the Son of God and Abram is recorded in the latter part of Genesis chapter 14. When Abram returned from the slaughter of the kings, Christ met him as Melchizedek who manifested the face of the ox to him. When Yahweh the Son was begotten as the Son of God before the foundation of the world, the Father declared that He would be a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that Melchizedek was ‘without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the *Son of God*, he remains a priest perpetually’.

The ministry of Jesus Christ, as our great High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, is to share His life with us by offering. Life that is multiplied and shared by offering is the ‘power of an endless life’. Melchizedek brought out bread and wine, which symbolised the life of Christ in His body and blood, and blessed Abram. Abram had already received the promises of God and his name had been made great. In this encounter, Melchizedek blessed the one who already had the promises. The blessing was the life of Christ in the fellowship of the communion meal.

As he ate and drank with Melchizedek, Abram was given a participation in the life and fellowship of Yahweh. He was invited into a fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Not only did he receive a share in Christ’s sonship, he also received a share in Christ’s priesthood. As a son and priest, he became a joint heir with Christ of all things in heaven and on earth. In his letter to the Romans, Paul explained that Abram became an ‘heir of the world’. This inheritance included the right to a resurrection body for the new heavens and new earth.

References:

Gen 14:18-20 Heb 1:3
Psa 110:4 Rom 4:13
Heb 5:6 Heb 6:20
Heb 7:6, 16, 17, 21

Further Study:

Hebrews 7

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 2

The covenant of sonship

The third encounter between Christ and Abram is recorded in Genesis chapter 15. We read that *the Word of Yahweh* appeared to Abram in a vision. 'The Word of Yahweh' is a title that belongs to the Son of God. He is the Word who was 'in the beginning with God'. The Son of God is the Messenger of the Covenant.

In this interaction, the Word of Yahweh said, 'Do not fear, Abram, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward'. In this way, the Lord identified three specific outcomes of the work of the cross for Abraham and all of his descendants, by faith. By His death, Christ has destroyed him who has the power of death; that is, the devil. This means that every believer can be released from the bondage of the fear of death. There is no reason for any believer to be consumed by anxiety and the worries of this life.

However, more significantly, when the Word of Yahweh proclaimed, 'I am your shield', He was saying 'I am your faith'. The faith of the Son of God has been made available to every person through the cross, so that they can believe to be born as a son of God and do the works of sonship that the Father has prepared for them to do.

Christ also promised to be the substance of our sonship in us. He is our exceedingly great reward when His divine nature is formed in us as we participate in the fellowship of His sufferings. This is the outcome of the process that is best described as an 'offering transfer'. Our sin and iniquity has been transferred to Christ so that it can be removed from us in the fellowship of His sufferings. And in this same fellowship, His life has been transferred to us so that it can be formed in us.

References:

Joh 1:1-2

Heb 2:14-15

Mal 3:1

2Co 5:21

Gen 15:1

Further Study:

Genesis 15

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 3

The inheritance of sonship

The fourth encounter between Christ and Abram is recorded in Genesis chapter 17. When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him, and said, 'I am God Almighty [El Shaddai], walk before Me and be blameless'. In this interaction, God Almighty began by confirming Abram's personal discipleship and sanctification. However, He immediately proceeded to identify the covenant that He was making with Abram and *his household*.

It is the work of the cross of Christ to cut the propensity to sin from the flesh of mankind, and to cut the flesh of mankind into the Everlasting Covenant. Circumcision was given to Abraham as a symbol of the cross. It was the sign of the covenant in his flesh. It was the sign of the covenant that God had given to Abraham *and his household*.

Further to this, the Son of God gave Abram a share in the inheritance of the name of Yahweh. The name of Yahweh belongs to all three Members of the Godhead. It is important to recognise that the meaning of a name in the Scriptures is much more than a title. The revelation of the name of God is the revelation of who God is. It is the revelation of His person and nature. He is present and active in His name, which means that the revelation of His name establishes a place of meeting and a context for fellowship.

Concerning the fundamental essence and nature of God, the apostle John declared that 'God is love'. The name of God is endowed with the love of God. In His high priestly prayer, Jesus declared that He had made the Father's name known to the disciples so that His love would be in them. When the love of God is received, it casts out all fear, and gives resurrection power to fulfil the will of God. The hope of sonship does not disappoint because it is fulfilled.

References:

Gen 17:1, 11
1Jn 4:8, 16
Joh 17:26
Rom 5:5

Further Study:

Genesis 17

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 6

Love and power

The divine power given to Abraham and Sarah by the love of God, was manifest in the weakness of their mortality as resurrection power. Even though they had no physical capacity to conceive a child in their old age, they were quickened in their mortality and the promised seed was brought forth. When Isaac was born, the promise of the adoption was established in the house of Abraham. Isaac was brought forth in a covenant house as a son of God. God had promised him, 'In Isaac, your seed shall be called'. Paul said that it was not the children of the flesh (brought forth from Hagar) who were the children of God. Rather, it was the children of the promise who were counted as the seed.

Abraham had the capacity, by the love and power of God that had been given to him in the name, to deal with the carnality that was present in his home and train up Isaac in the way that he should go. His household was no longer governed by fear, because Abraham possessed love, power, and a sound mind. The Lord testified concerning Abraham, 'I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken of him'.

When parents have been named by Yahweh and empowered by the love that comes from Him, they are able to train and admonish their children in the way that they should go. The children will learn obedience from their parents and the blessing of Abraham will be established in their house. The evidence that Isaac had learned obedience from his parents during his formative years, was his willingness to join his father in the fellowship of offering on Mt Moriah.

References:

Rom 4:19
Heb 11:11-12
Rom 9:7-8
Gal 4:28

2Ti 1:7
Gen 18:19
Pro 22:6
Eph 6:4

Further Study:

Romans 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 7

The blessing made sure to all generations

On the basis of Abraham's faith and obedience on Mount Moriah, the sevenfold promise of God was confirmed to him, his household and his descendants, by the word of the oath. The writer to the Hebrews was referring to this specific interaction on Mount Moriah, when he said, 'When God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you".'

The blessing of Abraham was made sure to all generations and all the families of the earth because of Abraham's faith and obedience. The Lord proclaimed to him, 'By Myself I have sworn ... in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because you have obeyed My voice'. The book of Hebrews tells us that God confirmed His Covenant to Abraham by the word of the oath, because He wanted to demonstrate to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His purpose. The purpose of God has been unchangeable since before the foundation of the world. The gospel of sonship that was preached to Abraham is the same gospel that was preached by Christ, and the apostle Paul, and that must be preached in every age and generation of the church. It is the gospel of sonship that must be proclaimed in all nations.

When a Christian has fully appropriated the blessing of Abraham in the New Covenant, they will be living by faith in the promises of God, living by the life of Christ that has been given to them to become their life, so that they can become a son-priest, living and participating in the fellowship of the covenant by offering, and living by the name and love of God, revealing the righteousness of faith as a firstfruits son. This should be true for every individual son of God and every covenant house. This means that every child conceived in a covenant house already possesses the blessing of Abraham.

References:

Heb 6:13-14, 17
Gen 22:16-18
Gal 2:20
Isa 65:23

Further Study:

Genesis 22

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 8

The fulfilment of the promise

Although Abraham himself did not receive the Spirit, he was blessed by God. This was the blessing of faith, through which he was able to believe for the promise of becoming a son of God. As Paul noted, 'In hope [for sonship] he believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be".' Now that Christ has come, the faith of Abraham enables us to *receive the substance* of the promise in Christ. We, who have the Spirit of God and are led by Him, are the sons of God. Moreover, the Holy Spirit within us bears witness with our spirit that we are indeed the sons of God.

The covenant made by God with Abraham was the Everlasting Covenant. We learn from the prophet Ezekiel that this included a *new heart* by regeneration and a *new spirit*. The Lord God declared, '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. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgements and do them.' Our heart, or natural identity, is made new through the process of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. It is for this purpose that the Father gives to us the Holy Spirit, to abide with us and be in us.

In the initial action of receiving a new spirit, the natural, regenerated identity of a believer is born again by the word of the Father, making it a spiritual new creation. The Father then places the Spirit of the Son within our heart so that it becomes the source of all of our motivations. The divine nature is then formed in us when we join the fellowship of Christ's offering through baptism, as a member of His body.

References:

Rom 4:18 Joh 14:16-17, 23
Rom 8:9-17 Eph 3:17
Eze 36:26-27 Gal 4:6
Tit 3:5 Joh 14:23

Further Study: Ephesians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 9

The ministry of the Spirit

In Abraham, Yahweh made a covenant with mankind and rewarded them by calling them into the fellowship of His own covenant relationship, kingdom and glory. By covenant, mankind would receive the glory of God from the Father when they were born again as His sons and daughters.

The life and nature of their sonship would be given to them by the Son, when they joined Him in the fellowship of His offering. The expression of their sonship was to be from the initiative of the Holy Spirit, as He sanctified them and equipped them, enabling them to become who they were born and named by the Father to be, once they were born again. Paul also proclaimed that the promise God made with Abraham was that, in the New Covenant, He would give us the promise of the Spirit through faith, so that we could live as sons of God.

Paul called the ministry of the Spirit, 'The ministry of life and righteousness'. He said that the ministry of the Spirit was a new covenant that gave to mankind the glory of God's own life and righteousness. Paul said that as we behold the glory of our sonship, which the Father has caused to shine upon us (into our hearts) from the face of Christ, we are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory.

Paul compelled us to turn to the Lord, the Holy Spirit, whose work is to sanctify us. When we turn to the Holy Spirit, He brings us into Christ. Christ draws us to Himself and takes the veil that is blinding us from our hearts. He then opens our minds to understand the Scriptures. Our minds are released from the veil of ignorance and the hardness of self-opinion, when we join ourselves to Christ's offering through baptism.

References:

Gal 3:14 Rom 12:1-3
2Co 4:6 2Co 3:14, 16, 18
Luk 24:32, 45

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 10

Restoration of faith

The Scriptures account the amazing lives that people lived because they had received faith for the promise of sonship that was yet to be realised. In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul listed many of the heroes of faith who obtained approval through faith, yet did not receive what was promised. Jesus said that the greatest of these heroes of faith was John the Baptist.

In the days of John the Baptist, faith was restored to the hearts of many as John prepared the way for the coming of Christ. This restoration of faith was the fruit of hearing and receiving the word. The promise of attaining sonship was at hand. People were heeding the word and laying hold of the promise of sonship, with the faith that the word was generating in their hearts. They were meeting the word. That is, they pressed into the presence of the word, taking hold of the substance of the word, to make it their own. Jesus described their attitude and action, as forcibly entering the kingdom of heaven and seizing it for themselves.

Jesus said that all of the prophets and the law had prophesied 'until John'. What He meant was that the word that was prophesied, remained only the promise of sonship until the days of John the Baptist. From the time of John the Baptist, grace for restoration was made available to those who received the word. John directed his hearers to behold Christ as God's Lamb and to receive from Him the promise of becoming sons of God. This was the promise that Christ had given to Abraham. For this reason, John testified to his own disciples, saying, 'He [Christ] must increase, but I must decrease'. John the Baptist did this so that his hearers would not fail to lay hold of the promise of sonship that was being made available to them in Christ.

References:

Mat 11:11-13
Mar 1:5
Joh 1:23
Isa 40:3

Further Study:

John 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 13

Paul's exhortation

In Hebrews, Paul exhorted all who have been born of God, and have received the divine nature, to turn to the Lord, and keep turning to the Lord, by fixing their eyes on Jesus who is the Author of their faith and life. Only then will they be able to maintain their sanctification as a son of God and run with endurance the race that is set before them.

Paul called the letter to the Hebrews an 'exhortation'. An 'exhortation' is more than instruction or information. To exhort someone is to urge them strongly and earnestly to heed the counsel that is being given, and to respectfully follow it as good advice. An exhortation urges a person to pursue a course of action with a view to a future outcome. Paul urged us to receive his epistle, and to bear patiently with his words of warning, even though much of what he has said needs amplification. This is because he had compressed his exhortation into a short letter.

The final two chapters of Paul's letter to the Hebrews, summarise the content of the whole letter and confront us with the issues with which most of us will struggle. Earlier in his epistle, he had given many Old Testament examples of people who found acceptance with God and gained approval through their faith. These heroes of faith believed in the hope of sonship that had been promised to them. They lived in the age that preceded the coming of Christ. They appropriated the promise of sonship as a hope. That is, like Abraham, they believed in hope.

Having only this kind of faith, they fulfilled their pilgrimage on earth as God-fearers. They found grace, and accomplished God's will on earth in their day. Speaking of these ones, Paul said, 'What more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets.'

References:

Heb 12:1-3

Heb 13:22

Rom 4:18

Heb 11:32-35

Further Study:

Hebrews 11

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 14

A great cloud of witnesses

Paul exhorted us to follow the example of faith of all the heroes of faith who are listed in the Old Testament. He called them, 'a great cloud of witnesses *surrounding us*'. They are now in heaven. Paul told us that we, also, now have access into heaven, and our name has been written down in the Lamb's book of life. We are enrolled with them in heaven, for we, through Christ, have been given access by one Spirit to the Father. We are, therefore, no longer strangers and foreigners, but are fellow citizens with the saints, and are God's household. We have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Paul further stated that the active commitment to God by the Old Testament believers, in faith obedience, was the means by which they obtained personal promises from God. Through faith, the works that they accomplished as they obeyed the word of God were called 'acts of righteousness'. God reckoned them to be righteous people before Him because of their faith obedience.

Paul said that the world was not a worthy place for these men and women, who had gained approval before Him by faith. He prepared for them a heavenly country with a capital city called, 'the New Jerusalem'. These people all died in faith without receiving the promises. But, having seen the promises and welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth, they were making it clear that they sought a country of their own. They desired a better country; that is, a heavenly one.

We have now received the promises in Christ. This is why Jesus said that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, who was the greatest of these Old Testament heroes of faith. While their extraordinary works were done through faith in the promise, we are now able to do even greater works by the power of the Spirit that is in us.

References:

Heb 12:1, 22-23 Mat 11:11
Eph 2:18-19 Joh 14:12
Heb 11:13-16, 33, 38

Further Study:

John 14

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 15

The creation of man

A son of God is a person who has been born of God. The apostle James taught that a person is brought forth, or birthed, as a son of God, through the exercise of the Father's own will, by the word of truth. He does this in order that they might become a firstfruits of His creatures. A son of God is a new creation. They have become a new humanity with a different life; that is, they have received the *zoe* life of the Father. To understand how this happens, we need to consider the difference between creation, incarnation, and new creation.

The Son of God, who was the Creator of heaven and earth, formed the physical body of Adam from the clay and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives (plural). The breath of lives (plural) carried within it the capacity for both male and female. God then formed the spirit of man within him and man became a living soul. Using the language of the New Testament, Adam became a living soul (*psuche*). The identity of Adam was in his spirit, and his spirit expressed itself through the faculties of his soul. The soul of man lived and expressed itself through the energy of his fleshly biological life, which was in his blood.

It is important to recognise that the creation of man was done in *two stages*. In the second stage, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, removed a rib from his side, and formed the woman as a helper comparable to him. The book of Genesis accounts that 'God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; *male and female* He created them'. The creation of mankind in the image of God was not complete until there was a couple.

References:

Jas 1:18 Gen 2:7, 20-22
2Co 15:17 Gen 1:27
Zec 12:1 1Ti 2:13
Lev 17:11

Further Study:

Genesis 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 16

Born of flesh

It was not until Eve received the word of motherhood that she was able to conceive and become the mother of all living. The word of motherhood enabled her to become the mother of all the races of mankind. We know that a person receives their physical body, which includes all the genetic characteristics that they have inherited from their parents and forebears. However, much more than this, the spirit and soul of each person was also conceived as a new identity, a result of the biological process of procreation.

This is a most remarkable consideration. A person has been given their identity as an eternal possession as the consequence of a biological action. In this way, the spirit of a person has been formed from the flesh. It would be a mistake to assume that God has a multitude of spirits with Him in heaven that He inserts into the womb of a woman every time a new child is conceived. When a child is conceived in the womb, they receive their natural identity from the fatherhood of Adam by the natural procreative process.

When we consider this reality, it emphasises the truth that a person is not *spiritual* because they possess a spirit. They have identity as an eternal possession because they possess a spirit, but their spirit was brought forth *from the flesh*. This is why Jesus was so emphatic on this point during His discussion with Nicodemus. He said that a person *must be* born again to become spiritual because ‘that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit’.

References:

Gen 3:20

Joh 3:3-8

1Pe 1:18

Gen 1:28

Gen 9:1

1Co 15:45-47

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 2

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 17

Abundant life

Jesus Christ came to give us *zoe* life and to give it to us *abundantly*. This is the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham when Christ said to him that He would be his reward – exceedingly abundantly! The *psuche* life of Christ was in His blood. Jesus said that He laid down His *psuche* life for us. However, His blood contained both His own biological life as well as Yahweh's *zoe* life. And it is this *zoe* life that He shares with us by offering. We are receiving His *zoe* life when we eat of His flesh and drink of His blood in the fellowship of the communion. Jesus said, 'He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal *zoe* life'.

We know that Jesus Christ was made *like us* by incarnation. The Word became flesh when He became the Son of Man in a biological body. However, He already existed as a spiritual new creation Son of God before His incarnation. We have been predestined to be made *like Him* by new birth. As He was born of God before the foundation of the world by the word of the Father, we also receive this privilege of becoming a son of God when given a *second birth* by the same word. Our first birth was by natural means. We need to be reborn a second time to become spiritual.

Until we are born of God, we cannot confess or proclaim that God is our Father. It is through the process of being born again that we are made spiritual. After we have become spiritual, the Father gives us the Spirit of Christ. We receive Christ and are then able to receive His divine nature from Him, by joining the fellowship of His offering. This is the fellowship of the communion meal.

References:

Joh 10:10
Gen 15:1
Lev 17:11
Joh 6:53-54
Joh 1:14
Col 1:15
Rom 8:29
1Pe 1:23
Gal 4:6
Eph 3:17

Further Study:

John 6

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 20

Becoming a son of God

The gospel of sonship is preached to an unsaved person by Christ and His messengers. Those who hear the word about becoming sons of God must first come to Christ to receive sonship. Christ is the only doorway to the Father. No-one can come to the Father except through Christ. It is Christ who gives a person the right to become a son of God.

Through Christ, a person first receives redemption, and then justification. They are then received as an *adopted son* by the Father. This means that they come into the *position* of a son of God. More specifically, they are a son of man who has begun to receive, from the Father, the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. This involves the regeneration and renewing of their natural identity, a process that should continue for the rest of their Christian pilgrimage. Through the process of regeneration, the veil that covers their spiritual eyes, causing their blindness to the things of the Spirit, is removed. Furthermore, they are delivered from the fear of death.

Those who receive the word of Christ are directed to go to the Father to be born a second time. The Father then births them from above by the incorruptible word of God. This happens when the seed of God's word germinates in the regenerated heart of a hearer. Their regenerated natural identity (or human spirit) is *reborn* and *made spiritual*. Through this birthing process, God the Father has now become the Father of their spirit. They are a *new creation* that is spiritual. This makes them a son of God and a spiritual firstfruits of the new creation. They have been born of water. Jesus taught us to pray, 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name'. We are to pray this way because He has become *our* Father, the Father of our identity.

References:

Joh 10:9 2Co 3:16
Joh 1:12 Joh 3:3-8
Joh 14:6 1Pe 1:23
Tit 3:5 Mat 6:9

Further Study:

Galatians 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 21

Born of the Father

The incorruptible seed from the Father contains the believer's name as a son of God. It names a son of man with the capacities of Yahweh's own nature, causing him to be born of God and defined as a spiritual man. These capacities will include love, word, life/light, and Spirit. Moreover, the name of the new creation contains the predestined works that belong to the newly created son of God.

Then, because they are a son, God sends forth the Spirit of His Son into their heart. By this means, they are able to express sonship, which is evidenced by their cry of 'Abba, Father!' This is because the Spirit of the Son is the divine nature of the seed. It gives to them the nature of new creation sonship. When this happens, they have been born of the Spirit. Paul makes it clear that unless we have the Spirit of Christ, we are not sons of God. This is what Jesus meant, when He said, 'That which is born of Spirit is spirit'. We recognise that the *seed of identity* is from the Father and the *nature of the seed* is from Christ, who is Yahweh Son.

Like those who are born in the world, children who are conceived in covenant households, also receive natural identity through the process of procreation. However, because of the faith of at least one of its parents, the child is conceived with the adoption. This simply means that the Father has received this new human identity as a son in His house. Because they are a son, the Father gives them the Holy Spirit, then births them from above by His word, and gives to them the Spirit of the Son. Following the nine months of gestation, they are physically brought forth as a son of God. Of course, they have natural parents. However, God the Father is also the Father of their spirit, and they are a new creation from the womb.

References:

1Pe 1:23

Gal 4:5-6

Joh 3:5-6

Rom 8:9

1Co 7:14

Gal 1:15

Luk 1:15

Further Study:

1 Peter 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 22

God's judgement on sin

When we look at the world around us and the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, we can identify seven kinds of suffering. The first kind of suffering is the consequence of God's judgement on sin. When Adam sinned in the beginning, God subjected the world to the judgement of futility and deferred the execution of His judgement upon sin, to give mankind the opportunity to repent and be recovered to His covenant plan. This was the expression of God's mercy toward man. However, throughout history, God made examples of individuals and cities, like Sodom and Gomorrah, that indulged in gross immorality, and they were judged with the punishment of eternal fire. In the days of Noah, God judged and destroyed the whole world with a flood. Noah and his family only escaped because of their obedient faith.

Most of the prophets of the Old Testament, who proclaimed coming judgement and called for repentance so it could be averted, were persecuted and their words unheeded. This has resulted in the judgement of God being manifested in many specific ways throughout history. The apostle Peter prophesied that in the last days, there will be many who scoff at the need for repentance and wilfully ignore the manifestation of God's judgement in the past, as they continue to walk and live according to their own desires. Those who proclaim that the world has been reserved for judgement by God, will be ridiculed in the same way that Noah was ridiculed in the days preceding the great flood. However, Peter reminded us that 'the Lord is not slack concerning His promise'. God has fixed a day in which He will finally and completely judge the heavens and the earth in righteousness, through Jesus Christ who He raised from the dead.

References:

Gen 3:17
Rom 8:20
2Pe 2:5-6
Jud 1:7

Luk 17:26-27
2Pe 3:3-4, 9-10
Act 17:31

Further Study:**Daily Proverb:**

2 Peter 3

Proverbs 23

The consequence of sin

The second kind of suffering that we observe in the world is the consequence of our own misguided, ignorant, and wilful actions. The fruit of sin itself is suffering and death. Solomon, the wise man, said, 'They shall eat of the fruit of their own way and be satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naïve will kill them and the complacency of fools will destroy them.'

The third kind of suffering is the consequence of somebody else's sin upon us. This kind of suffering will be evident in many situations and relational interactions. It is particularly evident in the impact that the behaviour and decisions of parents have on their children. We could trace this principle all the way back to the beginning. The fall of Adam has impacted all generations.

The cross of Christ was the place where all these different elements of suffering were manifested. In the first case, when we look at the cross of Christ, it was the place of the full manifestation of God's judgement on sin. Further to this, it was the place where the consequence of every person's individual sin was seen and remedied, as well as the consequence of every person's sin on others.

When we are baptised into Christ's death, we join the fellowship of His sufferings. His sufferings are unique. We know that all suffering in the world is the fruit of man's disobedience, sin and rebellion. Suffering in the world, outside of Christ, has no virtue and only produces death. In contrast to this, Christ's sufferings were the fruit of His obedience to the Father's will, and are the means by which our propensity to sin is removed from us and His life is shared with us by offering.

References:

Pro 1:31-32
Exo 20:5
1Co 1:18
Php 3:10

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

1 Peter 4

Proverbs 24

The circumcision of Christ

The fourth kind of suffering that was revealed by Christ, was the outcome of the Father's circumcising hand upon Him. This suffering was to deal with the iniquity of mankind that originates from the other law, which is the law of self-centred and self-initiated religious motivations. We know that Jesus Christ did not personally need a circumcision to deal with the other law. He had no other law in His flesh. However, when the Father made Him our sin offering, and as He offered Himself to God as our great High Priest, He was tempted in all points, as we are, to turn aside from obedience. As our High Priest, He overcame in prayer by the power of Eternal Spirit, and His confession to the Father was, 'Not My will but Yours be done'.

Christ, as High Priest, demonstrated full obedience as He gave Himself up for us and then gave Himself over as an offering to the contradictory circumstances of absolute suffering. The cause of His suffering was the effect of sin and also the judgement of God that poured out the wrath of God upon Him. He was set forth as a propitiation, that is, an appeasement, as He endured His sevenfold punishment on our account. Through His seven-times sprinkling of His own blood, as our obedient Priest, He redeemed us from our iniquities, paid the penalty for our sin, and is now able to deliver us from the power of the other law that controls us.

From the garden of Gethsemane until He cried out and stated that His work was finished, His suffering and dying was a circumcision. Paul called this process, 'The circumcision of Christ'. It is important to note that the circumcision of Christ is doing more than removing, or *cutting off*, the other law from our flesh. The circumcision of Christ is also *cutting us in* to the Everlasting Covenant as sons of God who have been born of the Spirit.

References:

Rom 7:23 Luk 22:42
Heb 2:17-18 Col 2:11
Heb 5:5-9 Heb 10:5-7

Further Study: Hebrews 9

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 27

The chastening of the Father

As members of His body, our ongoing participation in the sufferings of Christ has become a chastening from the hand of the heavenly Father in our lives. The Father chastens us so that we can share in His holiness and live. The discipline of the Father in our lives, demonstrates that we have been received by the Father as His sons. As the apostle Paul taught, 'It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.'

We can compare circumcision and chastening, by saying that circumcision is the act of a father to cut from the child the disobedience of its misdirected initiatives and cut it into the covenant; whereas, chastening is the formation of the life that is already present in the child. The chastening of the Father is doing more than dealing with our propensity to sin. It is training us as priests and sons so that we conform our lives after the example of Christ's obedient death. This means that we will reach full maturity as sons of God and inherit everything that God has planned for us in the age to come.

Those who receive the discipline of the Father in their lives, bear the peaceable fruit of righteousness. However, if we refuse to be sanctified to our name, we will lose the birthright of sonship, as Esau did. As a consequence, we will be rejected by God and die spiritually. For this reason, Paul exhorted us to not fall short of the grace of God, nor allow any root of bitterness to take hold in our hearts. Esau never came to the place of humility that repentance requires. Instead, he sought repentance with the passions and emotions that sprang from his other law.

References:

Heb 12:7-8, 10-11, 15-17
Eph 6:4
Pro 22:6
1Pe 5:6

Further Study:

Hebrews 12

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 28

The travail of Christ's offering

The fifth kind of suffering was revealed by Christ as the travail of His offering to the Father, to see the divine nature *shared with*, and *formed in*, a multitude of sons. Circumcision and chastening were the work of the Father toward the Son; whereas, offering was the work of the Son toward the Father. Jesus Christ 'offered Himself without blemish to God'. Through the offering of Himself, Christ made His life available to us. He did this by pouring out His life through the sufferings of His death. The prophet Isaiah declared that Christ will see the fruit of the travail of His soul in many sons of God.

We are joined to Christ's offering by baptism and then participate in His offering as we eat and drink of His body and blood in the communion meal. When we do this, Christ's life becomes our life. It purges our heart of the self-centred motivations of sin and gives us a new *motivation* and *capacity* to serve as sons and priests of the living God. We serve God as sons and priests in the newness of the Spirit and not by the motivations of our own religious ideals.

We can serve God because we have received the capacity to travail, or labour, for others to be birthed from above. This travail involves filling up that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ for the sake of others. Through participation in Christ's offering, we are able to transfer the life of Christ to others. When we join the weakness of the cross, the life of Christ can be formed in us and the power of His life can be directed to others through us.

References:

Isa 53:10-11 2Co 13:4
Gal 4:19 Rom 7:6
Heb 9:14 Col 1:24
1Co 11:26

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 1

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 29

The limitations of our mortality

The sixth kind of suffering that we experience is the limitations of our mortality. For a Christian, every travailing pain that we endure has a purpose. We are being adjusted and positioned, through the pain of dying, for a better resurrection. It will be by resurrection that we are brought forth from the natural creation into the new heavens and earth. The whole of the creation is caught in the pain and suffering of this travail. We also have a part in the suffering and travail that everything in the creation presently endures. Its travail is positioning us so that we can be brought forth out of this present mortal order of creation into the glorious liberty and freedom from mortality that belongs to the sons of God.

The apostle Paul declared that the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us as the firstfruits of our inheritance, is also travailing in us. He turns our suffering and travail into an intercessory prayer. This is how He helps us in our weakness. Speaking of Christ, the prophet Isaiah stated that ‘in all of their affliction, He was afflicted, and the *Angel of His Presence* saved them’. He then continued to say, ‘But they rebelled and grieved His *Holy Spirit*’. We note that it was the Holy Spirit who was described here as ‘the *Angel of His Presence*’. We recall that it was the Holy Spirit who ministered the capacity of Eternal Spirit to Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, to endure His affliction on our behalf. Likewise, the Holy Spirit is the Messenger of Christ who has been sent to help us in our distress.

References:

Heb 11:35 Luk 23:43
Rom 8:21-23, 26 Heb 9:14
Isa 63:9-10

Further Study:

Romans 8

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 30

Groaning becomes a prayer

We know that the Lord is never pleased with moaning or grumbling. This was the lesson that the first generation of the Israelites who were delivered from Egypt learnt in the wilderness. Our groaning, as we experience trials and afflictions, must move beyond the kind of anxious cry for deliverance and help that is manifest in the whole of creation. We know that the Holy Spirit helps our weaknesses. Our sufferings do not become too much for us because the Holy Spirit is our Helper. He helps us by taking our travail and sufferings, expressed through our groaning, and making them a prayer. This is an amazing work of the Holy Spirit!

Our sufferings are part of the will of God for our lives because they belong to the sufferings of Christ. They have become an effective birth pang that is part of the Spirit's groaning and intercession for us. In this way, the Holy Spirit joins us in our suffering and begins to travail in us and with us. Christ hears our groaning in the Spirit, which is now too deep for words, because of the intercessory praying capacity of the Holy Spirit, and petitions the Father to cause all that is happening to us to work together for our good. This means that our suffering will be working for us an eternal weight of glory.

It is important that we accept the purpose of the suffering of travail that we endure in our mortality. We find peace when we embrace the process that is preparing us for a better resurrection. A better resurrection infers an immortal life. We are birthed into this as we die to mortality and are changed by resurrection power and brought forth as immortal sons of God. When the sons of God are brought forth into immortality, suffering and travail will cease to be a part of creation, for there will be no need for it in the new heavens and earth.

References:

1Co 10:5-11 Heb 11:35
Rom 8:26-27 Rom 8:18
2Co 4:17 Rev 21:4
1Pe 4:19

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 5

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 31