

# The Gospel

PORTRAYING CHRIST  
AS CRUCIFIED

## **STUDY GUIDE**

National Youth Convention 2019

## THE GOSPEL

*Portraying Christ as crucified*

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National Youth Convention 2019

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# Contents

## **PREFACE**

The testimony of Jesus	7
A new covenant established	8
The great Shepherd of the sheep	9
Birthered by water and blood	9
Beholding Christ	11
Journeying with Christ	12

## **INTRODUCTION**

Key definitions associated with the gospel of sonship	15
The Everlasting Covenant	15
The law covenant	16
The New Covenant	16
Living by law	17
The implications of the fall of mankind	18
The other law and iniquity	18
Sin	18
Transgression	19
The ministry of the word	19
A messenger of Christ	19
Spirit of grace and supplication	20
Faith	20
Grace	20
Our sanctification	21
An anointing	21
Identity	21
Name	21
Authority	22
A measure of faith	22
Talent	23
Living epistles	23

The fellowship of Christ's offering	23
Priesthood	24
Offering	24
God's righteousness	25
Self-righteousness	26

## OVERVIEW

The offering journey of Christ	27
Introduction	27
Overview of Christ's offering journey	28
Map - The seven wounds of Jesus Christ	29
Tuesday 13th Nisan/Abib	30
Morning	30
Wednesday 14th Nisan/Abib	30
6:00 pm (after sundown) - the upper room	30
Approx. 9:00 pm - the Mount of Olives	30
Approx. 12:00 am - the garden of Gethsemane	31
Approx. 1-1:30 am - the garden of Gethsemane	32
Approx. 2:00 am - before Annas and Caiaphas	32
Approx. 3:00 am - before Caiaphas the High Priest	33
Early in the morning - before Pilate	33
Early in the morning - before Herod	34
Early in the morning - before Pilate a second time	34
Early in the morning - in the Praetorium	35
6:00 am - presented for crucifixion	35
9:00 am (the 3rd hour) - Christ nailed to the cross and lifted up at Calvary	36
12:00 pm (the 6th hour) - darkness fell over the whole land	37
3:00 pm (the 9th hour)	37
Approx. 4:00 pm - Christ's side was pierced	38
Thursday 15th Nisan/Abib	38
6:00 pm - in the tomb	38

## **THE LAST SUPPER**

Jesus washed the disciples' feet	39
Washed to offer	41
Why the feet?	42
Peter and Judas	43

## **THE FIRST WOUND**

Sweat as great drops of blood	45
Introduction	45
The fulfilment of the Father's will	46
Dealing with our self-determined will	47
Coming back from the death of sin	47
He died for our sin	48
Born again through the sin offering	49
The fellowship of prayer	51
Introduction	51
The word of the cross	52
Abiding in the fellowship of Their prayer	53
Participating in the offering of Christ	53
Strengthened in prayer	54

## **THE SECOND WOUND**

Bruised for our iniquities	57
The light of life	58
Self-righteous Peter	58
Self-righteous Judas	59
A righteousness to be revealed	61

## **THE THIRD WOUND**

Chastened for our peace	63
Chastened while there is hope	64
The peace of God	65
Peter's restoration	65
Bringing forth fruit to maturity	66

## **THE FOURTH WOUND**

By His stripes we are healed	69
Healing to our spirit	70
You and your temperament	71
Physical problems and abilities	72
Summary	72
Key definitions	75
The first man	75
The natural man	76
The old man	76
The carnal man	77
The new man	77
Abilities and talents	78

## **THE FIFTH WOUND**

The crown of thorns	81
Introduction	81
The crown of thorns	82
Cursed is the ground	83
Because of sin	83
For our sake	84
Thorns and thistles	85
Making a name for ourselves	85
Receiving the word of God	86
The issue of comparing	87
Conclusion	87
The testimony of the apostle Paul	89
Introduction	89
Weakness - Paul's mode	90
The testimony of the apostle Paul	91
Paul's journey	92
A thorn in the flesh	94
Concluding note - finding contentment and taking courage	95

## **THE SIXTH WOUND**

Christ crucified	97
Introduction	97
The sixth wound	98
Pierced for our transgressions	99
The two thieves	100
Constrained to the cross	101

## **THE SEVENTH WOUND**

Blood and water from His side	103
Introduction	103
The word of the cross pierces our heart	104
Piercing opens the heart	104
Conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement	104
Resisting the Holy Spirit	105
A dull heart cannot be pierced	105
A new and living way was opened	106
The conquering Slave	106
Obedience to the will of God	107
Born from above by the word of God	107
Whoever is born of God does not sin	107
Reigning in life	108



# Preface

*Victor Hall*

## The testimony of Jesus

In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul wrote, 'Therefore, when [Jesus] came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. *Then I said*, 'Behold, I have come - in the volume of the book it is written of Me - to do Your will, O God'.'" ' Heb 10:5-7. Paul was quoting a psalm written by King David, which prophetically expressed Christ's own testimony regarding His coming in the flesh, and then His offering in Gethsemane. Psa 40:6-8.

We know that Jesus received His physical, mortal body from the Father in the womb of the virgin Mary. Luk 1:35. Mat 1:20. This is when the word became flesh and dwelt among men. Joh 1:14. *Then*, in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus declared, 'Behold, I have come - in the volume of the book it is written of Me - to do Your will, O God.' Heb 10:7.

The book that Jesus was referring to is the book of Deuteronomy. In this book, Moses drew attention to the failure of the Old Covenant. Deu 31:26-29. Not one person was able to keep the Law through the will of their flesh. As a consequence, everyone who lived under the Law was cursed. Gal 3:10.

Moses prophesied that God would establish a new covenant through which His people would be delivered from the stubbornness and rebellion that is characteristic of the flesh, and would be enabled to fulfil His Law. Deu 30:5-14. The Lord God would give them the capacity to love Him with all of their heart, and to love their neighbour as themselves. Mar 12:29-31. In the New Covenant, they would be able to love because they would be born of God. 1Jn 4:7-8.

Through the offering of the Son, the Father's will, which was outlined in the book of Deuteronomy, would be fulfilled. Joh 10:17-18. This is why Jesus said that the book of Deuteronomy had been written about Him. Heb 10:7. We further note that 'the song of Moses', which concludes the book of Deuteronomy, is also called the 'the song of the Lamb'. Rev 15:3.

### **A new covenant established**

The prophetic statement, 'Behold, I have come - in the volume of the book it is written of Me - to do Your will, O God', was fulfilled when, in Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done.' Luk 22:42. Paul explained that when the Son made this declaration, He took away the Old Covenant, which required the attainment of righteousness through the will of the flesh, and established a new covenant. Heb 10:9. Joh 1:12-13. In other words, Jesus prayed, 'Not the righteousness of God through the will of the flesh, but the Father's will, which was proclaimed in the book of Deuteronomy, be done.' We know that this offering of prayer was effective once Jesus had been strengthened with Eternal Spirit by the Holy Spirit. Luk 22:43. Heb 9:14. By this means, Jesus was anointed with the oil of the Spirit for the work of establishing a new covenant.

Although Christ did fulfil the Law Covenant in a mortal body, this was not the principal reason that He came into the world; nor was it the means by which He authored the pathway for our salvation. Christ did not come by human blood, nor by the will of the flesh, *but was born of God*. He was born again from the death of sin by the sin offering. He came back from the death caused by sin, by the blood of the New Covenant. Heb 13:20. This is how Christ took away the Old Covenant, which Paul described as 'the first covenant', and established the second, or new, covenant. Heb 10:9. We see, then, that the New Covenant is the will of God fulfilled in a human body. As we will consider later, this was achieved through the agency of water, blood and Spirit.

Christ's prayer, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done', was the confession that the New Covenant was *born*. This was the righteousness that comes from God, revealed and brought forth as a corporate body, by faith. For this reason, the New Covenant is the new birth *in Christ*. Through this new covenant, 'as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God'. Joh 1:12-13.

### The great Shepherd of the sheep

Christ, our great High Priest, who offered Himself without spot to God, was also the great Shepherd of the sheep. Heb 9:14. Heb 13:20. This flock was a multitude of people who belonged to the Father, but did not know Him. Joh 17:2-3. This is because, as the prophet Isaiah declared, 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way.' Isa 53:6.

Jesus died the death caused by sin as our iniquities were laid on Him, and He became our sin. Isa 53:6. Isa 53:10. 2Co 5:21. Christ joined us in our separation from the Father. By joining us in this death, He found all the sheep who had gone astray and were lost to the Father because of sin. Christ came back from the death of sin by the blood of the New Covenant. Heb 13:20. In so doing, all the sheep who had been lost to God were brought back with Christ.

Paul called Jesus 'the firstborn from the dead'. Col 1:18. This means that when Jesus was being brought back from the death caused by sin, by the blood of the New Covenant, He was being born from the dead. We are brought to birth from the dead, with Christ, by the same blood.

Jesus began to shed the blood of the New Covenant in Gethsemane when, by the capacity of Eternal Spirit, He prayed to the Father, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done.' Luk 22:42-43. Heb 9:14. For this reason, in order to be born from the dead with Christ, by the blood of the New Covenant, we must watch and pray with Him in Gethsemane. Mat 26:41.

### Birtherd by water and blood

As we further consider the establishment of the New Covenant in the garden of Gethsemane, we recognise that *water and blood* are the elements that are necessary for being born of God. The water refers to the word of the Everlasting Covenant, while the blood is the life of the

Everlasting Covenant. To understand how this birthing process was established as the New Covenant, it is helpful to remind ourselves of some key aspects of Christ's ministry on earth.

We noted earlier that the Father prepared a physical body for the Son, which He received when the Son was born of Mary. The Scriptures teach us that when Jesus was born as a son of man, He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. Rom 8:3. Significantly, Jesus was born under the Old Covenant, which was under the administration of the angels. Gal 4:4. Heb 2:2. This is what it meant for Jesus to be 'made a little lower than the angels'. Heb 2:7.

Jesus had no other law, and was without sin. 1Pe 2:22. Heb 4:15. He was the only person who could have fulfilled the righteousness of God by keeping the Law through the will of His flesh. However, this is not what the Father wanted. As Jesus Himself acknowledged, 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire.' Heb 10:5. The Father's will was for the establishment of a covenant that was different from the way of life under the Old Covenant. Through this *new* covenant, Yahweh's Everlasting Covenant desire for fellowship with a multitude of sons who were born of Their life, would be fulfilled.

Jesus ministered under the Old Covenant, and under the angels, until the New Covenant was revealed. The outcome of the New Covenant was that Jesus would be raised above the angels. Paul explained that Christ was raised above the angels *when He inherited a more excellent name than them*. Christ received this name when the Father spoke the word of the Everlasting Covenant to Him, saying, 'You are My Son, *today* I have *begotten* You.' Heb 1:5. The word of the Father was the birthing element of water. The point of time that was designated as 'today' referred to Christ's whole journey from Gethsemane to Calvary.

As we have already considered, the New Covenant was not revealed until Gethsemane. The implication of this point is that the Son obtained the inheritance of His sonship name by the word of the Father, and began to be raised above the angels, *in Gethsemane*. The water of the word, proclaiming the sonship of Christ, was then being ministered at each stage of His journey back to the Father.

The apostle John recorded that God the Father so loved the world 'that He gave His only *begotten* Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life'. Joh 3:16. Christ was given by the Father for the purpose of establishing a process by which we could be

sanctified, and could receive eternal life. Rom 6:22. This was the pathway of salvation that Christ authored as He came back from the death caused by sin, through the shedding of His blood. His blood was shed through the six wounding events that He experienced as He journeyed from Gethsemane to Calvary. This revealed the second aspect of new birth in the New Covenant – the element of blood.

Paul, in the book of Hebrews, referred to this second birthing element of the New Covenant when he wrote, ‘*Again* when He [the Father] brings the firstborn into the world [lit: the inhabited earth], He says, “And let all the angels of God worship Him”.’ Heb 1:6. Paul was saying that the Son, having been born of water, was then made alive from the death of the sin of the world, through the blood of the New Covenant. Jesus was the first of the inhabitants of the earth who had been made alive from this death. The earth belongs to the meek, who have received the blessing of eternal life because they believe in Christ and are being born from the death of sin through fellowship in His offering. Mat 5:5. Eph 2:5. Col 2:13.

How did the Father ‘give’ the Son? He gave the Son *in the Passover meal*. Jesus was the Lamb for the Father’s house. Paul was making this point when He wrote, ‘He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?’ Rom 8:32. ‘All things’ refers to the covenant of sonship. Once we have been born from above by the word of the Father, and baptised into the fellowship of Christ’s offering, the bread and wine of the communion are our ongoing participation in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings. This is the fellowship of the Lamb, through which we are being born as New Covenant sons of God.

## Beholding Christ

The garden of Gethsemane is where the disciples beheld Christ as ‘the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth’. Joh 1:14. He was on a journey, through six wounding events, to be high and lifted up on the cross. Christ’s sixth wound entailed His hands and feet being nailed to the cross, and His body then being lifted up from the earth. At the conclusion of this wounding event, Christ was revealed as having been born from the death of sin, and raised above the angels. He then committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father, and physically died. Luk 23:46.

After His death, a soldier pierced His side with a spear. As a consequence of this wound, blood and water began to flow from His heart, and a spirit

## THE GOSPEL

of grace and supplication began to be poured out upon those who were there. Joh 19:34-37. Zec 12:10. This is when Christ's face began to shine like the sun in its strength, and He began to draw all men to Himself. Rev 1:16. Joh 12:32. The word of the New Covenant began to be proclaimed to all men, and a way was opened through His flesh into the fellowship of His offering. Heb 10:20.

When the word of the cross is proclaimed to us, a spirit of grace and supplication is poured out upon us, granting us the opportunity to hear and receive the New Covenant message. If we do not resist God's grace, the veil of our own fleshly perspective is drawn back from the eyes of our heart and we are able to look on Him whom we have pierced. 2Co 3:16-17.

What do we see when we turn and look upon Christ? We see what the apostle John saw; we see the elements of blood and water flowing from His pierced heart. Moreover, the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that these elements are the means by which we are inheriting our sonship with Christ. 1Jn 5:6. Rom 8:16. We are being born from above by the word of Christ, and are being redeemed by His blood through the circumcising hand of the Father upon us.

By the spirit of grace and supplication, we mourn for Christ. This means that we travail to be born of water, and to be sanctified by Christ's blood. We desire to join Christ in His offering, and to fellowship in His inheritance of being born from the dead. To be begotten of the Father by resurrection life is the inheritance of sonship.

To bear witness of the blood and water is to behold the outcome of Christ's total obedience. The outcome of Christ's obedience was that the will of God was done as He was born by the word of the Father, and came back from the death of sin by the blood of the New Covenant. This will is for us. It is the New Covenant in His body and blood, of which we partake at the communion gathering as we hear and receive His word. The word grants us faith to join Christ in the fulfilment of the Father's will. As we considered earlier, this will was revealed in Gethsemane.

### **Journeying with Christ**

The Holy Spirit joins us to the secret place of prayer in Gethsemane. Rom 8:26. As we watch and pray with Christ, by the Spirit, the Father speaks the same word to us that He spoke to Christ - 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' By this word, in the fellowship of Christ's

offering, the will of God can be done in us. We are being sanctified by the birthing process of the offering up of the body of Christ. Heb 10:10.

Christ was born of water and the Spirit in Gethsemane. And we were born again by these same elements in Him. Now that we are back from the dead with Him, having been born again by the word of the Father, our journey to obtain the full inheritance of our sonship is not by water only, but by water and blood. 1Jn 5:6. Our hearts are being sprinkled and delivered from an evil conscience, with its good and evil, which is the measure of its own self-righteousness. Heb 10:22. And the Spirit is bearing witness to our sanctification. Rom 8:16. This is the righteousness that comes from God, which is part of our name and sonship.





# Introduction

## Key definitions associated with the gospel of sonship

*Peter Hay*

Those who fear the Lord speak to one another about the word that Christ, the great High Priest, is ministering to His church. Mal 3:1,16. Through this conversation, the secret of the Lord is being made known to them. Psa 25:14. As we continue to apply our hearts to understand the word of the cross, it will be helpful to reiterate and further define some key terms that are fundamental to this discussion.

### The Everlasting Covenant

God's Everlasting Covenant purpose and plan for mankind is summarised by the statement, 'Let *Us* make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.' Gen 1:26. This statement communicated the shared initiative of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to create and bring to glory a great multitude of sons. His sons would be born from above with the life of God, and would be joined to Their fellowship. Heb 2:10. Rev 21:3,7.

### *The law covenant*

After delivering the children of Israel from their slavery to the Egyptians, the Lord came to meet them and to make a covenant with them at Mount Sinai. He desired for the nation to be His own possession; a kingdom of priests who were holy, or sanctified, to Him. Exo 19:5-6. In order to keep God's covenant, they would need to circumcise their hearts. Deu 10:16. Instead of acknowledging their inability to circumcise their own hearts, the people declared, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do!' Exo 19:8.

In response, the Lord bound His Law upon the children of Israel as a covenant, and said that if they kept the Law they would be righteous and would have eternal life. Lev 18:4-5. Deu 6:25. However, if they transgressed the Law, they would die.

Under the law covenant, the children of Israel endeavoured to obtain the righteousness of God through their own efforts to keep the Law. Of course, they were unable to do this. The failure of Israel to keep God's covenant served to highlight the weakness of the flesh of all mankind. Rom 3:10-19. God had given the law covenant to Israel to teach them that a person could only be justified, or made acceptable to God, through faith in Christ. Gal 3:24.

Paul referred to the law covenant as 'the first covenant' and 'the Old Covenant'. He did this because Moses and the Old Testament prophets had prophesied that God would establish a new covenant through which His purposes would be fulfilled. Heb 8:7-13.

### *The New Covenant*

Christ established the New Covenant through His offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary when, having been strengthened with Eternal Spirit, by the Holy Spirit, He was begotten by the word of the Father and by the shedding of His blood. Heb 9:14. Heb 1:5. Heb 1:6. Heb 13:20. Col 1:18.

In the New Covenant, we are born again by the word of God. The righteousness that we are now to fulfil as a son of God is to walk with Christ each day, in *faith*. This way of living has replaced keeping the Law as the basis for righteousness. Walking in faith with Christ involves joining the fellowship of Christ's offering.

In the fellowship of Christ's offering, the other law, which brings us into bondage to sin, is being removed from us, and is being replaced by the

law of the Spirit of life. Rom 8:2. This is the capacity of God's love, which the Holy Spirit pours into our heart. The Holy Spirit is not only helping us to be righteous; He also is the expression of the righteousness of God within us. We are able to love and to give according to our name as sons of God and members of Christ's body, which has now become for us the new context for our life.

### *Living by law*

When Christ died on the cross, the Law and its associated ordinances were taken out of the way and nailed with Christ to the cross. Col 2:14. The Law was not destroyed through this action. Instead, the Law was now established in, and operative through, the cross.

Those who are in Christ are no longer condemned by the Law. Rom 8:1. Rather, through the obedience of faith, they establish and fulfil the Law. Rom 3:31. This is because those who are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering are walking by the Spirit. They are not endeavouring to keep the Law, nor to attain to a self-defined righteousness, through the efforts of their flesh. Rom 8:4. In the fellowship of Christ's offering, this fleshly propensity is being removed from their heart, and the Holy Spirit is pouring the love of God into their heart. Rom 5:5. Motivated by the love of God, they make offering by faith and according to their name and sanctification. By this means, they fulfil God's Law and reveal His righteousness. This is the way of life in the New Covenant.

To live according to any way other than this is to pursue a standard of righteousness through our own efforts and self-defined activities. This is what it means to 'live by law'. Most Christians are not focused on keeping the ten commandments. Of course, to be occupied in this way would be futile, as God has established the fellowship of offering by the Spirit as the only means of fulfilling the Law. Rather, many Christians live by law because they live from the basis of their own perception of what is good or evil for themselves.

People who live in this way judge themselves as being either righteous or unrighteous, from the basis of their own law. Living according to their own way keeps them captive to sin. Rom 7:23. In response to their failure to attain to the standard of righteousness established by God's word, they will either change their perception of what it means to be acceptable to God or they will condemn and chastise themselves because of their failure.

The only way of being delivered from this way of living is to *die with Christ*. This is what Paul meant when he wrote, 'Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another - to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God'. Rom 7:4.

## The implications of the fall of mankind

God created man in His image and according to His likeness. Gen 1:26. Man's life and identity came from Him. However, Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because they believed Satan's lie that they could have life, and could define their own destiny, outside of the fellowship of Yahweh's offering. This pursuit only separated them from the fellowship of Yahweh. This is why Adam and Eve died in the day that they ate the fruit. Gen 2:17. Mankind's death was the inevitable consequence of Adam and Eve separating themselves from fellowship with God, who is the source of all life.

### *The other law and iniquity*

'The other law' is a principle of evil within the heart of every person. Rom 7:21. It became a part of our identity when Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The other law motivates a person to self-centred identity projection. They endeavour to create and project an image of who they are, and how they would like to be viewed and received by others. A person does this because they inherently believe that they have the wisdom to create what is good, and to deal with what is evil, as those who have the capacity to distinguish between these elements of existence. However, this pursuit only maintains their disconnection from fellowship with God and His life.

The effect of the other law is that we pursue our 'own way' in life. The Scriptures describe the actions that we take in pursuit of our own way as '*iniquity*'. The prophet Isaiah declared, '*All of us* like sheep have gone astray, *each of us* has turned to *his own way* [i.e. every person lives by their own law]; but [or, to deal with this] the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.' Isa 53:6.

### *Sin*

Sin is 'missing the mark', or falling short, of the standard of God's Law. God's Law is love, and is expressed by offering. Mar 12:29-31. Joh 15:13. Fallen mankind is unable to fulfil the law of love. This is because they live

by their own law, which is 'other than' the law of love. Their other law is the desire to define their own destiny, and to live for themselves. As a consequence of living by the other law, every thought that a person has, and every action that they take, falls short of, or is contrary to, God's Law. This is why those who live by the other law are in captivity to sin.

The effect of sin within fallen mankind is that the 'first' man - their body, soul and spirit - has become a 'body of sin'. Rom 6:6. In this regard, we can consider the body of sin to be a mutated and corrupting first man. In this mutated and deformed state, we are completely lost. We have become something that is far removed from the image of who God predestined us to be.

Sin is like a cancer within a person, and it is 'killing' them. It does this by arousing within them the desire for a life and a destiny that has its own accompanying position, work, wealth, power and pleasure that they assume belong to their identity. Because fallen mankind pursues this as their life, they remain separated from God, who is the source of all life. The death caused by separation from God is the implication of transgressing God's Law.

### *Transgression*

Transgression is sin. It refers to specific violations or breaches of God's Law. In this way, transgressions are observable acts against other people and against God, which have breached the commandment for us to love the Lord our God and to love our neighbour. Gal 5:18-21. Luk 10:27.

### **The ministry of the word**

The purpose and plan of God comes to pass by His word. The apostle Peter explained that we are born again as sons of God 'through the word of God which lives and abides forever'. 1Pe 1:23. As we continue to receive and walk in the light of this word, we have fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and with one another. 1Jn 1:1-3.

### *A messenger of Christ*

A messenger of Christ is a person who has been sent by Christ to proclaim His word. Jesus said, 'He who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.' Joh 13:20.

Christ now speaks to His churches through presbyteries which are in His right hand. Rev 1:20. Hab 3:4. This means that a messenger of Christ is

part of a presbytery. They are sent by Christ, from the presbytery, with the word of the cross.

### *Spirit of grace and supplication*

A spirit of grace and supplication is poured out upon a hearer, by the Holy Spirit, when the word of the cross is preached to them by a messenger of Christ. The spirit of grace and supplication flows from the heart of Christ, which was pierced by a soldier's spear after He had yielded His Spirit to the Father. Zec 12:10. Joh 19:34,37.

Grace and supplication enable a hearer to understand, and to respond in repentance to, the gospel. Those who hear the word of the cross are able to look upon Christ whom they have pierced, and to mourn for the consequences of their sin. Zec 12:10.

### *Faith*

Faith is the capacity of God that He gives to us so that we can *believe* what He believes, and are able to *participate* in the fellowship of His offering. We receive His faith by hearing the word of God when it is proclaimed to us. Rom 10:17.

Paul explained the implications of receiving the faith of God in his second letter to the Corinthians, writing, 'And since we have the *same spirit of faith*, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also *believe* and therefore *speak* [in the fellowship of Christ], knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.' 2Co 4:13-14. We are only raised with Christ if we join the fellowship of His death, which is His offering. 2Ti 2:11. Rom 6:8-11. A person who lives by faith, lives by offering. Gal 2:20.

### *Grace*

Paul explained that faith grants a person an introduction into grace in which we stand, or abide, and rejoice in the hope of progressively becoming a son of God. Rom 5:2. God's grace is who He is. It reveals the nature of His one life, which is offering. This is why we are called to abide in grace, and why Paul wrote, 'We have boldness and access [to fellowship with Christ] with confidence *through faith* in Him'. Eph 3:12.

Grace reveals the nature of Yahweh's one life. It has four dimensions which are expressed by offering. These four dimensions are word, life/light, love and Spirit. Joh 1:1. Joh 1:5. 1Jn 1:5. 1Jn 4:16. Joh 4:24.

Grace is given to us to tightly bind us to the fellowship of Christ's offering as a member of His body. As we continue each day in the fellowship of Christ's offering, the grace that we receive through prayer sustains us, enabling us to continue in the fellowship of Christ's body, and to be obedient to God so that His will is accomplished in our life. We are joined by grace to the obedience of Christ as He submitted Himself in prayer to the Father, saying, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done.' Luk 22:42.

## **Our sanctification**

Our sanctification is the expression of our calling as a son of God. The calling of God is His purpose for each person. It is what God has sovereignly chosen, or elected, them to be and to do as His son. Sanctification involves a person presenting themselves in the authority of their name, by faith, for fellowship in the body of Christ, and multiplying the life of God through offering. There are several elements associated with our sanctification.

### ***An anointing***

In his first letter, the apostle John wrote, 'But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him'. 1Jn 2:27.

The Holy Spirit is the anointing who teaches us concerning all things. As Jesus said, 'When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.' Joh 16:13. 'All things' and 'all truth' refer to our sanctification as sons of God in Christ Jesus. Each element of our sanctification is enabled by the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

### ***Identity***

Through procreation, a son of man is conceived, and possesses a body, soul and spirit. Their spirit is their natural identity and includes their abilities.

### ***Name***

A son of man is born from above of incorruptible seed, through the word of the Father. 1Pe 1:23. Through this birthing process, they receive their name as a son of God. This name was determined by God and written in the book of life before the creation of the heavens and the earth. It

defines who God called them to be and the works that they are to do as a son of God. Because our name and works were planned by God before we were created, we refer to them as our *predestination*.

### *Authority*

Inherent in a person's name is ownership of their identity, and the *authority* to express their sonship. This authority is not their name, but is the mandate that is given to them by the Father, through the Son, to express and minister their gifts and the abilities that belong to their identity. Through this expression, they are fulfilling the works of their sonship, which were prepared beforehand in Christ. The authority of a person's name is typified in one of Jesus' parables as a 'mina'. The apostle Peter described the mina as the virtues, or excellencies, of Christ. 1Pe 2:9. 2Pe 1:5-8.

### *A measure of faith*

Closely connected with the mina is a measure of faith that is allotted to each person by God the Father once they have received their name through the process of new birth. Rom 12:3. This faith continues to come to them 'from faith to faith', as they hear the word of God. Rom 1:17. Rom 10:17. This word also defines the works of their sonship.

It is evident that a person has heard the word and received faith from God when they present themselves to God, and in the body of Christ, to do the works that are associated with their name. As the apostle James testified, 'I will show you my faith by my works.' Jas 2:18.

Describing this implication of faith, Paul wrote, 'And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," *we also believe and therefore speak*'. 2Co 4:13. Where do we speak? In the next verse, Paul explained that we speak in the fellowship of offering. He said, '[We know] that He who raised up the Lord Jesus [from the death associated with His offering] will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.' 2Co 4: 14.

A person multiplies their mina by faith when they believe the word and speak by faith in the fellowship of offering according to the authority of their name. To 'speak by faith' means to express our sonship on the holy ground of Yahweh's fellowship. Holy ground is an authentic place that embraces reality. It is a place where the truth is spoken, where dialogue is sincere, and where offering is made. This includes the secret place of prayer, as well as among our brethren in the body of Christ.



## *Talent*

Jesus used the imagery of ‘talents’ to describe another feature of a person’s sanctification. Mat 25:14-30. Talents are from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and are given by Christ. They refer to the four dimensions of God’s grace that come from Christ’s hand. This grace is given as a gift, according to a person’s abilities. A son of God receives from Christ one talent, two talents or five talents. Christ expects a person to double their talent. The talent only becomes our possession after it has been multiplied.

Talents are given to a person according to their abilities. These abilities are a feature of a person’s identity. While talent is given according to ability, not everyone who has ability receives multiple talents. Talents belong to a person’s calling, and calling and name meet in offering. It is important that we do not confuse abilities with talent, as this promotes confusion and corruption within the church.

A person receives the gift of talents from Christ *after* they have been born of God and have come into the house of the Son through baptism. That is, talents are given to slaves of righteousness. Their slavehood to Christ results in their sanctification as a son of God. Rom 6:19. As a believer participates in the offering of Christ as a member of His body, they are also multiplying the grace of life as a son of God.

## *Living epistles*

An epistle is a letter. The apostle Paul said to the Corinthians, ‘You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.’ 2Co 3:2-3. A person is a living epistle when the word that they have received from Christ’s messengers is in their mouth and in their heart. Rom 10:8. The word is demonstrated, and observed by others, through their conduct and conversation.

## **The fellowship of Christ’s offering**

Christ’s offering was the provision for the fulfilment of God’s Everlasting Covenant purpose. Through His offering, the life of God was made available to become our life. Moreover, He opened a way for us to join the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Concerning His offering, Jesus said to His disciples, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.' Joh 13:36. Jesus was indicating that He was first offering Himself once and for all. He was the only One who could make this offering. However, His offering journey would establish a pathway upon which His disciples could journey in Him and with Him.

We are first joined to the offering of Christ through baptism into His death, burial and resurrection. Then, as we eat and drink the elements of the communion each week, our participation in this offering becomes a daily, and specific, reality for us.

Through His Melchizedek priesthood, Christ's offering as the Lamb of God, 2000 years ago, is being uniquely applied, today, to the life of each son of God who is in Christ. As believers, we receive all that happens in our day, including our sufferings - whether notable or common to all men - as our unique participation in the events of His offering.

### *Priesthood*

A priest is a person who is appointed to serve or minister to God by making offering. Christ is our great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. He priested, or offered, Himself as a living sacrifice.

God has called us to be son-priests. We are to serve as priests with Him in the sanctuary of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched in the heavenly places. Rev 7:14-17. We do this by presenting ourselves as living sacrifices. Through offering, we are proving and fulfilling the will of God, which is our sanctification. Rom 12:1-2. 1Th 4:3. The outcome is eternal life. Rom 6:22.

Priesthood is, in fact, our *eternal inheritance as a son of God*. Christ has made us to be a kingdom of priests to the Father. Rev 1:6. Our inheritance is to serve as priests in the temple of God forever. Rev 7:14-17. Rev 22:3-5.

### *Offering*

Offering is the way that God lives. God (*Elohim*) the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three Persons who are, and who possess together, one Spirit and one life; that is, They exist and express Themselves as one God by offering. This is the nature of Their one life. They minister this life to one another, in love, through the fellowship of offering. Each Person in the Godhead lays down His life, according to His unique name, to reveal the

other two. The other two lay down life, according to Their names, to reveal the one. As each One, in turn, reveals the Others, Their offering is so complete that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one. They are fully manifest as one God, called 'Yahweh'.

It is most important to understand that each Person does not have Their own life by which They can live independently from the Others. If this were so, Their end would be in Themselves. Any one of Them would cease to exist if They endeavoured to have life apart from the fellowship of Yahweh.

God is the source of all life. Through offering, Their life is multiplied and extended beyond Themselves as a gift to creation. As Paul explained, Yahweh God '*gives to all life, breath, and all things*'; and, in Him, *all* 'live and move and have [their] being'. Act 17:25,28.

As we have already noted, we are to priest ourselves as living sacrifices by joining the fellowship of Christ's offering. We make offering according to our name and sanctification. The works that we do, according to our name, are for the purpose of revealing another.

### *God's righteousness*

The righteousness of God is the inexhaustible fellowship and works of God. It describes the achievement of His will. From the Scriptures, we can identify three dimensions of God's righteousness. The gift of righteousness is, first, the *expression of the love and fellowship* of Yahweh that we are to participate in, by offering, for eternity. This is what it means to 'reign in life'. Rom 5:17. The second dimension of the righteousness of God is that it *endures forever*. Psa 112:9. 2 Co 9:9. The third aspect of the righteousness of God is that it is the *works of God*.

We become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. 2Co 5:21. We receive the righteousness of God as a gift. Rom 5:17. It is not obtained because of our good deeds. Rather, we become the righteousness of God by exercising the faith that we have received by hearing God's word. This is why Paul called it 'the righteousness of faith'. Rom 4:11. Rom 9:30.

Having been born of God, we are baptised into the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. As we noted earlier, in the fellowship of His offering, the other law, which brings us into bondage to sin, is being removed from us. This evil principle of life is being replaced by the law of the Spirit of life. Rom 8:2. This is the capacity of God's love, which the

Holy Spirit pours into our heart. The Holy Spirit is our helper because He is the expression of the righteousness of God within us.

### *Self-righteousness*

Self-righteousness can be simply defined as being our pursuit and promotion of what we perceive to be right and good, and our efforts to abolish what we perceive to be evil. It is self-centred identity projection based on our pursuit of a 'good' image.

A person can base their image and projection on the word of God. Recognising the promise of life that comes with the word, they selectively draw on the word of God to define the standard of good, or righteousness, to which they seek to attain.

# Overview

## The offering journey of Christ

*Peter Hay*

### Introduction

The apostle John recounted the words of Jesus, who said to His disciples, 'I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.' Joh 16:28. Jesus was explaining to them that He was on a journey. This journey was the means by which God's Everlasting Covenant desire for fellowship with a multitude of sons of God was being fulfilled.

The first stage of Christ's journey from the Father was when, as God the Son, He emptied Himself and was brought forth by the word of the Father as the Son of God. The Son of God then came into the world as the Son of Man. He was born of Mary and grew up as part of her family. At the age of thirty, Jesus commenced His earthly ministry. Luk 3:23. For three and a half years, Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom, and ministered grace and healing to the multitudes.

The apostle John recorded that Christ's journey from the Father reached its conclusion at the last supper. He wrote, 'When Jesus knew that His

hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end [or to the uttermost]'. Joh 13:1. Christ had taken the gospel out to the furthest reaches of the human condition, even to the condition of a betrayer, and was now beginning His return to the Father.

At the conclusion of His journey *from* the Father, Jesus had become fully acquainted with the grievous condition of our sinful flesh and the accompanying destruction and death that befalls each of us because of our separation from God. Isa 53:3. For example, five days before the Passover, Jesus testified in the temple, saying, 'Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father, save Me from this hour?" But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.' Joh 12:27-28. Luk 19:47. Then, as He entered the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said to His disciples, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' Mat 26:38. Mar 14:34.

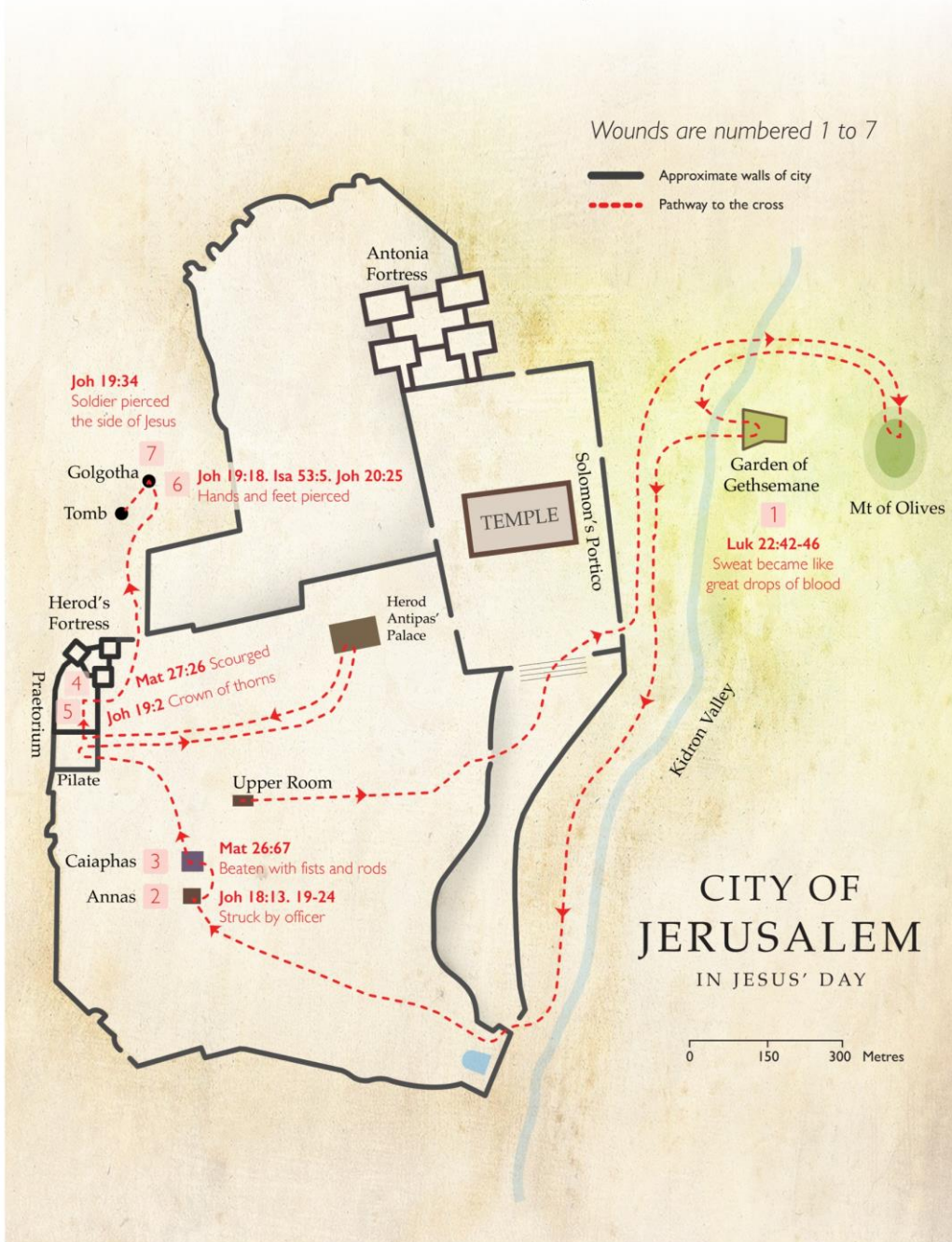
Jesus began His journey back to the Father at the last supper. Joh 13:1. His journey *back* to the Father was very different from the journey that He had made *from* the Father. Through His journey back to the Father, Jesus was pioneering a pathway upon which a great multitude of sons of men would journey in Him and with Him.

## Overview of Christ's offering journey

This overview of Christ's journey draws on a harmony of the four Gospels. The times have been established from the narrative of Christ's passion, as well as from inferences drawn from key Old and New Testament Scriptures. For example, we have used Christ's exhortation to be on the alert for the coming of the Master, in order to mark the key time-points leading up to Christ's presentation as the King of the Jews in the Praetorium. In this passage, Jesus nominated four time periods, saying, 'Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming – in the *evening*, at *midnight*, at the *crowing of the rooster*, or in the *morning* – lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!' Mar 13:35-37. Many Bible scholars agree that these waypoints refer to the following time periods:

- Evening: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- Midnight: 9:00 pm - 12:00 am
- Crowing of the rooster: 12:00 am - 3:00 am
- Morning: 3:00 am - 6:00 am

# The seven wounds of Jesus Christ



## Tuesday 13th Nisan/Abib

### *Morning*

- Jesus instructed Peter and John to go to a particular house in Jerusalem to prepare the Passover meal for Jesus and His disciples. Mar 14:13-16. Luk 22:8-13.

## Wednesday 14th Nisan/Abib

### *6:00 pm (after sundown) - the upper room*

- Jesus and His disciples commenced the last supper in the upper room. Mat 26:20. Mar 14:17. Luk 22:14. During the meal, Jesus:
  - washed the disciples' feet, and called them to wash one another's feet. Joh 13:5-20.
  - identified His betrayer. Mat 26:21. Mar 14:18-21. Luk 22:21-23. Joh 13:21-30.
  - established the bread and wine of the communion as a participation, or fellowship, in His body and blood. He described the cup as 'the blood of the New Covenant'. Mat 26:26-28. Mar 14:22-24. Luk 22:19-20.
  - called the disciples to cease from relating to one another in the manner of those who rule as benefactors in the world. Luk 22:24-30.
  - prophesied, the first time, concerning Peter's three denials before the crowing of the rooster. Luk 22:31-34. Joh 13:36-38.
  - outlined the elements, or steps, of new birth as a son of God. Joh 14:1-31.

### *Approx. 9:00 pm - the Mount of Olives*

- 9:00 pm was the end of the evening watch, and the beginning of the midnight watch.
- Jesus and His disciples concluded the last supper by singing a hymn. They then journeyed from the upper room, out of the city gate, and to the Mount of Olives. Mat 26:30. Mar 14:26. Luk 22:39. Joh 14:31.



- On the Mount of Olives, Jesus:
  - prophesied again that Peter would deny Christ three times before the cock crowed. Mat 26:31-35. Mar 14:27-31.
  - instructed the disciples regarding abiding in Him, the culture of love, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Joh 15-16.
  - prayed to the Father, summing up His ministry on earth. During this prayer, Jesus defined eternal life and proclaimed how it would be obtained by the sons of God. Joh 17.
- At the conclusion of His prayer, Jesus and the disciples descended the Mount of Olives. They crossed over the Brook Kidron and entered an enclosed garden called 'Gethsemane'. Joh 18:1.

### *Approx. 12:00 am - the garden of Gethsemane*

- 12:00 am was the end of the midnight watch, and the beginning of the third watch.
- Gethsemane was the site of Christ's *first wounding event*.
- In Gethsemane, Jesus called all of His disciples to watch and pray. Luk 22:40.
- From the twelve, He took Peter, James and John to pray with Him, testifying, 'My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death.' Mat 26:38.
- Jesus then went a little way beyond them and prayed three times, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.' Mat 26:39. Each time that He prayed, He came and found the disciples sleeping from sorrow. Luk 22:45. He asked them, 'Could you not keep watch with Me for one hour?' Mat 26:36-45. Mar 14:32-41.
- As Jesus was praying, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done', an angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him with Eternal Spirit. He then began to pray even more fervently and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground. Luk 22:42-44. Heb 9:14.

## Wednesday 14th Nisan/Abib (cont.)

### *Approx. 1-1:30 am - the garden of Gethsemane*

- After Jesus had finished praying, a great multitude from the chief priests and elders of the people came with Judas to the garden of Gethsemane. Mat 26:47. Mar 14:43. Luk 22:47. They were carrying swords and clubs, and were accompanied by a cohort of Roman soldiers (480 men). Joh 18:3,12.
- Jesus was betrayed by Judas with a kiss. Mat 26:48-49. Mar 14:44-45. Luk 22:47-48.
- Jesus declared that He was 'I AM', causing the multitude to fall to the ground. He directed them to let the disciples go, so that not one of them was lost. Joh 18:4-9.
- Peter cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest. Jesus healed the servant's ear. Joh 18:10-11. Mat 26:51-54. Luk 22:51.
- The Roman cohort and the officers of the Jews arrested and bound Jesus. Joh 18:12. All of the disciples fled from the garden. Mat 26:56. Mar 14:50.

### *Approx. 2:00 am - before Annas and Caiaphas*

- The house of Caiaphas was the site of Christ's *second and third wounding events*.
- Jesus was first taken by the multitude to the court of the high priest, where He came before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Joh 18:13.
- Annas questioned Jesus about His teaching. Following Jesus' response to this question, one of the officers struck Him. Annas then sent Jesus to Caiaphas, the high priest. Joh 18:13,19-24.
- Peter's first denial occurred during this initial interrogation of Christ. This was in response to a query from a slave girl. Luk 22:56-57. Joh 18:17.
- Jesus was brought before Caiaphas and the Jewish Council, or Sanhedrin, who endeavoured to obtain testimony against Him in order to condemn Him to death. Jesus did not respond to their accusations and false testimonies. Mar 14:55-61. Mat 26:57-63.
- Caiaphas asked Jesus whether He was the Messiah, the Son of God, to which He replied, 'I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.' Mar. 14:62. Mat 26:64.

- The high priest tore His clothes and condemned Christ to death. The members of the Council spat on Him, covered His face to blind His eyes, and beat Him with their fists. Mat 26:67-68. Mar 14:64-65. Luk 22:63-65. Through this assault, Christ's face was being bruised for our iniquity. Isa 53:5. This was Christ's second wounding event.
- Jesus was also beaten many times with rods. Mat 26:67. Mar 14:65. The prophet Isaiah described these wounds as being the chastening of the Father that fell upon the Son for our peace. Isa 53:5.

### *Approx. 3:00 am - before Caiaphas the High Priest*

- 3:00 am was the end of the third watch and the beginning of the morning watch. It was marked by the crowing of the rooster.
- It appears that the interrogation and abuse of Jesus occurred for about an hour. Luk 22:59. At the end of this hour, Peter denied Jesus for a third time just before the rooster crowed, marking the end of the third watch. Luk 22:59-60. Mat 26:73-74. Mar 14:72. Joh 18:27.
- Jesus looked at Peter, and Peter looked into the eyes of the Lord. Through this interaction, Peter was illuminated regarding His iniquity, and began to weep bitterly. Luk 22:61-62.

### *Early in the morning - before Pilate*

- 'Early in the morning', sometime just after 3:00 am, the Jewish Council held a consultation, with a view to Him being put to death. They bound Jesus and delivered Him to Pilate. Mat 27:1-2. Mar 15:1. Luk 23:1. Joh 18:28.
- Pilate asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews. Jesus replied that He was indeed the King. Mat 27:11. Mar 15:2. Luk 23:3. Joh 18:33-38.
- The chief priests and leaders of the people made false accusations about Jesus before Pilate. Jesus did not respond in self-defence to their accusations.

## Wednesday 14th Nisan/Abib (cont.)

### *Early in the morning - before Herod*

- Not finding Jesus guilty of anything, Pilate sent Him to Herod, who was glad of the opportunity to meet Him. Luk 23:8. Herod was an Idumean. This meant that he was a descendant of Esau. He was also a descendant of Ishmael through Ishmael's daughter, Mahalath, who married Esau. Gen 28:9. Jesus did not respond to any questions or comments from Herod. Luk 23:8-9.
- After treating Jesus with contempt, and mocking Him, Herod and his soldiers dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. Luk 23:11.
- Herod and Pilate became friends that day. Luk 23:12.

### *Early in the morning - before Pilate a second time*

- When Jesus had returned from Herod, Pilate summoned the chief priests and rulers of the people. Pilate reaffirmed his belief in the innocence of Jesus, and asked them whether they wanted the murderer and thief, Barabbas, to be released, or Jesus to be released. Pilate recognised that Jesus had been delivered to him by the Jewish Council because of envy. Mat 27:17. Mar 15:6-11. Luk 23:13-17. Joh 18:39.
- Pilate's wife sent word to him, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.' Mat 27:19.
- The chief priests stirred up the people to ask for Barabbas to be released rather than Jesus. Mat 27:20-21. Mar 15:11. Luk 23:18-19. Joh 18:40.
- In response, Pilate addressed the people a second time, asking what should be done with Jesus. The crowd demanded that Jesus be crucified. Mat 27:22. Mar 15:12-13. Luk 23:20-21.
- Pilate addressed them a third time, asking what Jesus had done. Yet the people cried out all the more for Christ to be crucified. Mat 27:23. Mar 15:14. Luk 23:22-23.
- Seeing that he was unable to prevail, and that there was risk of a riot, Pilate washed his hands, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.' Mat 27:24. The people answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children.' Mat 27:25.

- Wishing to satisfy the multitude, Pilate released Barabbas and commanded that Jesus be scourged and then crucified. Mat 27:26. Mar 15:15. Luk 23:24-25. Joh 19:1.

### *Early in the morning - in the Praetorium*

- Jesus experienced His *fourth and fifth wounding events* in the Praetorium, under the direction of Pilate.
- The soldiers took Jesus away to the Praetorium where He was scourged with the cat o' nine tails. Mat 27:26. Mar 15:15. Joh 19:1. This was the fourth wound of Christ. Isaiah prophesied that by His stripes we are healed. Isa 53:5.
- All the soldiers of the garrison were called together. They stripped Jesus of the gorgeous robe that He had been clothed with by Herod, and clothed Him with a 'scarlet', or purple, robe.
- The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they placed a staff made from a reed in His hand as a mock sceptre. They spat on Him, and beat the crown of thorns into His head with the mock sceptre. They mocked His kingship and repeatedly abused Him.
- At the conclusion of this abuse, they took the scarlet robe off Him and put His garments back on Him. Mat 27:27-31. Mar 15:17-20. Joh 19:1-3.

### *6:00 am - presented for crucifixion*

- 6:00 am was the end of the morning watch.
- The apostle John recorded that after Jesus had been scourged and adorned with the crown of thorns, Pilate presented Him again to the Jews so that they would know that he found no guilt in Christ. Furthermore, He made efforts to release Jesus. However, the multitude reiterated their calls for His crucifixion and confessed that they had no king except Caesar. Joh 19:4-15.
- John identified this time as the 6th hour. Joh 19:14. Most commentators agree that this was the Roman 6th hour, which was 6:00 am, and the conclusion of the morning watch. It was the day of preparation for the Passover. Joh 19:14.
- As the soldiers led Jesus away to crucify Him, they pressed Simon of Cyrene into service to help him to bear His cross. Mat 27:32. Mar 15:21. Luk 23:26.
- There was a great multitude of people, including many women who were mourning and lamenting Him as He journeyed from the

Praetorium to Calvary. He spoke to them, saying, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.' Luk 23:28.

- Jesus was led to Calvary, or Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull, to be crucified.

### Wednesday 14th Nisan/Abib (cont.)

#### *9:00 am (the 3rd hour) - Christ nailed to the cross and lifted up at Calvary*

- The nailing of Christ's hands and feet to the cross was His *sixth wounding event*. Concerning these wounds, Isaiah declared that He was pierced through for our transgressions. Isa 53:5.
- The Gospel of Mark recorded that Jesus was crucified at the third hour, which was 9:00 am. Mar 15:25.
- During the period of time between the 3rd hour and the 6th hour:
  - the soldiers attempted to give Jesus wine mixed with myrrh, which He refused to drink. Mat 27:34. Mar 15:23
  - Christ was crucified, or lifted up, with two thieves - one on His right, and one on His left. Mat 27:38. Mar 15:27. Luk 23:33. Joh 19:18.
  - as Jesus was crucified and raised up, He said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' Luk 23:34.
  - the soldiers divided Christ's garments and cast lots for them. Mat 27:35. Mar 15:24. Luk 23:34. Joh 19:23-24.
  - the inscription 'King of the Jews' was placed above His head. Mat 27:37. Mar 15:26. Luk 23:38. Joh 19:19.
  - those who passed by hurled abuse at Jesus, wagging their heads and challenging Him to save Himself by coming down from the cross. The chief priests and scribes, likewise, mocked Him. Mat 27:39-43. Mar 15:29-32.
  - during this time, even the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus cast the same insults at Him. Mat 27:44.

*12:00 pm (the 6th hour) - darkness fell over the whole land*

- Just prior to the sixth hour, one of the thieves who were crucified with Jesus ceased from hurling insults at Him. This thief said to the other criminal, who was continuing to abuse Christ, ‘ “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise”.’ Luk 23:40-43.
- At the 6th hour – 12:00 pm – darkness fell over the whole land. Mat 27:45. Mar 15:33. Luk 23:44.

*3:00 pm (the 9th hour)*

- Nearing the 9th hour, Jesus saw His mother and committed her into the care of John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. Joh 19:26-27.
- At the 9th hour – 3:00 pm – Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ Mat 27:46. Mar 15:34. Knowing, therefore, that all things had been accomplished, Jesus said, ‘I am thirsty.’ He did this to fulfil the prophetic Scriptures. Joh 19:28.
- One of those who were standing by filled a sponge with sour wine and put it on a reed of hyssop for Jesus to drink. Mat 27:48. Mar 15:36. Joh 19:29.
- Jesus then declared, ‘It is finished!’ Joh 19:30. Every aspect of His offering journey had been fulfilled. He cried out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit.’ Luk 23:46. Yielding up His Spirit to the Father, He breathed His last. Mat 27:50. Mar 15:37. Joh 19:30.
- When Jesus had breathed His last, the veil of the temple was torn from the top to the bottom. Mat 27:51. Mar 15:38. Luk 23:45. Furthermore, the earth shook, the rocks were split, the tombs were opened, and many of the bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. However, they did not come out of the tombs until after His resurrection, three days later. Mat 27:51-53.
- When the centurion and soldiers saw the things that were happening, they were very afraid. Having seen how Christ had died, the centurion said, ‘Truly this was the Son of God’, and acknowledged that Jesus was innocent. Mat 27:54. Mar 15:39. Luk 23:47.

## Wednesday 14th Nisan/Abib (cont.)

*Approx. 4:00 pm - Christ's side was pierced*

- Because it was coming up to the beginning of the 'high day' Sabbath, which marked the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Jews asked for the bodies of those who were crucified to be removed. Joh 19:31. The high day Sabbath commenced at 6:00 pm.
- Joseph of Arimathea, who was a prominent member of the Jewish Council, came to Pilate and requested the body of Jesus. Mat 27:57-58. Mar 15:43. Luk 23:50-52. Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel, came with him. Joh 19:38-39.
- Prompted by their request, Pilate marvelled that Christ was dead already, and asked for confirmation of His death. Mar 15:44. The soldiers, therefore, came to check on the bodies of those who had been crucified. They broke the legs of the two thieves, but found that Jesus was already dead. Joh 19:31-33.
- One of the soldiers pierced Christ's side, and immediately blood and water flowed from His heart. Joh 19:34. The apostle John noted that this fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy, 'And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.' Zec 12:10.
- Luke recorded the effect of grace and supplication being poured out from the side of Christ, writing, 'The whole crowd who came together to that sight, *seeing what had been done*, beat their breasts and returned'. Luk 23:48.
- Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took Christ's body down from the cross, prepared it for burial, and placed it in a new tomb. Mat 27:59-60. Mar 15:46. Luk 23:53. Joh 19:40-41. This all happened before 6:00 pm. Luk 23:56.

## Thursday 15th Nisan/Abib

*6:00 pm – in the tomb*

- Thursday 15th Nisan, the first of three days and three nights that Jesus' body lay in the tomb. Mat 12:39-40.



# The last supper

## Jesus washed the disciples' feet

*Richie Kaa*

As Christ's offering journey drew to a close, on the very same day that began with a final meal with His disciples, a spear was used to stab Him in the heart. Joh 19:34. This seventh and final wound to Christ's body was never about taking His life. His work was done, and He had already yielded His Spirit to the Father. Joh 19:30. Luk 23:46. Rather, this seventh wound was for *us*. From Christ's heart flowed the separated elements of 'blood and water'; the elements that would enable the sons of men to be born of God's own life. 1Jn 5:6.

We read in the Preface that the element of water refers to the *word* of the Everlasting Covenant, and the element of blood to the *life* of the Everlasting Covenant. While much of this publication explores the element of blood and the six wounding events that collectively address every aspect of the fallen human condition, this article will focus on an aspect of the water - the washing of one another's feet.

We recall that, during the last supper, Jesus rose from the table, laid aside His garments, girded Himself with a towel, poured water in a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet. This activity was based on a

## THE GOSPEL

custom where the servant of a household would wash the feet of an honoured visitor as an action of receiving them. Jesus said, concerning the sending out of the seventy, 'But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, "Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you".' Luk 10:10-11. This action of dusting one's own feet was a declaration to the townsfolk that they had rejected God's word. We too reject God's word when we fail to receive our brethren and the word that they bring to us.

The washing of the disciples' feet also connects to the principle of the laver. In the tabernacle of Moses, the laver was a large basin that contained water. Every priest was to wash their hands and feet with this water before offering sacrifices on the altar. Ex 30:17-21.

Of course, the washing element that Jesus was teaching them about was not literal water. Rather, He was pointing them to the word that was washing them just as the water of the laver had washed the priests. For this reason, Jesus made two key points to Peter.

The first was, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me'. Joh 13:8. The word of God was the only way in which they could be washed so that they could be joined to His offering. In typical 'Peter-style', he then asked that Christ wash all of him - not just his feet. Here, Christ provided clarity concerning the effect of the word, noting, 'He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean'. He then affirmed Peter, saying, 'You are clean.' Joh 13:10. Importantly, Jesus also remarked, 'Not all of you are clean', referring to Judas. Joh 13:10. Evidently, even among the twelve disciples there remained an element of unbelief. Joh 15:3.

The particular occasion when Peter is thought to have been washed was recorded earlier in John's Gospel. Jesus made a startling claim, saying, 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.' Joh 6:53. He promised that if they did eat His flesh and drink His blood, they would have eternal life, and they would abide in Him and He in them. Joh 6:54-56. Although the promise of eternal life was of great interest to the gathered crowd, the practice (i.e. cannibalism) was highly offensive in their culture. In fact, many followers of Jesus who had heard His words were appalled, and they objected, saying, 'This is a difficult statement, who can listen to it?' Joh 6:60. Their refusal to believe Christ, and their offence at His word, meant that they were unclean and were unprepared to join His offering. It is important that we recognise the reality that, without proper understanding and insight concerning God's word, we too can misconstrue God's intent. This can lead to

offence. This then hinders us from receiving His ongoing word, which we need for our continuing participation in His offering.

Those who were offended by Christ's statement were considerable in number, and they withdrew in unbelief, and ceased from walking with Him. Joh 6:66. Jesus then narrowed in on the twelve, asking them, 'Do you want to go away also?' It was here that Peter demonstrated the washing effect of the word, saying, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.' Joh 6:68-69. Peter's statement didn't cleanse him of all sin or eliminate every self-righteous response. It simply kept him joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering - even before the first drop of blood was spilt.

Only when they were gathered for the Passover meal did Christ reveal the mystery of His earlier statement which had led so many to withdraw and turn away in offence. Jesus was informing His disciples that the Father was giving Him - His only begotten Son - as the Passover lamb for the Father's house. And, as in the first Passover, those households who ate the Passover lamb were joined to the provision of God for their journey of deliverance and salvation. Exo 12:1-28.

Today, this understanding confirms our weekly participation in the communion meal. Luk 22:19. 1Co 11:24. During this meal, we follow the example of Christ, who first demonstrated the activity of foot washing. Joh 13:8. Today, the water of the word remains active as it proceeds from the mouth of Christ as 'the sound of many waters'. Rev 1:15. It sounds like many waters because it is the ministry of the word in the mouth of the many members who make up the body of Christ. The word flows from each son as a ministry of the Spirit, according to their sanctification. This water continues to birth us by the word of the Father, and to cleanse us for our participation in His offering for the duration of our days on earth.

## **Washed to offer**

So, how does the word wash us? It is helpful to note that the word is not washing sin and corruption from us. Rather, the word is washing us clean from the secular influences that affect the way in which we view life and engage in it. They have an impact on our understanding of, and readiness for, offering. It is in the fellowship of Christ's offering that we receive His life through the process of 'offering transfer'.

Consider a person who has received a significant and painful health concern that negatively impacts upon their health, family life, friendships and even finances. A common worldly response is to protest in fear against this kind of suffering, because it reduces the quality of our life. However, when we are washed by the word, we are able to believe and accept that this is from the hand of the Lord, so that we are obtaining resurrection life in our mortal body.

Each suffering, whether big or small, can be likened to a 'wound' from which our self-centred, covetous life flows from us. As it flows, we are made weak. If we despise the circumstances that have made us weak, we are at risk of becoming offended, and of viewing ourselves as a victim. But, if we have been washed by the word, we will refuse our familiar ways of viewing a matter, and the fallen perspectives that the world offers, and will, instead, embrace the weakness. This is how we are recovered from our protest, and are joined to His offering. However, if we cease from being washed by the word, we will find ourselves withdrawing from His offering and anxiously seeking alternative solutions – even those that are based on fables and myths – to alleviate our suffering and to optimise our quality of life.

The capacity of the word also grants us *faith*. Faith is the evidence that we have been washed by the word; and without faith we cannot please God by being the son who He named us to be. Heb 11:6. This is because faith leads to righteousness; the will of God done. Faith comes to us by hearing, and our hearing is enabled by the word of Christ. Rom 10:17. The outcome of receiving faith is that the hearer is given the capacity to present themselves for offering. Any work of offering enacted without faith is a dead work and will never result in righteousness. Rom 10:8-10. Heb 9:14.

Faith is demonstrated when a believer hears a word and then, in prayer, receives the capacity to fulfil that word by offering. If we present ourselves to offer in any other way, our offering will be an exercise of our own self-righteousness. However, when we offer according to the faith we receive, the will of God is done, and we continue to grow in our sanctification.

### Why the feet?

Despite Peter's strong insistence that Jesus wash every part of him, Jesus focused on only their feet. Our feet represent the places where we go and the contexts that we engage with during everyday life. In simple terms,

Jesus was saying this is what needs to be washed. We must be careful that we don't legalistically assume that Christ wants to wash, or to remove, the things that we do. Rather, He is concerned with that which is motivating our activities. He is concerned with the cultural outlook that informs our choices and actions, and which establishes our expectations.

## Peter and Judas

In Peter, we see a strong motivation to conquer the Roman oppressor. Judas was a little less obvious, but seemed to be motivated by social status and the possible success of this fledgling sect. Both men believed that their perspectives were good; but both men were unaware of the personal cultural influences that led to their respective actions.

If Peter were at this year's National Youth Convention, he would be the first to praise the Lord and to comment on the terrific word. He would likely be filled with enthusiasm to put into practice all that he had heard. And I trust that this describes everyone in attendance.

Judas, on the other hand, would be somewhere in the Auditorium, but in his heart he would be saying, 'This is a difficult word; who can listen to it?' Joh 6:60. Rather than believing, and lifting his voice for understanding, he would be drawn to a group of like-minded folk (i.e. a faction), looking for another way - a 'better' way - to achieve all that he thought important. His motivation would not necessarily be to oppose or to betray, but would willingly accept that any means, including betrayal, would most definitely justify an outcome that aligned with his self-righteous good.

Both men proved that they were filled with self-righteousness, and were on 'a collision course' with the inevitable fruit that they produced. However, Peter demonstrated that the word of Christ gave him access to Christ's blood, which was poured out as He offered Himself. This is how he was recovered and how his self-righteous failing could be circumcised. Sadly, for Judas, the blood of Christ had no effect upon him when he was confronted with his folly. His refusal to be washed by the water of the word earlier in Christ's ministry gave him no access to the blood that could recover him. All that was left in his heart was the word of his own self-righteousness.

As we come to the communion meal each week, the bread is joining us to His body, and the cup is joining us to the fellowship of His sufferings. Furthermore, we are washed by the word so that we are cleansed from

## THE GOSPEL

the alternative approaches that we might otherwise be tempted to employ in explaining our daily circumstances. These include the familiar ways that we have been raised with, as well as the many myths and fables regarding lifestyle, wellbeing, and good living that Paul warned Timothy against. 1Ti 4:7.

As we are washed by the word, we are receiving faith to participate in the events of the coming week, as tailored for us by the Father. This faith is given to us as we go to the secret place of prayer. The communion word cannot sustain our Christian walk without prayer; neither will our prayer life sustain our Christian walk without the communion word.

# The first wound

## Sweat as great drops of blood

*Luke Pomery*

### Introduction

The first sprinkling of Christ's blood occurred in the garden of Gethsemane. During His hour-long prayer meeting with the Father, Jesus began to sweat great drops of blood. Luk 22:44. Remarkably, this particular sprinkling of Christ's blood did not occur from wounds inflicted by men. Instead, this was *the sovereign initiative of the Father* toward the Son, to set Him forth as an offering. As we read in Isaiah, 'The Lord was pleased [as the manifestation of His will] to crush Him, putting Him to grief'. Isa 53:10. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was smitten and afflicted by the Father. Isa 53:4.

The shedding of Christ's blood in the garden of Gethsemane was also an outcome of the *Son's initiative* to offer Himself as the Lamb of God. Isa 53:7. Christ's prayer in Gethsemane was a great travail. As He offered Himself in prayer, He was strengthened in three distinct ways.

First, Jesus was strengthened with the capacity of *Eternal Spirit* so that He could continue to offer Himself to God. Heb 9:14. Luk 22:43. It was

after He was strengthened by Eternal Spirit that Jesus began to sweat great drops of blood. Luk 22:44.

Through the shedding of His blood, Jesus was making the life of the Everlasting Covenant available to mankind. As He offered Himself on our behalf to God, the *blood from each wounding event* multiplied the life of God to Him so that He was sustained in His offering work. This was the second aspect of His strengthening.

And a third, fundamental element to Christ's strengthening was *the word* of the Everlasting Covenant, *spoken by the Father*. It was in the garden of Gethsemane that the Father proclaimed, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' Heb 5:5. The Father also declared, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.' Heb 5:6. This passage in the book of Hebrews continues to describe the nature of Jesus' travail in prayer in Gethsemane. Heb 5:7.

We can therefore identify the three elements that enabled Jesus to offer Himself as the Lamb of God. That is, Jesus offered Himself through *the capacity of Eternal Spirit*, through *the blood of the Everlasting Covenant* and by *the word of the Father*. Rom 6:4. In the same way, the apostle John testified that Jesus Christ came by *water*, which is the word of the Father, by *blood*, and the *Spirit* bears witness. 1Jn 5:6.

### The fulfilment of the Father's will

As we discussed in the Preface, Jesus was the only person who could successfully fulfil the righteousness of God by 'keeping the Law' through the will of His flesh. However, this was never the Father's desire. Heb 10:8. In His prayer in Gethsemane, Christ declared that He had not come to fulfil the requirements of the Law through the will of His flesh but, rather, that He had come to do *the will of God the Father*. Heb 10:9. Jesus prayed, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done.' Luk 22:42.

Jesus offered Himself to fulfil the will of the Father by establishing a New Covenant. Through His prayer, Jesus took away the first covenant and established the second, in which a multitude of people could be born as sons of God. Heb 10:9. It is through the will of the Father, fulfilled in the offering of Jesus Christ, that we are born as sons of God and sanctified as priests. Joh 1:13. Heb 10:10. It is only through new birth that we are able to fulfil the will of the Father.



## Dealing with our self-determined will

Another specific outcome of the first sprinkling of Christ's blood in Gethsemane is that *He overcame all of the self-determined wills of mankind*. We note that, under the Old Covenant, the disciples of Christ were not able to abide in the fellowship of Yahweh's prayer and offering through the will of their flesh. Jesus had asked the disciples to watch and pray with Him for this one hour of prayer - but they fell asleep for sorrow. Luk 22:45. This only confirmed the inadequacy of the Old Covenant in that, while their spirits were willing to live in obedience to God's will, their flesh was weak. Mat 26:41. 'The will of their flesh' was incapable of fulfilling the will of God. Nevertheless, a New Covenant would soon be established for them through the shedding of Christ's blood, in which they would be born as sons of God and enabled to walk obediently by the Spirit within them.

As a result of being made a sin offering by the Father, Jesus had taken upon Himself all of the fallen and 'disobedient wills' of mankind. For us, before we were born from above, the operation of our 'will' was fundamentally self-centred. However, through the new birth, our will, which is a faculty of our identity, is *reoriented to the will of the Father* for our life. In this regard, the apostle Paul explained that those who are born again no longer live according to 'the will of the flesh', but according to 'the will of the Spirit of Christ' within them. Rom 8:9. Paul therefore wrote, 'But we have the mind of Christ'. 1Co 2:16.

## Coming back from the death of sin

We learn from the book of Hebrews that Jesus, our great Shepherd, was being *brought back from the death of sin* through the sprinkling of His blood - the blood of the Everlasting Covenant. Heb 13:20. This sprinkling occurred over six wounding events on His journey from Gethsemane until His redemptive work was finished on the cross. By the time that Jesus declared, 'It is finished!', while hanging on the cross, He had fully come back from the death of sin and had established the New Covenant by the shedding of His blood. Luk 22:20. In this way, Jesus Christ manifested *resurrection life* (Gr. *exanastasis*, Php 3:11.) while He was still alive in His mortal body. Importantly, the seventh wound, which was the piercing of Christ's heart, opened the door of access to the New Covenant for us. All could now enter, receive the divine nature and become sons of God through faith.

Having understood that the shedding of Christ's blood was *bringing Him back from the death of sin*, and that Christ had *resurrection life* while still alive in His mortal body, we could ask the question, 'When did Jesus *die* for our sin?' The apostle Paul stated, 'For the *death that He died*, He died to sin once for all; but the *life that He lives*, He lives to God.' Rom 6:10. We note that the death that Jesus died was not our kind of physical death. As the apostle was showing here, *His death was when He was 'cut off' from God in Gethsemane*. Jesus was living by resurrection life (*exanstasis*) as He was coming back from the death of sin. This was the life that He lived to God. These two realities - the *death that He died* and the *life that He lives* - were operative from Gethsemane until He declared, 'It is finished!'

The blood of Christ that proceeded to flow from His body during each wounding event progressively brought Him back from the dead as it multiplied the resurrection life of God in His mortal body. Likewise, we too are coming back from the death of our sins and are living by resurrection life with Christ, by His blood.

### He died for our sin

By the time Jesus prayed to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane, He was fully acquainted with our sick condition, which was a result of sin. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus was 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with [our] grief'. Isa 53:3. He was the embodiment of all our sin - with all our rebellion, anger, contentions, jealousy, depression, desires and waywardness. Gal 5:19-21. Furthermore, God the Father *made the soul of Jesus* an offering for our sin. Isa 53:10. In this regard, Jesus said to His disciples, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death [as a sin offering].' Mat 26:38.

As He prayed to the Father, Jesus drank the cup of God's wrath and judgement upon our sin. Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for every person. Heb 2:9. The death that resulted from our sin was not physical death but, rather, was separation from God. Isaiah prophesied concerning the hour of Jesus' prayer that Jesus was *cut off* from the land of the living. Isa 53:8. He was dead to God. However, He had entrusted Himself to the One who could save Him from death. Heb 5:7. Furthermore, with every drop of blood that He shed, He was then coming back from this death and separation from God. Heb 13:20.

In spiritual terms, sin is 'a terminal illness' which causes us to become 'deformed', and it eventually 'kills' us. The apostle Paul explained, 'For

the wages of sin is *death*.' Rom 6:23. The fruit of this death is separation from God and the inability to have relationship with Him and with others. Our sin, with the resulting death and separation that it causes, is much worse than we perceive or are willing to confess.

Through the sprinkling of His blood, Jesus came back from the death of every sin. We cannot deal with our sin through self-condemning or self-justifying activity. To deny Christ's offering for our sin, and to endeavour to recover ourselves, is a delusion. Through our participation in the offering of Christ, we are being delivered from believing in our own capacity to bring ourselves back from the death caused by our sin.

### **Born again through the sin offering**

'The sin offering' is described by the prophet Isaiah as 'a *travail* in order to *bring to birth*'. Isa 53:11. Significantly, it was through Christ's travail as the sin offering that we are *born again* from the death of sin, as sons of God. Concerning the offering of Christ in Gethsemane, Isaiah prophesied, 'If He would render Himself as a [sin] offering, He will see His offspring [seed] ... as a result of the anguish [travail] of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied.' Isa 53:10-11. At the conclusion of His travail throughout six wounding events, Christ became 'the firstborn from the dead'. Col 1:18.

Christ is the One Seed in whom all names are named. Gal 3:16. Eph 1:21. Each person's name as a new-born son of God was 'made known' and remembered before God when Christ's soul was made a sin offering. Our names were declared in Gethsemane, and then carried by Jesus throughout the six wounding events of His offering. Our names are written into the steps of obedience which Jesus learned through His sufferings on our behalf. Heb 5:8. Furthermore, as our great High Priest, He also continues to declare our names before the Father, for 'He always lives to make intercession for [us]'. Heb 7:25.

We continue with Christ in the fellowship of the sin offering for the whole of our life. Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, is bringing us back from the death of our sin as we journey with Him on the path that He pioneered. In this regard, we read in the book of Hebrews, 'Therefore *let us go forth to Him*, outside the camp, bearing His reproach'. Heb 13:13. Through our participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering, we are being made adequate to fulfil the will of God in our life every day.



# The first wound

# The fellowship of prayer

*Luke Pomery*

## Introduction

During the last supper, Jesus explained that the New Covenant would be established through the shedding of His blood. Luk 22:20. The shedding of Christ's blood occurred over six wounding events, from Gethsemane until His work was finished on the cross. However, as we have already discussed, there was no 'entry point' for us to participate in the New Covenant until the seventh wound of Christ took place. The seventh wound, where blood and water flowed from the heart of Christ, was *our access into the New Covenant*. A new and living way was opened for us to *be born* as sons of God. Joh 19:34. In this regard, the writer to the Hebrews stated, 'We have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a *new and living way*.' Heb 10:20.

At the last supper, Jesus had told His disciples, 'Where I go, you cannot follow Me *now*; but you will follow *later*.' Joh 13:36. We note that in the garden of Gethsemane the disciples of Christ were overtaken with the sorrow of their own suffering, and were *unable to abide* with Jesus in the fellowship of His prayer. Luk 22:45. Without the new birth and the

strengthening of Eternal Spirit by the Holy Spirit, they were unable to watch and pray with Christ for one hour. Mar 14:37. However, after they had been born of water and the Spirit, and had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were evidently able to abide with Christ in the fellowship of prayer. Act 2:42.

### The word of the cross

The apostle Paul testified that he preached no other gospel than the mystery of 'Christ crucified'. 1Co 1:23. It is through the preaching of the word of the cross of Christ that we receive a spirit of grace and supplication. Zec 12:10. The spirit of grace and supplication is the capacity to turn to the Lord and to mourn in repentance. Whenever we turn to the Lord, the veil of our self-determination, in which we endeavour to fulfil the righteousness of God by the will of our flesh, is removed from our hearts. 2Co 3:16. *Jesus overcame our self-determination* through His prayer to the Father on our behalf, 'Not My will, but Yours be done.' Luk 22:42.

Remember that Christ, 'In the days of His flesh, offered up both *prayers and supplications* with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His [godly fear]'. Heb 5:7. Christ's prayer to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane was an expression of faith-obedience. Mar 14:36. In the same way, we must draw near to God in prayer, with the *confession of faith*. For we read in the book of Hebrews, '*Without faith* it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him'. Heb 11:6. The faith that comes by hearing and receiving the word of Christ enables us to present ourselves to God in the fellowship of prayer. The apostle Paul testified, 'We have boldness and access with confidence *through faith* in Him.' Eph 3:12.

We first received our name, from the Father, when we were born from above by the incorruptible word of God. 1Pe 1:23. Furthermore, the Father continues to speak to us each week, through the word spoken at the communion table, concerning our sonship and the works we are to do. These works belong to our name and sanctification as a son of God. The faith we receive each week enables us to believe and obey what the Father is saying to us. Our first 'work' of faith is *to speak* - and the first context in which we speak, is *the secret place of prayer*. Rom 10:8. Thus, from the communion table, we proceed by faith to abide in the fellowship of prayer with the Lord.

## Abiding in the fellowship of Their prayer

Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, has invited us to join the prayer meeting of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As we are joined to Their prayer meeting, by the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to offer prayer and worship in the same way that Christ did! In the garden of Gethsemane, Christ offered Himself in prayer and worship to the Father. Eph 5:2. Jesus Christ has opened the way for *us* to join Him, as *priests*, in His offering of prayer and worship to the Father. We read in the book of Revelation, 'He has made *us* to be a kingdom [of] *priests* to His God and Father'. Rev 1:6.

Christ's prayer in the garden of Gethsemane revealed the fellowship of prayer in the most holy place of the true tabernacle. Heb 8:2. Jesus described this as 'the secret place of prayer'. Mat 6:6. Through His instruction, Jesus teaches us to pray to our Father who is in secret, confessing Him as our Father. Mat 6:9. And, significantly, we note that the Holy Spirit is *joining us to the continual fellowship and offering of Yahweh*. In this sense, the fellowship of prayer doesn't 'begin' when we start to pray. Rather, we are joining Their *ongoing* discussion.

We pray in the Holy Spirit and allow Him to lead us, even in the manner in which we ought to pray. Rom 8:26. Christ searches our hearts and gives to us understanding as we abide in the fellowship of Their prayer. Rom 8:27. This understanding is 'the knowledge of the Holy One'. 1Jn 5:20. Pro 9:10. Through prayer, we learn that we are participating in the offering of Christ; and that the events of each day are therefore part of our faith-obedience, with Christ, as He teaches us to continually abide with Him. Heb 5:8.

## Participating in the offering of Christ

The fellowship of prayer is foundational to our daily participation in the offering of Christ. In this way, the first sprinkling of Christ's blood enables us to *remain connected* to all of Christ's other wounding events. Through the fellowship of prayer, we gain entry into the grace of God. In the book of Hebrews, we read, 'Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need'. Heb 4:16. The help we need each day is to stay connected to the offering of Christ, through which we are being delivered from our sin and iniquity, and through which resurrection life is being multiplied to us.

Jesus commands us to *abide in the fellowship of Their prayer* so that we can overcome the temptation of living according to *our self-determined*

*will*. A person's 'will' is a faculty of their identity. According to the motivations of their will, they are able to set their mind in a certain orientation – either on the flesh or on the Spirit. Rom 8:5. The will of a person determines how they think, behave and communicate. As we remain connected to the fellowship of Christ's prayer and offering, our self-centred motivations that belong to 'the will of the flesh' are being cut from our life. This is the particular deliverance that we receive from the first wounding of Christ.

### Strengthened in prayer

In the fellowship of prayer, *Jesus* is dealing with our motivations and giving us the capacity of His obedience. As we pray with Christ, His blood, which is the *life of the Everlasting Covenant*, cleanses our hearts from the activities of dead works so that we can serve the living God. Heb 9:14. Our will is reoriented to the works of priesthood that God has prepared for us. Jesus carried our names through every aspect of His offering, and He learned the steps of obedience that we are to walk. Heb 5:8. In prayer, Jesus teaches us the way of His obedience. In this regard, Jesus gives to us the 'instruction manual' for the events of each day. As we continue to walk with Him in the fellowship of His offering, we are learning to be son-priests to the Father.

In the fellowship of prayer, *the Father* is speaking to us about the secret of our name. We recall that God the Father spoke to Christ in Gethsemane, declaring the word of Christ's sonship and the work of His priesthood. Heb 5:5-6. The Father also speaks the *word of the Everlasting Covenant* to us, concerning our sanctification as sons of God and the work of our priesthood. The Father continues to regenerate our inner man so that the virtues of Christ's sonship can be established in our hearts, by faith. Eph 3:16.

In the fellowship of prayer, *the Holy Spirit* is strengthening us with *Eternal Spirit*. In the same way that Jesus was strengthened in the garden of Gethsemane to pray more earnestly, so too, we are strengthened to remain connected to the fellowship of Their prayer. In this regard, the apostle Paul said that we are to pray continually. 1Th 5:17. The Holy Spirit is given to us as the anointing that teaches us 'all things' regarding our sanctification as sons of God. The apostle John testified that we have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit from the Father; and the Holy Spirit teaches us about our participation in the fellowship of Christ's



offering. 1Jn 2:27. The Holy Spirit is compelling us to make offering, by faith, according to our sanctification.

The apostle Paul testified about the outcome of being strengthened by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the fellowship of Their prayer. He explained that, as we pray, we receive grace to adjust any unbelieving and anxious attitudes. Php 4:6. In contrast, we note that an unbelieving person acts *hastily* in the matters of life. Isa 28:16. However, as we *wait* on the Lord in prayer with thanksgiving, we are growing in the knowledge of our name and in the understanding of our participation with Christ in the fellowship of His offering! Paul joyfully declared that, having been strengthened in prayer, '*the peace of God*, which surpasses understanding, will guard [our] hearts and minds through Jesus Christ'. Php 4:8.



# The second wound

## Bruised for our iniquities

*Lachlan Perrin*

Following His arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was taken to the court of Caiaphas the high priest. The crowd who had gathered there 'spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him'. Mat 26:67. This violent mistreatment, or 'buffeting', of Jesus' body was foretold by the prophet Isaiah when He wrote, 'He was *bruised for our iniquities*'. Isa 53:5. This bruising for our iniquity was Christ's second wound. In this article, we will consider how our fellowship in Christ's second wound enables us to understand the nature of our heart. By illumination, we can recognise whether our expression as a son of God is motivated by faith or by self-righteousness.

The second sprinkling of Jesus' blood was the *internal* bleeding that caused His bruises. In the same way that bruising refers to *underlying* wounds, iniquity refers to the faults in our identity that lie *underneath* a veil of self-righteousness. When Jesus was bruised for our iniquity, His very wounding reflected the nature of our fallen efforts to be a Christian. Iniquities are obstinate, perverted opinions through which we believe that we can love God and serve Him. They are the judgements and

perspectives which we default to in life because we sincerely trust in our flesh to know right from wrong. But these views are invalid because they are self-centred. Our fallen dilemma is that we are blind to our iniquity; unable to recognise when our expression as a son of God is self-righteous.

## The light of life

The apostle John wrote about Jesus, 'In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it'. Joh 1:4-5. This darkness is the blindness of iniquity, and refers to the condition of our fallen heart. We cannot live according to the word of God unless our iniquity is exposed and removed. The life that was the Light of men was in Jesus' blood. Lev 17:11. The second sprinkling of His blood caused the light of *illumination* to shine into and reveal the nature of our heart. Illumination breaches the veil of our self-righteousness and lays bare our iniquity before us. To say this another way, when our fallen heart is sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, the light of life begins to revive our spiritual sight. We understand the thoughts and intents of our heart; whether they are motivated by faith or by iniquity and self-righteousness.

How do we join the fellowship of Christ's second wound and deal with our iniquity? The apostle Paul taught that the veil of our self-righteousness can be removed (breached by the Light of life), if we will turn and look upon the Lord. 2Co 3:16. This is the meaning of repentance. When we respond to the word of the cross, turn and meet Jesus eye to eye, we behold the ugliness of our own heart reflected in His marred face. We understand that He was, literally, bruised for our iniquity. In repentance, we acknowledge that the integrity of our heart, which we thought was good, is in fact self-centred and evil. Our flesh is exposed as being inadequate to love God and to express His righteousness. This was the profound experience of the disciple Peter.

## Self-righteous Peter

Before they proceeded to the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said to Peter, 'Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' Mat 26:34. Astonishingly, Peter defied Jesus. He chose to trust in his sincerity rather than in the words that Jesus was speaking. He said, 'Even if I have to die with You, *I will not deny You.*' Mat 26:35. Later, in the court of Caiaphas, Peter watched as Jesus was

beaten, slapped and condemned to death. We remember that Peter was the disciple who took Jesus aside and rebuked Him for talking about His death and resurrection, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.' Mat 16:22. As Jesus suffered His second wound, Peter's dogmatic belief that He would not be killed began to collide with reality.

Indeed, in the court of Caiaphas, Peter three times denied knowing Jesus. On the third occasion, he began to curse and swear. Mat 26:69-75. Peter was cursing because, in his flesh, he could not follow through on his zealous assertion that he would die with Jesus. The important lesson that we learn is that we cannot join the fellowship of Christ's offering through self-righteous, good intentions. Like some kind of frustrating, malfunctioning machine, our self-preserving flesh will resist the intent of our mind to die with Christ. The apostle Paul summarised this exasperation when he wrote, 'The good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want'. Rom 7:19. Peter's other law, which was keeping him bound to the fear of death, caused the passion of sin to manifest as agitation and foul language.

As a rooster crowed, and Jesus was led away from the house of Caiaphas, Peter met Him eye to eye. He saw the ugliness of his iniquity reflected in the bruises on Christ's face. By illumination, he realised that the integrity of his fallen heart was, in fact, self-righteousness. As Jesus' eyes pierced his heart, Peter understood the hopelessness of his own righteousness. This confession, that we are bankrupt in spirit, is the beginning of repentance. Peter departed, weeping with godly sorrow because he was mourning the loss of his sonship. It is better for us to look upon Christ and see the horribleness of our iniquitous heart, than to live in the agitation of being unable to do the very thing that we desire as Christians; to abide in Christ.

### Self-righteous Judas

Judas was also present in the house of Caiaphas when Jesus was bruised for our iniquities. Throughout the Gospels, Judas was often labelled as the 'betraye[r]' of Jesus. Mat 10:4. Mar 3:19. However, Judas was *not predestined* to be a betrayer. He was called to be an apostle of the Lamb! Act 1:24-25. But he was born with another law at work in his members. Rom 7:23. Judas had a fallen perspective that veiled his capacity to understand the work of God and the offering of Christ. Iniquity was motivating his heart. In this regard, he was no different from Peter.

## THE GOSPEL

Peter's zealous, self-righteous actions came to a climax in the garden of Gethsemane when he struck the high priest's slave with his sword, cutting off his right ear. Joh 18:10. Peter would have believed that he was demonstrating his readiness to die with Jesus. However, the blindness of his fallen heart was causing his behaviour to obstruct the offering of Christ! Earlier, having finished praying, Jesus said to Peter, "Get up, let us be going; the one who betrays Me is at hand!" Immediately while He was still speaking, Judas came, saying, "Rabbi!" and kissed Him.' Mar 14:41-47. It is curious that Peter's anger was not directed at Judas.

If Judas had overtly betrayed Jesus, we could appreciate the acute deception that Peter would have felt. So, why did Peter strike Malchus, a man he'd most likely never met, instead of Judas? It was because nothing about Judas' greeting of Jesus was out of character! As Judas arrived and said, 'Hail, Rabbi', he greeted Jesus in the same sincere manner that Peter had observed countless times throughout their previous three years together. What was Judas doing? Judas believed that orchestrating a meeting between Jesus and the religious authorities of the day would prove His authenticity as the Messiah. On many occasions, he had watched Jesus confounding those who challenged Him, and silencing those who opposed Him. Like Peter, Judas would have considered himself to be a faithful disciple who was showing high initiative.

In the house of Caiaphas, when Judas saw that Jesus had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' 'But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!" He threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.' Mat 27:3-5. Judas had the same opportunity as Peter had. He also looked into Jesus' eyes and, by illumination, understood that iniquity was motivating his heart. Ashamed of what he'd done, Judas proclaimed Jesus' innocence because illumination enabled him to see that Jesus was condemned for *his* iniquity. He looked upon Jesus and saw the offering that God was making for him!

Unlike Peter, Judas didn't respond by acknowledging the bankruptcy of his flesh. He saw the ugliness of his self-righteousness and sought to fix the situation self-righteously. When he couldn't return the thirty pieces of silver, his fleshly capacity to make amends was exhausted. The contrariness of his heart was no longer a confusing motivation, subtly lying beneath his actions. Racked with condemnation, and unable to join

Christ's offering, Judas took His own life. Instead of joining Christ's death, he killed himself.

### **A righteousness to be revealed**

Despite his self-righteous zeal, Peter received the word of God and believed the message of sonship that Jesus proclaimed during His earthly ministry. Joh 6:68. He believed that, in Christ, sons of men could become the righteousness of God. 2Co 5:21. At the last supper, Jesus commended Peter for receiving this word. He said, 'You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.' Joh 13:13. Joh 15:3. As the last supper concluded Jesus proclaimed, 'Where I go, you cannot follow Me now [speaking of His impending offering and death]; but you will follow later.' Joh 13:36. Jesus was signalling that every disciple would need to join the fellowship of His offering. Zealously, Peter said to Him, 'Lord, why can I not follow You right now?' Joh 13:37. Peter did not understand that Jesus' death would open a new and living way of salvation.

The lesson that we learn from Peter's impulsive zeal is that iniquity in our heart will cause us to try to verify Jesus' words self-righteously. However, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as we tarry in the offering of Christ. Rom 1:17. This is the context where our identity is progressively restored from the damage and corruption caused by iniquity. This process begins once a person is born again and joined to Christ's death and life by baptism, and continues for the duration of their time on earth. 1Jn 3:2. As the blood of Christ and the water of the word cleanse our heart, we cease from walking according to the flesh. Instead, our participation in Christ's offering equips us to live by faith and to walk by the Spirit.





# The third wound

## Chastened for our peace

*Lachlan Perrin*

The book of Hebrews helps to explain the *chastening* that we experience as Christians. We are encouraged that ‘whom the Lord *loves* He chastens’. Heb 12:6. In fact, the writer to the Hebrews instructed us to view chastening as an entirely positive experience because it is the *evidence* that God is engaged in our life. When we view chastening in this way, we realise that it is not an unpleasant by-product of walking with the Lord; rather, we persevere with the Lord *for* chastening! Heb 12:7. Chastening, although unpleasant in the moment, yields ‘the peaceable fruit of righteousness’. Heb 12:11. Jesus described this fruit as being our growth as sons of God. Luk 8:14.

When Isaiah prophesied about Christ’s offering and death, he wrote, ‘The *chastisement* for *our* peace was on Him’. Isa 53:5. In this article we will consider how the chastening that we experience from the hand of the Father is received through our participation in Christ’s offering. This is how the Father deals with our immaturity and helps to direct us to the works that He has prepared for us. The chastening that Jesus received for our peace occurred in the court of Caiaphas, and was the third wound

that He experienced in His journey from Gethsemane to Calvary.  
2Sa 7:12-14. Mat 26:67.

If our fellowship in Christ's second wound exposes the iniquity of our fallen perspectives, then our fellowship in His third wound reveals the death associated with proceeding in the *way* of self-righteousness. King Solomon described the way of self-righteousness when he wrote, 'There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death'. Pro 14:12. We recall from our previous article that iniquity results when we appraise life according to the stolen knowledge of good and evil. When our flesh engages and reacts to the world around us, our other law decides what is 'good and evil' from a self-centred perspective. Even a considered and calculated decision made on this basis will cause us to proceed 'our own way', which is the way of sin, separation from God and death.

Jesus Christ, who is 'the Prince of Peace', ministers the *peace of God* to us through the sprinkling of His blood. Isa 9:6. In other words, the peace of God is only available to us as we participate in Christ's offering. The peace of God becomes substantial for us when we appreciate that our life, with all of its successes and failures, and joy and adversity, is a fellowship in the offering of Christ. We will recognise the peace of God 'ruling in our hearts' when the objections of our flesh, concerning the difficulties we experience, are silenced. Col 3:15. Instead, we will find ourselves offering up a sacrifice of thanksgiving *because* we are participating in the sufferings of Christ! Psa 50:23. In this way, our Christian testimony becomes an expression of the righteousness of God.

### Chastened while there is hope

'Chastening' can be understood as the 'training', 'educating' or 'instruction' which is applied, in particular, to a maturing child. As 'children' of God, *the Father chastens us to remove immaturity and to foster mature sonship*. Heb 12:7. We learn from the book of Proverbs that God 'chastens His sons while there is hope, because He does not desire their death'. Pro 19:18. The Father's chastening is the suffering that we experience when we conduct ourselves according to the unregenerate immaturity of our fallen flesh. These evil ways of behaving and relating do not bring forth the fruit of our sonship because they are self-righteous projections motivated by iniquity.

The Father chastens us because 'foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child (an immature son of God); the rod of discipline (chastisement) will

remove it far from him'. Pro 22:15. The Father desires every son to bring forth fruit to maturity. Joh 15:8. He does not desire our life to be unfruitful, nor our end to be eternal death! It is for this reason that He chastens us. He is aligning our way to the hope of righteousness that He has set before us.

## The peace of God

'The peace of God' does not refer to the absence of conflict in the world or our exemption from personal affliction. The apostle Paul described those dimensions of suffering as 'common to man', whether a person is saved or unsaved. 1Co 10:13. Instead, when we talk about 'peace', we are talking about the absence of anything in our heart that conflicts with God's will and purpose for us. When we are self-righteous, we cannot know the peace of God.

We can only abide within the lines of our sanctified predestination when there is no other law at work in our heart that is warring against the leading of the Spirit. For this reason, we can understand peace simply as 'sanctification to one's name'. In other words, we will not come to peace while we live by our self-centred other law and remain contrary to the will of God.

When we meet Jesus eye to eye and, by illumination, understand the nature of our own heart, we can receive the peace of God. Despite feeling confronted and exposed because of our iniquity, we find that abiding in Christ is the context where the peace of God can rule in our heart. The peace of God is the resolution that we find when we set our mind on the Spirit. It replaces the agitation that we inevitably experience when we try to fulfil God's will according to the initiatives of our self-righteous flesh.

## Peter's restoration

When the life of God is ministered to us in the third sprinkling of Jesus' blood, we learn 'the way of righteousness' that Christ pioneered for every son of God. Encouragingly, we read in the book of Proverbs, 'In the way of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death'. Pro 12:28. This is the key point; *chastening teaches us the discipline of walking in the way of our sonship*. And this is the way of peace; sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In our previous article, we considered the breach that was made upon Peter's self-righteous heart by the light of life shining from Christ's face. Having met Jesus in the fellowship of His second wound, Peter proceeded

to join Christ in the fellowship of His third wound. As a result, the sprinkling of Jesus' blood began to minister the peace of God to Peter. By the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, after His resurrection, Jesus addressed the issues of Peter's immaturity. It was here that Jesus restored Peter, calling him to fulfil the works of his name, to walk in sanctification amongst his brethren, and to fellowship in His death. Jesus said to Peter, 'When you were younger [immature], you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go. "Now this He said, signifying by *what kind of death* he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!" ' Joh 21:18-19.

Jesus used this conversation to highlight how Peter must proceed. He pointed out that, in Peter's self-righteous immaturity ('when you were younger'), Peter's way was independent and self-centred. But, should Peter receive the chastening of God and mature in his sonship ('when you grow old'), he could proceed in fellowship and faith obedience.

As Peter received this word, he received faith. Further to this, the Holy Spirit was pouring the love of God into His heart. His faith, now working by love, motivated Peter to join the fellowship of Christ's offering. This was the 'kind of death' that Jesus was revealing to Peter by illumination. It was the death of Christ through which the righteousness of God would be revealed in Peter's life! Peter was going to participate in the fellowship of Christ's death, by chastening, and reveal the life of God in his mortal body. As Jesus had foretold at the last supper, 'You will follow later', He was now instructing Peter to fellowship in His offering with the command, 'Follow Me!' Joh 21:19.

### **Bringing forth fruit to maturity**

When we persevere in the fellowship of Christ's chastening, our desire to go our own way is circumcised from our heart. This process is ongoing, operating by the practical disciplines that support our Christian lifestyle. When we live in this way, we can 'attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a *mature* man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the *fullness* of Christ'. Eph 4:13.

We experience chastening in the daily circumstances of life. Chastening limits, frustrates and undermines the activities and initiatives that are not part of our sanctification. These pursuits reveal our immaturity as sons of God. In the parable of the sower, Jesus defined the immature

pursuits of self-righteous iniquity as being the worries of riches and pleasures of worldly living. Luk 8:14. When we are chastened, we learn to walk according to the word of our sonship. We experience the peace of remaining in the Father's will, and we joyfully fulfil the works of our sonship! As we persevere, by faith, in the fellowship of Jesus' chastening, we progressively bring forth the fruit of our maturing sonship.



# The fourth wound

## By His stripes we are healed

*Tim Maurice*

In His fourth wound, Jesus Christ encompassed the suffering of our common humanity. 'Our common humanity' is another way of saying, 'the ordinary shared aspects of being a human being, or a natural man'. The fourth wound was administered when Jesus was scourged with the cat o' nine tails whip on orders from Pontius Pilate. This whipping brought Jesus to the point of death as it tore flesh from His body and caused His blood to flow from multiple wounds. These whipping wounds are also called 'stripes'. The healing that this suffering ministers to us is healing to our spirit, or inner man:

He was wounded for our transgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities  
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,  
And by His stripes we are healed. Isa 53:5.

The suffering of our common humanity comes upon all people, whether they are sons of God or not. The apostle Paul described it this way: 'No temptation [adversity] has overtaken you but such as is common to man'. 1Co 10:13. For example, we all inherit genes from our parents, giving us

physical abilities, weaknesses and personality types. This genetic heritage is natural - an aspect of the natural man - but it is subject to the Fall, and therefore is affected by sin. It is imperfect. The shedding of Jesus' blood in His fourth wound was for the healing of these imperfections so that they should not impede us from doing the works of our sonship.

## Healing to our spirit

When we speak of healing here, we are referring to the healing of our spirit. Our spirit is our identity - the essence of our being. In the fellowship of Christ's offering we can be healed in our spirit, or 'inner man', and become fruitful sons of God. It is the will of God for each person to be regenerated in their inner man so that they can exercise their abilities, thereby being able to exercise the talents He has given.

This is why we all need to come to terms with who we are. We must accept how God made us. In doing so, we will become aware of what our areas of diligence should be. God gives talents according to our several abilities. Our abilities are a starting point in our understanding of where God has given us a talent. This talent is a share in Christ's divine nature, which we are able to express and exhibit as unique firstfruits of the new creation. Jas 1:18. As we continue to be healed and recovered in our spirit, we find growing clarity regarding the unique expression of Christ's life within us. God works with the raw material of how we are made - that is, our natural man. But He is also committed to dealing with the carnality in our old man. He regenerates our natural man and circumcises from us our old man. This happens on the pathway of our individual participation in the offering of Christ, as we make straight paths for our feet. Heb 12:13.

So we all have to accept that we were born with certain natural traits. We have abilities and we have limits. Our limits are not necessarily a dead end. A bed-ridden person can lead a life as productive as a person who is never sick. They may not find physical healing, but they can still come to the fullness of their fruitfulness as a son of God, because healing has come to their spirit. They can worship God in spirit and in truth, fully participating in the fellowship of Christ and their brethren, walking in the will of God. To illustrate, you may remember that Jesus was asked a question about the man who was blind from birth: 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Joh 9:2. The disciples were looking for the cause of the man's blindness, believing that some specific sin was to blame. But Jesus dispelled this idea: 'Neither this man



nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him'. Joh 9:3.

We see the point that Jesus was making here. God's purpose for you and me is to reveal His works in us - even through, or in spite of, what we regard as awful defects. It is therefore no use in trying to analyse why 'this' or 'that' is wrong with us. Was it our upbringing? Was it our parents' fault? Did we displease God somewhere? All of this can become an exercise of contending with our Maker, of the clay arguing with the Potter. Rom 9:19-21. God is the Potter, and He made us a certain way; He shaped the clay of who we are. But there are flaws in the shape because sin is in the world. Jesus died for the deficiencies in our physical makeup and character. We can be healed when we stop arguing with Him about the way we are, and accept the grace that He offers us through the various trials of life each day. When we embrace the package He has given us, we can get on with the business of doing our works, finding healing as we do so.

## You and your temperament

For example, you may have been born with a temperament which makes you especially nervous or angry under certain pressures. Now, God does not want you to be either of these things - overly nervous or angry - but you don't need to obsess over them. Your preoccupation should be with the name God has written for you in heaven, not with your perceived defects. Luk 10:20.

We are able to understand that the suffering caused by our inherited flaws and imperfections is included in the sufferings of Christ. The temperament we inherited from our parents is part of the package of our life, but we do not have to be ruled by our temperament. We are not the victim of our genes. Our name is the truth about who we are.

If we are going to be able to join the fellowship of Christ's offering, it is really important that we recognise the sort of person we are. Not in order to feel condemned, but so that the Lord can lay hold of us and heal us in the inner man! We have a name in the image of God, and the Holy Spirit is continually sanctifying us to that name. We don't, therefore, have to be resigned to the way we are. We can be regenerated and recovered to the hundredfold productivity which God predestined for us.

## Physical problems and abilities

The same mindset applies to those physical problems that arise in the normal course of life. A person born as an asthmatic or with poor eyesight does not have to regard themselves as a victim of their condition. Nor should they be engaged in a never-ending pursuit of some magical release from the way things are. A mature response to their situation will allow them to make straight paths for their feet - to do what is prudent without being anxious, to be proactive without becoming obsessed with their health.

As the pathway of life narrows, it is tempting to kick against the goads of mortality. The fear of death can cause us to be discouraged or to embark on a quest to find a solution to our suffering - to 'trust in ourselves'. But true healing comes from eating from the tree of life! Once we know that we cannot die before our time, we are able to understand how God is able to sustain us - at times miraculously - in order that we fulfil the works of our name. Even though we are sometimes under extreme pressure, we will not be crushed or destroyed.

Equally, we can be greatly encouraged as we apply ourselves to the areas in which God has graciously given us ability. This will involve application, such as consistent musical practice, study and homework, studying the word of God, making time for fellowship, learning diligence in the home, applying ourselves to being hospitable, and so on. As we apply ourselves in this way, across all the areas of our life, it will become evident where God has given us specific grace capacities or where we have been called to be accountable. In this way, we will become increasingly clearer regarding the priorities of our life, and how we can participate fruitfully in the administration of Christ.

## Summary

The healing that Jesus made available to us in the fourth wound is healing to our spirit. We are able to see things (including ourselves) as God sees them and to respond to the issues of life as He desires us to respond. Our spirit is our identity, the essence of who we are. Thus the healing to our spirit is a healing toward us becoming the particular member of the body of Christ that He wants us to be. This healing is for our participation in His body; our individual contribution to the life of the whole.

To that end, we are all given certain abilities which we are able to exercise, improve and apply ourselves to. These abilities can include areas such as music, intellectual capacity, hospitality, finance. We must remember as well that the Lord gives talents according to our several abilities. So, part of our healing and recovery as sons of God will be to recognise which abilities are part of His priority for us in relation to our name.

Giving proper application to the training of our areas of ability will ensure that we are not overcome by laziness and lack of fruitfulness. The healing that comes from the fourth wound of Christ's offering is towards our *psuche* so that we can achieve the fullness of our participation in the body of Christ. This will be seen in body ministry where the fruit of Christ's life in us can be ministered to others according to the uniqueness of a person's name. We will then be able to join in close and easy *koinonia* (fellowship) with our brethren as others bear witness to the life of God in us.



# The fourth wound

## Key definitions

*Tim Maurice*

In order to better understand the work of Christ's fourth wound, it will be helpful to be clear on some definitions.

### **The first man**

The first man is Adam before the Fall. He was the first person in the order of creation. There will only ever be one first man, because God does not intend that we should return to Adam's sinless but unperfected state. The purpose of Christ's offering is to gather us, finally, as a company of perfected sons of God who have grown up to the measure and stature of the new man - Jesus Christ. Eph 4:13.

The first man, Adam, is therefore obsolete. Jesus is referred to in Scripture as 'the second Adam', the new creation. 1Co 15:45-47. 2Co 5:17. And we have been brought forth by the will of the Father as particular firstfruits of this second, new creation. The offering of Christ has removed ('taken out of the way') the hindrances of the old creation. Col 2:14. As sons of God, we have been brought back from the death of sin and raised into heavenly places with Christ. Heb 13:20. Eph 2:6. The

healing that comes to us through the blood of Christ is not restoring us to the pre-Fall state of Adam; it is conforming us to the image of the Son.

### The natural man

Unlike the first man, who had no knowledge of death or sin, the natural man is subject to both as a result of the Fall. He has been damaged by sin and cut off from the supply of God's life. The natural man is the package of *bios* (biological life) and *psuche* (the inner man) which makes a human being 'a living soul' - a person with an identity. 1Co 15:45. It is the *psuche* element of the natural man which is renewed by the regeneration of the Spirit and which can be made compatible with the spiritual life.

This is how the natural man differs from the old man. The *psuche* of the natural man can be gathered up into the life of the Spirit once a person has been born from above. In this way, their natural abilities can be offered in the body of Christ. The natural can then serve the spiritual.

### The old man

The problem, however, is that there is another 'man' in the equation who demands to be served. This is the old man who, until we are born from above, is attached to the natural man. In this state, the old man is captive to the law of sin and brings all the faculties of the natural man under the power of sin, giving sin dominion over a person's life.

Put another way, the old man is the body of sin which asserts its pre-eminence in the hearts of men. 'The old man and his deeds' must be put to death. Col 3:9. He cannot inherit resurrection life and he cannot be made spiritual, because the only law he answers to is the law within him - the 'other law'. This makes him lawless, reprobate and incorrigible. Unlike the natural man, he cannot be made compatible with the life of the Spirit.

In the fellowship of Christ's offering, we have the capacity to 'put off' the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts of the other law. Notably, Paul connected the old man to the 'conduct' of a person before they are born again. Eph 4:22. As we put off the old man, we are to be renewed in the spirit of our mind, and are to 'put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness'. Eph 4:23-24. The conduct of the new man is our sanctification, by the Spirit. By this means, we are becoming the righteousness of God in Christ. 2Co 5:21.

It is important to note that the old man is also *corporate*. This is a 'body of death' of fallen humanity which is consigned to the condemnation of the law because it rejects Christ. This body can have no part in the corporate offering of Christ. A person joined to the body of the old man, which is the world, cannot participate in the body of Christ. 1Jn 2:15-17.

## The carnal man

Carnality is a leaven which asserts itself among Christian believers. However, it can be dealt with in us as we abide in the offering of Christ, reckoning ourselves dead to the demands of the flesh. A carnal person is one who believes their own religious self-righteousness to be the righteousness of God. They mistake 'concurring' with the word of God with actual faith. Rom 7:22. In fact, they reject the necessity of faith coming by hearing. They think that they don't need to hear, because they already know. This is what it means to be 'puffed up' by knowledge.

As such, they approach the Scriptures and the fellowship of believers from the perspective of their own wisdom. This wisdom is obtained from their own knowledge of good and evil. This false wisdom seduces them away from the simplicity of walking in the light of fellowship. This is because they believe that their self-righteous analysis and assessment has made them wise. Furthermore, because the carnal man is serving his flesh, he cannot set his mind on the Spirit. Rom 8:6. He will therefore always come back under the power of sin, finding himself miserably trapped in hypocrisy and self-deception.

## The new man

Jesus Christ is the new man. He is not merely a living soul; He is 'a life-giving spirit'. 1Co 15:45. His life is not defined by what is natural or 'of the earth'. His life is spiritual life and He lives by offering. As a person abides in Christ, they are able to be led by the Spirit of God, living in the fellowship of Christ's offering and multiplying the life of God. This person is able to set their mind on the Spirit. They can therefore be healed in their spirit (their identity) and recovered to who God named them to be. They can begin to do the works of their name in Christ.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Eph 2:10.

As such, they can make offering with their natural abilities. In doing so, they will discover what the Lord has placed in their hands to multiply by offering. They can be entrusted with a talent. Mat 25:14-30.

We note that, like the old man, the new man is also corporate. We are members of His body, which is the context for all offering and multiplication of new creation life. There are three elements to new creation life that belong to the offering of each member of the Godhead. The first is the new birth of the seed of the divine nature from the Father. This is where our identity is reborn and renewed. Christ then makes offering to us by coming to dwell in our hearts by faith, giving us our participation in the corporate life of His body. 2Co 5:17. The Holy Spirit is the New Covenant, whose temple we are. 1Co 6:19. In doing the works of our sanctification we reveal Him.

### **Abilities and talents**

And now we come back to the work of the fourth wound of Christ.

In this wounding action, He is recovering and regenerating our natural man so that we can fulfil the works of our name. Not so that we can be 'better' Christians, but so that we can be entrusted with a portion of His divine nature (a talent) which we are then to use to multiply life by offering in the body of Christ.

This talent is something which is 'not of ourselves'; it is of Christ. It is obtained only in the fellowship of His sufferings, where we discover 'the secret of the Lord'. Knowing this secret allows us to 'walk in the truth', not lying against the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. 3Jn 1:4. If we bring a projection on to the holy ground of offering, we will be profaning the Holy Spirit and will attract the judgement of God. Act 5:3.

It is important we realise that the talent is not measured by the training or skills of the natural man. God doesn't measure grace by what is natural. The most highly trained pianist is not necessarily the most graced musician. The most eloquent speaker is not necessarily the most graced preacher. The best tradesman is not necessarily going to be graced like Bezalel. Exo 35: 30-33. God chooses whom He wills. He gives grace gifts to the new man.

At the same time, our talents are not wholly disconnected from our natural abilities. So education, aptitude and skills training, or lack of them, will have some influence on the shape of our new man's talent; but



only up to a point. In any event, we do not need to strive or worry about what our talent is. In an easy fellowship among our brethren, as we seek to reveal Christ in all that we do, such things become evident and confirmed in due course and at the right time.

So Jesus' fourth wound is a wonderful provision. Not only are we healed in areas where we have been hurt or where we have damaged ourselves; we are also sustained miraculously so that we can walk out our predestination. The trials and difficulties of our common humanity, difficult though they sometimes are, need never impede us from doing our sanctified works. This is wonderful news. Jesus encompassed all of these sufferings, and now they do not need to overwhelm or discourage us. We can get on with living in the new man with absolute confidence that the Lord will supply our every need.



# The fifth wound

# The crown of thorns

*Stephen Bourne*

## Introduction

Satan deceived Eve with a lie. Concerning the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, he said to her, 'You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' Gen 3:4-5. When Eve listened to this lie, her perception of the fruit was distorted. It now appeared to her to be good for food, a delight to the eyes, and desirable to make her wise. Gen 3:6. Once she ate the fruit, these three desires became part of her identity. The apostle John described this third desire - namely, the pursuit and exercise of wisdom from the basis of a person's knowledge of good and evil - as 'the pride of life'. 1Jn 2:16.

Our pride and projections are the key elements that Christ dealt with in the fifth wound. The way in which Christ did this, and how we are to join Him in the offering work of the fifth wound, forms the focus of this article.

Shortly after Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Lord God said to Adam, 'Cursed is the ground *because of you*; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.' Gen 3:17. This passage can equally be translated, 'Cursed is the ground for *your sake*; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.' Mercifully, God did not curse *Adam* (and thus mankind), as He did with the serpent. Gen 3:14. Rather, He cursed the ground for the sake of man. Specifically, God said to Adam that with much toil and sweat the cursed ground would grow for him 'thorns and thistles'. Gen 3:17-19.

The *ground* speaks to us of the whole context of our life, with all of the unique relationships, circumstances, works and realities that are particular to each individual. Thorns and thistles, then, are the *frustrations and suffering events of life that God allows to occur in order to deal with our pride and projections*.

The cursing of the ground, with all of its associated sufferings and frustrations, followed the fall of mankind. Death was the inevitable outcome of man's transgression by disobeying the word of the Lord in the garden of Eden. Gen 2:17. Death was the fruit of sin, which resulted in suffering and mortality for all mankind. Rom 5:12. Rom 6:23. Suffering was, therefore, an inescapable judgement for our sin. However, instead of this judgement leading to our eternal death by being cut off from God, the Father commuted our suffering to a loving discipline, in Christ. Joining Christ in His sufferings is the Father's provision to us so that we might be recovered to our name, to fellowship with Yahweh, and to attain eternal life. 2Co 4:17. Heb 12:6.

## The crown of thorns

As part of the fifth wound, Christ endured mocking and humiliation at the hands of hundreds of Roman soldiers. This included a crown of thorns being twisted and placed upon His head, portions of His beard being plucked out, being spat on, and being beaten on His head with a reed used as a mock sceptre. Christ was also stripped of His clothes and dressed mockingly in a scarlet robe. Mat 27:27-31. Mar 15:16-20. Luk 23:11. Joh 19:2-3.

If we consider these elements briefly, we can identify a number of key points.

*First*, a crown designates the rulership and authority of a specific individual. The crown of thorns, however, was used to mock and

humiliate Christ, rather than to honour Him. While Christ should have received the double crown of kingship and priesthood reserved only for the Messiah, He instead endured the mocking of His authority at the hands of the soldiers. Zec 6:11-14. His authority was taken away from Him as He endured the opposition of God on our behalf. Isa 53:8. However, by this action, all 'rule and authority and power and dominion' was being taken away from those who had misappropriated it on earth and in heaven. Eph 1:21. It was being re-established in Yahweh.

*Second*, we would all realise that thorns can inflict an annoyingly painful and sharp incision into our skin, causing blood to flow from our wound. Let us pause and consider the imagery of the crown of thorns and its confronting proposition - namely, that all of mankind, including you and me, are guilty of forcibly imposing upon the head of Christ, in prideful arrogance, our own projection and self-centred agenda for our life, demanding it be recognised and blessed by Him.

*Third*, we mock Christ's Lordship and sovereignty in our life when we cease from living by every word of our name, and instead live by the abilities and resources of our identity. Mat 4:4. Our own resources and abilities are clearly exhaustible and finite, and are unable to achieve the righteousness of God. Rom 10:3.

God faithfully calls us into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and offering as we recognise our culpability in these matters. 1Co 1:9. However, unless we turn to look upon Him whom we have pierced, we will be unable to see the hurt and grief that we cause to God when, being stiff-necked, we stubbornly reject our predestined name. Zec 12:10. 2Co 3:16. Act 7:51.

## Cursed is the ground

### *Because of sin*

In the first instance, the ground was cursed *because* of the fall of mankind. To understand this implication of the Fall, we note that the Son of God was the 'firstborn over all creation'. Col 1:15. All things were created through Him and for Him. Col 1:16. Adam was given dominion over the natural creation. The natural creation was sustained and in harmony while man remained connected to the order of headship under Christ. 1Co 11:3. When Adam sinned, through disobedience, he was cut off from Christ's headship. As a consequence, creation was no longer

sustained by the life of Yahweh. It was now subjected to futility.  
Rom 8:20. All living things were now competing for life and survival.

Through His offering, Christ was reversing the curse by reconnecting man and creation to Himself. Furthermore, He was disempowering the fallen mode of existence that claims the right to life through exercising might and power over others. This fallen way of living is commonly referred to as 'the survival of the fittest', and is the basis of all conflict. Jas 4:1-2.

Paul explained that Christ reconciled all things, on earth and in heaven, 'having made peace through the blood of His cross'. Col 1:20. Peace in creation was established through the blood that was shed on account of the fifth wound - namely, the crown of thorns. In this regard, we note that Christ was still wearing the crown of thorns when He was being crucified on the cross.

### *For our sake*

As we noted earlier, it is equally true that God cursed the ground for *man's sake*, promising Adam that 'thorns and thistles' would be an outcome of his toil and sweat. The purpose of this action by God was not to *punitively condemn* Adam for his transgression in the garden. Rather, it was an act of mercy and loving discipline to *turn* Adam, and thus all of mankind, back to fellowship and connection with God. How would cursing the ground achieve this?

To answer this question, we must first understand that the pathway of our recovery to God is *only* in and through Christ. Joh 14:6. He pioneered the pathway for us to follow as He came back from the death caused by sin through the shedding of His blood in six wounding events. Heb 2:10. We too are to join Him on this same pathway, whereby we are born from the death of sin in Gethsemane and born from above by the incorruptible word of God (the element of water). Heb 13:20. 1Pe 1:23. It is through baptism that we are joined to Christ and the pathway of salvation that He pioneered through His offering and sufferings. Communion, then, is our ongoing participation in the fellowship of this pathway of recovery, and our continued commitment to be joined to His offering through our baptism and sufferings. 1Co 11:25-26. 1Pe 3:21. Because we are joined to Christ, we are being sanctified and are receiving eternal life in the midst of our sufferings. Rom 6:22. 2Co 4:17.

It is evident that the ground *is cursed* when the work of our hands is frustrated, our plans are thwarted, and we eat the fruit of our labours with much toil and sorrow. Notably, in dealing with our pride, Christ is also dealing with all of its associated expectations, idealism, drive and ambition.

However, more than this, we must also recognise that the ground is cursed *for our sake*. The discipline of God is an act of His love toward us, and is the process by which we are recovered to our name. The Father, in Christ, is not punishing us when we are being disciplined. Heb 12:6. Rather, discipline in and through our sufferings is occurring for the good of our sonship so that we will trust in Him and not lean on our own understanding. Rom 8:28. Pro 3:5. 2Co 1:9. Heb 12:10.

### *Thorns and thistles*

As we have already stated, thorns and thistles are the *frustrations and suffering events of life that God allows to occur in order to deal with our pride and projections*. They can be situations and circumstances that impede the achievement of our own self-centred successful outcomes, which are nothing but the filthy rags of our self-righteousness. Isa 64:6. It is the boastful pride of life that drives the ambitious, short-sighted pursuit of our own perceived success. 1Jn 2:16.

The Lord God is allowing these frustrating situations and circumstances in our life to deal with our pride. Pride, sourced in our other law, and the projections associated with making a name for ourselves, are the elements that God is circumcising from our heart as we are joined to Christ in the fifth wound.

### **Making a name for ourselves**

In their pride, Adam and Eve sought to make a name for themselves by eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Gen 3:6. Similarly, the citizens of Babel desired to construct a city and a tower, and to *make a name for themselves lest they be scattered*. Gen 11:4. We can, therefore, see that the underlying agenda for making a name for ourselves is to cover the shame of our nakedness with a projection.

A projection is a self-defined, idolatrous image of ourselves to which we attribute worth. We then enthusiastically oblige others to worship it with us. We project this image because of the shame of our nakedness – our nakedness being the disconnection from our God-defined name and thus

the absence of the clothing of His righteousness, which is His will being done. Psa 132:9.

In pursuit of this self-defined name, men and women will regularly use, abuse and accrue any resource to achieve their goal, often at the expense of others. This futile 'striving after wind' occurs in the pursuit of all manner of wealth, knowledge, beauty, relationships, worldly successes and achievements. Ecc 2:17. Solomon remarked that 'all the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the *soul is not satisfied*'. Ecc 6:7. The person who seeks to find their life by making a name for themselves is always left with a compounding sense of anxiety and depression. This is because their false 'hope' of finding themselves through gradual accrual is being constantly deferred and their heart is becoming sick. Mat 10:39. Pro 13:12.

### Receiving the word of God

In considering pride and how it is dealt with in Christ's fifth wound, we must also see that Christ is circumcising from our hearts the fallen way in which we receive His word. In this season, the Lord has taken issue with how we receive His word. He has particularly addressed the common tendency to *agree* with the word rather than to respond to the word with godly repentance. This position is one of arrogant pride.

When we *merely agree* with the word, we have assumed the position of a *judge*. Herein lies the danger of our pride: we wrongly convince ourselves that we have the ability in ourselves to do and be what was said. In this regard, we believe that there is no need for drastic changes in our life, other than minor adjustments to our behaviour. We can even presume to instruct others regarding 'prudent' adjustments *they* should make to *their* lives. The error in living this way is that we *continually live by a righteousness of our own*. Instead, we must receive in humility the implanted word, which carries with it the faith to be the son whom God's word is calling us to be. Jas 1:21. Rom 10:17.

If our mode is to live by our self-righteousness, then the frustration of our hands in the suffering events of life will drive us to a variety of unbelieving attitudes, *instead of provoking us to turn to Christ*. We become ever more impatient, angry, frustrated, agitated, determined, stoic, depressed, anxious and self-centred. These are the hallmarks of someone living by the flesh. If we do not participate in Christ's sufferings, these frustrating circumstances will *destroy us* rather than *turn us* to Christ and reconnect us to the word of our name. In this



regard, we note the words of the wise man, 'Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, but humility goes before honour'. Pro 18:12.

## The issue of comparing

If we remain unwilling to join Christ's sufferings, we will eventually begin to compare ourselves with others, particularly when we perceive our unique circumstances as being unjust and unfair. This attitude is exemplified in the Bible by Esau, who wrongly believed himself to be a victim of his own circumstances. Gen 27:41. Heb 12:15-17. We may ask, 'Why doesn't anything work for me? Why does it always go well for everyone except me?'

We can easily look upon the perceived successes of others and start to express jealousy, envy, dissensions (or divisions) and outbursts of anger. These attitudes are the deeds of the flesh. Gal 5:19-20. This can motivate us even more to pursue, with a determined resolve, the idol in our heart – that is, our own righteousness. The apostle John exhorts us to guard ourselves against such idolatry. 1Jn 5:21.

If we constantly sow to these fleshly responses, we must realise that we will reap only division, distrust and discord, which all inevitably lead to relational death within the body of Christ. Gal 5:15. Gal 6:8. 1Co 11:18-19.

One of the outcomes of pride and projections being circumcised from our heart, and our deliverance from the propensity to compare ourselves, is that we no longer see ourselves as a victim of our circumstances. Rather, just as the apostle Paul testified, we too are able to testify that God is causing *all* things to work together for the good of our sonship. Rom 8:28. Heb 12:10.

## Conclusion

Both James and Peter tell us that God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. 1Pe 5:5. Jas 4:6. When our heart is lifted up in pride, God is strongly opposing us. However, if we humble ourselves in the frustrating circumstances of life, trembling at His word, then God's grace enables us to walk our sanctified path every day as a son of God. Isa 66:2. Heb 4:16. Instead of proudly pursuing the success of our own hands and our own self-defined name, we can simply know and live according to the name that the Father has given to us.



# The fifth wound

# The testimony of the apostle Paul

*Stephen Bourne*

## Introduction

Speaking to Timothy, the apostle Paul testified, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an *example* for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.' 1Ti 1:15-16.

As we read the testimony of Paul's life in the Scriptures, including the many difficult and frustrating circumstances that he endured, we see both the mercy of God and the perfect patience of Christ towards Paul. 1Ti 1:16. Evidently, it was through many tribulations that he entered the kingdom of God. Act 14:22.

In this article, we will step through Paul's life, and will particularly note what he learned as he endured through the sufferings that God allowed

in his life, and the way in which the blood of the fifth wound was applied to his life.

We will remember from our previous article that the fifth wound, which primarily comprised the crown of thorns, is dealing with our pride and projections. Thorns and thistles, which are the fruit of the ground being cursed by God, are the frustrations and suffering events of life that God allows to occur in our lives in order to deal with our pride and projections as we are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering.

The apostle Paul endured many frustrating and difficult circumstances throughout his life. He testified that he was 'always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested'. 2Co 4:10. Paul learned, in the suffering events, to boast in his weakness. 2Co 11:30. Rather than trusting in himself, and in all of his abilities, he learned to trust God who raises the dead. 2Co 1:9.

Further, as the love of God was poured into his heart by the Holy Spirit, it was in Paul's weakness that others were being strengthened and made complete. Rom 5:5. 2Co 13:9.

## **Weakness – Paul's mode**

First, let us briefly look at Paul's ministry mode.

The Corinthian church desired a charismatic leader, lamenting that Paul's presence was 'unimpressive and his speech contemptible'. 2Co 10:10. They were looking for a 'guru' teacher to 'tickle' their ears through a sophisticated, charismatic ministry model. 2Ti 4:3. 2Co 11:4. Nonetheless, Paul did not pander to these desires.

What was Paul's mode? It was undoubtedly one of boasting in his weakness so that the power of God could be directed towards the hearer. 2Co 11:30. 2Co 12:5,9. Paul did not come with 'superiority of speech or of wisdom' but, instead, came to the Corinthians in 'weakness and in fear and in much trembling'. 1Co 2:1,3. He determined to know nothing among them 'except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified'. 1Co 2:2. The important point is that *Paul's ministry mode was the same mode in which he lived from day to day.*

Just as Christ was crucified in weakness, offering Himself through the power of Eternal Spirit, the apostle Paul, likewise, testified that he was weak in Him. Heb 9:14. 2Co 13:4. Paul was crucified *with* Christ and lived completely *for* Christ, who died and rose again on his behalf. Gal 2:20.

2Co 5:14-15. Paul did not trust in himself, but in God who raises the dead. 2Co 1:9. Evidently, Paul was made an example to all believers of the very gospel he preached.

Although at times he could not see many steps ahead, Paul knew by the Holy Spirit that bonds and afflictions awaited him. Act 20:23. This was his portion as a minister of the gospel. However, it was through weakness in his sufferings that Paul could effectively preach the gospel of the grace of God from the basis of testimony. Act 20:24.

This is a critical point for us to understand. God does not want us to endure the sufferings of our life, and all of its frustrations, only to trust in ourselves. This same self-righteous pride that presumes to trust in ourselves is what Christ dealt with in the fifth wound.

Rather, in and through the sufferings of life, the gospel of His grace is being made real and effective in our lives as we trust God. God desires that the gospel be made true in us, as it was in Paul. Indeed, we are to be a living epistle, 'known and read by all men'. 2Co 3:2.

## The testimony of the apostle Paul

Throughout the course of his ministry, Paul endured many trials and frustrations that appeared to thwart his work in proclaiming the gospel. Many of these instances were recorded by Luke in the book of Acts and testified to by Paul in his letters. In his second letter to the Corinthians, in addressing the church's willingness to embrace false teachers, Paul recounted:

'In far more labours, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labour and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.' 2Co 11:23-27.

We could read Paul's testimony and mistakenly conclude that, given the number of things that seemed to go wrong, Paul's ministry was not overly successful. Our rational mind could also wrongly conclude that the trials,

frustrations, and afflictions that Paul often faced hindered and thwarted his work in proclaiming the gospel.

However, the opposite was true.

Rather, it was *through* the trials and frustrations that the gospel was effectively being proclaimed. This was because, in Paul's weakness, the power of Christ was able to be expressed in and through him. 2Co 12:9. In weakness, Paul did not trust in the abilities of his identity; rather, he trusted in God who strengthened him. Php 4:13.

Similarly, we can often view the frustrating circumstances of our own life as an annoying hindrance to our work as a son of God. We can often believe that when our sufferings end, our life will return to a semblance of normality. Rather, when we are in Christ, the Father is using the sufferings and the frustrations throughout our life to deal with our pride, which presumes that we can achieve His righteousness through our own abilities.

Our endurance in the sufferings and frustrations of life, through weakness, is the evidence that we are being joined to His offering and sufferings. As we turn to Him, the difficult and frustrating circumstances *are the process* through which our pride and projections are being *progressively circumcised* from our heart, in Christ. In this same disciplining process, we are *progressively attaining* to resurrection life in our mortal body. Php 3:10. 2Co 4:11. Thus, we can truly testify that when we are weak in ourselves, then we are strong in Christ. 2Co 12:10.

## Paul's journey

The book of Acts recorded many specific examples of the suffering events that Paul endured, as follows.

- Shortly after Paul's conversion, while he was preaching in Damascus, the Jews plotted to kill him. In fleeing Jerusalem, Paul was lowered down by a large basket at night. Act 9:23-25.
- While Paul preached in Pisidian Antioch, the Jews were filled with jealousy and began to contradict the things that he spoke. They incited many of the leading men and women to drive Paul and Barnabas out of the district. Act 13:44-50.

## The testimony of the apostle Paul

- Gentiles, Jews and rulers within Iconium attempted to mistreat and to stone Paul and Barnabas, which required them to flee the city. Act 14:5-6.
- Curiously, after many from the city of Lystra had just designated Paul and Barnabas as pagan deities, the Jews won over the crowds and stoned Paul, dragging him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. Act 14:11-19.
- While in Philippi, Paul cast out the demon within a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination. Paul and Silas were later dragged into the marketplace, where they were beaten with rods and thrown into prison. Act 16:16-24.
- In Thessalonica, the Jews jealously formed a mob against Paul, setting the city in an uproar. As a result, Paul and Silas were sent by night to Berea. Act 17:5-10.
- The Jews of Thessalonica heard that Paul had been proclaiming the gospel in Berea. They arrived in the city and started to agitate and stir up the crowds. As a result, the brethren sent Paul away. Act 17:13-14.
- The city of Ephesus was stirred into an uproar after a speech by a silversmith named Demetrius opposed the ministry of Paul. Two of Paul's companions were later dragged into an assembly. Act 19:23-41.
- Jews from Asia, intent on Paul's demise, seized him while he was in Jerusalem. Paul was later bound in chains and taken away to the barracks. Act 21:27-36.
- More than 40 Jews had formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. Act 23:12-13.
- Paul was brought before Governor Felix, who left him imprisoned for more than two years, supposing that Paul would give him money for his release. Act 24:26-27.
- Paul, still being imprisoned, was later brought before Festus, Procurator of Judea, where he proceeded to appeal to be heard by Caesar. Act 25:10. Instead of being freed, Paul was sent to Italy as a result of his appeal. Act 26:32. Act 27:1.

- Finally, Paul was sent to Rome as a prisoner in a large ship, which was later shipwrecked on the island of Malta. Act 27:2,41. Act 28:1.

## A thorn in the flesh

The apostle Paul testified that he had received a thorn in his flesh - a messenger from Satan. 2Co 12:7. The thorn in his flesh that Paul was referring to was *the persecuting spirit* that followed him for a large portion of his ministry journey. This was the same envious and murderous spirit that Paul, previously Saul, had been energised by in persecuting the early church with all his self-righteous zeal. Act 22:3-4.

It is clear from Paul's testimony that the reason for the thorn in his flesh was to deal with his pride due to the abundance of his revelations. 2Co 12:7.

The sufferings and circumstances that Paul endured became to him a uniquely tailored participation in Christ's suffering. Christ had already experienced the suffering of death for Paul. Heb 2:9. We remember that, in His one offering, Christ dealt with the sin of pride, as well as the curse of death because of our transgression. Gal 3:13. Rom 6:23.

Through the abuse that Christ suffered at the hands of the Roman soldiers, Christ experienced the opposition of God to the sinful pride of humanity. 1Pe 5:5. He humbled Himself and endured this abuse as the Lamb of God. Isa 53:7. By His humility, Christ overcame the pride of humanity, including Paul's pride which had been laid on Him. Through this wound, the sin of pride was being destroyed and removed from the heart of Paul. The Holy Spirit joined Paul to this aspect of Christ's sufferings when Paul suffered what he called his thorn in the flesh.

As He did for Paul, Christ simply invites us to join the fellowship of His sufferings. Php 3:10. As we are joined in weakness to Christ in His offering through baptism, we become the expression of the righteousness of God. 2Co 5:21.

Notably, Paul confessed that he implored the Lord three times to take away the thorn in his flesh. The Lord responded to Paul, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' 2Co 12:9.

Paul had no ability to deliver himself from the sufferings that accompanied His ministry. He had to trust in God and not in himself. 2Co 1:9. This was his *weakness*. As Paul joined the Lord in the secret



place of prayer, he had access through faith to the grace of God that enabled him to walk the sanctified path that God had predestined for him, however humiliating, frustrating and difficult this was. Rom 5:2. Heb 4:16.

As the love of God was poured into his heart by the Holy Spirit, Paul learned to rejoice and boast in his weakness. This was because he recognised that the thorn in the flesh that he experienced was dealing with his pride. More than this, he further recognised that the fruit of his suffering was that others were being strengthened and made complete. 2Co 13:9.

The important point to note is that the frustrating circumstances that God allows in our life are not *solely* to circumscribe our pride and projections from our heart.

Paul recognised that the *fruit* of his sufferings was that the body of Christ was being built up in love, and that others were finding comfort and salvation in his afflictions. Eph 4:16. 2Co 1:6. The Lord desires to lift our eyes from the difficulty of our circumstances to see how we are to serve one another in love and to be a fully participating body member who is able to build another up. Gal 5:13. 2Co 12:15.

### Concluding note - finding contentment and taking courage

Paul declared that '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'. 2Co 12:10. It is clear from Paul's testimony that we too are to know *contentment* and *settledness* in our weakness and abasement, for only then will we be strong in Christ. Php 4:11-13. 2Co 12:10.

Paul is an example to us of someone who knew that God worked *all* things for the good of his sonship because he loved God. Rom 8:28. Heb 12:10. We can only love God when our self-righteousness is circumscribed from our heart, *and* the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Rom 5:3-5.

Notably, in Paul's appeal to Caesar, the Lord encouraged Paul to *take courage* and to *bear witness* before the rulers in Rome. Act 23:11.

Even when the work of our hands is frustrated, and we are publicly humiliated through the difficult circumstances of life, the Lord is wanting us to take courage. Act 23:11. We are not to despair, even when the

## THE GOSPEL

refining fire of Christ's gaze is towards us. 2Co 4:8-9. Psa 39:13. Rev 1:14. Christ is Lord of all. Act 10:36. All things are working for the good of our sonship. Rom 8:28. We have a predestined work to do even in the perplexing situations that befall us. 2Co 4:8. As we are joined to Christ in His sufferings, and our pride is being progressively cut from our heart, He is walking with us in our weakness, holding our hand. Heb 4:15. Isa 41:13. Psa 73:23. Christ has laid hold of us and is not letting go! Php 3:12. 2Ti 2:15. He will never desert us, nor will He ever forsake us. Heb 13:5. The grace of God is sufficient for us in whatever situation or circumstance that comes our way, for His power is made perfect in our weakness. 2Co 12:9.

# The sixth wound

## Christ crucified

*David V Hall*

### Introduction

King David wrote a prophetic song concerning the crucifixion of Christ. Psa 22:16-18. In the song, he identified different groups of people who witnessed and participated in the piercing of Christ. David made reference to 'the congregation of the wicked', whom Jesus called 'a synagogue of Satan'. Rev 2:9. The scribes, Pharisees and elders who mocked Christ were of this congregation. The Gospels give the account of the fulfilment of this prophecy.

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed that Jesus was 'pierced through for our transgressions'. Isa 53:5. This piercing occurred when the soldiers brought Him to the place called Golgotha, or Calvary, which translated means 'Place of a Skull'. Mat 27:33. Mar 15:22. Luk 23:33. Joh 19:17. Jesus had endured previous wounds, was bloodied, battered and bruised. He had been made a spectacle through mocking, jeering and blaspheming by the soldiers, the Jewish priests and scribes, and the unbelieving crowds who followed Him to that place. Then they crucified Him. Laying Him on a cross of wood, they pierced Him through His hands and feet with nails,

pinning Him to the cross. He was pierced through for our transgressions. Isa 53:5.

Then, Jesus was lifted up, and the foot of the cross was wedged into the rock to hold Him upright. Joh 3:14. Joh 12:32. This occurred at about the third hour (9:00 am). The slow death on the cross was intended to torture Him through pain and suffocation, until He finally died. Two thieves also walked with Him to Calvary, carrying their own crosses. They were crucified on His right and left hand. They also joined in blaspheming and reviling Christ. Above His head, the Roman governor, Pilate, had nailed the words of the accusation: 'The King of the Jews'. The Gospel of Luke recorded that 'all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things'. Luk 23:49. After three hours of darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour, He finally yielded up His Spirit and breathed His last. Mar 15:37.

### The sixth wound

The events of the crucifixion show us that there was a difference of initiative between the first five wounds and the sixth wound of Christ. From Gethsemane until the sixth wound, each event revealed the suffering and death caused by our sin, which was laid upon Christ as He performed the will of the Father. And it revealed the way of escape from this condition through Christ's death. As Christ's blood was shed with each wound that He suffered, He was coming back from the death caused by our sin. Heb 13:20. He was being made alive to God.

In one statement when Jesus spoke about His death, He said that two significant things would happen in the six hours of His suffering while nailed to the cross:

1. 'Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.'
2. 'And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.' Joh 12:31-32.

In the first statement, Jesus meant that the cross was now going to be a place of judgement for the world, and that He was going to cast out Satan, the ruler of this world. He was signifying that He would deal with the Law and its covenant, and also with the power of Satan, the ruler of this world, who held mankind in bondage to sin through the fear of death. Heb 2:14-15. We remember that the fear of death is a powerful

drive in us for self-preservation. It activates our desire to save ourselves through our own resources. But those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Gal 5:24.

Second, He said, 'And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.' Joh 12:32. He was signifying that, in this event, He was now taking up a new initiative. No-one was taking His life from Him; rather, He was laying His life down, conquering all enemies and redeeming all those who would believe in Him. We remember also that He was laying down His life as a ransom for many, and drawing all peoples to Himself. Mat 20:28. Joh 12:32. This meant that all people would receive the capacity to see Christ lifted up, understand their sin, believe in Christ, be healed and saved. This is the meaning of 'the serpent on the pole'. Joh 3:14-15.

Writing to the Galatians, the apostle Paul explained that 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, and that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' Gal 3:13-14. When He was lifted up on the cross, Jesus was able to draw all peoples (Jew and Gentile) who were strangers to the covenants of promise to Himself. Eph 2:12. His intention was to reconcile them to God in the one body of Christ through baptism, and to give them access as sons of God to the Father by giving them the Spirit. This meant that all the nations of the earth could be blessed, and be included in the covenant of sonship through the Spirit. Eph 2:11-14.

## **Pierced for our transgressions**

The book of Malachi has given us a most comprehensive discussion of the curse upon Israel (and upon us) because of our transgressions. Malachi declared, 'Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them.' Mal 3:7. Our transgressions break the Law of God when we sin against relationship. They are observable acts against other people and against God, that have breached the commandment to love the Lord your God, and to love your neighbour. Gal 5:18-21. Luk 10:27.

Christ was pierced through for our transgressions. He became a curse for us. Gal 3:10. Gal 3:13. Taking all of our transgression, He took the curse and its judgement, and laid His life down as a ransom for many. Mar 10:45. The blood that flowed from His wounds was made available to

reconcile, forgive, and heal our transgressed, or breeched, relationships. We fellowship in this wounding of Christ by joining Him through baptism. Col 2:11-12.

We notice that, just before the sixth hour, when Jesus was on the cross, one of the thieves had stopped mocking Christ. He had received illumination and was able to believe. Then darkness covered the earth and Jesus began to deal with the Law and the enemies of the cross. The apostle Paul summarised this event in his letter to the Colossians, writing, 'When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them in the cross.' Col 2:13-15.

### The two thieves

The Gospels record that, just before the sixth hour (noon), the people passing by the cross reviled and blasphemed Christ, wagging their heads; so also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, and even the two thieves. They wanted their own judgement to be appeased, saying, 'If He is the King of Israel let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him.' Mat 27:42. Their words indicated their trust in their own reason and sight as they transgressed in mocking Him. Their obsessive derision revealed their demonised state.

One of the thieves blasphemed, saying, 'If you are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' Luk 23:39. Blasphemy is an ungodly, defamatory accusation; a transgression. The thief who blasphemed Christ did not believe Him to be the Messiah. Yet, in his desire to have his own life preserved, the thief challenged Jesus to prove that He was the Messiah by saving him.

However, at this time, the other thief rebuked the one who spoke first. He said, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom". Luk 23:40-43.

This shows us that something new had occurred in this event. Suddenly, one thief had gained sight concerning his own condemnation. He was

illuminated to see that he was rightly under judgement for the deeds that he had performed. He had gained sight concerning transgression. Further, he viewed crucifixion and death, and being cursed of God and separated forever from His life, as being the just reward for his deeds.

We remember that Jesus had said to His disciples, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.' Joh 3:14-15. This thief now confessed Christ as Lord, finding the faith of Abraham in a spirit of adoption. Suddenly, this thief had found the capacity to believe, and to submit to Christ as Lord. Luk 23:42. And then he asked, 'Remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' He was illuminated to the fact that he had a name, and he wanted to be remembered as a son of the kingdom. Mat 13:38. He was given the assurance of his faith when Jesus said, 'Today, you will be with Me in Paradise.' Luk 23:43. Salvation had occurred!

### Constrained to the cross

Paul wrote that the Scripture constrained all of us under sin until the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Gal 3:22-26. Through the illumination of faith in Christ, He has made us alive together with Him. He has forgiven our trespasses, and answered the requirement of the Law against us, nailing it to the cross with Him. Col 2:13-14. The Law is now constrained and fulfilled through the cross of Christ. There is now no condemnation, and the Law is fulfilled in us as we walk according to the Spirit. Rom 8:2-4.

We need to note that, if we are crucified with Christ, we also have our hands and feet constrained to the cross. This means that the way in which we walk and the way in which we do things are no longer governed by the desires of our flesh. Gal 5:24. Rather, we are constrained by the love of Christ to consider ourselves to have died with Him so that we might live for Him. 2Co 5:14-15. We will be able to give ourselves to the constraint of the love of Christ. If this is so, we will not deviate from the fulfilment of the will of God, which is His word and our sanctification. 1Th 4:3.

The law of the spirit of life is setting us free from the law of sin and death. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. Gal 2:20. The commandment to love the Lord our God and our neighbour is now our sanctified culture, for the love of Christ constrains us. This is the message of 'Christ crucified'. 2Co 5:14. 1Ti 1:5.





# The seventh wound

## Blood and water from His side

*Michael Fox*

### Introduction

After Christ committed His Spirit to the Father and physically died, a soldier pierced His side with a spear. This was His seventh and final wound. Immediately, blood, water and a spirit of grace and supplication began to flow from His heart. Joh 19:34. Zec 12:10.

To the crowd who watched Christ's offering and sufferings from Gethsemane to Calvary, He appeared to be no different from a common criminal. In fact, everyone had been mocking Him and hurling abuse at Him. Mat 27:39. However, as the spear was thrust into Christ's side, a spirit of grace and supplication enabled them to see what was truly happening. This was not a criminal who deserved their abuse. This was the Son of God, the One whom they had pierced. Joh 19:37. Mat 27:54. More significantly, they saw blood and water flowing from His side. This experience caused them to beat their breasts and to mourn as they returned to their homes. Luk 23:48.

How is it that these people could now see with a different perspective, and could mourn for the One whom they had just mocked and murdered? It was because the *veil of their fleshly perspective was being circumcised from their heart*. 2Co 3:16. As this veil was removed, the Holy Spirit poured the love of God into their hearts. Rom 5:5. The eyes of their heart were illuminated to see the glory of sonship. Eph 1:18. They were convicted of their sin, and of the reality that God was calling them to be a son of God with Christ. Joh 16:8. Those who believed the truth began to travail in prayer to be born of God.

Just as the spear had pierced Christ's heart, so also the crowd were pierced to the heart. To be pierced to the heart involves the circumcising and convicting work of the Holy Spirit. Joh 16:8.

### **The word of the cross pierces our heart**

We are joined to Christ's seventh wound when we are pierced to the heart by the word of the cross. 1Co 1:18. The Holy Spirit comes with the word to circumcise the other law from us. This removes the fleshly veil from the eyes of our heart. Now we can look on Him whom we have pierced, and see the blood and water as the means by which we will inherit our sonship with Christ. 1Jn 5:6.

This is what happened to those who heard Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. As Peter proclaimed the word of the cross, they were pierced to the heart. This literally means that they were 'stabbed in the heart'. Act 2:36-37 LITV. They were illuminated to see Jesus Christ, whom they had pierced. Furthermore, the conviction of the Holy Spirit caused them to respond to the word by laying hold of salvation. Act 2:37.

### **Piercing opens the heart**

The spear that entered Christ's side pierced His heart. This was not simply His natural, physical heart. Rather, it was the innermost being of Yahweh the Son. This piercing *opened* the heart of Yahweh the Son so that blood, water and a spirit of grace and supplication flowed out. When we receive the conviction of the Holy Spirit, our heart is pierced open to receive these three elements of Christ's offering.

### **Conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement**

The Holy Spirit's work is to convict us of sin, righteousness and judgement. Joh 16:8. This is a daily reality for us as Christians as we

fellowship with our family and friends regarding the word that we have received. Deu 6:7. We are continually pierced to the heart by the word, so that the love of God is instilled in our heart Deu 6:5-6. We are convicted about how we have not walked as a son of God but, more importantly, we understand what it means for us to live in God's will. Love motivates us to press on and to inherit our sonship by blood and water.

## Resisting the Holy Spirit

It is important to understand that it is possible for us to *resist* the work of the Holy Spirit. Stephen proclaimed the word of the cross to the Jewish Council, but they were not pierced to the heart. Rather, their hearts were sawn asunder, meaning 'cut into two'. Act 7:54. The word of the cross had a different effect on them because they resisted the work of the Holy Spirit. Act 7:51. They refused a spirit of grace and supplication, by which they could have turned from their fleshly perspective and travailed with Christ to be born of God. Finally, they gnashed their teeth at Stephen, covered their ears, and rushed at him with murderous intent. Act 2:57.

When we hear the word of the cross, we respond in one of two ways. Our heart is either pierced or sawn asunder and we are provoked either to mourn or to murder. If we let our fleshly perspective go, and receive the illuminating love of God, then a spirit of supplication leads us to mourn for Christ. We pray in travail with Christ to inherit our sonship. On the other hand, if we harden our heart by holding on to our fleshly perspective, we are provoked to murder. We may never physically attempt to murder the messenger, but the motivation remains in our heart. Mat 15:19.

### *A dull heart cannot be pierced*

If a person resists God's grace and does not receive the word of the cross, then they cannot understand His word. Joh 8:43. They cannot proceed to be born of God and, therefore, they remain in sin. Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning, is the source of their sin. Joh 8:44. As a result of Satan's fatherhood, anger becomes a murderous spirit within the person.

This serves as a warning for us. A person who resists the grace of God receives no understanding concerning the sonship that is being offered to them. Rom 8:32. Jesus described such a person as having a heart which has become 'dull'. Mat 13:15. 'Dull' means 'fatty'. The arrogant person who resists a spirit of grace and supplication *has a heart covered in fat*

*which cannot be pierced.* Psa 119:69-70. They choose to keep their fleshly perspective as a veil upon their heart. Their dull heart is unresponsive to the conviction of the Spirit, and they do not proceed to inherit their sonship.

### **A new and living way was opened**

The piercing of Christ's flesh opened a veil which gave everyone access to a new and living way. Heb 10:20. Before describing what it means to walk on this pathway, we will consider how our participation was made possible by the piercing of Christ's side.

Before God made covenant to bring forth sons of God, Yahweh was full and complete. There was no room for anything else! All the fullness of Yahweh was in Christ. Joh 8:28. Col 2:9. This means that when Christ's side was pierced, Yahweh Himself was pierced open. Christ's offering had created *space for something new* in Yahweh's fellowship. It was for a multitude of sons who would be born of Their life and live in fellowship with Them. There, at the cross, room was made for us! Christ's pierced side was the point of entry for us into the fellowship of Yahweh.

At this point, Christ's face began to shine like the sun in its strength. Rev 1:16. The light of the gospel was now shining to every tribe, tongue, people and nation. By this means, the blessing of Abraham, which is the promise of being born of the Spirit, was being made available to the Gentiles. Gal 3:14. Now, as we receive the light from His face, we are illuminated about the glory of sonship. 2Co 4:6. We desire to join the fellowship of Christ's offering from Gethsemane to Calvary. This is the pathway of salvation upon which we become a son of God.

### **The conquering Slave**

Embarking on this journey, we soon realise that we have some enemies. They endeavour to prevent God's will being done in our life. However, we need not fear! Christ has gone forth like a warrior and has *prevailed against His enemies*. Isa 42:13. Through His offering and sufferings from Gethsemane to Calvary, Christ conquered every enemy of the cross. This includes the willfulness of our flesh, sin and our other law, false religion, the rulers of this world and Satan with his spiritual powers of wickedness. This was an amazing victory!

### *Obedience to the will of God*

Christ could have achieved this by the will of His flesh, but that is not how He did it. Joh 1:13. He conquered His enemies by His *obedience* to the will of God. He was the conquering Slave. Isa 42:1. Isa 52:13. The will of God for Christ was that He would be born of God. He was born from above by the word of the Father, and He was born from the death of sin by the life in His blood which He shed. This is the will of God for us too. Our obedience is to be born of God. This is how we will overcome our enemies.

### **Born from above by the word of God**

Upon hearing the word of the cross, we mourn in repentance. Zec 12:10. This is because we understand that we have not been living according to God's will. We don't yet fully understand how to fulfil the will of God, so the Holy Spirit helps us. He pours out a spirit of supplication upon us, which motivates us to travail with Christ in Gethsemane. Rom 8:26. This is the secret place of prayer where we meet the Father personally. Mat 6:6. We pray with the faith that we have received from His word. 2Co 4:13.

The Father responds by speaking the word of our sonship to us. Heb 1:5. The word of our sonship is the will of God for us regarding our name and works. Every morning, as the Father awakens our ear to hear what He is saying, we understand how to fulfil God's will. Isa 50:4.

### *Whoever is born of God does not sin*

When we are born of God, we do not sin. 1Jn 3:9. This means that we do not fall short of the name and works predestined for us by God. Rom 3:23. We desire to live according to our name and to do the works of our sonship. The faith that we receive by hearing the word enables us to do these works. Rom 10:17. 'We do not sin' doesn't mean that we are sinless. It means that by doing the works of faith we live at a level of maturity that is perfect for our age and stage. Php 3:15. We are 'little children' in the sense that we are not yet fully mature. 1Jn 2:1. 1Jn 3:7. The Father disciplines us as sons to bring us to maturity. We have confidence that, to the degree to which we have matured as a son of God, we do not sin. Php 3:16.

## Reigning in life

We arrive at the victorious conclusion that we overcome sin by being born of God and by doing the works of our sonship! Rom 6:12. Rom 6: 14. This is what it means to reign in life through Jesus Christ. Rom 5:17 We conquer every enemy that would stop us from doing God's will. Eph 2:10. These enemies include the will of our flesh, sin and our other law, and the culture of the world. They are disempowered in our life as we suffer with Christ in weakness. 2Co 12:9. 2Co 13:4.

As we put off these fleshly motivations, we also put on the qualities of God's life. Eph 4:22. Col 3:12-13. Above all, we put on love as our primary motivation for life. Col 3:14. We lay down our life for our friends in the same way that Christ laid His life down for us. Joh 15:13. Demonstrating this capacity for offering is the evidence that we are reigning in life.

Enemies continue to come against us and we will experience many contrary circumstances. However, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. In every situation, we overwhelmingly conquer because we are walking obediently with Christ. Rom 8:35-39. We reign in life as we participate with Christ in His offering and sufferings until His work is complete in us. Php 1:6.