



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

SEPTEMBER 2018

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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Wisdom from above

Wisdom, understanding, and the knowledge of the Holy One are three dimensions of the word of life that are essential to living as New Covenant believers. King Solomon said, 'Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.' **Pro 4:7**. He also said that if we incline our ear to wisdom, and lift up our voice for understanding, then we will 'understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God'. **Pro 2:2-5**.

The word of the Lord that is proclaimed from the presbytery is the wisdom of God. As Paul declared, 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory'. **1Co 2:7**. The apostle John described this wisdom as being the word of life from the beginning which was heard, seen, looked upon and handled in a presbytery. **1Jn 1:1**. It is the wisdom of God which comes down from above. **Jas 3:17**.

The wisdom of God is the light of present truth. It is ministered directly to every individual, and to every household, through the proclamation of the word of life. This happens publicly and house to house, by those with ascension gift grace, who are part of the presbytery that is in the hand of Christ. **Act 20:20. Eph 4:11-12**.

Receiving the word of present truth, as it is proclaimed by ascension gift messengers of Christ, will be the primary initiative of every son and daughter of God who recognises that 'wisdom is the principal thing'. **Pro 4:7**. They recognise that this is the bread that comes down from heaven, by which we live. **Joh 6:50-51,63**. **Mat 4:4**. This word defines the works of our sonship, and establishes the ground of fellowship and offering in the presbytery and, therefore, in the church.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: PROVERBS 4

Understanding

The Scriptures teach that understanding is 'a wellspring of life'. **Pro 16:22**. In this regard, the psalmist prayed, 'Give me understanding, and I shall live.' **Psa 119:144**. Understanding is necessary so that we are able to live and walk in the light of the word that we have received.

If getting wisdom involves humbling ourselves and receiving the word of present truth, then understanding involves buying the word that we are receiving. **Pro 23:23**. To buy the word, we must acknowledge that there is a price to pay in order to have the word. Jesus likened paying the price for the word to 'treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field'. **Mat 13:44**. The hidden treasure is the secret of the Lord.

Paying the price for the word means joining the fellowship of Christ's offering. To be found in Christ, we must sell, or let go of, all the things that we use to validate our ministry as sons of God. These may include our self-defined initiatives, our qualifications, our experience, and our traditions. Like Paul, we are to count them all as 'dung' in view of knowing Christ and being found in Him. **Php 3:8**.

The joy that the man who purchased the field demonstrates, is the same joy that the apostle John referred to when he said that the word of life is written and declared to us so that our 'joy may be full'. **1Jn 1:4**. This joy is the evidence that we are obtaining understanding.

Understanding comes to individuals when they meet together for fellowship in the word of present truth. **1Jn 1:1-3**. The evidence that a person has received understanding is that the word has become the culture of their life.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: MATTHEW 13:24-58

Knowledge of the Holy One

King Solomon said that if we would incline our ear to the wisdom which comes down from above, and apply our heart to understanding through fellowship in the word that we have received, 'then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.' **Pro 2:2,5**. The knowledge of God, or of the Holy One, is knowing God and living in fellowship with Him as a son of God. A person who knows God in this way is participating in the fulfilment of His will. They are living in fellowship with the Lord and with their brethren, and are becoming the person whom God predestined them to be. They are obtaining their eternal inheritance as His son.

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul declared, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.' **Eph 1:17**. The knowledge of the Holy One is not merely information about God or about how we live as His people. To have the knowledge of the Holy One is to know the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are light, and to know ourselves and one another according to sanctification. That is, we walk in the light. **1Jn 1:5,7**. This is what it means to know Him who is from the beginning, as one who is mature in the Lord. **1Jn 2:13-14**.

A person who has received and is walking in the word of life is compelled by the love of God to judge that if Christ died their death for them, then they are to die Christ's death. That is, they will be joined to the offering of Christ. **2Co 5:14**. Importantly, a person who has received this knowledge and judges that the only way to life is in the fellowship of Christ's offering, ceases from their judgements of the word and those who proclaim it.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 JOHN 5

Judges of the word

Many of the relational and cultural difficulties that we experience as a presbytery and as churches, arise because the word that Christ is ministering in our midst is not received or believed. This does not mean that people necessarily disagree with the word. Rather, they are not buying the word. Evidently, they are not getting understanding or finding the knowledge of the Holy One.

A person who agrees with the word is not, by implication, receiving wisdom, understanding and knowledge. This is because a person's agreement with the word can come from the basis of their judgement of the word and of the messengers who are preaching it. Approaching the word in this manner is inherently self-righteous.

A person who is judging the word is, obviously, not selling everything to buy it. Instead, they selectively appropriate the word for their own use. They strongly support content that accords with their own perspective and experience, and query or reject those elements of the word that conflict with their own understanding.

These people claim to be believers of the word, but their partiality in relation to the word and its ministry, reveals that they are not getting understanding, nor are they finding the knowledge of the Holy One. Rather, they lean on their own understanding. Notably, their selectively acquired knowledge causes them to become puffed up. **Pro 3:5. 1Co 8:1.** When leaders minister from this basis, they are at risk of promoting a leaven that can impact upon whole congregations. **Gal 5:9.**

While ever we judge the word and preference our own way over the way in which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are seeking to establish us, we remain in the death of Adam. A person who remains in Adam, rather than joining the death of Christ, will be anxious to avoid death. They are not simply fearing the end of their mortal life. They fear losing their own expression and validity. This will become their preoccupation, and will prevent them from finding their life in Christ. **Mat 16:25.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 2 CORINTHIANS 10

The word from the beginning

The word from the beginning is the wisdom of God that comes down from above. John explained that this word is the preoccupation of fathers who know Him who is from the beginning. **1Jn 2:13-14**. In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul described the word from the beginning as 'the milk of the word'. **Heb 5:12**. He further explained that the milk of the word refers to the sayings, or oracles, of God Himself. This is the word of God that encompasses our predestination as sons of God. It is the word of present truth.

Some of us are hindered in our participation in the fellowship of the church because we do not believe that the milk of the word applies to us. That is, we approach the fellowship of the presbytery, or the communion table, in a manner that assumes that we have matured beyond the need for receiving the milk of the word. When we view ourselves this way, we become the judges of the oracles of God. Our judgements and assessments demonstrate that we have not received this word and do not have understanding, even if we agree with what is being said.

When Paul wrote that a person who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, he was identifying men who selectively drew from the word of present truth for their own, self-righteous ministry endeavours. **Heb 5:13**. They were not 'eating' this word themselves and were not joined to the fellowship that the word established. This is why he said, 'You have come to need milk'. **Heb 5:12**. A person who is mature receives the word of God. They speak this word by faith and according to sanctification in the fellowship of offering. They do not cease from receiving the word in this way but, rather, grow in their knowledge of Him who is from the beginning.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 JOHN 2

Speaking from testimony

Our witness in the world is to speak from testimony and not from the rightness of theology. The apostle Paul said that we are living epistles, read and known of all men. **2Co 3:2**. When the word of faith is in our mouth, as the expression that comes from our heart, we will be expressing the righteousness of faith, by the Spirit. **Rom 8:6,10**. Our demeanour will not be the expression of religious self-righteousness.

Having received the word that is preached to us, we confess, through testimony, the lordship that Jesus has over our lives. **Rom 10:9**. This confession is being demonstrated in us because we believe that Christ was raised from the dead after His work of offering was completed on our behalf. His resurrection was the sign that God had justified and received us as His children. **Rom 4:25**.

With our mouth, we speak of the saving power of God that is active in our life. With our heart, we are believing for the righteousness that comes from God, which is to be our expression as sons of God. **Rom 10:9-11**. This is our testimony, and the reality of our life, because we are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering. We are able to proclaim the mystery of the cross because it is the culture of our life.

Paul functioned from the basis of testimony, having received understanding concerning the mystery of Christ. That is, he had learned the secret of fellowship in the offering of Christ. Specifically, he wrote, 'I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things [in] Him who strengthens me.' **Php 4:12-13**.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: PHILIPPIANS 4

Faithful sayings

Paul referred to the understanding and testimony that we receive in the fellowship of Christ's offering as 'faithful sayings'. For example, he wrote to Timothy, 'This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.' **2Ti 2:11-13.**

Just prior to this faithful saying, Paul wrote, 'And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.' **2Ti 2:2.** Paul had ministered the word to Timothy in the fellowship of a presbytery. Evidently, Timothy had received this word, because Paul said that he was to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. **2Ti 2:1.** This is the grace that comes with the word. **Act 20:32.** Because Timothy had received this word, he was to speak it according to his sanctification, so others could join the same fellowship of which Timothy was a part. This fellowship would involve suffering and hardship, which Timothy was to endure as a good soldier of Christ. **2Ti 2:3.** Notably, Paul said to Timothy, 'Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.' **2Ti 2:7.**

Paul could encourage Timothy to endure in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings because this was the reality of his own life. Referring to this gospel, Paul testified, 'I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.' **2Ti 2:8-10.** This must be the basis of our ministry as well.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 2 TIMOTHY 2

The church is the community of heaven

The organisation of a Christian community so it reflects the heavenly reality of the kingdom of God, does not make it viable. That is, the church is not simply a copy of heavenly realities, claiming to represent God as it interfaces with the secular community. It is not merely teaching good principles for life, nor theology as a science, so that the church, along with its ethics, is relevant and compatible with the dictates of modern thinking.

The church is the community of heaven, on earth. It has been born from above. **Joh 3:3. Eph 2:4-7.** Its faith, which is the expression of its life and culture, comes directly from God. This faith is the fruit of the seed of the word that is planted in a person's heart. **1Pe 1:23.** God, through Christ, sends messengers whose work is to proclaim the word of God to mankind. **2Co 8:23.** Their word is the wisdom of God. **1Co 1:21**

We must receive this wisdom if we are to be part of this community of heaven. It is evident that we are part of this community when we speak by faith in the fellowship that the word establishes. That is, 'speaking by faith' means 'getting understanding'.

When a person has understanding, they are able to recognise that which is from above. They know the secret of the Lord. **Php 4:12.** They know their name and can appreciate the name of others. Their obedience to the word and submission to others is the demonstration of faith. They have received what is laid down to them by offering, and they respond by offering because the word of faith is in their mouth and in their heart. **Rom 10:8-9.** In other words, their submission and obedience is not demanded from them by those who are in the presbytery. It is given by offering. This is the culture of understanding.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: PHILIPPIANS 2

The mystery of the cross

When the anointing of the Spirit is upon a person so they are getting understanding from the wisdom of God that is proclaimed to them, they do not need anyone to teach them how to participate in the fellowship of offering. The outcome of this anointing and getting understanding is that a person will abide in Christ. **1Jn 2:27**. Their conduct will be consistent with the culture that is being established by the word. This is because the word is in their mouth and in their heart. **Rom 10:8-9**

A person who inclines their ear to the wisdom from above is able to receive understanding regarding the mystery of the cross. However, a person who is wise in their own eyes will remain blind to, and ignorant of, this mystery. **Rom 11:25**. The mystery of the cross describes how the events of Christ's one offering for every person are applied to each of us, forever, through His eternal priesthood.

Melchizedek, our great High Priest, sprinkles our heart with His blood, which was shed through His offering. **Heb 6:19-20**. **Heb 10:22**. Seven sprinklings represent the blood of His sevenfold suffering, which is now finished. The life that is in His blood is supplied to our heart as He joins us to the historical sacrificial events of His offering and suffering. This is the 'high-priestly' work of Christ.

Through Christ's eternal capacity as High Priest, and by Eternal Spirit, He is able to apply the efficacy of His offering to our lives each day. This is achieved through fellowship in His offering. In this fellowship, which includes a fellowship in His sufferings, the blood that was shed on His body, as our Mercy Seat, in each wounding event, falls upon our heart. **Rom 3:25**. **Heb 10:22**. Our heart is being circumcised in Him, and His life is being transferred to us. The life of God is love, and it is being poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: **1 CORINTHIANS 1**

The fellowship of Christ's offering

The Scriptures state that, in Adam, every person died. **Rom 5:12**. This statement conveys the understanding that all people are limited, and physically terminated, in this world, by their mortality. This is binding upon every person. From mortality, there is no escape.

Mortality also encompasses a Christian, but the Lord offers them a way of escape. How do we find this way of escape? We find it by joining the death of Christ. Through offering, Christ became a new context for our life. The Scriptures teach us that everyone who is in Christ, though mortal, shall be made alive. **Rom 8:10-11**. In this regard, our mortality has been embraced by the grace of God.

The apostle Paul informed us that Jesus, by the grace of God, has tasted death for every person. **Heb 2:9**. The grace of God enables us to bear what we are going through. **1Pe 2:19-20**. In faith, we are able to supply virtue, and so, proceed in life, finding the way of escape from the death that is caused by sin. **2Pe 1:5-7**.

God has established a throne of grace, for the time of need, in the midst of our mortality. We are to come boldly to this throne in prayer and find grace to help us in our times of need. **Heb 4:16**. The help that we receive is the grace to remain joined in the fellowship of His offering.

The New Covenant is not simply the operation of the Father to circumcise our hearts by our suffering; that is, by merely cutting the other law from us so we can love. If this is all that happened, then our love would still be self-righteousness. Rather, the Father, by joining us to the offering of Christ, is cutting us into the fellowship of the Covenant of Yahweh, so Their love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 5:5**. This enables us to love and give according to our name as sons of God and members of Christ's body, which has now become for us the new context for our life and living.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: PHILIPPIANS 3

A way of escape

For the worldly person, time and chance, their genetic predispositions, and their own mistakes, precipitate their sufferings and afflictions. These are elements of the death that mankind has died in Adam. **1Co 15:22**. However, for a Christian who has died in Christ, their sufferings are now the afflictions of Christ. In the fellowship of His afflictions, they are being made alive with Christ from the death of sin. **1Co 15:22**.

Concerning the afflictions that we experience in the course of life, the prophet Isaiah declared, 'In all their affliction He [Christ] was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them'. **Isa 63:9**. Christ was afflicted with us, and made these afflictions His own. When we suffer in Him, the Angel of His Presence is saving us and giving us an escape from the death that is in Adam. **2Pe 2:9**. King David understood this principle, noting, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all'. **Psa 34:19**. When Christ's sufferings, which He has finished, are made complete in us, then our sufferings will cease. This is because the healing that He is bringing to us has been achieved.

The temptations that overtake us and cause us grief are all common to man. **1Co 10:13**. In this respect, we do not suffer more, or less, than others in the world. However, with the temptation, He makes a way of escape so we can bear these sufferings and receive the life that He wants us to have.

Every Sunday in the communion service, when we eat the bread and drink the cup, we commit ourselves afresh to join the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and death. **1Co 10:16**. In preparation for the weekly realities of life that confront each one of us, we need to take time in prayer at the communion table, and tarry one for another, so we are renewed in faith and grace to walk forward in Christ during the coming week, no matter what transpires.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: PSALM 34

Not drawing back

If we neglect the salvation that God has given to us, there is no escape from the afflictions associated with the death caused by sin. **Heb 2:3**. In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul highlighted the reality that the salvation that God has given to us is the pathway that Christ pioneered from Gethsemane until His work was finished on the cross. **Heb 12:2**.

Paul explained that it is because this way of salvation is neglected that many among us 'are weak and sick, and a number sleep [or, die before their time]'. **1Co 11:30**. They are not being healed through participation in the offering of Christ, by which He came back from the death caused by sin. Christ came back from this death while still in a mortal body. He has made His resurrection life available to us so in the fellowship of His offering we, also, can experience resurrection life in our mortal body. **Php 3:11**.

Paul said that if we judge ourselves rightly at the communion table, we will not be judged. However, when we are judged, we are being chastened by the Lord so we will not be condemned with the world. **1Co 11:29-32**. There is a judgement and suffering that we can find ourselves in, that is not healing us; that is, we are not finding an escape from the death of sin. This is because we are not discerning what our participation in the body of Christ should be. Instead, we are continuing to pursue a righteousness of our own, which is contrary to Christ's offering and suffering. **Php 3:9**.

The Lord wants all our sufferings to be Christ's sufferings, as a fellowship in His offering. In the midst of our suffering, the key is to respond by the Spirit, rather than to draw back in unbelief and anxiety. **Heb 10:38-39**. We must, instead, press forward in faith and find a way of escape.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 CORINTHIANS 11

Watching and praying

Essential to our participation in the offering of Christ is our obedience to His call to watch and pray with Him in Gethsemane. Jesus said to His disciples, 'Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' **Mat 26:41**. Jesus was not merely saying that we need to stay awake. He was saying that we need to watch how we pray and how we journey with Him in the fellowship of His offering.

In this regard, we are to look and see whether we are praying and offering in the flesh or in the Spirit; that is, whether it is from the basis of the other law or according to our name as a son of God. As we have already considered, we can only know this in the fellowship of Christ's offering. In this fellowship, we can learn from Christ how to pray and how to minister in holiness as a son/priest. **Mat 11:29**.

The communion meal grants us a participation in the offering of the Lamb of God. **Joh 1:29**. The call to watch and pray with Jesus is the invitation to watch, and to remain connected to, the pathway of priesthood that He pioneered for us through His offering as the Lamb of God. **Heb 12:2**. Our fellowship in this offering is to be our daily reality. This means that, in the midst of the events of the day, we are walking by the Spirit, who is the expression of our sonship. We are not being driven by fear and anxiety. **Gal 5:16**.

'Watching' also means that we are mindful of what is coming into our houses. In this regard, heads of households should be watching what comes into their houses, including media content and alternative philosophies. **Luk 12:39**. If fathers are not watching this way in relation to their own house, they will certainly be unable to see what is coming into the church.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: LUKE 12:22-59

Knowing and believing

We must know and believe from our heart, that it is because Christ loves us that He rebukes and chastens us. **1Jn 4:16. Rev 3:19.** He does this so the peaceable fruit of righteousness that comes from God will become part of our identity, and we will cease from living according to our own way. **Heb 12:11.** It is for this reason that He exhorts us to 'be zealous and repent' in response to His word. **Rev 3:19.**

We can only know and believe that Christ loves us in this way if His word has been received into our heart. When we receive His word, it becomes our confession unto salvation. **Rom 10:10.** We are not believing simply because our minds are convinced that the word is true. Rather, believing means joining the fellowship of Christ's offering. It is evident that we believe the word because it is in our mouth to speak, and it is in our heart as a cultural foundation.

Further to this, the Father, through the Holy Spirit, is joining us to the offering of Christ in the secret place of His presence. He is doing this by regenerating us through the seed of new creation so we are born of Him as His children, and are also established in Christ. **2Co 1:21. 1Pe 1:22-23.** As Paul wrote, 'For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.' **2Co 1:20-22.**

In this 'establishing process', to which the Father is joining us, our name is made known. The Father gives us into the care of the Holy Spirit, who leads us in the way of discipleship, training us in the way of sonship so our sanctification reveals our name.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 JOHN 4

Sealed by God

What does it mean to be sealed by God? The Scriptures reveal that the seal of God is the sign of ownership. For example, Paul wrote, 'Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His"' **2 Tim 2:19**. Through baptism into Christ, we join the fellowship of Christ's offering and circumcision. **Col 2:11-12**. Journeying with Christ in the fellowship of His offering and circumcision is what it means to live and walk by faith. **Gal 2:20**. Fellowship in the circumcision of Christ is an authentication of, or testimony to, the reality that we have received the righteousness that comes from God as a seal, or a sign.

When we have the righteousness that comes from faith, we have the seal of God upon us. Having been joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and circumcision through baptism, we are then baptised with the Holy Spirit from the Father as the guarantee of receiving and expressing our sonship. Peter described this progression at the end of his Pentecost sermon. He declared, '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'. **Act 2:38**.

Those who are sealed by God belong to Him. As we walk after the Spirit, in the fellowship of Christ's offering and circumcision, the Holy Spirit continues to be the expression of our sonship in a firstfruits measure. Furthermore, we are being delivered from the dying that is in Adam, and are experiencing resurrection life in our mortal body. **Php 3:10-11**. This process continues until we are fully redeemed from the death of mortality and receive immortality. This is what Paul meant, when he wrote, 'Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body'. **Rom 8:23**.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 16

The secret place of prayer

There are three co-dependent and necessary dimensions to the secret of the Lord that will be evident in the life of a person who is living and walking in the New Covenant. When these dimensions are not foundational in our life, the New Covenant remains veiled to us. We will live our life in the mode of the Old Covenant, seeking to fulfil the righteousness of the law through the efforts of our flesh. **2Co 3:14-15.**

In the first case, every person should have a personal awareness of their name and sanctification as a son of God. We first received our name from the Father when we were born from above by the incorruptible word of God. **1Pe 1:23.** The word of God continues to define the works of our sonship. With this word, we receive faith, which enables us to believe and obey what the Father is saying to us concerning our sonship. **Rom 10:17.**

The first work of faith is to speak. **Rom 10:6.** To speak by faith means to express our sonship on the holy ground of Yahweh's fellowship. Holy ground is an authentic place that embraces reality. It is a place where the truth is spoken, where dialogue is sincere, and where offering is made. Having received mercy from the Father, and been sealed by Him with the Holy Spirit, we are able to present ourselves, by faith, for participation in this fellowship. **Rom 12:1,3.**

We first speak by faith in the secret place of prayer. **2Co 4:13. Mat 6:6.** This is the fellowship of prayer which Christ revealed in the garden of Gethsemane, and which we join by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 8:26-28.** Here, the Father reveals the secret of our name to us. Jesus said to His disciples, 'But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.' **Mat 6:6.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY: MATTHEW 6

The secret of the Lord

The fellowship of prayer in the secret place is foundational to our daily participation in the offering of Christ, which is another dimension of the secret of the Lord. Paul described the secret of the Lord as 'the mystery of the cross'. **1Co 2:7-10**. He explained that the cross, or the offering of Christ, is a stumbling block and a scandal to the religious sign-seeker, and foolishness to the scientific logic of the Greek. **1Co 1:23**. When a person responds in either of these ways to the invitation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to participate in the offering of Christ, it demonstrates that a veil remains over the eyes of their heart. They are unable to rightly discern the Lord's body or their participation in the fellowship of His offering. **1Co 11:29-30**.

Every Christian should have a personal testimony of fellowship in the offering of Christ. This should be the reality of our daily Christian experience. In this fellowship, we are fulfilling the works that the Father has prepared for us, in Christ, and are receiving our sufferings – whether big or small – from the Lord as a participation in His afflictions. **Eph 2:10**. This is the implication of being baptised into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and partaking of the bread and wine of the communion each week. **Rom 6: 3-4**.

Finally, a person who knows the secret of the New Covenant will walk in the light of the word that they are receiving at the communion gathering. **Jn 1:5**. This will involve fellowship with those who proclaim the word of life, recognising that their fellowship is with the Father and the Son, by the Holy Spirit. **1Jn 1:1-3**. This is the fellowship of Yahweh. It will also involve breaking open, and eating, the bread of the word within their households, and from house to house. **Act 2:46. Act 5:42**.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 CORINTHIANS 2

A corporate mirror

The light of the gospel shines from the face of Christ when it is proclaimed by His messengers who are in His right hand. **2Co 4:6-10**. When we receive this word, we can turn and look, with an unveiled face, into Christ's face. Paul said that Christ's face is a mirror. **2Co 3:18**. Without a mirror, we cannot truly know ourselves. We are only able to know the reality of our name and works as we look in the mirror and receive a reflection from outside of ourselves. Otherwise, our understanding of ourselves will be completely self-centred.

Through the reflection that we receive by looking into the face of Christ, we are able to distinguish between our endeavours – which are projections to cover the shame of pursuing an image for ourselves – and the truth of our name. In this fellowship, we can be affirmed to our name and sanctification as we put off our projections. With this clarity, we are able to appreciate the name and sanctification of others, and can make offering by revealing others. This is foundational to worshipping in Spirit and in truth. **Joh 4:24**.

This mirror is in the fellowship of the presbytery, which is extended to every person through the preaching of the word. How we receive and walk in the light of this word reveals the extent to which we are looking into the mirror of Christ's face. As the apostle James wrote, 'For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the word, this one will be blessed in what he does.' **Jas 1:23-25**.

Testing our sanctification

The apostle Paul said to the Corinthians, 'Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith – examine yourselves.' **2 Cor 13:5**. He was referring to the faith to participate in the fellowship of Christ's offering because this is the only way we can test and prove our sanctification and name as a son of God. Paul declared to the Romans, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service ... that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' **Rom 12:1-2**. The will of God is our sanctification. **1Th 4:3**. His will refers to the works that are associated with our name, which is written in the book of life. **Heb 10:7**. **Psa 139:16**.

Through offering, in Christ, it becomes apparent as to whether our initiatives are actions of faith or are sinful projections. Significantly, it is only in the fellowship of Christ's offering that this is able to be known and resolved. This is because, as the Lamb of God, Jesus was both the burnt offering and the sin offering. Our participation in the sin offering is making us adequate to participate acceptably in the burnt offering.

Through Christ's finished work, a fountain was opened for sin and uncleanness. **Zec 13:1**. The water of this fountain is the word of God, by the Spirit, which washes and sanctifies us. **Eph 5:25-27**. 'Uncleanness' refers to the projections of ourselves that we present in order to cover the nakedness of our shame. If we continue to offer from the basis of these projections, it will become idolatry, and we will be cut off from the covenant. However, through our participation in the fellowship of offering, which we are joined to because we receive and walk in the word that is laid down to us by ascension gift messengers, we are made adequate to offer acceptably and according to our sanctification. **1Jn 1:3**. **Rom 12:1**.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: HAGGAI 1

Self-righteousness

The apostle Paul desired to be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of his own that was derived from the law. In other words, Paul did not want to be righteous because he was fulfilling the law or because he was using the law properly. Neither did he want the Lord to help him to fulfil the law. Instead, Paul wanted to be in Christ and to have the righteousness that comes from God through faith. **Php 3:8-9. 2Pe 1:1.**

The righteousness that comes from God through faith is the whole package of life that the Father has predestined for us. He wants our cooperation so we reveal the name that He has for us. However, our familiar and fallen propensity is to make a name for ourselves. Paul called this, 'a righteousness of our own'. **Php 3:9.** In the pursuit of our own righteousness, we can even draw from the standard of God's law to define an image and a name for ourselves. We believe that what we are presenting is true. Paul called this 'a strong delusion'. **2Th 2:11-12.**

He also wrote, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung'. **Php 3:8.** In referring to his own righteousness as 'dung', Paul was drawing on the words of the Lord by the prophet Malachi.

Through Malachi, the Lord said, "And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to My name," says the Lord of hosts, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke your descendants and spread refuse [lit: dung] on your faces, the refuse of your solemn feasts; and one will take you away with it". **Mal 2:1-3.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY: ROMANS 10

A new way of living

The New Covenant is not like the Old Covenant. Under the Old Covenant, a person's goal was to attain the righteous requirement of the law through their own self-righteous efforts. **Deu 10:15-16**. The New Covenant is a complete revision of how we are to live as God's people. God Himself must write the New Covenant upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and must enable us to be part of the New Covenant by the power of new creation, which is from the fellowship of Yahweh. **Jer 31:33. Heb 10:15-16**.

It is important to recognise that we insult the New Covenant when we live according to our own righteousness. Paul recognised, and treated, every effort to find righteousness and identity expression through keeping the law, as excrement or 'dung'. **Php 3: 8**. However, even when we recognise this, we cannot simply decide to cease living according to our own righteousness. Such an endeavour is, itself, self-righteous and futile.

Paul outlined the only way that we can be delivered from self-righteousness and can have the righteousness of God. He said, 'That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.' **Php 3:10-11**.

Attaining to the resurrection from the dead means living by resurrection life while still in a mortal body. Paul was making this same point in his letter to the Romans, when he wrote, 'But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.' **Rom 8:11**.

When Paul said, 'if by any means', he meant living and walking in whatever way the Spirit was leading him, as he journeyed each day in the fellowship of Christ's offering, according to the will of the Father. **Rom 8:26-27**.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: HEBREWS 10

The promise of the New Covenant

The first step in being delivered from living according to our own righteousness is to be born from above. This occurs when we receive our name from the Father as a seed. **1Pe 1:23**. We are made a new creation who is able to love God, to love who He has made us to be, and to love others as ourselves. As the apostle John wrote, 'Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God'. **1Jn 4:7**. This happens by the Holy Spirit.

The parable of the sower and seed teaches us that, unless we are joined to a process through which the seed of our sonship is able to take root in our heart and bear fruit, we will return to living according to a righteousness of our own. **Mat 13:19-22**. We must be joined, through baptism and the communion, to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

In this fellowship, our identity continues to be regenerated, the other law is being removed from our heart, and we are living by the life of Jesus, which is in His blood. **Lev 17:11**. His life, which is love, becomes our life when it is sprinkled on our heart in the fellowship of His offering.

In the New Covenant, the righteousness of the law can only be fulfilled in us if we follow the leading and direction that the Holy Spirit gives. The Holy Spirit is the essential 'ingredient' of the New Covenant. He is the substance and expression of the righteousness which comes from God through faith.

We receive the promised Holy Spirit, and the capacity for righteousness that He brings, when we respond to the word of God that is proclaimed to us. In this regard, we remember that Paul said that we receive the Spirit by the hearing of faith. **Gal 3:2**. The grace of God comes with the word of God, giving to us the capacity to hear and believe what the Lord is saying to us, and to receive the Holy Spirit.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: JEREMIAH 31

A temple for the Holy Spirit

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all involved in giving us the Spirit so we can live in the New Covenant. When Jesus was outlining the pathway of salvation, He said to His disciples that if they loved Him, they would keep His commandments. **Joh 14:21**. He then explained how they would be able to love Him and to keep His commandments. He said, 'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.' **Joh 14:16-17**. This happens when the Father seals us and gives us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee of receiving the full inheritance of our sonship. **2Co 1:22**.

We note that Jesus did not say that we are enabled to obey His commandments because the other law is removed from our heart. He said that we are able to obey Him because we have received the Holy Spirit. However, it is important to recognise that when we receive the Holy Spirit, He is not helping us to keep the law. Rather, He is helping us by being the expression of the righteousness of God within us. This is fundamental to living in the New Covenant.

Once the Holy Spirit takes up residency in our heart, our body becomes His temple. **1Co 6:19**. When we are baptised into the name of the Holy Spirit, He seals our body as a temple for the expression of His name. **Eph 1:13**. **Eph 4:30**. This means that His name is recorded upon us as His temple. The offering of the Holy Spirit within us is to sanctify our spirit and soul so we can be joined to Christ, become a member of His body and, through offering, reveal and glorify His name.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 CORINTHIANS 6

The sanctifying work of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is sanctifying us as sons and priests so that we can serve the Father in the temple of His Son – Jesus Christ. For this reason, we also should sanctify ourselves to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, and to one another. **Joh 17:19**. When we are living this way, the righteousness that comes from God through faith is being revealed in us. **Rom 3:21-22**. Walking and living by the Spirit does not mean asking the Holy Spirit to help and strengthen us to use the law properly, so we can live and keep the law. Living this way would still be a righteousness of our own.

Joining the offering of Christ is the only way by which we can receive the New Covenant. We eat and drink the elements of the communion in faith for our ongoing participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering. **1Co 10:16**. This is why Jesus identified the bread and the wine as being the elements of the New Covenant. **Luk 22:19-20**.

Once a person is joined to the offering of Christ, their life becomes a total package that is priested to them through the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek. **Heb 7:15-16**. The sufferings that they experience in life are not punitive. These sufferings are their participation in the afflictions of Christ. And, in the fellowship of these sufferings, the Angel of His Presence is saving them. **Isa 63:9**. Their other law is being cut from their heart, and the love of God is being poured into their heart by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 5:5**.

This is how the Holy Spirit writes the law of God on our hearts and in our minds in the New Covenant. **Jer 31:31-33**. Paul highlighted that it was the Holy Spirit who said, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them.' **Heb 10:15-16**.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 14

The initiative of the Holy Spirit

Some of us may have likened the Christian life to driving a car with power steering. We have considered ourselves as being the driver of the car, which is on the road to righteousness as a son of God. We have used the metaphor of 'power steering' to describe the nature of the help that the Holy Spirit gives to us so we can live and walk as God's son.

However, we are coming to understand that this is a self-righteous way of living. If our body is a temple for the Holy Spirit, then we are not the driver of our life. We are, in fact, the vehicle, and the Holy Spirit is the driver. Through His sanctifying work, He is leading, directing and empowering our life. He is in charge of the agenda of our life. We, through faith that comes by hearing the word of God, are workers together with Him. **Rom 10:17. 2Co 6:1.**

Our faith is to choose to follow the initiative of the Spirit as He leads. Faith is an expression of our freedom. Faith is required as an accountable response to the word of direction that is given to us from the Father and the Son, through the Holy Spirit. **Heb 10:38.**

Anxiously asking the Lord to help us to walk as a son of God is not faith. Fear and anxiety are the evidence that we are pursuing our own righteousness; we are attempting to maintain control of the agenda of our life. **Rom 10:2-3.** Perfect love – the love of God that is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit – casts out all fear. **1Jn 4:18.** Our faith is to work by this love. **Gal 5:6.** This is how we are to live and walk each day in the New Covenant.

Of course, this is what the Scriptures teach us regarding living in the New Covenant. Christ is not rewarding our self-righteousness and calling it 'walking in the Spirit'. Rather, His righteousness is our reward for journeying with Him in the fellowship of His offering.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: ROMANS 5

