



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

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SEPTEMBER 2020

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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Walking in the light

What we believe, and how we live, are essential to having an assurance of eternal life. **1Jn 3:19. 1Jn 5:13.** Those who have heard and received the gospel have accepted that salvation from sin and self-centredness is an essential requirement for entry into heaven. They are able to testify that this is being accomplished in their lives, because they are demonstrating the divine nature as those who have been born of God's life. Significantly, other members of the body of Christ are also able to bear witness to this life within them. **Psa 116:18-19. Heb 13:17.**

A person is able to walk on this pathway that leads to life as they continue to receive the counsel that proceeds from the presbytery. The apostle John revealed that this counsel addresses what is true and what is a lie; what is spiritual and what is carnal; what is illumination and what is self-deception; what is of Christ and what is of antichrist. **1Jn 2:27. 1Jn 1:7-8. 1Jn 4:2-3.** Those who receive and walk in the light of this counsel maintain their fellowship with the presbytery, which is the fellowship of the Father and the Son. **1Jn 1:3.**

Although Christ reveals the word of truth to us through the ministry of His messengers, the apostle John alerted us to the fact that opposition to the gospel of sonship is raised within the church by the spirit of antichrist. **1Jn 2:18-23.**

Those who are of the spirit of antichrist deny that Jesus Christ is *coming* in the flesh. **1Jn 4:3. 2Jn 1:7.** They reject the call to be born of God and to be joined to the fellowship of Yahweh as part of the body of Christ. **1Jn 2:19.** Accordingly, they refuse to accept that the divine nature is coming in the flesh of those who are born of God and are members of Christ's body. They deny that a person's salvation depends on them being joined to this fellowship by receiving and obeying the word of life that is proclaimed from the presbytery.

Jesus addressed anger

Following His proclamation of the Beatitudes, the first issue that Jesus addressed in relation to the Christian pilgrimage was *anger*. **Mat 5:21-22**. He spoke of three grades, or levels, of anger. The *first* level is anger against a brother or sister 'without a cause'. **Mat 5:22. Joh 15:24-25**. To be angry without a cause means that a person has no valid reason for their discrimination against their brother or sister. The motivation for their anger is, therefore, imaginary, sick or wicked. It is based on the judgements that they make of others from the basis of their knowledge of good and evil. **Gen 4:5-8**. Those who judge in this manner identify and communicate the reasons for their anger as though they are facts.

Anger without a cause develops into a *second* phase. The angry person speaks to, or about, their brother or sister with a humiliating tone, describing them as 'empty-headed and worthless'. This is the meaning of the Chaldean word 'raca'. Jesus used this term to encapsulate the way in which an angry individual speaks about the person they despise and have made their adversary. **Mat 5:22**.

On the basis of their judgements, the angry person believes that ending their relationship with their brother or sister is justified. This relational disconnection may involve limiting their interactions to superficial pleasantries, withdrawing from relationship with their brethren, and eventually, leaving the fellowship of the church altogether. When a person isolates themselves from fellowship in this manner, they are being imprisoned by their own fallen, judgemental practices. **Pro 18:1**.

The *third* level of this same anger involves calling a brother a 'fool'. **Mat 5:22**. In this scenario, the word 'fool' has a specific application. It is used to describe the folly of wickedness. It is the same as saying, 'You rebel against God', or 'You apostate'. In so doing, the fundamental motives and integrity of the person being spoken against are impugned, and they are maligned as being evil and wicked.

FURTHER STUDY MATTHEW 5:21-48

The judgement seat of Christ

Jesus said that the manifestation of anger springs from a murderous motive. **Mat 5:21**. Those who continue among us, maintaining this kind of behaviour, are putting themselves in grave danger. In fact, Jesus said that they were in danger of 'hell fire'. **Mat 5:22**.

Speaking about life after death, the apostle Paul said that 'while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord'. **2Co 5:6**. He then said, 'We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord'. **2Co 5:8**. Because this was Paul's attitude toward life, he testified that, whether present or absent, his one ambition was to be well-pleasing to the Lord. Paul said this, knowing that we all will all be scrutinised before Christ's judgement seat. **Rom 14:10-12**.

When we appear before the judgement seat of Christ, our true character will be revealed, and we will reap the results of the life that we have lived in the body – whether good or worthless. **2Co 5:9-10**. To the reprobate, Christ will say, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'. **Mat 25:41**. They will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous will enter into eternal life. **Mat 25:46**.

Knowing the implications of the judgement of the Lord, and having received the fear that is inspired by the Lord, Paul endeavoured to win people to his position. **2Co 5:11**. Paul's position was to know Christ and Him crucified. **1Co 2:2**. This meant being born of God and being joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings as a member of His body.

Leave your gift at the altar

Although we may be aware of the anger of others towards us, it is important that we heed the instruction of the apostle Paul, who said, 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.' **1Co 4:5**. It is the Lord Himself who comes to judge matters at an hour that we do not expect.

Mat 24:44.

That said, Jesus did address those who were angry, saying, 'Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.'

Mat 5:23-24.

Jesus was addressing the person who presumes to exercise some spiritual gift in the church, while harbouring anger in their heart towards a brother or a sister. Even though the brother or sister heeds Paul's instruction and does not judge the matter themselves, they will be aware of the anger that is directed towards them. They will know that they have been called 'raca', or 'fool'. In this regard, they have something against the angry person that they can bring before the Lord, who is the Judge. **Mat 5:25.**

Jesus was clear that the angry individual needs to restore relationship with those who have something against them; otherwise, the exercise of their gift in the name of the Lord will be nothing more than dead works. We note the words of Jesus, 'Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practise lawlessness!"' **Mat 7:22-23.**

Deliverance from anger

Jesus said that if an angry person ‘remembers’, or is illuminated to see, their anger towards a brother, they are to leave their gift at the altar and first be reconciled with their brother. **Mat 5:23-24**. He said that this will involve *agreeing* with their adversary *quickly*. **Mat 5:25**. The beginning point for their recovery to fellowship is to humble themselves and to accept that their own perspective, from which they are judging others, is not the truth. It is in darkness. This is the reason for their disagreement with those who are in the light. **2Co 6:14**.

A person who humbles themselves in this regard is *granted* repentance so that they may not remain a captive of the devil. This was Paul’s point when he wrote, ‘A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.’ **2Ti 2:24-26**.

A person who rejects the word of the cross that is proclaimed by the messengers of Christ, and leans on their own understanding, chooses the way of darkness. **1Jn 2:11**. **Pro 3:5-6**. They find no forgiveness or deliverance from sin, yet believe that they are without sin. **1Jn 1:8**. For example, Paul said that, prior to his conversion, he considered himself to be blameless in relation to God’s Law. **Php 3:6**.

John explained that because of a person’s deluded presumption in relation to sin, they make God a liar, and His word, which is proclaimed from the presbytery, is not in them. **1Jn 1:10**. Their rejection of fellowship with those who proclaim the word, and with those who are receiving this word, reveals their true predicament – *they are in captivity*.

The example of Paul

The conversion of the apostle Paul provides a helpful example of deliverance from anger. Prior to his conversion, Paul exemplified the anger spoken of by Jesus. His judgements of Christians were based on his own knowledge of good and evil. His murderous endeavours were his attempts to extinguish what he viewed to be an evil sect within the religious Jewish society. **Php 3:6. Act 8:3. Act 9:1-2.**

Paul was travelling to Damascus with the intention of jailing all those who were 'of the Way'. **Act 9:1-3.** However, after he met Christ, when the light shone around him and he heard Christ speak to him, his true condition was revealed. When he arose from the ground, he was blind; his true condition was a prison of darkness.

Even though Christ had personally spoken to Paul, Paul's deliverance from this prison house would only be through the word of a messenger – a person whom he had intended to jail! **Act 9:6.** Ananias knew that Paul was coming to bind all those who called on the name of the Lord. In this regard, he had something against Paul, and was bringing the matter to Jesus, the Judge. **Mat 5:23-24.** However, the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.' **Act 9:15-16.**

Ananias addressed Paul as a 'brother'. He laid hands on Paul, connecting him to the fellowship of light from which he was speaking, and he prayed for Paul. Immediately, scales fell from Paul's eyes and he received his sight. He was baptised into Christ and began to do the works that belonged to his sonship as a member of the body of Christ. **Act 9:17-20.**

The writings of John

After the apostle John had received the revelation of Jesus Christ on the Isle of Patmos, he wrote to the Gentile believers of the church age. This was John's obedience to the directions given by Jesus, who said, 'Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.' **Rev 1:19.**

The Gospel of John is the record of what he 'had seen'. **Joh 1:14.** John's Gospel is 'the word from the beginning' which was proclaimed, demonstrated and personified by Christ. **Joh 1:1-2.** Through his Gospel, John bore witness to the Word made flesh, and testified to us of Christ's ministry on the earth. **Joh 1:14-15.**

John's three epistles were 'the things which are'. Through these letters, John defined what a Christian needs to know to have an assurance of eternal life. He confronted various heresies, and called believers to receive, and live only by, the word from the beginning as sons of God. John's epistles were his crystallisation and clarification of the gospel.

Furthermore, these epistles are the word that is proclaimed by those whom Jesus identified as star messengers in His hand. **Rev 1:20.** This word is the gospel message that should be proclaimed throughout the church age by presbyteries that are in the right hand of Christ. Significantly, John said that if this word abides in us, we will abide in the Father and in the Son, and that this is eternal life. **1Jn 2:24-25.**

Finally, John recorded 'the things which will take place after this' in the book of Revelation. *The book of Revelation* is the eschatology of the cross. It reveals the way in which Christians among the Gentile nations are to live together as sons of God as He brings to pass His Everlasting Covenant purpose in the church.

FURTHER STUDY JOHN 1

The word of the Father

The gospel story has a beginning. In his Gospel, Mark tells us that the gospel of Jesus Christ has its origin in the Old Testament Scriptures that were written by the prophets. **Mar 1:1-2**. The Scriptures also tell us that Jesus is the Beginning of the creation of God, and that He was sent by the Father, from the beginning, to bring the word of the Father to us. **Rev 3:14. Joh 1:1-2**.

The word from the Father is that we must know Him as the only true God, and must accept Jesus Christ, His Son, whom He has sent. **Joh 17:3**. Further, we are to be born again of His Seed, and come to know Him as our Father. **Joh 3:3-6. 1Pe 1:22-23**.

The mark of a spiritual father is that they know Him who is from the beginning. **1Jn 2:13-14**. That is, they know the Son and, therefore, know the Father. **Joh 12:45. Joh 14:9**. As it is for our spiritual fathers, so it should be for us.

We are assured that we know the Son if we keep His commandments, which He received from the Father. **1Jn 2:3. Joh 14:10**. John called the word from the beginning, 'an old commandment'. **1Jn 2:7**. The old commandment is the message that 'God is light and in Him is no darkness at all'. **1Jn 1:5**.

Significantly, John said that there is no new commandment other than the word from the beginning. **1Jn 2:7**. However, he then said, 'A new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining'. **1Jn 2:8**. How are we to understand this seeming contradiction? The new commandment is that what is true in God, which is the old commandment, can now be true in us.

The true light is shining

The culture of fellowship and love, which John described as ‘the light’, is to be our culture. This happens because the darkness is passing away and the true light is shining. **Joh 12:46.** ‘The darkness that is passing away’, as we receive the word from the beginning and abide in the Father and the Son, is the darkness of our carnal perspectives and judgements. Jesus taught that the lamp of the body, which is our spirit, is the eye. It is the faculty of our sight. He said, ‘If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, *your whole body will be full of darkness.* If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!’ **Mat 6:22-23.**

With this understanding, we note Christ’s instruction, ‘If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.’ **Mat 5:29.** Our darkened sight is only able to be cast out when we are joined to the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings. This is the implication of receiving and walking in the light of the word from the beginning. **1Jn 1:7.**

The true light is shining in us when we are born of the Spirit. We are no longer walking according to our own darkened perspective, which is based in our knowledge of good and evil. Instead, we are seeing and walking by the Spirit. Describing this way of living, Jesus said, ‘The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ **Joh 3:8.**

The new commandment

The new commandment is the New Covenant of the Spirit. **2Co 3:5-6**. By the Spirit, we are able to abide and walk in the light of the word that we are hearing. What is true in God, who is Light, is becoming true in us; it is the reality of our life. Our culture is one of fellowship and love with our brothers and sisters in Christ. The fallen propensities of our flesh are being removed from us so that there is no cause for stumbling within us. **1Jn 2:10**.

When we allow the word from the beginning to abide in us, we abide in the Light; that is, we abide in the Father and the Son. **1Jn 1:5. 1Jn 2:10. 1Jn 2:24**. As we abide in the Light, we receive an anointing from Jesus Christ, the Holy One. **1Jn 2:20**. This anointing, which is the Holy Spirit, teaches us to abide in Christ. **1Jn 2:27**.

If we abide in the Son, we will have confidence in the day of His second coming, because we will not be ashamed before Him. We will also have confidence when He comes to us in the seasons of our life to confront us in relation to our Christian stewardship and culture. **1Jn 2:28. 1Co 4:4-5**.

We are not ashamed when Christ comes to us, because we have been born again and joined to the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. We are being delivered from the shame-driven motivation to define our own life and works, which are a lie, and are doing the righteous works of our sonship in Christ. **1Jn 2:29**. In other words, the righteousness that is true in Him is true in us! This is the new commandment being fulfilled in us, and is the reason for our confidence when He appears.

The message from the beginning

The message from the beginning is that God has promised us eternal life, and that this life is in His Son. **1Jn 5:11-12**. The eternal life that was with the Father, in the beginning, was manifest to mankind in the Person of Jesus Christ. **Joh 1:4**. Jesus, who is the Father's Firstborn Son, is the express image of the Father's Person. **Heb 1:3**. As the Firstborn Son of God, He is the full manifestation of the Father's life. **Joh 14:9**.

The message from the beginning is that the Son of God has also become the Son of Man. The Word has become flesh and dwelt among us. **Joh 1:14**. Those to whom the Son made Himself known have testified that they have seen, looked upon, and handled, by close relationship with Him, the new dimension of life that He came from the Father to give to mankind. **1Jn 1:1**. They taught what the Son had made known to them.

The Son was sent to be the Saviour of the world. His work on the cross was a complete work. By the grace of God, Jesus died the death of every person who has ever lived, and will ever live; and, by one offering, He purged from them their self-centredness and sin. **Heb 2:9**. **Heb 1:3**. Christ reconciled mankind to God, enabling them to be born again as sons of God by giving to them the divine nature that He possessed.

As we continue to abide in Christ, there is a progressive manifestation of our birth as a son of God, which reveals the love of God. *We testify that we are sons of God now*, and are growing up in Christ. **1Jn 3:2**. The testimony of a person who is learning this by the anointing that they have received from Christ is, 'Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!' **1Jn 3:1**.

The knowledge of good and evil

The account of Adam and Eve's fall into sin is also a fundamental aspect of the gospel, which is the word from the beginning that is being proclaimed to us today. In Adam, we were all made sinners. **Rom 5:19**. The apostle John said that if we say we have no sin, and deny that we are sinners, we have no eternal life. **1Jn 1:8-10**.

Let us not continue to hide under the branches of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, asking Christ's messengers to bring to us some fruit from the tree of life so that we can make a 'salad' with it as we mix it with the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **Jer 4:22**. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has no capacity to feed our identity. In fact, it has the opposite effect upon us. It causes dystrophy in our lives, motivating us to sin, which results in alienation, trouble and grief. **Php 3:18-19**.

The knowledge of our shame is only energised as we make the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the basis of our fellowship, or communion. Our confessions of shame, and the voluntary humiliation of ourselves, are self-justifying actions that God does not receive as repentance. They are the dead works of penance, which neither minister nor achieve life. They reveal only that we are self-righteous.

Self-justification, and apportioning blame to others and ourselves, is the good and evil that results from the insight received from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This becomes an emotion of sin which, when it develops to hatred, becomes murderous. **1Jn 3:11-12**. If we claim that we do not need to deal with the issue of hatred, we deceive ourselves. Jesus Himself said that we hated Him without a cause. **Joh 15:25**.

All the nations will mourn

After Christ had yielded His Spirit to the Father and died on the cross, His side was pierced with a soldier's spear. **Joh 19:34**. A spirit of grace and supplication was poured out from Christ's heart upon the house of David. **Zec 12:10**. These were the Jews and inhabitants of Jerusalem who witnessed His crucifixion. Grace and supplication gave to them illumination so that they understood that they had crucified the Lord of glory, their Saviour. The conviction of their sin enabled them to mourn in repentance, to become bankrupt in spirit, and to find forgiveness and cleansing from sin. **Luk 23:48**.

Christ was raised from the dead by resurrection life, and then ascended to the right hand of the Father. **Rom 8:34**. **Eph 1:18-23**. As our Melchizedek High Priest, *He continues His ministry from the cross* to subsequent generations of humanity, through the power of Eternal Spirit. This ministry will continue until the end of the age. The apostle John made this point when he said, 'Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And *all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him*. Even so, Amen.' **Rev 1:7**.

In the book of Revelation, John observed that Christ, as Melchizedek, is *currently* dressed in the priestly garments of a servant-priest. **Rev 1:13**. These are the *same garments* that He wore when He offered Himself to God as a living sacrifice during His journey from the last Passover until His work, on our account, was finished on the cross. The eschatology of the cross, which is the content of the book of Revelation, reveals that Jesus is continuing to priest to us the finished work that He accomplished on the cross for every person.

Our great High Priest

Jesus Christ, dressed in the garments of a servant-priest, is now standing in the midst of seven golden lampstands. **Rev 1:12-13**. While on the cross, Christ personally poured out grace and supplication on the house of David. However, it is now ministered from the cross through the word of His messengers, who are part of a lampstand church administration. Illumination is being brought to all the nations of the earth through this administration.

The word of the cross is preached and portrayed to all mankind by those who now *handle* the word of life. **1Jn 1:1**. These are messengers whom Christ described as 'stars' in His right hand. Each star is a messenger administration that belongs to a lampstand church. **Rev 1:20**.

A messenger of Christ handles the divine nature by demonstrating, in himself, the dying and the living of the Lord Jesus Christ. **2Co 4:10**. As they minister this way, Christ is publicly portrayed as crucified among those to whom they are sent with the message of sonship. **Gal 3:1**. Those who receive the ministry of Christ's messengers also receive from them the spirit of grace and supplication that Christ made available when He died on the cross.

In relation to our sin, our Advocate with the Father is His Son, Jesus Christ. **1Jn 2:1**. Jesus is our great High Priest, through whom we make confession to the Father and find forgiveness. The Father forgives us when we do not maintain an attitude of unforgiveness towards others. **Mat 18:21-35**. That is, He forgives our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. **Luk 11:4**.

As we find forgiveness from the Father, we are able to confess our faults to one another for the purpose of finding healing through prayer. We do this because we recognise that most of our sinful attitudes and behaviours spring from the lameness, or frailties, of our identity. In fellowship with others, we pray in faith for healing so that we do not continue to sin against others in this manner. **Jas 5:16**.

John saw the coming of Christ

On the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Peter questioned Jesus concerning the pathway and works that had been prepared for his fellow disciple, John. Jesus responded, saying, 'If I will that he remain till I come [a second time], what is that to you?' **Joh 21:22**. John himself explained that Jesus did not mean that he would not die before the second coming of Christ. **Joh 21:23**. Nevertheless, John *did* see the second coming of Christ. He was able to see this because he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. **Rev 1:10**.

In the Spirit, John received Christ who came to him as the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the First and the Last. **Rev 1:11**. Moreover, he was connected to the ministry of Christ that would continue until Christ's second coming at the end of the age. John saw this in the Spirit, testifying, 'Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand"' **Rev 22:8-10**.

The apostle John wrote his Gospel, his three epistles, and the book of Revelation (the last four books of the Bible), in response to Christ's direction, 'Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.' **Rev 1:19**. Through his writings, John, and those who were part of a presbytery with him, were to proclaim the gospel of sonship, which is the word of the cross. By this means, Christ is coming with clouds to reward everyone according to their works. **Rev 22:12-13**.

Abiding in the light

The apostle John introduces his epistle by telling us that he is part of a presbytery. **1Jn 1:1**. A presbytery is symbolised by John, in the book of Revelation, as a shining star that is ministering among the churches from the right hand of Christ. **Rev 1:20**. From this position, John invites us to receive the word of God that he is proclaiming to us. We will then be able to have fellowship with him and the presbytery, and with the Father and the Son. **1Jn 1:3**.

In his epistle, John tells us that God is light. **1Jn 1:5**. God is making Himself known to us. He is revealing Himself to us so that we may have eternal life. If we are to have eternal life, we must come to Him who is the Light. We must abide in, and live by, the light. John then tells us that this light is also the fellowship of God, and that fellowship is the expression of love. **1Jn 2:10**. It is only in this fellowship that we can practise the truth, for in this fellowship there is no darkness at all. **1Jn 1:5-6**. God is love and, as we keep His word, the love of God is being perfected in us. **1Jn 2:5**.

We fellowship with God in the light when we practise the truth by fellowshiping with one another. As we fellowship with one another, we are given access to the life of God, which is in the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ, then, begins to cleanse us from all sin. **1Jn 1:7**.

Participating together in a communion meal is an action of fellowship that joins us to the offering of Christ. **1Co 10:16**. Christ is the Bread of God which came down from heaven. **Joh 6:51**. When we eat His flesh, and drink His blood, we abide in Him and have eternal life. **Joh 6:56-57**.

The fruit of sonship

The fruit of fellowship is that the love of God is perfected in us. When this is happening, we know and are assured that we are in Christ. **1Jn 2:5**. John then expanded the meaning of fellowship, incorporating it into the concept of abiding in Christ. **1Jn 2:6**. The confession of a true Christian is their declaration that they abide in Christ. They are saying that they are always in union with Christ because they dwell in Him.

The theme of 'abiding' was then developed by John in all of its aspects so that we may appropriate the eternal dimension of God's life. When he referred to 'abiding in Christ', John was explaining to us the substance of eternal life. Those who abide in Christ have eternal life. **Joh 6:54-56**.

Those who are born of God demonstrate the fruit of sonship. **Eph 5:8-10**. The fruit of sonship is the fruit of the Spirit. **Gal 5:22-23**. This fruit is the light of God's life that gives us true sight. It replaces the darkness of our own fallen perspectives and judgements, which are sourced from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Our own sight, which is darkness, has no substance or veracity. It is deluded. It is the sight that resulted from believing the lie of Satan, who said that we could be 'like God', and have life in ourselves, without being 'born of God'. **Gen 3:4-7**.

Our self-protecting mechanisms and our offensive reactions demonstrate that we are walking according to the darkness of our own sight. In this condition, we view ourselves as the victims of the contrary circumstances that we inherited when we were wounded and made lame through Adam's disobedience. **Rom 5:12**. We recognise that we have the sentence of death in ourselves, and are afraid. **2Co 1:9**. If we live in darkness, we can trust only in ourselves.

The fruit of the Spirit

The first light that God sends to us, and causes to dawn in our lives, is the word that declares that we do not need to fear, and do not need to trust in ourselves. **Mar 5:36. 2Co 1:9.** Our own resources and natural capacities are not sufficient to save us from death. However, Yahweh has made an offering for us. Through God's messengers, we are invited to accept God's offer to save us and to raise us from the dead with Christ. The Father has the power to raise the dead. **2Co 1:9.**

Jesus said that when He returned to the Father, He would send the Holy Spirit to us. He described the Holy Spirit as 'another Helper' and 'the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him'. **Joh 14:16.** The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring to our attention the things that Christ continues to teach us as the word of present truth. **Joh 14:26.** For this reason, Jesus Himself admonishes us to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. **Rev 2:7.**

The substance of what Christ teaches is brought to us by the Spirit as fruit that we are to eat. The fruit that the Holy Spirit feeds to us, and then receives from us, are the variegations of the love of God. **Eph 3:17-19.** The expression and character of God's love that we have received are revealed by us as 'joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control'. **Gal 5:22-23.** These fruits of the Spirit are the character and cultural expression of a son of God.

The old commandment that Christ speaks to us through His messengers is the word from the beginning. As this commandment is being fulfilled in us by the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is revealed through us. That is, the word from beginning, which is the demonstration of the love that reveals who God is, is being revealed in us. The apostle John called this reality 'the new commandment'. **1Jn 2:8.**

The Holy Spirit teaches us all things

John explained that when we receive and believe the word from the beginning, which the Father sends to us as light, it illuminates our lives. We are being delivered from the darkness of our fallen perspective and our self-preserving mechanisms. **1Jn 2:8**. When we receive the word that brings light, we *abide* in fellowship with the Father and the Son.

The Son then sends to us the Holy Spirit who teaches us to abide in Christ. **1Jn 2:27**. We abide in Christ by eating the flesh of Christ and drinking His blood. **Joh 6:56**. The Holy Spirit feeds us with the substance and life that belongs to the new humanity. The new humanity is all those who are becoming sons of God in Christ.

The Holy Spirit brings to us the substance of the divine nature. **2Pe 1:3-4**. He causes us to be born of the divine nature. This is what it means to be 'born of the Spirit'. When we are born of the Spirit, our bodies become a temple of the Holy Spirit. **1Co 6:19**. We become a temple in which the Holy Spirit worships the Father and Son in fellowship with, and through, us.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit's worship in us is the expression of the divine nature of a son of God, in and through us. This is what the apostle John meant when he said, 'But you have an unction from the Holy One [Jesus Christ], and you know all things.' **1Jn 2:20**. Because of this anointing, we have no need for anyone to teach us. **1Jn 2:27**. What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to teach us all things? It means that He is the full expression of the divine nature within us, giving expression to our identity as a son of God in Christ.

Provision for healing

Jesus was unambiguous on the subject of forgiveness. He said that unless we forgive those who sin against us, we will not receive forgiveness from the Father for our sins. In other words, we will not obtain salvation as sons of God. **Mat 6:14-15.**

This truth can be particularly challenging for those who have experienced significant abuse, betrayal or treachery at the hands of others. The pain of these injuries can be very deep and enduring. As a consequence, the victim's will, and capacity, to forgive the person who has sinned against them remains elusive. Indeed, it is elusive, because forgiveness is not a capacity that is native to us. It is a *grace* that we receive from Christ when we look on Him whom we have pierced, and join His travail. **Luk 23:34. Eph 1:7.**

The spirit of the world teaches that victims of abuse can find healing and closure by publicly exposing the deeds of the one who has defrauded them. This form of vengeance is presented as a means by which victims can overcome their sense of humiliation, and receive some form of identity verification through the approval, support and subsequent actions of others.

Obtaining closure through vengeance is often dramatised in film and television through the narrative of 'good triumphing over evil'. This pursuit, as a means of resolution, is exemplified in current affairs programs that provide a media platform for victims to publicly humiliate and chastise their abusers. It is a form of retribution for the one who has suffered loss.

It is important that we distinguish this *fallen approach* that is promoted in the world from the provision for healing and genuine resolution that is only found in fellowship of Christ's offering. **Rom 14:13.**

Do not avenge yourselves

Providing victims of abuse with a relational setting to voice their grievances is a common, yet unfruitful, approach to pastoral care in the church. In these situations, the counsellor provides a sympathetic ear to a victim of abuse who is seeking justification and verification through the disclosure of their mistreatment. The carer then endeavours to fortify the identity of the victim by affirming their good, over and against the evil of the one who has sinned against them. This form of counsel is based in the knowledge of good and evil, and is unable to minister life and healing to the one who is in pain.

Those who pursue this form of resolution believe that, as they speak out against evil, their courage and goodness will be made known and affirmed by others. They believe that through this exercise they will find peace. Sadly, this does not bring healing to a person or closure to matters; it may even exacerbate their distress. **1Pe 3:17-18.**

The apostle Paul addressed this issue in his letter to the Romans. He wrote, 'Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.' **Rom 12:19-21.**

We are only able to do this when we are joined to the offering and sufferings of Christ. In this fellowship, the love of God is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 5:5. Mat 5:44-48.** We receive the capacity of God Himself to love our enemies and to overcome evil through our obedience to the Father.

Father, forgive them

The first statement that Christ made from the cross was, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' **Luk 23:34**. This was Christ's prayer to the Father as the soldiers nailed His hands and feet to the cross. In relation to this event, King David, who was speaking prophetically for Christ, said, 'In return for my love they are my accusers, but I give myself to prayer.' **Psa 109:4**.

The abuse of crucifixion was the final and most painful humiliation that Jesus suffered on His offering journey. In the preceding five wounds, He had been brought back from the dead by the resurrection life of God that was in His blood. Paul coined the Greek word *exanastasis* to describe this effect of resurrection life in a mortal body. **Php 3:11**. Christ's death on the cross was the dying phase of His offering. This was when He laid down His life in obedience to the command of the Father, so that He might take it again in *anastasis*. **Joh 10:17-18. Php 2:8**. *Anastasis* is the resurrection of the dead to immortality.

Christ's death on the cross demonstrated the Father's love for us. Because God the Father loved the world, He gave His only Son, who died for us even though we were all ungodly and without strength. **Rom 5:6-11. Joh 3:16**. The offering of Christ was not only the expression of the Father's love toward us; it was also the means by which the love that He alone possesses was commended to us so that we could be born as His sons. **Rom 5:8**. The Father's love is the definition of His life. **1Jn 4:16**. Through the offering of Christ, He gave His life to us as a gift. Giving His life to us was the expression of His fatherhood toward us.

Beholding the Lord Jesus Christ

To receive salvation, a person must look on Christ and acknowledge that He was crucified *for* them, and *by* them. **Rom 5:6. Rev 1:7.** This happens when a messenger of the gospel declares that we, by *lawless hands*, crucified Jesus, putting Him to death. **Act 2:23.** The messenger also tells us that God has raised Christ from the dead and has seated Him at His right hand on King David's throne as the Head of the nations. **Act 2:24,30,33.** He was made 'the Lord Jesus Christ'.

As a title, the name 'Lord Jesus' designates that He is Yahweh the Son of Man, Immanuel, God in the flesh, made supreme in authority as Ruler of heaven and earth. He is also 'the Christ'. **Act 2:36.** This means that Jesus was the anointed, or ordained, Lord, which made Him the King of Israel and the Saviour of the world. **Joh 4:42.**

On the Day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter declared, 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ'. **Act 2:36.** Those who heard him say this were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' **Act 2:37.** The beginning of their salvation was to repent of their sin, be joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings through baptism, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. **Act 2:38.**

Having been joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering, we are to abide in His love. This is the love that He received from the Father. **Joh 15:9-10.** Our desire to abide in Christ's love is our response to the compulsion of His 'giving' love. **2Co 5:14.** We abide in love when we live by offering, as sons of God, in the fellowship of the body of Christ. We do this through our obedience to the commands of the Son, which is the word of God.

FURTHER STUDY 1 JOHN 5

The overflow of anointing

As a person receives the word of the cross, through which Christ is portrayed to them as crucified, grace and supplication are poured out upon them. **Zec 12:10.** This is the overflow of the anointing that Jesus received when He was ordained as 'Lord and Christ'. This anointing falls upon us. As this anointing falls upon us, we are enabled to see His offering for us and the effect of our sin upon Him. We recognise that our thoughts and actions, motivated by good and evil, are all the works of *lawless hands*. **Act 2:23.** They are our sinful deeds for which Christ suffered, and died on the cross.

Christ took all of the abuse that we would suffer in life and made it His. He has forgiven those who trespassed against Him. This includes us, as well as those who have sinned against us. When, by the anointing, we see our sin and begin to mourn with godly sorrow, we receive the forgiveness of our sin.

As the Spirit continues to pour the love of God into our hearts, we receive grace to join the prayer that Christ prayed as He was crucified on the cross. Joined to the fellowship of His travail, we are able to pray, by the anointing He received, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' **Luk 23:34.**

The capacity and motivation to forgive does not come from ourselves. It is not a charitable action that is sourced from our own motivation for good. Our capacity to forgive is from the *anointing*, by which the love of God is being poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 5:5.** We are enabled to love others in the same way that Christ loved us. Instead of seeking to justify ourselves and avenge our hurts, we are able to forgive those who have sinned against us. This is the only way in which we can truly love our enemies. **Luk 6:27-30.**

An evil conscience

Most sinners are people who have good ideals and are motivated by honourable intentions. Because their intentions are good, many will even view themselves as righteous, or fruitful. Yet, God has already assessed us and concluded that we are all sinners. He has said, 'There is none righteous, no, not one.' **Rom 3:10**. He has further declared that we have all turned aside and become unprofitable; we have not known the way of peace. **Rom 3:12,17**. He said that there is no fear of God *before our eyes*. **Rom 3:18**.

Unless we are delivered from the darkness of our own perspective, we will view ourselves as righteous, or acceptable to God. We will believe in our inherent 'good', even if we are familiar with the Scriptures that challenge this perception. The Scriptures describe this condition as 'great darkness'. **Mat 6:23**.

Those who live and walk in darkness use their conscience to support the self-righteous position that they have chosen for themselves. By their conscience, they assess and pass judgement on their own attitudes and actions, believing that their conscience gives them the necessary objectivity to make these judgements. Because they believe in their inherent goodness, they allow their conscience to provoke their thoughts so that their thoughts accuse or else excuse them. **Rom 2:14-15**.

All of this activity does not prove that we are righteous. Rather, it demonstrates that we are a law unto ourselves, and are therefore not subject to the Law of God. **Rom 2:14-16**. We are, in fact, the enemies of God. **Rom 5:10**.

Thankfully, we learn from the apostle Paul that, while we were the enemies of God, He reconciled us to Himself through the death of His Son. However, reconciliation is not enough to save us from the wrath of God. We must be saved from our sins, through Christ. We cannot be saved from sin unless Christ gives His life to us. **Rom 5:10**.

FURTHER STUDY ROMANS 3



Restoring
my Soul