

THE CHRIST-LIFE

"Christ in you, the hope of glory"



Notes for your edification

By

Geoffrey Bull

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COURSE OUTLINE NOTES

GOAL OR PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

- To help you understand the truth of the indwelling Christ, living in you and through you, to His glory (Gal 2:20), in accordance with the Fathers intention from before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4)
- To usher you into a deeper experience of “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27)
- To help you learn the difference between a life of dependent union and a life of separation
- So that you can be filled to all the fullness of God, to the praise of His glory

KEY VERSES: Gal 2:20, Eph 1:4 and Col 1:27 – turn there and read and mark – put your name in Gal 2:20

QUOTE: (Bob George – Classic Christianity): “Christian maturity is not starting out with Jesus then graduating to something better. The Christian life is starting with Christ, then spending the rest of eternity discovering more and more of what we already have in Him, more and more of the wonders of this Person “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

- Some diagrams, themes and examples used in this course material have been drawn from Devern Fromke (Ultimate Intention), Stone & Gregory (The Rest of the Gospel), Bob George (Classic Christianity) and Norman Grubb (Continuous Revival).

Course Outline – what we will cover in these lessons

- **Lesson 1: Introduction**
 - o **The Temporal versus the Eternal** (2 Cor 4:18): looking at the natural and spiritual realms in which we, as believers, live. Learning to base life on the unseen (spiritual truth) rather than the seen (circumstances and situations in the natural).
 - o **The “toolbox”** : Tools and methods we will use as we endeavour to “learn Christ” including: Prayer, the Word, the Holy Spirit, Examples from life, Praise and worship and Assignments (you get out what you put in)
- **Lesson 2: The Proper Starting Point**
 - o Starting with the Father, Creation, Man, or the Fall ? – to understand God’s plan and purpose we must start from the right place, in the heart of the Father before the foundation of the world
 - o From Eternity - the paternal purpose in the Son (Eph 1:3-10). God’s plan for Himself, His Son and man. The plan which is not affected by sin or time.
 - o Living for the Whole – (2 Tim 1:8, 9) learning not to confuse the part with the whole, His grace with His overarching purpose. The calling to ultimate fellowship.
- **Lesson 3: The Cross Part 1 – We died with Christ**
 - o Don’t Settle for Only Fifty Percent of the Gospel - Not only did Christ die for our sins, but he is also to be our indwelling life. He provides the life that is impossible for us to manufacture.
 - o What was dealt with on the cross? – dealing with SIN (cause) as well as with SINS (effect)
 - o You were crucified on the cross – when Christ died you died with Him
 - o What you died to when you died with Christ on the Cross – sin, the law and yourself as the point of reference
- **Lesson 4: The Cross Part 2 – Christ lives in you**
 - o Christ lives in you – the crucifixion and death would be meaningless without resurrection life to follow
 - o The Passover Lamb – the OT foreshadowing of the provision through the Lamb on the Cross
 - o Christ living in you and through you, bringing glory to the Father
- **Lesson 5: The Complete Gospel of Grace**
 - o We don’t want to settle for a partial gospels or a comingled gospel (called “another gospel” by Paul, we want the true or complete gospel of grace
 - o Addendum to lesson 5: “Born Again” defined
- **Lesson 6: Who You Really are In Christ**
 - o Managing Soul and Spirit
 - o One spirit (1 Cor 6:17)
 - o One nature
 - o The real you
 - o Containers expressing Christ

- **Lesson 7: The Onward Journey - God's way**
 - Revelation Knowledge, seeing through God's Eye
 - Our part and God's part
 - Steps of Growth
- **Lesson 8: Our Freedom in Dependency**
 - Freedom through the mind set on Christ
 - Freedom through a life of Faith
 - Freedom through a life of Dependent Union
 - Freedom through the Way of the Cross
- **Lesson 9: Continuous Revival**
 - The Essentials to Living in Constant Victory
 - Our walk
 - Our Brokenness
 - Our Joy
 - Our Testimony
 - Our Exhortation and Encouragement
- **Lesson 10: Entering His Rest**
 - Detached from the values of the world
 - Enter His Rest
 - What is our "Canaan"?
 - What is the "Wilderness"?
 - Active, but at rest
 - The pathway to rest
 - No hiding place

Recommended reading:

- **The Ultimate Intention** by DeVern Fromke (out of print, but used books available from www.amazon.com or www.abebooks.com)
- **Classic Christianity** by Bob George
- **The Rest of the Gospel when the partial Gospel has worn you out** by Dan Stone & David Gregory
- **The Key to Everything** by Norman Grubb
- **Continuous Revival** by Norman Grubb
- **This then is the Message which we have heard of Him** by Warren Litzman
- **Life in the Son** magazines (download pdf version from www.christ-life.org)

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LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

THE TEMPORAL VERSUS THE ETERNAL

2 Cor 4:18 ... “while we look not at the things which are *seen*, but at the things which are *not seen*; for the things which are seen are *temporal*, but the things which are not seen are *eternal*”.

We believers have the privilege of living in both realms ... in the natural and in the spiritual realms.

- The invisible, eternal realm is changeless, timeless, it's the realm of the Spirit and of God's absolutes, it's the realm of ultimate reality, of completeness and wholeness, where things are settled, FINISHED. It's the realm of I AM, where things ARE. The term “I AM” calls our attention to God's timelessness, His self-completeness and His absolute love.
- In contrast, the natural and visible realm is temporary, or uncertain. It's the natural realm of matter and appearances, with a beginning and end, a past, present and future, where there is birth, life, death, sowing, growing and reaping. A realm of activity, PROCESS and need, where we are BECOMING.

At the appointed time Jesus moved from the eternal (spirit realm) to temporal (natural) realm ... **John 1:14**. ... “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us” ...

Jesus experienced all we experience in the natural or visible realm. He had a past, present and future. He experienced growth, pains, and had needs. He came to show us what real man, man with the divine nature, looked like and how he was to live. He also came to provide a way for us to be restored to the Father and to have and live by His life.

And now, in the Father's eyes, according to that which is settled in the eternal realm, the truths concerning us are that:

- We are His righteousness (2 Cor 5:21)
- We are holy and blameless and beyond reproach (Col 1:22)
- We are complete in Him (Col 2:10)

These are *already* true of us in the spirit or eternal realm, in God's eyes. As sons and daughters He has birthed, as new creatures, these are the eternal unchanging truths concerning our identity. Our identity is established in Christ.

In the natural or temporal, however, we are in the *process* of change, we are growing, our minds are being renewed.

There are some important facts we must know concerning the two realms we live in:

1. God has designed us to operate by **faith**. By faith we see through the visible, natural and temporal to the unseen and eternal. Jesus of Nazareth did this when He looked at dead Lazarus, the withered hand, the dead girl, the deaf, the lame, or the 5 loaves and 2 fishes. He did not see these things as ultimate, but He saw

beyond the outward appearance to what His Father was doing. He brought the reality of that realm into the natural, visible, temporal realm and met the needs. He invites you and me to do the same.

2. We all have failures, sins and shortcomings and these are realities in the seen or natural realm. If we focus on these, we will see this as our identity. But this is a false identity, not the true identity that God gave us when we were born again. Now, unless we understand our true, eternal identity, we will habitually draw from our false or temporal identity, regardless of how good or bad it is. Our focus will be on trying to clean up our act so we can be good enough for God to accept. This is wrong. We can't do anything to attain that which is already established. According to God we are accepted in the Beloved (Eph 1:6 KJV).

In the unseen and eternal realm, God has already perfected us. In the seen and temporal realm, God is busy bringing that perfection, or completion, into view. From God's point of view, in the eternal or unseen realm, we are a finished product. At the same time, in the seen or temporal, He is continuing to work the truth deeper into us, to conform us to His image. This is the process of the renewing of our minds. This is the *outworking* of our salvation Pauls speaks of in Phil 2:12.

3. God has designed us so that we can find fulfilment only in the eternal realm. The natural realm offers many pleasures, but none ultimately satisfy. We only find life in the eternal, in God. He is life. He is the source of the abundant life.

The total answer, the ultimate answer, is in a Person, Jesus Christ. It's part of God's program to make us dissatisfied with what the temporal realm offers, so that we might seek life in Him. ... "He who has the Son has life" (*1 John 5:12*).

A life of faith, our true identity, and our fulfilment in life are all established in the eternal realm. The truths from this realm can only be understood through REVELATION by the Holy Spirit.

So we are to be completely dependent on the Holy Spirit to be our teacher, to teach us Christ, and the truth of who we are in Christ.

Spiritual growth is a process of replacing what you see or feel outwardly with eternally established truth, and living out of that reality. As you come to know and understand the life of Christ within, that life will flow out of you in your words and actions. We live what we believe. What you put into your mind and think about will influence your feelings and actions.

We will never know abundant life, the outflow of the life of Christ within us, until the unseen and eternal realm is second nature to us, influencing our every day actions and experiences. Until then, we will be living according to feelings and external appearances, and these will never lead us to live the life God desires us to live. God wants to bring us to the point where we are living according to His original intention and plan for our lives. Where we see ourselves as He sees us. He wants us to rest in Him, in the eternal, and experience His fullness, His sufficiency, within us.

A truth of utmost importance that we can know from the unseen and eternal realm is that we and Christ are one, or in union. *1 Cor 6:17* ... "the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit" (some translations add *with him* – but this is not in the original Greek manuscripts). You and He are **one**. When we begin to know and live out of that truth, all the promises of the Word become daily realities. It's no longer God up there somewhere and me down here. We live in union. In this world of the natural and temporal He operates in

and through you. “Christ in you, the hope of glory” ... “It’s no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me”... You are the container and He is the contents, the life in you.

We who have believed in Him are His righteousness (**2 Cor 5:21**). We are complete in Christ (**Col 2:10**). We are already holy (**Col 3:12**). We are already perfect (**Heb 10:14**). There’s nothing else to be done. It is finished. As we see that, we will live that and God will make what is already true in the unseen and eternal our experience in the seen and temporal realm.

- Keep this FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH in mind as we go from week to week through the course

THE “TOOLBOX” :

Tools and methods we will use as we endeavour to “learn Christ”, including:

Prayer:

- More than anything prayer is simply engaging in a conversation (two-way) with our heavenly Father. That’s how you get to know someone and find out what they’re thinking, feeling or desiring.
- Ask God to give you wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ
 - o Eph 1:17-23
 - o Eph 3:14-19
 - Voluntary assignment - Look through Paul’s epistles for his prayers, mark them and use them in your prayers

The Word:

- The Word is a Person ... Christ (John 1:1-4, 14)
- What is the meaning of “word”? What are “words”? - My words take the invisible “me” and put them in a concrete or tangible form. My words are the outward, final, tangible form of the inner “me” you cannot see. My “words” are the invisible, inner thoughts and intents that come out of me in an audible, tangible form. My words are distinct from me yet they are part of me in a different form. My words communicate the real, inner me to you the hearer. Right now my invisible thoughts are now coming out of me in such a fashion that you can grab hold of them. In fact my thoughts via my words are coming out of me and going inside you, the hearer, and are assimilated and comprehended by you. They have now become a part of you. You’re assessing and processing my words as they become part of your thought process and later may form part of your words and actions. Now apply this to Jesus. **Jesus is the word of the Father.** He is the speaking out, the final concrete form, of the invisible God. Jesus is the exact representation or expression of the Father. He is the expression, the speaking out form of the invisible God. Heb 1:1-3 says “God ... has spoken to us in His Son ... and He (Jesus) is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of his nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power”. When Jesus came to live among us, as “man”, God was perfectly expressed in Him and through Him. He is the Word of God.

- So the Bible, the Word of God, is a record of His thoughts and intents given for our benefit so we can know Him and His plans
- So if we want to learn Christ, we must go to the Word, for it is there that He is revealed to us
- Heb 4:12 'for the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the **division of soul and spirit**, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do". – think back to our discussion on the temporal and eternal – division of soul (temporal) and spirit (eternal)
- 2 Tim 3:16,17 "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work".
- 2 Tim 2:15 "Study to show yourself approved to God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth".
- All Scripture is inspired and is for our benefit, but not all of it is written directly to us (the born again). We need to rightly divide the Scriptures. The OT and gospels (for the most part) were written directly to individuals (Abraham, Isaac, David, etc) or to Israel, whereas, the "in Christ" parts, written to believers (the born again), may be found in predominantly in Paul's epistles.
 - o Example: Gen 50:20 Joseph "and as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive"
 - o Example: Isa 40:31 "Yet those who wait upon the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary"

While these were written to an individual (Joseph speaking to his brothers) or a nation (Isaiah speaking to the nation of Israel) these are eternal truths, valuable principles, and are of value to us, but the "In Christ" message is found predominantly in Paul's epistles, and some in John's writings. So, as this study focuses on "Christ in you", we will focus mainly on Paul's epistles.

- Voluntary Assignment – go through Paul's epistles and mark and count the number of times "in Christ", 'in Him", "In Whom" is mentioned.

The Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit is our Teacher.
- John 14:26 and John 16:13-16 The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth. Depend on Him to teach you.
- The prime ministry of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Christ to us – to convict the sinner of his need for Christ and to train the believer in Christ to know Him (to reveal Christ in you to you).
- Trust the Holy Spirit, learn to hear His voice, he is the teacher, learn how he speaks to you in your way, then, follow Him in what He says or reveals to you.
 - o Like a baby learning to walk - making mistakes at first is part of the learning process. God is not concerned about you falling, just like the parents expect the child to fall at first. Eventually the baby learns to stay upright, and eventually you too will succeed. So press on! Jesus said "My sheep hear my voice"... there's no question as to whether you

can or cannot hear Him. If you're listening you will hear Him. Then you can act on His words.

- We preachers and teachers are just informers, reporters, illustrators – the Holy Spirit is the one Teacher.
 - Voluntary assignment – study John chapters 14, 15, 16 and see how many times it refers to the Holy Spirit as Teacher.

Examples from life:

- As we share examples from experience we can enrich one another.

Praise and worship:

- John 4:23, 24 “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth”
- Spirit and truth refer to the “unseen or eternal” realm. When we praise and worship it should be us agreeing with what God has established in the eternal, the truth, not in the circumstances around us in the natural.
- We should sing songs that reinforce the truths of Christ in you the hope of glory.
- Praise is faith in action
- Eph 5:19 “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord”.

Assignments:

- All assignments will be voluntary, but remember, you only get out what you put in

SUMMARY:

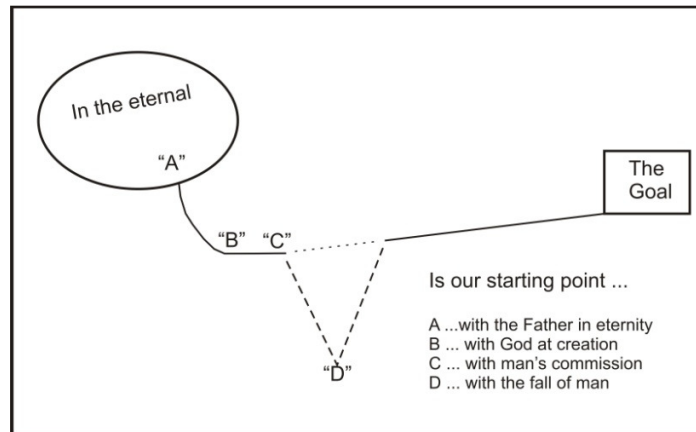
- Remember that truth is established in the unseen, the eternal realm. By faith we see through the natural to the spiritual to find out what is final, settled, truth established by our Father God. Then live it.
- Use the tools from the toolbox in your path to learn Christ:
 - o Prayer, The Word, The Holy Spirit (your Teacher), Examples from life and Praise and worship.
- Voluntary Assignments
 - o Look through Paul's epistles for his prayers
 - o Go through Paul's epistles and see how many times the “in Christ” statement occurs
 - o Go through John 14, 15 and 16 and see how many times the Holy Spirit is referred to as teacher

LESSON 2: THE PROPER STARTING POINT

WHERE DO WE START?

We want to understand God's original intention, His purpose and plan for Himself, His Son, and all of creation. We want to see where we fit in to this plan and why. So where do we start?

Eph 1:1-14 (note v6, 12, and 14 "to the praise of His glory")



If we start with the fall ... God's purpose is seen in the light of man's need for redemption. This framework begins with man's fall to sin and ends with man's redemption and getting into heaven. It starts with man and ends with man and what he gets. This conception makes man and his restoration central. Surely there is more to God's eternal plan than this. While man's need for redemption must not be minimized, it should not become the overshadowing truth and there must be a larger framework of truth.

If we start with the man, Adam ... Starting with God's commission to man "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it" (Gen 1:28). Then we would fit in with those who seem to by-pass any need for personal redemption and who almost ignore the Fall and become involved in the establishing God's kingdom.

From this starting point all history is interpreted with a governmental or kingdom purpose. The kingdom becomes the central theme. Talk to a Jehovah's Witness or a follower of British-Israelism and you will find out how their framework is concerned with God's kingdom and His righteous government on the earth.

If we start with God as Creator at creation ... starting in Gen 1:1 with God as Creator the resulting scheme and purpose of God has an architectural or sovereign colouring. While this may allow for a God-centered approach it does not fully answer the purpose in His creation nor describe His sovereignty.

This framework seems to stop with man conformed to the image of God and finally enjoying all that God intended in a "new creation". While in this framework God does have the glory and honour, and in a sense it goes beyond what man is to get, this view is still too small and there must be a larger, ultimate framework.

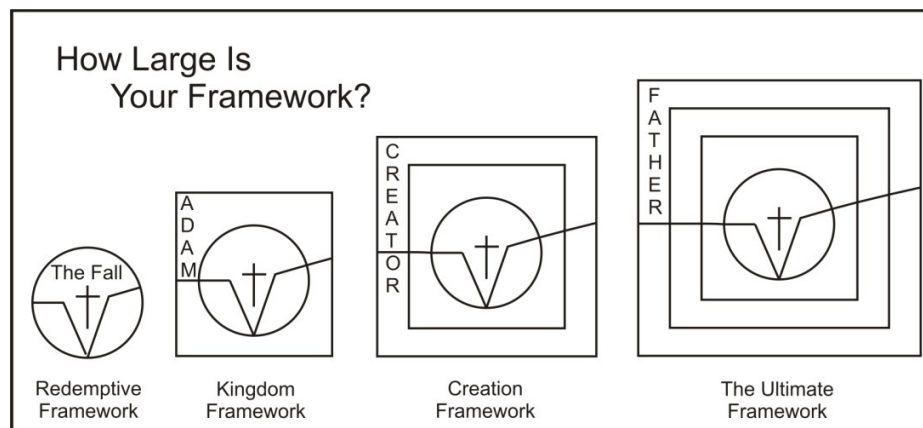
If we start with the Father before the foundation of the world ... We start in the Father's heart – not *with* the foundation but *before* the foundation of the world.

Paul, by revelation, starts out in Ephesians with ... “God our FATHER and the Lord Jesus Christ”. The FATHER is the first Cause of all causes.

It is not with God's varied activities, nor with His attributes that Paul started; but with the Person, who He chiefly is, the FATHER. So it's God's FATHERHOOD that is seen to be the ultimate and deciding factor which determines all His plans and actions.

It was not man's fall that determined all things; it was not God's desire for a kingdom, nor even His plan for a new creation – but it was God's paternal being and nature which determined His primary desire, His eternal purpose, His supreme dedication and finally the ultimate realisation which will bring him that satisfaction of which His Father-heart is so worthy.

HOW LARGE IS YOUR FRAMEWORK?



What framework could be larger than the one beginning with the eternal Father and ending with that vast family which will bring to Him and His eternal Son honour, glory pleasure and satisfaction? In such a framework we see the importance of salvation (since man did fall). We see the kingdom; we see the New Creation, but we also see the Father and His vast family and this framework alone gives proper meaning to all that is included.

So now, as we look at Paul's words in Rom 8:28-30 (JB Phillips Translation) we see they have more meaning, as they help us understand what a Father would determine and purpose and ultimately intend:

... “And it is plain, too ... that at last we have realized our full sonship in Him ... Moreover we know that to those who love God, who are called according to His plan, everything that happens fits into a pattern for good. God, in His foreknowledge, chose them to bear the family likeness of His Son, that He might be the elder of a family of many brothers. He chose them long ago; when the time came He called them, He made them righteous in His sight and then lifted them to the splendor of life as His own sons.”

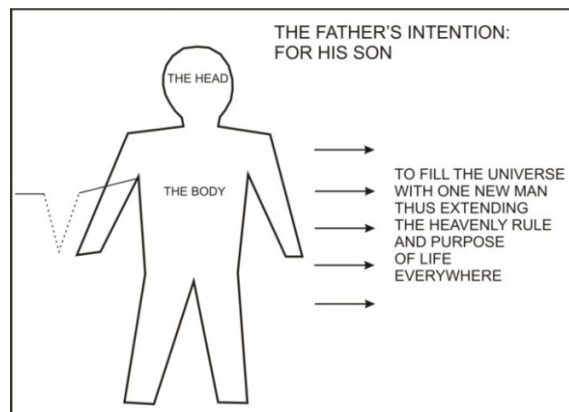
THE FATHERS GLORIOUS PLAN AND ULTIMATE INTENTION

Now that we have moved into the eternal stream where we see all from the Father's own viewpoint – now, our dedication can be nothing less than co-operating with Him to realize His glorious plan and ultimate intention.

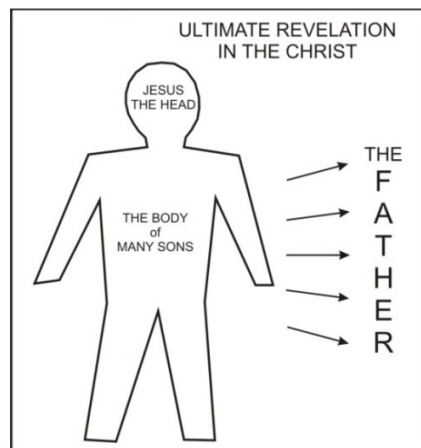
Manifestation of the sons of God: There is a great day coming, a day for which all of creation is waiting with bated breath. For this day of the manifestation of the sons of God, there is a deep groaning throughout all of nature. What a day it will be when the corporate Son – Christ the Head in union with His body, the church – will be unveiled.

What untold splendour will be realized when the Holy Spirit pours forth light as never before upon the Head of the corporate Son. Such light will break forth upon the entire universe announcing the glory of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!

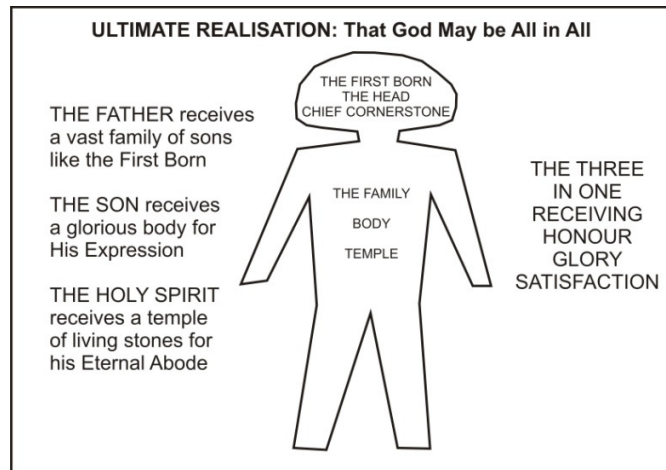
This is the day Paul speaks of in Rom 8:19 “for the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God”



The Father revealed: Yes, it is in this light that the whole of creation will recognize the corporate Son (each individual son conformed to the image of the Firstborn), and it is this which will finally bring the supreme revelation of the heavenly Father who has wrought the purpose of His heart. What a day of glory!



That God may be all in all: The great hour of realization is drawing near when the Father will have a family; the Son, a body; and the Spirit, a temple. As the Father fashions this unique corporate Body for His Son, the habitation of the Spirit is also being framed together and growing up into an holy temple, and this is God's family, His masterpiece of Self-revelation. This will bring about the ultimate realization (1 Cor 15:28) ...“that God may be all in all”.



How perfectly this family will express the delight of His heart, and bring forth the pleasure and satisfaction of which He is so worthy. It will express God's LIFE through the Body, His LIGHT through the temple, and His LOVE as never known among men through the members of His family.

From the eternal viewpoint God sees this as already complete. As we learn to live in the eternal with Him, we shall see how the future becomes reality now.

As Watchman Nee said ...“For the ultimate reality is always before God, and God speaks of His church in the light of that reality. The time-factor in the Bible is one of the greatest problems to the human mind, but it vanishes from the horizon when once our hearts have been enlightened to know the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

So this then is our call: let us not only live *for the ultimate*, but let us live *in the ultimate*. Then life's purpose is not a goal set before us in the future; it is a present, living, reality in which we participate now, even as God does.

FROM ETERNITY THE PATERNAL PURPOSE IN THE SON

We need to see clearly that there is an eternal purpose hidden in the Father which has never been involved in time. This is something that moves on the eternal level, and is not affected by sin or time. We need to see how the eternal Son is related to this eternal purpose of the Father.

We have been so prone to relate Christ to the redemptive activity that we have hardly appreciated or understood how He is related to eternity and the Father's purpose.

To see the eternal Christ in the right perspective we can simply ask the question:

...“if man had never sinned, would all things have been summed up in Christ? (Eph 1:10).

The answer comes through Paul in his letter to the Ephesians where it is clear that the Father intended for His Son to be a means of accomplishment, not because sin entered, but even if sin had never entered. Consider these statements from Eph 1: 3-10:

EPH 1:3-10	
vs 3	"... blessed us ... IN CHRIST"
vs 4	"... chose us IN HIM before the foundation ..."
vs 5	"... predestined us to adoption ... through JESUS CHRIST .."
vs 6	"... made us accepted IN THE BELOVED ..."
vs 10	"... the summing up of all things IN CHRIST ..."

These statements make absolutely no reference to sin or time. They are matters settled in the Father's heart before the foundation of the world. They are eternal truths that had previously been a mystery down through the ages which Paul was now unveiling: The Father intended for His Son to have a Body to express his life – Himself – in the world now and before all creation in the ages to come.

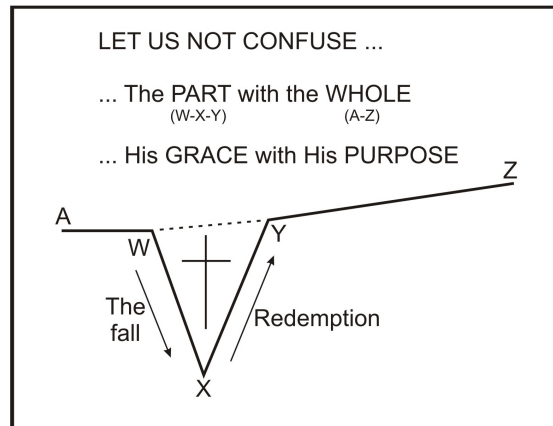
So it is clear that the Father's plans and purposes are not determined by man's need, but rather by His Paternal purpose in the Son.

Paul answers in the same passage most of the questions we might ask about the Father and His vast family He has marked out for Himself, which is now being realized through His only begotten Son:

EPH 1:3-14	
WHO	"He" (God the Father) vs 3
WHAT	"chose us" (picked us out as sons for His family) vs 4
HOW	"in Him" (Christ - the eternal Son involved in all aspects) vs 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
WHEN	"before the foundation of the world ..." vs 4
WHY	"for Himself" as His own (for His pleasure, to the praise of His glory and for His satisfaction) vs 5, 6, 12, 14
WHERE ...	that we should be "before Him" (Gk. lit. "in the presence of Him") vs 4

LIVING FOR THE WHOLE

2 Tim 1:8, 9 (KJV) ... "God has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own PURPOSE and GRACE, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began".



His PURPOSE is to take us from A to Z, His GRACE is necessary to get us back on track from X to Y so we could continue the journey to Z.

Redemption, getting from X to Y is not the overall objective or purpose.

The goal, His PURPOSE, is to bring into being a host of sons and daughters whom He indwells; through whom He lives and manifests Himself; and in and through whom Christ reigns supreme.

We are beneficiaries of that Plan. God, in His love and grace, has made us part of His plan. But we are not the centre of it; Christ is. We are participants in that plan whom God loves and cherishes. We are God's inheritance (Eph 1:18). His inheritance is His body – the Body of Christ- accomplishing His purpose. And although the Bible records man's fall, that calamity has not done one thing to delay or change God's purpose. His intention was always to have a vast family of sons and daughters. The fall did not deter that plan. God incorporates our redemption into that plan, but the plan's goal is still the same. We are here for the praise of His glory.

Rom 11:36 amplifies this wonderful truth: "For *of* Him and *through* Him and *unto* Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever"

SUMMARY

In accordance with the Father's plan, established before the foundation of the world, Christ lives in us to manifest His life through us. Christ in us accomplishes the Father's purposes. Part of His purpose is intimacy with us, but His plan encompasses more than that. He is working towards His own ends, and we are the vessels through which He works. We are the visible manifestation of what God is doing, with Himself and the ultimate goal: "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28).

That's why the Father wants us "filled up to all the fullness of God" and that's what this course is all about and my prayer is that through these lessons you will come to a better understanding of: being filled to the fullness of God, to the praise of His glory.

Voluntary Assignment: Read and mark first few verses of each epistle where God is referred to as "FATHER".

LESSON 3: THE CROSS PART 1 – WE DIED WITH CHRIST

Don't Settle for Only Fifty Percent of the Gospel

Not only did Christ die to redeem us from sin, but He is also to be our indwelling life. He provides the life that it is impossible for us to become, or to manufacture.

There are many believers who only know half the gospel. They know Christ died *for* them to forgive their sin and that they will have a place in heaven one day but that's all. But that does nothing to tell them one thing about abundant life and living it here and now.

Sadly, they attempt to live a "godly life" by external compliance; attempting to keep whole bunch of commandments, do's and don'ts. And what is the result of this attempting to "*shape up*" be a "*good Christian*"? Absolute frustration, failure and inner condemnation ... although most won't admit it.

Christ died for us: Now there is plenty of scripture to back up the truth of the first half of the gospel:

1 Cor 15:3 "Christ died for our sins"

Eph 1:7, 8 "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" ...

Col 1:14 "In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins ..."

... and many more scriptures to back up this eternal truth.

It's a wonderful reality that our sins are forgiven and we have been restored to right standing with God, but this is only *half* the gospel. We need the other half also ... the remainder that has to do with abundant living.

What Was Dealt with on the Cross?

There are two aspects to the cross. The first part the cross deals with is our SINS (plural). Through the death of Christ and His shed blood our SINS are forgiven. Past, present and future SINS are all wiped away.

But getting our SINS forgiven does not deal with the question of SIN (singular). SINS are a product of SIN, that the Bible says dwells within unregenerate man, the unbeliever. SIN is a power, a force; it is the nature of the evil one that is in rebellion against God and produces SINS as its fruit.

Rom 5:12 ... "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."

Through Adam we inherited SIN. SIN passed from Adam to all subsequent generations.

As long as SIN dwells in the centre of our being, it will produce SINS. For Sin to no longer have dominion over us something must happen ... we must die.

Many think this is something that refers to what will happen when we die physically and go to be with the Lord in glory. But that's not so because in the realm of the Spirit, this event has already happened. This is the other part of what happened on the Cross.

You Were Crucified with Christ

When Christ died on the cross, we died with Him.

Rom 6:3-11 ... "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, ⁶knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. ¹⁰For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

All who have been immersed into Christ have been immersed into His death. We were all immersed into Him, poured into Him. We were in Him on that cross, experiencing what He experienced. When He died, we died. When He was buried, we were buried. When He was raised, we were raised with Him.

Rom 7:4 ... "Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God."

2 Cor 5:14 ... "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died."

Col 3:3 ... "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

You may say, "According to history, Jesus died approximately 2000 years ago and I am here right now, alive and well, so how on earth could I have died with Him?"

The answer is in Rom 6:6 "knowing this, that our *old self* (or *old man*) was crucified with Him ..." Your *old man* – the nature of the devil which you inherited from Adam, cut off from God but alive to the power of sin – was crucified with Christ.

Eph 2:1-3 describes the life that flowed from the *old man*.

The source of that life had to die. Christ did not come just to "fix the old man and make him better". He came to put the *old man* to death. So He had to rip out that old life, the sin nature, put it to death, or it would have continued to produce the fruit of sin. So God crucified you with Christ.

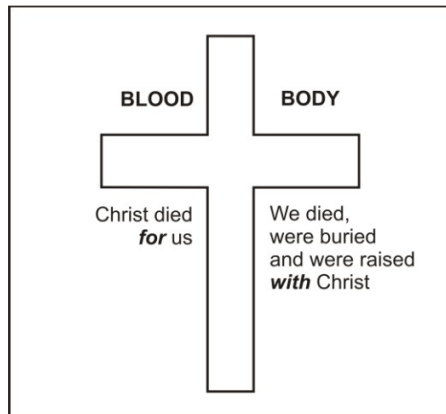
Example: You don't just chop off the top of a weed to get rid of it; you pull it out and burnt it.

We were not crucified physically, in the seen and temporal realm. We were crucified with Him in the unseen and spiritual realm. In that realm time has no meaning; everything is in the NOW.

In the seen and temporal realm (the realm of our history and physical records) Christ was the Lamb slain about 2000 years ago. In the unseen and eternal realm, He has always been the Lamb slain from eternity past. He was the Lamb slain from the beginning (Rev 13:8, Heb 4:3, I Pet 1:19, 20). In the seen and temporal we live physically right now. In the unseen and eternal, you and I were crucified on the cross - our **old man** died with Christ on the cross. By faith in the finished work of Christ we bring that reality from the eternal into the present and it becomes a reality to us here and now; our old sin nature is dead and gone.

So we see two sides to what happened on the cross:

- Christ died and shed His BLOOD **for us** for the forgiveness of our sins
- We were poured into His BODY and being united **with Him** on the cross, we participated in his death, burial and resurrection



Paul's theology is built on the Lord's Supper – the blood and body. Christ died *for us*; we died *with Him*.

We may not feel dead, we may not look dead and often we don't act dead. But if we ask the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our understanding He will show us in the deepest part of our being, in our spirit, who we truly are. We will see an exchange of nature has taken place; an exchange of the one who occupies us. The old man, the nature and life of the devil is dead and gone and has been replaced by a new nature and life, the life of Christ. We are forever changed. A new creation in Christ. And we can echo Paul's words from Gal 2:20 ... "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

The old man, the source of SIN is dead and gone forever. Now with Christ as life in is we are brand new creatures.

2 Cor 5:17, 18a ... "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ ..."

That's how God sees us. Often we inflict punishment, guilt and condemnation upon ourselves for things about us that result from a lack of understanding of who we really are and what happened on the cross, but God says in Rom 8:1, 2 "there is therefore **now** *no condemnation* for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death."

So who are you going to agree with? What you currently see, or the truth, what God says?

What you died to when you died on the cross with Christ

1. You died to SIN

You died to SIN, the indwelling nature of the evil one and power that produces acts or fruits of unrighteousness (SINS).

2 Cor 5:21 "He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (Christ)."

He didn't just solve our problem, He became our problem. The cure was Radical – Jesus joined our old man to Himself and became sin, we were poured into Him – and when He died we died with Him and He eradicated the sin nature from our innermost being.

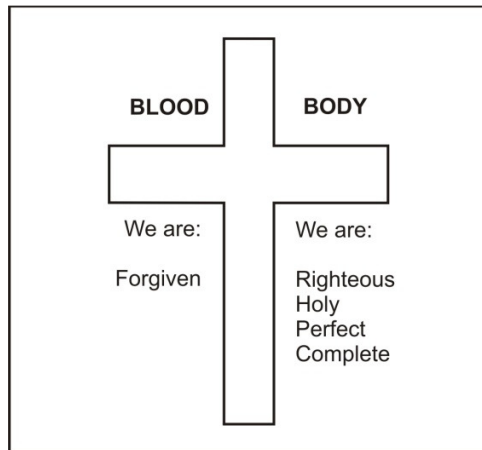
1 Pet 2:24 "and He Himself bore our sins in his body on the Cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness..."

You may well say "if I have died to sin why am I still tempted to sin, and why do I still occasionally commit sins?" That's because the body, your "members" and your mind are still unrenewed. As Paul says in Rom 7:23 "I see a different law in the members of my body..."

Salvation is threefold, spirit, soul and body. When you were born again there was no immediate change in our soul (mind, will, emotion) or in your body – those parts still need attention. We will deal with these parts later. Those are the parts that have the potential to pull us down, if we let them. But our spirit cannot be pulled down by sin. Sin has been totally removed from our spirit; we are now righteous, holy, perfect, and complete in spirit. The life in our spirit now is Christ.

1 Cor 6:17 "the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit". He now occupies us and we live by His righteous nature.

So let's look again at what is ours through the cross. Through the shed BLOOD we are forgiven, through His BODY we are the righteousness of God. Righteous, holy, perfect and complete.



As we learn to live from the truth of what has happened in our spirit, we will see the outward manifestation of what God has already made a reality internally. Death has separated us from the nature and power of sin (we have died to sin) and we have become the righteousness of God – we now have total victory over sin; the righteous nature of Christ now occupies us.

2. You died to the Law

Romans 7:4-6 ... “Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. ⁵For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were *aroused* by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. ⁶But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.”

It is clear that we died to the law, but, as the Law and the commandments are holy and good (Rom7:12), why did we die to the Law? Because the law was there to reveal sin and to lead us to Christ but once we were in Christ the law no longer had a purpose. Gal 3:24-25 ... “Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

Once a person becomes a believer, if he/she tries to observe the law this will become a hindrance to the fulfillment of God’s purpose in our lives; that He might express his life in and through us. The law by its nature sets standards, and if we are not careful, we will try in our own effort to live up to these standards by self-effort, by work of the flesh – and end up frustrated. Rather, we should be trusting in Christ (who is the fulfillment of the law) in us and living by His life. This is why Paul chastised the Galatians:

Gal 3:1-3 ... “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed *as* crucified? ²This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”

Because we have been crucified and have died to the law, we are free from it. Now we are free to allow Christ in us to express His life through us. It's no longer us trying, but us resting in Him and Christ producing His righteous fruit in and through us. (We will look at this more later).

3. We died to ourselves as our point of reference

Gal 2:20... "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

It is impossible for you or me to know our union with Christ and live out of that union, if we don't know that we have died with Christ. If I think the old me is still alive, I am still my point of reference. If I am still my point of reference, I will forever be trying to correct me, straighten me up, make something out of me, or be doing something to try and change me. As long as my emphasis is upon me, it can't be upon Christ in me. So I end up as a divided person. Sadly this is where many Christians are at. Constantly trying to do something to please God.

Until the full work of the cross – our death and resurrection with Christ – becomes a reality to us, we will attempt to produce something that is not required of us. Our focus will be on us, instead of Christ in us. And we will miss out in being involved in God's glorious activity, as Christ lives out His life through us for the benefit others.

1 Cor 1:30 Mark this, learn it, know it in your heart. He is our righteousness, he is our holiness, He is our sanctification, he is our redemption, He is our life, and He is our all in all. Christ is our point of reference in all things. We live by His life and by His faith.

Summary:

Prayer: If this has not already become a reality to you, pray and ask the Father to reveal these truths to you - of your death, burial and resurrection with Christ - of the fact that you have died to Sin, died to Law and died to yourself as the point of reference in your life. Thank Him for forgiving you from your sins, and for raising you up to new and abundant life in Christ. Amen.

LESSON 4: THE CROSS PART 2 – CHRIST LIVES IN YOU

Christ Lives in You

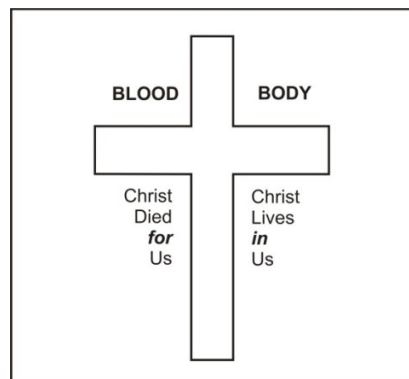
So far we have considered our death with Christ on the cross. We cannot stop there. Crucifixion and death would be meaningless without resurrection life to follow. We must go on to understand what the Father purposed to be resurrected out of our death with Christ: LIFE. ABUNDANT LIFE. (John 10:10)

Rom 6:4-5, 11 Paul emphasizes *both* our **death** and **resurrection** with Christ and our new life in Christ.

... “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection ... ¹¹Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

This is when the great exchange took place. The old man out and the new man in. An exchange of nature. The Father placed His Seed in us. Christ came into us and we became one spirit (1 Cor 6:17). The Father raised us as brand new creatures (2 Cor 5:17). He who was spiritually alive laid down His life **for us**, so that He could give His life **to us** and live **in us**.

Christ now lives in us and through us.



The Passover Lamb

The Old Testament is full of types and shadows and the picture foreshadowing Calvary is no exception. In Exodus 12 we read of the Passover Lamb.

- The lamb died **for** the household. Through the blood applied to the doorposts, they escaped the wrath of God. This foreshadows the blood shed on the Cross - Christ died **for** us. His shed blood spared us God's wrath, His blood was the payment for our sins – a satisfaction of the righteous judgment of God. Our sins are forgiven.


But if that's all that happened the children of Israel would still have been living in Egypt as slaves subservient to the evil Pharaoh. Many believers are in this position, they know they are forgiven, but they are still living in captivity; Striving to overcome by their own effort, trying to become spiritual.

But God had a solution to the problem of the Hebrew's captivity, and He has a solution for you and me.

- He provided sustenance for them, or life, to get them out of Egypt and out of captivity. He told them to roast the lamb and eat its flesh for nourishment for their journey. You take the lamb (Christ) *into* you as life.
- The lamb is the total answer. They killed one lamb for two purposes: for the Passover and for the journey.
- Paul calls life's journey a "walk" or a "race". What is the sustenance for that walk? It is not us trying in our strength to walk for God. That was never God's plan for us. Christ is not only the Lamb who's blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins, but He is also the life within us, from whom we make the journey. (Meditate on John 6, especially v 51 & 56). He is the life in us.
- On the outside it looks like us, but on the inside it's Him. We have the Lamb of God within us.
- Unless you have Christ within, you'll always be operating in the realm of captivity. It's impossible for us to generate the life. It has never been the Father's plan that we generate the life. His eternal plan has always been that we live by His life; the divine nature.
- Rom 5:10 We are saved not just by Christ's death, but also by Christ's life. That is true eternally and it is true in the here and now. We are saved by Him who is the life within is. We don't have to *try* to live the life, or *try* to live for God, because Christ *is* the life in us. It's the life we can't produce and the *only* life we have. Christ in you, the hope of glory!

Christ living in you and through you, bringing glory to the Father

Now we put the last two lessons together and go on from there to see the Father's eternal plan unfold:

John 14:6-20	Gal 1:11-16 Gal 2:20	Col 1:25-29	Eph 3:1-11
The Bridge 	Paul's revelation of Christ in him	Paul's Commission from God	Before the foundation of the world
- I AM - Union between Jesus & the Father - Knowing Him - Our union with Jesus & the Father	- Christ lives in me	- Revelation of the mystery - Christ in you the hope of glory	- Revelation of the mystery - Eternal purpose of God

The Father reveals Himself and His purpose through the Word. It's like putting a puzzle together without a big picture, but instead we have the Holy Spirit to guide us.

- From Genesis to Calvary the pieces are to do with prophecy of the Christ
- John bridges the OT and NT
- The Paul brings the missing pieces – the mystery hidden from the ages

The Bridge: John 14:6-20

John's writings come more by **revelation** than just being historical records as in the synoptic gospels. He takes us from the physical (seen) realm to the spiritual (unseen) realm. Here we see:

...The **I AM** statements. When God uses this term "I AM" He is calling our attention to His timelessness, His self-completeness and His absolute love. Here it tells us who Christ is. He is the: I AM, the Way (there is no other "way"), the Life, the Truth, the Bread of life (6:35, 48), the Light (8:12), the resurrection and the life (11:25) ...HE IS LIFE.

... Jesus introduces the **union life**. The Father in Him and He in the Father. Jesus introduces the Father heart of God. He refers to Him primarily as Father. Jesus does nothing apart from what He sees or hears in the Father. The Father lives in Him and he (Christ) is the expression of the Father. John 14:9, 11 ... "he who has seen Me has seen the Father" ... "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me". Outwardly it looks like Jesus, but inwardly it's the Father. He says "what you see when you look at Me, is the Father as Me".

... Jesus shows us that He is the revelation of the Father and the more you know Christ the more you will know the Father

... He speaks of our union with Him and the Father. "That day" (John 14:20) refers to day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit birthed the Seed – Christ – into those who were waiting and believing. From "that day" Christ would be **in us**. Not us down here and Him up there, but Christ **in you**. Note John 14:18 "**I** will come to you".

Paul's revelation of Christ in him: Gal 1:11-16, Gal 2:20

Gal 1:11-16 ... "For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹²For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ ... ¹⁵But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood..."

Paul had this divine revelation of Christ. All he wrote in his epistles came from revelations from God. Paul had not known or followed Jesus of Nazareth (as Saul of Tarsus he thought Jesus was an impostor and was doing all he could to destroy anyone and anything to do with Jesus) – everything he knew of Christ came by revelation by the Holy Spirit.

v16 This is the most important revelation he received – Christ in him as his life. This is the core, the key part to the puzzle we are putting together. That's the basis for Paul's Gal 2:20 statement.

Gal 2:20 ... "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

The essence of this message is that I am blind, empty and unable to function properly and that Christ is the answer – He is the life I am to live by. Through the cross the great exchange, my old sin nature for His life, takes place. Now all that's required of me is to trust Him, rest in Him. (Don't push your car, use the engine!) – He's the life and power – you just go for the ride. Trust and obey, for there's no other way.

So often believers attempt to live “like Christ” – that is attempting the impossible (like pushing your car instead of using the engine) – and they end up tired and defeated. Trying in our own strength to live “like Christ” is the same lie that Satan sold to Adam (Gen 3:5). Don’t try and “dress up” a dead thing.

It was never the Father’s plan or purpose for us to live by any other life than His. He has placed His Seed – Christ – in you as your life. You are the container; He is the life in you. Rest in Him, He is your only life.

Paul’s commission from God: Col 1:25-29

JB Phillips ... “for I am a minister of the church by **divine commission**, a commission granted to me for your benefit, and for a special purpose: that I might fully declare God’s Word – that sacred mystery which up till now has been hidden in every generation, but which is now as clear as daylight to those who love God.” ... And the **revelation of the mystery** was the revelation of ... **Christ in you**, the hope of glory. Note v 29 ... “I labour striving according to **His power**, which mightily works **in me**”.

Paul of all people; A Pharisee out to terrorize and destroy the church. Saul of Tarsus (Paul) was not a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth. He was out to destroy the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. (Phil 3:4-8 gives his pedigree – in the world’s eyes he was a very knowledgeable man of amazing pedigree, a super religious man - but he counts this all as rubbish). God chose this man to receive this revelation and to pass on God’s word concerning this mystery to us.

That’s why Paul’s epistles are so important to us to “learn Christ”. It was to Paul that the revelation of the mystery was given, so he could pass on to us these wonderful truths. Now we must ask the Holy Spirit to bring this to our understanding. Ask Him to **reveal His Son in you to you**, that you may **know** Him (not just know *about* Him) and live in that intimate union – one spirit.

Before the foundation of the world: Eph 3:1-11

... “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him **before the foundation of the world**, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight ⁹He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him ¹¹also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.”

This revelation took Paul back to before the foundation of the world, into the Father’s original and ultimate intention and plan (Eph 1:4, Eph 3:11).

The truth simply is that we have Christ and all the treasures and riches of glory in us. Christ is our all in all. He is the Father’s PROVISION to us. (See also 2 Pet 1:3, 4). Christ is the answer to every detail of our life.

Our sins are forgiven, we have been put to death with Christ at the cross, and we have been buried for once and for all. The great exchange has taken place, His life has been poured into us, we have risen with Him and are totally new creatures. Now He is the Life in us. Not you producing His life, but you expressing His life, as you rest in Him and trust Him to live through you.

Example: The watering can. The purpose of the can is to contain and distribute the water to the plants so they can live and flourish. You are the can, He is the water. You are a container of Him, to let Him “pour” out of you in all you say and do, to bring life to others. It looks like you on the outside (the can), but it’s Him inside (the water). What they see when they look at you is Christ as you in action.

The eternal purpose of the Father is that we live by His life, Christ in us, according to his plan established in glory before the foundation of the world.

We have the PROVISION, now we must take POSSESSION.

PROVISION is not worth a thing to the believer who does not take POSSESSION. Take possession of Him who is your life. Yield to Him, rest in Him, know Him, trust Him, submit your faculties to Him so that He can live His life through you, in accordance with His eternal plan and purpose.

In closing this chapter, consider this:

Rom 6:11 (KJV) ... “**reckon** ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord”.

Reckon is a banking term. If you have deposited money in your bank account, it means you can **reckon** or **count on** that money being there for you to draw upon when you go shopping and your cheque or debit card will be honoured by the bank for the purchase you have made. Reckoning does not put or deposit money in the bank, it just counts on, or certifies, the fact that the money is already there and that you are free to draw upon that money whenever you like. Reckoning does not make us dead to sin and alive unto God, it simply acknowledges or certifies this to be fact and allows you to freely live out of the fact. Reckoning counts on the fact that ... “I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me”... We have the PROVISION, that’s fact; now take POSSESSION, live out of the fact.

LESSON 5: THE COMPLETE GOSPEL OF GRACE

THE ONE TRUE GOSPEL – the Father’s plan from before the foundation of the world

A SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

We have a wonderful Teacher, the Holy Spirit, given to us by the Father to enlighten us, to open our eyes to the truth, to teach us Christ. So to enable us to understand the truth concerning the Father’s plan for us, the one true gospel, let us ask the Father to pour out His Spirit on us and open the eyes of our understanding. The most powerful prayer we can pray in this respect is the one Paul penned for us in his letter to the Ephesians. In fact I firmly believe this is a prayer we should pray for ourselves and others around us every day. So before we go any further, let’s pray right now the prayer in **Ephesians 1:15-23**:

“For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all,”

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH FOR THE ONE TRUE GOSPEL

In Galatians 1:6-9 Paul speaks of “another” gospel that was being brought in to distract believers from truth, and that accursed is anyone who brings you any other (different) gospel other than the “true” gospel, the one taught by Paul. Now, take a moment and ponder the question, “what is the gospel”? If you ask a number of people (believers) to give you a brief answer to this question you’ll be amazed at the answers you get. Take another moment and write down your answer, and then reflect on it later after you have read through this discourse. Now, having done that, let’s take a journey through the word and see what is the one true gospel. There are some key passages of scripture in which the truth is established concerning the *one true gospel*. Let’s read those truths right now and see what the Father has in mind for us.

Ephesians 1:3-6 ... “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ**, just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”

Colossians 1:18, 25-28 ... “He is also **head of the body, the church**; and He is the beginning, the **firstborn from the dead**, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. Of this

*church I was made a minister according to the stewardship of God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, **the mystery** which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ."*

Galatians 2:20, 21 ... *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith **of** the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.*

John 12:1, 2, 9-13, 19-25, 27, 35-36, 49-50 ... *"Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him ... ⁹The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus. On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel" ... ¹⁹So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him". Now there were certain Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal" ... ²⁷Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father glorify thy name" ... ³⁵if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself. He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes" ... ⁴⁹These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."*

LIFE OUT OF DEATH – GOD'S GLORIOUS PLAN

Keeping all the above passages in mind, let's focus on this latter passage from John 12, in which the basis of the one true gospel is given.

It is important to understand the context of this John 12 passage, to understand what was going on. In the lead up to this time Jesus has performed miracle after miracle, fed multitudes with a couple of fish and a few small bread rolls, calmed storms, turned water into wine, He has raised Lazarus from the dead, the

news about Him has got out and the people are thronging around Him proclaiming Him as their King. Even a certain group of Gentiles, the Greeks, had come to the Passover feast and they had approached Jesus' disciples to see if they could get to see Him.

Now you must picture the scene in your mind and imagine what the people, particularly Jesus' disciples, must have been thinking. These were not Jews, they were Greeks. The Greeks were the intellectuals, the philosophers of the day. They had come to Jerusalem not only for the Jewish Passover feast, but they came to seek after Jesus and to speak to Him. These philosophers, intellectuals, leaders of man's earthly wisdom had heard about Jesus of Nazareth and were seeking out His wisdom and counsel. Now picture the disciple's thoughts: If ever the moment of glory had arrived this was it, they thought! For not only are there crowds of local Jewish people thronging after Jesus, hailing Him as King, but the Greek philosophers are here wanting to gain wisdom and knowledge from Jesus. He has performed miracle after miracle, raised a man from the dead, crowds are shouting Hosanna, his path is paved with palm leaves, the mighty Greek intellectuals are here, surely this is the moment of His crowning glory! And to top it all they hear Jesus say "the hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified". "Yes"! They think. This is the moment for which they have been waiting! The crowning of their King, the hour of the Son of Man's glory! Yoo-hoo! After all they were His disciples, His chosen, and there would be something in it for them. The ministry looked like it was about to expand into the Greek empire and beyond. They, by association with Jesus, would be world famous! They were reveling in the moment! Or so they thought.

Jesus then throws them a curved ball with His words that followed; Words that they certainly did not comprehend and words that left them dumbfounded. He did not count the miraculous deeds He had done, the adulation of the crowds, or even the presence of the inquiring Greek philosophers and wise men as the glory about which He was thinking and speaking. Having the Greek intellectuals come for His counsel and wisdom didn't register as glory to Him. Often, when He had healed someone he told them to go away and tell no one. He had refused previous attempts by the Jews to make Him King and instead He had withdrawn into the mountains or lonely places, to be alone to converse with his Father; To hear from His Father, to be certain He was "on track" with the Father's plan that was established before the foundation of the world. That's what was occupying His mind. What was going on in the minds of His disciples, glory associated with fame, was not the type of glory He sought, but, in the midst of this all, He clearly states that "now is the day of the Son of man's glory". While He must have been thinking that the presence of the Gentiles as well as Jews was indeed significant, as the day of His glory is a day that does indeed involve both Jews and Gentiles, His thoughts were certainly not in line with those of the disciples. For He immediately follows His statement of the coming of the hour of His glorification with the mind boggling words: "unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it abides alone". It's got to be buried in the ground and die, for only in its death will there be the resurrection and harvest that follows.

THE LAW OF HARVEST

This is the law of harvest. The *solitary* seed will bring forth, it will reproduce itself *many* times over. From the *one* will come *many*, all in the exact likeness of the original one. That which you sow, the seed that dies, reproduces exactly after its likeness. You sow a single grain of wheat and many times more of exactly the same thing, wheat, springs up. So what Jesus was saying was that the hour was here for the Son of man to enter into glory, but that would only come about by His falling into death and reproducing Himself, bringing forth the many, exactly after His own kind. Take a moment and think about what He is

saying here. In His words, “a (*single*) grain of wheat ... remains alone (*by itself*)”, He is comparing Himself to one single, solitary grain of wheat. He is the only unique **one** of His kind.

In accordance with the Father’s plan, conceived from before the foundation of the earth, from before the creation of man, here we have Jesus the example of what humanity was meant to be: a real true human who is exactly as the Father intended man to be. Man, the container, inhabited by Christ, the Life. In Eden’s garden Adam had the choice to partake of the Tree of Life and live by His life, but he did not. Man fell, and lived not as God intended for him to live and be, rather, he chose from the “other” tree and into him was birthed the self-loving, self-serving, selfish nature of the devil. But here, for the first time, we have the man, Jesus, as man was meant to be from the beginning. He’s pure, He’s holy, He’s love, and He’s Life, Jesus in the flesh. But only one: the one, solitary, true “Seed”.

THE DEPENDENT ONE

He is the one who said that of Himself He could do nothing and all that He said he heard from the Father and all that He did, He first saw the Father doing. This is what makes Him unique: His utter and total dependence on His Father. He said of My own self, drawing upon all My own abilities I can do absolutely nothing ... zip... not a thing. Nothing! He said, “For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. ... The things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me” (John 12:49-50). In His prayer, just before His betrayal and arrest, in John 17:7, 8 He said, “Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them”. As Jesus lived and shared His life with His followers we see a unity with His Father: a union, a oneness, and yet a total dependence on His Father. He listens, watches and obeys. Nearing the end of His earthly life He reflects upon His life and, in paraphrasing His words, we hear Him say “Father I obeyed You, I did all You told me, I expressed You, I let them see You and hear You. I manifested Your name, Your character, not Me or anything of Myself. I have been a container of you Father, an expresser of You Father. I am your Word that was made flesh”.

Yet, in all this Jesus was not a “puppet” with the Father manipulating his “strings”, He was a Person, the God-man, the true human, the Father in Him and He in the Father, in a dependent union with His Father. John 17:21, “... even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee”. Jesus in His relationship with His Father chose to be the dependent, surrendered, submitted one, in order that He might be an expresser of the thoughts, the mind, the compassion, the love, the very heart of the Father. He is the expression of the nature and character of the Father. He is the Word of the Father. He is the Word that was made flesh. He came to show us what was in the heart of the Father. He is the dependent, surrendered Man that is the perfect expression of the Father.

Your “words” are the invisible, inner thoughts and intents that come out of you in an audible, tangible form. Your words are distinct from you yet they are part of you in a different form. Your words go inside the hearer and are assimilated and comprehended by the hearer. Your words communicate the real, inner you to the hearer. Jesus is the Word of the Father, the exact representation or expression of the Father. He is the expression, the speaking out form of the invisible God. That’s why He is the one unique, holy, pure “Seed”. He is God’s love in human form, about to be cast into the ground to die, to multiply, to fulfill the Father’s intent for mankind.

THE CONTRAST - IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

Gal 4:4 “But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”. He, the dependent One, appeared in the “fullness of time”, the perfect time. The hour for the Son of Man to be glorified was at a time when religion and Phariseeism was at its height. The word “religion” comes from the Latin words *re* (again) and *ligio* (to bind) – meaning “to bind anew” or “return to bondage”. In its meaning religion portrays “a binding to and observance of rituals and laws in order to please a deity”. He came when the religious leaders, the Pharisees, were so busy trying to love God with their rituals and rules and bondages. Doing, doing, doing. Always attending to their rituals, going to their meetings, carrying out all the observances to the letter of the law, bound to their laws, rituals and rules in an attempt to please God, yet having no love or time for people. Independent selves, trying in their own strength to please God.

Into this scene, “in the fullness of time” when they were at their best, Jesus steps in to contrast His life, His love, His true holiness against the dismal efforts of the religious sect. So hideous was their self righteousness that He called them a “brood of vipers”, because the heart of sin is independence. Look at the contrast He, the dependent One, brought: unlike the Pharisees, He spent all His time and ultimately gave His own life for needy people. That’s true holiness and love. That’s the love of the Father expressed in Christ. He cared for the “lost sheep”; He cared for the “Samaritan” lying dying by the side of the road; He cared for the “prodigal son” covered in pig’s muck. The Pharisees, the Levites, the Priests couldn’t care less about needy people; they were taken up with their religiosity, the rules and rituals. They looked down their noses and considered all others as “sinners”. In their religious eyes the publican and prostitute were “sinners”, to be sneered at and avoided at all costs, not “lost sheep” to be sought after and rescued. To them the Samaritan was the “enemy” to be condemned and avoided, not loved or helped. And to them the thought of embracing the “prodigal son” covered in pig’s muck, well ... they wouldn’t ever think of touching a pig let alone embracing him and have the excrement of a pig on the boys torn clothing touch them. My goodness ... they would be defiled! No, he was just “filth” to be avoided at all costs. In contrast, Jesus takes all the insults and sins of His enemies and bears them Himself. He sees the tax gatherer, the publican, the prostitute as “lost sheep”, people in need and reaches out to them. He identifies with the sinner, lets them mess up on Him and says let me help you, let Me take it from you that I might heal you. He is the expression of the Father that comes to man and He makes man whole. This is love. This is Jesus.

This is what the Father had in mind for man to be when He conceived the plan for man before the foundation of the earth. This is “true” man. He walks on earth among men the first and only “true” human, the “normal” man with a God kind of love dominion and authority over all the results of the fall. He is the “will of God” on earth. The original intent, the plan, the desire of the Father for mankind is here walking among men and women. He can be found. If you want to see the “will of God” in action go to the market place, or find out where He’s staying. Wherever you found this “true” man Jesus, there you would find God in activity, expressed in Him, through Him and by Him. In His words, in His touch, by His attitude, you would find the Father’s intent and His will for man. In His union and dependence on His Father, Jesus lived the way man was supposed to live. He received, contained and expressed the love of the Father wherever He went. You could find Him, the will of the Father, on the hills or near the lake of Galilee, in Bethany, in the temple in Jerusalem, at Jacobs’s well, or with the publicans. The kingdom of

God, the will of God among men had an address, you could locate Him. But He was the only one, single, solitary grain. He's it. The dependent one who is the perfect expression of the Father who says, "Only one thing counts ... to do the will of My Father".

ONLY ONE AND HE'S GOING AWAY

The Greek philosophers and intellectuals have come and sought out this one True Man. The people were hailing Him as King. Surely this is glory time. But He has refused it all. This was not the glory he sought. He is "going away". The disciples couldn't believe His words. He was the only "one", the solitary grain, and they were about to lose Him. What a waste they thought. We only have one. Don't go away. Just think, this thing could get big. Why not expand Your ministry and incorporate the Greek empire and beyond. Yet He said "it is far better for you that I go away", because, "unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it abides alone". Only one grain, and if Jesus had bowed to the adulation and wishes of the Jews to be accepted as their king, or embraced the praise of the Greek philosophers and sought out to expand His "ministry" to international proportions, He would have remained "alone" and only ever been the One.

Against this He said "it is better for you that I go away" because My Father's will involves more than you can imagine. He who is Life is to taste death for every man. He is life. It's not that He just has life, but that He is life. He who is life chooses to step into death. It was way beyond the disciple's comprehension. It's probably still way beyond the comprehension of many in the church today.

He moves into Gethsemane's garden and the drops of blood fall from His brow as He, the one grain, chooses to fall into the ground and die. The grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies. He takes our place. He who is selfless, who seeks the best for others, takes the place of the selfish, the self-dependent. He takes our place in death. He goes into the grave as us. He who is from the beginning, the Word of God that was made flesh, Emmanuel, God among men, He who is the Creator of all, who has entered into His creation and become true man now stands in Gethsemane and chooses "Not my will by Your's be done". He steps out of the garden to begin a new race of men. 2 Cor 5:17, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature" ... a new race of men. He's the last Adam who is starting again. Adam is the first man; this One is called the "second Man". He takes mankind into death. He takes man's satanic adopted spirit of self-love, self-serving and self seeking to the grave.

When he rises again He has broken death's power and everything that causes death and all the powers above death. He rises beyond it. Something greater than creation has occurred. Creation was something out of nothing at His word, but this is life out of death. Life out of non-life. This is something more. It's the greatest of all miracles when He comes out of the tomb. He has conquered the whole world of death and has taken man's false spirit of self-love and selfishness and laid it to death and put the stone over it, it's gone, it's finished. Now He is alive. Alive forever more! In doing this He has begun something, its harvest time. The solitary grain of wheat was placed in the ground where it died, and now it's harvest time. When He steps out of the tomb to all intents and purposes it's all there, right there, in the Life, the Life that has conquered death. This is the day the prophet Isaiah of old spoke of: "*A nation shall be born in a day*": the day of the resurrection. Life has come which shall bring forth a whole new race of people, a whole new nation. The grain of wheat has fallen into the ground and the harvest comes out of the tomb. In Him is a whole new race of people. Perfect reproductions of the original. He said if He didn't fall into the

ground and die He'd remain alone, He would be the only *one*. But now He's not the *only, solitary* one, He's the *first* one. "*The firstborn among many brethren*" (Rom 8:29).

SO, WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

I think many have limited the finished work of Christ. Just ask a number of people (believers) to give you a one sentence answer to the question "what is the gospel"? You'll be amazed at the answers. Many will say something like this: "this is the gospel – for God so love the world that He sent His son to suffer and to die for my sins. In other words, Christ died for us". But that's not the full gospel, and if you question them further and say, "Is that all" they may say, "well you know what I meant; I meant that He rose again too". But that's still not the complete gospel. The church for too long has pitched its tent at the death and sufferings of Jesus. That is not the whole gospel. Jesus rose out from death. That is the only meaning for His death, that He rose again. But that's not the totality of gospel either.

Just think about what is going on because there is something quite amazing here: they knew Jesus had risen from the grave and was alive, but He was more than just alive. Compare him to Lazarus. Lazarus came back to life after some days in the tomb, but Lazarus was "back to normal" after that. If you looked for Lazarus you would find him at home or at his work place, because Lazarus rose again from the dead to be what he was before he had died. He had not conquered death, he merely had a bit of extra life added, that's all. But when Jesus rose from death, He had conquered mortality. Resurrection is not just coming out of death. Resurrection is going into death to conquer death and coming out the victor. He came out like no other person had come out of death. He's resurrected, death is conquered, and they knew it, but He wasn't predictable. He was not subject to the limitations of mortality or the laws of nature. Sometimes He turned up for breakfast or dinner, other times you found Him in the group but you don't remember when or how He got there. He would just "appear" or pop in through the wall. He had not only conquered death, something far greater than they could even imagine had happened here.

But that's not all, that's not the totality of the gospel. Some weeks later, at the ascension Jesus says to His followers, "don't do anything but go into Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father". You see it wasn't finished yet. Many, when they think of the word "Christian", think of Good Friday. Most of those who are truly born again think of Easter Sunday. But who celebrates the ascension? Who celebrates the exaltation and the glorifying of Christ?

The finished work of Jesus took 50 days. It wasn't complete simply with His death. The resurrection gives validity to His death, but His work is still not complete yet. But it is when he ascended, when He is declared Lord, when He is no longer Jesus of Nazareth but He is Lord Jesus Messiah, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High. He stands before the Father and all heaven echoes "Father I have glorified Thy Name" and when that happened He poured out the Holy Spirit upon the believers who were "waiting on the promise of the Father", because that's what He came to do. He died to get the self-loving, self-serving "old man" out of the way; His blood is shed to deal with sin, and all the powers that belong to this world. When He rose it was a declaration of His victory over sin and death. But that was all for the one purpose, that there might be a great harvest. He fell into the ground to die in order that He now would be reproduced in millions and millions of people.

Even as the solitary grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies that it may spring up to produce many identical grains of wheat, even as He was the image of the Father, so now they would be His image. Then, He, who had conquered death, who had put to death the “old man”, who was exalted on the right hand of the Father, sent the Holy Spirit to birth His life, the exact same life that was in the one “Seed”, in human beings. That He may live in them. That the “Seed” of the Father may be birthed in man, so that man could live by His life. He did this so that, by the birthing, we are one with the Lord Jesus Christ. Containers and partakers of His divine nature. For “we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world” so that “it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me”. That’s the one true gospel that Paul taught.

THE HEAD OF THE BODY

From that moment on He is never spoken of as a singular individual. He is always the Head of the body, joined to believers. We are one with Him. 1 Cor 6:17 “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit”. An absolute one; a covenant binding together into one. He is the treasure and we are the vessels. He is the Life; we are the container of that Life. If you want to find the treasure, look in the vessel, the container, and you will find it. We are the branches, He is the Vine. If you want the fruit you’ll find it on the branches of the vine. The fruit got there because there’s life flowing through from the vine to the branch. We’re one. God’s word declares that, “As He is so also are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). As my head is so my body is in this world. If we say we abide in Him we ought to walk even as He walks.

Jesus said, “they” ... (and remember in this prayer (John 17) He said He was not praying just for the 11, He said I am praying for all those who should believe because of them, which includes you and me. Therefore, speaking specifically of us He said), “they are not of this world even as I am not of this world and the glory which you gave Me I have given them that they may be one just as We are One, I in them and You in Me”. A unity with Jesus, who Himself is unity with the Father, and this achieved through the birthing. The glory that was given to Jesus is given to us by His grace. So that, “as He is, so are we in this world”. “In Him we live and move and exist”... (Acts 17:28). He is the invisible Head who directs us, His body on earth.

The Kingdom of God, the will of God, once again can be located. He has a place of residence here on earth. He’s in you and me, His body. The person of Christ, the intent and will of God can be found, in His body. The Head and the body are one. Not One solitary individual, for He fell into the ground and died. He is no longer the “only” one, now He is the “first” One. Not the solitary, alone grain of wheat, but the one who has fallen into the ground and reproduced Himself, and now lives within us. He is not just “out there” somewhere, in the invisible. He’s not hidden in some “holy shrine”. He’s not, as many falsely think, visiting some “religious building”, often incorrectly referred to as the “house of God”, where people go every Sunday just to admire Him, sing to Him and to try and work up His “presence” and say how wonderful He is, try and “get” some blessing from Him and then go away for another week and do their own thing. No, if you now want to find Him He can be found, in the many members of His body. He is now resident in His body, the many believers, with whom He is one.

... “Christ in you the hope of glory!”

There's one thing that the true gospel is not, and that is you or me trying to live and be "like" Jesus. The "like Christ" gospel is "another" gospel and is, according to Paul, nothing short of damnable heresy. Paul said anyone who preaches "another" gospel, a gospel of law, a gospel of do's and don'ts, a gospel of works, of man trying to be "like" Christ is accursed (Gal 1:8, 9). It's heresy to try and be "like" Jesus. To try and imitate Jesus, that is the height of sin. "All our righteousness – our best deeds of rightness and justice – are as filthy rags or a polluted garment" (Isaiah 64:6 Amplified).

The true gospel is that He took the self-love and self-serving nature, with all the confidence in self, and nailed it to the cross. Nailed religion to the cross and buried it in the grave. In exchange we gained His life, His nature. So now we come, with His life birthed in us, dependent ones, that He might live His life in us. Not trying to be "like" Him, not imitating Him. Not even Him and me as a two-part "we" life. "I live, yet not I, it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20). The very same life, the life that came out of the tomb is the life that you live by now. We are containers, He is the life that fills us and is to flow out of us. We are PARTICIPATORS not IMITATORS!

Think of the Redwoods of California, which are reported to be about 3000 years old, or the Huon Pine trees of Tasmania that are 4000 years old, or the oldest of all trees, the Bristlecone Pine (*Pinus longaeva*), found in the Rockies which have around 4,600 tree-rings. They are alive today on the root that is those thousands of years old. It's the same life, the same Redwood, the same Huon Pine, the same Bristlecone Pine. The same life year after year. New branches, new leaves as time goes by, but the same root and the same source of life year after year. You and I are sitting here alive unto God with the same Life that came out of the tomb. Unchanged, same Life that conquered death. That very same Life coming from the very same Root (Rom 11:16, 17). That's how you are alive, that's who you are. You are an expression, a manifestation of His name, His love, His power. That's who you are. "Christ in you, the hope of glory".

This is His exaltation, His glory. Not some dialogue or consultation with the Greek intellectuals or the adulation of the crowds. That's not His "glory". Neither is it the becoming King of an earthly kingdom of the Jews. That's not His glory. His disciples had completely missed it. They simply did not understand what He meant when He said, "this is the day, this is the hour, when the Son of Man shall be glorified. Because He shall fall into the ground and die and when the harvest comes, when He will be reproduced in millions of others, the love that is now concentrated in One true human shall now be seen in millions of true humans, who are dependent humans in whom lives the Word, the expression of the Father". The kingdom has a new "address", yet it is the same old one, for it is still the Lord Jesus Christ. He now lives in His body, the ecclesia, the "called out ones", the church. He is no longer the man Jesus of Nazareth walking around Judea, He is now the risen "Seed" living and walking around in the members of His body, you and me.

This revelation has been around for a long time. In fact it is as old Paul's epistles. When He ascended, the last Adam, the second Man, who in Himself has produced the new race, we began where Adam would have been if he hadn't have fallen, where he would have been if he had embraced the Tree of Life instead. Adam comes up to that moment and he goes off into the darkness. The last Adam comes and He brings us back from the darkness and we begin where Adam left off. The new race, the new creation.

Now we go into all of our worlds, the world of business, the world of art, the world of sport, the world of home domestics, your worlds. Go into all those worlds and announce it, and proclaim it is done! That man can be truly human, that man can be whole, he can be “normal” as planned by the Father from before the foundation of the world. A normal man is the container and manifester of God who is love. It is time. The time has come for the church to arise, to get away from this utter blinding nonsense that the gospel means sins forgiven and waiting for the rapture and in the mean while we’ll live in meaningless vacuum of legalism, defeated legalism and call it Christianity. The time has come to arise out of that, to shake like a man awakening out of sleep and say my God where have I been? It’s a time to ask the Holy Spirit to give us a revelation of Jesus Christ. That we may “learn Christ”. That we may know Him and to begin to be the expression of God in Christ that we are meant to be. Not with our minds fixated on the flesh, the things we see, feel, touch and taste, but fixed on Him who is our life. For the mind set on the flesh is death but the mine set on the Spirit is life and peace (Rom 8:6).

WE WRAP UP WITH A FINAL PRAYER

What is left for us to do? It is to say, may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ give us a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him and open the eyes of our understanding, flood us with light in our innermost hearts that we may see and know what is the great hope of His calling. That we might see the riches of the glory of His inheritance in us, His many sons living by the life of His Son, that we may see the exceeding greatness of His power which is toward us now, we who believe, which is the same power that raised Him from the dead and sat Him down at His Father’s right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers and know that’s the power that quickened us. To know that, and knowing it to go and be it. To be who we really are: containers and expressers of His life and His love, that He may be known and that His name may be praised in all the earth.

ADDENDUM TO LESSON 5: “BORN AGAIN” DEFINED

The Birthing

The liberating secret, which Paul refers to as the “mystery” (Rom 16:25, Eph 1:9, Eph 3:3,4,9, Eph 6:19, Col 1:26,27, Col 4:3 & 1 Tim 3:16), is something hidden in God about which no man knew anything until God revealed it to Paul (Gal 1:15-16) and which Paul then spoke about in his epistles. Paul summarised the liberating secret in Colossians 1:26-27 as “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” He went on to teach us that the believer was a container of Christ, living His life in and through the believer. All this comes about as a result of the birthing. Being born again.

The literal meaning of the word birth is a new life coming into existence which has the same nature as its parents. If a cat or dog is born, there is new life with a cat nature or dog nature, respectively. If a child is born a new life comes into existence which has the nature of the child’s parents, which is sinful and subject to death. This is the “birth of the flesh” (John 3:6) and receives its nature from Adam, the father of the human race. The Adamic nature is a sin nature or a Satan nature (John 8:44). The only thing God could do with this sin (flesh) nature was to judge it and condemn it to death (Rom 8:3 & Rom 6:6).

To be born again or re-birthed does not mean that this life, which is born of the flesh, is changed, cleaned up, or made over. A miracle is needed to change man from the fallen (Satan) nature to the Divine (God) Nature. The miracle required is an exchange of natures, making the new birth imperative. This new birth is a birth in the spirit (John 3:5-8), it is to be “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13). This birthing brings into being a new life which has the incorruptible and immortal nature of its Father, God. “Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever” (1 Pet 1:23).

This Seed is eternal, cannot die, and remains in the one born of God for eternity (John 3:16, 1 John 3:9). This eternal God-Life cannot die and all who are born of the incorruptible Seed have the incorruptible nature (God-nature) in them. It is impossible for the recipients of this new life to be unborn, for that would mean the corruption of the divine nature and death of that which cannot die.

God’s plan that His Seed should be placed in us, that we may live by His life, originated from before the foundation of the world. Before the creation of man He had this plan. It was not some stop gap plan that He suddenly concocted when Adam chose to believe Satan and eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and thereby take on the nature of Satan and be separated from God. Rather, before anything was created, the Omniscient Father, who is Love, planned to have a family of sons who would be birthed by Him and thereby contain His nature, His Seed, His Love, and His Life. These would be birthed sons, not created beings. Sons containing Love and capable of loving Him by a free-will decision because of who He is, not just creatures forced or programmed to love Him. His plan is stated clearly in Eph 1:4 “just as He chose us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.” God’s plan from the beginning was that we should be in Christ and Christ in us. It should therefore come as no surprise to us that the most often stated truth in the New Testament is that of being “in Christ”.

God being Omniscient, all knowing, knew even before He created Adam that this first man would, of his own volition, choose the path of corruption and take on the fallen (Satan) nature. So before the foundation

of the world He provided the means by which man could enter into His plan for man to be a partaker of the Divine Nature and live by His life, for Christ was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8, I Peter 1:18-20, Heb 4:3). The most foundational motivation of the heart of the Father is principle of the cross, for this is true Love. The principle of the harvest (John 12:24) originates from this cross principle. God’s original plan for man is conceived in Love.

From the beginning God knew that there was nothing we could do by our own works, or attempts to adhere to laws, that would save us or enable us to please God. We need only to look through the Bible from the time of creation to the day of Pentecost to see that man could not possibly live a righteous, holy or God pleasing life through attempts to adhere to laws. With the revelation of the mystery we now understand that the only way man can ever please God is for God to take part of Himself, His Seed, and put it into man. People from the Old Testament times had to do something (works) to attempt to please God. They could only approach him if they first offered an animal sacrifice, which was a type and shadow of the ultimate sacrifice to be made on Calvary’s cross. However, neither the blood of an animal nor the works of man were able to save the people from their sinful nature. There was no life giving power (eternal life) in these acts. God’s word is clear, “he that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (I John 5:12). Life is in the Son, for He is Life (John 14:6).

God has placed the desired for eternal life in us. A literal translation of Eccl 3:11 is as follows: “He has also set eternity (the desire for things eternal) in their heart, without which man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.” This is probably what motivated Nicodemus to seek out the truth from Jesus. From the beginning God’s plan was that we should be containers of His life and that we would live by His life and that desire was placed deep within man. When we come to the end of our tether, when our lives are in turmoil, when we come to the realization we just cannot make it alone, the desire for things eternal that is deep within us, spurred on by the Holy Spirit, is what drives us to reach out for help from God. That’s why, when Nicodemus came to Jesus, Jesus knew he was in search of the liberating truth and said to him, “you must be born again.” Jesus at that time could not explain this statement to Nicodemus as it was a mystery hidden in God to be revealed in the fullness of time. In John 14, 15 and 16 Jesus stated clearly that the Holy Spirit would reveal the hidden things to us. “In that day (day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit comes) you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you” (John 14:20).

The birthing is about the placement of one person into another to be their life. It’s the only way an exchange of nature can take place. This is the exchange in which we become something entirely new. Not the old made over or fixed up. “If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new” (2 Cor 5:17). This is “the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph 4:24).

If we look at the first few chapters of Genesis the following is apparent: God created Adam in His image and likeness but then there is a gap between Gen 5:2 and Gen 5:3. The occurrences of Gen 3 and 4, the fall of man, took place during this gap. In Gen 5:3 we read “and Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image and called his name Seth.” Adam’s sons were not begotten in the image and likeness of God but rather in the sinful image and likeness of the fallen man, Adam. The scriptures go on to say of Adam “and he died”. This pattern goes on and on for all the descendents thereafter “and all the days of ... are ... years: and he died”. Every descendant from Adam to

the present day has been born in the likeness and image of Adam, with a sinful nature and subject to death. There is no exception for, “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” ([Rom 5:12](#)). For, “by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation” ([Rom 5:18](#)). The penalty for this is physical death and separation from God and the second death, which is the final separation of the body, soul and spirit from God.

The Son of God came into the world and put on flesh. He dwelt among men of the old creation but was not of it. He was the Seed of His heavenly Father and not of the seed of Adam. He did not possess the sinful Adam nature, rather, He was “full of grace and truth” ([John 1:14](#)). “In Him is no sin” ([1 John 3:5](#)).

Christ identified Himself with the first creation and took upon Himself its guilt and shame. He was “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” ([John 1:29](#)). This was Jesus who ... “by the grace of God should taste death for every man” ([Heb 2:9](#)). But death could not hold Him for [Acts 2:24](#) says “Whom God raised up again, putting to an end the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.” The Son of God, who was also the Son of Man, rose victorious over death as the “first-born from the dead” ([Col 1:18](#)) that “He might be the first-born among many brethren.” Out of death came life, to be the Author of a new creation. “But God ... even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” ([Eph 2:4-6](#)).

The new creation receives its righteous nature from its Head in the same way that the first creation received its sinful nature from its federal head, Adam. “By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” ([Rom 5:19](#)). In both cases, the nature of the creation depends on the act of its head. It does not depend on the acts of those who issue from the head.

As the unalterable law of the first creation is sin unto death, so the unalterable law of the new creation is grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life. “For if by one man’s offence, death reigned by one: much more they which received abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ” ([Rom 5:17](#)).

As the head of the new creation cannot be condemned, the members cannot be condemned ([Rom 6:9-10](#)). We have “passed from death unto life” ([John 5:24](#)). For the new creation, the old has passed away ([2 Cor 5:17](#)) and there can be no return to it. We cannot be un-birthed.

Many Christians have a religious idea that a new creature means we are an old person made “better”. Because such believers do not understand the birthing they foster this idea that they are getting “better”; but it was never God’s intention that we be “better”. There is nothing we in and of ourselves can do to become “better”. To think this is to miss the point and that’s why many Christians fail. A Christian is not a changed or made-over person; he has a totally exchanged life. That’s what “new” creation means. That’s why Jesus said “you must be born again”. Birthing spells out the beginning of something that has not existed before, a new life. Life is nothing to do with how you live, your actions, your deeds. The life, the only life, is in the Son. He is life. To be a partaker of that life you have to be birthed by the Father of that life. The new creation has a new Father. By placing His Seed in us His life is birthed in us.

If there is ever one thing the devil wants to do, and does successfully, is to prevent believers coming to the understanding of the truth that “I (the old sinful nature) have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I (the old sinful nature) who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I (the new Christ indwelt creature) now live in the flesh I (the new Christ indwelt creature) live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me” (Gal 2:20).

A mother cannot do anything to bring about a new life other than accept the father’s seed. She may give her ovum to encapsulate the seed, but she cannot produce life, another person, on her own. That’s why Jesus said you must be born again. He said there must be another father, because only father’s produce fruit. Mothers cannot produce fruit, they can only bear it. Believers cannot produce fruit; they can only receive and bear the seed placed in them. You cannot produce a Christian life. It does not matter how many times you repent, how many times you make commitments, how many denominations you join, how many times you go to the altar, or how much good works you do; as a believer you cannot do anything (good works) within yourself to please the Father. There is nothing you can do to produce the Christ-life or Chris-likeness. We must start with that fact. There is nothing we can do to produce that Seed. The Seed has to come from the Father. Peter makes it clear (1 Pet 1:23) where he says you are born again by the Father placing His Seed in you.

All we need do is believe on the Lord Jesus (and even that faith or ability to believe is a gift from God). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved” (Acts 16:31, John 1:12, 13). The instant you believed, you cohabited with another Father; and that Father, in an act of love, birthed in you His dear Son. At that instant we became “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4). The nature of God is in the Seed, and the Seed is the life, and the life is Christ, Christ in you.

People keep on sinning and doing their own thing because they do not know who they are. They have no understanding of the birthing. They think they are getting “better”, or they are going to get “better” or will do “right” tomorrow, but that is false thinking.

When you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father placed His perfect Son in you. In the Seed that was placed in you is everything, the totality, of His Son. Not just part. “Of His fullness we have all received” (John 1:16). “In Him you have been made complete” (Col 2:10). Consider an acorn, the seed of the mighty oak tree. In the acorn is everything that will spring up to produce everything that constitutes the mighty oak tree; every root, the big trunk, all the bark, every branch, leaf and acorn. The Seed that was placed in you by the Father has in it every part of the nature, character and attributes of His dear Son; the fullness or totality of Him. Christ, the Seed, is Life, Love, Joy, Peace, Righteousness, in you. He does not give you these, they are His attributes, part of Himself who is in you.

After Christ has been birthed in you, the Father will not depend on you at all; He will depend on His Son in you. As you live on this earth, He will not depend on you acting righteous. He will depend on Christ in you, who is your righteousness, your hope of glory. That’s the gospel. Religion says you need to do something to be “better”, you need to get it all together, you need to get it all under control, you need to try an act “like Christ”, but you cannot do it. It’s impossible. God put in you His Seed, His Son and you are a partaker of His divine nature, and Christ in you can and will do what you cannot do.

When believers come to the revelation that the only life they have is Christ and that they and He are “one spirit” (1 Cor 6:17), they will desire to live in the same loving union with Him as He did with His Father when He walked the earth as Jesus of Nazareth. For “the mind set on the Spirit (Christ within) is life and peace” (Rom 8:6).

We are made up of spirit, soul and body (1 Thess 5:23). At the birthing, when we are born again, an exchange in nature occurs, which takes place in the spirit. This exchange is instantaneous, complete and final, and is an act of God’s grace. Christ in His completeness is placed in us and there is no more of Him that we can obtain. Like the conception of a human child, the father goes into the mother and deposits the seed. The seed is joined to the mother’s ovum and a new life is conceived. In that tiny fertilized egg is the complete and total life, all the parts that will make up a new person. The father does not go back a second and third and fourth time to add extra parts. At the birthing we are complete in Christ.

At the instant of the birthing, which takes place in our spirit part, no immediate change occurs in our soul or body parts. The salvation of our souls begins and is a progressive work as we submit our mind, will and emotions to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit to teach us Christ. This is the mind-renewal process that allows us to conform with and express the Christ within, in our outward words and actions. This is the process in which Christ is “formed” in us (Gal 4:19). The word “formed” in the original language in which it was written means “fashion, form, craft or adjust”. Paul’s epistles speak much about this process of adjustment or transformation taking place in us as we are “renewed” or “transformed” in our minds. The Holy Spirit is our teacher to seamlessly transform or change our minds (reprogramming) to align with Christ who is our Life, the One with whom we are one spirit.

The only change that takes place in our body is that it continues its path of decay ending finally in death, after which we will inherit a new glorified body. So salvation of spirit is instantaneous and complete, salvation of soul is progressive, while salvation of body is to happen sometime in the future. Paul alludes to this three part salvation in (2 Cor 1:10) “God ... who delivered us (spirit) ... doth deliver (soul) ... will yet deliver (body).”

Scripture does not teach that the human being has a nature of its own. We come into this world with the nature of Satan and when we are born again there is an exchange of nature to that of our Heavenly Father, God. That divine nature is in the Seed of the Father, Christ, who is placed in us at the instant of our re-birthing. When Jesus made the John 12:24 statement, the law of harvest statement, He was saying that He, the one Seed (a grain) had to die and be buried so that He could rise up again and be multiplied many times over (bears much fruit) and placed in the millions and millions of people who would believe on Him and receive that identical, original Life. Now that does not mean that there are millions of Christs out there, it does not mean that we become God (the container or vessel is not the contents), but it does mean that each and every believer contains exactly the same Seed, Christ in His fullness, who is their Life their all. His is the only life we have now that we are re-birthing. We are containers of the divine nature. This was God’s plan from the beginning, that we would be in Christ. Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Each of us is unique in our soul and body. Our soul (mind, will and emotion) is what makes up our personality. We are not all created in a cookie cutter way. We all have different personalities, different mental abilities, different artistic flair, a range of different abilities or skills, and so on. Some are tall, some are short, some are thin, some are more rotund or heavy boned, some are dark, some are fair, all are different and unique. No two are identical, not even “identical” twins. When Christ is birthed in us He is

our life and He lives that life through our different personalities. So if you are a baker, or dentist, or plumber, or teacher or student, its Christ as you, the baker, dentist, plumber, teacher or student that goes where you go and does what you do. If you are jovial or serious, that is the unique way in which Christ as you will be expressed. But the Christ, the Seed of the Father, the Life that is in each of us is the “perfect reproduction of the original”; it is the identical Seed that went into and came forth from the grave. The same “Seed” that was placed in Mary and gave birth to Jesus of Nazareth is the “Seed” birthed in you.

No one has any more of Christ or any less of Christ in them. Sure, He will be expressed differently in different people. The more he is “formed” in us through the renewing of our minds the more purely He will be expressed. Jesus said He only spoke what He heard from the Father and only carried out the works He saw in the Father because He walked in perfect union with the Father, who was in Him (John 17:21,23). He is the radiance of His (the Fathers) glory and the exact representation of His (the Fathers) nature (Heb 1:3). He was the perfect expression of the Father. His desire for us is that we live by His life and express Him in our words and actions. If we live in union with Him we will bear His fruit (John 15:4, 5 & Gal 5:22, 23, 25). It’s this unity relationship that will be the means by which the world will see and know Christ (John 17:21). This was from the beginning and continues to be God’s single plan; to have many sons in the image of His Son, containers of His Seed, His Life (“perfect reproductions of the original”) living by His life and expressing Him to all the world around us, that they too may know Him, whom to know is life eternal.

LESSON 6: WHO YOU REALLY ARE IN CHRIST

Managing Soul and Spirit

In order to live in a dependent union in Christ there are two things we need in place:

Firstly we need a revelation that we were poured into Christ and that when He died we died, with the result that we are dead to sin, dead to the law, and dead to ourselves as our point of reference. When He rose, we rose in newness of life, His abundant life and that life we now live is Christ. Then, we need a revelation (understanding) on the difference between soul and spirit and on how to manage the difference.

Heb 4:12 ...“The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of *soul and spirit*, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the *thoughts and intentions* of the heart”.

Thoughts are to do with the soul (mind, will, emotions), while *intentions* are to do with the spirit. Intentions are to do with resolve. As a believer your intent of heart is for God. But, while your heart's intent is on God and loving Him, your thoughts can, at the same time, be flirting with evil. Your heart intent is to love God, and deep down you really love Him, but at the same time you may be mad at Him just because something has gone wrong around you.

Often the *thoughts* and associated feelings are much louder than the *intentions* of our heart. This is the dilemma we often face and need to manage. That's where the living and active Word of God comes in, to speak into our heart like a sharp two-edged sword, dividing, making a sharp distinction between soul and spirit, between the seen and the unseen.

The soul and emotions are turbulent and noisy, while the spirit is steady and quiet. The soul and emotions are up and down and all over the place, depending on the circumstances and situations we face. The spirit is fixed; it's one in Christ, quiet, unmoved. The activity is all happening in the soul and if we don't know that we are first and foremost spirit persons, with our spirit in union with Christ, then the activity of our soul will dominate and control us.

We don't like the fluctuations of our emotions and the unsteadiness of the soul and the bad thoughts and feelings we have. But we have been created this way, and we can deal with it in one of two ways: either by trying to “do good” through “programs”, like trying to crucify our self, in our own strength to attempt to become “good Christians” (and if we do this we are doomed for failure), or, we can learn to live by faith out of who we really are and who He really is, rather than out of appearances (what we see).

We can't stop the fluctuations of soul. That's how we have been made. God made us to have feelings. Circumstances and situations are there to push us to Christ. But as long as self is our point of reference, while we have not come to the revelation that we died with Christ and now live by His life, we will be dominated by the soul and its condemnation. However, our point of reference can change. This change comes when we have a revelation of the fact that when we died with Christ we died to ourselves as our point of reference. We need to *know* that Christ is our point of reference and that we live by His life and by His faith (Gal 2:20).

When we live and experience the reality of our union with Christ, seeing Him, not ourselves, as our point of reference, we will no longer be soul based but will have moved up into a higher realm, the realm of the spirit. The realm of the spirit is the realm of the unseen, not the realm of the seen, of feelings and appearances. When we move into that position we will begin to see our soul activity (feelings and appearances) as a positive in our lives, not a negative. When we see and know who we really are in Christ we will acknowledge that the fluctuations of soul are necessary, because there would be no such thing as faith if we did not have something to challenge faith. How can you operate in faith if you never have doubt or unbelief to overcome?

The soul, our thoughts and feelings, are noisy, while the One with whom we are one spirit is quiet. While we are designed to live in the midst of the noise of the soul, we draw our life from the place of perfect stillness and quietness, from Him who is our life. This is why it is important to learn to know and hear the “still small voice” or the “quiet whisper” of the Spirit (1 Kings 19:12). Then our decisions are based on that “inner knowing”, that comes from Him.

Take time to listen and know Him and His voice within you. If we don’t do this we may miss Him and His leading in our lives. Knowing God comes by revelation. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the difference between the noise of the soul and the quietness of the spirit. Learn His still small voice so that you are not controlled by your feelings and thoughts. Rest in Him with confidence.

One Spirit (1 Cor 6:17)

It is a mystery, ... “Christ in you the hope of glory” ... and ... “he who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit”. What this means is that the only life you now have is Christ. He provides the life, we manifest it. We must put aside the urge to try to “do” something to try and manufacture the life. We cannot produce the life of Christ. He will live His life in you. Jesus said, “I only do that which I see and hear in the Father”. He manifested the life of the Father. It looked like Jesus of Nazareth outwardly, but it was the Father who He was manifesting and expressing. When a woman is pregnant, she can’t help but manifest it. If Christ is in you, the life in you, you will manifest Him. This is the mystery hidden through all the ages but now revealed to you ... Christ in you ... and now you express His life as you trust Him to live His life in and through you, as you, You and He are one. It looks like you outwardly and personality wise, but it is Him you manifest and express.

One Nature, not Two

Many Christians believe deep down that they are both good and bad, righteous and yet still sinful. They think they have a good nature and a bad one too and these are in a constant fight for control. That is not true and it is vital that we understand this because we will be forever trying to sort ourselves out in an attempt to improve ourselves, to suppress the bad nature and to try and elevate the good nature, in an attempt to be “like Christ”. If we believe this we will not be able to live in union with Christ and rest in Him, trusting Him to live in and through us.

For too long people have been taught that they have two natures, a human nature and a Christ nature. This is wrong. Look at what God says in His word through Paul:

Gal 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith **of** the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me”.

The problem comes in the realm of the seen, the realm of appearances, where there is constant evidence of good and bad. Our behaviour is sometimes good and sometimes evil, there is no denying this. And if we judge by appearances we will come to the conclusion that we are both good and evil and that we have two natures at war. But in the realm of the spirit, the realm of the unseen, our true identity is eternally settled. We, the “old man”, the old sinful nature, is dead and buried and the life we now live is Christ. We have only one nature, His nature. We are partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4). That’s the real you. That’s your true identity. We don’t have two natures, only one. We were formerly “by nature children of wrath” (Eph 2:3) but now we are “partakers of the divine nature”.

- Genesis 2 **the two trees** – tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of Life. Adam was given a choice of one of the two, never a choice of both. The tree Adam was to choose was the one he was going to express. He chose the tree of knowledge of good and evil and that’s where the realm of duality entered – *good and evil*. We are not an expression of both trees. We partake of only one tree, we have only one nature.
- Matt 6:24 **the two masters** - “no one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other.” Yes we fail sometimes and we commit sins, but that’s not the point. What is important is this, who is your master? Christ is. Example: In my early days working on mines I fell into the trap of not having regular Christian fellowship and often spent my spare time out drinking with the boys. Yet I would come home to my room in the mine single quarters and weep before the Lord because I was doing that which I knew grieved Him who was my Master and Lord. I knew I could not serve two masters.
- John 8: 41-44 **the two fathers** – of the Pharisees Jesus said ...“you are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father”. John 8:28, 29 of Himself, Jesus said ... “I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me” ... “I always do the things that are pleasing to Him”. You were born of God (1 John 5:1) He is your Father. You can only have one father. You cannot have two fathers; you do not have two natures.
- Rom 5:12-21 and 1 Cor 15:45 **the two Adams** - ... “If by the transgression of the one many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many”. From God’s eyes we are either in Adam (have a sinful nature) or in Christ (have the divine nature). As a believer you can only be in Christ, and have His nature.
- Rom 6:12-23 **the two types of slave** – “slaves of sin” or “slaves of righteousness”. If you know your true identity in Christ you will naturally put off sin, because you are dead to sin, it’s not your nature. You have partaken of the Lamb of God, you are no longer in Egypt (slavery) in subjection to Pharaoh (Satan). You, like Paul, are a bondsman of Christ.
- Rom 7:1-6 **the two husbands** – you cannot be married to two husbands at the same time. You express the life of the one with whom you have been joined.
- 1 John 4:2-4 **the two spirits** – the spirit that confesses Christ is of God and the spirit that does not confess Christ is of the antichrist. If you are ever in a mess and confused about your identity, just ask yourself, “Who do I belong to? Who do I confess?” You may not be proud of your actions,

but you know you belong to Christ. You are joined to Him, one spirit. You have only one nature, not two.

We can *do* or *carry out* acts of evil as well as good, there's no denying that. But our identity is not established by that which we see in the realm of the seen or temporal, whether it is good or bad, our true identity is settled in the realm of the spirit, in Christ. We can only be the expression of one tree; we only have one master; we only have one Father; we can only be one type of slave; we only have one Husband; we can only be of one Spirit.

It's hard not to believe we have two natures because it *looks* so true. What we see, feel, think and experience in the realm of the seen makes it look real. Good one minute and bad the next. But the truth is we are not what we feel, or think, we are that which is established in the eternal and unseen realm, we are what God says we are.

Example – An actor on the stage. Pretending to be someone else does not make you that someone – no matter how good an act you may be. But the devil tries to keep our attention on how we act, so we eventually think that's who we are, our identity.

It is not how we act (the things we do) that determines our identity. Our **birth** determines our identity. The Father has birthed in us His Seed, His life. We are partakers of the divine nature. Our old nature was put to death on the cross with Christ, and we have been born again and now His nature is the only nature we have.

The two-nature belief tears us apart, it puts us in Romans 7:19, 24 ... “for the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish” ... “Wretched man that I am. Who will set me free”...and then the answer to the cry (7:25- 8:1)... “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” For ... “There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”.

We move from trying to push down one of the masters and help the other one up, to the place where, by revelation, we see – Christ is my life my all. The life I live is Christ. Oh that we may come to the revelation that our old self is dead, gone, finished, and ...“it is no longer I that lives, but Christ lives in me”. The revelation that Christ is our life, the only life we have. He is our righteousness, holiness, our all. His nature is ours. Our true identity is found in Him who is our life.

The Real You

Before we became believers we were living by our independent, self seeking, self-centered lives. Self was our point of reference. We got so used to this, we were thoroughly “programmed” by the devil to live and think this way. We learned to get along quite well in life. The devil is quite happy for us to be “good” people, living by our own self righteousness. But our self righteousness is as filthy rags (Isa 64:6). One of the biggest challenges a person faces when they are born again is to not act independently from Christ who is our life. Living by what we see, feel and think, living independently from Christ, us trying in our own effort to live right, is living from a pseudo or false self. We express Christ through our thoughts, words and actions, through our soul, but it must be our soul operating out of a dependent union. Dependent on Christ within.

So many, when they are born again want to live the Christian life, but don't know how, and they automatically resort to living from the pseudo, or false self. They get caught up in the teachings and literature that teaches you to be a "better self", ... "seven steps to a holy life", ... "how to do this and that to become a "better" Christian", and so on. All promoting life out of the pseudo self, or self-reliance. And all of this is done from hearts that genuinely think they're doing it for God.

This will continue until we see Christ, not just as the forgiver of sins, but, also as our life. When that revelation sinks in, from then we will see that we are a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17). New creatures. Brand new, with no prior existence. Alive for the first time, the way God meant for us to be, living by Him as our Source. Outwardly you may and do look the same old you, but the real you, the inner you, is brand new.

The old is gone. In the realm of the temporal or seen, it may not look like the old has gone or it may not appear to be disappearing as quickly as you would like, but in the realm of the eternal or unseen, God sees it gone. So who are we to differ with Him?

2 Cor 5:21 He sees us as **righteous**. ... "He (the Father) made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ". 1 Cor 1:30 ... "by His (the Father's) doing you are in Christ Jesus, who has become to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption".

Eph 1:4 He sees us as **holy and blameless** before Him. Col 1:22 ... "yet He (Christ) has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him (the Father) holy and blameless and beyond reproach".

Col 2:9, 10 He sees you as **complete**. ... "For in Him (Christ) all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete".

When the Father looks at you He sees in you the nature of His Son, because He sees Christ in you. In you He sees Love, Joy, Peace, and all the attributes of His Son, in you. He sees you as righteous, holy and blameless, complete and acceptable.

It is an insult to God to go on saying that you are unworthy, bad, sinful. Unbelief is the sin that kept the children of Israel from entering His rest (Heb 3:1-19). Unbelief is saying you don't believe what God says. It is false humility. True humility is agreeing with what God says about you, the real you. He does not want us to be "actors" living from a false identity, He wants us to live from our true identity, which is based in Christ who is our life. He wants us to know who we are in Christ. The Father wants us to live with a Christ-consciousness not a sin-consciousness. We are saints, not sinners and we need to live with that awareness. God will take us through all sorts of circumstances and situations until we come to the place where we see Christ as our total life and where we live in dependent union with Him.

Our true self, the real you, is who we are in the realm of the spirit. This is your true, eternal, changeless identity. This fact is not changed by the thoughts, feelings, or poor behavior, as real as these may be. It's as we accept, by faith, what God says and has established about our identity, resting in Him, that we will begin to experience the reality of the Christ life in our daily walk. If you have not

come to this revelation, of who you are in Christ, then pray that God will open the eyes of your understanding and reveal His Son in you (Gal 1:16).

Containers Expressing Christ

We were created to be vessels, containing the life of Christ. The purpose for containing Him is that He may be expressed through us. We are not the contents of the vessel, Christ is. We cannot produce His life, we can only live in dependent union and express His life. The frustration comes when the vessel tries to become the contents. This is what happens when we try to become “like Christ”. God never wanted us to try and become “like Christ”, actors trying to be someone they can never be. He merely wants us to be vessels that contain Him and let Him flow out of us. He wants us to come to the point where we say ... “I only do and say what I see and hear in Christ, as I live in dependent union with Him who is my life”. We are to be receivers and expressers of the Person with whom we are in union. Our union with Christ does not mean that we are swallowed up by Him and lose our personality. He will operate through you just like you are, through your unique personality. But it’s His life operating in and through you the container.

Think of a watering can. The can is there for the purpose of containing and distributing the water to the garden, so that the plants can be watered and have life. You are the watering can and He is the water. As you contain and pour Him forth, the world will see Him and receive His life.

You may say ... “I’m not very clever”, or ... “I’m not good looking”, or something else related to your physique or personality (which is how you were made), that you may think will inhibit you from attracting people to Christ. But it is these imperfections, the outer personality, which may well be the very thing that God uses to help people see Christ in you. They may say ... “you know he may be a simple man, but how the wisdom of Christ is expressed through him”. Or, ... “despite the fact that she is a professor and so intellectual, just look how the humility of Christ flows out of her to those simple folks”, or, ... “well he’s such a strong man, so incredibly powerful, yet look at the gentleness, love and kindness of Christ that he displays to those tiny children”. And so on. People will relate to your personality as Christ flows out of you just as you are.

It is a mystery ... Christ in you, the hope of glory. Not your life, but His. Not you attempting to produce His life, but you expressing his life, as you rest in him and trust Him to live through you, as you. Looks like you, just as you are, warts and all, but it’s His life shining through you, to the glory of the Father.

LESSON 7: THE ONWARD JOURNEY - GOD'S WAY

Revelation Knowledge – Seeing Through God's Eyes

Knowing *about* Christ is not the same as *knowing* Him. You can have all of the in-Christ or Christ-in-you sayings down pat, you can point people to all the relevant scriptures, but this does not necessarily mean that you *know* Christ intimately. Head knowledge is not the same as heart knowing; the inner *knowing*.

There is no relationship between the amount of head knowledge or information we have gathered and the ability to live out the Christ life. The only one who can live that life is Christ and He does that through us as we live in union with Him and express Him. But that requires that we know Him and listen to Him, so we can cooperate with Him and express Him as He directs. Knowing Him comes only by revelation through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our only teacher to teach us Christ. The mysteries hidden in God can only be revealed by the Holy Spirit. The unseen and eternal things hidden in God can only be learned by revelation.

When we try in our own strength, in the flesh, to try to live the Christ life we will find it impossible. We can do all the “right” things, say all the “right” sayings, go to the “right” places, but none of these things will produce the Christ life in us. We will get very frustrated and eventually throw it all out and say it doesn't work. God has made it that way because it's often only when we come to the end of our tether that we turn to Him. If He allowed us to be content in our “fleshly” life we would never come to know Spirit life. It's only by revelation knowledge that we will experience and understand the unseen and eternal realities that are ours in Christ.

1 Cor 2:9-12 ... “But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God no one knows, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God”.

God is the only one who knows God and the only way we can get to know Him is by Him revealing Himself to us. That's the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit expresses to us, reveals to us, His knowledge of Christ and brings us to the deep inner knowing of Him. This is not something you can go and learn by effort from books or cd's. This is something He gives us by His grace, a free gift, as we rest in Him and trust in Him. The Holy Spirit is the only one that can make us one with the “deep things of God”.

John 16:13-15 ... “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you”.

John 14:26 ... “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you”.

People like teachers and writers are merely instruments that can illustrate, present or point you to the truth, but it is only the Holy Spirit that can *reveal* and *establish* you in that truth. Only He can open the eyes of your understanding. Only He can reveal Christ in you. So we must spend time in His Word and in His presence and allow the Holy Spirit to bring us the revelation of Christ we so need, and which only He can reveal to us.

That knowing is a deep knowing. It's when you say ... "oh yes, I see!" It's not a thing of the intellect; it's a *knowing* deep in your heart. It's the same knowing that you experienced when you were born again. You *knew* He had forgiven you and taken your sin away and made you new. That's how He wants you to *know* Him. And the Holy Spirit will bring you to this knowing of Christ in you if you submit to Him and ask Him to open the eyes of your understanding. That's why Paul's prayer in Eph 1:15-23 is so important for us to pray daily.

Knowing Christ is not just a once off revelation. It's an expanding awareness of Him. Not a learning *about* Him, but seeing, knowing and experiencing more *of* Him each day as we live in union with Him and as the Holy Spirit reveals Him to us. This revelation will come to you in God's way and timing. We must understand that the circumstances and situations we face are designed to push us to Christ. As we ask Him to reveal Himself to us it may come through the experiences of life, and some of these may be tough ones and it may take a while. We so want everything instantly, but God knows when He can give you the next bit. He knows when he can reveal more and more of Himself to you. God has a purpose for everything that happens in our life, and if you do not choose to see His purpose or reason for the circumstances, then all you will reap or experience is the hassle around you. Learning Christ, His ways, His desires, His character or attributes is often hidden in things happening around or to you. Your duty is to seek Him. Look through the external situation to Christ. The more you trust Him, rest in Him and express Him, no matter what is happening around you in the realm of the seen and circumstances, the more of Himself he will reveal to you. Cooperating with Him is agreeing with Him, trusting Him. Knowing is related directly to believing and trusting. It is so assuring to us to know that ... "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" ([Phil 1:6](#)).

He will reveal Himself to you in the unique way that fits you. It's different for everyone. He will reveal Himself to you in a way that "fits" you, because He has placed Christ in you to be expressed as you in your "world" of life. You can only walk or express that which you know and He wants you to intimately know Him so that it is Him that the world around you sees as He is expressed through you. He wants to live in and through you to the glory of the Father. You are the "light bulb" and He is the "power" that flows in and through you to produce the "light" that dispels the darkness around you. So the Father has given you the Holy Spirit as a Teacher to reveal Christ in you. Submit to Him and learn Christ.

God's Part and Our Part

[Phil 1:6](#)... ... "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus"

[Heb 12:2](#) ... "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith"...

Those scriptures are very clear – He starts it and He finishes it.

Ezek 36:26, 27 ... “Moreover, **I will** give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and **I will** remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **I will** put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances”.

Look at all the “I wills”. *He will* make the great exchange of natures in us, the old man out and Christ in, and *He will* cause us to walk or live out His statutes. All He asks of us is that we willingly cooperate.

Eph 2: 8, 9 ... For by **grace** you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the **gift** of God; **not as a result of works**, so that no one may boast.

The life we have in Christ is ours by God’s *grace*. It is a *gift* from the Father. God initiated this life in us, *He* fulfils it and *He* will complete it. Christ alone is the life in us and He alone can live that life.

Many fall into the trap of thinking that now that God has saved us and forgiven our sins, that we must now “do” something to live “like Christ”. Adhering to a whole lot of “rules” that we are told are the done things to observe if we want to be seen as “good Christians”. But really, we need to be reminded of Paul’s rebuke to the Galatians in Gal 3:3 ... “are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”

For you to try to live “like Christ” is like having a car and pushing it wherever you go. You may get the odd “downhill run” which makes you think you’re doing ok (may look like it outwardly), but the “hills” will come and you’ll struggle and eventually be beaten. You’ll end up worn out, tired and frustrated. You’re meant to use the “engine”. Then it’s effortless to get wherever you want to go. Christ is the life, the “engine”, in you. You are not the engine. You cannot produce the life of Christ.

1 Cor 1:30 ... “by **His doing** you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption”. Not only is justification, our being declared righteous, by grace, but our sanctification is also by grace. That’s God’s part, not ours. He does it all.

So where does that leave us? What role do we have in living out the Christ life? Our single and only role is to be *willing*, to *cooperate* with Christ, the Person, in us who is our life. God will never override your will, or otherwise we are just puppets. He did not design us to be puppets; He gave us a free will. God will do everything to draw us to Himself, but He never overrides our will. He will acknowledge and honour our choices whatever they are. He is patient. He will let us go “around the mountain” if that’s what we choose. Rather, like Mary, who said ... “may it be done to me according to Your word” (Luke 1:38), we must be available, willing to cooperate with God.

Phil 2:12, 13 ... “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work *out* your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure”. Note it does not say ...work **for** your salvation, but rather it says “work **out**”. Work out means “release” the salvation that is within you, let it out. Knowing that Christ is our salvation, a paraphrase of this passage could be ... “by submission and willing cooperation, let there be an outworking, a release, or outward expression of the salvation (Christ) who is within you”. Let Him live His life outwardly through you. This is done by submitting to the Holy Spirit so that He can teach us Christ; so that we can know Christ who is our life and be available to Him to speak and act through us. Note also from the Philippians passage, it is God who is doing the working (not you), and He is doing it *in* you in accordance with His will and pleasure. Christ in you wants to do all

the “doing”, he wants to speak and act (“do”) things but He needs your mind, your hands , your voice to speak and act through. All He asks of us is that we submit to Him and yield our members to Him willingly so He can live in us and be expressed through us, as us. It will look like you outwardly but it really is Him in you living out His life through you. That is what “working out” your salvation is all about.

For so long, prior to our salvation, we have lived the lie of the independent life of self-sufficiency. The sinful self- life. It is so easy to go on to think we can do something in and of ourselves to produce the life that only Christ is and can be in us. There are many popular movements today that are promoting the message of developing “self sufficiency”, building “self worth”, being a “better self” and so on. Christ put to death the old self life and exchanged it for His. It’s dead and gone, don’t try and resurrect it and try to improve it. That’s not possible. And if you do try you will fail and then you’ll just end up in self-condemnation. Nothing of God has its point of origin in us. He is the point of origin of all He has done, and is, doing in us. He said, ... “*I will* remove your heart of stone ... *I will* give you a heart of flesh ... *I will* put My Spirit in you ... *I will* cause you to walk in My statutes” ... and all he asks of us is the willingness to cooperate with Him so that He can express His life through us.

Gal 2:20 ... “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” ... is followed by ... “and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith *of* the Son of God”... not only is the life in me *His life*, but I also live by *His faith*. *He* is the one that initiated the work in me and *He* is the one that is bringing it to completion. It is His life and His faith in action, as we are ... “being transformed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor 3:18) and all that he asks of us is that we are *willing* to cooperate with Him. No more striving or vain effort on our part; just a matter of flowing with Him. We are not to try and produce the “Christ life”, that’s impossible, we are to rest in Him, trust Him and watch Him do what we cannot do. In *willingness* we respond to him and yield our faculties to Him so He can have expression through us. When walking on earth as Jesus of Nazareth, His purpose was to do the will of His Father, to be the expression of the Father to mankind, to be ... “the radiance of his glory and the exact representation of His (the Father’s) nature”... (Heb 1:3). John 5:30 and John 6:38 ... “I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent me”. Christ now lives in us and His purpose is still the same, to do the will of the Father and to express Him to the world. He does that through us.

God created us with the capacity to make choices, to exercise a free will. He also has set in motion the law of harvesting. What we sow is what we reap. Our choices carry consequences. All He asks of us is that we willingly submit to Him so that He can accomplish His will in and through us. Our availability releases His ability.

All he asks of us is that when we are confronted with the circumstances and situations of life that we look through these hassles to Christ and that we willingly submit to Him and allow Him to respond through us as He wills. That *His* will may be done, or come into effect, on earth. (Think about this each time you pray the Matt 6:9-13 prayer).

That means when someone asks for help when we are feeling exhausted and really don’t want to help, and we hear His still small voice within saying “I want to help them”, that we willing submission to Christ and say, “even though I am absolutely tired I’ll willingly help, knowing I go in Your strength and this will be a joyous and blessed time”.

It means, that when someone has been horrible to us and very unfair to us, and we just want to be horrible in return, that we choose to willingly submit to Christ within who is love and who does not take into account wrongs suffered and allow Him to be forgiving through us and to allow Him to express His love to that person despite their actions.

This is where submission to Christ is vital if we want to see the love and life of Christ flow out from within us. Rom 8:6 (paraphrase) “For the mind set on the flesh, the temporal realm, the realm of appearances and circumstances, is death, but the mind set on the Spirit, the realm of the eternal, on that which is established in Christ, is life and peace”.

So our part is willing submission to Christ who is our life and to the Holy Spirit to teach us Christ, and His part is to do the doing, to produce the life. We are the vessel in which He lives, and we are to willingly submit our faculties to Him so He can have expression through us to the world around us.

Steps of Growth

In the realm of the unseen, the eternal, we are already righteous, sanctified, complete and perfect, because of what has been established in us through Christ. Now what our Father wants is for our everyday lives, in the realm of the seen and temporal, to express what is already true and established fact. (Phil 1:6) The work he has begun (that is the part which He has established and is fact in the eternal realm) he will complete (which is the part where He is doing whatever is necessary to present us complete, mature, grown up, and whole expressers of Christ in the realm of the temporal or seen. The here and now realm).

The Father’s purpose and plan for us is to take us from having our mind will and emotions focussing on the external realm of appearances and circumstances, to a point where we are transfixed on the internal and eternal realm of the Spirit, where we live in constant union with Christ who is our life and our all and spontaneously give expression of Him in our outward words and actions.

For each person the way we are taken on this journey of growth in Christ will be different. We are all different in character, stature, intellect, etc. We have all been uniquely fashioned as individuals by our loving Father and He will work in us in the unique way that fits us. God is not limited to any one specific process, but He will complete His work in us.

Although our path to maturity will be unique to each of us, the general steps or stages of our growth in coming to full stature in Christ are as described by John in his first epistle.

1 John 2:12-14 ... “I have written to you, *little children*” ... “I have written to you, *young men*” ... “I have written to you, *fathers*” ... John is not referring to the chronological ages of the people that make up the church, he is talking about the stages believers go through in coming to maturity in Christ.

What are the characteristics of these three basic stages through which we believers progress? They are:

Little Children:

- Know their sins are forgiven
- Know they have a heavenly Father

But the little children may not necessarily know anything about the life they have in Christ and certainly have not mastered abundant living. However, they do know they have a Father to run to in time of need and they know fathers provide, protect and give encouragement. Their focus is still on themselves. *Their* sins forgiven, *their* Father. *They* are still their point of reference.

Young Men:

- Know they are strong
- Know the word of God abides in them
- Know they have overcome the evil one
- Know the two things the little children know

Young men have confidence in themselves and know they are overcomers. They have studied and know the word of God and know its promises and can stand on the word. They know they have power and have overcome the evil one; and boy do they revel in the power. There is plenty of enthusiasm in them. They are very happy out there “doing” things *for* Christ. But while they know heaps more than the little children and you can’t fault them for their enthusiasm, *they* are still their own point of reference. *They* are strong, *they* know the word, *and they* have overcome. It’s all about *them* and about what *they* are doing. They may have come to a place where they know Christ in them, but they still see Him as being there to help them perform their deeds. They have not yet come to the revelation that Christ is their life and he’s there to live His life through them. They have not yet come to the revelation that He is to be their sole point of reference.

Fathers:

- Know Him who is from the beginning
- Know all that the little children and young men know

Fathers have come to the place where it’s *who* they know and not just *what* they know. They have come to the intimate knowledge of the eternal Father. They have entered into a union relationship with Him. They have come to the revelation of His Father heart and His purpose that was established from before the foundation of the world. They know Him who was, who is and who is to come, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. They know everything is ... “*of* Him and *thorough* Him and *unto* Him” and that ... “to Him is all glory both now and forever more”. Fathers have come to the revelation that Christ alone is their point of reference. They have entered His rest.

These three stages of growth may also be seen as:

- Little children – a begetting relationship
- Young men – a governing relationship
- Fathers – an expressive relationship

They may also be seen as:

- Little children – a **resurrection** life – enjoying what Christ has done for them

- Young men – a ***reigning*** life – enjoying the power and authority they have in Christ
- Fathers – a ***realising*** life – operating in union with Christ and are vessels through whom the Father’s ultimate intention is being realised.

God invites us all to move from the early stage of ... “the fellowship of the Gospel” (Phil 1:5) where we enjoy what He does for us, to maturity where we walk in ... “the fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil 3:10) where Christ’s death operates in our soul, so that we can bring life to others as he lives through us. He wants us to ... “walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7), living from the realm of the eternal and not from the realm of the temporal.

Spiritual growth is not about us striving, and “doing”, it’s about rest, it’s about submitting to the Holy Spirit to learn Christ, so that we can be expressions of Him to the world around us.

LESSON 8: OUR FREEDOM IN DEPENDENCY

In this lesson we want to look at how we can live in freedom through a life of dependent union with Christ who is our life. We know *what* is required of us but do we know *how to* do this? So our focus here is on the “how to”.

Freedom through the Mind Set on Christ

“You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32)

Truth sets you free - error leads to bondage.

Whatever we put into our minds will affect our emotions. Our emotions are responders to our thoughts. Just watch a scary movie, and you get chills up your spine. Or a love story with a sad ending and you get all choked up and teary. There’s nothing happening directly to you, you are just sitting in the movie house, but your emotions will follow whatever is in your thoughts. The information coming in via your eyes and ears forming thoughts will influence your feelings. We can’t control our emotions, we can only control our thoughts. In the sad love scene when you feel tears welling you have to look around and say to yourself, “I’m just watching a movie, this is not really happening”, and bring yourself to your senses, change what’s going on in your mind, and then the emotions change and the tears stop. Our thoughts affect our emotions which in turn influence our actions. That’s why it is vital that we set our minds on the truth.

Phil 4:8 ... “Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, ***think on these things***”.

Rom 8:6 ... “For the ***mind*** set on the flesh is death, but the ***mind*** set on the Spirit (Christ) is life and peace”

John 17:3 ... “and this is life eternal, that they may ***know*** Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent”.

Fix your mind on Christ, know the truth, for your thoughts will affect how you feel and your feelings will influence how you act. Having the mind of Christ will enable you to walk in true freedom.

Freedom through a Life of Faith

Often we have read in books or heard preachers say that the amount or size of our faith determines what we will or will not get from God. We are told to “build up” our faith so we can receive what we want. If we don’t get what we need they say it’s our fault and that we lack faith. Is that true faith and is that what faith is all about? Well I don’t think that’s what the word really teaches about faith!

We know that as Christians we are to live by faith. Gal 3:11 says ... “the just shall live by faith”. But do we know how this is done? Do we know what true faith is? To start with let us look at what faith is not:

Faith is not a feeling: Our emotions are responders to whatever is going on in our thoughts. Emotions, which are how we feel, fluctuate with our different thoughts. Sometimes people are stirred up emotionally

by a message and then mistakenly associate these feelings with faith. As a result, with emotions stirred, they make all sorts of commitments to God, but when they are back home and the music and persuasive talking is gone, so too are the stirrings or feelings gone and they wonder about the commitments they have made, especially when they have pledged themselves into some form of bondage. They go back the next week and it all happens over again. This rollercoaster of religious feelings leads to frustration and bondage. Exercising faith may result in feelings, but feelings themselves are not faith.

Faith is not intellectual agreement with doctrine: There is an intellectual aspect to faith, but intellectual agreement in itself is not faith. Faith includes the elements of dependency and reliance. Faith always involves a decision of the will to act on what the mind believes to be true. Intellectual agreement says “I agree, the chair will hold me up” and leaves the matter there, whereas faith causes me to respond to what I believe to be true so I go and sit on the chair. Faith will always respond to the truth with associated action.

Faith is not a power to manipulate God: In true faith God is always the *initiator* and man is always the *responder*. God makes a promise or declares a truth, and faith responds with actions, depending on God for the results. Conversely, presumption is when man is initiator and tries to use “faith” as a power to force God to be the responder. Whenever we hear someone speak of “amount” of faith required to get something done, or faith as a “power”, we should be wary, as this is presumption, not faith.

There is no power in faith itself, the power is found only in the object of faith. For example, swallowing does not save us from starving to death, but rather, swallowing food will prevent starvation. Similarly, it is not faith that saves us, but rather, it is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that saves us.

Example: The clutch in a car – engages or disengages the engine to the transmission and causes the car to move. But we don’t focus on the clutch and say “Oh what a powerful, wonderful clutch! Look at how it makes the car go!” The power is in the engine, the clutch simply transfers that power to the wheels. When a bloke gets a new car and he gathers his mates around to look under the bonnet of the car it’s not to look at the clutch, they admire the engine! Look at this big v8! There is no power in faith, the power is in God. Faith simply connects that power to our humanity.

The size of our faith is not the issue. We don’t have “great” faith, we have a great God. Jesus said all we need to move the tree is faith the size of a mustard seed (Luke 17:6). What He was really saying was, you don’t need “great” or “big” faith, all you need is enough to take Him at His word. All we need is ... *“the measure of faith”* that God has given to everyone, great and small (Rom 12:3). This is a gift of God’s grace. You cannot “work it up”, you cannot manufacture it in and of yourself; all you can do is receive it and use it. The most important thing is knowing the will of God and then acting on it. If it is God’s will (as He is the initiator) for you to move the tree or mountain, all it takes for you (as responder to God’s will) is to take Him at His word and apply the faith, which simply means to speak the command. Abraham is spoken of as the father of faith because he was ... “fully assured that what He (God) had promised, He (God) was able also to perform” (Rom 4:21).

That is why it is so important for us to walk in constant union with Christ, tuned into Him to hear what He is saying and doing and wanting to accomplish through us. He is the initiator. Then we respond in faith, taking Him at his word without question, and acting on it knowing He will deliver. A life of faith springs from a life of dependent union. So it’s’ through *knowing* Him and in *knowing* Him *fully trusting* Him that you can respond in faith and know He will deliver on His word.

One last thought concerning faith - The biggest miracle that can take place is the miracle of salvation; the miracle of the exchange of our old nature for the divine nature. This miracle only takes “the measure of faith”. We did not have to work up “great” faith to be saved. So why should it take more than this little “measure” of faith for any other provision or miracle to occur?

Freedom through a Life of Dependent Union

The statement “a life of dependent union” may be an elusive concept for some people to grasp. It may be explained in the following manner: A life of dependent union is evidenced by *our love for God*, which flows through to *dependency upon God*, resulting in *obedience to God*.

This pattern is seen clearly in Jesus Christ in His earthly walk as the Perfect Man: Only He ever fulfilled the commandment ... “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt 22:37). Every moment of His earthly life He demonstrated His *love* for His Father. As a result of that *love* He lived a life of total *dependency* that is seen in statements like John 5:30 ... “by Myself I can do nothing”, or John 12:49 ... “for I did not speak of My own accord, but the Father who sent Me commanded Me what to say and how to say it”, or John 14:10 ... “don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? The words I say to you are not just My own. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me, who is doing His work”. His attitude of perfect surrender resulted in a life of perfect *obedience*, demonstrated in the Garden of Gethsemane where, in the face of having to drink the cup of our sin that would lead to His death, He prayed ... “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

As God’s children we are called to live according to this same pattern that Christ established: *love for God*, leading to *dependency upon God*, resulting in *obedience to God*. It is only as we approach life in this order that we will experience the true freedom and life that the Father has purposed for us, and it is the only way we truly demonstrate obedience to God according to His will.

If we try to obey while ignoring the necessity of *love* and *dependency*, it will not work. Why? Because, without *love* and a passion for God we will have no *motivation* for obedience, other than fear of punishment. And, apart from and understanding of what it means to live *dependently*, a life of true faith, we will have no *ability* to live obediently, and we will set ourselves up for a Romans 7 experience ... “for what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate to do”. So a lack of understanding of either of these things, *love* as our *motivation*, or *dependency* as our source of *power* or *ability*, will inevitably lead to a return to law; legalistic obedience without a surrendered heart. Quite simply, if we do not follow the God ordained pattern, we will have no motivation or power for true obedience.

So then, how do we learn to love God? First, we must understand and accept that we have no ability in and of ourselves to manufacture love for God. God is love. Love is a Person and we must receive Him. So then, we must first receive God’s unconditional love and rest in His acceptance for us before we will ever learn and be able to love Him in return. 1 John 4:19 ... “we love because He first loved us”. The more we learn and experience God’s love on a daily basis, the more we will find ourselves responding with love for Him and other people.

God’s unconditional love for us and acceptance of us is clearly seen in:

John 3:16 ... “for God so loved the world (us) that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life”

1 John 4:10 ... “ This is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as the one who would turn aside His wrath, taking away our sins”.

1 Cor 13:4-8 defines God’s love for us:

... “Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never fails ...”

Eph 1:4, 8 (KJV) ... “He (God the Father) hath chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world” ... “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved”.

Psalm 139:13-18 He knew us before He formed us in the womb and we are “fearfully and wonderfully made”

His love and acceptance for us is so clear throughout the Word; and this love and acceptance is our ***motivation*** to love Him in return through obedience.

Then, where does our power or ***ability*** to obey come from? It comes from dependency on Christ, who is our life. Jesus gave us a simple illustration to understand the source of our life in John 15: 5 ... “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing”. The branch does not *produce* the fruit, it *bears* the fruit. If you cut off the branch from the vine it will cease to bear fruit, because there is no power or ability in and of the branch itself to produce fruit. However, the branch can bear lots of fruit by doing what it was designed to do; by simply abiding in the vine and allowing the life sap of the vine to flow through it in order to produce fruit.

Branches of the vine don’t spend their time on “works” getting “burned out”, they don’t get frustrated and consider “giving it all up”, and they are not concentrating on themselves or even on bearing fruit. Branches are totally dependent on the vine to produce the fruit. All branches do is receive the life sap from the vine and bear the fruit that the life sap produces.

We are not responsible, nor able, to produce the Christian life, only Christ can do this. Our responsibility is to maintain a dependent, receiving attitude – the same attitude and availability that Jesus had towards His Father during His earth walk – and Christ will produce His fruit in us. Through our union with Christ and this dependent, receiving attitude we will be bearers of the “fruit of the Spirit” – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5: 22, 23). Our power or ability is Christ. As we acknowledge that apart from Him we can do nothing, and as we surrender to Him, rest and trust in Him, His ability is released to fulfill His will through us. Just read John 14:12-14 where Jesus speaks of the ‘greater works’ that we will do in His strength as He immediately goes on to assure us with His words, “**I** will do it”. All we do is believe and receive!

Now, *surrender* to Christ is not to be confused with *commitment* to Him. Commitment is what I promise to do for God. Surrender is placing my life, my all, in His hands and saying, “Do with me as you please”.

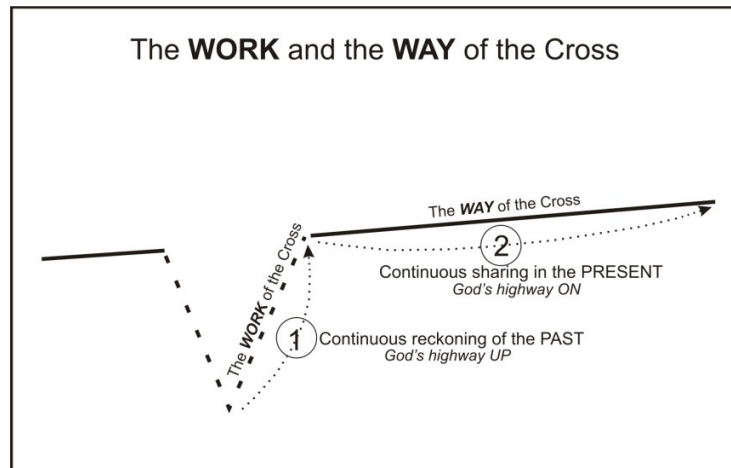
This is surrendering to a loving Father knowing He will take charge of my live and that in perfect wisdom and control He will achieve His purpose and desires through me.

Paul encourages us to this type of surrender in Rom 12:1 ... “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – which is your spiritual worship”. Our *motivation* here is ... “God’s mercy”, which is His love and grace that he has freely bestowed on us in Christ. But what does the “offering of our bodies” here mean? It’s the surrender to Christ of all claims to personal rights - rights to happiness, rights to be noticed, rights for life to be fair to me, rights to be appreciated, rights to get my own way, and so on. These rights have to be surrendered because you cannot hold onto rights and at the same time maintain a thankful heart. A thankful heart is a trusting heart. One which says, “I trust you Lord, no matter what I am facing”... “No matter what I see or feel, I know you are the way, the truth and the life and you are my all, and I am so grateful, I am thankful for that, because I know I am secure in Your loving hands”. This thankful, trusting, submitted heart is the conduit for accepting, or receiving the life sap from Christ. This submission in dependency is the source of our power or ability to obey. Obedience, or the enactment of the desires of our Father, is then a natural outcome of the ability of Christ that flows from Him through us as a result of our state of dependent union, our “connection” to Him who is the Vine. Like the light bulb, only when we are “connected” does the power flow through us, the element, with the end product of light that dispels the darkness.

To summarise; A life of dependent union is evidenced by *our love for God*, that flows through to *dependency upon God*, resulting in *obedience to God*. Love is the motivation and dependency provides the ability to obey.

Freedom through the Way of the Cross

The work and the way of the Cross:



It is important, first of all, to distinguish between the *work* and the *way* of the Cross. The *work* of the Cross includes the things accomplished by Christ to redeem us, to put to death the old nature and to place His life in us. The *way* of the Cross is the divine way of life; the lifestyle of selfless giving.

We begin by learning to appropriate the **work** of the Cross, and then as we come to the revelation of the **work** of the cross, and the principle of the cross becomes inwrought in us, we learn the **way** of the cross. So we start with the **work** of the cross, which focuses mostly on what man receives, and then go on to the **way** of the cross, which is all about what the Father receives through His sons. We enter the **way** of the Cross when the Cross ceases to be only external and when it becomes an operating principle within us.

The scriptures encourage us to move on, to the **way** of the Cross: Heb 6:1 ... “therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity ...”

Similarly Paul echoes this in regard to his ministry in 2 Cor 4:11 ... “For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you”.

Rom 8:36 ... “just as it is written, for Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

So we are daily delivered unto death “for *Jesus* sake”. Previously we saw everything for *our* sake, but now as we progress we interpret this working of death as “for *Jesus* sake”.

We are so privileged that God has chosen and designed us to be transparent vessels through which He may continually reveal to others the dying of the Lord Jesus. What seems to be “our dying” is really the “dying of the Lord Jesus” in us. This “working of death” becomes the means to life to those around us to whom it is revealed.

Divine life cannot be used:

The Christ-life can only be lived in one way, and that is, unto God and poured out for others. If we think we can settle down to “use” Him and His life for our own living and benefit, we will find that both Christ and His life won’t be ours to “use”. Divine life simply does not operate in that way. The divine way is a “giving” or “poured out” life.

As long as we continue to interpret Calvary as being for *our* benefit, we will find that we have not been delivered from the world; we have not moved from self as our point of reference to Christ as our point of reference in all things. Even though we do share in Calvary’s benefits for “the lost”, if this is all we see in Calvary, we remain in captivity to the world system of “security and reward”. Our heavenly Father longs to turn our captivity into freedom, but He will never thrust his ways upon us. He has made it our free choice to progress along His highway onwards, where life is lived unto Him.

The past and the present:

In the eternal, in God’s reckoning, the **work** of the Cross has been finished, once for all. We too must reckon on the fact of Christ’s death for us and our death with Him as a ***past tense*** reality. As Pauls says:

... “I **have been crucified** with Christ ...” (Gal 2:20)

... “Our old man **was crucified** with Him ...” (Rom 6:6)

... “Reckon yourselves to be **dead** ...” (Rom 6:11)

In our union with Christ we are delivered from sin's guilt and power by reckoning (counting on) our identification with the finished work of Christ on the Cross. This is something that was accomplished in the past, it is finished. The **work** of the Cross is a **past** tense reality.

We need to be clear about Paul's statements concerning our "dying daily". When Paul said, "I die daily" (1 Cor 15:31), he was not saying that he, or we, are called to die daily to sin. It is on this point that some confuse the **work** of the Cross with the **way** of the Cross. The **work** of the Cross is a **past** tense reality, upon which we reckon. The **way** of the Cross, is a **present** tense reality which we share with Christ continually.

Jesus entered the world as the sinless Man and needed only to embrace the **way** of the Cross. He said (Luke 9:23), "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me". Some misuse this when they teach that by some measure of self-discipline man can put the old self to death by a daily denial. To do this is to frustrate and insult the grace of God. We must keep two aspects of truth in their proper place; two different men are involved. Our Lord identified with the human race, enfolded us in Himself and took us to the grave and now God reckons that we are not only dead but also buried. This was the end of the Adam race, the end of the "first man", the end of the old Satan nature. Now, we have risen with Christ and are alive in Him, who is spoken of as the "second man", or the "last Adam" (1 Cor 15:45). In Him we are a **new** creation – a completely **new man**.

There is a difference:

The *old man* Adam experiences the **work** of the Cross, while the *new man* in Christ is called to embrace the **way** of the Cross. We reckon factually on our death to the old man always in the past tense, standing on Christ's finished work. Now, daily, in the present, we share in the new Man the divine way of life, which is the way that "works death in us, but life in others".

The principle of John 12:24 ("Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit") is to be operative as our way of life. This is what Paul refers to in 2 Cor 4:10 ... "always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body". It is faulty to assume that God would place heaven's treasure in anything other than in a "new man".

Let's look at four scriptures that apply to the new man, not the old:

1 Cor 15:30, 31 ... "Why are we also in danger every hour? I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, ***I die daily***". It is the "new man" who, because of ministry, stands in danger every hour. That's why Paul says "I die daily". There is no reference here to dying to sin. Paul is speaking of his daily willingness to hazard his life for the gospel. In verse 32 he says ... "If ... I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me if the dead are not raised"? He is not referring to dying to sin, but his willingness to sacrifice his life that others may live.

John 12:24 ... "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit". This too has nothing to do with death to sin. A farmer always plants good seed – seed with life in it. Seed is not planted for the purpose of purification, but for production. We are the Father's seed to be planted so that others might find life.

Phil 3:10 ... “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death”. Six years before Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians he wrote to the Galatians and said ... “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...” (Gal 2:20). So why should one who testifies to such a death later say ... “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death”? If you are dead, you are dead. So why does Paul long to die again or to continue to die? Simply, because he is not referring to the death or dying of the *old man*; he is speaking of the *new man* he is in Christ and his purpose to ... “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church” (Col 1:24). As Paul shared more deeply in Christ's sufferings by conforming to the way of the Cross, he would know greater resurrection power. We too have the same privilege and joy to be identified with Christ in ministry.

2 Cor 1:8, 9 ... “For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead”. Conformity to death on the resurrection side of the Cross means a deepening weakness in ourselves, not an increasing of our own strength. We so easily get revved up by a good sermon or book and feel and think we are strong in ourselves and can do great exploits! No, apart from Him we can do nothing, and His way of life is the way of the Cross. Weakness is the way of the Cross, for we live by the life and strength of Another.

It is *dying*, not *doing*, that produces spiritual fruit. The secret of a fruitful life is to pour ourselves out for others and to want nothing for ourselves. We are to leave ourselves and our needs completely in the Father's hands, for ... “He cares for you” (1 Pet 5:7). That's His job, not ours.

The *work* and the *way* of the Cross are distinct. To walk in the true freedom of our lives in Christ, to accomplish the Father's purposes, we are to willingly embrace the *way* of the Cross.

In Gen 32:22-32, we read of Jacob's midnight crisis when God put the sentence of death on the strength of the “old Jacob” and even when he came forth in his new name “Israel”, God left him with the mark of lameness. This was to be a constant reminder that he was not to walk after the old life of the flesh, but in the strength of his new life as “Israel” (having power with God, God's fighter). In a similar manner, as new creatures in Christ, we learn our own weakness in ourselves, and that our constant life and source of strength is in Him. And with Paul we can say ... “Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; **for when I am weak, then I am strong**” (2Cor 12:10)

1 Cor 1:18 “For the word of the Cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”.

The *Cross as a principle* is an expression of the Divine way of life. The *Cross as a place* is where the divine and earthly ways of life come into conflict. The *Cross as a power* is the means by which God works through believers.

Summary

Our freedom in dependency, which is our living unto the Father, is attained through;

- The mind set on Christ – truth sets you free, error binds you
- A life of faith – the measure of faith is all it takes
- A life of dependent union – evidenced by *our love for God*, that flows through to *dependency upon God*, resulting in *obedience to God*
- The way of the cross – seed planted for the purpose of production

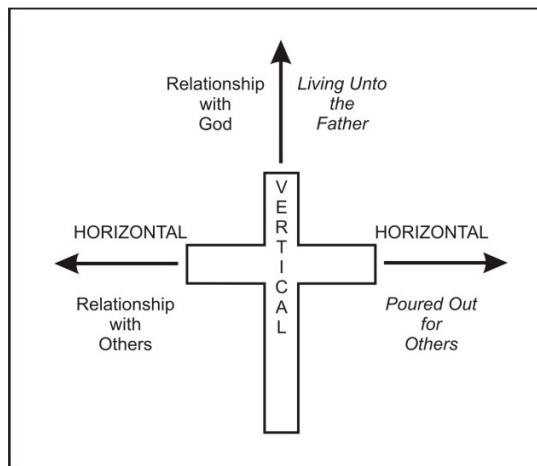
LESSON 9: CONTINUOUS REVIVAL

The Essentials to Living in Constant Victory

We have been saved for the two fold purpose of *living unto the Father*, and *poured out unto others*; that they may see Christ in us and receive His love through us, with the goal that they also may know Him and live in victory. This is how we will bring glory to the Father. This way of living is not to be a “Sunday only” or a “now and then when we feel like it” matter, but a continual expression of Christ in our everyday living. We are called to live this everyday Christ-life in front of everyday folks; it is to be experienced in our hearts before God, in our homes with one another, in our workplace, in our neighbourhood and amongst the brethren with whom we fellowship.

2 Cor 2:14, 15 “But thanks be to God, who always (not just now and again) leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place (that’s everywhere we go at all times of the day and night). For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing” ... (words in parentheses added for amplification).

Have a look at the Cross – part is **vertical**, part is **horizontal**, part reaches up, part reaches out. We have received life from above that it may be poured outwards to others.



We, the sons of the Father, the body of Christ and the temples of the Holy Spirit, receive the *vertical* outpouring from heaven (He who is Life has been poured into us), in order that there may be a *horizontal* out-moving of Christ through us, His vessels, into the world around us; the world of both sinners and saints – the unsaved and the saved. The unsaved need the light and life of Christ, the brethren need edification, exhortation and encouragement.

So there are two aspects to constantly living the victorious, abundant and triumphant life:

- a *vertical* love relationship with God, and
- a *horizontal* love relationship with those around us.

Let’s examine the essential points to a continual triumphant, victorious and joyful life:

1. *Our Walk:*

We start with our *vertical* relationship and *our walk before the Father*:

We have been set free from the yoke of slavery to sin and the flesh and accordingly Paul encourages us in Gal 5:16 ...“But I say, *walk* in the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” ... and in verse 25, after explaining the deeds of the flesh and contrasting these with the fruit of the Spirit he says ...“If we live in the Spirit, let us also *walk* in the Spirit”.

Again, Paul writes in Eph 4:17 ...“So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you *walk* no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind” ... and in the verses that follow he describes the selfish and corrupt ways we are to put off, and then in verse 23 and 24, he encourages us to ... “be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which in God has been created in righteousness and true holiness”. He’s saying, “Fix your mind on Christ (vertical relationship), learn Christ, and know Him and his ways that you may express Him in your walk”. You have the provision, now take possession and give expression of Him in your walk.

In Col 1:9, 10 Paul prays that we may be ... “filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may *walk* in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God”. Then in Col 2:6, 7 we read ... “Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so *walk* in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude”.

So these and many other scriptures encourage us in our *vertical* relationship with the Father and our *walk* before Him. We incline our ear to the Holy Spirit, our Teacher, and He reveals Christ in us to us, then we express Him in our walk and talk.

Next, we move on to our *horizontal* relationships, *our walk with those around us*:

After praying that we may ...“be filled up to all the fullness of God”... and after referring to ... “the power (God’s power) that works within us” (Eph3:19, 20), or, in other words, as we walk in union with Christ (our vertical relationship) and live by His life and power, Paul then says in Eph 4:1 ...“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to *walk* in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”. Then, following this, at the end of chapter 4 in verse 32, he goes on to encourage us to ... “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you”.

He immediately reinforces this in Eph 5:2, by saying ... “and *walk* in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma”. What God is saying to us here is, just as you have received love and forgiveness *vertically*, so we should give (and receive) love and forgiveness *horizontally*.

If you read 1 Thess 2:5-11 you’ll see that Paul records how he and Silvanus and Timothy were an example of how the sacrificial Christ life is walked in practice, for the purpose of exhorting others to do

the same, which he goes on to say in verse 12 ... “so that you would *walk* in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory”.

He then says in 1 Thess 4:1 ... “Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to *walk* and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more”. We are encouraged to progress, keep going on to maturity in our walk.

John says, 1 Jn 2:6 ... “the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to *walk* in the same manner as He walked”

In other words, the evidence of a lifestyle of abiding in Christ will be your walk in Christ – Christ seen in your walk.

The first point in living a continually triumphant life is the integrity of *our walk* before the Father (vertical relationship) and *our walk* before those around us (horizontal relationships). This is a moment by moment, step at a time, activity of the present.

2. Our Brokenness

The next point is that of *brokenness*. A triumphant life is established through brokenness. Brokenness is the way, or principle, of the Cross. Brokenness is the basis of our initial and continual relationship with our Saviour.

Salvation came to us through a *broken* Saviour:

In the passage concerning the Lord’s Supper, Paul quotes Jesus in 1 Cor 11:24 ... “this is My body which is *broken* for you”...

In the messianic prophecy the psalmist says in Ps 69:20, 21 ... “Reproach has *broken* my heart and I am so sick. And I looked for sympathy, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink”.

On Calvary’s Cross His fellowship with the Father was broken, Matt 27:46 ... “Jesus cried out ... My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

He was broken, that we might be whole. Brokenness is the principle of the Cross.

This principle is not reserved only for the Saviour, it also extends to us.

Psalm 51:17 ... “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise”.

- The Hebrew word for “broken” here is used elsewhere in the scriptures mainly in relation to the “shattering of idols”. For us, that means that anything that displaces God from first place in our lives is an idol and is to be “shattered - broken”.
- The word “contrite” means crushed by conviction. Talcum powder, that ladies and babies use, comes from the “contrited stone” (crushed talc stone). So here it speaks of the crushing of a hard stony heart to yield an attitude that is “fragrant and acceptable” to God. Also, Mk 14:3 the alabaster vial had to be broken to release the fragrant perfume.

The most crucial point concerning the way of brokenness, and this applies to all relationships of the Christ-life, is that it is a two way relationship – *horizontal* as well as *vertical*. Our lives are not to be isolated to a vertical only relationship with God. We are members of a human family too, with whom we live in *horizontal* relationships.

We cannot say we have become righteous before God, through salvation, and yet continue in unrighteousness among the folks around us. You cannot say you love God, and at the same time hate someone else.

1 John 2:10, 11 ... “The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him”.

1 John 4:20 ... “If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen”

1 John 3:16 ... “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”.

- 1 John 1:3 – two-way fellowship
- 1 John 3:7 – two-way righteousness
- 1 John 4:20 – two-way love

The two-way (vertical and horizontal) relationship of brokenness applies particularly to repentance and faith. This is made clear in Rom 10:8-10 ... that ... “with the heart man believes resulting in righteousness” ... and ... “with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation”.

True faith is acting on (confessing) what we believe. It’s the outward proclamation of the inward belief. Norman Grubb in his book “Continuous Revival” says, “Confession before man does something in our hearts that heart-faith alone can never do”. When a sinner believes in the Lord Jesus Christ he is saved, and when he confesses this outwardly he knows that he knows he is saved. Never again does he doubt his salvation. On the other hand, if he makes no confession, it’s like saying, “I make an intellectual ascent, but I’m not really sure about this matter, I’ll just keep it to myself”. And he will go on to waver and doubt his salvation.

This is what James is alluding to when he say in Jas 2:17, 22 ... “faith, if it has no works, is dead”... and after referring to Abraham offering Isaac on the altar he says ... “you see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was completed”.

Brokenness is an “open” life. It’s about “breaking open” with God and one another. The most deep rooted and subtle sin is the sin of pride. Holding on to self-esteem and self-respect. We are quick to tell everyone about our successes. How many people we have led to the Lord, or helped in their journey in Christ, or our good deeds. Partly because we want people to think highly of us. But how quick are we to talk freely about our failures and God’s dealings with us regarding sin in our lives? Impatience, temper, unfair dealings, unkindness, dishonesty and so on. It can be little things that are not necessarily sin in themselves like, sneaking a biscuit or having a restaurant lunch and going home and acting like you have had nothing all day. It’s pride that drives this. That pride must be broken.

Hiding the truth about ourselves before others – pretending to be what we are not – is hypocrisy. Let's call it what it is and deal with it.

Openness before others is the genuine proof of our sincerity before God, even as walking in righteousness and love towards others is the genuine proof of our love relationship with God.

Christ is seated in heaven, but at the same time He also lives in, and is present in, believers. How can we go to Him and ask forgiveness for something we have done in offending someone else and expect forgiveness, if we don't also ask them for forgiveness. After all it's Him that we have offended. To be open and honest with Christ is to be open and honest with Him as our God in Heaven and to be open with Him who is also present in all believers.

Jesus (Matt 25:35-40) talks about feeding the poor, visiting the prisoner, inviting the stranger in, and so on, and says ... "to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me". Brokenness says, ... "I see Christ in you and I love and respect Him so I love and respect you, for I know that what I do to you, I do to my Lord".

It's interesting to note that the first sin to be judged by God in the early Church, as recorded in Acts 5:1-11, was the sin committed by Ananias and Sapphira. They pretended that they were making a bigger sacrifice than what they really were doing. They tried to hide the truth. They could not hide the truth from God, because He was present in believers. Ananias and Sapphira certainly did not live in triumph.

If we want to walk in continual victory and triumph, we must walk in a two-way brokenness – which is expressed in our heart attitude to God, and by our confession and actions toward those around us. It's an "open" life where pride is shattered and love, righteousness and honesty prevails.

3. Our Joy

Joy is the mark of maturity and evidence of a triumphant life. Joy is the one thing present in those who have been captivated by the heavenly way and purpose of life. Why? Because they have learned to live in the strength and source of Joy Himself. Joy is not optional; it's imperative and should be exhibited by everyone who runs to win. "The joy of the Lord is our strength" (Neh 8:6), therefore, joy is the strength of God's people and it is their chief characteristic.

Don't confuse joy with happiness. Happiness results from happenings (temporal or seen realm). It is an exuberance that springs from the dynamics of the soul, the dynamics between the mind and emotions. On the other hand, Joy has its source in God (eternal realm) and flows to those who have learned the abiding union. The sap of Joy flows from the Vine through the abiding branches.

Heb 12:2 ... "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the *joy* set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God".

Christ endured the Cross because His eyes were fixed on the goal, not the pathway. When the goal is sufficiently important, the pathway is a secondary matter. He endured the Cross because He lived with his eye on the future – on the glorious anticipation of the joy that he would bring the Father, and the fullness of joy He would then share with his brethren. It was not what was happening *to* Him, but what was being achieved *through* Him that caused Him joy.

The triumphant life is all about the *continual flow* of joy, the *fullness* of joy, which is to be evident in our lives. So our focus now is not on the fact of joy in the believer's life, but on the continuity of flow.

1 John 1:3-4 ... "what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our *joy* may be made complete".

John speaks of our two-way relationship, with the Father and with one another, and links the two-way relationships of openness with joy, that is to characterize our daily walk.

David in Ps 23:5 says ... "my cup overflows"... Overflowing joy is to be the normal, daily, continual experience of the believer in Christ – not just an occasional thing.

What causes this overflowing of joy to stop? Sin. We must call it what it is. We have convenient names and excuses for the disturbances to our continual flow of joy, but at the end of the day it's sin in one form or another. We blame all sorts of things for our bad tempers, unkindness, impatience, and so on – we blame stress, worry, nerves, tiredness, and so on. But these are excuses, and if we are honest we will allow the Holy Spirit to shine the light of truth on the situation and reveal the underlying sin.

1 John 1:5-10 ... "This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us".

God is light. The main function of light is to expose and expel darkness. It reveals things as they are. As it says in Eph 5:13 ... "but all things become visible when they are exposed by the light"...

God is light and as such he inexorably shines on us and in us and to reveal things as they are in His sight. He is not forceful, but if we are honest and teachable His light is inescapable.

John 3:19-21 ... "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God".

The sinner will not be lost because of his sin, as Christ has already atoned for his sin, he will be lost because he has refused the light. The destiny of the unbeliever hangs on whether he loves darkness or comes to the light.

Coming to the light is equally important to the believer as there is a necessity to "walk in the light".

1 John 1:6 ... "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth".

A believer can walk in darkness if he so chooses. He can refuse to admit what God sees and says about his state; he can try and cover up by using other names for what is actually sin in his life. He can be a hypocrite and say, “there’s nothing wrong, I’m walking in fellowship with God”, and spout out lots of religious clichés and quote lots of scriptures that make him look ok, but in reality he is walking in darkness. Ultimately, he can be self-deceived and say he has no sin (verse 8).

God will not condemn us because ... “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1). If we walk in childlike faith and fellowship with Him, every moment of the day, step at a time, if something happens and we slip up and our cup of joy ceases to overflow, He who is Light will show us what the sin is that is hindering us. He will call it like He sees it, and then ... “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). “Confess” really means “to agree with God” on a matter.

Confession itself does not cleanse us; the blood of Jesus cleanses us. Confession is the humble acknowledgement and speaking out, calling it like it is, of our sin; it’s the “walking in the light”. If we “walk in the light”, the blood automatically cleanses us.

Confession is two-way; vertical before God and horizontal with fellow man. James encourages the horizontal confession in Jas 5:16 ... “confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed”.

Conviction, confession and cleansing will in turn cause the overflow of joy to resume in our lives. It will turn the tap of joy back on.

We don’t stop there. There is another type of “confession” that is vital to living in continual triumph.

4. *Our Testimony*

The confession that is of utmost importance is our “testimony of Christ”.

Confession of sins takes place as and when we err, while our *testimony* of Christ is our constant privilege and calling.

This testimony is twofold. It is the testifying of the word and of Christ to unbelievers to show them the way of salvation, and it is the testifying to those around us, especially the brethren, of the mighty power of God at work in us to “conform us to His image”. It’s the sharing with others the dealings of God in our lives that they may be encouraged in their faith. The purpose is not a morbid focus on our failings, but a magnification of Christ and His power to deliver.

Brokenness (openness and honesty) before the brethren is required as we testify. We started our journey by a two-way brokenness, vertically by acknowledging to God our need for salvation and horizontally by our confession to man of our belief in Christ, and we must now continue this way in our daily walk. Our testimony as to God’s deliverance belongs to the body, the church. We don’t live our lives unto ourselves. We are part of the body of Christ, and our function or malfunction affects the whole body.

The only thing that will hinder this testimony is pride. Something may happen in our home, an altercation of some form, and then we confess and make good with one another and with God. But are we willing to share our testimony with others that they may gain from our victory over sin and have opportunity with us

to give praise to God for His faithfulness? Or do we want to have everyone think we are perfect and not subject to failure. Do we just want others to think we are a “nice”, “spiritual” person and never get angry, or never say unkind things to our spouse? Is that not hypocrisy? Is the very decision to “hide” our home life not the very thing that will stop the flow of joy in our lives?

Our willingness to testify of God’s dealings in our lives is proof of our genuine repentance and genuine brokenness. For me to be completely open before God and man means I must be ready at all times to share about His dealings with me. That is what it means to “walk in the light”.

The reason we are so insensitive to the “little sins” in our daily lives, and the reason we pass them over so easily, is because we are not too ashamed about them, which means we see no real need for repentance and confession. We sort of acknowledge we have erred and go in secret to God and bank on His mercy and easy-going forgiveness, and then think we have dealt with the matter.

But if instead, we start “walking in the light” with others and share with them what has happened and of God’s wonderful deliverance we will find two things occur: firstly, we enter a new sense of shame and repulsion for sin, and, secondly, we walk in a deeper assurance of our cleansing and liberation from the sin (that’s important as Satan will be there to cast doubt on us). Then we again walk in triumph and our “cup” overflows with joy.

This continual practice of openness before others makes us far more alert concerning daily sin. When we walk in the light with others as well as with God, we come alive to attitudes, or actions, of sins in our lives that went unnoticed before. It also has effect on those with whom we testify. It quickens their desire to “walk in the light”. Joy and praise are infectious. It convicts and leads others to deal with their “secret” sins. This alone is how great revivals break out and spread.

Let us read and heed the words of Hebrews 12:1-13 and deal with ... “the sin which so easily entangles us”. As we walk in brokenness with God and one another, the sins which used to so easily beset us lose their power and occur less frequently, until eventually we triumph over them.

A word of caution. Don’t mistake temptation for sin. Temptation is not sin. Jesus was tempted in all points like we are. In each case He replied to Satan’s lies with the truth, He said ... “it is written”... It’s what you do with the temptation that counts. Temptation only results in sin when we yield to it.

Also, we must be careful to maintain liberty and spontaneity in the matter of giving testimony. If we are not careful we can slip into a legalistic ritual. This is not to be a “walk by rule” matter, but a following the promptings of the Spirit as He leads you to share. Especially in small groups, we must not develop a “this is the time you are all expected to give a testimony” and a pressure to perform. Everyone must feel free at all times to share but the testimony must come from our walk in Christ, as He prompts us to speak and tells us what we are to say. He will tell us what to say, when to say it, and with whom we should share it. Sensitivity is needed as some things we want to share may cause certain people to stumble instead of building them up. Not everything is to be shared with everyone, but everything is to be shared with some as the Spirit leads.

God gives light to each one of us in His way and in His timing as He alone knows will fit us. It is His duty, not ours, to deal with each individual to bring them to freedom and maturity. Our job is to simply testify humbly and joyfully whatever God shows us to say of His dealings in our lives.

Brokenness is simply obedience to the light. It may be costly and painful to our pride, but we must step out in faith, and as we do that, even in small steps at first, we will see the immediate results and benefits and it will get easier as we go.

There is one more stage in our walk of triumph; the matter of mutual exhortation and encouragement.

5. *Our Exhortation and Encouragement*

The early church enjoyed fellowship where they broke bread from house to house (Acts 2:46), they all had a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation (1 Cor 14:26). They enjoyed regular fellowship and mutual exhortation. Today's church has largely deteriorated into two groups, the preachers and the preached-to. The system generally either has little flexibility for folks to share freely, or they are too afraid to share for fear of "stepping out of line". Fellowship has largely been replaced by preaching. Hebrews 10:25 has often been quoted as the summons to gather people into a large group for Sunday services. If we read this verse in its context we will see it actually refers not to gathering people for preaching but for mutual exhortation. Heb 10:24, 25 ... "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near". This setting allows for the Holy Spirit to have leadership, not just one outstanding individual. It allows for the individual members of the body to function in their gifts and callings. This is how Eph 4:15, 16 can be realized in practice.

Eph 4:15, 16 ... "but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love".

So if we want to walk in continual triumph and revival we need to give attention to mutual exhortation and encouragement. We are our brother's keeper. It's our duty to be faithful to our brothers and sisters in the Lord to help them when they are not on top spiritually. Look for opportunities for quiet fellowship. Encourage participation in home fellowships. Visit or phone folks regularly, to provide them with encouragement. Obey the Holy Spirit as He prompts you to go to someone, or to share a word, or to pray, or to exercise a gift for the exhortation of those with whom you fellowship.

But don't let this deteriorate into legalistic formal ritual. Start at home, and expand this mutual exhortation into other settings, with other individuals, your social contacts, into small groups, or into your work place. Follow the spontaneous leading of the Spirit and you will walk in triumph, and so will those around you.

Summary

If we want to see our neighbourhood, our city, our state and our nation come to Christ revival must first come to the church. When the essentials for continual victorious living are being upheld and believers are operating in a state of continuous revival, the love, light, life and joy of Christ will be overflowing and the unsaved will not be able to resist the power of God that has been unleashed on them. For love never fails. Our attention as believers, therefore, should be focused on the (vertical and horizontal) integrity of our walk, our brokenness, our testimony and our exhortation that ensures the continual overflow of our cup of joy.

Acknowledgement – the outline used in these notes has been drawn largely from "Continuous Revival" by Norman Grubb. The reader is encouraged to obtain and read this book.

LESSON 10: ENTER HIS REST

Detached from the World

As new creatures in Christ we live in this world, of the temporal and seen, but we are not of it. If we are to live overflowing lives of triumph and joy we will have to choose to detach ourselves from preoccupation with the cares and values of this world.

Mk 4:18, 19 ... “And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful”.

Jesus gave us a warning in this parable of what happens to those who are preoccupied with the values and pulls of the world.

The challenge that faces us is the question: are we too busy doing things that we have little or no time for intimacy with God? One of the Devil’s favourite tricks to keep us from the abiding union is to have us busy all the time. He doesn’t mind if we are doing good things either, so long as we are too busy to wait on God. He knows our strength comes from an abiding union with Christ.

God is not interested in us “fitting in” a meeting here and there, grab a little reading of the word now and again, some quick prayers and then off to “doing” we go. He wants us to live with our “receivers tuned in” to Him at all times.

The more we allow the world’s cares to beset us by dictating priorities, the more we will be trapped into the world system. Jesus said “where your treasure is, there will your heart will be also” (Lu 12:34). Jesus lived His earthly life detached, not from the people, but from the world. All He wanted was to do the will of His Father. There wasn’t anything of the external realm that could enhance His identity. He did not have to have a bunch of wealth to be a “somebody” important. He lived in total freedom because there wasn’t anything of this world’s possession that He wanted to possess more than he wanted to be possessed by His Father.

If there is something of this world that has its hold on us, our life will be in turmoil. There will be no peace. This is not to say we must not work for a living. We have to do that. 1 Thess 4:11 says ... “make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need”. We are to work to make provision for our families needs, but, note also, it is the leading of a “quiet life” that is significant. That means an “inner quiet”, or peace, that penetrates and influences every part of our lives. God changes us from inside out. It’s being preoccupied with Him who is our life that is of prime importance. We are to put aside preoccupation with the temporal things and cleave to the eternal, to Him who is our life. Luke makes this clear:

Luke 9:23-25... “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?” Note the condition: “deny himself and take up his cross daily”, which really means detach

yourself from the things of the world that give you false identity. Cleave to Christ, your identity is found in Him alone. Rest in Him.

Enter His Rest

In the following passage take particular note of how many times it uses the words “today” and “enter His rest”: “Today” is mentioned 5 times and “rest” is mentioned 11 times! Repetition says God is trying to emphasise something here, so we need to pay particular heed to what He is saying.

Hebrews 3:6 – 4:11 ... “but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, “**Today** if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw My works for forty years. Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, ‘they always go astray in their heart, and they did not know my ways’; as I swore in My wrath, ‘they shall not **enter My rest**.’ Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “**today**,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, while it is said, “**today** if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me.” For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not **enter His rest**, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief. Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of **entering His rest**, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed **enter that rest**, just as He has said, “As I swore in my wrath, they shall not **enter My rest**,” although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: “and God **rested** on the seventh day from all His works”; and again in this passage, “they shall not **enter My rest**.” Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, He again fixes a certain day, “**today**,” saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, “**today** if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.” For if Joshua had given them **rest**, He would not have spoken of another day after that. So there remains a **Sabbath rest** for the people of God. For the one who has **entered His rest** has himself also **rested** from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to **enter that rest**, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience”...

Paul is writing to believers who had begun but not progressed in Christ. He illustrates the position they were in by likening them to the situation the children of Israel were in, who were brought out of the bondage of Egypt, but had failed to enter into the promised land of Canaan. They stopped short of the good things God had promised them. And the reason they did this was because of “unbelief”. They did not continue to trust and totally submit themselves to God and His ways.

It was never God’s first purpose for them to spend so long wandering around in the wilderness. His purpose for redeeming them from the slavery of Egypt was to bring them into the Promised Land that flowed with milk and honey, a land of fruitfulness and plenty.

Deut 6:23 ... “He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers”.

To get to the Promised Land they had to travel through the wilderness of Sinai, which was a difficult desert. After the Red Sea crossing they were full of joy and praise for God. But after a short while in the tough desert their new found faith was tested and it did not stand up. Each time the desert conditions were hard (things in the seen or temporal realm) they doubted in their hearts and began to murmur against God. They despaired and even wanted to turn back to Egypt. No wonder God said ... “Therefore I was angry with this generation”... So as a result of their unbelief and murmuring, for forty years they wandered around until the entire generation died, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb.

Now these things are types and figures of us. We were all born into the slavery of sin and dominated by “the god of this world”, Satan. But the Father purposed to have a people for Himself, saved out of the world, and through the redemption of His Son He has this family. Like Israel, who were redeemed by the blood of a lamb, we are redeemed by the blood of The Lamb. And like the children of Israel who were redeemed for a purpose, for something better, the Father's purpose was to bring us out of slavery to sin and into the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only in Him do we find that all the longings of our hearts are satisfied as we fellowship with Him. In Him we find the Bread and Water of Life. In Him alone we put to flight all the enemies and have victory over sin and Satan. Only in Him do we have lasting peace and joy.

“Canaan” is something we are to enter *here and now*. In the Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 passage the words “today” are repeated five times. Canaan is a picture of the life of satisfaction and liberty in Christ we are to enter *here and now*. The Father has brought us out that He may bring us in, and nothing else will satisfy His heart, or ours.

What is our “Canaan”?

First, we need to understand what our “Canaan” is. In the passage from Hebrews, immediately after quoting Psalm 95, where God swears that the children of Israel shall not enter His rest, which is Canaan Land, the writer goes on to say in Heb 3:14 ... “For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end”... Implied then, is that the Promised Land, “Canaan”, for the believer is being made “a partaker of Christ”. Not an imitator of Christ, not even a servant of Christ, but a partaker of Christ. What I partake of, which is like eating food, becomes a part of me. So this union with Christ is where He lives His life in me and I am joined, inseparably, to Him. It's not my life being improved, but His life being imparted. So, Christ Himself and partaking of Him then is our Canaan.

Then, the verse also tells us about the condition on which we are made partakers of Christ. It says we become partakers ... “*if* we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end”, or as the Phillips translations says, if ... “we steadfastly maintain until the end the trust with which we began”. The same trust and dependency we started with when we came to him for salvation, is to be the trust and dependency we live by continually, right to the end. So, the “*if*” implies that this condition could be fulfilled one day, but not the next. For us, therefore, the important question is “how is it with me right now?” Our “Canaan” experience, our abiding union, is to be contemporary and continuous.

The passage says ... “steadfastly maintain until the end the *trust* with which we began”... So, what is our trust in? It’s in the *grace* of God. We will find in passage after passage throughout the Scriptures, where “Assurance” or “confidence” or “faith” or “trust” is used, *grace* is implied as its object. It’s faith or trust in the grace of God that causes a sinner to draw near, and confidence in grace that brings a believer who has failed back into fellowship with God. So verse 14 is really saying we are to hold fast the beginning of our assurance or confidence *in grace* firm to the end. The same confidence in grace that brought us out of Egypt’s slavery brings us out of the wilderness into Canaan. In the same way that we acknowledged we could not come to salvation by any works of our own, but through the grace of God, so must we continue to trust in God’s grace alone to bring us into the fullness of Christ. The life and fullness of Christ are made available to us always and only on the basis of grace. An attitude of “brokenness” or “openness” acknowledges it is by grace alone that we stand. It’s not by any works of our own that we partake in Christ. It’s only as we bow before Him empty that we are filled. This confidence in grace must be contemporary and continual. Now and always, to the end.

That’s why so many times it says “today”. It does not matter that I came out of Egypt and entered into Canaan in the past, what matters is what is happening in me today. Today if I hear His voice, I must not harden my heart. That’s why we must walk in brokenness, exhorting one another, challenging and encouraging one another in love, so that we are not hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. *Today*, He calls us to return to our abiding union; to enter His rest.

But there’s more to this that we need to understand. So let’s dig a little deeper and see what we find.

There are two different words used in these passages that get translated into our word ‘rest’:

In all verses in the passage we read, except chapter 4:9, where we find the word, the word “rest” comes from the Greek word *katapausis* which means “a state of settled or final rest”. The Hebrew word for rest as quoted here from psalm 95 is the word *menuha* which means “rest” or “resting place”, and denotes the place or state of rest. So from both the Greek and Hebrew words the meaning is, or implies: “to rest and be finally settled, having desisted from any former state we have been in”.

The other word for “rest” used in Heb 4:9 is the Greek word *sabbatismos* which means “to cease or to rest from labour”. This is the reference to a “Sabbath rest”. The Hebrew word *shabat* means rest, cease, desist, put to an end, to sever, and is used to mean “to put to an end, to cause to cease”.

So if we put all the meanings together what we end up with is that we are to “desist, put to an end, sever ourselves from, or cease from, all our works and enter a place and state of permanent rest”. In the context of the passages where “rest” is used, that resting place is in Christ. So, today, we are to find our resting place in Him who is our life and our all and to remain in that place continually. So then, our “Canaan” is simply living in Christ, abiding in Him, in “His rest” in the here and now.

It is interesting to note, from the story of creation, in Gen 2:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31 after each stage in creation from day 1 to 5 God looks at His works and says it was good, and at the end of day 6, the day man was created, after looking back over all His work of creation, He says it is very good. However, according to Gen 2:1-3, on the seventh day, when all His works were completed, He rested from all His works and He did not just say this day was good or very good, instead he *blessed* the day and *sanctified* it. Everything God made He called very good, however, He only sanctified and blessed the seventh day,

indicating that the climax of creation was not the creation of the world, the sun moon and stars, the animals, plants or even man, as man-centeredness often interprets or would like to think, but it was the seventh day, the day of rest, the day of inheritance or realization of His ultimate intention.

So we are to be mindful that we are His inheritance and we are to enter His rest and rejoice in Him knowing that ... “of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things. To Him be glory both now and forever” (Rom 11:36).

Now if “rest” means we are to “desist”, or “cease from” the activities and attitudes of the “wilderness life”, then what is it we are to stop doing? To answer that, we need to go back to the example of the children of Israel in the wilderness and find out what the “wilderness” represents.

What is the wilderness?

Living in the “wilderness”, a spiritually dry place, is the opposite of living in “Canaan”, a spiritually fruitful place. Instead of finding our holiness and sanctification in Christ, in the wilderness we are seeking to find it in and of ourselves. In the wilderness we are trying to find something in ourselves on which to build our hope of peace, some evidences of faith, or trying to do something feel good about ourselves, and always ending up in condemnation when we fail to find what we are looking for. This leads to despair, which leads to thinking there is no grace that can reach us and to the point of wanting to throw in the towel with the Christian life. This is the extreme of the wilderness experience and a position of grave peril. That’s why Paul sounds his warnings in Heb 3:12 ... “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God”... and in Heb4:1 ... “Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it”... and again in Heb 4:11 ... “Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience”.

There is no hope of finding holiness in ourselves, no matter what good things we do. In the past as unbelievers we were dominated by the flesh and the self-centered drives that had their source in the sin nature. Our minds were programmed to live by that self-centeredness. But we will find it is easier to get blood out of a stone than get holiness out of the flesh. The flesh is not only incapable of producing holiness, but it actually produces the opposite, self-centered actions and reactions.

It has never been God’s plan for us to be “made over”, or fixed up. His only plan has been for us to be made new, born again, and then to live by the life of His Son. That’s why Paul asks in Gal 3:3 ... “Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” Even more, in the “wilderness” the believer is living his life largely under the law or mixture of law and grace. If we as believers are not willing to enter His rest, choosing to live by law rather than resting totally in the truth of God’s unconditional love and grace, we are behaving just like the Israelites. The problem for us then is that we cannot go back to Egypt and become lost again any more than a butterfly can go back to being a worm. So the butterfly ends up crawling instead of flying. The end result is that we end up with no choice but to set up camp and try and make the best of the wilderness. Like Las Vegas in the Nevada desert, we set up a self pleasing playground in the wilderness. Many Christians have done this. They have flashy programmes, and fancy buildings and lots of activities to keep everyone occupied with supporting the programme. For a while its fun but soon they discover they are on a pseudo-spiritual treadmill, having to go here and go there and do this and do that all the time to feel approved and feel good about themselves

and to gain God's acceptance. Everything is done in their strength rather than God's, so burnout is inevitable. They end up asking, "Is this what Jesus meant abundant life to be all about?" But by then they have grown cynical and burned out and want to throw the whole thing in and give up. The sad reality is that God has not called us to try and do certain things or not do certain things (live by law) in order to make ourselves acceptable and holy in his sight. All God wants is for us to grasp by faith the fact that Christ has done it all, and there is nothing left for us to do or to perform to be acceptable to Him. He is saying, "I have done it all, now just rest in that fact. Rest in Me, get to know Me, enjoy fellowship with Me, because I love you and want your fellowship. I want to let My abundant life flow through you".

The thing that made God mad about the children of Israel in their wilderness experience was their unbelief; their hardness of heart and lack of trust in Him. They did not know Him. Heb 3:10 ... "they always go astray in their heart, and they did not know My ways"... Their interests were purely selfish and self-centered. John 17:3 says ... "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent". Continual walking in eternal or abundant life comes through an intimate union with Christ as we learn His ways and gain His mind and walk in His will. This is a life of absolute trust in Him.

Active, but at rest

Entering His rest is not about some passive kind of existence. Jesus was not inactive, in fact the opposite is true, He was very active, but He was always at rest; at rest in the Father. Also, it's not about me trying to do something or not do something to make myself acceptable before I could be at rest. Heb 4:10 says ... "For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His". The key to entering God's rest is not to cease from all activity, it's not about a passive form of existence, but rather, it is to cease, to desist, to completely end all labour that has its beginning point in us. Our point of reference is not in ourselves, it's in Christ. We are to rest from activity that has us as the point of reference. We enter His rest when we learn from Jesus who is our prime example of living from the life of Another. Just as He lived as Man on earth by the life of His Father, so must we live by His life. Our Lord who created the world lives in us and wants to express Himself through us every day of our lives.

Matt 11:28-30 ... "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls". Through the intimate union with Christ, His life will be spontaneously reproduced and the life that flows out of us will be His life. Yoked to Him we will find it easy. Not us trying to produce His life, which is impossible, but His life spontaneously flowing in and through us. Then we will know peace of mind and stability in our emotions. That's not to say the path in the seen and temporal will be easy, the way of the Cross is always challenging to the flesh, but you will have inner peace as you will be walking out the life that the Father has invited and enabled you to participate in with Him.

The pathway to His rest

What do we have to do, what does it take for us to rest from our own works, as God did from His? The answer is we must trust Him totally and absolutely at all times.

Heb3:19-4:3 ... "So we see that they were not able to enter because of ***unbelief***. Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For

indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by *faith* in those who heard. For *we who have believed enter that rest*".

By faith we rest in what God has already done within us in the unseen and eternal realm. He has made us His righteous, holy, blameless children through Christ. We stand uncondemned before Him. Our old man died with Christ on the cross. We have been raised with Him as completely new creatures, born of His Spirit, His Seed in us. He has made us perfect in His sight. In Christ he has made us one spirit. We are containers of Christ and through us He manifests His life to the world around us. The Father is pleased with us, He delights in us, and He loves us. It is His pleasure to live His life in us as us.

We will never find this out from the realm of the seen or temporal. The "wilderness" mentality will not lead you to that understanding. These truths are only revealed to us, brought to our understanding, by God through His word and by His Spirit. That's why in the same passage of scripture immediately after exhorting and encouraging us to "enter His rest", the Holy Spirit through the writer to the Hebrews goes on to say in Heb 4:12 ... "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart". Most times folks will quote that verse in isolation, but it is written in the context of entering God's rest. We must clearly understand that we cannot enter His rest as long as we are living on soul-based appearances and feelings, based on the things we see and feel around us, instead of on the realities of what God has already done in our spirit in the unseen and eternal realm.

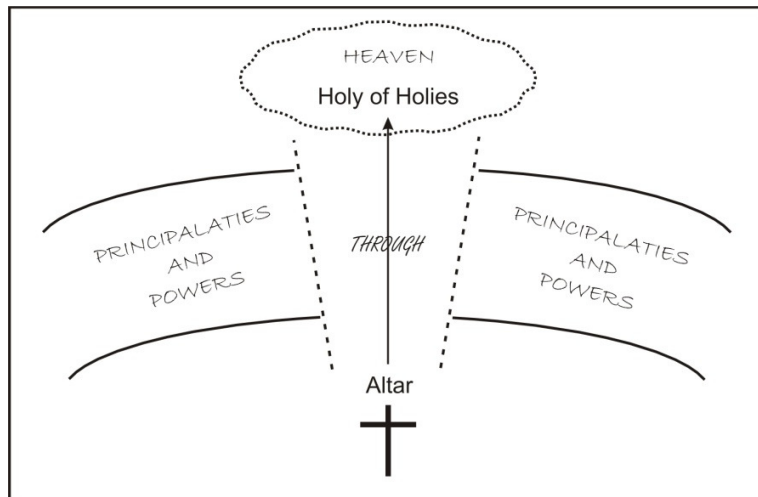
So how can we follow the exhortation to be diligent to enter God's rest? It's not by striving or works that we enter. Simply turn your mind to Christ within. Pray as Paul prayed in Eph 1:17-19 ... "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him ... that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe". By turning in trust and bowing in dependence on Christ we can know Him and His ways. We can understand what it means to be His glorious inheritance. In the face of all odds we can live by His life and power. We can become "partakers of Christ".

Paul writes to believers and says in Gal 4:19 ... "my children, with whom I am again in labour *until Christ is formed in you*". By resting, by abiding in Christ, in total trust and confidence in Him, and by inclining ourselves to the Teacher, the Holy Spirit, He will bring us to maturity where Christ is formed in us. Our spirit is the place of the divine habitation while we are here on earth. We are to turn to Christ who is our life and to the Holy Spirit whose job it is to reveal Christ in us to us, that we may know Him and express Him in our walk and talk. The more God takes us within, to know him who is life eternal, the more people around us will see Him in us.

No hiding place

We can't hide in the wilderness, for ... "there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb 4:13). We live before our Father who sees and knows everything about us. Our inner motives, thoughts and attitudes are laid bare before Him. That's why brokenness is so important. To live broken, open honest lives before Him allows Him to bring to completion that which He has begun in us. That way Christ is formed in us. The rest we are called to is

a rest of heart through surrender and obedience. So, rather than hiding in the “wilderness” where failure is guaranteed, let us heed the rest of the words in this passage to the Hebrews. Heb 4:14-16 ... “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need”.



He has passed through the heavens, through the principalities and powers over which He has total dominion and victory. As High Priest He has carried the sacrificial blood of the Lamb from the altar of Calvary through to the holy of holies in heaven and the atonement for our sin has been accepted and is complete before our God. We now stand before Him righteous, holy, blameless and complete. There is no condemnation for us who are in Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ understands and knows our weaknesses, but He assures us that even as He was tempted and overcame, so He is our strength and upon Him we can depend in tough times. And finally, He invites us to ...“draw near with confidence to the throne of grace” and are assured that His grace will be ours and His help will be freely given in our time of need.

Why would we not want to enter His rest? What better place can there be than resting in total trust and confidence in Him who is our life and our all. For ... “in Him we live and in Him we move and in Him we have our being” (Acts 17:28).

As Dan Stone (co-author of “The rest of the Gospel”) aptly said, “There is a place of quiet rest, but it isn’t in this world. There is a place of quiet rest, but it isn’t in your senses. There is a place of quiet rest, but it isn’t in your soul. There is a place of quiet rest. It’s in God”.

Rest in Him. Christ in you, the hope of glory.