

Our glorified body

Preparing to officiate at a thanksgiving for a dear brother who had gone to be with the Lord, I started to write out the committal: 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust: in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who will *transform our frail bodies that they may be conformed to His glorious body*, who died, was buried, and rose again for us'. Just to explain why I was using that wording: it is the Church of England approved wording, and has been for many years, so we take it to have some authority, but as I wrote it I was checked in my spirit, the Lord's alarm bell rang. The part that was causing concern is italicised in the quotation. So I put the key words into my electronic concordance, but no references came up.

The week before our Brother went to be with the Lord he came and asked if cremation was acceptable to the Lord or should we all be buried. Later I discovered he had also talked to born again brethren from other churches about it, so it was of great concern to him. It is wonderful how the Holy Spirit works. His passing was totally unexpected. He left the meeting on that Saturday evening, by Wednesday he was in hospital on end of life care, on the following Saturday about lunchtime, just one week later, he had passed into glory. He was making preparations for his departure. What follows is what God transforms into our glorified body and how He achieves it both in those whose mortal life ends before the rapture and those that are taken up to meet Jesus in the Spirit.

There I was with my heart checked regarding the committal wording, then the Holy Spirit reminded me of a verse of scripture that the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth:

1 Corinthians 15:50 - *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

Jesus speaks of this to Nicodemus in John 3:

John 3:6-8 - *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

In 2 Corinthians 5:1-5 Paul speaks of our mortal body, our spiritual body and our glorified body:

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Nakedness is a reference to sin, for those who are in sin are not clothed with the life of a spiritual body, their spirit is dead. The earnest of the Spirit is the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the baptism of God, the key to ongoing immersion into the depths of God.

Then I saw Solomon's Temple, or rather Zerubbabel's rebuilding of it, lying in ruins after the fire of 70AD. The Shekinah Glory had left long before that of course, and Jesus had fulfilled all that the Temple had stood for in the Old Covenant. It had been a great witness for the Lord but it had now served its purpose and had been destroyed and deserted for the last time. Jesus prophesied its destruction at the start of Matthew 24 when He gives an account of the end times, the times we live in now. He also declared Himself as the Temple of God for God's Spirit, His Shekina Glory, lives in Jesus as He lives in us. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit resides in our spirit our Holy of Holies, and our body is the Holy Place sanctified by God's indwelling presence. The space we inhabit, the outer courts, are also sanctified by the presence of God in us, that is why our witness to the unsaved in salvation and healing is so powerful. It is not us but the power of God in us. We read in John 14, where He speaks of the preparation of His Father's house for us as our heavenly Bridegroom He prepares the dwelling place for His Bride after the rapture and the marriage supper of the Lamb. Marriage is often used to illustrate the relationship Jesus has with us and we with Jesus. It is the intensity of our love relationship, the separation and sanctifying of ourselves for Jesus, setting us apart from the world that we may walk in holiness with Him.

Jesus has made us holy and acceptable to God through His redeeming blood, reconciling us to God through His sacrifice, making us the righteousness of God as we abide in Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is a complete work. We are given access into the knowledge of God through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. A love affair that reveals Jesus on the inside of us as we partake of His divine nature.

We also need to consider the events of Christ's resurrection for they demonstrate important details of our resurrection at the rapture.

Jesus was seen in His flesh after His resurrection, but His body had been transformed. Jesus commanded Mary Magdalene not to touch Him because He had not yet ascended to His Father. It was the holiness of His sacrifice that He carried, to present Himself holy and acceptable to His Father having overcome sin and death on His behalf and ours. He could not be touched by anything that could profane Him, not even Mary who loved Jesus, He had delivered her from a life of sin but she lived in the flesh not the Spirit. He appeared to her as she grieved for Him. She thought He was the gardener because she did not expect to see Jesus, He was dead, she had seen Him die. The tomb was empty, she assumed His body had been stolen, moved so that there was no risk that His disciples could falsely claim Jesus had risen as He prophesied that He would. Of course, it was not a false claim for the resurrection had actually taken place, all the prophesies fulfilled, given over many centuries through different generations, often in countries of exile.

Some may think that of course we could not see Jesus in the flesh, He must be a ghost because of His resurrection. But Jesus dispelled that theory, His fleshly resurrection is 'material' proof of the fulfilment of prophecy. The spiritual proof is really what is most important, for through His victory over death and sin He has set the whole of creation free from corruption and taken away the power of sin and death. Jesus now has the keys of death and hell. For those that have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, partaking in Christ's victory, overcoming satan's lies and deception, we are now no longer subject to the sting of death which is sin and the condemnation of hell. The power of sin is broken.

John 12:31 - *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

Jesus makes this declaration just a few days before the last passover. 'Now' means 'at this present time', so Jesus is speaking of the time He is in, the time of His inspection, rejection and resurrection. What does He say of all that is set before Him? 'At this present time is the judgement of this world', the world corrupted with satan's spirit. 'At this present time shall the prince of this world, satan, be cast out'. Did you hear that? Has it registered in your spiritual understanding? Now, at that present time, 2000 years ago, satan was cast out. This is Jesus speaking, the Word of God. What does cast out actually mean? The Greek words are plain: 'cast': driven out and deprived of power; 'out': made a foreigner, a stranger, not of this community. Legally in the Spirit, every born again believer, every single one, can confirm the actual fact that all of satan's power has been stripped from him and our inheritance is in Christ (Colossians 1:10-14). We have in Jesus' name all that He has won for us, Jesus won it for us through His precious blood and the overcoming power of His resurrection, He confirmed it when He gave us the great commission at His ascension. He confirms it with every soul saved, every sickness healed, every torment destroyed, every addict delivered, now, at this present time, 2000 years later. Salvation, healing and deliverance from every abuse of God's power that satan had put in our way. I say 'had' because Jesus dealt with it, all of it, 2000 years ago. It is finished! Jesus accomplished through the cross and the resurrection our reconciliation with God, our Father, and the King of Glory has made us princes in His kingdom. That means we live and reign with Jesus in all that He is. All power in heaven and earth is given to Jesus, and whatsoever we ask the Father in the glorious name of Jesus He will give to us (John 15:16; 16:23).

This is truth that needs to be preached in our churches and on every street corner: satan is defeated. His lies are still being spread, even by wrong teaching in the Church. satan is a liar and the father of lies, he is still peddling his deceit, but the reality is that all power under heaven and on earth is given to Jesus (Matthew 28:18), there is none left over for anyone else, including satan. That is the truth no matter what anyone tells you to the contrary, no matter what 'proof' they may have of their failure or the failure of others. In Mark 11:23-24 Jesus tells us that we receive by faith as we speak to the mountain, trusting in the cleansing blood of Jesus and the testimony that Jesus has given us as we rely on God's promises and believe that we receive what we pray for. Our faith in all that Jesus has done makes us whole.

Mary recognised Jesus' voice when He called her by her name. Later, in the evening He appeared to the disciples who were hiding in a room with the doors locked for fear of the Jews. He appeared before them in His flesh, after His resurrection, with the wounds that He bore on Calvary and ate food. John reports that He did many other proofs that it was Him, Jesus, that had been raised from the dead (John 20). Jesus met the Disciples at the side of the Sea of Tiberias and cooked them breakfast, they knew it was Jesus. Jesus spoke those famous words to Peter, do you love me more than the fish? Jesus spoke of sacrificial, submissive love of lovers, Peter responded with brotherly love. Jesus ate with them and talked with them. He met with over 500 people between His resurrection and His ascension, but only 120 gathered in the upper room to receive the promise of the Father the outpouring at Pentecost that released the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the Church.

We then go to Bethany to hear His blessing and see Him carried away into heaven (Mark 16; Luke 24:50-53). Our next sighting of Jesus, like a son of man, is to view Him in His glorified body, described in Revelation 1:12-18. I believe that is what we will look like. We are being conformed to the image of Christ. We can minister Jesus in all the fulness of the power of the Holy Spirit now and we will minister in that great power during the persecution of the Saints, the Fifth Seal, and the revival that immediately follows at the opening of the Sixth Seal. It is not unreasonable to think if we are as Jesus is in this world, then we will also be as He is in the next (1 John 4:17).

To continue with Paul's message to the Corinthians, he goes on to talk about what happens to the body of those caught up to meet Jesus in the air at the rapture:

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 - *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

Therefore, those that are not asleep in death will be raised in the rapture and will ascend to heaven in their natural body and that body will be changed into our glorious body. Paul then goes on to explain why that will happen and how it will happen:

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? -- The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It will happen because of the victory of Christ's resurrection and because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our body, sanctifying our whole being, all the fulness of God filling us, no longer at the mercy of sin but living in the grace and mercy of God:

Romans 8:11 - *But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

Because we are immersed in the love and power of God, ministering out of the fulness of His indwelling presence our body will be sanctified and will be transformed to conform to Christ's body. Our heavenly Father raised up Jesus from the dead through the Holy Spirit and our Father will also bring to life our mortal body because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection life, in us. This has implications for us in healing and our ongoing health, and it is also of great importance in our resurrection in the rapture. See, it is the Truth that sets us free, free indeed. The Holy Spirit has been sent to bring us into all truth, reveal Jesus in us, we have to be transformed by the renewing our mind, to think and therefore act like Jesus. It is not that we make better decisions as to how to act, the renewing of our mind is so that our attitude toward God is not obstructive but submitted to Him and we are obedient to the Holy Spirit's leading. Rebellion and doubt is our biggest obstruction to the flow of the power of God through us. We have to come to the revelation that if we have given our life to God, surrendered our all, we cannot continually take it back when events do not unfold as we expected, or He tells us to do something that is against our will. If we trust God we will not snatch ourselves out of His hand. It is God's will that we are fulfilling not ours.

John 5:30 - *I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me.*

Jesus had His ear open to the Holy Spirit, when He heard the voice, He made sure it was the voice of His Father and if it was He followed Him and said what He said or did what He showed Him. He did not consider His own will, not even the impact of what He was to say and do on others. So when He told the Pharisees that they were a generation of vipers it was what He heard His Father say, when He raised Lazarus from the dead it was what He saw His Father do. When Jesus told Mary that it was not time for Him to move yet when she told Him the wine had run out at the Cana wedding feast, He was waiting for His Father to speak. When He received the command He gave the command, the servants did as they were told and the wine flowed. It seemed to me to be a strange thing to do until I discovered that running out of wine at a wedding feast was a huge disgrace that would have scarred the family's reputation for generations and the wedding feast would have been attended by a great crowd of people. God answered their need in abundance, like He does for everyone who comes to Him.

We come to the crucial point, if corruption cannot put on incorruption how does that affect born again Christians who are taken up in the rapture, our resurrection? How does it affect those that die in Christ before the rapture? Can the means of the disposal of our mortal remains hinder or even disqualify our glorified body? How you want your body to be dealt with after death is your choice and your convictions, or those of others, will rule it in some instances. But we will see that our focus is on the wrong body because the traditional committal directs us toward our 'frail' body, our mortal body, not our spiritual body. Our focus should be on our spiritual body long before any mortal need for the decision to needs to be made, in fact it is our salvation. We are redeemed, the price has been paid, that is the reclaiming from satan, the dowry that reconciles us to God and starts the salvation process, preparation for our marriage, our joining as one to our betrothed Bridegroom.

It is obvious to anyone who has lost a loved one, and been with them as they passed out of this world, that the spirit leaves and the body remains. What leaves is the life impulse, be they saved or unsaved. One is the life that lights every man that comes into the world, the life that Jesus spoke into creation at the Father's command. The other is the quickening power of the Holy Spirit who has raised the born again Christian from death to life, who has made them temples of God, those who abide in Christ and He abides in them, Christ is seated in their Holy of Holies through the Holy Spirit, their whole temple sanctified by His presence, the Shekina Glory filling their house, their spiritual body. Those who have maintained their relationship with Jesus in their first love have their names written in the Book of Life. We must learn from what we read in the scripture those things that are essential to our relationship with God and pay attention to them. The Holy Spirit will shine His light upon them and counsel and guide us into the authority and comfort of the promises of God. Some would seek to find a man who can tell them what God can do, but the best person to tell us is God Himself, Jesus prayed our Father and God sent the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from the Father. The Greek word translated 'proceeds' means 'flows out like a river'. If we are filled with God that is what happens, as Jesus told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, out of our spirit will flow the Holy Spirit, like rivers of living water, the cleansing, healing flow of life.

2 Peter 1:3-4 - According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

See, we receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon us (Acts 1:8), the power that gives us all we need to walk in the Spirit with Jesus. God has given us everything we need to live and walk in the Spirit with Him for a singular reason that we might escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. The power of our deliverance is in the promises of God, our testimony of overcoming the lies of satan, the Spirit and the Word working together. As we are set free from the pull of the world we can soar in the Spirit. Our selfish, fleshly control spirit must be defeated, we cannot serve two masters. Our spiritual body growing to maturity in Christ.

We have established that there is a fleshly order and a spiritual order, this is confirmed in John 1:12-13:

But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And again, Jesus tells Nicodemus this fundamental truth:

John 3:3-8 - Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the

kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Born of water is natural childbirth, the water being the amniotic fluid in which the baby is protected, allowed movement and development of the lungs and digestive system while in the womb. Because of Adam's sin and Satan's corruption of creation we are born spiritually dead, therefore we are not born in God's image but in Adam's image, in the corruption of sin. We have to be born of natural conception and be a living being before we can accept Christ as our Saviour, being reconciled to God, the blood of Jesus washing us clean and making us the righteousness of God in Christ, so that the Holy Spirit can enter into us and resurrect our spirit, breathing the life of Christ into us and make us in God's image. As Jesus told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well:

John 4:24 - *God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.*

God formed Adam from the dust of the earth, to make Adam in God's own image He had to breathe His Spirit into him, not just into his lungs but into his whole being. Adam then became a worshipper, for the Spirit of Truth that proceeds from the Father was in Adam. I would remind us of the Shekinah Glory sanctifying the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem.

There are those who have lived in a special relationship with God, who have received the revelation of salvation, before the Lord Jesus Christ was even manifest in the earth. God revealed Jesus to them. Job is reported to be the oldest book in the Bible and yet Jesus is there:

Job 19:25-27 - *For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*

Job sees Jesus in his realm of time, Job saw Him living, 'liveth' is present tense, Job's present. Jesus is the only One called to be our Redeemer. He also looks forward to the rapture which will take place long after Job's earthly body has returned to the dust from which it came. His eyes will see Him, in his flesh he will see God. If that is not Job's flesh and bones when he lived on the earth it must be his spiritual body of which he speaks, a similar glorified body that the disciples saw of Jesus and John saw when Jesus dictated Revelation to him. Enoch walked with God and was not, Abraham, Jacob and Moses God's friend, Joshua to whom He sent the Captain of the Host, with His sword drawn. Who is the Captain of the Host? Psalm 45 tells us. WE also speak of King David who brought Israel together into a great nation, and so the list goes on. We must take account of what happened when Jesus took Peter, James and John up on the mount of transfiguration when Jesus was changed, His face shining like the sun and His clothing so white it shone, the glory of God shining through Jesus' earthly body. He was transfigured into His heavenly body. I have seen such a garment on an angel, it was as though the garment was woven with fine crystals that sparkled in the

light but the fabric was bright white linen and thick, flaxen in appearance but whiter than white. Again it was not the garment as such but the glory that was in the garment that gave it that shone that sparkling purity of whiteness.

Paul speaks of the divine order of flesh first followed by Spirit, the gradual unveiling of God to mankind:

1 Corinthians 15:50-55 - Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Let us break down what Paul is saying in these verses. The flesh and blood that Paul is referring to here is the unregenerate flesh and blood of a person who has not been born again. An individual who has not been cleansed from the corruption of this world, the corruption of Satan's deception of Eve and Adam's fall into sin, rejecting the counsel of God. We need to fully appreciate the magnitude of the change that Christ's redemption and salvation bring. There are fundamental changes that happen to us spiritually, that also make profound changes in our body. Jesus tells us that we must be born again, that means our dead spirit, overwhelmed with the death of corruption and held in death through the deception of sin has to receive the resurrection life that raised Jesus from the dead, so that we too can be raised from death to life, from defeat to victory over all the power of the enemy.

First we are washed clean by the blood of Jesus to make us holy, to make us the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. It is not what we do it is what God does. At this point we know we need salvation and we have a life changing experience with God, but it is not until later that we fully appreciate the depth of sin that has to be dealt with. His cleansing is in our whole being: in our spirit and our body. That makes us acceptable to God, reconciled with Him. The resurrection life entering our spirit and our body is not an abstract event it is an actual experience. The action of resurrection lifts us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the dear Son of God's love (Colossians 1:13). We are in a different place, but kingdom is more than a place, it is the government of living. We are no longer under Satan's government of sin, but we live in the government of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, sin and death are no longer the currency by which we live. Satan has been defeated, that which held us captive has been made captive and the keys that he captivated us with have been confiscated from Satan and Jesus now has the keys of death and hell, now we are no longer captive but live in the liberty of the children of God. Our guilt and shame were dealt with through the ridicule that was heaped upon Jesus by the Roman soldiers and His fellow Jews as He was 'prepared' for crucifixion by cruel men who delighted in inflicting pain and suffering. We are healed by

the stripes that Jesus suffered at the whipping post, that flailed His skin and muscle from His body and laid bare the arteries and veins that carried His precious blood. We are washed clean by His blood, every trace of sin cleansed from us through His redeeming flow. We are set free through those nail pierced hands. Through Christ's resurrection, the total overcoming of satan, the corruption and death that he brought, all of his deceptive devices and every demonic being and influence has been defeated. All power is given to Jesus, there is none for anyone else, particularly not satan. Jesus has not only given us the victory, He, Jesus, is our victory and He is living within us, so Christ's victory is actually alive and within us through the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 - *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

Jesus was not of the earth, He was of the Spirit and born of the Spirit in Mary's womb who was a virgin. She had not known a man but she was known and chosen of God to bear His only begotten Son for His manifestation on the earth to reclaim all that Adam had lost to satan. Make no mistake we have been transformed into a new creature in Christ. It is a starting point for further growth in the Spirit which we take forward by faith, a leap into the unknown, but each step is guided by the Lord.

Romans 8:11 - *But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

Because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our spirit, as the Shekinah Glory filled the Tabernacle Holy of Holies and filled the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple and sanctified every part of the structure that formed God's temple and it's surrounding courts, so the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within our spirit, our Holy of Holies, sanctifies the whole of our being to God and the outer court of our body. We are temples of the living God. It is important that we recognise this significant change in our standing in God, our standing in the world and the separation that must be the separation, the sanctification, of every true born believer. We are not the same person we were before, we cannot be like a dog returning to its vomit, nor can we any longer be subject to satan's torments.

This quickening of our mortal flesh is evident in maintaining our spiritual health and our mortal health. When we pray for healing we speak the word of faith in the name of Jesus and the Holy Spirit comes to banish sickness from us. So we can defend ourselves from sickness through the expression of the promise that if we pray in the name of Jesus sickness is overcome. We start to feel unwell, what do we do? Do we accept that sickness is about to happen and submit ourselves to it? Or do we proclaim God's promise and tell satan to get behind us, that the same Spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead dwells in me and also quickens, fills with spiritual life, my mortal body by the Spirit that dwells in me. He is the Spirit of resurrection life, that raised up Jesus from death and hell and Jesus took the keys of death and hell and overcame all that satan was and had before the resurrection of Jesus. So sickness is defeated.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

All things are of God. It really does mean that the old things have perished, died, are no more. We are totally forgiven, our sin is forgotten, and we live in a different place, we have to learn to live in the government of Jesus, follow Him and dwell in God's kingdom. So why are we so troubled with our past? Two reasons. First, satan will not let us go without a fight and he uses delusion and deception to try and regain his grip. Second, we are learning to walk by faith which is totally different to living with familiar spirits, living with the known. We loved sin and satan reminds us of its temporary pleasures, even though that pleasure might be leading to sickness and death or had us in the grip of anxiety and a destructive lifestyle. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. It is as we discover the promises of God, keep experiencing the delights of the divine nature that we come into the liberty of living by the faith of the Son of God. We need to intensify our teaching of new converts to give them the armoury and skills God has provided for the warfare in which we live (Ephesians 6). That armoury is found in our relationship with Jesus and in following the leading of the Holy Spirit, using the Gifts that God has given to strengthen and encourage His Church.

Acts 1:8 - . . . *ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me . . .*

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit baptises us into the same Spirit that Jesus was baptised into when He rose out of Jordan having received John's baptism of repentance. We see another clear example of Jesus submitting Himself to something we need, repentance, so that we can receive it from Him. He also showed us sanctification, being set apart to God, when He sanctified Himself so that we might be sanctified through Him, the Truth (John 17:17-19). The Greek word 'baptizo' means total immersion, repeated total immersion until we become like a sunken ship, overwhelmed and soaked in God. When we receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit we are baptised into God but it is not a one off event, as it was not a one off event for Jesus. He kept going to be in His Father's presence and kept getting immersed in God, over and over again, so should we. The cleansing and repentance was not necessary for Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, but it was necessary for Him to submit Himself to it for us to follow His example in both baptisms. But notice this: the first event following Christ's baptism in the Spirit was that the Holy Spirit, not the devil, drove Him into the wilderness for a time of proving, a time of overcoming. satan was defeated through the promises of God. Every word spoken by Jesus to overcome satan was a clear statement of God's undertaking for Jesus, and for us, declaring God's knowledge and victory over satan's deception. God's supremacy, His position as Almighty God, was, is, never under threat. We use the promises of God to remind satan of his defeat, not to secure God's position. God's position is not under threat, it has never been under threat and never will be under threat. There is a glassy sea before our Father's throne, nothing disturbs Him.

Paul then gets into more detail of the mystery. We have received the resurrection life of Christ at salvation, we are at peace with God, but there has to be a working out of the cancelled sin, so that we can live in the Spirit, in the peace of God. Behold I show you a mystery . . .

Man's concept of development is different to God's. Man starts on the outside working our way into or up to the desired central goal, each level won through knowledge to bring us into the final place of higher realms of intellect or recognition. God starts on the inside and works it all out in us through the revelation of Jesus in us. See, like Peter told us, we have all things that pertain to life and Godliness. We are made holy at salvation, we are a son of God at salvation. Now we must be sanctified, the Greek word 'hagiazō' which means 'to separate from profane things and dedicate, consecrate us to God'. Our acceptance of Christ as our Redeemer is the start of salvation, we are at the strait gate that leads to eternal life, we now have to walk the narrow way that brings us to life eternal. That word 'hagiazō' also means to purify, to purify by expiation: free from the guilt of sin, to purify internally by the renewing of our mind, our spiritual mind. To say we do not 'earn or work' for our salvation puts our walk in the Lord on a wrong basis because it makes us tend to think we can just sit back and God will do it without any involvement from us at all. It is not true. To be sure we cannot bring anything to the table, except our willingness to surrender, to be obedient to God's command; give Him our love and adoration; our willingness to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn from Him through the Holy Spirit; to commune with Him, to have conversation with Him; to love and worship Him, to stand for what Jesus reveals in us; to minister to God and to the brethren the ministry God has given us in the Fruit and Gifts of the Spirit, our God given endowment; to love and worship Him; to walk according to the light we have received so that we overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word our testimony and make disciples of others in the process. Finally to love and worship Jesus and our Father. Quite a long list of doing nothing. I know I have repeated love and worship but in all our doing love and worship is the foundation, the cause and reason for it.

Jesus constantly warns the Church, through His revelations to John and His words to His disciples in Matthew 24 and Mark 13, about the large number of false prophets that will arise in the end times, in fact are arising right now. In these gospels Jesus tells us how to recognise those that are His, by their fruits. A good tree brings forth good fruit, a good fountain clear waters. This is how God will judge us, by our fruit, so our fruit has to be good, fresh and mature, ripe and wholesome. That good fruit comes from being immersed in God like a sunken ship, soaked through with the divine nature. The Church has taught that it is not possible to live without sin, in constant communion with God and it does not matter anyway because 'it' is by faith. What God promised, and all the Apostles teach in their letters, is that it is not only possible to live without sin, but it is our inheritance and will be manifest in the Church, if we give ourselves totally to God for Him to possess us. Darkness cannot live where there is light. It does not mean to say we are free from accusation and temptation because that is satan's ministry. What we do have is the power to overcome his deception through the blood of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit God has placed within us and the promises in God's word.

Paul tells the Church at Corinth that in the same way that there are different types of flesh in different animals there is also a difference between the earthly body and the spiritual body. The Apostle Paul points out that grain when sown looks nothing like the plant which is formed from it, such is the action of the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fulfilment of His presence in us that fills us with all of God's fulness. It comes through obedience to His leading through the Holy Spirit and the transformation of our whole being until we are fully conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus is one with the Father, we must be one with Jesus and, in reality, one with the Father because Jesus is one with the Father. Furthermore, one with the Holy Spirit because He is living in us and responsible for the revelation of Christ in us as we follow Him and He infills us with the Fruit of the Spirit. Thus we have all the fulness of God in us. If we can grasp that we can see that all the component parts are already within us, it is not about getting all the parts, it is about building a love relationship with God and emptying ourselves of self so that all the manifest fulness of God is made evident in us, until God fully possesses and controls us. Many have no problem seeing demon possession is a reality, but few understand that the devil works in the counterfeit of what God is doing. So if demon possession is a reality it is because satan is trying to copy the truth, God possession. The difference is that satan imposes himself upon his victims, ensnares them into sin and death through deception and deceit; we are willing sons of God and God possesses us as we willingly yield ourselves to Him, to His truth and His love and all the benefits of the abundant life in God's kingdom.

We can only worship God in Spirit and in Truth, we cannot worship God in the flesh we can only praise Him, but in the Spirit we worship God from our spirit, in fact it is the Holy Spirit worshipping God through us. We are totally given over to worship as we fully surrender our life to Christ. Worship is not about us, but an unrestrained adoration of the the Lord Jesus Christ and our Father. In its highest form worship is totally controlled by the Holy Spirit as the worshippers get lost in the anointing of the Holy Spirit through singing in tongues to a heavenly tune orchestrated in absolute union by the Holy Spirit focusing on exalting our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I have been there, it absolutely awesome to experience a room full of born again believers all singing in perfect harmony to a tune that the Holy Spirit has put into the heart of everyone there, singing in a heavenly language, an orchestrated choir of adoration in the Spirit. Alternatively, just one person singing the song of heaven. There is a constant chorus of worship and adoration in heaven, and yet at the opening of the Seventh Seal, the judgement of the earth, there is silence for half an hour. Waiting on God in total silence is also a higher form of worship and the anointing of God upon us is so blessed, so strong. We do not need to speak, the Holy Spirit knows what to pray and how to pray it. We are just partaking of God, it is very special.

What blesses me most is that God prepared all of this before He created anything. Jesus was begotten of God before creation was created, see Proverbs 8, Wisdom is the manifest Word of God, the person of the Godhead we know as the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything that we need is already in place. Now is the time of great preparation but do not leave it too late the Fourth Seal is breaking

now, the Fifth Seal will quickly follow and that will be for three and a half years, then the Sixth Seal revival, which will end in the rapture. No-one has ever lived in times that are as significant as the times are today. We are on the very cusp of events that have never happened before. Yes, we have seen revivals but never a revival like the one that will break at the opening of the Sixth Seal.

The conclusion of all that has been said is this: we must seek God with all our heart, our desperation for God comes from seeking God, even if that is intentional out of our own will because we see the signs of the times and know the rapture is near. The first letter that Jesus told John to write as He started to reveal His revelation to him was to Ephesus. They had strictly upheld and kept to the rules of holiness, but they had forgotten that the revival God brought to them through Paul's ministry was the gospel of love, that it was the fire of God's love that brought the light of God into their hearts. They had lost their first love. Even though it looked and sounded right it was legalistic, their faith was in their natural mind, not in their heart, they had changed their mind, but not surrendered their heart, their spirit was not being immersed, they did not intimately know Jesus and our Father as Jesus said they should, they were not of one spirit with Him like a betrothed bride for her bridegroom.

There is a special ministration to those who are alive and remain for the rapture, the Holy Spirit transforms them through the repeated immersion in the Holy Spirit. The process of salvation starts but does not end when we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead. There is a relationship to be built, an overcoming to be done to conform us to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29) and make us one Spirit with Him. A betrothed couple, man and woman, start off their relationship with an attraction between them that draws them together but as their relationship develops into love they become one in the spirit. They fit together. It is helpful to describe how betrothal worked in the days of Jesus and then we are not deceived into what has become the norm in the world today and regrettably all too common in Christian circles as well. The bridegroom would select his bride and pay a dowry for her once the betrothal was agreed, the bride would separate herself and, with her virgin friends, prepare herself for marriage, keeping herself in purity, waiting to be called to the marriage. The groom would go and prepare a place for them to live together in his father's house. When a suitable time had passed, the preparations for marriage complete, usually about a year after the proposal, the bridegroom would sound a trumpet to warn the bride and the marriage procession would start off from the home the bridegroom has prepared for His bride. It would be a night time procession, they would go to the prepared place, consummate the marriage, followed the next morning by seven days of feasting, the Marriage Breakfast. During that year of preparation a deep love and longing to be together would develop and they would both long to be together. The Holy Spirit does this through the revealing of Christ in us so that a deep relationship is formed between us. The Fruit of the Spirit, the divine nature, is being nurtured within us and the Gifts of the Spirit are being ministered to us to strengthen us and build us up. Following salvation, all of this is achieved through the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes and overwhelms us with God's love and with His presence. He transforms us by the renewing of our mind so that we think how Jesus thinks, we sur-

render our will to God so that we can know His will and do it without question (Romans 12:1-2; John 5:30). We are conformed to the image of Jesus, filled with all the fulness of God like Jesus.

This is a very necessary, in fact essential, part of the fulfilment of our betrothal because without that outworking of the Holy Spirit in us we are not prepared to receive Christ as our husband, made one with Him. Our holy of holies is not filled with all the fulness of God, therefore our body is not fully sanctified and we are not fully separated from that which is profane. When Jesus spoke the great commission in Mark 16 He said this:

Mark 16:16 - *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

We have always taken the baptism to be the baptism in water and it is part of it for we have to acknowledge and practice the clean break that is made at salvation between how we used to live before salvation. We do that through the symbolism of water baptism, death to the flesh and resurrection into the life of the Spirit. However, the Greek word 'baptizō' means repeated immersion until we are like a sunken ship or a pickled vegetable. A sunken ship is continuously under water. We cannot be continuously going through the waters of baptism, so it must mean some other baptism, that only leaves the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is the age of the Holy Spirit, it can only be the Holy Spirit and so we are immersed over and over in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. When God reveals this to you and He starts to immerse you, you know it is true. You are changed from glory to glory. The Church has taught a doctrine of arrival, but all these are transit points. For some we arrive at salvation, for others it is water baptism, then some more 'arrive' at the baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues; then a gift of the Spirit; then the rapture. But John tells us in his first letter that now are we the sons of God but it does not yet appear what we shall be, so there is more, even beyond the rapture, there it is in the scripture. John the prophet, the seer, spoke it out. Then we hear it: 'We've arrived' and everything comes to a screeching halt because they stopped seeking, pride takes over. How do we get to the end of eternal God! Each part is only a stepping stone. Even the rapture is a stepping stone to the next adventure with God.

I've seen it, spiritual superiority, that elitism that is the pride that God resists, growth stops, sin enters in and the Church becomes bloated unable to move forward.

We are beginning to see God immersing His Church in the Holy Spirit, but there is some debate in people's hearts as to whether it is 'right' or not. Let me say this: there is only one who does not want us to get closer to God and his name is satan. The devil knows that if we are filled with all the fulness of God there is no foothold for him, he has lost the battle for that piece of land. Church has become respectable, or holiness has become irrelevant, but God will have His way, He will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh as He promised through His prophet Joel. It has to happen in the Church first. The outpouring upon the Church will increase dramatically when the Fifth Seal is opened and the persecution of the Church is in full force globally. Some see the tribulation of the Saints as a wholly negative event, but it is the wilderness that brings forth hunger and thirst. It is desperation for more

power for greater manifestation of the Fruit and Gifts of the Holy Spirit that God will respond to as we seek to overcome and defeat the power of the enemy let loose against the Church. It will be cut short for the sake of the elect but there will be those who are imprisoned, some who will be martyred for proclaiming the name of Jesus. The outpouring on all flesh will happen when the Sixth Seal is opened, but that is not the subject here.

Without that intimacy there is no rapturous joining together, no consummation. I make no apology if that offends some, although it is a fleshly comparison I speak spiritual truth. Jesus spoke of this relationship regularly, those who heard Him would know what He meant and the intimacy that was necessary to see the Bride and Groom come together and seal their love for one another. This is agape love, the love of full surrender, the love between a bride and her groom. I knew in my spirit what agape love is but the Greek dictionaries did not describe what I knew in my spirit. Our daughter-in-law's sister lived in Greece and we visited her there. She was in a relationship with a Greek man and I asked him what agape meant, he told me it is the love of lovers, the intimate love he had for our daughter-in-law's sister. That confirmed what the Holy Spirit had told me, I knew it but I was cautious it might be me. What a lesson, we have to believe Jesus when He speaks.

How is this love for Jesus developed in us? Jesus told John to write this to the Ephesians:

Revelation 2:4-5 - *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

So what are the first works? Seeking God until you find Him, like you did when the Holy Spirit was convicting you of sin and you were seeking salvation, not letting go until He reveals His love in you. Do that and His love is renewed afresh, even stronger than before. Then the Holy Spirit starts to immerse you as you continue to seek Jesus for Himself. We must surrender our will to God. God can only fill us with all of His fulness as we surrender and allow Him to empty us of our self, die to self. We must come to that point that Jesus came to, be about our Father's business and give our life fully to God, withholding nothing: no me time, lots of knee time. We are new creatures in Christ, old things are passed away behold all things are become new, all things are of God. There is only room for God in our life, there are other things that need our attention but nothing comes before God.

Seek God with all of your heart, keep seeking Him until you find Him, like Jacob wrestled with God. We then come to the reality of John 15, in fact all of those conversations recorded in John that Jesus had with His disciples in preparation for His death, His resurrection, His ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, recorded in Acts 2, not only in their day but for every day until He calls His Bride home.

John 15:4-5 - *Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.*

We have to stop doing our thing and praying God will bless it. If we abide in Jesus and Jesus abides in us we live in the same house, our Father's house, the temple of God. Jesus is with us all the time and we are with Him, there is no separation from Him, we eat and sleep in the same house, we talk together, our life with Jesus is an ongoing conversation. He is our Friend and He tells us what His will is, so that we can follow Him and do His will. There is not a set time for meals or an appointment to consult with Jesus. There is no formality in our relationship, there is respect and the acceptance of authority, reverence for His position but the relationship with our Father is one of Father and son. With Jesus it is husband and wife, there is mutual respect but Jesus takes the lead in everything and we reverence Him for that.

The greatest, most productive thing we can all do is seek God for more of Him, not for gifts or benefits but more of Jesus, then everything we need will flow from God.

We do not need to worry about how our mortal body is disposed of, it is our spiritual body that will be raised in the rapture. Our spiritual body is incorruptible, at mortal death our flesh goes back to the dust from which it came. The law of Moses was the law of sin and death but the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus is in the Spirit therefore our resurrection can only be in the Spirit and of our spirit. The earthly realm is time limited and bound in death, but the spiritual realm is eternal and not restricted by time or any other earthly limitation. Therefore it is our spirit that God changes by His Spirit indwelling us. It is that Spirit that raises us from death to life through the revelation of Christ in us the hope, the expectation, of glory and it is that same Spirit that raises us when the trumpet of God sounds and God call us home in the rapture. Our spiritual body is glorified and passes into God's presence to be with Him for eternity.

1 John 3:2-3 - Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.

We shall be like Jesus, the Risen Christ, in His glorified body.

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