



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

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MARCH 2019

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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The manifestation of the word

The apostle John introduced his Gospel by saying, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' **Joh 1:1**. In this passage, John was explaining the first phase of the Son's journey from the Father as the Word. **Joh 13:3. Joh 16:28**. This expression of the word established the beginning of God's covenant purpose for mankind. It was also the means by which God created the heavens and the earth. **Col 1:16-17**. As John explained, 'He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.' **Joh 1:2-3**.

Describing the next manifestation and expression of the word, John then wrote, 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt [lit: tabernacled] among us.' **Joh 1:14. Heb 2:17**. In this passage, John was obviously referring to the Son of God coming in the flesh. Jesus was the Word made flesh. His birth and life under the Old Covenant was the second phase of the revelation of the word of God.

In relation to this phase, the Scriptures teach us that when Jesus was born as the Son of Man, He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. **Rom 8:3**. Significantly, Jesus was born under the Old Covenant, which was under the administration of the angels. **Gal 4:4. Heb 2:2**. He was still under the Old Covenant as He ministered throughout Judea for three and a half years. This was still part of His journey *from* God the Father, as the Word. **Joh 13:3. Joh 16:28**.

The Son's journey from the Father reached its conclusion at the last supper. **Joh 13:1-3**. At this point, Christ began to pioneer a pathway back to the Father. From the last supper, which He inaugurated as the first communion service, Jesus, the Word made flesh, was revealing the way of the *New Covenant*. **Luk 22:20**.

FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 1

We beheld His glory

John declared concerning Christ, 'We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' **Joh 1:14**. Christ's glory, as the only begotten of the Father, was witnessed by the disciples in the garden of Gethsemane. Here, the way of the New Covenant was initiated as Christ was born of God through the agency of water, blood and Spirit. The New Covenant was fully manifest and proclaimed to the world when He was lifted up on the cross. He became a banner, or an ensign, to which the redeemed of the Lord would gather. **Isa 11:10-12**.

Christ's journey from the last supper to when He was presented to the Father in heaven as the firstfruits of the new creation, was a three day and three-night operation. **1Co 15:20-23**. It was a journey, by the capacity of Eternal Spirit, from *exanastasis* to *anastasis*.

Exanastasis is a Greek word which means 'resurrection life in mortality'. Jesus demonstrated *exanastasis* when, from Gethsemane, He was progressively brought back from the death of sin by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, while still in a mortal body. **Heb 13:20**. When He declared from the cross, 'It is finished!', He was still in His mortal body, yet He had been fully made alive from the death of our sin.

Anastasis is the Greek word which refers to 'resurrection to immortality'. This is the resurrection that Jesus experienced after He had physically died and His body had rested in the tomb for three days and three nights. Through *anastasis*, Jesus received an immortal, spiritual body.

Christ's own physical body was 'destroyed' when He suffered as a living sacrifice and then yielded His Spirit to the Father. Speaking about His physical body, Jesus had said, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' **Joh 2:19**. After three days and three nights, Christ's body was raised as a corporate temple, built of living Christ's body was raised as a corporate temple, built of living stones. . **Joh 2:19. 1Pe 2:4-8**.

FURTHER STUDY: PHILIPPIANS 3

The ministry of the word

Solomon concluded the book of Ecclesiastes by saying that ‘the words of the wise are *as goads*, and as *nails* fastened by *masters of assemblies*, which are given from *one shepherd*’. **Ecc 12:11**. In this passage, Solomon was describing two distinct dimensions of the word – a goad and a nail.

Jesus Christ is the one Shepherd. He is the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. **1 Pet 2:25**. He has appointed some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be teachers, and some to be evangelists as part of a star presbytery that is in His right hand. **Eph 4:11**. **Rev 1:20**. These are Christ’s messengers who are sent to proclaim His word to His church. **Mat 10:40**. Through the ministry of the word of His grace, they are equipping the saints for their work of ministry. **Eph 4:12**. This shepherding work of Christ’s messengers can only be exercised in fellowship with Christ. **Joh 21:15-17**. Having received this shepherding mandate from Christ, His messengers are to care for His flock as His ‘under-shepherds’.

To this end, Peter exhorted the elders of the church, writing, ‘Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, *servicing as overseers*, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.’ **1Pe 5:2-4**.

Overseers, who shepherd the Lord’s flock, are the ‘masters of assemblies’ described by Solomon. **Ecc 12:11**. Jesus referred to the masters of assemblies, when He said, ‘Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?’ **Luk 12:42**. The preoccupation of overseers is feeding and tending the sheep that belong to the Lord’s household. They do this by proclaiming the word of present truth in the midst of the presbytery and in the church.

FURTHER STUDY: ACTS 20

Proclaiming the Lord's death

The word of God is the wisdom of God which comes down from heaven. **1Co 2:7. Jas 3:17.** Paul's description of the wisdom of God as being manifold, or variegated, reveals that there are many dimensions to the word of God. **Eph 3:10.**

Christ was the incarnate Word of God. All the dimensions of the word were revealed by Christ, at each and every stage of His journey, from the last supper to Calvary. This means that at each stage of Christ's journey, we can observe the expression and effect of all the dimensions of the word of God.

When we join the fellowship of Christ's offering, through baptism and an ongoing participation in the communion, we are able to receive and then express these same dimensions of the word as Christ's witnesses in the world. **Eph 3:8-12.** Significantly, Jesus explained that eating His flesh and drinking His blood refers to how we hear, believe, and obey His word. **Joh 6:61-64.**

Jesus said that the bread of the communion is His body, which we are to eat. The communion wine is the blood of the New Covenant, which we are to drink. Paul explained that eating and drinking the elements of the communion are a *participation*, or fellowship, in His body and blood. **1Co 10:16-17.** Furthermore, he declared that 'as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you *proclaim* [or show forth] the Lord's death till He comes'. **1Co 11:26.** We understand from Paul's writings that we eat and drink the communion meal in faith for our participation in the *exanastasis*, or the living sacrifice journey of Christ. This is how we proclaim His death until He comes. It is portrayed through the way that we live. If we continue faithfully in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, when He comes again, we will be like Him, in *anastasis*, having received our immortal, spiritual body. **1Jn 3:2.**

FURTHER STUDY: 1 CORINTHIANS 2

The bread of life

The word of God is the bread of life. At the last supper, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' **Luk 22:19**. This bread was Christ's flesh which His disciples were to eat. **Mat 26:26**. Christ was giving Himself as food, or bread, for their participation in His body.

Each wounding event that Christ endured along His offering journey, was a point where His body was being broken and His flesh was being given to us to eat. That is, the virtues, or excellencies, of Christ were being proclaimed and made available to us. **1Pe 2:9**. These include, His diligence, faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. **2Pe 1:5-7**. As we receive His word, and walk in the fellowship of His offering, these virtues become our possession and are multiplied within us. By this means, we are made useful and fruitful in relation to the expression of the word. **2Pe 1:8**.

The breaking and eating of the bread of life – which is the word – identifies us as part of the one body of Christ. As Paul explained, 'For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.' **1Co 10:17**. The word, which we eat, defines the culture of the body of Christ. As we feed on this word, the culture of the body of Christ becomes the culture of our lives, individually, as households, and as a community of believers.

The bread of life reveals the *word which is spirit*. When Jesus taught about the necessity to eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to have eternal life, He explained that the words that He speaks are spirit and are life. **Joh 6:63**. His word as spirit is the bread that we are to eat. To eat the bread means that we are becoming spiritual.

FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 6:22-59

Water and blood

At the first communion meal, Jesus took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.' **Luk 22:20-21**. He also poured water into a basin and washed the disciples' feet. **Joh 13:5**.

We can view the water and blood, together, as one dimension of the word. We note, in this regard, the teaching of John, who wrote, 'This is He who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood.' **1Jn 5:6**. John bore witness to the blood and water which flowed from Christ's heart when His side was pierced with a soldier's spear. **Joh 19:34-35**. John explained that this was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah, who declared, 'In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.' **Zec 13:1**.

The blood and water, together, reveal the word of life. **Joh 6:63**. In this regard, Jesus said, 'The words that I speak to you ... they are life.' **Joh 6:63**. Concerning blood, the Lord said, 'For the *life of the flesh is in the blood*, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls.' **Lev 17:11**. Notably, the water which flows from the throne in the New Jerusalem is described as 'the *river of life*'. **Rev 22:1**.

In the same way that water and blood are the means by which we receive the life of Yahweh, they are also both agents for cleansing. Regarding the agency of water, Paul said that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, 'that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of the word'. **Eph 5:25-26**. In relation to the blood, the apostle John witnessed a great multitude which no man could number, who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. **Rev 7:9,14**.

The word is a goad

Solomon described the word of the great Shepherd, spoken by His messengers, as a *goad*. **Ecc 12:11**. A goad is the sharp, or pointed, end of a shepherd's staff. A shepherd uses the goad of the staff to prod sheep who are going their own way, to motivate them to obedience. We note that a shepherd's staff can also be used as a rod in order to chasten sheep, and as a crook to rescue sheep who have found themselves in peril and distress because of their disobedience.

Jesus said to Saul on the road to Damascus, 'Why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to *kick against the goads*.' **Act 26:14**. Jesus confronted him with this question. Having been confronted in this way by the word, Paul later wrote, 'The word of God is living and powerful, and *sharper* than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart'. **Heb 4:12-13**. The word, as a goad, is sharper than any two-edged sword – even the sword of the Spirit.

The word pierces the heart of a hearer, revealing its deceitful and wicked condition. **Jer 17:9**. This deceitful and wicked condition is the consequence of a principle of evil within us, which Paul described as another law. **Rom 7:21,23**. It is the desire to go our own way. **Isa 53:6**. The purpose of the goad is to reveal the operation of the other law within us, so that we can turn in repentance from our own way and walk in the way of sonship that the Father has prepared for us. We note, however, that the word of the goad does not remove the other law from our heart. The other law can only be removed from us through our fellowship in the circumcision of Christ.

FURTHER STUDY: ACTS 2

Our abuse of Christ

Jesus said to Saul on the road to Damascus, 'Why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to *kick against the goads*.' **Act 26:14**. The wounds that Saul inflicted upon the early Christians were a manifestation, in time, of the suffering that he had already inflicted upon Christ. Saul had wounded Christ in Gethsemane, bruised and beaten Him in the house of Caiaphas, scourged and mocked Him in the Praetorium, and nailed His hands and feet to the cross. This principle is true for every one of us.

When the goad of the word pierces our heart, it causes us to realise that we have persecuted, wounded, and crucified Christ. The Spirit of grace and supplication that flowed from Christ's heart, as the outcome of the seventh wound, causes us to look upon Him whom *we have pierced*. **Luk 23:48. Zec 12:10**. We know that the seventh wound is the sum of all the wounds of Christ. We, personally, inflicted all of Christ's wounds upon Him.

There is a specific point of confrontation, and a specific illumination that is relevant for each wound. For example, in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus goaded the disciples, asking, 'Could you not watch with Me for one hour?' **Mar 14:37**. In the house of Caiaphas, Jesus goaded the Jews, when He declared, 'I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.' **Mat 26:64**. This prod with the word of truth, caused Caiaphas to react by tearing his garments and condemning Christ. **Mat 26:65-66**.

The effect of the word as a goad on a person is that they are cut to the heart. **Act 2:37. Act 7:54** Those who do not resist the Holy Spirit, and respond with repentance and faith under the influence of grace and supplication, are able to be joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. In this fellowship, they are forgiven, and are delivered from their own way, and are able to be the son whom the Father named them to be in Christ.

FURTHER STUDY: ISAIAH 53

Our response to the goad

The effect of the word as a goad was exemplified on the Day of Pentecost. Peter proclaimed, '*You nailed [Him] to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.* **Act 2:23**. Peter was clear that every individual in the crowd was personally responsible for driving the nails through the hands and feet of Christ. He said further, 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, *whom you crucified*, both Lord and Christ.' **Act 2:36**.

The word of the cross, proclaimed by Peter, was a goad that pierced the hearts of his hearers. The book of Acts records, 'Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call!"' **Act 2:37-39. Act 16:30-33**.

In contrast, those who reject the word of the cross as it pierces their heart are, instead, provoked to anger and to kill the messenger. **Act 22:22. Act 25:24**. This was the response of those who heard the message of Stephen. In the same manner as Peter, Stephen declared, 'You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom *you now have become the betrayers and murderers.*' **Act 7:51-52**. In response to the goading of the word of the cross, they were cut to the heart and gnashed their teeth at him. They dragged Stephen out of the city and stoned him. **Act 7:57-58**.

FURTHER STUDY: ACTS 7

The word is a seed

In His explanation of the parable of the sower and the seed, Jesus identified the word of God as a seed. **Luk 8:11**. It is the means by which we are born of God. As the apostle Peter wrote, 'For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.' **1Pe 1:23**.

Jesus, the Word made flesh, was the Seed who went into the ground and died when He offered Himself as a burnt offering, a sin offering, and a peace offering. He said to His disciples, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.' **Joh 12:24**.

Significantly, through His death as a sin offering, Christ brought life and immortality to light through the word of the gospel, and made it available to all mankind. **2Ti 1:8-12**. Through Christ's progressive travail as the sin offering, sons of God are brought to birth out of death. This is what the prophet Isaiah was referring to, when he wrote, 'When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His seed* [offspring], He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord [His covenant desire for many sons] shall prosper in His hand.' **Isa 53:10**.

We first joined this birthing process when the word of the cross was preached to us and we were born from above of incorruptible seed. **1Pe 1:23**. Then, through baptism, we were joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. In this fellowship, we are progressively being born from the death of sin with Christ. This is an ongoing implication of receiving the word as a seed. Jesus said that we would experience tribulations and persecutions because of the word, or seed. **Mat 13:20-21**.

The sword of the word

The word of God is described as a two-edged sword which proceeds from the mouth of Christ. **Rev 1:16. Rev 2:12,16.** The purpose of the sword is to divide between the wicked and the just. It is either a weapon for our deliverance through admonition and edification, or it is an instrument of judgement and destruction. **2Co 13:10.**

The sword is the prophetic word concerning the name and destiny of every person. Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord declared, 'For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; indeed it shall come down on Edom [Idumea], and on the people of My curse, for judgement.' **Isa 34:5.** This prophetic word was fulfilled when Jesus was sent by Pilate to appear before Herod, the Idumean. **Luk 23:6-7.** Herod, the descendant of Esau and Ishmael, desired to see a sign from Christ to support his claim over Jerusalem and the temple. **Luk 23:8.** If Herod's kingship and temple were validated by Christ, the yoke of Jacob would have remained broken from off the neck of Esau and his descendants. **Gen 27:40.**

However, Christ answered Herod not a word. Christ's only resolve was, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' **Joh 2:19.** As Herod mocked Christ's kingship, and sent Him to the Romans to be abused and crucified, Herod's temple was left desolate. Moreover, the Old Covenant, which was serviced by Herod's temple, was also destroyed. This was the impact of the sword of the Lord upon Idumea and natural Jerusalem, as Christ disempowered and conquered them through His obedience to the Father.

Isaiah's prophecy did not only apply to Edom, but to the lives of every individual from every nation on earth. We know this because earlier in His address, the Lord said, 'Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations.' **Isa 34:1-2.**

FURTHER STUDY: ISAIAH 34

Two sides of the sword

The sword bathed in heaven, is the word of the Lord that has been forever settled in heaven. **Psa 119:89**. It can proclaim judgement and cursing upon a person. However, it equally proclaims and confirms a person's name as a son of God. This reality was revealed by Jesus, when He said, 'Rejoice because your names [as sons of God] are written in heaven.' **Luk 10:20**. Cursing and the blessing of sonship are the two sides, or edges, of the sword of the word. *They are, in fact, two prophetic destinies, written in the Scriptures, for each individual.*

The implication of the first edge of the sword is that it proclaims liberty to those who are in captivity to sin and death. Christ Himself testified that the word from His mouth proclaimed liberty to the captives. **Luk 4:18**. This is because it addresses the principle of evil within us, called 'the other law', which Satan fathered in mankind when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Paul taught that a person who lives by the other law is brought into captivity to the law of sin and death. **Rom 7:23-24**.

Motivated by another law within them, a person seeks to create an image and define a name for themselves. The works that they do – irrespective of whether they are well-intentioned or not – are sin, because they are contrary to whom the Father predestined them to be. Unless they are delivered from this principle of evil, they can only live in sin.

Thankfully, for those who join the fellowship of Christ's offering and circumcision by eating His flesh and drinking His blood, the sword of the Lord cuts this body of flesh from them. In the same action, they are being cut into the covenant of sonship.

The word made more sure

While the goad of the word reveals the condition of our heart, the sword of the word is the initiative of the Father, through the Son, to cut the other law from our heart. This happens in the fellowship of Christ's circumcision. The sword is not only cutting the flesh from us; it cuts those who respond to the word of the cross with repentance and faith, into the covenant of sonship. In other words, as we are delivered from our own projections, we are being released and enabled to fulfil our sonship name, which is written in heaven. The prophetic word of our name is being made more sure in our life as we become the son whom the Father predestined us to be. **2Pe 1:19.**

Condemnation and damnation are the implications of the second edge of the sword which proceeds from the mouth of Christ. Those who continually resist the Holy Spirit when the word of the cross is proclaimed by Christ's messengers, stumble backwards, are broken, snared, and taken captive. **Isa 28:13.** Because they choose their own way, rather than obedience to the word, the word itself appoints them to their own place. **Act 1:25.**

The sword of the word carries within it two destinies for every person. The prophetic word of one destiny or the other, is made sure through a person's response to the word. Either, they turn in repentance and faith from their own way, obtain their name, and bear the fruits of the Spirit; or, they choose to continue in their own way and are appointed to their own place. Their own place is damnation. The experience of Judas provides a helpful example of this scriptural principle. **Acts 1:25.**

FURTHER STUDY: JEREMIAH 7

The example of Judas

Judas had a name as son of God, which the Father had prepared for him before the heavens and earth were created. In line with his name, Judas was predestined to sit on one of twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. **Mat 19:28-29**. However, on the Mount of Olives, Jesus prayed, 'Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, *that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*' **Joh 17:12**.

The Scriptures that Jesus was referring to were the prophetic psalms, which were both songs and prayers. For example, prophetic of Christ's betrayal, King David wrote, 'But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng. Let death seize them; let them go down alive into hell, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them.' **Psa 55:13-15**. Through this prayer of Jesus, the sword of the Lord was being wielded against Judas. From this point, there was no avenue for his recovery. The prophetic word concerning the sin of his betrayal, and his condemnation, was being made sure.

Many people erroneously believe that because Judas' betrayal and death was written in the Scriptures, that he was predestined to damnation. **Act 1:20**. **Psa 69:25**. **Psa 109:8**. However, this is not true. As we have already considered, Judas had a sonship destiny which was also written in the Scriptures. However, because he rejected the goad which called him to eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood, he was progressively taken, snared, and then appointed to his own place by the sword of the word.

The implication of Judas' experience is that the Scriptures declare two destinies for every person – their name as a son of God, and their destruction as a transgressor. The word of the Lord makes either one of these prophetic destinies 'more sure' on the basis of how we respond to the word of the cross.

FURTHER STUDY: PSALM 109

The goad and the sword in the church

Christ has now committed the ministry of the word, as a goad and a sword, to a presbytery which is in His hand. This reality was demonstrated through the interaction between the apostle Peter and Ananias and Sapphira.

In the same way that Judas had been goaded several times by the word, Ananias and Sapphira had several opportunities to repent and walk in the truth. The initial goad of the word was a call for people to make offering from their resources, to support the needs of the burgeoning congregation. **Act 4:33-35**. No doubt, in response to the word, Ananias and Sapphira were provoked by the Spirit to participate in the fellowship of offering. This was according to their name. However, like Judas, they loved money. **Joh 12:4-6**.

Peter said, that even when they had sold the land, the money belonged to them. However, the goad of the word, by the Spirit, was revealing the corruption in their heart. They desired to make offering for a good showing in the flesh, while at the same time, maintaining their financial security. At this point, Satan entered their heart, motivating them to lie to the Holy Spirit. **Act 5:3**.

Finally, as they came to the feet of the apostles, which is the place of judgement, where the eyes of the Lord were searching their heart, they lied to Peter. However, Peter said that they had not lied to men, but to God. **Act 5:4**. At this point, Christ Himself slew them as Peter spoke to them. They were appointed to their own place by the sword of the word. What was prophetically written concerning Judas, became the prophetic word made sure in relation to their life.

FURTHER STUDY: LUKE 12:35-53

The word is a nail

While the purpose of the goad is to provoke faith obedience, the word as a nail reveals the love of God expressed through faith obedience. That is, the nails maintain a person's connection to the offering of Christ, in which the works of faith are fulfilled. We note, in this regard, that Christ's love held Him to His offering journey. He said, 'No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.' **Joh 10:18**. Laying down His life in this way revealed the love of God. **Joh 15:13**.

The word of the cross that is proclaimed to us is also the word of faith. **Rom 10:8**. If we receive it, then faith comes with the word. We know that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. **Rom 10:17**. This faith motivates, or goads, us to join the fellowship of the cross where, by offering transfer, we join the fellowship of His circumcision. In this regard, the words of faith become *the nails* that join us to the cross of Christ so that we are crucified with Him. Faith works by love. **Gal 5:6**. In this way, the nails are securing us to the offering of Christ, through which love is expressed.

In the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, the faith we have received, working by the love of God, which is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit, is ensuring that the works that we do are according to our sanctification. **Rom 5:5**. By this means, we are not deviating from the works associated with our name, in the pursuit of another will, or through the exercise of our flesh. We know the peace of God, because we are being the person whom He named us to be.

The example of Peter

The disciple Peter provides us with a comprehensive example of the impact of the word as a goad, then as a sword, and then as a nail. In the first instance, Peter was goaded by the word of Christ, which confronted Peter's belief in the integrity of his own heart and his capacity to love in the same manner as God. In response to the Lord's word, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward', Peter replied, 'I will lay down my life for You.' **Joh 13:36-38.** Jesus said to Peter that he would deny Him *three times* before the rooster crowed.

When Peter looked into the eyes of Jesus after his self-righteous love and integrity had failed, he began to mourn. He was delivered from his fleshy self-righteousness as it was cut from his heart. We know this happened, because when Jesus found him on the shore of Galilee, he confessed that he was unable to love with the *agape* love of God. **Joh 21:15-16.** Having been delivered from his self-righteous integrity, the prophetic sword of the word was now making Peter's sonship name *more sure*. In this regard, Jesus spoke to him about his work as an 'under-shepherd' of Christ.

Significantly, Jesus also spoke to Peter about the nature of his death. John recorded this conversation between Jesus and Peter. Jesus said to him, "When you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish". This He spoke, signifying *by what death he would glorify God*. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me". **Joh 21:18-19.**

Christ's word was now a nail that was securing Peter to the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. As Peter continued in this fellowship, he would be able to do the works associated with his name. That is, he would be able to feed and tend Christ's sheep as an overseer in the church. **1 Pe 5:1-2.**

FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 21

The song of the Lord

As an expression of the word of God, the song of the Lord reveals the nature of God's life. God (*Elohim*) is three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – who are, and who possess together, one Spirit and one life as 'Yahweh'. They minister this life to one another in the fellowship of offering. In this fellowship, each Person in the Godhead lays down His life to reveal the others. By this means, Their one life is multiplied and given to be our life. Abraham recognised this culture of offering as being *worship*. **Gen 22:5**.

The song of the Lord is an expression of worship, or the culture of offering. We note, for example, that under the leadership of King Hezekiah, 'When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord also began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David, king of Israel. So, all the assembly worshipped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.' **2Ch 29:27-28**.

As an expression of offering, the song of the Lord communicates and brings to pass God's covenant will. With this in view, it is depicted in the Scriptures as a weapon through which the truth is established, and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God is cast down. **2Co 10:3-5**.

This dual effect of the song of the Lord indicates its connection to the sword of the word which proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. This association between the song and the sword is conveyed by the psalmist, who wrote, 'Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand.' **Psa 149:6**.

Like the two-edged sword of the word, the song of the Lord is able to bring deliverance to those who are in captivity, so that they are able to participate in the fulfilment of God's covenant will. **Ezr 3:10**. The song of the Lord, or the high praises of His people, equally executes judgement on those who choose to remain enemies of the Lord.

FURTHER STUDY: EZRA 3

The song brings deliverance

The Scriptures reveal many examples of the two implications of the song of the Lord – deliverance and judgement. **Jdg 7:22**. We are reminded, for example, of the deliverance of Israel according to the prophetic word of Deborah. She called Barak to lead the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali against the king of Canaan. **Jud 5:7,11-12**. The song of the Lord, sung by Deborah, and received by Barak, enabled him to go forth and to conquer the enemies of the Lord. For this reason, he is listed among the heroes of faith. **Heb 11:32**.

Similarly, Judah was delivered from the hands of Ammon and Moab by singing the song of the Lord. As a great multitude came against Judah, King Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast and gathered all the people to Jerusalem to seek help from the Lord. In the midst of the assembly, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, of the family of Asaph, and he prophesied concerning the Lord's deliverance of God's people. In the faith of this word, Jehoshaphat said, 'Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, *put your trust in the Lord your God and you will be established*. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed.' **2Ch 20:20**.

The Scripture then recorded, 'When [Jehoshaphat] had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire, as they went out before the army, and said, "Give thanks to the Lord, for His lovingkindness is everlasting". When they began singing and praising, *the Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir*, who had come against Judah; so they were routed.' **2Ch 20:21-22**.

FURTHER STUDY: 2 CHRONICLES 20

Paul and Silas

In the book of Acts, Luke recounted the experience of Paul and Silas in Philippi. **Act 16:22-34**. Having been beaten with rods, they were put into prison, and their feet were fastened in stocks. At midnight, they were praying and singing hymns by the capacity of the Holy Spirit. **Rom 8:26**. The Lord, by the Spirit, had given them a song in the night. As the psalmist declared, 'The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime; and His song will be with me in the night, a prayer to the God of my life.' **Psa 42:8**.

A great earthquake occurred as they sang, causing the prison doors to be opened and the chains, which held Paul, Silas, and the other prisoners, to be loosed. Supposing that the prisoners had escaped, the jailor drew a sword to kill himself. However, Paul called with a loud voice, saying, 'Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.' **Act 16:28**. The jailor 'called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"' **Act 16:29-30**.

As Paul and Silas sang the song that the Lord had given them in the fellowship of His offering, they were delivered from their chains. Moreover, the song of the Lord brought salvation to the Philippian jailor, who was a captive to sin and death. The jailor's response was to call for the light of the word, which would reveal to him the pathway of salvation. **Psa 119:105**. The song in the night, sung by the messengers of the Lord, brought salvation to the jailor and his whole household.

Jesus sang the song of the Lord

At the first communion service, Christ and His disciples would, no doubt, have sung psalms as part of the Passover celebration. Many commentators agree that they are likely to have sung what are referred to as the 'Hallel Psalms'. Some scholars identify the Hallel as Psalms 115 to 118, while others indicate a more expansive suite of six songs drawn from Psalms 108 to 118. **Psa 115:16-18. Psa 116:6-8.** These psalms were songs of deliverance and thanksgiving, prophetically declaring the offering of Christ. They would have sung, 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.' **Psa 118:22-24.**

The Gospels of Matthew and Mark record that Jesus and the disciples went to the Mount of Olives after concluding their Passover meal with the singing of a hymn. **Mat 26:30. Mar 14:26.** Although the Scriptures do not indicate which hymns they sang, it could have been the Messianic Psalms of the Hallel, which depicted Christ's offering journey. They also may have sung other Messianic psalms. Psalm 40, in particular, is a prophetic song written by David, which outlines all the events of Christ's offering and suffering. Christ was singing this psalm as He fulfilled its content through His offering.

In this way, during the Feast of Passover, Christ proclaimed the song of the Lord. He sang the song of the Lord from the first communion service, until His journey was finished and He breathed His last while nailed to the cross on Calvary. Jesus calls us to journey with Him in the fellowship of His offering. He wants His song to be in our mouth. Although we are to sing exactly what He sang, the song will be the unique expression of each individual member of the body of Christ. This is because every member of the body of Christ has a unique name. **Col 3:16-17. Joh 10:3.**

FURTHER STUDY: PSALM 40

Jesus went forth with singing

Jesus went forth with singing from the first communion service, which He had just inaugurated. **Mat 26:30. Mar 14:26.** Isaiah prophesied concerning Christ's offering journey, writing, 'For you shall go out with joy [rejoicing], and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.' **Isa 55:12-13.**

Christ went forth from the first communion to fulfil all obedience as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, dressed in the garments of a slave-priest. He went forth, casting down every argument that had exalted itself against the knowledge of God. He went forth to bring every thought into captivity to His own obedience. He went forth to punish all disobedience as His obedience was fulfilled. **2Co 10:4-6.**

The song of the Lord was the first weapon that Christ, the Slave-Priest, used as He went forth to conquer sin and death, and to take captivity captive. **Heb 2:14-15. Eph 4:8.** He priested Himself as the Lamb of God for a burnt offering, a sin offering, and a peace offering. In this regard, He entered the gates of the true tabernacle with thanksgiving. The psalmist declared, 'Enter into His gates with thanksgiving [or with a peace offering], and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.' **Psa 100:4.** As those who have received the song of the Lord, we are to go forth with Christ, singing in the same manner as He did. When we sing the song of the Lord in fellowship with Him, 'we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us'. **Rom 8:37.**

Many will see and fear

Christ's song was the song of the Lord. It was a new song of praise to the Lord. He said that many would see it and would fear and trust in the Lord. **Psa 40:3**. To this end, we recall the effect of Christ's song on the thief who was converted while hanging on the cross next to Him. This thief, who was now illuminated, rebuked the impenitent thief, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong". Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom". **Luk 23:40-42**.

Throughout His journey, Jesus would take captive all those who heard His song, and they would mourn for Him as Yahweh's Son. **Zec 12:10**. This was the aim of His song. We note that when Jesus finished singing the song of the Lord, the crowd that had gathered against the Lord and His anointed were taken captive. Under the influence of a spirit of grace and supplication, 'all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts [in mourning]'. **Luk 23:48**.

The words of Christ's song, through which He took the captives of sin captive to Himself, are recorded in Psalm 40. 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Then I said, "Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of Me. I delight to do Your will, O My God, and Your law is within My heart"'. **Psa 40:6-8**. When Christ did this, He took away the Old Covenant and established the New Covenant. **Heb 10:9**. He birthed the New Covenant through the song of the Lord.

FURTHER STUDY: HEBREWS 10

Triumph through obedience

The Lord set ambushments against His enemies as He sang as a slave-priest. **2Ch 20:22**. Obedience triumphed over disobedience. Those who sought to destroy His life were brought to mutual confusion. **Psa 40:14**. All those who said, 'Aha, aha!' and wagged their heads, were confounded and brought to silence because of their shame. **Psa 40:15. Mar 15:29**.

Christ's song expressed His trust in God. As He died on the cross, His last words were the final words of Psalm 40. 'Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The Lord be magnified!" But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinks upon me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God.' **Psa 40:16-17**.

Christ's heart was broken because of the reproach that the Father had laid upon Him. That reproach was a sword by which the Father allowed the great Shepherd of the sheep to be struck down. This was the fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy, "*Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion*", says the Lord of hosts. "*Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered*". **Zec 13:7**.

This reproach broke His heart. **Psa 69:20**. Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?'; that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" **Mat 27:46. Psa 22:1**. However, He was not forsaken, for the Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and saves those who have a contrite spirit. **Psa 34:18**. Jesus committed His soul into the arms of the Lord for safe-keeping, and then He died. **Luk 23:46**. When the spear pierced His heart, the nations began to mourn for Him and to find obedience. Thus, He triumphed through obedience!

The new song in our mouth

Christ's song is the song of obedience, which He has now placed in our mouths. This means that we are to go to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. The apostle Paul exhorted us, writing, 'Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.' **Heb 13:13-15.**

When we are delivered from our captivity, we are able to sing the song of the Lord, because the Lord Himself becomes our song. This was the testimony of Moses when the people were delivered by God from their slavery in Egypt. Moses and the people sang, 'The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; my father's God, and I will exalt Him.' **Exo 15:2. Deu 10:21. Isa 12:2.**

We are unable to sing the song of the Lord while we remain captive to a culture that is other than the culture of offering in the body of Christ. **Heb 12:22-24.** As the psalmist testified, 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! If I do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth – if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy.' **Psa 137:4-6.**

The Lord gives us a song to sing in the midst of the darkness of night, which we experience at times in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. This song brings healing and refreshing to our spirit, sets ambushments against disobedience, and can minister deliverance to others who remain captive to sin.

FURTHER STUDY: PSALM 33



Restoring
my Soul