



But the People Who Know Their God...

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and carry out
great exploits.**

Daniel 11:32

Billy Conrad

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William (Billy) J. Conrad

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Cover photography by Verenicce Conrad

ISBN: 9798315952800

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Tucson, AZ

Printed in the United States of America

It had never entered my mind to write a book. As I share in this book God spoke to me in prayer when I was visiting China and told me to write it. So, I will dedicate this book to the LORD God Almighty my Father, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and my Regenerator and Enabler the Holy Spirit. I have tried to write only what They have inspired and instructed me to write and hopefully I have done that faithfully. If this book is helpful to you, thank and give the Godhead the glory, if there is teaching that misses the mark, I'll take the credit for that.

Writing this book has been the most challenging thing the Lord has asked me to do in 48 years of serving Him. It has also been one of the greatest learning experiences of my life. I have done what He told me to do by His grace and enablement, now it is up to Him to use it as He sees fit. I believe it will have a good purpose in His last days revival.

I pray this book will help and bless you, the reader.

Introduction

Although this is a Christian book it is not written primarily for believers. At least not primarily to believers who are satisfied with their religious experience. It is written primarily for unbelievers and unsatisfied believers who are searching for something more out of life and/or their walk with God. Something more than what they are getting out of sin, the world, or religion.

The purpose of this book is to teach you how to experience a close and intimate relationship with your Creator, Redeemer, Regenerator, and God. How to come into a relationship of oneness with the Godhead, in which God becomes your literal Father. And for you as His child to know Him and to know how to come into His Presence daily and enjoy communion with Him.

To be led by the Holy Spirit into His will, plan and purpose for your life. And by the Spirit to be equipped and empowered to live out His will, plan and purpose. This quality of life, aka eternal life, is what man experienced in the garden of Eden before it was lost through sin.

This eternal life, knowing the Father and the Son, has been made possible to us, man, again, through the Lord Jesus Christ who came as the Lamb of God to take away man's sins and to baptize us; those who have believed in Him, with the Holy Spirit.

Once we have received Jesus as our Savior and Lord, been cleansed from our sin by His precious blood, and been born again of His Spirit through Spirit baptism, we can begin to live the life we were created and redeemed to live, just like Jesus' first disciples did. Their story is written in the Book of Acts; our story is meant to be lived out in our world today.

Billy Conrad
Tucson, Arizona
March 2025

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SECTION ONE

My Testimony

Chapter 1

The Beginning (sort of)

It happened about 11 or 12 years ago, 2013, when I was on staff at a church in Tucson, Arizona. One morning as I was having breakfast with one of the assistant pastors of the church, he made a proposal to me.

This pastor was, at the time, the leader of the Preachers' Prep class at the church which was used to help men in the congregation prepare to become pastors and leaders.

"I was listening to the testimonies of players on a Super Bowl championship team," he said, "and what I kept hearing them say was 'I want to thank my strength coach for making this possible.' Now, what I'd expected to hear was 'I want to thank my mom, dad, high school coach, brother, pastor,' or someone like that... but strength coach? That made me stop and think."

He continued, "As I was pondering this concept of a strength coach I got this idea, perhaps that's what the men in the Preachers' Prep class need: a "spiritual" strength coach. I think you are the person to take that job on, and I wonder if you'd be willing to do it."

I had no idea what a spiritual strength coach was or did, but over the years I've seen God's faithfulness to me in various ministries and I've learned that whatever God asks me to do in His kingdom, He will enable me to do it.

So, I accepted the challenge. That was not exactly the beginning, but for sure it was the next step in the journey that has led me to the writing of this book. I need to go back a little farther though, in order to give some context to things – not back to my birth, but to the beginning of my spiritual journey.

That we were not a religious family would be a great understatement. My father was a bartender and an alcoholic

and was never married to my mother (although they had 4 children together and lived together on and off for many years). And my mother had children by three different men, so my parents were obviously not church goers. In fact, they never once went to church during the time that I lived with them, never took us or sent us to church, and never told us anything about God. The only time the name of God or Jesus Christ crossed their lips was... well, you know when that would have been.

But God was not limited by my parents, me, or my circumstances. When I was in first grade, we were given the opportunity to leave school for a couple of hours once a week to go to sessions of religious instruction at one of the churches near our school. It's probably hard for people today to believe that public schools used to support sending kids to religious instruction at a church, but at that time, they did. I signed up for the program – not because I was interested in learning about God or the Bible, but because I got to leave school.

These classes were only for one hour, one day a week for 10 weeks so the people teaching the classes didn't have a lot of time to work with us. What I remember from the classes was that the people teaching it were very nice, they used a flannel board that they stuck cutouts of people and other stuff on, and they talked about a person named Jesus a lot. I didn't get much out of the teaching; it was over my head. That might have been because the teachers assumed we students were somewhat familiar with what they were presenting, which most of the kids probably were, but unfortunately, I wasn't.

My next encounter with Christianity was when I was about twelve years old during summer vacation. As I sat in front of the TV set, channel surfing all of the three channels that were accessible back then, looking for something besides soap operas to watch, I came across Billy Graham giving an altar call. As I listened, God touched my heart, and I went and knelt in front of the TV set and prayed a Sinner's Prayer with Reverend Graham. Nothing came of that as far as changing my

life directly as I had no way of following through with being a Christian. But looking back, I believe something was planted in my heart that day.

When I was 20 years old and in the United States Navy, I was locked up in the Brooklyn Brig for going AWOL – and then thrown into solitary confinement for supposedly trying to start a riot in the brig (that’s a long, irrelevant story, so I won’t go there). In solitary, they stripped me down to my underwear, put me on a restricted diet, and left me in a tiny cell with nothing at all to do 24/7.

I had heard that if you asked for a Bible when you were incarcerated, they had to give you one, so I did, and they did. Again, my motives were not very noble. I only asked for the Bible so I would have something, anything, to do to pass the time. But before I was released from solitary, 3 or 4 months later, I had read the entire Old Testament, and I left that place believing that there was indeed a God.

After my fourth court martial, I was finally discharged from the U.S. Navy in 1968. Soon after that, I became a hippie and hitchhiked to Santa Monica, California, so I could live by the beach, get high, and “find myself.” Often the people who picked me up while I was hitchhiking would witness to me. Converted hippies on Venice Beach would give me *Chick* tracks to read and I would hear sermons at the Bible Way Mission where I went to get free meals. All of this must have had an effect on me, because on my twenty-first birthday, April 3, 1969, after dropping acid with a friend and heading out to party, as we walked on Santa Monica Beach I fell to my knees in the sand and blurted out, “Jesus, if You’re real, make Yourself real to me!”

When I got up from the sand that night, I was different. So much so, that friends who saw me the next day, who knew nothing of what I had done the night before, asked me, “What happened to you? You’re different.” When I asked them what they meant by that, they said, “You’re happy and we’ve never

seen you happy before.” I was happy and I had a love for people unlike anything I had known before, but I didn’t know why I was so happy. Maybe when I prayed that prayer Jesus forgave me of my sins and what I was experiencing was the joy of that.

Romans 4:7 “Happy are they whose transgressions have been forgiven, whose sins were covered up;

8 Happy the man whose sin the Lord does not charge against him!”

Something supernatural had happened to me, but I didn’t know what I was supposed to do with it. So, I continued doing drugs (way too much LSD), drinking, partying, fornicating... and getting more and more paranoid. I was a mess emotionally, spiritually, physically, and mentally, so I decided to flee Santa Monica and go back to my hometown of Niagara Falls, New York to try and “get my head together,” as we used to say.

But at home in NF it was just more of the same insanity. I didn’t work. I just collected welfare and food stamps, sold drugs, and stayed wasted. If not for a woman I lived with for three and a half of the four years I was there, I don’t believe I would have survived that period of my life. She reminds me of the chorus from a song called *Up on Cripple Creek* by The Band:

Up on Cripple Creek, she sends me
 If I spring a leak, she mends me
 I don’t have to speak, she defends me
 A drunkard’s dream if I ever did see one

To her I write this. God used you to keep me alive through an insane time in my life and for that I thank you. You loved me and were good to me and I did you wrong. For that I apologize and ask for your forgiveness. I pray often that you have/will come to know Him who loves you like I never could. I love you now and hope that when our lives are over, I will see you again, in heaven.

Chapter 2

An Angel Disguised as a Physical Therapist

One afternoon I was drinking in a clam bar in downtown Niagara Falls when a woman came up to me. She had noticed that my right arm was hanging at my side, and I wasn't using it. She asked what was wrong with it. I showed her a sixteen-inch scar that runs up the inside of my right forearm and told her I had an accident.

Actually, what had happened was, I had been drinking and dancing in a bar in Fredonia, NY where we used to go to sell drugs and party with the college students. I left the bar with a girl and walked over to a small park in the center of town. I was all hot and sweaty from dancing in the bar and there was a fountain in the park, so I dove into the eight inches of water that was in the fountain to cool off.

I must have hit some glass or something on the bottom of the fountain because I cut a sixteen-inch gash in my right forearm all the way to the bone! I would have bled to death or at best lost my right arm if not for the fact that there was a police station next to the park which I ran to and they were able to control the bleeding with a gunshot wound bandage while an ambulance came from a nearby town. I had severed four major blood vessels and cut through one of the sensory nerves that went to my right hand, but because I did not need my arm to play pool, drink beer or get high I never did anything to rehab it, and the muscles had atrophied.

Now you may be thinking, *why would a twenty-three-year-old man not care about losing the use of his right arm?* I am not sure exactly where I picked up this idea, but I thought I owed it to my generation to live a totally crazy life and die

young. Probably ten to twelve of the people I partied with OD'd and died in their late teens or early twenties, and many of my heroes in the rock industry were dying young also. Our would-be philosophers said things like, "Don't trust anyone over thirty," and "Tune in, turn on and drop out," so I didn't do the first and I did do the second. I was a good follower. Anyway, I didn't care about my arm because I didn't expect to be alive much longer, so what difference did it make?

Back to the woman in the bar. As it turns out, she was a physical therapist, and she said she would like to help me get back the use of my arm. I remember thinking, *why does this stranger care about me?*

Somehow, because of her concern, I thought maybe I should begin to care about myself. So, I began to go to her for physical therapy, play tennis to build up the muscles in my arm, and cut down on some of my drugging. As I started to get a little healthier, I decided to go back out West and see if I could experience whatever it was that I had experienced while living in Santa Monica four years prior. For some reason, that I do not understand, I did not connect Jesus to what I had experienced back then.

Chapter 3

Go West, Young Fool, Go West

I left Niagara Falls and hitchhiked to Tucson, AZ to begin my quest. As you've probably guessed by now, nothing changed; I was right back to alcohol, drugs, parties, and women. Alcohol was always my biggest bondage, and from years of abusing my body with it I was suffering physically. My insides were so messed up from drinking and not eating that I was often sick to my stomach. The more I drank the worse it got, but I could not stop.

Finally, in desperation, I committed myself to a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center run by a group of Sikhs. While living with them in their Ashram I learned about their religion, wore a turban, became a vegetarian, practiced meditation and began to teach yoga classes. I did not drink or do drugs for the six months I lived in the center, and I even stayed clean for another six months after I left.

When I left the Rehab Center there was a giant void in my life. With drinking and partying gone (and the fact that I did not work) I had nothing to do. I looked in the underground newspapers for something to get involved in and found an ad to join a free dance group. I went to a practice and really enjoyed it, so I joined the group who were called: Interfaith Community Dancers. I enjoyed dancing so much that I wanted to take more dance classes, but I had no money, but I did have an idea.

I had met a man sometime before this who was in a wheelchair and who was going to college for free as part of a program through the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. I knew the University of Arizona had dance classes, so I went to D.V.R. and told them I wanted to be rehabilitated. I told them about my injury, that I had no feeling in the fingers on

my right hand, that I had been on welfare for many years, and that I wanted to get an education so I could get a job and get off welfare.

It took them a few months to evaluate me with intelligence tests, psychological tests, and physical tests, but I did get accepted into the program. They offered to pay for me to go to school for two years at Pima Community College so I could adjust to going to school again, followed by four years at the University of Arizona. The problem was, Pima did not offer any dance classes, so I told them I would not go to Pima, but that I would go to the U of A (not telling them the real reason, of course).

They decided that I had scored high enough on the tests that I should do alright going directly to the U of A, so they accepted me into the program, and I became a twenty-seven-year-old full-time student at the University of Arizona. They paid for my tuition, books, and health insurance. They even paid to have my teeth fixed so I would fit in better. My two front teeth were broken a few years before when I got hit in the mouth with a whiskey bottle accidentally at a New Year's Eve party. They paid for two beautiful new crowns and sent me off to college!

Now, I would like to be able to tell you that by this point in my life I had come to my senses and took advantage of this great opportunity. Unfortunately, I cannot. During my first semester at the U of A, I took Art History, Drama, Spanish 101, and about ten dance classes. My counselor at D.V.R. strongly suggested I take some real classes the next semester. I told her I would take Freshman English, which I did – as well as Spanish 102, and thirteen dance classes.

Since I had no intention of getting a degree, staying in school, or staying in the program after that second semester, I had a talk with my English professor after the first class. I told her I was only taking the class because I had to because of the program I was in. I asked her if instead of doing the classwork, if I could write poetry and turn it in for her to

critique, with the understanding that I would not pass the class. She said no one had ever asked her for anything like that before, but if I was willing to take an F, she would go along with it. At the end of my second semester, I dropped out of school and out of the D.V.R. program.

Chapter 4

Out of Options

I did continue dancing with some groups in town and even auditioned for a professional improvisational dance company, but my life had slipped back into the same old routine of drinking, drugging, sleeping around (and of course, the sickness was back).

In December of 1976, I was living with a girl who was a nursing student at Pima College and a guy who was a Journalism major at the U of A. People said we were like brothers and sister – when you saw one of us, you saw all three. At Christmas break that year, my roommates both decided to go back to their hometowns for the holidays. I was left alone for the first time in a while and had time to think about my life. I was 28 years old and physically sick from drinking but unable to stop; I hadn't had a job since I had been thrown out of the Navy eight years before, and I had no hope of anything getting better in the future.

So, in desperation, I walked up on the side of “A” Mountain, knelt down and asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins, told Him I was giving Him my life, and said, “If You can do anything with it, good luck.”

I felt nothing and did not know if Christianity or Jesus were real or not, but I had run out of options, so I decided I was going to give this Jesus thing an honest try and see what would happen.

I figured that I needed to get away from Tucson and away from my friends if anything was going to change, so I hitchhiked out to Yuma, Arizona and camped along one of the canals there. I would cook my food over a campfire and then spread out the coals, bury them, and sleep on them to keep warm. It was the middle of winter.

I didn't really know anything about being a Christian, but as I said I had read the Old Testament while in solitary and my understanding from what I read was that God talked to people. So, I thought if this God is real, He will talk to me and tell me what I need to do. A girl had told me once that when Christians pray, they pray in Jesus' name, so I would pray in Jesus' name, and wait to see what God would say or do. To my surprise and excitement, God began to speak to me!

He spoke two things to me very clearly: to get baptized, and to join myself with other Christians. He impressed these things upon me so strongly that I was going to baptize myself in the canal I was camping next to but didn't because it was freezing cold out. And Him telling me to join myself with other Christians became very significant a little later on in my journey.

One more thing is significant. Once as I was there praying, I said, "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost," because as a teenager I heard Bishop Sheen say that on TV. But I stopped myself immediately. *What am I doing?* I thought. *I'm saying stuff and I don't even know what I'm talking about! I know who the Father is, He's God. And I know who the Son is, that's Jesus. But what in the world is a Holy Ghost? God, if He's part of You, You are going to have to show me who He is.*

Chapter 5

I Being in the Way, the Lord Led Me

A few days later, after finding a scorpion crawling on my jacket and having had enough of the freezing nights, I decided to leave the canal.

“I’m going up to the I-8 freeway and hitchhiking to five cars heading East,” I told the Lord. “If I don’t get a ride, I’m going to the other side of the freeway and hitchhiking to five cars heading West. I’ll go back and forth until I get a ride because I don’t know where to go or what to do, so You take me wherever You want me to go.” As I was walking up the on ramp to the freeway to begin hitchhiking, a semi pulled over before I even began to hitchhike. I ran up to the truck, climbed up on the step, looked in the window, and asked the driver where he was going. “Tucson,” he said.

Once in Tucson, I decided not to go back to where I had lived before but instead go to another friend’s house who was not such a partier. I told him I had become a Christian and that God had spoken to me about joining other Christians and getting baptized. I told him that I had read in the newspaper years before about a commune of Christians that lived down by the Santa Cruz River, so I was going to go down there and see if I could find them. I figured that made sense: they’re Christians so I could join them, and they lived by the river so I could get baptized, just as the Lord had told me to do.

“Why don’t you wait until Saturday when I don’t have to work,” he said, “and I’ll drive you down and we’ll see if we can find them?”

I accepted his offer.

Friday night as I was packing my stuff up to leave the next morning, I got a call from my ex-landlady. She heard that I was

back in town and knew that I didn't have a place to live or any money and told me about a woman she knew who was 82 years old and had had a few heart attacks. She needed help around her house, for which she would trade room and board, and wondered if I would go talk to her.

"I'm leaving town tomorrow, so I really can't go," I said.

"If she'll see you tonight, will you talk to her?" she asked.

"I don't have any way to get there."

"If I come and get you and take you, will you go?"

I wasn't very excited about the idea, but I said, "I guess?"

"Okay. Let me call her and see if she can see you tonight," she said.

When she called back a few minutes later to say the woman would see me that night, she said the woman had yelled, "Praise the Lord!"

"But you can overlook that," she told me, "Because you need a place to stay." I told her that I had become a Christian since I had seen her last and that maybe this was God, to which she replied, "Whatever."

When we arrived at the woman's house, there she was: an old lady, straight as an arrow, living in this really nice house – and there I was: a 28-year-old hippie, hair down to the middle of my back, a full beard, and pants covered with patches. What a contrast!

We sat down in the living room to talk.

"I was walking out the back door to feed the chickens," she began, "and I was talking to the Lord. 'Lord, I'm 82 years old and I've had three heart attacks, and I've been praying for a long time that You would send someone to help me, but You haven't sent anyone.' Just then," she said, "the phone rang and the woman on the other end said, 'Are you still looking for someone to come and stay with you and help you?' So, I yelled, '*Praise the Lord!*' because God was finally answering my prayer!"

She finished and now it was my turn.

“Well,” I said, “I’ve just become a Christian and God told me to join myself with other Christians, and you’re the first one I’ve met, so if you think it’s God, I’ll move in.”

“Okay,” she said, “Move in!”

Chapter 6

Holy Ghost, You Wonderful Holy Ghost!

That following Wednesday morning, the woman I was staying with asked me if I wanted to go to church with her that night, and I agreed. As it turns out, she took me to a church that she didn't attend, because she thought I would fit in better at this other church.

After the songs and worship, there was a wonderful presence of God in the building when the pastor got up to preach. He started by announcing the title of his sermon: *Who is the Holy Ghost?*

Wait just a minute, I thought. Five days ago, I was sitting along a canal in Yuma, Arizona, praying. I mentioned the Holy Ghost and then realized I don't even know what I was talking about. So, I told the Lord, "If the Holy Ghost is part of You, then You're going to have to show me who He is." I leave there and go up to the freeway to hitchhike to, I don't know where, and a trucker stops to offer me a ride before I even start to hitchhike (and truckers don't pick up people like me). He takes me back to Tucson and as I'm getting ready to leave Tucson, my ex-landlady calls me up out of the blue. She takes me to this woman's house, who just happened to be praying about God sending her someone to help her when my landlady just happened to call. This woman takes a total freak like me into her house because she believes God is answering her prayer. I stayed with the woman because God had told me to join myself with other Christians and she's the first one I met. She then takes me to a church she has never been to before because she thinks I will fit in better there, and the pastor gets up and preaches on *Who is the Holy Ghost?! This is more than a lot of coincidences! This is God!*

What's more, the Holy Ghost was in that church that night! At the end of the message, as the altar call is given, the pastor calls for people who want to receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour to come forward. Since I did that on "A" Mountain, I didn't respond.

Then he asks if there is anyone who wants to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I get up out of my seat and go forward. As I am walking up to the front a man joins me, tells me his name is Ray, and that he will be glad to pray with me to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

We pray and nothing happens. I feel nothing and I do not start speaking in tongues like the others. The man who prayed with me encourages me to keep seeking the baptism of the Spirit, and we part ways.

The next day, the assistant pastor calls me and asks if I would like to go to a Bible study that night. I agree and he picks me up later that day. At the end of the Bible study, he tells the group that I had prayed for the baptism of the Holy Spirit the night before and had not received it. He asks if they would be willing to pray for me again tonight. Ten or twelve people surround me and some lay hands on me, and they are all speaking in tongues and praying, but again nothing happens. On the way home, the assistant pastor encourages me to keep seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The next day, at home, I am getting ready to meditate (something I had held onto from my time in the ashram). As I start to sit down in my room, a voice says to me, "Don't do that."

I stop and think for a minute and come to the conclusion that meditation is spiritual, and therefore a good thing, so I'm going to meditate. I go to sit down again.

"Don't do that," the voice says again. I get a little upset and say, "This is the devil trying to rip me off from my last spiritual discipline, and I'm going to do this!" I go to sit down again.

"Don't do that."

“All right,” I say. “I said I was going to give this Jesus thing my all, so I won’t meditate.” But I was quite angry and somewhat confused!

I should explain something here: The meditation I was involved in was not Christian meditation. In Christian meditation, a person meditates on the Lord, on His Word and/or on His works.

In the meditation I was involved in, you did not focus on any specific thing. You just opened yourself up to anything and everything, which is very dangerous spiritually!

For those of you wondering, *was the voice audible?* I would say no, I do not think so – but by the same token, it was very clear and distinct. Someone was talking to me.

How would I describe the voice? It was a gentle, loving command. He was not asking me. He was *telling* me – although I knew I could disobey if I chose to. Thank God, I did not disobey!

That night, I was invited to a concert at the church, and I went. I had been to a service and a Bible study, so I already knew what was going to happen. They were going to begin by worshipping God in song, which would lead to praising Him in words and in tongues.

I tried to sing along as best I could, and when the music ended and it was time to worship Him, I lifted my hands and began to praise Him – and was immediately baptized in the Holy Spirit and began worshipping Him in tongues! I was surprised, to say the least, and as we finished and sat down, I asked the Lord, “Why did I get baptized in the Spirit now, when I wasn’t even asking for it, but not before, when I did it the way they said I should do it?” But there was no answer.

At the end of the service, Ray, the man who had prayed with me to receive the Holy Spirit the first night I came to the church came up to me and asked if I would like to go forward and pray to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He had no

idea what had happened to me at the beginning of the service, and to be honest with you, I wasn't positive myself. This stuff was all new to me. So, I told him, "Yeah." I figured if I really got what I thought I got, he could confirm it.

"When I first got saved," he told me on our way to the front, "I had a hard time receiving the baptism of the Spirit because I had been involved in meditation before I was saved. When I renounced meditation, it was then that I was baptized in the Holy Spirit."

As soon as he said that the Lord spoke to me: "That's why you didn't receive the Holy Spirit before when you prayed, but when you obeyed Me and didn't meditate this morning you received Him." As we continued walking up to the front, he asked me if I had ever been involved in meditation.

"Yes," I said.

"Are you willing to renounce your involvement in that?"

"Yes." We prayed a prayer of renunciation. He then prayed for me to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, and I lifted my hands and began to speak in tongues... again.

"That's it," he said. "You got it," and then I knew that what had happened to me at the beginning of the service was what I thought it was. I had been baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues! Hallelujah!

Let me just add this before I move on: The baptism in the Holy Spirit with the gift of tongues was a tremendous boost to my faith. And here's why: most of everything in the Christian life that I was doing up until that point I could do physically in my own ability. I could go to church, read my Bible, get baptized in water, pray, witness, give money, fast, etc.

But when God baptized me with the Holy Spirit and enabled me to speak in tongues, I knew that was something that I couldn't do within my own ability. It was a miracle of God. It was supernatural and it really proved to me that God was real.

When I talk to some Christians I meet about their experiences with Holy Spirit baptism, they tell me, “Oh yeah, I was baptized with the Spirit when I got saved.” When I ask what happened to them, they tell me, “Nothing, nothing special, no tongues, I just automatically received it when I accepted Christ into my heart.”

My first thought when I hear that is, *that’s not what I read in the Bible*. Holy Spirit baptism in the Bible is a separate event or experience like receiving Christ as Lord and Saviour, and like baptism in water. In every account we read in the Bible of Holy Spirit baptism, the people knew when they received Spirit baptism, where they were when they received it, and what happened to them when they received it.

Secondly, I think, *I’m sure glad that’s not what happened to me!* The baptism of the Holy Spirit was such an important reference point for faith in my life, that I’m glad that I know exactly Whom I received, when I received Him, where I was, and how it happened! How do I know all of that? Because He gave me the gift of tongues when He baptized me!

Chapter 7

From Bar Life to Church Life

God had brought me into a church family, had baptized me with His Spirit, and now things began to change pretty rapidly. It was 1977 and the Jesus People Movement was in full swing. Our church was in revival and people were getting saved in droves.

It was an exciting time in the world and in the church. When I came into the church in Tucson, attendance at our church was about one hundred and forty, mostly single young people. Within the first couple of years, the church grew beyond the seating capacity of our building.

All the chairs in the sanctuary were filled and people were sitting on the floor, in all the aisles, and in the front altar area. Then one night, the fire department came in and shut us down. They said it was a fire hazard because of the people sitting in the aisles.

After that, we became the church on the move. We met in high school auditoriums, hotel ballrooms, and in a shopping center – but all the while, the church kept growing. Eventually, we bought some property and had a building built. Attendance at Sunday morning services at that time was at about one thousand people, and I'm glad to say that forty-seven years later, the church is still thriving.

The local congregation in Tucson has launched over six hundred other churches in the United States and around the world, and we are in the process of building a new sanctuary and conference center on our property. Praise the Lord!

A week or so after coming into the church, the Lord spoke to me about moving out of the house of the Christian lady I had been staying with. I felt really bad because I had said

I would stay and help her, so I was praying and asking God how to explain it to her.

When I got home that day, I went into the kitchen to talk to her, but before I could say anything she started talking.

“I brought you here to help me so I could get more rest,” she said, “but now you are going to church all the time and when you come home at night I’m sleeping, and the dogs start barking, and I get woken up, so I’m getting less rest now than before you came. I’m sorry, but I’m going to have to ask you to move.”

So, it all worked out, and I moved into a house with a bunch of single brothers from the church.

For the first time in my life, I wanted to get a job and be productive. I went out and walked the streets, putting in applications at any place I could find. The only problem was that I had nothing to put on a work application. I was 28 years old, but I had no work history!

I had been thrown out of high school at 16, joined the Navy at 17, and was thrown out of the Navy at 20. I had collected welfare and food stamps and sold drugs for the next eight years, so what did I really have that could be put on an employment application?

Thank God that He has ways to overcome our seemingly insurmountable problems.

My first Saturday morning at the brothers’ house, the phone rang and one of the brothers yelled from his room, “If that’s my boss, tell him I don’t want to work.”

“If that’s his boss,” I yelled from the couch where I was sleeping, “tell him *I’ll* work.” It *was* his boss, and he *did* want him to work, so the guy who answered the phone explained the situation to the man, and he said, “Okay, send the other guy in.”

I walked into the Holiday Inn and the boss told me that the dishwasher had not shown up again, and asked if I knew

how to operate a dishwasher? I did not, so he showed me, and as I was working that day, the boss came back and asked if I could come back to work again the next day.

“I don’t know,” I told him. “I have just become a Christian and I don’t know if Christians are allowed to work on Sundays – but I can call my pastor and ask.”

“Okay, come to my office and use the phone.”

As the pastor’s phone was ringing, the boss said, “Tell your pastor that if he lets you work tomorrow, I’ll make up two more days of things for you to do and give you a full-time job.”

When my pastor picked up the phone and I asked him if it was okay for me to take a job if I had to work on Sundays, he asked me, “Do you have a job?”

“No,” I said.

“Do you need one?”

“Yes.”

“Well, what do you think you should do then?”

“Okay, thank you,” I said and hung up. So, I told the boss I would take the job, and he said, “Okay, you’re hired.” Then a couple days after he had hired me, he gave me an application to fill out for the Human Resources department. God had worked it all out. He got me a job without me having to fill out an application first. He made a way in what I thought was an impossible situation. Praise the Lord. I had a job!

Chapter 8

Marriage and Divorce

By the end of my first two years of salvation I had gotten married, had my first son, got a job as a salesman, and was driving a big, fancy car. One day, as I was driving out of town for a sales appointment, I was worshipping God and thanking Him for all that He had blessed me with.

In my enthusiasm I said, “Lord, I love You so much. If there is anything that I can do to show You how much I love You, just tell me and I’ll do it.”

“Love your wife!” He immediately responded.

I felt like someone has just dumped a bucket of ice water over my head; I was crushed.

“I can’t,” I responded.

Obviously, I need to explain some things here. For the first twenty-eight years of my life before salvation, I had lived a totally selfish, self-centered life. I was a big baby, a spoiled brat, and I had married a woman who had lived a similar life before she got saved, and she was just like me.

You have heard the saying; opposites attract and like repel. Well, that was us. We were just alike and there was a lot of repelling going on. Our relationship was more like one of enemies than lovers and our home was more of a war zone than a Christian sanctuary.

And now God was asking me to love my wife, and in my mind that was not possible.

Of course, it was possible by God’s grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, if I was only willing to allow that old carnal, selfish man that I was to die, and to allow God to form in me the new man He meant for me to be. But I was not willing

at that point, and my family and I paid a terrible price for my rebellion.

As I said, God spoke to me about loving my wife about two years into my marriage, and my marriage lasted another seventeen years after that. I will spare you the gory details but suffice it to say, it was hell on earth for all involved.

I'll take the opportunity here to apologize once again with all my heart to my ex-wife and our children for what I put you all through. I am truly sorry.

By the 16th year of our marriage my wife and I were no longer living together. She was forced to leave the apartment by the courts, and I was left working a full time and a part time job and trying to care for and raise 4 school age children. That was a very difficult time, but I was enjoying my children and enjoying the end of all the tension and strife in our home. In 3 years we would be divorced, but just before that happened something else happened.

As I was sitting in church one day, a man preached a message about marriage, and he made a statement that I had heard many times before. He said, "Divorce is never an option." But this time, God took those words and said, "That means it's not an option for you!" I took that to mean that I needed to work things out with my wife and be reconciled with her.

I had no immediate plans to divorce my wife, but had assumed that it would happen eventually. Since leaving, she had been in relationships with other men, and had even been unfaithful before we were separated, which I found out from the children after she left our home. I felt I had scriptural grounds to get a divorce, but I was in no hurry to do so because I was not sure what would happen concerning the custody of our children. In almost all the divorces I had heard about, the wife got custody of the children.

But now God was telling me that divorce was not an option and that I needed to begin to work on reconciling the relationship.

I'm a slow learner, but after almost nineteen years of hell on earth because of my refusal to obey the Lord and love my wife, I was not going to disobey Him this time. I called up my wife and invited her to dinner and she accepted.

As we sat in the restaurant I said, "We are still married, and I would like to begin working on our marriage again." I told her that I was willing to forgive her unfaithfulness and that maybe we could start talking again and trying to work things out.

She thought that I was asking her to move back into our apartment, which I was not, but she told me that she would not move back in with me because she did not want to live in a monogamous relationship. A monogamous relationship between a husband and wife is what God demands and is the only kind of relationship I was interested in, so by her saying that she told me that we did not even have the basics for continuing our marriage. I did not bother arguing with her. We finished our dinner, and I drove her home.

God had spoken very clearly to me that divorce was not an option for me and now after talking to my wife, I realized our marriage was never going to be reconciled. This led me to conclude that I would be married to my wife for the rest of my life, but never have a relationship with her, or be able to have a marriage relationship with any other woman!

I became totally depressed at this prospect. This was literally the lowest point of my Christian life (and it had some pretty low points up to this time).

Then the Lord started speaking to me: "Get counsel. Get counsel," but I would just argue, "What for? You spoke to me very clearly that divorce was not an option, and after talking to my wife, I know I will never have a relationship with her. I'm doomed!"

The depression just kept getting worse and worse. I was sinking and it seemed like there was no way out of my dilemma!

During this time, I went late to a concert at the church one Saturday night. As I was heading from my car to the church, our pastor, who was leaving the concert early, was headed from the church to his car.

As we passed, I said, “The Lord has been telling me to get some counsel. Do you have a minute?” He said, “Sure,” and we stopped to talk.

“My kids tell me that my wife has just moved a new guy in with her,” I said, “and I don’t know how much longer I can go on like this.”

“Why don’t you get a divorce?” he said.

I said incredulously, “What?!” My pastor had been my pastor for twenty-plus years at this point, and I couldn’t believe my ears. Maybe I hadn’t heard him right.

“Why don’t you get a divorce?” he said again. Again, I said, “What?!”

“If you can keep the custody of the children and keep your retirement,” he said, “why don’t you get a divorce?”

“I’ll look into it,” I said, and he left.

A five-minute counseling session with my pastor and, all of a sudden, I had some hope!

I had no money for a lawyer, and, as I said, I was afraid of losing custody of the children, so I didn’t do anything immediately. Then the city of Tucson contacted me about a program that I had applied for a few years earlier to qualify to buy a house.

It was a first-time homeowner’s program for low-income families, and I had taken all the classes required to be eligible and had waited on a list of applicants for a long period of time, but now it was our turn, and we could begin shopping for a house.

I found a beautiful house close to the church almost immediately and I was really excited. I was finally going to be

able to move my kids out of the low-income apartment project we lived in and into a house in a good neighborhood.

But there was a problem. When I signed up for the program I was living with my wife, so her name was also on the application. The agency told me that if she would not sign a waiver stating she would not be involved in the transaction, then they could not allow me to stay in the program or to get the house.

I called her and asked if she would sign the waiver and she said, “No!”

I really wanted that house, and by this point in time my wife had served me with divorce papers, so I needed to get some legal help quickly.

I went to Legal Aid to apply for free legal help. I had an interview that day and the woman called me the next day to say they would accept me into the program. I told her I had two days to get some papers signed by my wife so I could buy a house, or I would be released from the homebuyer’s program, so I needed a lawyer immediately. She explained to me that it did not work that way. “When someone is accepted into the program,” she said, “they are assigned lawyers as they become available, and that usually takes weeks or even months.”

“Okay,” I said, hung up, and prayed.

The next day the woman called me back and said, “I can’t believe it, but a lawyer called today looking for a client to represent!” She gave me his phone number and I called him immediately to set up an appointment, but he said he did not have an opening until the following week. I explained to him about the house, and my wife, and that I had until the next day at 5:00 p.m. to turn in a waiver signed by my wife. He asked for the name of my wife’s lawyer and said he would call me back.

In a few hours, he called to say that he had talked to my wife’s lawyer, that her lawyer had talked to her, and that if I brought the waiver to her at work that night, she would sign it!

I did, and she did. The waiver was turned in on time, and I bought my first house at age 48!

When I met with my lawyer the next week, I explained to him that in the divorce papers I had received from my wife, she was seeking full custody of our children which was something I was totally against. I told him that I wanted full custody of the children.

“You’ve got it,” he told me.

“What do you mean?” I said.

“You have had sole custody of the children for the past three years while your wife has been gone from the home, and the court is not going to take them away from you and give them to her.”

A half-hour talk with the lawyer and my biggest fear about the divorce and my pastor’s first concern was resolved; I would get full custody of the children, Amazing!

But that still left my retirement to be dealt with. As we began the divorce proceedings, the courts ordered my wife and I to meet with a counselor to discuss dividing our property. Our property really did not consist of much – in fact, other than both of us keeping what we already had, and the custody of the children (which was already settled) there was only the issue of my retirement and child support.

I told my wife that if she would let me keep my retirement, that I would not ask her for any child support. She readily agreed to that, and so the last issue was resolved. Everything worked out just as my pastor had counseled me!

Please don’t think that my pastor or I take divorce lightly. The Bible is very clear: God hates divorce. We both fear God and revere Him and His Word. But there are situations in life that sometimes come up that take away all other options. If one spouse no longer wishes to remain in the marriage covenant and has left God and their spouse and is living with another person, what else is someone to do?

I believe that even though I was in this mess largely because of my own selfishness and rebellion, when I repented and chose to obey God, and to love and forgive my wife and seek reconciliation with her (but was met with unwillingness on my wife's part) that God helped me through the divorce process and worked it all out for my and the children's good.

I believe that when I sought counsel, as the Lord was directing me to, that He used my pastor to speak His will for me into that situation. I thank God for forgiving, directing, and helping me through this very difficult time, and for a pastor who hears from and is used by God!

Chapter 9

He is Faithful, and He is Good

About four years after the divorce, the Lord began to deal with me about leaving my job at the University of Arizona. I was working as the trainer for our department and teaching as an Adjunct Faculty member at Pima Community College at the time.

I had also remarried, and my wife was an LPN, so things were very good for us financially. I talked to my wife about what I felt the Lord was speaking to me about, and she said if I felt it was God, to go ahead and quit.

I wanted to get my pastor's input, so I went up to him after a service one night and sat down to talk to him. I told him what the Lord was speaking to me about – quitting my job at the U of A and he said... To be honest, I do not know exactly what he said, but it was not, *Great, go for it!*

I do know this about his answer: it was negative, and short, and direct, and he turned and left. I valued his opinion, so I did not quit my job. I put it on hold.

But the Lord would not put it on hold with me. He kept prodding me to pursue this, so reluctantly I went back to my pastor a few weeks later and told him that the Lord was not giving me any peace about staying at my job.

“There's a fine line between presumption and faith,” he said, “and if you really believe it's God, go ahead and quit.”

It turned out that because I was over 50 years old and had enough points, I was able to retire. So, after eighteen years of working at the university, at age 52, I retired and was unemployed again.

Now, the Lord had spoken to me clearly about leaving my job but had not given me any direction about what to do

afterwards. I did some landscaping part-time for a few months and then, one day, my pastor contacted me and wanted to talk to me.

At our meeting, he asked me to come on staff at the church. Praise the Lord! A dream comes true!

My first responsibility was manning the office phone during the day. I also began taking care of the grounds at the church. I also wrote and directed plays and organized and led the church's Impact Teams. These teams were groups of volunteers from the church who would go to some of our baby churches during the summer to help them evangelize their cities.

My pastor also sent me to some places to hold revivals. The first place I traveled to do a revival was Odessa in the Ukraine. On the third night of the revival, as the pastor and I arrived at church, there was a woman from the church waiting for him outside the building. She told him that she had gone blind in one of her eyes and asked him to pray for her. He told her to come in for the service that night and we would pray for her at the end of the service.

As I was standing on the stage that night for the song service, while they were singing one of the songs in Russian, I was just standing there not able to sing along. All of a sudden, the Lord began to speak to me:

“Tonight, when you get to the point in your sermon where you say, ‘Jesus said, if you don’t believe I am who I’m telling you I am, believe Me for the miracles’ sake,’ At that point, call the blind woman up on the platform and I am going to heal her.”

I remember thinking, *so that's how these evangelists do what they do! The Lord speaks to them and tells them what to do before or during the service.* At the point in the sermon where the Lord had told me to call the woman up and pray for her, I did, and she was instantly healed!

God really used that miracle to touch some teenagers who were there in the service. Up until that miracle happened, they were not at all interested in what was being said, but after the Lord healed that woman, He had their complete attention.

It was really exciting to see God use me in that way, and to see the impact it had on the unsaved who were in attendance. I pray that we will see a revival of the gifts of the Spirit as we labor to bring in this last day's harvest. I believe God will use miracles mightily in these last days to confirm His Word being preached, and to reveal His love and power to people, just like He did all through the Bible!

Chapter 10

Back to the Beginning

At the end of 2012, twelve years after I had been brought on staff at the church, is when the assistant pastor approached me about becoming the “spiritual strength coach” for the men in the church who were aspiring to ministry.

We have now come full circle back to where I started my story. I have shared up to this point what preceded that encounter, so I’ll pick the story up here in 2012 and bring you up to the present, 2025, and to my reason for writing this book.

I began praying and seeking the Lord for what to teach these men in order to help them to become spiritually strong. I knew and practiced the spiritual disciplines I had been taught, namely: Bible study, prayer, witnessing, church attendance, worship, etc. I gave some lessons on these topics, but there was not much interest from the few who attended. These men were, for the most part, very involved and busy already in the church, and they did not seem excited about having yet another meeting to attend. Mercifully, the class ended after a few months, early in 2013.

A few months after that, as I was fasting and praying in preparation for our upcoming 2013 June Bible Conference, the Lord began an intense time of visiting me and speaking to me. This was unlike anything I had experienced in my almost forty years of salvation. One day, I was reading a book written by another pastor in our city. As I finished reading for that day, something triggered in me the thought of leaving my church.

I thought that very strange because, as I have shared, God supernaturally brought me into the church, and now I was on staff, and there were no problems between me and anyone in the church. Why would the thought of leaving the church come into my mind?

As I was walking into my office that day, I remember thinking, *God, are you telling me to leave my church?* Actually, the thought was so ridiculous, I thought it was kind of funny.

When I sat down at my desk, I read my daily devotional. For many years I have sent out a daily devotional that I get from different websites to a number of pastors and others. This day's devotional read: "If God speaks to you through a book or even this devotional, you need to obey God and do what He says." I thought that was coincidental and, again, a little amusing.

Because this thought had come to me when I was reading a book by a pastor from another church in town, I decided to go visit that church on one of our free nights. I went to a service, and it was good, but I loved my church and my church family, and I was not interested in leaving to go somewhere else.

Our Bible conference started, and I still could not shake this idea that God was speaking to me about leaving my church. One night of the conference, as I was in the prayer room before the service, I prayed, "Lord if You want me to leave my church, You will have to speak to me so clearly that there will be absolutely no doubt in my mind."

I went into the service a few minutes later and, as the minister got up to preach that night, he started his message like this: "God is speaking to some of you that you need to leave your church, and you need to obey God and leave your church. I know it doesn't make any sense, but you need to obey God and leave your church."

I know that what the man was saying was directed at established pastors whom God might have been calling to leave their churches and go out on the mission field. But, when you just get done praying and telling God, "If You want me to leave my church, You are going to have to tell me so clearly that there will be no doubt in my mind," and then you go into the service and the pastor gets up and says what he said...! It scared the stuffing out of me, and for the first time I began to think,

“Oh, my God! Maybe He really is talking to me about leaving my church!”

By the next day, I am really starting to panic. I'm in prayer meeting that morning before the service and I tell the Lord, “I've been in this church for thirty-seven years and do You really expect me to leave this powerful move of God and go to that other church? We are hosting our annual Bible conference, and we have hundreds of people in town from all over the world, and we are going to announce fifteen to twenty new church plants on Thursday and Friday night. Could You really be asking me to leave all of this and go to the church I went to visit last week?!”

In the service that morning, a man got up to preach and he used an illustration about the head of Ford Motor Company going to one of the executives from Boeing and talking to him about leaving Boeing and coming to Ford.

To which the man from Boeing responded, “Do you really expect me to leave Boeing and come to Ford? I've been at Boeing for thirty-seven years and I love it, so how can you think I would leave a great company like Boeing and go to Ford?” Almost the exact same argument I had given to the Lord a few minutes before in the prayer room that morning about leaving my church! (For those of you who may be wondering, the man did leave Boeing and go to Ford.)

I told one of my best friends at break that morning what was happening, and he could see that I was very stressed over it. He told me, “Just don't do anything rash,” which was great advice; advice which I did follow.

The next day, I was still really anxious, and I was trying to figure out why God was speaking to me about leaving my church. I got the thought: *maybe I'm going to get sent out to start a church; maybe that's what the Lord is trying to speak to me about.*

Now, I should say here that I didn't believe I was called to pastor a church, and my pastor had told me before that he was not going to send me out to pastor, but I was so desperate

to try and make sense of what God was speaking to me about that I was grabbing at straws.

Later that day, I got a call from one of the assistant pastors who told me that our senior pastor wanted to talk to me that night before the service. Now, it would be very normal for our pastor to meet with someone who he was thinking of sending out to start a church to talk to them, so I thought, *maybe that is what this has all been about.*

As I was in the prayer room that night before service, waiting for the pastor to call me in to talk to him, and as I was praying, the Lord spoke to me again. "Leaving the church is going to be similar to when you left your job at the University of Arizona." I did not know exactly what that meant, but that's what He said.

When the pastor called me in, he explained to me that they were bringing another assistant pastor on staff to assist him, and that they were going to have to let me go and use my salary to help pay him. He apologized for having to make the move, and I told him, "Don't worry about it. It's God. This confirms what the Lord has been speaking to me about." What I meant by that statement was that if I left the church, I would have to resign my staff position, so this resolved that issue. He asked me what I meant, and I told him I would explain it to him after the conference.

I'll add here that when I left the church it did turn out like it did when I left my job at the university. When I obeyed the Lord and left my job at the university is when God brought me on staff at the church which was a tremendous privilege and blessing. When I obeyed Him and left the church the Lord brought me into another level in my relationship with Him which was also a tremendous privilege and blessing.

Back to what happened at that time. I made it through the conference, which ended Friday night. Saturday morning, I was at home praying, and as I walked out my back door into the yard I said, "It doesn't make any sense, Lord. You supernaturally

brought me into this church thirty-seven years ago. Why would You be telling me to leave now?" He answered me clearly and immediately, "I supernaturally brought the children of Israel into Egypt before I supernaturally brought them out."

I had to think about that one for a minute, but it was true. He had supernaturally brought Israel into Egypt through Joseph before He supernaturally brought them out 430 years later through Moses. There were other confirmations that I will not take the time to list here, but I finally accepted that the Lord was indeed telling me to leave.

A week or so after the conference, I met with my pastor and shared with him everything I just shared here. I told him that I would stay one more year and take care of my scheduled responsibilities and that would give him time to find someone to replace me. He said he would keep me on staff and that he thought I would be more fruitful if I stayed at the church, and that he did not think I should go.

Now in pride, I could have said, "Sorry, Pastor, but God's spoken to me, and I have to obey God and not man." But the Lord would have none of that silliness! Instead, He told me to talk to my pastor and ask him for his "leave." I thought that was a strange term, but what I felt it meant was that even though my pastor did not condone or agree with what I was doing, he would give me his leave, consent, to do it.

My pastor was very gracious and gave me "leave" to go and do what I believed God was calling me to do and told me that I was welcome to come back to the church anytime I wanted. He even prayed for me and my wife during a service and sent us off with his blessing. He is the only pastor that I've ever had in forty-eight years of salvation, and he will always be my pastor no matter where I might be.

Chapter 11

Preparing to Leave: One Final Confirmation

During that next year, my wife and I got everything in order in preparation to leave. We were going to depart the week after this year's, 2014, June Bible Conference ended. We had our farewell parties and said all our goodbyes. It seemed God was directing us to go to the Buffalo, Niagara Falls, area, so that was our plan.

Then, just as conference was getting ready to begin, one morning as I was on the treadmill walking and praying, I said, "Lord, I know that You have told me very clearly to leave here and I believe You want us to go to the Buffalo, Niagara Falls, area, but if this is not the right place or if this is not the right time for us to go, if You'll let me know, we won't go. I'll look like a total fool, as I have been telling everyone for the last year that we are leaving, but I don't care, I don't want to do anything out of Your will."

I got off the treadmill and went into my office to check my email. I opened up my Yahoo account, and in my inbox was a message. This is what was visible before I opened the message up: "Buffalo/Niagara. Plant yourself here this summer." I had just asked the Lord, if the Buffalo, Niagara Falls, area is not the right place for us to go, or if this is not the right time to go, let me know and I won't go. Then I go and open my email and read: "Buffalo/Niagara: Plant yourself here this summer!"

So, at the end of the conference, we rented a big truck, packed it full of all our stuff, hooked a trailer up behind the truck, put our car on it, and drove to the Buffalo, Niagara Falls, area of Western New York.

The apartment the Lord opened up for us to rent ended up being in Niagara Falls. I was not exactly sure what the Lord

had brought us here to do, but I did know that wherever I was, I was commanded to preach the Gospel and get people saved. I ended up living only two blocks from Niagara University, where I thought I would evangelize during the school year.

I planned to go there and sign up for a class so I would have a reason to be on campus if I was hassled by the authorities for being there and witnessing. I went to the admissions office and found out that one class would cost about three thousand dollars, so I immediately gave up that plan.

As I walked back to my car and was about to get in, there was a man walking down the sidewalk toward me. It was summer, so there were very few people on campus.

Out of the blue, the Lord says to me, "Talk to him." I ask, "About what?" No answer. I wait for a few seconds on the sidewalk until the man gets to me and I ask him, "Do you work here?" The man stops and says, "Yes."

"What do you do?"

"I'm a teacher," he says.

"Is this a Catholic university?" I ask. "I see a lot of statues here."

"Yeah, it is," he replies. I am really uncomfortable by now. I'm talking to this man because the Lord told me to, but I don't have any idea what I'm supposed to be talking to him about. Thank God, the man was gracious and at this point he asked, "Are you new here?" I tell him I am, and he asks where I came from. I tell him Tucson, Arizona, and he asks what everyone back in the Northeast asks when you tell them you left the beautiful, sunny Southwest to come to the frigid North: "Why?"

I had been asked that question a few times since being in NF and so I was a little hesitant about answering him honestly. When I told people the truth – that I was here because God had told me to come here – that was almost always the end of the conversation.

But for some reason, I decided to go ahead and tell him the truth.

“I came here because God told me to come here.” Instead of ending the conversation and walking away, he asks, “Well, what are you going to do here?”

“I’m going to try and get people saved,” I say. “I’m a Christian and that’s what Christians do.” He tells me I should check out the Gospel Rescue Mission and he gives me the name of a church to visit.

Just then it started raining a little, and now I feel bad that I stopped this man a long way from the nearest building.

“You better go,” I tell him. “It’s starting to rain.”

“No, this is God!” he says. “I’ve been praying that God would send revival to Niagara Falls and you tell me that God told you to come here.”

I think to myself *this guy sounds like one of us*, but it starts raining harder now and so I tell him, “That’s great, but you need to go; it’s raining.”

“Okay,” he says, but before he leaves, he tells me his name and what department he works in.

When I got home from the university, I decided to look up the professor on the university website and send him a note. I found him, and wrote, “This is the person who you met on campus today. I really enjoyed talking to you and if you are free sometime, I would like to get together and have lunch and talk some more.” He invited me to join him and a friend of his that he meets with for breakfast every other week. I joined them that week and that was the beginning of a great friendship.

That all happened in July of 2014 and I met with these guys every other week until I left NF in July of 2022. God has never spoken to me and told me to stop someone on the street and start talking to them in my forty-eight years of serving Him, except for this man, and it turned out that he is the one that God used to connect me to the Chinese community at Niagara University.

I had started a Bible study with Chinese students and scholars at the University of Arizona and was involved in that for about ten years, but I thought that I was done with that part of my life when I left Tucson. God had other ideas, though.

One day, the professor asked me to help him witness to some international students he was going to invite to his house for Easter dinner. This was Easter of 2015, and we had been in NF about ten months at that time. God had opened a door for us to hold services in a high-rise apartment building in November of 2014, and we were working mostly with older people.

My wife and I went to the professor's house for Easter dinner and met a couple of Chinese scholars who were going to be here for a year: two ladies, Kris and Laura. My wife told Laura about our service on Sunday morning, and Laura asked if she could come. It turned out that Kris and Laura lived in the same apartment complex as we did and that Sunday we took Laura to our service. At the end of the service, Laura, who was already a Christian, was crying and said, "I feel the Spirit of God in this place. I want to start coming here for church." I was very excited about that, and said, "Praise the Lord!"

Laura invited her roommate Kris that next week and she came. The next week after Kris first came, they brought another scholar friend named Gloria and she came with her 12-year-old son, Jerry. After that, they all began coming to every service. Kris, Gloria, and Jerry got saved pretty quickly. In the summer, Laura's husband Leo and her daughter Lisa came from China to visit for a month, and Lisa also accepted Christ as her Savior. We were having revival!

As 2015 was coming to an end and it was getting close to the time for Laura, Kris, Gloria, and Jerry to go back to China, we were all very sad. We had grown so close to them and now they were leaving. They were the heart of what God was doing in our little church group. They suggested that we come back to China with them and start a church in their hometown, a city called Changsha in Hunan Province. I pondered the idea

and thought maybe that was what God had brought us to NF for: to meet these people and go to China from here.

I called my pastor and told him we were considering going to Changsha in China to start a church and he said he would pray about it. We would have had to sell our house in Tucson to be able to afford the move, and it turned out that was not going to be possible at that time. Additionally, a whole new group of Chinese students and scholars came to the university and Laura ended up bringing two couples and their kids and a couple of single people into the church before she left to go back to China. Now we couldn't go anyway.

Here's a little update on Kris, Laura, and Gloria who returned to China in January of 2016. Two and a half years after they left, I was in Tucson for a visit and to attend our 2018 June Bible Conference. As I walked into the prayer meeting one night before that evening's service, I saw a guy who I thought might get sent out to start a church that year. I walked up to him and asked, "Are you getting sent out this year?" He didn't exactly answer because you're not supposed to spoil the surprise for announcement night. But I said, "If you do, don't forget about China."

He said it was funny that I should say that because God had put a city in China on his and his wife's hearts a few years ago and they had been praying about it. He told me that he had in fact, just sent an email to our pastor and told him that they would be interested in going to China as missionaries.

It turns out that when our pastor got his email and saw that the city God had spoken to this couple about was the same city that I had told him I was thinking about going to, Changsha, he started thinking maybe this was God. He decided to contact my son-in-law, who is a missionary in China to get some input from him. He asked him, "If I was going to plant a church in China, do you have any cities you would recommend?"

"Changsha!" was his answer. So, our church sent the couple to Changsha, China as missionaries. Laura is now the translator in the church and Kris, Gloria and Jerry all attended there.

My wife and I went to China from NF in November of 2019 to visit our kids who were missionaries there. While in China we got to go to Changsha and visit Kris, Laura, Gloria, and Jerry and a couple of other people that we had met and ministered the gospel to in NF. We went to the church in Changsha, and it was a blessing to see what God was doing there and to see how God was using those we had met in NF.

Before we returned to NF from China while we were in our kids' apartment, one morning as I was praying, God spoke to me and told me to write a book. When He did, He gave me the first chapter of the book, which I went and immediately wrote down on my laptop. You have read that first chapter when you read Chapter 1, and now you know how this book came to be. If we will just obey God and do what He tells us to do there is no limit to what He can do in and through our lives.

Chapter 12

Things Begin to Come into Focus

We returned to NF from China at the beginning of 2020. We had been in NF six years in July of that year, and although we had seen a lot of great things happen for which I am eternally grateful, I was never exactly sure what God had brought us here for. Until the last two years we were there, that is. I believe I now know the main reason God sent me there.

God brought me there primarily to get me alone with Him, to be able to bring me into the relationship He wanted to have with me – away from my job, family and friends, with lots of time just to focus on Him. He wanted to teach me what it means to really know Him so that I might experience that and be able to share it with others through this book.

As He was beginning to show me these things, I was doing everything I knew to try to experience them. I would pray for hours every morning, then read and study my Bible. I would go for long walks and pray and speak in tongues. I would fast 2 or 3 days a week and seek the Lord, but to be honest, it just was not happening. There was still something missing.

Then one morning, after I had prayed and read the Bible, and sent out the devotional for that day, I was just sitting there and thinking about God and reaching out to Him with my spirit when I began to sense His Presence. As I sat there with my eyes closed, meditating on Him, His Presence became more and more tangible. I felt like I had ascended into the throne room of heaven, or that heaven had come into my office – I didn't know or care which.

During all my years of being saved up to that point, I had experienced the Presence of God in a tangible way a very limited

number of times. A few times in church services, a couple of times in worship, maybe a few times when fasting and praying – but it seemed like those times were random, so I didn't know how to replicate them when I tried. This time it would be different!

I spent maybe an hour that morning basking in His Presence, soaking in the fullness of joy that is there, and floating in the ocean of His love. Okay, I'm starting to wax poetic, but it really was a wonderful time of intimacy with my heavenly Father!

When I finished enjoying that glorious experience, I opened up e-sword, a free Bible study program available at e-sword.net on my laptop and was going to start reading a new book from the library that's part of that program. The book was titled: *The Deeper Christian Life* by Andrew Murray. It just so happened that the first chapter in the book is entitled *Daily Fellowship with God* and is a list of ten steps to use to come into the Presence of our Father on a daily basis. What he writes about in that chapter is exactly what I had just experienced a few minutes before.

What a confirmation! I wasn't crazy; this really was from God, and He was letting me know that. I am so glad that I had experienced what Mr. Murray wrote about before I read about it! From that time on, I began meeting with my Father daily, each morning. It became, and still is, the highlight of my day.

Sometimes during these encounters, God speaks to me. He gives me instructions on what I should do and/or stop doing. Sometimes He gives me revelation from His Word of things to teach as part of this book.

I really feel like I am experiencing what eternal life is meant to be. I am enjoying daily intimacy with my heavenly Father in His Presence. This was the breakthrough that my soul was longing for even when I did not know what it was that I was searching for. This is what knowing God is all about, union and communion, fellowship, oneness, with Him!

But God was not through. There was more. The Lord began to show me that He had outlined for us in the Lord's Prayer what we should pray for and about during our time of daily intimacy with the Father. In Section 3 of this book, we will go through the steps that I use to come into the Presence of the Father daily. We will also learn how to use the Lord's Prayer as an outline of what to pray for and about.

I will also include what I pray daily, what I believe the Lord has revealed to me to pray to fill in my outline. I will also include a number of Scriptures to support what I am praying. I believe you will find my prayers and these Scriptures helpful tools as you begin to fill in your own outline.

I trust that as you begin to practice coming into the Father's Presence daily and begin using the Lord's Prayer as a model of what to pray for and about, the Lord will speak to you and show you what to fill in your outline with; that which is relevant to you according to your own personal walk with Him.

Before we look at coming into the Father's Presence and the Lord's Prayer in Section 3 of the book, I want to look in Section 2 at how we become God's legal and literal children. This is necessary because Jesus gave the Lord's Prayer to God's children to use in praying to their heavenly Father, and only God's children have access to His Presence.

SECTION TWO

The Full Gospel Message

Chapter 13

Cumulative Revelation

As we study the Scriptures, we will be using the process of cumulative revelation to form our conclusions. We will look at the full counsel of God's Word, or at least as much as is feasible in the confines of one small book, before we make our conclusions of what the Bible teaches on the subjects we will cover. We cannot possibly do a study of the whole Bible here, but we are all individually responsible for reading, studying, and knowing what the whole Bible teaches, so that is our homework assignment for the rest of our lives.

When I say cumulative revelation, I'm not talking about progressive revelation, although some consider them to be the same thing. They are not. Progressive revelation as from the Old Testament to the New Testament gives us a progressive revelation of God's teachings to, and interaction with, man. With progressive revelation when we learn something new, we often discard the old, as in the revelation of Jesus' death as the atonement for our sins taught in the New Testament. When we receive that revelation in the New Testament, we no longer even consider offering animal sacrifices as is taught in the Old Testament, so we abandon that revelation, teaching, practice, altogether.

But this is not the case with cumulative revelation. Cumulative means increasing or growing by accumulation or by successive additions. Another definition of cumulative says it describes the total amount of something when it is all added together. When we are considering the very crucial teachings of the New Testament as they pertain to salvation, eternal life, the second death (hell), heaven, etc., we have to look at all that the Bible teaches on these subjects and add it all together before we come to our conclusions.

Isaiah 28:10 “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.”

I gave you an example of progressive revelation, now let me give you an example of cumulative revelation.

Jesus said:

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

It is often taught from this verse that all a person needs to do to, “not perish but have everlasting life,” is believe in Jesus. Now it is true that we need to believe in Jesus to have eternal life, and it is also true that if we do not believe in Jesus, we will perish.

But is believing in Jesus all we need to do to not perish and have everlasting life?

We will answer that question by looking at some other things that Jesus said, taught.

Mark 1:14 “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

In this Scripture Jesus adds to believing the command to repent.

Do we therefore also need to obey Jesus and repent to not perish and have everlasting life?

Let’s look at something else that Jesus said to find out the answer to that.

Luke 13:3 “I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”

Jesus says here that if we do not repent, we will perish. Peter confirms our need to repent to not perish in explaining

why Jesus had not yet, at that present time, kept His promise to return for His church, and to judge the world.

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

Do these verses that speak of our need to repent, or we will perish, contradict Jesus’ teaching in John 3:16, that if we believe in Him, we will not perish?

Of course not! We simply take these two truths that are revealed in the New Testament and add them together. Therefore, we must both obey Jesus’ command to repent, and we must also believe in Him to not perish and have everlasting life.

Are there other things that the Bible teaches us that we must obey God and do to not perish and have eternal life, be saved?

There are actually many which I cover in great detail in the Chapter entitled Obey, so I won’t go over them here, but we will go a little further down this road to get a better idea of how cumulative revelation works.

Jesus, as recorded in Mark’s gospel, and John the Baptist, as recorded in John’s gospel, both spoke of this connection between believing and obeying in order to be saved, have eternal life.

Jesus said the following.

Mark 16:16 “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

What does Jesus say we must do to be saved?

Believe in Him and obey His command to be water and Spirit baptized.

What does He say will cause a person to be condemned?

Not believing. The Greek word translated, “he who does not believe” is “apisteo” and by implication means “disobey.”

Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries: “apisteo – to be unbelieving, that is, (transitively) disbelieve, or (by implication) disobey...”

John the Baptist said the following concerning believing and obeying as it pertains to mankind being saved, receiving eternal life, or not.

John 3:36 “And anyone who believes in God’s Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn’t obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God’s angry judgment.” NLT

How do we obtain eternal life?

By believing in God’s Son.

What will keep us from ever experiencing eternal life?

Not obeying God’s Son.

Mr. Benson and Dr. Doddridge give some excellent commentary on the second part of this verse, “Anyone who doesn’t obey the Son,” also translated in some Bible versions as, “he that believeth not the Son,” which will give us great insight into the truths being spoken here.

Joseph Benson’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments: “And he that believeth not the Son – That does not receive his doctrine in faith and love, and with an obedient mind; or, who is disobedient to the Son, as the original expression seems more properly to signify; and continues in unbelief and disobedience, shall not see, or enjoy life – Either spiritual or eternal; but the wrath of God abideth on him – Being unpardoned and unrenewed, he remains under the guilt of all his sins, and is continually exposed to that wrath of God which, if his repentance, faith, and new obedience do not prevent, will quickly sink him into final condemnation and ruin. It is justly observed here, by Dr. Doddridge, that ‘it is of great importance to preserve a difference in the translation between ο πιστευων εις τον υιον, he that believeth on the Son, and ο απειθων τω υιω, he that is disobedient to the Son; because the latter phrase

explains the former, and shows that the faith, to which the promise of life is annexed, is an effectual principle of sincere and reserved obedience; and it is impossible to make one part of Scripture consistent with another, unless this be taken into our idea of saving faith.”

Let's take a closer look at what these men are saying. Mr. Benson starts off looking at the second half of this verse and he uses a Bible translation that says, “And he that believeth not the Son.” I used the New Living Translation which translates the second half of this verse as, “Anyone who doesn't obey the Son.” Of the 38 Bible translations in my Bible study program 12 translate these words, believe not, and 26 translate them, obey not or disobey. Mr. Benson goes on to say that “who is disobedient to the Son” is a more accurate translation.

Dr. Doddridge says, “It is of great importance to preserve a difference in the translation between, he that believeth on the Son, and he that is disobedient to the Son; because the latter phrase explains the former, and shows that the faith, to which the promise of life is annexed, is an effectual principle of sincere and reserved obedience...”

Dr. Doddridge says it is important to preserve the difference in the translation. The translation, “he that believeth on the Son,” in the first part of this verse is translated correctly. But the translation of the second part of the verse translated by some as, “he that believeth not the Son,” is not translated correctly and should be translated, “he that is disobedient to the Son.” The importance of this, he says, is that “he that is disobedient to the Son,” explains the first part of the verse and shows that the faith, to which the promise of life is annexed, attached, connected, to, is an effectual principle of sincere and reserved obedience.

In simple terms he is saying that the faith that leads to everlasting life must include obedience. And he goes on to say, “and it is impossible to make one part of Scripture consistent with another, unless this be taken into our idea of saving faith.”

What does he mean by that?

Our idea of the saving faith in Jesus Christ which leads to eternal life, must include obeying what He commands us to do because if it doesn't then Scripture becomes inconsistent and it will even contradict itself, which Scripture cannot do!

Let's look again at some of the things that Jesus said which are recorded in the gospels and see if we can see how this would be true.

Jesus said:

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

What did Jesus say here about people not perishing and having everlasting life?

Jesus said that whoever believes in Him would not perish but would have eternal, everlasting, life in heaven.

But Jesus also said:

Luke 13:3 "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

What did Jesus say here about people perishing?

Unless people obey His command to repent, they will all perish.

And Jesus said this about those who believe in Him:

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

What did Jesus say here about believers going to heaven, having everlasting life?

The only believers who are going to heaven are the ones who do, obey, the will of His Father in heaven.

And Jesus also told us this:

John 3:5 "Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'"

What did Jesus say here about people entering the kingdom of God, heaven?

They must be born of water and of the Spirit or they cannot go to heaven.

Let's add up what Jesus said in these 4 verses (and Jesus and the writers of the New Testament said a lot more than this which also needs to be added in, but we can't do that here) and see what we come up with.

Jesus said, "whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." He also said, "but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." And He said to believers, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." And also, "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

To sum it up, Jesus said if I believe in Him, I will not perish, but have everlasting life; but if I don't obey Him and repent, I will perish; and if I don't do, obey, the will of the Father I won't go to heaven, have eternal life; and if I am not born again of the Spirit, I won't enter heaven, have everlasting life. We see then that these sayings of Jesus are inconsistent and even contradictory unless believing in Jesus includes obeying Jesus.

If we accept the truth that believing in Jesus must include obeying Him as John 3:36 records, then these verses become consistent and do not contradict one another. They simply tell us that if we obey Jesus and repent, and believe in Him, and we do His and the Father's will, and are born again of the Spirit we will not perish but have eternal, everlasting, life in heaven.

What are we to conclude then from John 3:36 and these last 4 verses of Scripture that we just looked at?

Unless believing in Jesus, saving faith, includes obeying Him as Dr. Doddridge said it does, then also as Dr. Doddridge said, "It is impossible to make one part of Scripture consistent with another."

What then is the solution to keeping Scripture consistent?

We must consider everything that is written and taught in the New Testament – the whole counsel of God’s Word, before we determine what exactly it is teaching. We must add it all together and see that it all fits together and is consistent with itself. We can’t take individual Scriptures and build a doctrine from them. Everything must align with the context of the whole body of inspired Scripture.

If we end up with inconsistencies or contradictions, we must study and pray until it all agrees and makes sense. If after doing that, we still cannot make it all fit together then we must conclude that there are things that we don’t understand and let them be for the time being until we are given further revelation. But we can never twist the Scriptures to get them to fit our chosen belief systems and we cannot add extra Biblical teaching to God’s Word, or throw out, disregard, the teachings of Scripture that don’t agree with our organization’s doctrines.

The Pharisee’s did this with their belief from the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the coming Messiah, that He was going to come as a conquering king who would restore Israel to a place of dominance in the world. Because they held to that belief and ignored or disregarded the Scriptures which talked about the Messiah coming as a Suffering Servant who would die for mankind’s sin, they totally missed who Jesus was and ended up being enemies of God and plotting the death of His Son who was their promised Messiah! If they had taken all that was written in the Old Testament Scriptures and added it together, they might not have made that mistake.

One of my inspirations for writing this book, besides being obedient to God telling me to, was reading Scriptures like Matthew chapters 7 and 25 where multitudes of believers are being sent to hell, because of disobedience and they seemed to have not understood that obedience to the Godhead was necessary to be saved. Part of this of course is because they

did not make the effort to study the Scriptures for themselves. But part of it is due to the emphasis that the modern-day church puts on salvation by faith alone and its neglect in preaching the full gospel message.

Think about this for a minute. God condemned the whole human race because one man disobeyed Him and ate a piece of fruit that God commanded him not to eat. All through the Old Testament Israel was either blessed or judged according to whether or not they were obeying, serving, the Lord or not. When they disobeyed, God brought judgment. When they repented and obeyed, God brought deliverance and blessing.

But now since Jesus came to fix the mess that mankind had made through their sin, disobedience, by making a way for man to be forgiven and to be able to obey the will of God through the new birth, many are teaching, that as long as you believe in Jesus you are going to heaven. Obedience to Him is not necessary to be saved. God has changed His mind about obedience to Him as being necessary for having a relationship with Him or for going to heaven. I think people who believe this are just being willfully ignorant because they desire to continue living in sin, disobedience.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: “Faith is only real when there is obedience, never without it, and faith only becomes faith in the act of obedience.”

I could imagine what it would be like for believers in Jesus, coming to Judgment Day thinking that they were prepared and ready to stand before Him and to be judged by Him, only to hear these words from Jesus’ mouth, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”

Knowing that at that point there is no hope of changing things. Life is over, the dye has been cast. What is, is what will eternally be. The picture of that happening, possibly to me if I don’t live my life in obedience to God’s will, scared the hell out of me, and hopefully it does you too!

That's enough about cumulative revelation for now. I'm sure you see the importance of it and how it works.

Isaiah 28:10 “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.”

Chapter 14

Foundational Truths

God begins His revelation of Himself and His will, plan, and purpose for His creation in the Old Testament of the Bible. We will begin looking at this to lay some foundational truths to learn from and to build on. This will be especially helpful to those who have no or a limited understanding of the Bible.

We'll begin our study of the Bible here in the Book of Genesis because God begins His revelation of Himself to us here.

Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.”

The word “God” in verse 1 is plural, why?

Because God is three persons in one!

1 John 5:7 “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”

How are these three one?

They are all God; They abide in one another, and They are one in purpose and all work together in one accord.

We see the Father speaking in verse 3 of Genesis 1 above, and are told that the Spirit was hovering over the waters in verse 2, but is the Word there at the beginning of creation also?

Yes, we are assured that He was in the Gospel of John.

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Who does the Bible say the Word was?

“The Word was God.”

What was the Word’s part in creation?

“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” The Father made all things through the Word and by the Holy Spirit.

What did the Word become?

The Word became flesh, a human being, the only begotten of the Father, and He dwelt among man!

Who is the only begotten of the Father who came to live, dwell, with mankind?

The Word/the Son/the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we read in Genesis 1:1 God created the heavens and the earth, what does that include?

Short answer, everything, but more specifically – the heavens, constellations, sun, moon, stars, planets, etc. The earth, mankind, the animals, all living things, the air, water and food that sustain life; everything that we see, touch, taste, smell and hear. Also, He created all things invisible: the angels, the demons (although He didn’t create them to be demons), all powers, principalities, rulers and dominions, etc. etc.

Why did He create everything?

He created everything according to His will, plan, and purpose. He created it to do His will and fulfill His plan and purpose for it.

Revelation 4:11 “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

We were created by God’s will to do His will, but how do we know what His will, plan and purpose for us is?

The Father’s general will, plan and purpose for all people is recorded in His Word, the Bible, which was written and is revealed to us by His Spirit. And we learn His specific will for us as individuals as we live, walk, submitted to the Holy Spirit, who is our teacher, guide and enabler.

1 Corinthians 2:10 “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”

Back to Genesis Chapter 1:

Genesis 1:26 “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

What does it mean to be made in God’s image?

We, mankind, are created spirit beings, like God who is spirit, and as such we are eternal and will exist forever. Like our Father, we have intelligence, consciousness, and a will to enable

us to think, reason and make decisions and choices. We were created one with our Father through Jesus and by the indwelling of His Spirit. We were made body, soul, spirit and Spirit. Parents reproduce children in their own image and God, who is our Father, created us in His image to be His loving, trusting, obedient and dependent children.

After God blessed them, what did God command them to do?

He commanded them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. God created the first couple and gave them the responsibility of reproducing and filling the earth. He also told them to have dominion over all the rest of His creation. They had dominion over creatures and beings physically and spiritually more powerful than themselves, as long as they lived under God's dominion, in submission to Him.

Genesis Chapter 1 is an overview of God's creation of the world and in Chapter 2 we are given more details of what transpired. We'll examine some of those details next.

Genesis 2:8 "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

What did God make our physical bodies from?

The earth, the dust of the ground.

What is the significance of God breathing into man?

God breathed the breath of life into man and made him both physically and spiritually alive by breathing physical life and breath into his body, and by imparting man's spirit united with His Spirit into him. We were created for intimacy with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to enjoy union and communion with Them and Them with us, and to be one with them through Their indwelling Spirit. This union of the Godhead with our spirit is what makes us spiritually alive, literally God's children!

Continuing in Genesis 2:

Genesis 2:15 “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;

17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”

What is the next recorded command that God gives to man?

To eat from every tree of the garden freely, but not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God in His wisdom put a restriction in the garden, something that man was forbidden from doing. As we said earlier, the Father created man to be His loving, trusting, obedient and dependent children. That love, trust, obedience and dependency needed a restriction so that it could be exercised and tested.

What does God say will be the consequence of eating from this tree?

In the day man eats from it he will surely die.

What right does God have to command man and tell him what he can and cannot do?

Everything that exists including man, us, came from God. We did not create ourselves, life, by spontaneous generation and then evolve. God created everything and therefore owns it all. Man belongs to Him, so He has the right to govern man. Not only did God give man life, but He gave them His will, plan and purpose for their lives, and everything they needed spiritually and physically to live out that life, including His Spirit, air, water, food, etc.

2 Peter 1:3 “as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...”

It is often said life is a gift from God, is it?

Our life is a gift in the sense that we did not earn it; God gave it to us. But He did not give it to us as a gift so that we could

do whatever we want with it. Our life is given to us by God as a trust, stewardship, to serve His will, plan, and purpose for it.

What does it mean that our life is a trust, a stewardship, and not a gift?

Here is an example of the difference between a gift and a trust. If someone gives us \$100 as a gift, we can spend that money on ourselves to buy anything we want. Once they give it to us as a gift it belongs to us; it is ours to spend however we choose, but if someone gives us \$100 to use to go buy food for them, and we take it and spend it on ourselves, then that is a sin, a crime. We are criminals and should be punished for what we have done.

And so it is. If we take the life that God has entrusted us with to serve His will, plan, and purpose, and we take it and use it to do our own will and to serve our own plans and purposes that is sin. One day we will all be called to give an account of our stewardship of the life that God has entrusted to us, just like this steward in Jesus' parable.

Luke 16:1 "He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods.

2 So he called him and said to him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward."

Like this steward in Jesus' parable who was called by his master to give an account of his stewardship of what was entrusted to him by his master, so we will all stand before our Creator and Redeemer and give an account of our stewardship of the life He has entrusted to us.

Romans 14:10 "...For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God."

12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."

Back to Adam and Eve in the garden.

Genesis 3:1 “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”

2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;

3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

Who does the serpent represent?

The devil.

Who do Adam and Eve represent?

Mankind.

Did Eve know God’s will concerning the fruit from the tree?

Yes. She told the serpent, “God has said, ‘You shall not eat it.’”

Did she know the consequence of disobeying Him?

Yes. She told the serpent that God had said we are not to eat it, “lest we die.”

Genesis 3:4 Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’”

What is the strategy the devil is using to get Eve to disobey God?

He is slandering God’s character. In verse 4 he tells Eve that God lied to her. In verse 5 he tells her why God lied, because when you eat of the fruit you will be like God, knowing good and evil. In other words, God lied to you because He is trying to keep you from becoming like Him. He wants to keep

you in subjection to, and dependent on, Him. He doesn't really love you and care about you, He just wants to control you.

The temptation that when she eats of the tree she will be like God, knowing good and evil, appealed to her desire for autonomy, independence, from God, which is, simply stated, man's desire to be his own god. Once Eve chose to believe the devil's lies about God and saw the opportunity to be free from His control, what followed was inevitable.

Genesis 3:6 "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

Did Adam and Eve die on that day when they disobeyed God and ate from the tree He forbade them to eat from as God had told them they would?

They did not die physically, they lived hundreds of years longer, but they died spiritually that day. The Godhead separated Themselves from within them. They were no longer living in union, oneness, with the Godhead. They were physically alive, but headed for the grave, and spiritually dead in their sins, separated from God.

What do we see at work in this verse tempting Eve to eat of the tree?

We see the lust of the flesh. The tree was good for food. The lust of the eyes – it was pleasant to the eyes. The pride of life – it was desirable to make one wise. These are what is in the world and are what the devil uses to tempt all of mankind. He tempts our flesh nature with what is in the world; that's all he has to use. These are the same things he tempted Jesus, the second Adam, with in the wilderness temptation.

1 John 2:16 "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

The main thing he used though, was the pride of life, "you will be like God, knowing good and evil." He understood man's

pride and desire to be his own god because it was the same pride and desire that resided in him when he was in heaven with God.

Isaiah 14:12 “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!

13 For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’”

Keep this truth in mind. Man disobeyed God and sinned because he wanted to be like God, or to be the god of his own life. He wanted to do his own will and not God’s. He wanted independence from God. He wanted to make his own decisions about how he would live his life based upon what he felt was right or wrong, good or evil. He wanted to do his own will and fulfill his own plans and purposes for his life according to his knowledge and understanding, and what he felt was best for him. And every descendant of that first couple which is every person born into this world is born spiritually dead, separated from God, and lives their life that same way: self-willed, independent of God and His will, plan and purpose for them, as God has told us clearly through the prophet Isaiah.

Let’s consider closely what Isaiah says.

Isaiah 53:6 “All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

In this verse, who are the “all we” the “every one” and the “us all”?

All human beings, all of mankind, everyone who has ever lived or will ever live, including you and me.

Who is the LORD?

God the Father.

Who is the Him?

Jesus His Son.

What does iniquity mean?

Sin.

What did the LORD, the Father, do with our iniquity, sin?

The LORD has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity (sin) of us all.

What was our iniquity, sin, that was laid on Jesus?

“...We have turned, every one, to his own way;” This is the sin that every human being ever born is guilty of. We all, from the time we are born, have gone our own way. We live our lives as our own god, doing our own will, serving ourselves, and not our Creator. We do not seek God for His will, plan, or purpose for our lives. We live however we think is best for us. And whether we live a good life or a bad life by society’s standards, in God’s eyes we are all sinners living in self-will and rebellion, separated from Him – spiritually dead!

But the Father knew exactly what man was going to do before He created him and had a plan from before the foundations of the world of how He was going to redeem man and bring him back into relationship, union, oneness, with Himself. He would lay the iniquity, sin, of us all on His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, so that through faith in Him we could be cleansed from all our sin, and be made ready to be made spiritually alive, one with the Godhead, again, through receiving the Holy Spirit into our hearts by faith.

Let’s go back to the garden and look at some other truths that are revealed as we see how God deals with Adam, Eve, and the serpent after the couple had sinned. As God is passing out judgment, punishment, to the trio for their sin, He gives Adam and Eve a promise so that they might have hope for themselves and their future generations, and He tells the devil what awaits him in his future.

Genesis 3:14 “So the LORD God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, You are cursed more than

all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.

15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”

Who is the Seed of the woman who is going to bruise the serpent’s head, take away his dominion?

The Seed of the woman, the He who shall bruise the serpent’s head, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

Luke 1:34 “Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”

35 And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”

Jesus was going to be born the Seed of the woman, born of a virgin, without a human father, God being His Father. He was going to rescue man from the dominion of the devil, take away his dominion, bruise his head. And he, the devil, was going to bruise His heel, orchestrate Jesus’ murder, unwittingly helping Jesus accomplish His purpose of dying for man’s sin. Then as the Lamb of God sacrificed, He could cleanse those who believed on Him of their sins, preparing them to receive the Holy Spirit into their hearts. Who, when received, would restore to them spiritual life, eternal life, union with the Godhead, which was lost when man chose to disobey God and sin in the Garden.

Titus 3:4 “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,”

Finishing up our lessons from the garden:

Genesis 3:7 “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

21 Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.”

Why did Adam and Eve make coverings for themselves?

Because after they disobeyed God, sinned, the shame, guilt and conviction of what they had done revealed their nakedness. They were uncovered, separated from God, spiritually dead in their sin, and in desperation, they made coverings of fig leaves.

After they made and put on their fig leaf coverings, why did they still feel that they needed to hide from the Presence of the Lord God?

Fig leaves could not take away or even cover their sin and had no power to restore them to a right relationship with the Father. So, when He came to them, they hid among the trees of the garden from His Presence. For as the Bible teaches, “without shedding of blood is no remission,” forgiveness, of sins.

What does verse 21 say that God did for the couple?

God shed the innocent blood of some of His creation to make coverings for them of animal skins. God in His mercy and grace provided a sacrifice, atonement, covering, for their sin, teaching them that the way into His Presence was by blood. He was also giving them a picture of what He was going to do in the future in providing His Son Jesus as the sacrifice, atonement, for the sins of all humanity.

We’ll continue with the second generation. Adam and Eve have given birth to two sons who have grown to be men, and

we pick up their story with them coming to bring an offering to the Lord to worship Him.

Genesis 4:3 “And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.

4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,
5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.”

What were the offerings that Cain and Able brought to the Lord?

Able obeyed God and came the way He had established and showed his parents in the garden, through the shedding of blood, “Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat.” But Cain did not, instead he came the way he thought was best, “Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.”

What was God’s response to their offerings?

“The LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering.”

What was Cain’s response to God rejecting his offering?

“Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.”

Continuing the narrative.

6 “So the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?

7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”

What did the Lord do next?

God in His goodness, love and mercy speaks to Cain about his sin and tries to convince him to repent and do what’s right and bring the proper offering. God does not change His standards to accommodate us. Today He still demands that when we come to Him, we come to Him His way, through the

blood of His Son; the sacrifice that He supplied for us. We either come to God His way, or we don't come to Him at all!

John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

Continuing with Cain.

8 “Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.”

What was Cain's response to God's counseling?

He did not obey what the Lord had instructed him to do and instead killed his brother Able. It is shocking how quickly we came from one generation whose sin was to eat a piece of fruit that they were told not to eat, to the next generation where one son murders his brother. But that is the nature of sin; it always escalates. We see that truth being lived out in the history of man as we look at what is happening with man just 9 generations removed from Cain.

Genesis 6:5 “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

What was man's condition concerning sin in Noah's day?

“The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

Continuing.

7 So the LORD said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.”

8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

What is God's response to man's wickedness, sin?

"I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth,"

There is a beautiful contrast in these verses. What is it?

God in His righteousness and holiness must bring judgment on man's sin, so He determines to destroy man from the face of the earth, but because of His great love and mercy toward man, He gives grace to Noah.

God has Noah build an ark as a way for man to escape His coming judgment. Noah preached for 120 years calling his generation to repentance, but when judgment comes and the flood begins, we find that only 8 persons out of the whole world have believed God's messenger and heeded His warning and repented and have gone into the ark.

Genesis 7:13 "In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;"

God is going to judge the world again at the end of the age, this time by fire. He has sent Jesus, to be a type of the ark, to make a way for us to escape that coming judgment. And Jesus has sent His church into the world to preach the gospel and warn people to repent of their sins and turn to Him. When Jesus comes to judge the world will you be among the few who are safe in Him, our modern-day ark, or will you suffer God's judgment as the whole world, with the exception of Noah's family, did?

Matthew 7:13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." – Jesus

We'll next look briefly at God's dealings with Abram whose name God later changes to Abraham. Abraham's descendants

will become the nation of Israel, the people through whom the Lord Jesus Christ will come into the world.

Genesis 12:1 “Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you.

2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’

4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him...”

From this little bit of information, why do you think God chose to call Abram to be the one through whom He would bless all the families of the earth?

Because when God spoke to Abram, he trusted God and obeyed Him. He left his country to go to a land that God would show him.

Never underestimate the value God puts on those who will love, trust and obey Him. Remember He created man to be His loving, trusting, obedient and dependent children. He chose Abraham because he willingly chose to love, trust, obey and depend on Him, and He is still choosing those today who are willing to do the same.

What do you think God is talking about when He tells Abram that all the families of the earth will be blessed in you?

Jesus will come through the lineage of Abraham and indeed in Him all the families of the earth are blessed for He will cleanse people from their sins by His blood and reunite them with the Godhead through Holy Spirit baptism.

Galatians 3:13 “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”),

14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the

Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

What do these verses say the blessing of Abraham is?

It is redemption from the curse of the law, the forgiveness of our sins through Jesus’ death on the cross, the tree, so that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith. This was God’s plan to undo what man had lost in the garden through sin, our union with the Godhead, spiritual life, and Jesus was the one who was going to bring it to pass.

John the Baptist declared what Jesus’ two-part mission was.

John 1:29 “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

32 “And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.

33 I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”

According to these Scriptures, what are the two things that Jesus came to do?

Be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and to baptize people with the Holy Spirit. He takes away our sins when we believe in Him and confess Him as our Lord and Savior, and He baptizes us with the Holy Spirit when we choose to receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts.

Let me emphasize this point a little more and hopefully make it clear. God, from the time man sinned in the garden and throughout the thousands of years between then and Jesus’ incarnation, tells man that He is going to undo what man lost when he sinned in Eden. He is going to cleanse them from their sins and reunite man with the Godhead through Spirit baptism. He is going to make them spiritually alive again!

Here is an Old Testament prophecy concerning these promises given by the prophet Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 36:25 “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”

Do we see the two parts of Jesus’ mission mentioned here?

Yes. Jesus came as the Lamb of God to cleanse us of our filthiness, take away our sin, by paying the price of our sin with His death on the cross, so that God could put His Spirit within man again through Spirit baptism.

Here is one other Old Testament prophecy given by the prophet Joel concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Joel 2:28 “And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.

29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”

Who is God going to pour out His Spirit on?

“I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.” God is going to pour out His Spirit on all people, so that those who are His followers can receive Him, the Spirit, into their hearts.

Here is Jesus speaking to His followers after He had hung on a tree and become a curse for them, was crucified and died on the cross, and then rose again from the dead.

Acts 1:4 “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, ‘you have heard from Me;

5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

And here is Peter on the Day of Pentecost, after having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, being born again of the Spirit, made spiritually alive, speaking to the people and explaining to them what had happened.

Acts 2:14 “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

18 and on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.”

We will end our study of foundational truths from the Old Testament here. We have now come full circle, from God creating man and putting His Spirit within him, to man sinning and the Spirit departing out of him, to God’s promise of putting His Spirit back into man again. And finally, to the fulfillment of that promise through Jesus’ death for the sins of mankind, and then Him sending His Spirit back into man through the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost 2000 years ago.

We will next look at Jesus’ two-part mission in more detail as we continue our study of the Scriptures beginning now in the New Testament.

Chapter 15

Jesus' Two-Part Mission

John 1:29 “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”

32 “And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.

33 I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”

Let’s look at the first part of Jesus’ mission to earth. Jesus came as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world by paying the penalty for man’s sin. The consequence of the first couples’ sin was that they died both spiritually and eventually physically, and all of their descendants were born spiritually dead, and they all died physically. Therefore, if Jesus was going to be able to pay the penalty for man’s sin, He would have to die both spiritually and physically.

So, He could not be born of human parents, or He would have been born spiritually dead, but He had to be a human, a person, so He could die physically to pay that part of man’s debt for sin. God’s answer for this was that the Word, the second person of the Godhead, would humble Himself, lay aside His glory, and become a man, the second Adam. So, when the Holy Spirit entered into that human egg in Mary’s womb to conceive the Seed of the woman, He deposited the Word’s spirit united with Himself, and the only begotten Son of God was conceived. Emmanuel, God with us!

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father..."

Jewish New Testament Commentary: "The Word became a human being, literally, "the Word became flesh." It is not that a man named Yeshua, who grew up in Natzeret, one day decided he was God. Rather, the Word, who "was with God" and "was God," gave up the "glory [he] had with [the Father] before the world existed" (Joh_17:5) and "emptied himself, in that he took the form of a slave by becoming like human beings are" (Php_2:7). In other words, God sent "his own Son as a human being with a nature like our own sinful one" (Rom_8:3), so that "in every respect he was tempted just as we are, the only difference being that he did not sin" (Heb_4:15). It is God the Word, then, who decided to become man, not the other way round."

The Word did not take on the form of a man as He had a few times before as is recorded in the Old Testament, but the Word entered into an egg in Mary's womb and was born the Son of Man/the Son of God. Spiritually alive because He was one with the Father through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But a man because He was born of a woman, one who was totally dependent upon the Spirit to be able to be and do what God had sent Him to do. The second person of the Godhead, the Word, became a man, the Godman, Jesus, the Son of Man, the only begotten Son of God, the second Adam.

He then being 100% God and 100% man, physically and spiritually alive, allowed Himself to be hung on a cross to die both spiritually and physically, to pay the full price for our, man's, sin.

Matthew 27:35 "Then they crucified Him..."

45 Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

46 "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'"

What is happening here?

Jesus is hanging on the cross and the Father has laid upon Him the sins of the whole world, He has literally been made to be sin for us, and because He has, the Father, and the Spirit separate Themselves from Him! For the first time in eternity, the Word/the Son, is separated from the Father and the Spirit! Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, the Word made flesh, who was born not only physically alive but spiritually alive, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, dies spiritually, and when He does, He cries out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Jesus took the sins of the whole world upon Himself in obedience to the Father, so why did the Father forsake Him?

Because the wages of sin is death, spiritual death, separation from God, so when the Father laid mankind's sin upon His only begotten Son and He became sin for us, the Father and the Spirit had to separate Themselves from Him. Just as the Godhead, Father, Word/Son, and Spirit separated Themselves from Adam and Eve when they sinned. God is no respecter of persons.

2 Corinthians 5:21 “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

What did Jesus being made to be sin for us make available to us, mankind?

“The righteousness of God in Him.”

Shortly after the Father and the Spirit separate Themselves from the Son/the Word, He dies physically when His spirit departs from His body.

Matthew 27:50 “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.”

What did Jesus yield up?

His spirit. The Holy Spirit had already left Him and He was spiritually dead. But now His spirit leaves His body, and He dies physically.

After He died physically Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb where it remained for 3 days. Then the Father sent His Spirit along with the Word's/the Son's/Jesus' spirit back into Jesus body and He rose from the dead being made both spiritually and physically alive; never to die again!

Acts 2:22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know –

23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”

Whose predetermined purpose was accomplished by Jesus' crucifixion and death?

God, the Father's!

Who raised up Jesus and made Him spiritually and physically alive again?

The Father, by His Spirit!

Why was it impossible for death to hold Him?

Because He had never sinned, He always and only did the will of the Father, even when He became sin for us on the cross. It was in obedience to the Father! And in doing so, and dying spiritually and physically, He paid the price of our sins, Jesus, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,” completed the first part of the mission the Father had sent Him into the world to accomplish. This now allows the Father to legally, righteously, justly, and freely forgive, make righteous, justify, those who put their faith, trust, in Jesus as their Savior.

Romans 3:24 “being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

What happens to us when we trust, believe, put our faith in, Jesus as our Savior?

The Father justly, legally, righteously, justifies us on the basis of Jesus atoning death on the cross and gives us standing as His sons, children.

Galatians 3:26 “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”

What does that mean that we are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus?

When we trusted Jesus as our Savior, we were cleansed from all of our sins, and God the Father legally adopted us as His children. God was able to legally and justly forgive our sins and adopt us into His family as His children because Jesus satisfied the righteous requirement of the law with His death, spiritual and physical, on the cross.

Paul says it this way in chapter 4 of his letter to the Galatians.

Galatians 4:4 “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

This Scripture states that God sent forth His Son to redeem us, what does redeem mean?

Thayer's Greek Definitions: “By payment of a price to recover from the power of another, to ransom, buy off.”

Jesus came to pay the ransom for, buy off, our debt of sin and deliver us from the power of God's law which demanded

death to the sinner. God must do things legally, righteously, justly. He cannot just forget about our sins because He loves us. The price for our sins had to be paid. Which is why the Father sent the Word/the Son into the world to be the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

What were those who put their faith in Jesus as their Savior and Redeemer able to receive?

“The adoption as sons.” Adoption like redeem is a legal term so those who put their faith in Jesus become the Father’s legally adopted children. And that is what you are if you have believed on Jesus as your Savior.

Was the Father satisfied with us just having legal status as sons?

No! That’s why He sent Jesus on a two-part mission.

John 1:33 “I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”

Let’s look at the second part of Jesus’ mission which was to baptize man with, by, the Holy Spirit.

Picking back up in Galatians chapter 4.

Galatians 4:4 “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

6 “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’”

What does the term, “because you are sons” refer to?

Because we have been adopted, given legal standing as God’s sons, children, through our faith in Jesus, God is able to give us something else.

What does our legal standing as sons make us eligible to receive from the Father?

The Spirit of His Son into our hearts, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is the second part of what Jesus had come into the world to do. When the Spirit impregnates, enters into, unites with our spirit in our hearts is when we are born again of the Spirit; brought back into oneness, union, with the Godhead, made spiritually alive! It's when we become not just legally adopted children of God, but literal children of God.

How do we know when we receive the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, are baptized by the Holy Spirit?

Paul told us in Galatians 4:6 which we just read, that when we receive the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, we will be “crying out, ‘Abba, Father.’”

Robertson explains in his dictionary what this word “crying” means.

Robertsons Word Pictures: “Crying – An old, though rare in present as here, onomatopoeic word to croak as a raven, any inarticulate cry like “the unuttered groanings” of Romans 8:26 which God understands. This cry comes from the Spirit of Christ in our hearts.”

From what we see in other instances in the New Testament where people received the Holy Spirit, were baptized by the Holy Spirit, were born again of the Spirit, they all spoke in tongues, which could certainly be described as an inarticulate cry because no one understands what we are saying when we speak in tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:2 “For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.”

Do we receive the Holy Spirit and tongues spontaneously and automatically when we believe in Jesus as our Savior?

From what is recorded in the Bible we know that the Gentiles who Peter preached to at Cornelius' house did.

Acts 10:44 “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God...”

What was the Gentiles’ experience?

As Peter was preaching to them about Jesus, they repented in their hearts, believed on Him as their Savior, and without them asking God for the Holy Spirit, or anyone laying hands on them, and before they were baptized in water, God baptized them with the Holy Spirit.

How did those of the circumcision know that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit when they believed on Jesus?

“They heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.”

Is people being baptized by the Spirit spontaneously and automatically when they believe in Jesus the normal way the Bible records that believers receive the Holy Spirit?

No, this is the only instance in the New Testament where people believed on Jesus and received the Holy Spirit spontaneously and automatically, but we know that they did because they spoke in tongues.

Why did God make an exception for the Gentiles and baptize them with the Spirit automatically?

The Bible doesn’t tell us, but my guess is that Peter would not have told them about Holy Spirit baptism because he would not have believed that it was for them. Remember, at this time the church leaders did not believe Gentiles could repent, believe in Jesus, or have their sins forgiven, let alone receive and be born again of the Spirit.

So, when God baptized these Gentiles with the Holy Spirit those Jewish believers who were with Peter were astonished. The fact is Peter would not have even talked to these Gentiles

about Jesus if God hadn't showed him a vision and if the Holy Spirit had not commanded him to go to them.

I believe God looked at these Gentile believers' hearts and saw that they would receive the Holy Spirit if someone would have told them about Him, so God just went ahead and baptized them with the Holy Spirit.

Since He did, when Peter got back to Jerusalem and was confronted by those of the circumcision about his dealings with Gentiles, Peter had an answer for them.

Acts 11:2 "And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him,

3 saying, 'You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!'"

What does Peter do when these Jewish believers contend with him?

Peter explained to them the whole scenario. The vision of the sheet coming down out of heaven full of all types of animals. Jesus telling him to kill and eat. His refusing the Lord's command arguing that he had never eaten anything common or unclean. The Lord saying, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." About the Gentiles coming to the house right as this was happening and the Spirit telling him to go with them.

As he continued his explanation, he came to this part:

Acts 11:15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.

16 Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

17 If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

18 "When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.'"

I believe that God baptized these Gentiles with the Holy Spirit in spite of Peter's ignorance of God's plan for the Gentiles because this was what He used to show the Jewish church that the gospel was not for Jews only, but for all the peoples of the world!

What then is the usual way recorded in Scripture that people receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues?

The precedent set by the 120 disciples of Jesus who first received the baptism of the Holy Spirit was: they repented of their sin, were baptized in water, believed on Jesus and confessed Him as their Lord, and then obeyed His command to wait in Jerusalem until they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:4 "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, 'you have heard from Me;

5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

And so, what did they do?

"They returned to Jerusalem" and "when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying" and "these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" for 10 days. Then on the Day of Pentecost this happened:

Acts 2:1 "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

What does it mean that they were all with, in, one accord in one place?

The previous Scriptures tell us they were all in Jerusalem in the upper room with one accord, in agreement, in prayer, most likely praying for what Jesus had told them to wait for, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

What happened when they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

They “began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” As the Spirit led them and enabled them to.

How many of the 120 disciples were baptized by the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues?

All of them.

Why did they begin to speak in tongues when they received the Holy Spirit?

When God’s Spirit comes into our hearts and unites with our spirit, our spirit will cry out Abba, Father, and begin to worship, praise and thank God in tongues as it is enabled to by the Holy Spirit. The reason for that is, at the moment when we are born again by God’s Spirit, when God literally sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts and He unites with our spirit, our spirit can’t help but respond in praise and thanksgiving to Him. We being born again of the Spirit, being made spiritually alive, being made one with the Godhead, is the greatest thing that can happen to us in this life.

We becoming a new creation through Spirit regeneration is what will enable us to become what God created us and redeemed us to be, His children, and will also enable us to live the life He redeemed us to live, so it is vital for us to know for certain that we have received the Spirit into our hearts. Our speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives us utterance gives us that assurance and is another reason why we speak in tongues when we are baptized by the Holy Spirit.

Is repenting of our sin, believing on Jesus as our Lord and Savior and obeying Him in water baptism and then in Spirit baptism the usual way we receive the Holy Spirit?

That was the way Jesus' first disciples did, as we just saw, and that is what they taught others that they needed to do. This is what Peter told those who listened to his message on that Pentecost morning when they asked him what they needed to do.

Acts 2:37 "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

38 Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

When were they going to be eligible to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?

After they had repented, believed on Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and obeyed Him in water baptism. Peter did not teach them that they received the Holy Spirit and were born again when they believed on Jesus, he said they would receive the Holy Spirit after they obeyed Jesus and were baptized in water.

Why do I make that point?

To show that receiving the Holy Spirit and being born again automatically and spontaneously when a person believes on Jesus is not what the Bible teaches even though much of Christianity teaches that today.

Peter taught the above, but what did Paul teach and preach?

Let's look at him in action.

Acts 19:1 "And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples

2 he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

From Paul’s question, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” do you think Paul believed that we receive the Holy Spirit automatically when we believe in Jesus?

If he did, he wouldn’t have asked that question because if we receive the Holy Spirit and are born again automatically when we believe in Jesus then if they were believers as Paul thought they were, they would have had to have received the Holy Spirit.

What did Paul mean by that question then?

He was asking them if when someone preached Jesus to you and you believed on Him as your Lord and Savior, did they also tell you that you needed to obey Him and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and did you obey and receive the Spirit?

What was their answer to Paul’s question, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

“We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

Unfortunately, many believers in the church today would have to answer that question the same way.

What does Paul ask them next?

3 And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”

What is their answer to Paul’s question?

“Into John’s baptism.” They had been baptized in water when they had responded to John the Baptist’s call for people to repent.

After Paul learned that these men had repented and been baptized according to John the Baptist’s teaching, what did he tell them they needed to do?

4 Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

When the men heard this, what did they do?

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

They believed on Jesus as their Savior, confessed Him as their Lord and obeyed Him in water baptism.

After they were baptized in water, what happened?

Paul explained to them that they also needed to obey Jesus and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When they agreed to receive Him, Paul laid hands on them, prayed for them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them, they received the Holy Spirit.

6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”

How do we know they received the Spirit?

The Scriptures tell us, “they spoke with tongues and prophesied” which is how we know for certain that they received the Holy Spirit.

Did they receive the Holy Spirit into their hearts and speak in tongues when they believed in Jesus?

No, after they believed in Jesus as their Savior and Lord, they obeyed Him and were baptized in water. Then when Paul told them about Jesus’ command for His followers to receive the Holy Spirit through Spirit baptism, they obeyed Him and prayed and received the Holy Spirit, were born again of the Spirit, and spoke in tongues.

After that if someone were to have asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed, they would have been able to answer them with an emphatic and confident, Yes! Can you?

Are there any other examples in the Bible that show clearly that we do not receive the Holy Spirit automatically when we believe in Jesus?

There are a couple more. Paul, when he became a believer on the Damascus Road when Jesus confronted him, did not receive the Holy Spirit until 3 days later when Ananias came and prayed for him to receive his sight and told him about the Holy Spirit. I am not going to write that out, but it is recorded in Acts chapter 9.

Also, the Samaritan believers did not receive the Holy Spirit until some number of days (we are not told the exact number) after they believed on Jesus and were baptized in water.

We will look at their experience next.

Acts 8:14 “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them,

15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

What was the Samaritan believers' experience?

They heard the Word of God concerning Jesus preached by Philip and received it. They believed on Jesus as their Savior and confessed Him as their Lord and then obeyed His command to be baptized in water, but they did not receive the Holy Spirit.

This may be because Philip did not tell them about receiving the Spirit (it is not recorded that he did) possibly because he did not believe anyone, but Jews could receive Him. (Later in this chapter when Philip is ministering to an Ethiopian eunuch it is not recorded that he speaks to him about Spirit baptism either).

When did they receive the Holy Spirit?

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the Samaritans had received the Word of God but not the Holy Spirit, they sent down Peter and John to them who when they came told them of their need to be baptized by the Holy Spirit and when they laid hands on them, they received the Spirit.

What then is the usual way recorded in Scripture that people receive the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues?

They repent of their sin, believe in Jesus as their Savior and confess Him as their Lord, obey Him in water baptism, and then obey Him and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and when they receive Him, the Spirit, into their hearts they speak in tongues. We have just looked at 3 groups of people and saw that they all followed these steps in receiving the Holy Spirit. We also saw that these were the steps that Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, taught those who asked him what they needed to do.

There are no other recordings in the New Testament where it gives details of people's salvation experience except the conversion of the Gentiles which we looked at, and Paul's conversion which I mentioned, and we are told he did not receive the Holy Spirit at the time he believed but 3 days later. So, of the 5 accounts from the Book of Acts that we have of people receiving the Spirit only one group, the Gentiles, received the Spirit automatically at the time they believed on Jesus, and this was confirmed by their speaking in tongues.

I have also read of individuals during the Jesus People Movement receiving the Holy Spirit automatically when they prayed to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and this was also confirmed by them speaking in tongues. Therefore, it is not impossible for someone to receive the Holy Spirit automatically when they believe in Jesus (God can do whatever he chooses to do), but you will know when this happens because the person will speak in tongues.

The usual way recorded in Scripture, and experienced by those today, is we receive the Spirit as a separate experience

after we have repented, believed on Jesus and obeyed Him in water baptism, and then prayed and asked the Father to baptize us with the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 16

The Full Gospel Message

As we saw in the last chapter, Jesus came on a two-part mission from God to be the Lamb of God who would die for the sins of all mankind and to baptize those who believed on Him as their Savior with the Holy Spirit. We will now see how these two things fit into the broader picture of what Jesus came to Earth to accomplish.

God has given us in the New Testament 4 gospels, written by 4 different men about the same Jesus, to show different aspects of His character, His ministry, who He was, why He came to Earth, and what He said and did. Therefore, to get a more complete picture of who Jesus is, what He said, what He did, and what He commanded us to do, we must consider all that is written in all 4 gospels and add it all together before we come to our conclusions (cumulative revelation). This is what we will do to discover what the full gospel message is that Jesus sent His disciples into the world to preach.

Here are Jesus' instructions to His disciples as He is sending them out to preach His gospel to all the world. These are Jesus' own words spoken as part of the Great Commission that He gave to His church, as they are recorded by the four gospel writers.

We'll start with what Luke recorded Jesus as saying:

Luke 24:46 "Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,

47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

What did Luke record Jesus commanding the disciples to preach to all nations?

“Repentance and remission of sins.” Repentance, man’s first step, decision, action, that he needs to take to be prepared to take the next step of believing on Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Mark recorded Jesus saying this:

Mark 16:15 “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.’”

What did Mark record Jesus commanding the disciples to preach to every creature?

The gospel.

What was the purpose of preaching the gospel to every creature?

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Believing on Jesus as one’s Savior and confessing Him as their Lord is the second step, decision, action, man needs to take to be prepared to take the next step of obeying Him.

Matthew recorded Jesus saying this:

Matthew 28:18 “Then Jesus came up and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” NET

What did Matthew record Jesus commanding the disciples to do?

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

Jesus commands His disciples to teach their disciples, those who have repented and trusted Jesus as their Savior and Lord under their preaching, to obey everything that He commanded them to do. Beginning with His command to be baptized in water. This is the third step, decision, action, that man needs to take to be prepared to take the next step of receiving the Holy Spirit through Spirit baptism.

And lastly, John recorded Jesus commanding the disciples to do this:

John 20:21 “So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. Just as the Father has sent me, I also send you.’”

22 And after he said this, he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

What did John record Jesus commanding the disciples to do?

“Just as the Father has sent me, I also send you.” And to, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” He sent them into the world to preach the gospel as the Father had sent Him into the world to preach the gospel and He commanded them to “receive the Holy Spirit.” Receiving the Holy Spirit through the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the fourth and final step, decision, action that man needs to take.

Upon being baptized by the Spirit, receiving the Spirit into his heart, man is born again of the Spirit. He is now spiritually alive and able to be led by and empowered by the Spirit to walk in the Spirit, live in the Spirit, so he can fulfill the Father’s will, plan and purpose for his life.

Jesus gave these instructions, commands, to His disciples to go into the world and preach the gospel to all people after He rose from the dead. This message of repentance toward God, believing in Him, obeying all His commands beginning

with being baptized in water and receiving the Holy Spirit were given during His 40 days on earth after His resurrection. The last day He was with His disciples on Earth, just before He ascended back into heaven, He commanded them once again to receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:4 “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, ‘you have heard from Me;

5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Why did Jesus tell His disciple to wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit before they began to preach this full gospel message?

They needed the Presence, the life, of the Holy Spirit in them when they called men to repentance so He, the Spirit, could convict them of sin, righteousness, and judgment. They needed the power of the Spirit in them to enable them to be able to obey Jesus’ commands. They needed the Holy Spirit to give those hearing their preaching revelation of Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah, so they could believe in Him. They needed the fruit and gifts of the Spirit to be at work in and through them to confirm that their gospel message was indeed the Word of God.

They needed to be baptized by the Spirit, to be born again of the Spirit, to be made spiritually alive themselves, so that they could impart spiritual life into those who responded to their message. You have to be spiritually alive, born again of the Spirit, if you are going to be able to impart, transfer, life into others. Life begets life and spiritual life begets spiritual life in others.

If all you have are beliefs, religion, then all you can impart into others are your religious beliefs. And that’s what we see happening all around the world today among all the different religions of the world, including, unfortunately, in much of the Christian church.

From what the 4 gospel writers recorded, what was the full gospel message that Jesus sent the disciples into the world to preach?

People needed to repent. They needed to believe in Him for the forgiveness of their sins and confess Him as their Lord. They needed to obey everything that He commanded His disciples to do beginning with water baptism, and that they needed to receive the Holy Spirit. This was the full gospel message that Jesus sent the disciples into the world to preach, and it was the message that they preached.

Starting with Peter on the Day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

38 “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

What steps does Peter command those who were hearing his message to take?

First of all, he told them to repent. Next, to obey Jesus and be baptized in water. (Telling them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ shows that they had believed on Him.) Next, he told them to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Paul also taught these steps and preached this same full gospel message:

Acts 19:1 “And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples

2 he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

3 And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”

4 Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”

We see that the early disciples took all of Jesus’ instructions and added them together and preached the full gospel message to their generation.

Now when I speak of adding together revelation, I am not talking about adding extra-biblical teachings to the Scriptures like some cults do. When we do that, we are in danger of God’s wrath as the Bible warns, but neither can we leave out the truths revealed in the Bible that do not fit with our organizations’ particular persuasion. The Bible also warns that those who take away from the Word of God will face God’s judgment as well.

Revelation 22:18 “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

John spoke these words about the Book of Revelation in particular, but it applies to the entire Bible as well.

We need to do what those testifying in a courtroom swear on a Bible to do: Tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help us God. If we do that, when we get to the

end of our days, we will be able to say what Paul said as he was approaching the end of his ministry and life.

Acts 20:27 “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”

If my saying that there are different steps involved in salvation sounds like strange doctrine to you and like it would be a long-drawn-out process, relax, it really is Biblical, and it does not need to be a long-drawn-out process.

In the Book of Acts, if a person was willing to respond to a message of repentance and they repented from their sin and turned to God, they were told to believe in Jesus’ death and resurrection for the forgiveness of their sins, and to confess Him as Lord. They were then told to obey their newfound Lord by being baptized in water, and by receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

So, the time from repentance to regeneration by the Spirit was maybe a couple of hours at the most, depending I guess on how close they were to water for baptism. In the case of the Gentiles at Cornelius’ house in Acts Chapter 10, they repented, believed on Jesus, and were baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues almost simultaneously, and then after this were baptized in water.

Here are some other examples of how quickly this process can and should happen.

This is what happened when Peter preached to the crowd on the day of Pentecost and taught them what they needed to do:

Acts 2:41 “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”

How many souls repented, believed on Jesus, and were baptized in water and the Holy Spirit?

3000 people.

How long did it take?

It all happened on that same day that they heard the gospel preached.

This shows the importance of people repenting first. If they repent of their sin and make God, their God, and turn from doing their will to doing His. Then when you tell them that God commands them to believe in Jesus and obey Him, Jesus, they do, and will follow that up with water and Spirit baptism as Jesus commands them to do.

1 John 3:23 “And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.”

What does John say that God commands us to do?

Believe on His Son Jesus Christ and obey Jesus’ command to love one another.

Paul says it this way:

Romans 10:9 “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

When we confess Jesus as our Lord, what are we doing?

We are saying we are no longer going to be the lord of our lives, but we are making Jesus our Lord, and we are going to begin to obey Him. In other words, we are repenting. And when people repent and believe in Jesus as their Savior and make Him their Lord, they will obey Him in water baptism, and Spirit baptism. And again, that can all transpire in one day.

When Paul preached to the disciples that he met when he came to Ephesus, who had already repented of their sin under the preaching of John the Baptist, they believed in Jesus as soon as Paul preached Him to them. They also obeyed His command to be baptized in water, and after that when Paul

told them about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and laid his hands on them, they received the Holy Spirit and were born again. This account is written as though these men took one step after another and it would have transpired in a very short period of time.

When Jesus confronted Paul on his way to Damascus, he confessed Him as Lord, repented, and believed in Him right then.

Acts 9:5 “And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”

6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’”

What shows us that Saul/Paul really repented and made Jesus his Lord?

He asked, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” When Jesus told him to go into the city, that’s what he did. And when Jesus sent Ananias to tell Paul what He wanted him to do, he obeyed Him and did it.

Acts 9:17 “And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.”

What did the Lord want Saul to do?

He wanted him to receive his sight back, be healed, and receive Spirit, and water baptism. This took 3 days because the Lord chose to involve a disciple in preaching the full gospel to him, but the Lord could have told him to be baptized in water

and to receive the Holy Spirit when He confronted him on the road, and it could have all transpired in one day.

Also, when the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people in Samaria had repented of their sin, believed on the Lord Jesus, and obeyed Him in water baptism, but had not received the Holy Spirit, they sent Peter and John there to get them baptized in the Spirit.

Acts 8:14 “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them,

15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

This full gospel message of repent, believe, obey, and receive was what was taught and practiced all through the Book of Acts, and it was meant to be obeyed one step after another, and was not meant to be a long-drawn-out process.

I believe we, the church of Jesus Christ, need to get back to preaching this full gospel message that Jesus gave His disciples to take into all the world, the one that they preached, taught and practiced all through the Book of Acts. But we, like them, need to first become full gospel saints. We need to repent of our sin, make Christ our Lord and Savior, obey everything He commanded them, us, to do, beginning with being baptized in water, and then being baptized by the Spirit, being born again of the Spirit, being made spiritually alive. Then, we will not only have the gospel to give to the world but spiritual life to impart to those who respond to our message.

As we saw it does not need to be a long-drawn-out process. In fact, I can envision a day coming soon, when God pours out His Spirit again as He did back then, and He is using His church

to bring in His end days' harvest. That churches will keep their baptism tanks filled so that at the end of each service they can baptize in water those who have repented and believed on Jesus during that service. And after they have baptized them in water, they will pray for them to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit!

Let me give you a little broader picture of what I believe the full gospel entails.

Repent means that we have a change of mind and choose to stop being the god of our life and to make God our God. This means that we submit ourselves to His rule and reign in our life and stop doing our will and begin to do His. In obedience to the Father, we believe on Jesus as our Savior and begin to obey Him as our Lord.

1 John 3:23 “And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.”

Believe means we trust Jesus' death, shed blood, as the atonement for our sins, and through believing in, putting our faith in Him, we are made righteous, justified. It includes confessing Him as Lord and obeying all things that He commands us to do beginning by obeying His command to be baptized in water.

Mark 16:16 “He who believes and is baptized will be saved...” – Jesus

Also, in obedience to Him we obey His command to receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

John 20:22 “And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

After receiving the Holy Spirit into our hearts through Spirit baptism we submit ourselves to the Spirit and allow Him to lead us into the Godhead's will for us. He will also empower us to do Their will.

Romans 8:14 “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

From here on I will refer to those who have repented of their sin, believed on Jesus as their Savior and confessed Him as their Lord, and who have obeyed Him in water baptism and Spirit baptism, are born again of the Spirit, and are now being led by and empowered by the Spirit to live out, walk out, the Godhead’s will for their life as “full gospel saints.”

We have seen that the Bible teaches that there are four steps we need to take to become full gospel saints. Jesus broke it down to two when He was talking to Nicodemus, but His first step includes the first three listed above, repent, believe and obey. And His last step is the same as the fourth step, receive, be born of, the Spirit. Just before we look at Jesus’ two-step process let me share some related thoughts.

While I understand that the Spirit is the agent by which we experience the first three steps of this process, He is an outward agent. He convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgment and brings us to repentance through our exposure to God’s Word. The Father uses Him to reveal to us, give us revelation, that Jesus is the Son of God so we can believe in Him and to draw us to Him. And it is through anointed, born-again, Spirit filled believers that we are instructed to be baptized in water and to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And it is also the Holy Spirit who uses the circumstances in our life and orchestrates divine interventions at just the right time so that we are open, receptive, and made ready to respond to the gospel. So, yes, the Spirit is instrumental in us repenting, believing and in us obeying Jesus in water and Spirit baptism.

But He does all of this while still living, abiding, outside of us, that is until we receive Him into our hearts through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and are born again. Because being born again of the Spirit is when the Spirit comes inside us and unites with our spirit, and we are made spiritually alive, one with the Godhead.

The truth is we don't need to be born again of the Spirit to be able to repent, or to be able to believe on Jesus as our Savior, and we don't need the Spirit's supernatural enablement to obey God and be baptized in water or to ask the Father to baptize us with the Holy Spirit. We can obey God and do these things by a decision of our will.

But once we ask and the Father sends the Spirit of His Son, the Holy Spirit, into our hearts and we are born again of the Spirit, we will need the power, the enablement, the life of the Spirit in us to be able to be and do everything we are called to be and do as God's children and ambassadors in the earth.

Because what He calls us to be and do, we cannot do in our natural talents and abilities. We are called to live a supernatural life of transformation and fruitfulness through our union with the Godhead, and just so we'll know for sure that we have received the supernatural life of the Spirit in us and have been born again, the Spirit gives us a new supernatural language, tongues!

Okay, let's proceed with Jesus' two-step process.

John 3:5 "Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"

What does Jesus command us to be or do?

He tells us that we must be born again, born from above, born of water and the Spirit.

What does it mean to be born of water?

One of the things that water represents in the Scriptures is the Word of God, the Word of Truth, the gospel. When we hear the Word of God, the gospel, preached, we need to believe it, choose to repent of our sin and choose to believe in Jesus as

our Savior and Lord. When we do that, we are washed clean of our sins, made righteous, justified.

Ephesians 5:25 "...just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."

What does the washing of water by the word mean?

Commentator David Guzik and Mr. Spurgeon say it means the following.

David Guzik's Enduring Word Commentary:

"When Jesus gave Himself for the church on the cross, it also provided cleansing from every stain sin makes. Since the work of Jesus on the cross comes to us through the Word of God and the preached word, it can be said that we are washed of water by the word."

Charles Spurgeon: "I do not believe that baptism is intended here, nor even referred to. I know that the most of commentators say it is. I do not think it. It strikes me that one word explains the whole. Christ sanctifies and cleanses us by the washing of water, but what sort of water? By the Word. The water which washes away sin, which cleanses and purifies the soul, is the Word."

Let's look next at a companion Scripture to Ephesians 5:26 and see what we can learn from it concerning being born again of water.

Titus 3:4 "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,”

How did God save us?

“According to His mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

Let’s look at B. W. Johnson’s comment on this verse.

The People’s New Testament: “Two elements enter into the saving; these are referred to in John 3:5 as the birth of water and of the Spirit. God’s spirit effects the renewal of the spirit of man by bringing him to faith and repentance through the preaching of the gospel; thus the renewal of the Holy Spirit is begun, and the gift of the Holy Spirit is promised as a sequence of baptism.”

Peter also tells us about this new birth, being born again, through the word of God, the gospel.

1 Peter 1:23 “having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

25 ...Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”

How does Peter say that we are born again?

“Through the word of God” which he says, “is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”

James says it this way:

James 1:18 “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.”

What does the term “brought us forth” mean?

It is translated in other versions of the Bible, by Bible commentators and in Bible dictionaries as follows: Begat us, gave us birth, give us new birth, gave birth to us, made us His children, gave us our new lives, regenerated us, give birth to, to breed forth, to generate, begotten to be His children.

And how does James say He brought us forth, regenerated us?

“By the word of truth.”

Commentator Joseph Benson says this about James 1:18.

Joseph Benson’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments: “*begat he us* – He converted, regenerated us, who believe; *by the word of truth* – The true word, emphatically so termed, the gospel;”

Paul uses the same terminology when he talks about himself and the Corinthian believers.

1 Corinthians 4:15 “For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”

So, we are born again by the water of His Word, the gospel, when we hear it and believe it and obey it and put our trust in its message about Christ. Yes, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God and when we put our faith in the One who that Word proclaims, we are made children of God.

Galatians 3:26 “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”

Being born again of water is necessary because Jesus commanded for us to be, and also because we need to experience this first to be prepared, made ready, to receive the Spirit of God into our hearts and be born again of the Spirit. The Spirit’s temple, our bodies, must be cleansed by the blood of Jesus before the Spirit can move in and take up residence. And, God by His Spirit has to make some renovations in us to make us ready for Him to move in. We have a great picture of these processes revealed to us through the prophet Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 36:25 “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.”

Commentator David Guzik and Mr. Wright make these comments on this verse.

David Guzik’s Enduring Word Commentary: “This reference to cleansing by the clean water of the new covenant is the likely connection Jesus had in mind when He spoke of being born of water in John 3:5.”

Mr. Wright: “It is likely that Christ was calling the attention of Nicodemus to this passage when He spoke in John 3:5 of the new birth through water and the Spirit; the Ezekiel promise was about to be fulfilled.”

What is being presented to us in this verse?

It is a picture of us being born again by the clean water of the Word, the gospel, when we hear it and believe it and repent of our sin and put our faith in Jesus’ shed blood which is the only thing that can cleanse us from all our filthiness.

But before God sends His Spirit within us He does some other things to prepare us to become His habitation.

Ezekiel 36:26 “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

Adam Clarke says the following about this verse.

Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible: “A *new heart also will I give you* – I will change the whole of your infected nature; and give you new appetites, new passions; or, at least, the old ones purified and refined. The heart is generally understood to mean all the affections and passions. *And a new spirit will I put within you* – I will renew your minds, also enlighten your understanding, correct your judgment, and refine your will, so that you shall have a new spirit to actuate your new heart. *I will take away the stony heart* – That heart that is hard, impenetrable, and cold; the affections and passions that are unyielding, frozen to good, unaffected by heavenly things; that are slow to credit the words of God. I will entirely remove this heart: it is the opposite to that which I have promised you; and you cannot have the new heart and the old

heart at the same time. *And I will give you a heart of flesh* – One that can feel, and that can enjoy; that can feel love to God and to all men, and be a proper habitation for the living God.”

After we have believed on Jesus and been cleansed of our sin, God begins His renovation process in us to prepare our lives for Him to come and live inside us. Many think this experience is them being born again of the Spirit because of the joy they experience from having their sins forgiven, the peace they feel from being made right with God and the great love they have for Jesus and for others because of the heart of flesh they have been given. But this is all part of being born again of water and is just God preparing us to become a proper habitation for His Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:27 “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”

When does God put His Spirit within us?

After we have heard the word of the gospel, and repented of our sin and believed on Jesus as our Savior and been cleansed of our sin, “filthiness,” by “the washing of water by the Word, by the washing of regeneration.” After “having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.”

After the Father brings us forth, begets us, “by the word of truth.” After becoming God’s sons, children, through faith in Jesus, and being adopted into the family of God. And after God has given us a new heart and a new mind and after He has taken out of us the stony heart and put within us a heart of flesh and we have become a new creation in Christ Jesus.

After we have been born again of water as Jesus commanded, and after being baptized in water in obedience to Him, then are we made ready to receive His Spirit into our hearts through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and to be born again of the Spirit. And only after having experienced both of these new births will we be enabled, empowered, to walk in God’s statutes

and keep His judgments and do them; and only then can someone enter the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 “Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’”

That then is the full gospel message. Be born of water and the Spirit or said another way, repent, believe, obey, receive the Holy Spirit, and then walk, live, in the power, life, of God’s Spirit in you.

In the next 4 chapters we will look in greater detail at what it means to repent, believe, obey, receive and then walk in the Spirit. Before we proceed there, I want to share a couple of testimonies of some folks I had the privilege of sharing this full gospel message with.

Recently I had on two separate occasions, an opportunity to share this full gospel message with two college students in China via Zoom. Both times after going through some of the teaching from the chapters entitled “Foundational Truths” and “Jesus Two-Part Mission” and then going over with them the steps listed above, the student went from being someone with a very limited understanding of the Bible, to being a born-again, tongue talking, child of God. They repented of their sin, believed in Jesus as their Savior, and confessed Him as their Lord, agreed to obey Him in water baptism as soon as that was possible, and obeyed Him in receiving Holy Spirit baptism. From the beginning of this teaching to their receiving the Holy Spirit took about one and a half hours. They both followed through with being baptized in water, and they faithfully attend our weekly Bible study and are growing in their relationship with Jesus.

Also, recently I was able to teach this full gospel message, via Zoom, to a teacher in China who has been a dedicated Christian for 15 years. I knew she was a strong believer in Jesus, had obeyed Him in water baptism, and went to church, but suspected she had not received the Holy Spirit since she

believed (Acts 19:1-6). I went through the whole teaching with her because it is all focused on this end result; seeing someone receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and be made spiritually alive.

Making man spiritually alive is the reason that Jesus came into the world. His death on the cross was the means of Him accomplishing that! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world was going to be the One who also baptizes people with the Holy Spirit. His death is what made baptism by the Holy Spirit possible. It was how He was going to restore mankind to the condition they were created to live in, being spiritually alive, being one with the Father and the Son through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

When I finished the study with her, I asked her if she wanted to repent. She assured me she already had. When I asked her if she wanted to believe in Jesus as her Savior and confess Him as her Lord, she told me she had done that also. When I asked her if she wanted to be baptized in water, she told me she already had. When I asked her if she wanted to receive the Holy Spirit, she was hesitant, but said she thought maybe she already had. I asked her if when she had thought maybe she had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit if she had spoken in tongues. She said she hadn't, and I assured her that she had not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I asked her if she wanted to receive it now and she said yes!

I told her that we were going to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit into her heart, and that after we did, I wanted her to begin to thank Him and praise Him in Chinese, with her understanding, with her mind. But I told her that when the Holy Spirit came inside her and united with her spirit that she needed to allow her spirit to begin to worship Him in tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:14 “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding.”

We prayed and asked the Father to baptize her in the Holy Spirit, and as she was praising Him in Chinese, and I was praising Him in tongues, she started praising Him in tongues. She was sitting there speaking in tongues, tears running down her cheeks, with a giant smile on her face. When she stopped speaking in tongues she said, “I feel so good,” she was half laughing and half crying as she was thanking me. She was so grateful to have finally heard the full gospel message and to have received what Jesus came to purchase for her: spiritual life through the baptism of the Spirit.

The full gospel message, Repent and Believe – Obey and Receive – then walk in the Spirit, still works today just like it did in the first century if we’ll only just preach it as the Bible teaches us to do.

Chapter 17

Repent

Luke 24:46 “Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,

47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”

What is the message that Jesus tells the disciples to go and preach in His name to all the nations?

The message is repentance and remission, forgiveness, of sins.

We saw in the last chapter that when Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission to go into the world and preach the gospel to the nations, He also included instructions for the disciples to preach and teach that people should believe and be baptized; that people should obey everything that He had commanded them, the disciples, to do, which would have included His command for them to be baptized in water and to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

So why do I put Jesus’ command for man to repent of their sin as the first step we need to take to come into a relationship with the Godhead?

Before I answer that question, we should look at what our sin is that we all need to repent of, and what it means to repent. Once we understand these things it will become obvious why the Bible places repentance as the first step we need to take if we are going to come into a relationship with our God and Creator, Lord and Redeemer, Leader and Regenerator.

What was man’s original sin?

In the Garden of Eden man chose to disobey God, rebel against His authority, come out from under His dominion,

and eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which God had commanded them not to eat from. The devil enticed them to eat of the tree by telling them that they would be like God, knowing good and evil when they ate of it. The temptation was, you will know good from evil, right from wrong, and you won't need God telling you what to do anymore. You can be your own god, independent of God.

Genesis 3:4 “Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.”

What did this act of rebellion release in the human race?

Man became a sinner, separated from the Godhead, spiritually dead in his sins and trespasses. The first couple then passed on what they had become to their descendants, which is every human being ever born. So, we are all born into the world spiritually dead, separated from the Godhead, and we all live as our own god, living out our will, plan, and purpose for our life according to what we think is best for us. We are self-centered, self-willed, self-serving individuals living to please ourselves. We give no thought to God our Creator or to how He would have us to live.

We have each gone our own way, as Isaiah the prophet so aptly describes.

Isaiah 53:6 “All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

Let's dissect this verse to find out exactly what it is saying.

Who are the “all we” the “every one” and the “us all”?

This refers to all human beings, all of mankind, everyone who has ever lived or will ever live, including you and me.

Who is the LORD?

God the Father.

What does iniquity mean?

Sin, transgression.

Who is the Him on whom the Lord laid all of mankind’s iniquity?

Jesus His Son. “And the LORD has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity (sin) of us all.”

What was our iniquity, sin, that was laid on Jesus?

“We have turned, every one, to his own way;” We live as our own god in rebellion to the true God. This is our sin that the Father laid upon Jesus as He hung on that cross; this is what Jesus died for.

What does God our Creator command mankind to do in response to our sinful condition and Jesus’ death for us?

Repent!

Acts 17:30 “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,”

Who does God command to repent?

All men, everywhere.

Why all men?

It is because, “All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way.”

What does the word repent mean in the New Testament?

The Greek word “metanoeo” translated to repent means:

Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words: “to change one’s mind or purpose”
“In the NT the subject chiefly has reference to “repentance”

from sin, and this change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God.”

What does Mr. Vine say, “to repent” means?

“To change one’s mind or purpose.” It is important that we understand this, that repentance begins with a change of one’s mind.

And what does he say it involves?

“Both a turning from sin and a turning to God.”

What is our sin that we need to turn from and what does it mean to turn to God?

Our sin, as we just saw, is us going our own way, living as the god of our own life. When we turn to God, we choose to make Him the God of our life and we begin to serve and obey Him. This happens when we have a change of mind and make a decision of our will to repent.

The Greek word for “to turn” is “epistrepho” and is often used together with the word repent “metanoeo” in the Bible and it means:

Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words: “to make to turn towards” (to convert); “to turn oneself around”; “turn again” (be converted); “you turned” indicating an immediate and decisive change, consequent upon a deliberate choice; conversion is a voluntary act in response to the presentation of truth.”

Here is a verse of Scripture where Paul is preaching the gospel, and he uses both these words together.

Acts 26:19 “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

20 but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.”

What did Paul declare, preach, to both Jews and Gentiles?

“That they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.”

People need to hear the truth about what their sin is and what God commands us to do about it because, as Mr. Vine said, “conversion (turning) is a voluntary act in response to the presentation of truth.”

Repenting and turning, converting, is also the message Peter and John preached, and they said that this is a prerequisite to people having their past sins blotted out, forgiven.

Acts 3:19 “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,”

Here then is what I mean when I am talking about a person repenting and being converted: They have a change of mind about sin, God and themselves. They come to the revelation, understanding, that there is a God who created them, that they did not make themselves, spontaneously generate and then evolve, and they do not belong to themselves. They realize that this God who made them, made them to fulfill His will, plan, and purpose for them. And that they have not followed, obeyed, Him, but have turned and gone their own way, lived as their own god, doing their own will, serving themselves, and that this sin is what separates them from God and is the sin they will be judged by Him for if they don't repent.

When they are convinced, convicted, in their minds and hearts of these truths by the Holy Spirit they have a change of mind and heart and choose to stop being the god of their life, to dethrone self from the throne of their life and to enthrone God their Creator as their God. They receive the kingdom of God into their heart and submit to His rule and reign in their life. They choose to turn, convert, from doing their own will, and choose to begin to do God's will for their life.

Now that we have learned what our sin is that we need to repent of and have seen what it means to repent and convert I will answer my original question.

Why do I put Jesus' command for man to repent of their sin as their first step in coming into a relationship with the Godhead?

Until a person repents of their sin and is converted in their heart, they are not ready to believe on Jesus as their Savior, because they will still be living in the sin of being their own god, even as they are praying and asking Jesus to forgive them of their sin! And God does not forgive sin we refuse to repent of and turn away from.

Also, all the great preachers of the New Testament began their gospel message with man's need to repent and turn from their sin before they told people to believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sin. We'll look at what these men preached next.

Repent is the first message that the Bible records Jesus preaching at the beginning of His ministry.

Matthew 4:17 "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"

In fact, repent is the first preached message recorded in the New Testament and it was preached by John the Baptist to prepare people to receive their Messiah, Jesus.

Matthew 3:1 "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.'"

What was the message that John the Baptist preached to the world?

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

Why did John preach to the people their need to repent?

To “Prepare the way of the Lord.” Prepare the peoples’ hearts to believe on and receive their promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul elaborates on this when he is speaking to the disciples at Ephesus.

Acts 19:4 “Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’”

What was the message that Paul said John the Baptist preached?

Repentance and that people should believe on Christ Jesus.

In what order did he preach this message?

Repent and then believe.

When John was put into prison, Jesus picked up where John left off and preached the same message.

Mark 1:14 “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

What was the message that Jesus preached to the people?

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” (Note the order, repent and then believe.)

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter repentance was a part of the full gospel message that Jesus told the disciples to go into the world and preach after His resurrection.

Luke 24:46 “Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,

47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

What did Jesus tell the disciples to preach?

Repentance and remission/forgiveness of sins. (Again, note the order.)

We also see that the disciples obeyed Jesus, and preached repentance as the first step in being saved. When Peter preached to the crowd on the Day of Pentecost, he confronted them with their sin and explained to them who Jesus was. When they heard what he preached, they were convicted, cut to the heart, and asked him what they should do.

Acts 2:36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Who did Peter say God made this Jesus who they crucified?

“Both Lord and Christ.” (Which explains why they were convicted, cut to the heart, and asked what they needed to do.)

What does Peter tell them that they need to do?

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;”

What is the first thing Peter tells them to do?

Repent!

What are the next things Peter tells them to do?

Obey Jesus’ command to be baptized in water and His command to receive the Holy Spirit.

Paul tells us in the Book of Acts what the gospel message was that he preached and taught.

Acts 20:20 “how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,

21 testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

What does Paul say his message was?

Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Where did Paul proclaim and teach this message?

Publicly and from house to house; in other words, everywhere.

Who did Paul preach and teach this message to?

Both Jews and Greeks, Gentiles; in other words, everyone.

In what order did he preach this message?

Repentance toward God first and then faith toward Jesus Christ.

We have seen now that John the Baptist preached repentance before telling people to believe on Jesus, that Jesus preached repent and believe, that Peter preached repentance first and then the other steps, and that Paul preached repentance toward God first and then faith towards Jesus Christ. And we saw this is the same message that Jesus has commanded us to go into the world and preach.

You may be thinking, but how am I supposed to convince people that they are sinners and that they need to repent?

We convince, convict, them the same way John, Jesus, Peter and Paul did, by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in you.

John 16:7 “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”

Where did Jesus say He was going to send the Holy Spirit?

He said, "I will send Him to you." Jesus was going to send the Holy Spirit to live inside them when they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

What was the Holy Spirit being sent to do?

He was coming to convict, convince, the world of sin, righteousness and judgment in order that they might repent and turn to God, and so that they would see their need for a Savior.

How is the Spirit going to do that?

He is going to do it through God's full gospel saints as they preach God's full gospel message, beginning with man's need to repent of their sin. God is depending on us because unless someone hears and is convinced, understands, that they are a sinner, what their sin is, the penalty for their sin, and their need to be made righteous, they will not see their need to repent or their need for a Savior.

Look at what Jesus says He is going to say on Judgment Day to believers who did not repent of their sin but continued doing their own will and not God's will.

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Who does Jesus say is going to enter into heaven?

Not those who just believe in Him and call Him Lord, but those who repent of doing their own will and begin to do the will of His Father in heaven.

Are these people that Jesus is talking about in these verses believers?

Yes, we know they are. They call Him Lord, say they preached in His name, cast out demons in His name and worked many wonders in His name.

But what does Jesus say to them on Judgment Day?

“I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness (sin)!”

Is this just a small fringe group of believers?

No, Jesus says there will be “many” on Judgment Day who will be turned away from heaven. And these many He says will be arguing with Him because they really thought they were saved because they believed in Him.

How could they live in rebellion to God’s will and think that they were going to be okay on Judgment Day?

Probably because they did not hear the full gospel message preached; they only heard God loves you, and if you will just believe in Jesus, you will be saved.

If you are a believer in Jesus, but have never repented of your sin, if you are still the lord of your life, and still doing your own will and not God’s, it’s not too late for you. Most full gospel saints who are alive today and living their life to serve God and do His will by the power of His Spirit, started out as believers. That’s because most of those preaching the gospel today are not preaching the full gospel message we see preached in the New Testament, so they only heard the message – just believe in Jesus.

They are not confronting people with their sinful condition, explaining to them what sin is, and calling them to repent and be converted, they are simply telling people that if they will pray and accept Jesus as their Savior, then they will be saved. But according to what the Scriptures teach, and that is what we will be held accountable to, that is not so.

If the Holy Spirit has convicted you of your sinfulness and your need to repent, you can do that wherever you are right now. If that's you, you can pray along these lines: Father I come to you a sinner. I have lived my whole life as my own god, doing my own will, and not Yours. But I am changing my mind about continuing living this way and am choosing to make You my God and choosing to turn from doing my will and to begin to do Your will. Thank you for your goodness, love, and mercy. Thank You for giving Your only begotten Son, Jesus, to purchase for me the gifts of repentance and righteousness, the forgiveness of my sins.

That's right, I said that repentance is a gift of God's grace that He has made available to us just like the forgiveness of our sins through believing in Jesus Christ is a gift of God's grace that He has made available to us through His Son.

Acts 5:31 "Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

What does this verse show us about repentance and forgiveness?

They are gifts, some things that God gives to us, gifts that Jesus bought for us, mankind, with His death on the cross.

But it says He gave these gifts to Israel, are they for the Jewish people only?

No, they are available to Gentiles and the entirety of mankind if they will humble themselves, exercise their free will, and choose to receive them.

Acts 11:18 "When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.'"

Back to what we were discussing in Matthew 7, Judgment Day is coming, and that is why we must preach and teach and warn men to repent to be made ready to stand before Jesus their Judge. That's right, Jesus will either be our Savior or our

Judge on Judgment Day, depending upon whether we repented of our sin and made Him our Lord and also trusted Him as our Savior.

Acts 17:30 “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

Why does God command all men everywhere to repent?

“Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained.”

2 Corinthians 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...”

Why do we persuade men to repent and be ready to stand before Jesus?

We know the terror of the Lord. Through the Scriptures we understand what a horrible destiny awaits those who when they stand before Jesus are found to be workers of lawlessness, still living in sin. So, we call all men to repent and turn from their sin because Jesus does not want anyone to perish in judgment, He does not want to send anyone to hell which is why He holds back His return to earth.

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great

noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

What is the Lord’s promise that Peter says He is not slack concerning?

His promise to return one day for His church and to judge the world in righteousness. It had been a long time since the Lord had ascended back into heaven and some were asking, “Where is the promise of His coming?” If He is really coming, why hasn’t He come yet?

What does Peter say is the reason for Jesus’ delay?

He’s holding back coming because He doesn’t want anyone to perish, believer or unbeliever, so He is giving them time to repent. Don’t mistake God’s patience in holding back from judging your sin as Him saying, sin doesn’t really matter, I love you too much to ever actually judge you. God does love us, but He will judge our sin in us as surely as He judged our sin in Jesus, if we don’t repent and turn from it.

What does Peter assure them of in the next verse?

“the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat...”

Jesus is coming like a thief in the night, and He is going to judge the earth, the world, mankind, with fire. He judged it the first time with water, Noah’s flood, and this time with fire! But in His longsuffering love, He is holding back this judgment to give us time to repent, but don’t be deceived or deceive yourself. God will certainly judge our sin if we don’t repent of it.

Paul wrote to the church in Rome about these same truths that Peter wrote to these believers about.

Romans 2:4 “Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”

What does the word “despise” mean?

To scorn, render of no effect, disrespect, look down on, disdain, to think little or nothing of, to hold in contempt, to think lightly of, to neglect, not to care for. Synonyms – to regard as nothing, despise completely, to cast off, reject, to dishonor, treat shamefully, to disesteem.

What are the things that Paul says believing and unbelieving sinners despise or treat shamefully?

The riches of His, God’s, goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering.

What do the words, goodness, forbearance and longsuffering mean?

Goodness also means kindness and gentleness.

Forbearance means delaying, self-restraint, temporary long suffering, a holding back, tolerance.

Longsuffering means self-restraint before proceeding to action, patience, slowness in avenging wrongs.

What Paul is saying in essence then is that our loving, holy God in His goodness, kindness, and gentleness is patiently, in self-restraint holding back from avenging our sins against Him by delaying judgment.

Why is God doing this?

To give us an opportunity to repent, to change our minds about serving sin, and to turn, convert, and serve God with our lives.

What does Paul say that God’s goodness, kindness and patience are meant to do?

His goodness, kindness and patience are meant to lead us to repentance.

But what does the devil, the world, and our flesh tell us that God not judging our sin means?

To unbelievers they say, there is no God, no sin, no judgment. If there really was a God, He would do something about all this wickedness in the earth. There is no need to

repent, change the way you're living because God does not exist. Or, even if there is a God who is going to judge the world, you're better than most, so you'll be okay as long as your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds, etc. etc.

To believers they say, God judged your sin in Jesus, so it doesn't matter if you repent and do or stop doing what He is dealing with you about. God loves you and He is so good, kind, and merciful. He will never judge you. He knows no one is perfect and besides lots of other Christians are doing what you're doing, and some are doing a lot worse, so you're safe. He's certainly not going to send all these believers to hell. Besides, if He's dealing with you about it, then that means you're saved. Etc. etc.

If we comfort ourselves with the evil trio's justifications and lies, we will despise God's goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, take it lightly, hold it in contempt, regard it as nothing, neglect and reject it, and we will continue in our sin and not repent.

But what does the Bible tell us in the next verse that we are doing when we despise these things, and don't repent, turn from our sin and begin to do God's will?

Romans 2:5 "But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent (unrepentant) heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,"

What does this verse say we are doing if we refuse to repent?

"you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The term treasuring up means we are storing up, stockpiling, for ourselves wrath, God's wrath! We can despise, take lightly, His goodness now and not repent and turn from our sin, but on Judgment Day we will wish that we had not listened to the lies of the devil, the world, or our flesh and had repented of our sin instead. But then, of course, it will be too late!

Let me just add here, that I understand the process of sanctification that we as Christians, redeemed sinners, are going through. It is a process, and sometimes we struggle with deeply embedded habits, sins, character flaws, etcetera, for weeks, months and even years after we are born again. I believe that if we are honestly contending for dominion over these things by the power of His Spirit, we don't have to worry about God's judgment even if we have to repent of, confess, and ask for God's forgiveness of these sins every day until we finally get victory over them. God does not judge as man judges; God looks at the heart. So, if we are sincerely trying to get victory over these sins and if we don't give up and stop fighting against them, then I believe we will be alright in the end, even though we are far from perfect.

We have seen up to this point the Father's, Peter's and Paul's call for mankind to repent because Jesus is going to judge us all one day. We'll look next at Jesus' call for mankind to repent.

Luke 13:5 "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

Who does Jesus say is going to perish?

All who do not repent, and all means all, everyone, you and me, we all! If we don't repent, we will all perish, says Jesus, who does not lie.

We saw earlier that the first message Jesus preached in the first book in the New Testament was a call for the world to repent of their sin. If we go to the last book in the New Testament, Revelation, we will see Jesus calling for believers in the churches who are living in sin to repent. This shows us that although repentance is the first step in coming into a relationship with the Godhead it is not a one-time act. We as Christians will all at times make decisions out of the will of God, or give in to carnality and/or worldliness, all of which are sins that need to be repented of, confessed and forgiven. For healthy Christians, repentance is a lifestyle, not a one-time act.

Finally, what are some conclusions that we can draw from what we have studied in this chapter?

Repentance is God's first and foremost commandment to His sinning creation and it is preached from the beginning to the end of the New Testament and all through the Old Testament. That God in His love, mercy, goodness, patience, and kindness is holding back judging man's sin to give him opportunity to respond to this command. We are assured that if we refuse to repent, we will surely experience God's wrath and we will perish in eternal separation from Him.

Jesus and all the New Testament preachers preached the full gospel message beginning with man's need to repent. Jesus commanded us, His church, to continue to preach this message, and for that purpose, He sent the Holy Spirit into the hearts of His saints so that the Spirit through them could convince, convict, the world of sin, righteousness and judgment so that they might repent and trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior. By the power of the Holy Spirit, in us, we can do that in love and humility with patience and grace.

We also learned that much of the church world is not preaching the full gospel message of repent, believe, obey, receive, then walk in the Spirit, but places their emphasis on believing in Jesus. Their message focuses on God's love and forgiveness, His blessings in this life and in the next, if people will just believe. They never allow the Holy Spirit through them to confront, convict, people of sin, righteousness and judgment. They don't call for both unbelievers and believers to repent and turn from their sin in order to be saved. They don't tell people they need to not only believe in Jesus, but obey Him and do God's will or they will not make heaven their eternal home.

Why do I think they don't do this?

Here are my thoughts on some possible reasons.

They don't want to offend people. They want people to like them and so they don't want to make people feel uncomfortable by confronting them about their sin.

They want people to respond to their message and they know more people will respond to the “just believe in Jesus” message, than the, “you need to repent and turn from your sin” message.

Although they have John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter and Paul as examples of those who preached repentance and saw great results, they also see in the Scriptures that these men suffered horrendous persecution, and they don’t want any part of that.

Many are trying to start a congregation or add to the one they have and are afraid if they confront people with their need to repent, many will just go down the street to the church that preaches, just believe in Jesus and you will have eternal life. But we are not called necessarily to build our church, but to build God’s kingdom, and entrance into His kingdom begins with repentance. If our aim becomes to build God’s kingdom by preaching the full gospel message, we will see that we will also build our church, and we will be building it with people who are going to make heaven their eternal home!

I could go on, but I need to bring this chapter to an end so I will close with our mandate from God to call His wayward creation to repentance. He will hold those of us who know the truth accountable for doing this.

Ezekiel 33:8 “When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked man, you shall surely die!’ and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

9 Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.”

Why would someone’s blood be required at someone else’s hand?

Because that person knew the word of the Lord and did not obey Him and “speak to warn the wicked from his way” warn the wicked person of his need to repent, turn from his way, his iniquity, his sin.

We saw earlier that Paul said the following about himself:

Acts 20:20 “how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,

21 testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul says that he held back nothing that was helpful to the people, so he preached and taught everywhere, to all people, their need of repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ. He continues in his discourse a few sentences later with these words.

Acts 20:26 “Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”

What does Paul mean when he says I preached to you the whole counsel of God and am therefore innocent of the blood of all men?

He is referring to what God spoke through the Prophet Ezekiel. He is saying I preached to you the full counsel of God, the full gospel message, beginning with repentance toward God. I warned you to turn from your way, your iniquity, your sin, and to turn to God, and to put your faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. Therefore, if you die in your sin, your blood is on your own hands, “I am innocent of the blood of all men.”

I pray to God that we would all be able to say the same thing about ourselves at the end of our life and ministry!

Chapter 18

Believe

Mark 16:15 “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

What did Jesus command the disciples to go into the world and preach to every creature?

The gospel.

What would be the consequence of them preaching the gospel?

Those who believed and were baptized would be saved; those who did not believe would be condemned.

What does the word gospel mean?

Thayer’s Greek Definitions: “Gospel – the glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom. After the death of Christ, the term comprises also the preaching of Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to procure eternal salvation for the men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life and exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty to consummate the kingdom of God.”

Jesus ended His ministry here on Earth by telling His disciples to go into the world and preach the gospel and He began His ministry preaching the gospel Himself.

Mark 1:14 “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

What did Jesus come preaching?

“The gospel of the kingdom of God.”

What was His message?

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

Why do we need to repent before we believe on Jesus as our Savior?

Repentance prepares us to believe on the Lord Jesus.

Mark 1:1 “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2 As it is written in the Prophets: “*Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.*”

3 “*the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.’*”

4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

Repentance, turning from the sin of being the god of our life and choosing to begin to do God’s will and not our own, prepares us to believe on Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins. Because if we choose to believe on Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and have not repented of our sin, then we will continue living in sin and will be none the better off for believing in Him.

After we have obeyed God and repented, why do we need to believe in the gospel?

The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins, and even though we have repented and chosen to stop sinning against God we still have a backlog of sin that needs to be atoned, paid, for. We all lived as the god of our own life, doing our own will and not the will of our Creator, up until we repented and converted, had a change

of heart and mind, made God our God, and turned from doing our will to do His will.

The penalty for that sin is spiritual and physical death, spiritual separation from God now in this life, and then physical death and separation from God for eternity. Repentance does not pay that penalty, debt. Only by believing in Jesus Christ as our Redeemer, Savior, can all of our past and present sin be forgiven because only Jesus died and paid the penalty for our sin.

Let's look at part of Matthew Henry's commentary on Mark 1:14-15.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: "When Jesus began to preach in Galilee he preached, The gospel of the kingdom of God. Christ came to set up the kingdom of God among men, that they might be brought into subjection to it, and might obtain salvation in it; and he set it up by the preaching of his gospel. Christ tells them, in the prospect of that kingdom approaching, they must repent, and believe the gospel. They had broken the moral law, and could not be saved by a covenant of innocency, for both Jew and Gentile are concluded under guilt. They must therefore take the benefit of a covenant of grace, must submit to a remedial law, and this is it - repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

"By repentance we must lament and forsake our sins, and by faith we must receive the forgiveness of them. By repentance we must give glory to our Creator whom we have offended; by faith we must give glory to our Redeemer who came to save us from our sins. Both these must go together; we must not think either that reforming our lives will save us without trusting in the righteousness and grace of Christ, or that trusting in Christ will save us without the reformation of our hearts and lives. Christ hath joined these two together, and let no man think to put them asunder. They will mutually

assist and befriend each other. Repentance will quicken faith, and faith will make repentance evangelical; and the sincerity of both together must be evidenced by a diligent conscientious obedience to all God's commandments. Thus the preaching of the gospel began, and thus it continues; still the call is, Repent, and believe, and live a life of repentance and a life of faith."

At this point let's consider why Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection were even necessary for man's forgiveness.

If God loves us and if He has all authority in heaven and Earth, why can't He just forgive us our sin if we ask Him to?

God does love us, and He does have all authority and power in heaven and on Earth, but God is a moral being. He is holy, just, righteous and true. He cannot therefore violate His own righteous character and just forget about, overlook, our sin when we ask Him to, just because He loves us and doesn't want us to perish. He must do things legally, righteously, and justly, and He always has, and He always will.

Let's consider God's righteousness in dealing with man's sin problem as it is revealed in Romans Chapter 3. We could have also used Isaiah 53 to show these same truths, and I highly encourage you to read that when we finish looking at Romans 3.

Romans 3:21 "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,"

What does it mean when it says, "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed"?

God's righteousness at this time is going to be imputed to man apart from him keeping God's law as is revealed through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This truth was also witnessed to, confirmed, by the Law and the Prophets, most clearly by the prophet Isaiah and King David.

Psalm 32:1 A Psalm of David. A Contemplation. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity...”

If God is holy and just, how could He forgive David’s sin?

Those who lived before Christ looked ahead by faith to what God was going to provide for them in making atonement for their sin. Those of us who were born after Jesus’ death, look back by faith to what Jesus has done for us in dying for our sin 2000 years ago. God, who is eternal, looked ahead to Calvary’s cross to be able to forgive the sins of those who lived before Jesus’ incarnation, and death, and He looks back to Calvary in forgiving those who have lived after Jesus’ death.

Romans 3:22 “even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;”

How do we receive the righteousness of God?

“Through faith in Jesus Christ.”

Who is eligible to receive God’s righteousness?

“All who believe.”

Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

Who has sinned?

All! Everyone, Jew and Gentile, male and female, young and old, we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Everyone that is, but Jesus!

Romans 3:24 “being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,”

What does it mean to be justified?

Justified is a legal term. We are going to see a number of legal terms used in the next few verses because God must do things legally, righteously, and justly because He is holy. He is a moral being and must act according to His own nature.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary: “To justify means to recognize, to set forth as righteous, to declare righteous, to justify as a judicial act. To justify, never means to make anyone righteous or to do away with his violation of the law, by himself bearing the condemnation and the imposed sentence. In the NT, man in his fallen condition can never do anything in order to pay for his sinfulness and thus be liberated from the sentence of guilt that is upon him as it happens in the mundane world.”

So how does this verse say we are justified?

Freely, we don’t earn it, by God’s grace, it is a gift, “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Here we have another legal term, redemption, let’s see what it means.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary: “Redemption – to let go free for a ransom, to redeem. Redemption. The recalling of captives (sinners) from captivity (sin) through the payment of a ransom for them, i.e., Christ’s death. Sin is presented as slavery and sinners as slaves.”

Even though we were justified, made righteous, freely, as a gift of God’s love and grace, it did not come without a cost. The penalty for sin is death; spiritual and physical, and that penalty, ransom, had to be paid. And it was paid for by the death, spiritual and physical, of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

Romans 3:25 “whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,”

What does it mean that God set forth Jesus as a propitiation by His blood?

Propitiation is another legal term which I’ll let Mr. Wuest explain.

Word Studies in the Greek New Testament (Kenneth S. Wuest): “The word translated “propitiation” is exceedingly important, and demands a careful treatment. It is hilastērion... The word is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, in the sense of an atonement or reconciliation. It refers to the act of getting rid of sin which has come between God and man... The word hilastērion is used in Leviticus 16:14 to refer to the golden cover (the Mercy Seat) on the Ark of the Covenant. In the Ark, below this cover, were the tablets of stone upon which were written the ten commandments which Israel had violated. Before the Ark stood the High Priest representing the people. When the sacrificial blood is sprinkled on this cover, it ceases to be a place of judgment and becomes a place of mercy. The blood comes between the violated law and the violators, the people.

The blood of Jesus satisfies the just requirements of God’s holy law which mankind broke, pays the penalty for man, and thus removes that which had separated between a holy God and sinful man, sin, its guilt and penalty... The words, “an expiatory satisfaction” seem to be the words rather than “propitiation” to adequately translate hilastērion. Hilastērion is the place of satisfaction, Hilasmos (1 John 2:2 “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”) that which provides that satisfaction for the broken law. Thus, our blessed Lord is both the Mercy Seat and the Sacrifice which transforms the former from a judgment seat to one where mercy is offered a sinner on the basis of justice satisfied.”

Why did God set forth Jesus as a propitiation?

To demonstrate, show, prove, His righteousness.

Why would God have to prove that He is righteous?

“Because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.” Forbearance means that God temporarily suspends the judgment due to man’s sin. God did not judge those who sinned against Him in the Old Testament who trusted Him to make a way for them to be forgiven even though Jesus had not yet died. But God had to follow through and demonstrate His righteousness by setting forth His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, as a propitiation, “an expiatory satisfaction”, to fulfill His own righteous demands, requirements. God’s righteousness demands that the penalty for sin be paid in full, but He temporarily suspends His wrath due to us to give us an opportunity to repent and to believe on Jesus as our Savior.

Romans 3:26 “to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Why does God need to demonstrate His righteousness by offering up Jesus as the atonement for man’s sin?

“That He might be just.” Everything that God does has to be done justly, righteously, legally, and so Jesus had to pay the penalty for man’s sins to satisfy the righteousness of God, so that God can justly justify, forgive, make righteous, anyone who puts their faith in, believes in, trusts, Jesus as their Savior. (Please take a few minutes right now and read Isaiah 53.)

Paul said it this way in his letter to the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 5:21 “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Who is the “He” in this verse?

God the Father.

Who is the “Him”?

Jesus, His Son, who had never sinned, God made Him to be sin for us.

What did Jesus being made to be sin for us make available to us?

“That we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Wasn't there some other way for God to be able to forgive man's sin than to have His only begotten Son suffer and die?

If there was, then the Father would have answered His Son's prayer in the garden, and not have required Him to allow Himself to be arrested, tortured, and killed.

Matthew 26:39 “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’”

What does Jesus mean when He asks the Father, “if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me”?

If there is another way for You to accomplish Your goal of redeeming man and making them spiritually alive again, spare Me from drinking this cup.

What is “this cup” that Jesus is speaking about?

Jesus allowing Himself to be arrested, tried as a criminal, tortured and crucified, to die spiritually and physically for man's sin. This cup was Jesus paying the penalty for man's sin, dying in our place, and that cup was filled with the wrath of God against man's sin. And Jesus had to willingly drink it and taste death for every person who ever lived.

Hebrews 2:9 “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.”

That is why the Bible declares this about Jesus.

Act 4:12 “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

And why Jesus said this about Himself.

John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

Why and how was Jesus the only way for man to be made spiritually alive, brought back into union with the Father?

I will answer this with part of what I wrote in the chapter entitled “Jesus Two-Part Mission.” Repetition is a great teaching tool.

The consequence of the first couples’ sin was that they died both spiritually and eventually physically, and all of their descendants were born spiritually dead, and they all died physically. Therefore, if Jesus was going to be able to pay the penalty for man’s sin, He would have to die both spiritually and physically.

So, He could not be born of human parents, or He would have been born spiritually dead, but He had to be a human, a person, so He could die physically to pay that part of man’s debt for sin. God’s answer for this was that the Word, the second person of the Godhead, would humble Himself, lay aside His glory, and become a man, the second Adam. When the Holy Spirit entered into that human egg in Mary’s womb to conceive the Seed of the woman, He deposited the Word’s spirit united with Himself, and the only begotten Son of God was conceived. Emmanuel, God with us!

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father...”

Jewish New Testament Commentary: “The Word became a human being, literally, “the Word became flesh.” It is not that a man named Yeshua, who grew up in Natzeret, one day decided he was God. Rather, the Word, who “was with God” and “was God,” gave up

the “glory [he] had with [the Father] before the world existed” (Joh_17:5) and “emptied himself, in that he took the form of a slave by becoming like human beings are” (Php_2:7). In other words, God sent “his own Son as a human being with a nature like our own sinful one” (Rom_8:3), so that “in every respect he was tempted just as we are, the only difference being that he did not sin” (Heb_4:15). It is God the Word, then, who decided to become man, not the other way round.”

The Word did not take on the form of a man as He had a few times before as is recorded in the Old Testament, but the Word entered into an egg in Mary’s womb and was born the Son of Man/the Son of God. Spiritually alive because He was one with the Father through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but a man because He was born of a woman, one who was totally dependent upon the Spirit to be able to be and do what God had sent Him to do. The second person of the Godhead, the Word, became a man, the Godman, Jesus, the Son of Man, the only begotten Son of God, the second Adam.

He then being 100% God and 100% man, physically and spiritually alive, allowed Himself to be hung on a cross to die both spiritually and physically, to pay the full price for our, man’s, sin.

Matthew 27:35 “Then they crucified Him...

45 Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

46 “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’”

What is happening here?

Jesus is hanging on the cross and the Father has laid upon Him the sins of the whole world. He has literally been made to be sin for us, and because He has, the Father, and the Spirit separate Themselves from Him! For the first time in eternity,

the Word/the Son, is separated from the Father and the Spirit! Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, the Word made flesh, who was born not only physically alive but spiritually alive, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, dies spiritually, and when He does, He cries out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Jesus took the sins of the whole world upon Himself in obedience to the Father so why did the Father forsake Him?

Because the wages of sin is death, spiritual death, separation from God, so when the Father laid mankind’s sin upon His only begotten Son and He became sin for us, the Father and the Spirit had to separate Themselves from Him. Just as the Godhead, Father, Word/Son, and Spirit separated Themselves from Adam and Eve when they sinned. God is no respecter of persons.

2 Corinthians 5:21 “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

What did Jesus being made to be sin for us make available to us, mankind?

“The righteousness of God in Him.”

Shortly after the Father and the Spirit separate Themselves from the Son/the Word, He dies physically when His spirit departs from His body.

Matthew 27:50 “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.”

What did Jesus yield up?

His spirit, the Holy Spirit had already left Him and He was spiritually dead but now His spirit leaves His body, and He dies physically.

After He died physically Jesus’ body was taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb where it remained for 3 days. Then the Father sent His Spirit along with the Word’s/the Son’s/Jesus’ spirit back into Jesus body and He rose from the

dead being made both spiritually and physically alive, never to die again!

But how could one man, Jesus, take away, pay the penalty for, the sins of the whole world?

Because as we have just explained Jesus was not just a man; He was also God, the Word, in the flesh. He was with the Father in the beginning and all of creation was made through Him.

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

What is John talking about when he says, “In the beginning?”

The beginning of time, when God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them.

Who do these verses say the Word was?

“The Word was God.”

How was everything, all things, made?

“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” And because everything and everyone were made through Him, the Word/the Son, He is equal to everything and everyone and could therefore die to pay the penalty for the sins of everyone, the whole world.

Under the Old Testament, Covenant, laws, the people were required to offer animal sacrifices to atone for their sin. But these were just a type of what God intended to do through the New Testament, Covenant, that He was going to institute through Jesus Christ and His sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:4 “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: *“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.*

6 *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.*

7 *Then I said, ‘behold, I have come – in the volume of the book it is written of Me – to do Your will, O God.’*

10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

Could animal sacrifices take away people’s sin?

No, God took no pleasure in them.

What did God do to remedy this problem?

He sent His only begotten Son into the world as a human being.

What did the Father send His only begotten Son into the world to do?

To live a sinless life in total obedience to Him and at the set time to offer His body as a perfect sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. All of whom have sinned, are separated from the life of the Father, spiritually dead, and who are headed for a devil’s hell, unless they repent and believe on Jesus as their Savior. There is no other way for mankind to be saved. God begot only one Son who He offered as a sacrifice for sin, and we believe in, put our faith in, trust in, Him, for our forgiveness or we die in our sins.

Jesus said it like this:

John 8:23 “And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.’”

Who is Jesus saying people need to believe He is to not die in their sins?

The light of the world, the Son of God, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, the Word made flesh, the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, the Savior of the world, the Way, the Truth and the Life and the only way for mankind to come to the Father, the Redeemer of mankind, the One who died for their sin and afterward rose from the dead.

Why do we need to believe that Jesus not only died for our sins, but that He also rose from the dead?

Just as Jesus' death fulfilled God's standard of righteousness required by the law so that He could justly forgive man, so God needed to raise Jesus from the dead to show that He had accepted Jesus' sacrifice and to fulfill the prophecies concerning the Messiah.

Act 26:22 "Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come –

23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

If Jesus took our sin upon Himself and therefore died, was it right for God to raise Him from the dead?

Even though Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the whole world and therefore had to die spiritually and physically to pay the penalty for that sin, Jesus had never sinned once in His life. He had always lived to do the will of the Father, and to fulfill the Father's plan and purpose for His life. Even Jesus allowing Himself to be crucified and killed as the sacrifice for the sins of the world was done in obedience to the Father's will. So, the Father is justified in forgiving the sins of all those who put their faith in Jesus, and He was justified in raising Jesus from the dead. We never have to worry, God cannot and will not ever violate His own righteous nature, He is holy!

What would it mean if God did not raise Jesus from the dead?

1 Corinthians 15:17 “And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!”

What does it mean, if Christ is not risen, our faith is futile?

If Jesus did not rise from the dead as He said He would, then our faith in Him is useless, we have believed a fairy tale. But He did rise from the dead and He has the power to forgive the sins of those who believe, put their trust in Him, and if we have done that then we are not still in our sins.

If you are not already a believer, are you ready to believe on Jesus as your Savior?

Salvation from the penalty of eternal death, due for our sin, like repentance, is a gift of God’s grace and love, but we need to choose to receive it, just as we must choose to repent. If you have repented of your sin, chosen to stop living as the god of your life and have made your Creator your God, and have chosen to stop doing your will and to begin to do His, then you are ready to take the next step and believe on Jesus as your Savior. In fact, if you have made the Father your God and have chosen to begin to do His will then you need to obey His commandment and believe on His Son.

1 John 3:23 “And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.”

If you are willing to believe on Jesus as your Savior, all of your past and present sins will be forgiven. If you want to be made righteous, holy, clean, I will lead you in a prayer using the following Scripture as a guide.

Romans 10:8 “But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Pray along these lines: Father, I have seen through this study of Your Word that I am a sinner in need of a Savior. I have repented of my sin and now I ask you to forgive me all of my sins in Jesus' name. I choose right now to confess Jesus Christ as my Lord, and I believe in my heart that You raised Him from the dead. I believe according to Your Word that Jesus died for my sins and that He rose from the dead, and that by believing, trusting, I have been made righteous, justified, forgiven of all of my sins. And that as I have confessed Jesus as my Lord I am saved. Thank You Father for choosing to love me and for sacrificing Your Son so that I can be forgiven. Jesus thank You for willingly dying in my place, I will serve You as my Lord and Savior with a grateful and loving heart all the days of my life.

What happens to someone when they do what those who have prayed this prayer have done?

The Bible says:

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

What has the Father done for those who have confessed their sins to Him?

He has forgiven their sins and cleansed them from all unrighteousness. The Father forgiving us of our sins and cleansing us from all our unrighteousness when we confess our sin and believe on Jesus is only possible because Jesus has satisfied the legal, righteous, requirements of God's law. I say that to remind you that we have been dealing with the legal aspects of our salvation in this chapter on believing.

Also to let you know that there are other wonderful benefits that are ours through Jesus' redemption and our believing in Him.

How's this for a benefit?

When you repent of your sin and believe in Jesus as your Savior your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

What does that mean?

Only those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life are going to enter into heaven and spend eternity with Jesus and the Father.

I should mention here though that the Bible does warn in the Book of Revelation that if a person turns back to living in sin and refuses to repent their name can be blotted out of that book. Just as Jesus blood blotted out our sins when we believed in Him so He can blot our names out of the Book of Life if we turn back to our sin.

Here is another one of the benefits we receive when we believe in Jesus.

Galatians 3:26 "For you are all sons (children) of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

Through believing in Christ Jesus, we have all become children of God. Because we have trusted in Jesus as our Redeemer, Savior and Lord, the Father was able to legally adopt us into His family as His children.

Galatians 4:4 "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Why did God send forth His Son?

"To redeem," buy back, pay the ransom, for His creation who were under the righteous judgment of the law. We were dead in our sins and trespasses, separated from God, lost and without hope so God sent His Son to rescue, redeem, us.

Why did the Father send the Son to redeem us from under the penalty of the law?

“That we might receive the adoption as sons.” That He might adopt us as His children. Adoption is another legal term, let’s see what it means.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary: “Adoption, receiving into the relationship of a child. In the NT, figuratively meaning adoption, sonship, spoken of the state of those whom God through Christ adopts as His sons and thus makes heirs of His covenanted salvation. Since *huiiothesía* was a technical term in Roman law for an act that had specific legal and social effects, there is much probability that Paul had some reference to that in his use of the word. Adoption, when thus legally performed, put a man in every respect in the position of a son by birth to him who had adopted him, so that he possessed the same rights and owed the same obligations.”

If God has adopted us as His children, what does that make us?

Brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ! Take a minute to let that register. Oh, what God has done for us, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We will spend all of eternity thanking and praising Him for His wonderful love and gracious sacrifice.

But what is the fate of those who refuse to repent and believe on Jesus Christ as their Savior?

John 3:36 “And he who believes in (has faith in, clings to, relies on) the Son has (now possesses) eternal life. But whoever disobeys (is unbelieving toward, refuses to trust in, disregards, is not subject to) the Son will never see (experience) life, but [instead] the wrath of God abides on him.” AMPC

“The wrath of God abides on him!” God will be a loving Father to those who obey Him and believe on His Son, but if we reject Him, refuse to repent and confess Him as our Lord and believe on Him as our Savior, on Judgment Day we will experience His wrath. The choice is ours.

Revelation 6:15 “And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’”

I thought Jesus was the gentle Lamb of God who came to die for our sins, so what does it mean, the wrath of the Lamb?

Jesus came the first time to save, deliver, His creation from the penalty of their sin. He is coming the second time as the Judge of all the earth and if when we stand before Him, we are still in our sins, we will experience His eternal wrath. As surely as Jesus experienced the Father’s wrath when He hung on that cross and took the sins of the world upon Himself, so we will experience the wrath of God and of the Lamb, if when we stand before Them our sins are not covered by Jesus’ blood.

What will the end of these be who have not believed in Jesus and whose names are not written in the Lamb’s Book of Life?

The second death, the lake of fire!

Revelation 20:12 “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

In these verses what is John saying that he saw?

Everyone who has ever lived and died standing before the throne of God. He also saw books being opened which contained records of everything that everyone had ever done. He saw the Book of Life being opened which contains the names of all those who were saved and a record of all their works, good and bad. The dead are then judged according to their works which are recorded in those books.

This is not a judgment where it is decided who goes to heaven and who goes to hell. People decided that for themselves by the choices they made during their life, and they found out where their eternal home would be when they died. If they were right with God at their death their spirit went into the Presence of the Lord. If they were not, then their spirit went to Hades to await Judgment Day.

For those whose names are not in the Book of Life, the degree of their eternal torment and punishment will be determined by their works, what they did in their life, as it is recorded in the books.

Let me add here a personal thought. I believe that the degree of the emotional and mental anguish that those who end up in the lake of fire will suffer will be proportional to the amount of truth, revelation, that they were exposed to in their life. If they had been saved at one time, but then backslid, or if they heard the gospel message, but refused to respond to it and now find themselves separated from the Godhead for eternity without any hope of reprieve, the torment of knowing that they knew the truth and could have avoided ending up in hell by simply doing what they knew was right, turning from their sin and believing on Jesus as their Savior, will torture their minds beyond description forever and ever!

Those whose names are written in the Book of Life will be rewarded and or suffer loss, again, according to their works as recorded in the books, but they themselves will be saved.

What does it mean that the lake of fire is the second death?

Those whose names were not in the Book of Life at the time of their death died in their sins. They were spiritually dead, separated from God, when they died physically and now they are going into the lake of fire to be separated from God, spiritually dead, for eternity.

As a coworker with the Godhead, I will end this chapter with these words.

2 Corinthians 6:2 "...Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

God has kept you alive your whole life to give you this opportunity today to repent of your sin and believe in His Son Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Your yesterdays are gone, and you are not promised tomorrow. Do not presume anything. Do what you know you need to do, right now. Bow your knee to the Father in repentance and obey Him and believe on His only begotten Son, Jesus, for the forgiveness of your sins. You will be eternally grateful if you do!

Once we have believed in Jesus as our Savior and confessed Him as our Lord, we are ready to, out of love for Him, begin to obey all things that our newfound Lord and Savior commands us to do, which is what we will consider next.

Chapter 19

Obey

Matthew 28:18 “Then Jesus came up and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” NET

What does Jesus command His disciples to do?

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

What is the significance of baptizing the new disciples in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

John Gill says the following about this verse:

John Gill’s Exposition of the Bible: “By the authority of these three divine persons, who all appeared, and testified their approbation of the administration of this ordinance, at the baptism of Christ: and as they are to be invoked in it, so the persons baptized not only profess faith in each divine person, but are devoted to their service, and worship, and are laid under obligation to obedience to them.”

Do we need to obey the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?

Yes, They are all three God, and all have the right to give direction and instruction, commands, to our life, and we need to submit ourselves and obey all three. When we repent and make the Father our God, we need to submit to His rule and reign in

our life. When we obey Him and believe on Jesus as our Savior and confess Him as our Lord, we need to obey all He commands us to do. When we obey Jesus and receive Spirit baptism and the Spirit comes into our hearts, we need to submit to His leading and by His power obey all that He commands us do.

Is this what is being taught in the church world today?

Not for the most part. It seems that in much of the modern church world obedience to the Godhead's commands has been labeled as works and is taught as being unnecessary for salvation. While doing works in the flesh to try and earn our salvation is useless, not doing what God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit command us to do is sin. And that is what we are talking about in this section – obeying the Godhead and doing the works, deeds, that They command us to do which are necessary and are our reasonable service. These works, deeds, are done in faith, faithfulness, to God and are not the dead works that the author of the Book of Hebrews exhorted the Hebrew believers to repent of.

Hebrews 6:1 “Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,”

What does this verse say that two of the elementary principles of Christ are?

To repent from, stop doing, dead works and to exercise faith, faithfulness, toward God.

What are dead works?

They are works that we do to try and earn our salvation or favor with God that are not done in faith, obedience, to God by the power of the Holy Spirit, but are done in the power of our flesh. Works done, not out of faith in Jesus and in obedience to Him are dead works. But so too, faith in Jesus that is not accompanied by works, obedience to His commands, is dead faith, and neither dead works nor dead faith will save us.

James, the Lord's brother, has much to say to us about dead faith.

James 2:14 "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?"

James asks, "if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?"

This is a rhetorical question that James is asking to make a point. So, the answer is, of course not. We just spent a whole chapter looking at the importance of faith, believing in Jesus, so we know it is an absolute necessity for us to be saved, justified, have our sins forgiven, be made righteous, but James is saying that our faith must be accompanied by works, obedience to Jesus, if it is going to save us.

James continues making his point by giving us a parable of sorts to help us see the reality of this truth.

James 2:15 "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

What is the lesson that James is trying to teach us with his parable?

He says if you, a believer in Christ, see another Christian brother or sister in need of clothing and food and speak some religious platitude over them, but don't meet their need, what does that profit? It certainly doesn't profit the naked and hungry brother or sister, but it has even worse consequences for the disobedient believer.

Why?

Because Jesus said that believers in Him, His disciples, must obey everything that He commanded them to do and one

of the greatest commandments that He gave to His disciples was this.

John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

The Father also commands us to obey Jesus’ command to love one another.

1 John 3:23 “And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.”

What is the Father commanding us to do?

Believe in His Son Jesus and obey Jesus’ command to love one another.

Did the believer in James’ parable who saw his brethren in need obey the Father’s and Jesus’ command to love one another?

No, and unless he repented and did what Jesus commands us all to do, to love one another, he will not be saved on Judgment Day! Because “faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” And dead faith can’t save anyone.

Let’s read about how Jesus is going to deal with believers in the final Judgment who did not add to their faith, works, obedience, to His command to love one another.

Matthew 25:41 “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;

43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.”

Why are these believers being cast into the lake of fire?

Because of what they did, or in this case did not do. Not because they did not believe in Jesus, but because they did not obey Him and in love care for their brethren.

Jesus continues His narrative:

44 “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’

45 “Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

How do we know for sure that those who go into everlasting punishment with the devil and his angels, are believers in Jesus?

They know who Jesus is and they call Him Lord and they are arguing with Him about being condemned. Also, we know that they are not unbelievers because unbelievers are not going to hell because they did not feed Christians when they were hungry or because they neglected to clothe them when they saw them naked. They are going into everlasting punishment because they refused to repent of their sin and to believe on Jesus as their Savior.

On the other hand, we know that believers will be judged by whether or not they not only believed in Jesus but obeyed Him in doing what He commanded them to do.

Who are the righteous who enter into eternal life?

Those on Jesus’ right hand who believed in Him and were justified, made righteous, by grace through faith in Him, and who also obeyed His command to love their fellow brothers and sisters and so ministered to them in their need and were thus justified, made righteous, by their works, obedience, actions, as well as their faith.

Matthew 25:34 “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;

36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.”

The righteous ask the Lord the same question as those who are cursed.

Matthew 25:37 “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?’

38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?

39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’

40 And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”

Why were these believers accepted into the kingdom of heaven?

Because they not only believed in Jesus as their Savior, but they obeyed Him as their Lord and loved and ministered to the needs of their and His brethren as He commanded them to.

Back to James’ parable:

James 2:15 “If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

16 and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”

Did the faith of those believers, those on Jesus' left hand, the goats, save them?

No! Because as James said, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

When Jesus is describing the final judgment in Matthew 25, He is not speaking a parable, He is speaking about what is actually going to happen. Don't miss the point, He is showing that faith in Him is not enough, it must be accompanied by obedience to His commands.

James continues making his point about our need for works, obedience.

James 2:18 "But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"

What is James trying to teach us when he says, you believe, and the demons believe?

He is saying, you and the demons both believe in God, but you know the demons are not going to heaven just because they believe in God. They believe in God because they saw Him sitting on His throne in heaven, but they also disobeyed Him and followed the devil in his rebellion against God. Now they are damned awaiting the final judgment and the lake of fire. What separates us, real Christians, from the demons, is we add works, obedience, to our faith in God and do what He commands us to do. Those who don't, James says, are foolish, and their faith, if not accompanied by works, is dead.

To drive his point home, James continues and talks about Abraham offering up his son Isaac:

James 2:21 "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?"

22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?"

Why did Abraham offer his son Isaac on an altar?

He was obeying what God had commanded him to do.

What does it mean that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect, complete?

Abraham believed God, trusted Him, and it was accounted to him as righteousness. And he obeyed God's command to offer up his son and through that obedience his faith was made complete, perfect.

Would Abraham still have been accounted righteous if he had believed God's promise, but then refused to obey His command to offer up his son?

No, he would have been sinning against God. He would have been unrighteous.

1 John 3:7 "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

That is why James went on to say:

James 2:24 "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only."

How does James say a person is justified?

"A man is justified by works, and not by faith only."

Faith is not enough to justify us if we choose to live in disobedience to God. This is again why repentance before believing is so important. We can't believe in Jesus and live in sin, rebellion, and think we are justified, saved, righteous.

Here is a portion of Scripture that those who believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone use in support of this teaching.

Ephesians 2:8 “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

How does this Scripture tell us we are saved?

By grace through faith. Not by works, dead works, that are done in the flesh, that are done to try and earn salvation. Justification, the forgiveness of our sins is through faith in Jesus, not by our works.

What does Paul say we were saved for?

“Good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

What if believers refuse to do those “good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them,” are they still saved, justified, righteous?

No, like Abraham who had been made righteous, justified, through his faith in God, and by his works, obedience to God, we also must be justified by works, obedience to God’s will, as well as by our faith in Christ. Faith in Jesus that doesn’t lead to obedience to Jesus is worthless; it can’t save you!

If we don’t obey God and do the works that He has prepared for us to walk in, live out, then we are back in our sin. And the wages of sin is still death whether we believe in Jesus or not.

And yes, I know, believers don’t immediately die spiritually and physically when we sin, or we would all be dead. God is gracious! He deals with us about our need to repent and do His will, even sometimes giving us years to repent, but if we don’t repent and obey Him at some point in our life, when we die, we will be in danger of the lake of fire.

Let’s look at what Paul says about our need to obey God after we have believed in Jesus and have been justified by grace

through faith. He explained the truth of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ in chapters 3, 4, and 5 of his letter to the Roman church. He ends chapter 5 with these glorious words:

Romans 5:19 “For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Who is the one man who disobeyed God and through whom many were made sinners?

The first man, Adam.

How will many be made righteous?

Through Jesus' obedience to the Father in dying on the cross for our sins and our believing, trusting, in Him to be made righteous.

Why did God give man the law?

That sin might abound, that man might see just how sinful he is and realize his need for a Savior, Deliverer. “But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.”

What were the consequences of sin and grace?

When sin reigned in our life it brought death upon us, but when grace reigns in our life it brings righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. These are wonderful truths that Paul is teaching us, but he doesn't want us in our fleshly thinking to twist them and use them to justify living in sin, disobedience, so he continues with the next sentence in his letter and asks a rhetorical question.

Romans 6:1 “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

What is Paul’s question in verse 1 and how does he answer that question in verse 2?

Paul’s question is, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? and the first part of his answer is, “Certainly not!” exclamation point. Which I translate as, Are you out of your mind?

He continues his answer with more questions: how can you continue sinning when you died to sin? Don’t you know that when you were baptized into Jesus you were baptized into His death?

What is Paul talking about when he says we were baptized into Jesus’ death?

When we put into practice our confession of Jesus as Lord and obeyed Him in water baptism, we were putting to death self-rule and beginning to live out His lordship of our lives. We were uniting ourselves with Jesus when He submitted Himself to the Father and obeyed Him in going to the cross. We both obeyed the Father and died to self-will and “as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death.” And “therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death.” We died to the rule of self, our flesh, our sinful nature.

Never underestimate the importance of obeying the Father’s and Jesus’ commands or the leading of the Holy Spirit. When we obey Them, self, the flesh, is being put to death and our spiritual man grows and we are being transformed more and more into the image of Jesus.

Paul goes on and says, “that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

What does that mean?

Christ not only died and was buried, but He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, the Holy Spirit. And we, after we have repented, believed on Jesus and confessed Him as Lord, obeyed Him in water baptism, can also obey Him and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit which will make us spiritually alive and empower us to walk in newness of life.

In obedience to Jesus, we need to die with Him in water baptism and in obedience to Him we need to live with Him through Holy Spirit baptism. Make no mistake about it, if we are going to live a life of obedience to God it will only be by the grace, life, of God, imparted to us by Holy Spirit regeneration. That way God receives all the glory!

Paul continues in Romans Chapter 6 to show us that after we have believed in Jesus, we need to not only obey Him in water baptism and in receiving the Holy Spirit and being born again, but we must obey Him in everything. We cannot continue to live in obedience to sin, self, the flesh, or we will die spiritually. Just as obedience to the Godhead strengthens us spiritually, disobedience revives self and the flesh and will kill us spiritually.

Romans 6:16 “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”

What is Paul referring to when he says, “to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey”?

He is saying that we have a choice to make when it comes to who we are going to obey. When we repented and said we were going to begin to do God’s will, and we confessed Jesus as our Lord and said we would obey Him always, and when we received the Holy Spirit and said we would

submit ourselves to His leading, God did not take away our free will. We can still choose to do our own will and not God's, reinstate ourselves as our lord and do what we want and not what Jesus commands us to do, and we can choose to walk in the flesh and not in the Spirit, all of which is sin, lawlessness, unrighteousness.

So, Paul says we must choose who we are going to obey, either sin, disobedience, leading to death, or obedience to God leading to righteousness.

What does Paul say the consequence of our choice will be?

If we choose to sin, we become its slave, and it will lead to eternal death, eventually, if we don't confess it and repent of it. If we choose obedience to the Godhead it leads to righteousness, not imputed righteousness, but righteous actions, works, right living, which leads to eternal life.

I have too much to say in this chapter on obedience to write out and go through the entire chapter of Romans 6, but you need to take the time to read it and study it for yourselves. I will close with the last verse and then move on.

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

When Paul says the wages of sin is death does that only apply to unbelievers?

It certainly does apply to unbelievers, but Paul is not writing to unbelievers in the world, he is writing to believers in the church in Rome. And he tells them that if they choose to live in sin, disobedience, they will die spiritually and eternally one day.

If anyone tells you, a believer, that you don't have to obey God, that you can disobey Him, sin, and “you will not surely die,” they are being used as a mouthpiece for the devil!

Genesis 3:2 “And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;

3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die.’”

What happened to Adam and Eve when they believed the serpents lie and disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden tree?

They died spiritually that day and eventually they died physically! And all their descendants, which is all of us, were born spiritually dead and we will all die physically someday.

Romans 5:12 “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men...”

Paul ends Romans chapter 6 verse 23 with “but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

If it’s a gift, why do we have to do anything?

God gave us the gift of His Son, Jesus, so that when we believe in Him, we can be made righteous, be justified, but we have to choose to believe in Him. He also gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Jesus, but we have to choose to receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Through these two gifts, imputed righteousness through faith in Jesus and Holy Spirit regeneration through the baptism of the Holy Spirit we have eternal life, but we must choose to live that life out in our daily walk. We cannot choose to live in disobedience, sin, or we will die spiritually and eternally, for the wages of sin is death to both believers and unbelievers.

If we are going to live forever, make heaven our eternal home, and not die spiritually and eternally, and not make hell our eternal destination after we have believed in Jesus, what are some of the other things we are commanded in the Bible to obey the Godhead and do and/or not do, besides these things we have already looked at? I will list some other examples, but this will not be an exhaustive list.

First and foremost, in my mind, is Jesus' command for us to be born of water and the Spirit.

John 3:5 "Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'"

What does Jesus say the consequence will be for those who do not obey His command to be born of water and the Spirit?

They cannot enter into the kingdom of God; they are not going to heaven!

Let's look at Adam Clarke's comments on John 3:5:

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible: "Therefore, our Lord asserts that a man must be born of water and the Spirit, i.e. of the Holy Ghost, which, represented under the similitude of water, cleanses, refreshes, and purifies the soul. Reader, hast thou never had any other baptism than that of water? If thou hast not had any other, take Jesus Christ's word for it, thou canst not, in thy present state, enter into the kingdom of God. I would not say to thee merely, read what it is to be born of the Spirit: but pray, O pray to God incessantly, till he give thee to feel what is implied in it! Remember, it is Jesus only who baptizes with the Holy Ghost: see Joh_1:33. He who receives not this baptism has neither right nor title to the kingdom of God; nor can he with any propriety be termed a Christian, because that which essentially distinguished the Christian dispensation from that of the Jews was, that its author baptized all his followers with the Holy Ghost."

What is Mr. Clarke saying?

He is saying a number of things which we need to consider closely. He says, if you have believed in Jesus and obeyed Him in water baptism but have not had any other baptism "take Jesus Christ's word for it, thou canst not, in thy present state, enter into the kingdom of God." He continues, "I would not say

to thee merely, read what it is to be born of the Spirit: but pray, O pray to God incessantly, till he give thee to feel what is implied in it! Remember, it is Jesus only who baptizes with the Holy Ghost.” He goes on and says, “He who receives not this baptism has neither right nor title to the kingdom of God; nor can he with any propriety be termed a Christian...”

Mr. Clarke is commenting on Jesus’ command for His followers to be born of the Spirit and he connects that to them being baptized by the Holy Ghost. And he says that if you have not been born of the Spirit, baptized with the Holy Ghost you have neither right nor title to the kingdom of God, you are not going to make heaven your eternal home as Jesus said.

Another example of something Jesus commanded His followers, God’s children, believers, to do, that if they don’t do, will keep them out of heaven, is Jesus’ command for us to forgive others. In the Lord’s Prayer Jesus tells us to ask the Father to forgive us our debts, but He tells us to add to that, “As we forgive our debtors.”

Matthew 6:12 “And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.”

What does the word “debts” mean?

Here are some Bible dictionary definitions: That which is owed; An offense, a trespass; Metaphorically offense, sin.

Luke in his recording of the Lord’s Prayer leaves no doubt about what our debts are that we are asking the Father for forgiveness of; they are our sins.

Luke 11:4 “And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us...”

Jesus ends the Lord’s Prayer in verse 13 of Matthew 6 and then goes on in verses 14 and 15 of that chapter to expound on what He meant in Matthew 6:12 “And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.”

Matthew 6:14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

What does Jesus say the Father will do if we obey Him and forgive men their trespasses, sins, offenses, debts, against us?

“Your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

This agrees with what Jesus taught earlier in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.”

Do we then earn God’s forgiveness, mercy, by forgiving, being merciful to others?

No, but if we don’t obey the Father and forgive others as He commands us to, then we are sinning. Think about it, as we are asking the Father to forgive us of our sins, one of which would be our sin of unforgiveness, we are at that very moment sinning by refusing to obey Him and forgive others as He commands us to do.

Jesus tells us in His next sentence that it doesn’t work that way. We must first repent of our sin of unforgiveness and obey the Father and forgive others or the Father will not forgive us; God will not forgive sins that we refuse to repent of, turn from, stop doing.

Matthew 6:15 “But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

What does it mean for us if the Father does not forgive our trespasses, sins?

That we are not made righteous, justified, we are still in our sin. And if we never repent and obey the Father and forgive, we will be in danger of God’s wrath on Judgment Day just as James confirms in his epistle.

James 2:13 “For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”

How does mercy triumph over judgment?

When we show mercy, forgiveness, love, to others in obedience to God and His Word, we are not continuing in sin. We are adding works to our faith and as James wrote, “A man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”

Let us not kid ourselves and say we love someone, but we just can’t forgive them. If we won’t forgive someone, we don’t love them! And, if we won’t obey Jesus’ command to forgive others, it’s because we don’t love others or Jesus as much as we might think we do.

John 14:15 “If you [really] love Me, you will keep (obey) My commands.” AMPC

Let me just add here that these works, acts of obedience, are not done in our flesh by our own strength and power. We do these things by the grace of God. Everything that God commands us to do we do by His grace, Spirit, so that He gets all the glory, and forgiving others is no exception to that rule as we will see in these next Scriptures.

Hebrews 4:15 “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Why can Jesus, our High Priest, sympathize with man in his weaknesses?

Because He, “was in all points tempted as we are.” Jesus had a human, flesh, nature, that was able to be tempted just like we do.

If Jesus was a man and He was tempted in all points like the rest of us, how did He never give into sin?

There were a few reasons for that but the one most relevant to us that I want to focus on is this:

John 3:34 “For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.”

Jesus was given a limitless supply of the Holy Spirit by the Father which enabled Him to live a sinless life, in perfect obedience to the Father.

But M. R. Vincent tells us that this verse says more than that and that is what is relevant to us being able to obey God and forgive men their sins against us.

Word Studies in the New Testament (M. R. Vincent): “Take up, then, the chain of thought from the first clause of John 3:34, and follow it on another line. The Messenger of God speaks the words of God, and thus shows himself worthy of credence, and shows this further, by dispensing the gift of the Spirit in full measure to His disciples. “He giveth not the Spirit by measure.” This interpretation adds a new link to the chain of thought; a new reason why Jesus should increase, and His testimony be received; the reason, namely, that not only is He himself divinely endowed with the Spirit, but that He proves it by dispensing the Spirit in full measure.”

Did you catch that?

Not only did Jesus receive from the Father the Spirit without measure, but He also dispenses Him to His disciples when we need Him and ask the Father for Him. That is what the author of Hebrews is telling us in verse 16 above. “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

What does Hebrews 4:16 say we come before the throne of grace to receive?

“To obtain mercy,” the forgiveness of our sins, from the Father. But as we saw Jesus connected us receiving the Father’s mercy, forgiveness, to us being merciful and forgiving others, which is where we can have a problem.

Thankfully, Jesus understands our weaknesses and He has made provision for us at the throne of grace.

What else do we come to the Father's throne of grace to receive?

“And find grace to help in time of need.” The Father can, not only give us mercy, the forgiveness of our sins, when we come before His throne of grace, but He can also give us grace to help in time of need. He can give us grace by the Holy Spirit to be able to forgive others. Whatever the Father commands us to do He also supplies us with the ability to do it, through the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit. He is a good, good Father unto us!

I don't want to cheapen the horrific injustices and abuses that some people have suffered at the hands of others, but no one has suffered more injustice and abuse at the hands of man than Jesus Christ. And as He hung on that cross battered and dying, He looked out at His unrepentant tormentors and forgave them and prayed and asked the Father to forgive them.

If He hadn't, He would have sinned and would not have been able to make available to mankind the gifts of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. But He didn't sin, He obeyed and forgave by the life of the Spirit in Him, and ended His earthly life sinless, perfect. And because He did, He was able to make forgiveness, righteousness, justification, and the Holy Spirit available to us.

We are therefore without excuse if we don't appropriate grace by the Holy Spirit and obey Him and forgive others their sins against us as He has commanded us. And as Jesus said, if we don't forgive men their sins against us, the Father won't forgive our sins, and if the Father does not forgive us our sins, then we are not justified, made righteous, and as Paul said, “the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God.” And remember he was not speaking these words to sinners in the world, but to believers in the church in Galatia.

In our next example God commands us in John's first epistle not to love the world and to do His will if we want to abide forever.

1 John 2:15 “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

Who is John writing to and what does John command them not to do if they want to abide, live, forever?

His brethren, brothers and sisters in Christ, believers in the church, and he commands them, “Do not love the world or the things in the world.”

What does he say will happen in them if they do love the world?

The love of the Father will not be in them. Adam Clarke has this comment about what that statement means.

Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible: “The love of God and the love of earthly things are incompatible. If you give place to the love of the world, the love of God cannot dwell in you; and if you have not his love, you can have no peace, no holiness, no heaven.”

After John tells us what is in the world, what does he say is going to happen to the world?

“And the world is passing away, and the lust of it.” I’ll add this to that; the world is passing away, perishing, and those who love the world and are living for it are going to perish with it unless they repent.

Does verse 17 above end with, “and the world is passing away, and the lust of it?”

No, it goes on to say, “But he who does the will of God abides forever.” If we want to live forever, have eternal life, in heaven with the Godhead, then we need to not love the world or the things in it, but love the Father and obey, do, His will.

Matthew records Jesus saying the same thing in our next example.

Matthew 7:21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’

23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

Who does Jesus say is going to enter into heaven?

“He who does the will of My Father in heaven.” Jesus says only those who do the will of His Father here on earth are going to heaven.

Jesus continues in Matthew 7:22 and says, “Many will say to Me in that day.”

Who are the “many” and what is “that day”?

These many are believers in Him. We know that because they go on to call Him Lord and profess, “Have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?” So, there is no doubt that these many are believers and probably pretty prestigious men and women in their churches with a resume like theirs. And that day is Judgment Day.

What does Jesus say He is going to declare, say, to these many believers on Judgment Day?

“I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”

1 John 3:4 “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”

What do you think their sin, lawlessness, was that caused Jesus to tell them to depart from Him on Judgment Day?

From the context of these verses the most logical conclusion is that they did not do the will of Jesus’ Father in heaven.

And so, on Judgment Day they are turned away from heaven by Jesus and told to depart from Him.

This is not a parable. What Jesus is saying here is a fact of what He knows He is going to do at the end of time at the final judgment. This is why He tries so hard so many times in the Scriptures to convince man to take sin, disobedience, lawlessness, seriously. He knows sin is not a game, a toy, to be played with. It will kill and take to hell the believer as well as the unbeliever, if we give into its siren call.

Mark 9:43 “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched –

44 where *“Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”*”

Is Jesus really suggesting that we cut off our hand?

No, you could cut off both your hands and both your feet and you could still keep on sinning if you wanted to. He is using this drastic illustration to show us how seriously we should take sin.

Why do we have to take it so seriously?

He tells us, if we don't repent of our sin, confess it and be cleansed from its consequences, and get victory over it by the life of the Spirit in us it will take us to hell, “where *“Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”*”

I am not writing this as someone who thinks he is perfect. I know what it is to struggle with strongholds of sin in my life. Ask my wife or my pastor if you doubt me, but we must always continue by the grace of God to fight against sin in our life until we get victory over it or die trying. I honestly believe that when we die, if we are striving against the sin in our life, we will be okay, but we can never give in and stop striving against it.

Luke 13:23 “Then one said to Him, “Lord, are there few who are saved?” And He said to them,

24 “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’

26 then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’

27 But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’”

Who is the one who is telling us to, “Strive to enter,” who is also the Judge who tells the workers of iniquity to “depart from Me?”

Jesus is the one telling us to strive to enter, and He is also the Judge of all the earth and is the one we will all stand before and give an account of our life to, who is also no stranger when it comes to striving against sin.

Hebrews 12:3 “For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.”

What is the author referring to when he says Jesus strove against sin to the point of bloodshed?

I believe he is referring to Jesus in the garden when He was struggling with obeying the Father’s will and going to the cross.

Luke 22:42 “saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”

43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

What is the cup that Jesus is asking the Father to take away from Him?

Allowing Himself to be arrested, to be physically tortured to the point of His face and body being marred more than any other man, then being crucified on a cross which has been described as the most gruesome form of execution ever invented. Then on the cross He took the sins of the whole world upon Himself and then experienced the full wrath of God against those sins.

Next, to die spiritually as the Father and the Spirit abandon Him for the first time since His conception, or for the first time in eternity, and finally to die physically when His spirit departed from Him and descended into the lowest parts of the earth.

This is the cup that Jesus was asking, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me.”

But what is the conclusion of His prayer?

“Nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”

Jesus submits to the Father’s will as horrific as it is, to make the way for mankind to be able to repent of their sin. Believe on Him and be forgiven, cleansed, of their sin; receive the Holy Spirit into their hearts and be born again. And, by the power of the Holy Spirit in them be able to obey the Godhead and do Their will.

So, when Jesus, our example, says to us, only those who do the will of My Father will enter into heaven, He by His grace has made available to us everything that we need to be able to do that. If then we don’t obey Him and do the Father’s will for our life now, on Judgment Day we will be, without argument or excuse when we stand before Him and we hear Him say, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”

In our next example Paul exhorts the believers in Philippi to:

Philippians 2:12 “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now

much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

Why does Paul say that we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling?

Because God is working in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

What does that mean?

God saved us so that we could fulfill His will, plan, and purpose for our lives. He reveals to us His will and what He would have us to do that would please Him. We have to work that out in our life and need to do it with fear and trembling because if we don't do His will, we will be back living in sin, disobedience, self-will, and that will lead to eternal spiritual death one day if we don't repent.

Salvation is a gift like the talents the master gave to his servants, but like the servants we are expected to take that gift and use it in service to the master because God is going to hold us accountable for doing that, just like the master held his servants accountable.

Speaking of fear, here is another good biblical term that much of the modern church world has turned into something that is bad. The idea is that Christians should not fear God but love Him and serve Him out of love and gratitude. While I agree with that premise, the truth is that our love and gratitude toward God is often not to the degree that it should be, and a little godly fear would go a long way in helping us to obey Him so that we make heaven our eternal home.

And besides that, Jesus admonishes us to fear our heavenly Father.

Matthew 10:28 “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Is that what most of us do?

No, we fear man and treat God like He is a harmless old grandfather. But even Jesus, the Bible says, had a reverential fear of disobeying the Father.

Hebrews 5:7 “who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,

8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,”

Who are these verses talking about and why did the Father hear His prayers?

They are speaking of Jesus, and His prayers were “heard because of His godly fear.”

What did He learn “by the things which He suffered”?

Obedience!

And who has He become the author of eternal salvation to?

“To all who obey Him.”

Are you seeing a pattern, a consistency, in the Scriptures when it comes to obeying God and being eternally saved and going to heaven?

Jesus had godly fear, and we are exhorted to have it also.

Hebrews 12:28 “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

29 For our God is a consuming fire.”

Why should we “serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear”?

Because “our God is a consuming fire.” Not a harmless old grandfather.

In our next example we will look at what Peter tells us we must do to make heaven our eternal home.

2 Peter 1:5 “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, **6** to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,

7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

We saw that James said, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.” James did not believe that faith alone, without works, obedience to God, would justify, make someone righteous.

From what Peter wrote above, do you think Peter believed faith alone was enough to save us?

No. He gives us a list of things that we need to add to our faith to make our call and election sure and for us to have an entrance supplied to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In these verses Peter calls his list of things we need to add to our faith, “these things.”

What does Peter say the consequences and/or benefits of adding or not adding “these things” to our faith would be?

1. “For if “these things” are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2. “He who lacks “these things” is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.”

3. “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do “these things” you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

What then is our ultimate benefit if we add “these things” to our faith and diligently do them?

We will make our call and election sure; we will never stumble; we will have an entrance supplied to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Simply put, we will make heaven our eternal home and escape eternal damnation!

Peter calls it the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is what we have been talking about. Jesus must be both Lord and Savior, and if He is not both, then He is neither. We must believe in Him as our Savior, and we must confess Him as our Lord and obey Him if we are going to make heaven our eternal home.

For what good is it if we believe in Jesus and confess Him as our Lord but don’t obey Him?

Which is exactly what Jesus is asking His followers with this question.

Luke 6:46 “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”

What is Jesus saying with this question?

He is saying, there is a dichotomy, a contradiction, here. You are confessing one thing with your mouth but with your

actions, the way you live, you are confessing the opposite as being true. You are calling Me your Lord, but in reality, you are the lord of your life. And again, unless Jesus is both our Lord and our Savior, we will not make heaven our eternal home.

Our next example is Jesus' own words concerning our need to obey Him.

Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount in which He commanded His followers as to what they should do and be and how they should live with these words:

Matthew 7:24 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.”

What did Jesus say a wise person does?

When he hears Jesus' sayings, teachings, instructions, commands, he does, follows, obeys, them.

What did Jesus liken someone who obeys Him to?

A wise man who builds his house, life, on the rock, Jesus, and does what He says in obedience to Him.

What did Jesus say the end of that wise person's house, life, would be, and why?

It would not fall, or be destroyed, because it was founded on living in obedience to Him.

Jesus continues:

26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

What did Jesus say a foolish person does?

When he hears Jesus' sayings, teachings, instructions, commands, he does not do, follow, obey, them.

What did Jesus liken him to?

A foolish man who built his house, life, on the sand.

What did Jesus say would be the end for the foolish person's house, life?

It fell, was destroyed, and He said great was its fall, destruction.

When Jesus finished His sermon, the people were astonished.

28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,

29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Why were the people astonished?

"He taught them as one having authority." He was not one of their religious leaders and He wasn't someone who was given authority over them by the Roman government, yet He commanded and told them what they should do and how they should live as if He were in authority.

What gave Him the right to speak to them with authority?

Because He, Jesus Christ, is Lord! He is not only our Savior, but He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings, very God. And we can be wise and confess Him as Lord of our life now and begin to do, obey, what He says, commands, teaches us. Or we can be foolish and continue to live as the lord of our life, refuse to confess Him as our Lord, and refuse to obey Him.

But on Judgment Day when we all stand before Him, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, including those who refused to do that during their life. And although they refused to honor and obey Him as their Lord in this life, they will obey Him then when He says, "Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity."

Philippians 2:9 “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

As we have seen earlier in our study, the full gospel message is repent, believe, obey, and receive and that after we receive the Spirit and are born again, we must walk, live, in the Spirit, if we are to please God and make heaven our eternal home.

I have given the first four steps; repent, believe, obey, and receive, a chapter each in this section of the book but will only expound on walking, living, in the Spirit here is this chapter and some in the next chapter, but be assured it is as important to our salvation as any of the other steps.

Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

What does the word “condemnation” mean?

It can be defined as, A decision against someone, a condemnatory judgment; a damnatory sentence; an adverse sentence.

So, according to this verse if I am in Christ Jesus, trusting, believing, in Him as my Savior, I am justified and there is no condemnatory judgment, no damnatory or adverse sentence, against me.

If what?

If I do not walk, live, according to the flesh, and if I do walk, live, according to the Spirit.

Again, we see that our choice of who we choose to obey determines our outcome. If I choose to obey self, my flesh nature, and follow its dictates I am condemned, but if I choose to obey the leading of the Spirit and yield myself to do His will by His power there is no condemnation against me.

How exactly does that work?

Paul tells us as we continue looking at Romans Chapter 8.

Romans 8:5 “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”

What is our part in determining whether we live according to the flesh or according to the Spirit?

What we set our minds and affections on and what we choose to think about, meditate on. Either the things of the flesh and the world or the things of the Spirit, spiritual things, heaven. And if we don't discipline our minds and focus them on the things of God, spiritual things, and we just let them wander wherever they choose, they will go to the things of the flesh and of the world because that is their default setting.

Colossians 3:1 “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Who determines what we think about?

We are responsible for what we choose to think about, set our minds on. One of the greatest hindrances to people serving God today is that their minds are so totally undisciplined. A big reason for that is that our minds are being bombarded constantly with media input which has caused us to become unable to focus our minds on any one thing. But thank God that He is able by the Holy Spirit to renew our minds, and give us control once again, but it will take a lot of effort and work on our part to see it become a reality in our life.

Continuing in Romans 8:

Romans 8:6 “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

How important is it, what we set our minds on?

It's a matter of spiritual life and death. If we are carnally, fleshly, minded it will lead to sin and death, but if we are spiritually minded, to life and peace. Everything we do begins with a thought in our mind so if we are going to live right, we must think right.

Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny."

The devil understands what Mr. Emerson is saying here and he therefore continuously sows thoughts into our minds. Our responsibility is to reject those thoughts, not allow our minds to dwell on them, and replace them with what we want our minds to think about, spiritual things, the things of God, Jesus, the Father, heaven, God's will for our life, the Word of God, etc. and know this, your eternal destiny depends on you doing just that!

Romans 8:13 "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

What is Paul saying very clearly in these passages?

If we live, walk, according to the flesh, self, its will and desires, we will die spiritually and eternally, if we don't repent and by the Spirit put to death the deeds, habits, of the body. But if we do submit to the leading of the Spirit, we will put to death the deeds of the body, the flesh, and we will live spiritually and eternally.

A note here: I believe the deeds of the body and works of the flesh are synonymous, and we will look at the works of the flesh next.

Galatians 5:16 "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”

What is God commanding us to do here?

Walk, live, in the Spirit, or according to the Spirit, and not to fulfill the lust of the flesh.

What is Paul describing as going on in our life?

A battle between the flesh, self, and the Spirit, God, for control of our life and he says if we submit to the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, both in His leading and in His power, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

How important is it that we walk in the Spirit and don't fulfill the lust of the flesh?

He tells us in these next verses where he lists what the works of the flesh are.

Galatians 5:19 “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

So, how important is it that we walk in the Spirit and don't practice the works of the flesh?

“Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” If you are a believer, but your habit is to walk in the flesh and practice its works, you will not inherit the kingdom of God. You will not make heaven your eternal home.

Here is a portion of Matthew Henry's comments on these verses.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible:
“He concludes the catalogue with an et cetera, and gives

fair warning to all to take care of them, as they hope to see the face of God with comfort. Of these and such like, says he, I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that those who do such things, how much soever they may flatter themselves with vain hopes, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. These are sins which will undoubtedly shut men out of heaven.”

Paul makes reference to walking in the flesh and walking in the Spirit in the next chapter of his letter to the Galatian believers and he tells us the result of doing both.

Galatians 6:7 “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”

What does it mean to sow to the flesh or sow to the Spirit?

It means to yield to, give into, serve, obey, live to please, walk in, live in, be controlled by, one or the other.

Commentator John Gill says this about this verse:

John Gill’s Exposition of the Bible: “For he that soweth to his flesh.... he is such an one that pampers his flesh, gratifies and indulges the lusts of it, who minds the things of the flesh, lives after it, and does the works of it...”

“But he that soweth to the Spirit; not his own, but the Spirit of God; or that soweth spiritual things, that minds and savours the things of the Spirit, lives in the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit...”

The New Living Translation of the Bible translates this verse as such:

Galatians 6:8 “Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.” NLT

What will the person who sows to, walks in the flesh reap?

Corruption, which means destruction, moral decay, etc.

Mr. Thayer defines corruption this way:

Thayer's Greek Definitions: "Corruption, destruction, perishing. That which is subject to corruption, what is perishable. In the Christian sense, eternal misery in hell."

What about the person who sows to, walks in, lives in, the Spirit, what will he reap?

Everlasting life in heaven with the Godhead.

Paul also writes about those who practice the works of the flesh to the believers in the church in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 6:9 "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

What is the end result of those who practice these works of the flesh?

They will not inherit the kingdom of God, enter into the kingdom of heaven.

I'll ask you the same question Paul asked these believers, Don't you know that the unrighteous are not going to heaven?

Don't you know in your heart that believers living in sin, who refuse to repent and turn from their sinful lifestyle, are not going to heaven? Whether or not you hear this message preached at your church, and if you don't read the Bible so you are not familiar with these Scriptures we have been looking at, doesn't your conscience tell you that you can't live in sin and

still make heaven your eternal home just because you believe in Jesus?

Here is part of Matthew Henry's comments on 1 Corinthians 6:9-10:

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: "He puts it to them as a plain truth, of which they could not be ignorant, that such sinners should not inherit the kingdom of God. The meanest among them must know thus much, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, shall not be owned as true members of his church on earth, nor admitted as glorious members of the church in heaven. All unrighteousness is sin; and all reigning sin, nay, every actual sin committed deliberately, and not repented of, shuts out of the kingdom of heaven..."

"Yet he warns them against deceiving themselves: Be not deceived. Those who cannot but know the forementioned truth are but too apt not to attend to it. Men are very much inclined to flatter themselves that God is such a one as themselves, and that they may live in sin and yet die in Christ, may lead the life of the devil's children and yet go to heaven with the children of God. But this is all a gross cheat. Note, It is very much the concern of mankind that they do not cheat themselves in the matters of their souls. We cannot hope to sow to the flesh and yet reap everlasting life."

I cannot say it any clearer than Mr. Henry did, "We cannot hope to sow to the flesh and yet reap everlasting life." Or than Paul did in his letter to the Romans, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die." And Paul is not writing to those in the world but to the believers in the church in Rome when he says to them, if you live, walk, according to the flesh you will die; spiritually, physically, and eternally.

We must therefore walk in, live in, sow to, be led by, be submitted to, the Spirit and not the flesh if we will make heaven our eternal home.

Conclusions from what we've seen up to this point in the book.

God created mankind to be His loving, trusting, obedient and dependent children. Man chose in the garden to disobey God's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because he wanted to be his own god and serve himself, live independent of God. When man sinned, he died spiritually, the Spirit of God separated Himself from man's spirit and eventually man died physically. And all of Adam and Eve's descendants were born spiritually dead separated from the Godhead, and they would all also die physically.

Knowing what man was going to do, the Father had a plan that He was going to implement by which He would redeem man and reunite him with Himself. So, in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son born of a woman born under the law to redeem those who were under the law so that they could receive the adoption of Sons which would prepare them to receive the Spirit of His Son into their heart.

Man's part in this was that he needed to repent of his sin, believe on Jesus as his Savior and then begin to obey Jesus as his Lord. Jesus' first command to those who choose to believe in Him is for them to be baptized in water.

Taking this step prepares them to obey His next command which is to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit comes into their heart and unites with their spirit the person is reborn to the condition God created man to live in at the beginning of time, in union, oneness, with the Godhead.

When a person receives the Spirit into their heart, life, He comes in as God and begins to lead them and empower them to live out God's will for their life. They must then submit to Him and allow Him to lead them. They must live, walk, according to the Spirit's direction and instruction and by His power do God's will.

But this can only happen after they obey the Lord's command to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and be born again of the Spirit.

And this is a great place to segue into the next chapter entitled “Receive.”

Chapter 20

Receive

John 20:21 “So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

What is Jesus’ two commands to His disciples?

“As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

Where was Jesus sending them and when, what was He sending them to do, and did they receive the Holy Spirit at that time?

John doesn’t give us the details of all that Jesus said to them when He visited them on the day He resurrected from the dead, but Luke fills us in on more of what Jesus spoke to His disciples on that day. We will be better able to answer these questions after we see what Luke records.

Luke 24:46 “He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,

47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 You are witnesses of these things.

49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Now we can answer some of these questions. He was sending them to Jerusalem first and then to the nations to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins in His name. They were not to go immediately though; they were to stay

in Jerusalem until He sent them the Promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, so, no, they did not receive the Holy Spirit at that time. Jesus was going to send Him later.

If they were not going to receive the Spirit at that time, why did Jesus breathe on them and tell them to receive the Holy Spirit?

It was symbolic or a pledge that the Holy Spirit would be coming. He also may have breathed on the disciples to get them to think about God breathing the breath of life into man at the creation.

Genesis 2:7 “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

When God breathed into man, He breathed into him his, man’s spirit united with His, God’s Spirit, and man became a living being, both physically and spiritually alive. Man was spiritually alive, united, one, with the Godhead through the imparted Spirit, but as we know man sinned and died spiritually, the Spirit of God separating Himself from man.

So how appropriate and symbolic it was for Jesus, who after dying for man’s sin and then rising from the dead, to come to those who had believed on Him and been cleansed from their sin and prepared to receive the Holy Spirit, to be made spiritually alive again, to come and breathe on them and command them to receive the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 15:45 “The Scriptures tell us, “The first man, Adam, became a living person.” But the last Adam – that is, Christ – is a life-giving Spirit.” NLT

So, when did they receive the Holy Spirit?

Jesus met with His disciples 40 days after this first encounter with them, just before He ascended back to the Father, and commanded them to do the following:

Acts 1:4 “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem,

but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, ‘you have heard from Me;

5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

9 “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

Jesus said that they were going to receive the Promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and that would happen not many days from when He was speaking to them, which ended up being 10 days later, on the Day of Pentecost.

What does it mean to be baptized with/in the Holy Spirit?

The word translated “with” in this verse in the New King James Version of the Bible is the Greek word “en” which is translated “in” in the American Standard Version, “but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.”

When we think of someone being baptized with something, we get the picture of something being poured over them and when we think of someone being baptized in something we get the picture of them being dunked into something.

Is that then what happens to someone when they are baptized with/in the Holy Spirit?

We don’t have to speculate about what happens to someone when they receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit because the Bible records what happened to the disciples when they were baptized with/in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:4 “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

When they were baptized with/in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit came inside of them, united with their spirit and they were born again of the Spirit and spoke in tongues.

They were also filled with the Holy Spirit at that time. One of the primary meanings of the verb “filled” is to put something inside of a container. In this case the something was the Holy Spirit, and the containers were the 120 disciples. So, we know that being baptized with/in the Holy Spirit means the Spirit coming inside of us.

The Greek word “en” can also be translated “by” as it is in this verse referring to Spirit baptism.

1 Corinthians 12:13 “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

Translating “en” as “by” gives us a little clearer picture of what Spirit baptism is, especially as it is linked to us being “made to drink into one Spirit.” Drinking conveys the idea of the Spirit being taken inside of us and Jesus uses this same metaphor before His death, when speaking to a crowd of people about them receiving the Holy Spirit.

John 7:37 “On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

What is the picture Jesus is painting here?

If you are thirsty for something more in life than what you have received from religion or what the world has given you to drink, then “come to Me and drink.” And “this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive.”

Jesus could not at that time give people to drink of the Holy Spirit, but after He was glorified, He poured the Holy Spirit

into His followers on the Day of Pentecost, and He still pours His Spirit into all who believe in Him and who ask and receive.

And here is another verse of Scripture that tells us exactly what happens when we are baptized by, receive, the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 4:6 “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’”

Where does God send the Spirit of His Son?

Into our hearts. We see then that to be baptized with/in/by the Holy Spirit means the Holy Spirit coming into our hearts, inside us.

Let’s go back for a minute to our original question of, What does it mean to be baptized “with/in” the Holy Spirit? From all these verses that we have looked at up to this point the answer would clearly be that it means that the Spirit comes inside us, into our hearts, and unites with our spirit. But there are other Scriptures referring to Holy Spirit baptism that do not paint a picture of the Holy Spirit entering into us. We need to consider these next.

When Peter is explaining to the crowd at Pentecost what had happened to them, to Jesus’ disciples, when they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he says that it was the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy in which God says, “I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.”

Acts 2:16 “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 *‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh...’*”

When Luke records that the Gentiles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit he uses the phrases, “the Holy Spirit fell upon all those,” and “the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles.”

Acts 10:44 “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.”

When Luke records that the Samaritans had not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit he uses the phrase, “He had fallen upon none of them.”

Acts 8:15 “who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them...”

When Luke records Jesus telling the disciples to wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and that they will receive power when they do, he uses the phrase, “when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”

Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...”

What do all these phrases mean?

While the Holy Spirit falling upon people or being poured out on people or coming upon people are all somewhat synonymous with each other, they don’t project the idea of the Spirit entering into people.

Then what do they mean?

When we pray and ask the Father to baptize us with the Holy Spirit, the Father pours out His Spirit upon us, the Spirit falls upon us, comes upon us, and our part is to open our hearts and receive, drink Him, the Spirit, into us. When Jesus ascended into heaven and received the Holy Spirit from the Father, He poured Him out upon the 120 disciples who were waiting for and praying to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as Jesus had commanded them. When the Spirit was poured out upon them, they received Him into their hearts, “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 2:33 “Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”

I want us to look at one other portion of Scripture that also talks about the Spirit coming upon someone from which we can gain some additional insight. It is where an angel who is talking to Mary, Jesus’ future mother, uses the same phrase that Jesus used when He said to His disciples, “when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”

Luke 1:31 “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.”

34 “Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”

35 And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”

What transpired when the Holy Spirit came upon Mary?

The Holy Spirit came inside of Mary and united with the human egg inside her womb and the Son of God was conceived. This is the same thing that happened to the disciples when the Holy Spirit came upon them on that Pentecost morning. The Holy Spirit came inside of them and united with their spirit, and they became born again sons of God!

So, when we consider the many verses of Scripture dealing with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we see that Holy Spirit baptism is when the Holy Spirit comes into, inside, those who choose to receive Him.

Back to Mary and her response to the angel telling her that she was going to conceive a Son; “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”

What did Mary mean that she did not “know” a man?

She obviously didn’t mean that she had never met a man. She is talking about intimacy. I am not married; I have never

had sexual relations with a man. I have never been legally and physically united with a man.

Webster’s Dictionary of American English (1828):

“To know – In scripture, to have sexual commerce (intercourse) with.”

Let’s also consider Mr. Vines’ definition of this word “to know.”

Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of New

Testament Words: “Ginosko – To know – The verb is also used to convey the thought of connection or union, as between man and woman.”

What does Mr. Vine say this word “to know” also conveys?

The thought of connection or union between two entities, he uses the example of between a man and a woman. I will add the union between God and man. And I believe this is what Jesus was talking about when He used the word “know” to explain what eternal life is.

John 17:3 “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

What is the context of this statement?

It is spoken as part of Jesus’ high priestly prayer to the Father recorded in John Chapter 17. A little farther into His prayer as He is praying for His disciples Jesus says,

John 17:11 “...that they may be one as We are.”

What does Jesus mean that His disciples would be one with Him and the Father and how were Jesus and the Father one?

Jesus tells us Himself what He means a little further on in His prayer when He adds that He is not just praying for His present disciples, but also for those who would believe in Him through their word.

John 17:20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

23 I in them, and You in Me that they may be made perfect in one...”

So then, Jesus and the Father are one because the Father is living, abiding, in Jesus, literally, by His Spirit and Jesus is living, abiding, in the Father, literally, by His spirit. They are spiritually united, they are one, and we, Jesus’ disciples, become one with Them when They literally unite with, come to live inside us, through Spirit baptism.

Just before His death Jesus spoke about these truths a lot as is recorded in John chapters 14-16 and John chapter 17 as we have just seen.

John 14:16 “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever –

17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”

20 “At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

Where does Jesus say that the Spirit the Father is going to give the disciples will be?

“for He dwells with you and will be in you.”

What is “that day” when the disciples will know that they are in Jesus and He is in them?

Pentecost, “that day” when they were baptized by the Spirit and He came inside of them and they were born again of the Spirit, made spiritually alive.

What does Jesus mean when He says, the Spirit will be in you, and I will be in you?

When man receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Father and Son who are one with Him, the Spirit, come into our hearts and unite with our spirit and we become one with Them.

1 John 5:7 “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”

So, when we receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts:

The Father comes into our heart.

Ephesians 4:6 “one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

Jesus the Son/the Word comes into our heart.

Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...”

As well as the Holy Spirit coming into our heart.

1 Corinthians 6:19 “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you...”

Us in Them and Them in us, this is what eternal life is, us knowing the Godhead intimately, being made one with, united with, in union with, Them, through receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This oneness by the Spirit is what man had in the beginning with God. This is what was lost when man sinned, and this is what Jesus came to restore to man again!

Make no mistake, this is what Jesus came to do. This was His mission. Yes, He needed to die for our sins, so that our bodily temple could be cleansed when we believe in Him. But this was, is, to prepare us to receive the Godhead into us. The cross was the only means to this end, but Jesus ultimate purpose was to baptize us with the Holy Spirit to make us one with Himself and the Father again.

That’s why all four Gospel writers tell us that Jesus came to baptize mankind with the Holy Spirit. His disciples receiving the Spirit into them was the primary thing He talked to them about just before His death as is recorded in John chapters 14-17.

Receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit was the first thing He talked to them about after His resurrection from the dead. And the last thing He commanded them to do before He ascended back into heaven was to receive the baptism of the Spirit. If we miss this, we've missed it all!

It's not coincidental that the Godhead uses intimate marriage terms in the Bible when discussing the relationship that They desire us to have with Them and Them to have with us. They want us to know Them intimately, be united with Them and They with us, to become one with Them. And They worked together to bring it to pass.

The Father sent the Word/the Son, into the world to be the lamb of God that would cleanse mankind of their sin. The Son willingly allowed Himself to be arrested and slain for our sins. The Father sent His Spirit to raise the Son from the dead. The risen Jesus commanded His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, just before He ascended back into heaven.

In heaven, the Father exalted Jesus to His right hand and gave Him the Holy Spirit which He poured out into His disciples and man was united, made one, with his Creator again. And those born-again disciples did great exploits for the Lord and His kingdom by bringing many, many souls out of the devil's kingdom and into the kingdom of God. They turned their world right-side up.

I shared at the very beginning of this book how I had been asked to be the spiritual strength coach for those being prepared for ministry in our church. Since that time the idea of spiritual strength was always in the back of my mind. One day as I was reading in the Book of Daniel this verse jumped out at me.

Daniel 11:32 "...but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits."

God was trying to show me something through this verse. I saw that spiritual strength, the ability to do great exploits, came from knowing God, but I didn't understand exactly what

knowing God was. My understanding of how we know God, at that time, was that we know Him through His revelation of Himself to us through His Word. Hence, the more we read and study the Bible, the better we know God, and that's valid, but I felt God was trying to show me something more.

It took God taking me to NF, getting me alone with Himself and His Word, before He was finally able to show me the truths that I am sharing with you now. That spiritual strength comes from us knowing, having an intimate relationship with, becoming one with, the Father and Son through receiving the Holy Spirit into our heart through Spirit baptism.

Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

This is the game changer. This is what Jesus died to make available to man, and it is what enables us to be and do all that God commands us to be and do. And this is why the devil fights against us experiencing this so relentlessly. He understands this, but somehow, he has been able to keep most of the church blinded to this truth for centuries, even up to this present time.

How could the devil accomplish this when the Bible so clearly chronicles the history and teaching of the early church in the Book of Acts? It shows us the difference that was made in these disciples' lives when they were born again of the Spirit at Pentecost, and it records what Peter and Paul taught concerning receiving the Holy Spirit. Don't Christians read their Bibles? Do they just take the teaching of their denominations as gospel? Are they willfully ignorant because they really don't want this experience?

Let me explain to those believers who have not bothered to learn for themselves what the Bible teaches concerning Spirit baptism and so have not obeyed Jesus' command to receive the Holy Spirit. I will use the analogy of human marriage because marriage, union, oneness, is what the Godhead desires

to enter into with us; we are the bride, the Lamb's wife, and Jesus is the bridegroom.

When a couple is going to be married, at least in this country, they go and get a marriage license. They then go to someone who has the legal authority to unite them in marriage and they have a ceremony. During the ceremony there is the exchanging of vows, and rings, and when that part of the ceremony is finished the official pronounces them husband and wife. Then the bride and groom, the minister, and some witnesses sign the marriage certificate, and they are now legally married.

But there is more that needs to take place before the union is complete. The couple still needs to consummate their marriage!

Oxford Languages Dictionary: “Consummate – To make a marriage or relationship complete by having sexual intercourse.”

A man and a woman being united legally through a marriage ceremony and the couple consummating that marriage and becoming one through physical union, intercourse, are two separate actions, one needs to precede the other, and the other needs to follow, but they don't happen simultaneously or automatically. The man and woman have to exercise their will and choose to do both.

Ephesians 5:31 *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”*

Word Studies in the Greek New Testament (Kenneth S. Wuest) “Joined” is *proskollaō* – “The compound verb denotes a most intimate union.”

If after the wedding ceremony the bride refuses to consummate the marriage relationship, we would all think that something is drastically wrong. Yet that is exactly what most believers do! They choose to receive Jesus as their Savior. They say their vows, some sort of Sinner's Prayer in which they profess faith in Christ, and by which they are made right with God, legally.

They are cleansed of their sins and are now made ready to receive Jesus, through Spirit baptism, into their hearts. To consummate the relationship and be made one with the Godhead. But they say no – I’m not going to take that next step. This is as far as I’m willing to go with this relationship. When that happens between believers and their Lord, just like when a wife refuses to consummate the marriage relationship with her husband, there is something drastically wrong!

Let’s consider this verse as it relates to our subject.

1 Corinthians 6:16 “Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For *“the two,”* He says, *“shall become one flesh.”*

17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.”

What is being said here?

When a man is joined to a harlot through intimate union, sexual intercourse with her, even though they are not legally married, the two become one flesh.

And when a person is joined to the Lord through intimate union, receiving the Spirit into their heart, they become one spirit with Him.

Why would someone not want to be one spirit with Jesus!?

Probably because no one ever clearly shared, preached, the full gospel message to them, but that excuse won’t hold water because they have the Bible to read for themselves, what it teaches.

Another likely reason is that they never repented of their sin. They are the lord, god, of their life and they don’t want to give that up. They were told if they would believe on Jesus as their Savior all their sins would be forgiven, and they would make heaven their eternal home. That was all they were signing up for when they prayed that prayer. So, they have no interest in having Jesus come inside of them and becoming one with Him. In having Him living in them 24/7, or in Him being their husband, the Lord, of their life.

It is no coincidence that Jesus used a wedding, marriage, analogy in The Parable of the Ten Virgins to reveal who is His true bride and who is not. And that He speaks this in the context of the judgment seat of Christ.

As we go through this parable, I will use commentary from **Joseph Benson's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments**. I cannot use all of Mr. Benson's comments, but enough to give us a clear picture of what Jesus is trying to teach us with this parable. Please read his entire comments on your own.

Matthew 25:1 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom."

J.B. "To ten such virgins our Lord compares the candidates for the heavenly kingdom, the complete number of all Christian professors... he compares professors to *virgins*... The lamp means a religious profession... The bridegroom means the Lord Jesus in this parable..."

2 "Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

3 Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,

4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."

J.B. "*and five foolish... These latter took their lamps – Took up a profession of the true religion; but took no oil with them... They did not receive or maintain... an interest in and union with Christ the good olive, or the life of God in their souls. But the wise took oil in their vessels, &c. – Together with the lamp of an external profession, they secured and maintained vital godliness, through the indwelling of the Spirit of God,*"

5 "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept."

J.B. "While the bridegroom tarried – That is, before they were called to attend him; they all slumbered and

slept – That is, all Christians, so called, good and bad, sincere and hypocrites, those who really love and wait for the bridegroom, and those who only profess to do so; lie down together in the sleep of death: all, while the bridegroom delays to come,”

6 “And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’

7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’”

J.B. “*And at midnight* – In an hour quite unthought of, and the most alarming... *There was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh* – As Christ’s coming to judge the world will be at a time the least expected; so then a great cry will be made... At this great cry, which will be heard to the ends of the earth, these virgins all awake, and begin to trim their lamps, to examine themselves, and prepare to meet their God: and now the foolish first perceive their folly: they find their lamps extinguished, and they have no oil wherewith to supply them: they find themselves destitute of vital religion, of union with Christ, and the graces of his Spirit, and that they have only a name to live while they are dead... utterly unprepared to meet the bridegroom. What a time was this to make such a discovery! whether the time of being overtaken with some unexpected judgment, the time of death, or that of Christ’s second coming be intended.”

9 “But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’”

J.B. “But the wise answered, saying, Not so... They begin the sentence abruptly, showing thereby their surprise at the state of those poor wretches who had so long deceived them, as well as their own souls... *And buy* – If ye can. O no! The time is past, and returns no more...

Observe, reader, *now only is the accepted time, and the day of salvation*, when we may come to God through Christ, in the use of the means of grace, and buy for ourselves the divine oil, which will never fail us: nay, we are counselled and exhorted to do so: and if we despise and reject these counsels and exhortations, while they may be useful, our cries and wishes will be as surely rejected another day, and our vain attempts to purchase when the bridegroom is coming will issue in an eternal exclusion from his kingdom.”

10 “And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’

12 But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’”

J.B. “*While they went to buy* – While they made some unsuccessful efforts to obtain oil, and light their lamps; *the bridegroom came, and they that were ready* – They who had put on the wedding- garment, who had an interest in Christ’s obedience unto death, and were renewed by his Spirit, who had recovered the divine likeness, the whole image of God stamped upon their soul; who had done and suffered the whole will of God unto the end... *And the door was shut* – The door of salvation, of pardoning mercy, and divine acceptance; the door of repentance, faith, and holiness; of grace and glory. This is always shut at death...And surely then it is shut, when the final sentence is passed at the great day, and the eternal Judge has fixed the states of mankind for ever. Then all entrance into the heavenly city will be for ever precluded, and he that is filthy must remain filthy still. *Afterward came also the other virgins* – After the door was shut and bolted against them by the irreversible decree of Heaven, they came to

enter, that is, they came too late, and therefore when they would have inherited the blessing, they were rejected, *and found no place for repentance. For he answered, &c.* – He was heard answering from within, I know you not...”

Jesus says to these believers, I don't know you. I never entered into an intimate union with you because you never chose to become one with Me. I loved you and did everything I could to make Myself available to you, but you would not receive Me into your heart, you rejected Me and now I reject you.

Let's look at another portion of Scripture, this time from the Book of Revelation, that addresses this same issue.

In Jesus' messages to the 7 churches in the Book of Revelation, He gives commendation to those in the churches who are doing what is right and rebukes those who are sinning and commands them to repent. To the believers in the churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia, Jesus gives only commendation and encouragement and finds nothing needing repentance in their lives. But to the church in Laodicea it is just the opposite. Jesus commends no one and calls all the believers in the church to repent.

Many believe that Laodicea is representative of the last days church, and many also believe that today's church is the last days church. The believer's sin in Laodicea was their lukewarmness, pride, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency which certainly describes much of the church world of today.

Revelation 3:16 “So then, because you are lukewarm...”

17 “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing...’”

After Jesus points out their sin and gives them some practical steps to take to deal with these issues, He, in His love for them, says these words.

Revelation 3:19 “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

What is Jesus admonishing these believers to do?

In His love He is telling them to repent, humble themselves and open the door of their hearts and let Him come in to them. They had believed on Him as their Savior, but they didn't want or think they needed Him to come and dwell inside of them as their Lord and Enabler. They recognized their need for His forgiveness, but they didn't want intimacy, oneness, with Him!

Let's look at what Mr. Benson says about this last verse in his commentary on the Bible.

Joseph Benson's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments: “Behold, I stand – Or, I have stood, as εστηκα literally signifies, namely, for a long time and I still stand, even at this instant; at the door – Of men's hearts; and knock – Waiting for admittance: if any man hear my voice – With a due regard, namely, the voice of my providence, word, and Spirit; and open the door – Willingly receive me, or welcome me with the affection due to such a friend and Saviour; I will come in to him – And dwell in his heart by faith...”

What a beautiful picture of our Lord and Savior's love, patience, grace, mercy, goodness, kindness and gentleness in dealing with His followers. (Yes, He is speaking to believers in the church, not sinners in the world.) That He would lovingly and patiently knock at the door of our hearts and wait for us to humble ourselves and open the door and let Him in. The one who created us and then redeemed us with His blood and who has every right to us and only wants to bless us and make us one with Himself, through us receiving Him, by His Spirit, into our hearts, knocks, and waits patiently for us to respond.

And what a horrible indictment against believers who would treat their Creator, Redeemer, Lord, God and Savior that way. The one who created them, died to save them, and who loves them with a never-ending love. I plead with you as an

ambassador of Christ Jesus, the bridegroom, to come to your senses and repent, humble yourself, open your heart and receive Him, let the Spirit of Christ enter in, become one with Him through Spirit baptism, please consummate your relationship with Him today!

Consider what Paul wrote to those in the church in Rome who are only, just, believers and have refused to receive the Holy Spirit into their hearts.

Romans 8:9 “...if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”

What is Paul saying?

If any believer does not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, they do not belong to Him! Let that sink in. If you have not received His Spirit into your heart, you do not belong to Him. Those 5 foolish virgins found that out when they heard Jesus speak to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.” Unfortunately, at that point it was too late for them, but God is making sure that you know that now so that you can repent and open the door of your heart and receive His Spirit into you and so be prepared to stand before Him on Judgment Day.

If you refuse to choose to be baptized by the Holy Spirit, to open the door, to receive His Spirit into your heart, God will honor your decision, He won't force Himself in.

But let me add this: even if you don't believe what I have taught about us not being born again of the Spirit until we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit or even if I am wrong in my conclusions concerning this, and you are right, even if you really were born again of the Spirit when you believed in Jesus; or when you were baptized in water as a baby; or that you were sovereignly born again by the Spirit before you trusted in Jesus as your Savior because you are one of God's chosen ones.

Even if you are all right and you have been born again, Jesus still commands all believers to receive Holy Spirit

baptism, and we must obey His commands, as we saw clearly in the last chapter!

Acts 1:4 “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, ‘you have heard from Me;

5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Who is giving this command and who is it being given to?

Jesus is giving this command to His followers, for them to wait until they are baptized with the Holy Spirit. He gave this command along with the command for them to go into the world and preach the gospel. And not only are these commands recorded here in Acts, but also in John 20:21-22 and in Luke 24:46-49. These commands go together, you cannot fulfill Jesus’ command to go and preach the gospel and make disciples of the nations until you first obey His command to receive Spirit baptism. You can’t impart spiritual life into others until you have first received it yourself.

And if you believe that Jesus’ command for His followers to go into the world and preach the gospel applies to all believers, then know that His command to receive Holy Spirit baptism applies to all believers as well. And if you refuse to obey Jesus’ command to receive Spirit baptism you are living in sin and unless you repent, when you stand before Him on Judgment Day you may very well hear these words:

Matthew 25:12 “But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’”

What does Jesus declare to these believers?

“I do not know you.” You never received Me by My Spirit into your heart. You never wanted to enter into intimate union with Me, become one spirit with Me, I was never one with you, because you refused to obey Me and receive My Spirit into your heart and be united with Me, therefore, depart from Me!

I shared in my testimony how I prayed on the side of “A” Mountain and asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins and to take charge of my life, how I went out to Yuma and camped next to a canal and while there I prayed and asked God to show me who the Holy Spirit was. I told how God supernaturally brought me back to Tucson and how I ended up at a church where the pastor preached a message entitled, Who is the Holy Spirit. I also shared how I received Spirit baptism and how that was when my life began to really turn around, change.

What I didn’t share though is that the church God brought me to believes that a person is born again of the Spirit when they believe on Jesus as their Savior. Or that I also believed that for the first 40 plus years that I was a Christian. (I didn’t understand what I have shared with you until God got me alone with His Word and His Spirit in Niagara Falls.) I’m sharing this to say that even though my church believed that we are born again of the Spirit when we put our faith in Jesus, they also preached that the Bible commands all believers to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And because they preached this truth, I sought and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and was born again, and being born again of the Spirit is the reason that I am still serving God 48 years later. I am forever grateful that God brought me to a church that preached the full gospel message!

If you have repented of your sin and made God, your God, and are living in obedience to Him, if you have obeyed the Father and believed on His Son Jesus as your Savior and confessed Him as your Lord, and obeyed Him, Jesus, in being baptized in water, and you want to take the next step of obedience and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, all that you need to do is ask the Father to send the Spirit of His Son into your heart.

Luke 11:13 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

When the Holy Spirit comes into you and unites with your spirit your spirit will speak in tongues. You do not need to learn a new language with your understanding, you will not be speaking from your mind, your spirit will be speaking when it is united with the Holy Spirit and He enables it. Your spirit will be worshipping and thanking its Father for sending His Son to make this possible. Thanking and worshipping the Son for willingly sacrificing His life so that you might be made spiritually alive. And thanking and worshipping the Spirit for making you one with the Godhead.

If you are not baptized with the Spirit the first time you ask, then keep on asking and seeking Him. It may be that there is something that you need to do or stop doing that is preventing you from receiving the Holy Spirit. I did not receive the Holy Spirit the first two times I asked, but the third day after first asking, the Holy Spirit spoke to me to stop meditating. I had been involved in a cult and still hung onto the practice of meditating and that needed to stop before the Spirit was going to come in. When I obeyed Him and did not meditate that day, then that night in a church service when I lifted my hands to worship God, I was baptized by the Spirit and spoke in tongues.

After we receive the onetime baptism of the Spirit and are born again, we need to come to the Father to receive fresh fillings regularly, even daily.

Ephesians 4:4 “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

What are all these “ones” Paul is writing about?

The one body is the body of Christ, the church, the family of God. We are adopted into that family when we put our faith in Jesus as our Savior and confess Him as our one Lord. And when we obey Him in receiving one baptism by the one Spirit,

the Godhead, the one God and Father, the one Lord Jesus Christ, and the one Holy Spirit come into us and unite with our spirit, and we become one with Them. (No, Paul did not forget about water baptism when he wrote this, but he is speaking about Spirit baptism and is emphasizing that it is a one-time experience.)

Paul speaks these same truths to the saints in the Corinth church.

1 Corinthians 12:12 “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

When we are baptized by the Spirit and born again, made spiritually alive, are made one with the Godhead, we are also filled with the Spirit as the 120 were on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:1 “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

What in these verses shows us that the disciples were not only baptized by the Spirit but also filled with the Spirit?

Besides the fact that it says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, they spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. The Spirit gave them the utterance, the ability, but they had to submit to the Holy Spirit and speak out what the Spirit gave them the utterance to speak. That’s what being filled with the

Spirit means, being submitted to, controlled by, obedient to and empowered by the Spirit.

Is being filled with the Holy Spirit a onetime experience also?

No, a couple of days later after this first filling some of those who had been filled with the Spirit on Pentecost were praying to God and they were filled with the Spirit again.

Acts 4:29 “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,

30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

Why are these men praying and what are they praying for?

These disciples had just been threatened, by the same Jewish leaders who were responsible for having Jesus executed, to never speak or teach in the name of Jesus again. So, they were praying that God would give them boldness to preach, power to heal, and power to perform miraculous signs and wonders.

How did God answer their prayer?

He filled them with the Holy Spirit, and we know that He did because they spoke the word of God with boldness by the power of the Holy Spirit. God did not want His people controlled by the fear of men, but to be controlled by His Spirit. So, He filled them with the Holy Spirit and worked many signs and wonders through their hands by the power of His Spirit in them.

Acts 5:12 “And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people.”

Is being filled with the Spirit for apostles only?

No. Just as every believer in Christ is commanded to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, so every believer who is Spirit born is commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit as we see in Paul's letter to the believers in the church in Ephesus.

Ephesians 5:17 "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,"

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?

It means a number of things. We'll look at what some Bible commentators say it means as it is used in Ephesians 5:18 as we answer this question.

Word Studies in the Greek New Testament (Kenneth S. Wuest): "Filled" is plēroō, "to fill up, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally, to flood, to diffuse throughout..." Therefore, the fullness of the Spirit has reference to His control over the believer yielded to Him. The verb is in the present imperative; "Be constantly being filled with the Spirit." The interpretation is, 'Be constantly, moment by moment, being controlled by the Spirit.'"

From here we can take that to be filled with the Spirit means to be furnished or supplied liberally with the Spirit and that to be full of the Spirit refers to His control over a believer yielded to Him. The Spirit comes in to take control in our lives, as the Father does when we repent and make Him our God, and as Christ does when we confess Him as Lord, and They should because they are all God. But we must choose to yield to and obey Them, They do not take over our will, we always have the ability to refuse to obey Them. Also, we are told to be constantly controlled by, yielded to, the Spirit.

The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: "The fact that the verb is in the passive mood indicates that while it is a command, something we are responsible to

fulfill, it is something that we allow God to do for us. That is not only a matter of ability (we cannot fill ourselves; only God can do that) but a matter of right (we belong to God, and he has the right to fill us)... It is therefore consistent with the teaching of Ephesians that we regard the filling and control of the Holy Spirit to be God's sovereign right in our lives... This blends the special work of the Spirit with an attitude of continual obedience that allows the Spirit to do this, which could be described as a spiritual state or character... Therefore the filling and fullness of the Spirit are part of the "filling" work of God and Christ. This is not just a matter of receiving blessing or of empowerment for service, but it is God functioning in our lives. Being filled with the Holy Spirit therefore is a sacred responsibility appropriate to those who profess to glorify God... we realize that the filling of the Holy Spirit is not some isolated experience but is related to understanding and doing God's will... Another way to describe the filling of the Spirit, then, is to speak of being subject to the "control" of the Spirit... There is a sense in which drink "controls" a person. This is done not directly but by lowering inhibitions and letting the lower nature, the "flesh," perform in a way a sober person might not allow to be seen in public. This work of the flesh should be restrained and replaced by the filling of the Spirit."

From here we can see that being filled with the Spirit is a command, something we are responsible to obey, just like being baptized with the Spirit is a command, and with both we cannot do them ourselves we must ask the Father to do both. He says being filled with the Spirit is not just empowerment for service, although not "just" empowerment, be assured that it is indeed empowerment for service. Being filled with the Spirit is related to understanding, knowing, and doing the will of God. The "work of the flesh should be restrained and replaced by the filling of the Spirit."

Galatians 5:16 “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”

What does it mean to walk in the Spirit and to be led by the Spirit?

For the most part they are synonymous with to be filled with the Spirit, in the context of being controlled by the Spirit. Although being filled with the Spirit is much broader in its scope as we have begun to see above.

We will look at being led by the Spirit next because it is synonymous with being filled with the Spirit in many ways.

Romans 8:14 “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

Let’s once again see what the commentators have to say about the meaning of this verse.

Joseph Benson’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments: “For as many as are led, guided and governed, by the Spirit of God – As a Spirit of truth and grace, of wisdom and holiness; they are the sons of God – That is, they stand related to God, not merely as subjects to their king, or servants to their master, but as children to their father; they are unspeakably near and dear to God, being spiritually begotten of him, and partaking of his nature.”

From these comments we see that those who are spiritually begotten of God, received Him into their hearts through Spirit baptism, have God as their Father and partake of His nature. They are led, guided and governed by the Spirit of God, and have Him as not only their King and Master, but as their Father. If we want to walk in the truth, live by grace, have real

wisdom and live a holy life, it will only be by the life of the Spirit in us.

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible: “As are led – As submit to his influence and control. The Spirit is represented as influencing, suggesting, and controlling... The influence of the Spirit, if followed, would lead every man to heaven. But when neglected, rejected, or despised, man goes down to hell. The glory belongs to the conducting Spirit when man is saved; the fault is man's when he is lost.”

If we submit to the Spirit's influence and control, He will lead us into God's will and enable us to live it out which will end with us making heaven our eternal home. If we walk influenced and controlled by the flesh, we will end up at life's end in hell with no one to blame but ourselves.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible: “No man who has not Divine assistance can either find the way to heaven, or walk in it when found... so the Spirit of God is the great agent here below, to enlighten, quicken, strengthen, and guide the true disciples of Christ; and all that are born of this Spirit are led and guided by it; and none can pretend to be the children of God who are not thus guided.”

We need the Spirit's assistance to guide us into the way to heaven and to enable us to walk in that way. He is given to enlighten – reveal God's will and ways to us; quicken – impart spiritual life, eternal life; strengthen – empower and enable us to be and do what God has redeemed us to be and do; guide us – lead us into God's perfect will. We are not God's children if we are not being led by His Spirit.

Before we move on let's take a little time to expound on some of what we saw above as to why we need to be filled with, led by, the Spirit.

The first and most frequent thing mentioned was being controlled by the Spirit. In considering this, we need to keep in mind that the Holy Spirit is God, and when the Father made

man, He did not make him to be a robot, so being controlled by the Spirit does not mean that He is going to take over control of our life. It means that we need to willingly submit to His leading, guidance, commands, directions, instructions, whatever they may be.

Here is how this was to work: Jesus said just before He was arrested that it would be advantageous to His followers if He went away because if He went away, He would send the Holy Spirit to them.

John 16:7 “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.”

What were the advantages to the disciples of having Jesus go away and the Holy Spirit to come?

Until Jesus went away, died on the cross, He could only be in one place at a time speaking to, teaching, leading, and guiding one group of people at a time. Once He died for the sins of mankind, those who believed in Him and were cleansed from their sin could receive Him by His Spirit into their hearts and He could be with every believer in the world at the same time.

In this form He could speak to, lead, teach, and guide each individual according to their level of maturity and specific needs and according to His will for that person.

He could also empower, gift, equip, enable and strengthen each person so they would be able to do what He was commanding them to do, and be what He commanded them to be.

For these reasons and more, Jesus commands us in the Lord’s Prayer to come to the Father daily and ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit, our daily bread, our spiritual sustenance, the power, the life, the fuel we run on.

Luke 11:3 “Give us day by day our daily bread.”

Why am I interpreting “our daily bread” to mean the Holy Spirit?

Because when Jesus finishes the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11:4, He expounds in Luke 11:5-13 on what He means by us asking the Father for our daily bread and He tells us exactly what that daily bread is. Let's look closely at these verses and see if that is so.

Luke 11:5 "And He said to them, 'Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

7 and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'?

8 I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs."

Is there a reference to asking for bread in these verses?

Yes, Jesus begins His exposition by talking about a man who goes to his neighbor and asks for 3 loaves of bread, and He seems to be making a couple of points through this story. First, that the man has a desperate need, and he knows that his neighbor is able to meet his need. Second, that he does not accept no for an answer, but persistently keeps asking, seeking, and knocking until he receives what he came for.

What we need to understand when we come to our Father and ask Him for our daily bread is how desperately we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and that our Father is the only one who can give Him to us. That without Holy Spirit sustenance we will not be able to live a life that pleases and glorifies the Father because we are totally dependent on the Spirit to lead us into and enable us to do the Father's will.

We need to also understand that the Father is more than willing to meet our need and give us of His Spirit, even though He may require persistence from us in seeking Him for it. The fact that the Father sent His Son into the world to die for our sins so He could make the Holy Spirit available to us should convince us of this truth.

Jesus continues.

Luke 11:9 “So I say to you, Ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks and keeps on asking receives; and he who seeks and keeps on seeking finds; and to him who knocks and keeps on knocking, the door shall be opened.” Amplified Bible (Classic)

What is Jesus doing here?

He is referring back to us, asking the Father for our daily bread and the man going to his neighbor and knocking on his door and asking for bread. And He is assuring us that if we ask, and keep on asking; seek, and keep on seeking; knock, and keep on knocking; we will receive; we will find; and the door will be opened; and all this in the context of someone persistently asking for bread.

Jesus continues.

Luke 11:11 “If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?”

Is there a connection here with Jesus telling us, God’s children, to ask our heavenly Father for our daily bread?

Yes. Jesus asks here, if a child comes to his father and asks him for bread, will he give him a stone? Again, Jesus is bringing our attention back to what He said previously in the Lord’s Prayer about us asking our heavenly Father for our daily bread. He gives a couple more examples of a son asking his father for food to show us that even human fathers won’t give their children something bad or harmful when they ask for food, physical sustenance.

Then to make sure that we get the point He’s been making with this entire exposition, to make sure that there is no confusion

about what He meant when He told us to ask our heavenly Father for our daily bread, He ends His exposition with this:

13 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

What does He say here?

If you human fathers, evil compared to your heavenly Father, give good gifts, food, physical sustenance, to your children when they ask you, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit, your spiritual sustenance, to you, His children when you ask Him!

The Lord’s Prayer is very compact and yet Jesus makes asking our Father for our daily bread, the Holy Spirit, the central part of it and then uses His entire exposition of the Prayer focusing on this one part.

Why?!

Because everything that we, God’s children, are called to be and do in the kingdom of God is only possible by our being born again of the Spirit and then our staying filled with the Holy Spirit daily. Which is what we will look at next.

Do we need the Holy Spirit to be able to be and do all that God commands us to be and do?

Zechariah 4:6 “So he answered and said to me: “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts.”

What is the Lord’s message to Zerubbabel?

You are not going to accomplish what I have commanded you to do in your own strength, power or ability, but by My Spirit. This word is appropriate for us today as well because we cannot be or do what God commands us to be and do except by His Spirit.

Jesus tells us this same truth in a little different way.

John 15:5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

What is Jesus saying here?

If our life is going to produce the fruit Jesus redeemed us to produce, we will need to abide in Him and He in us, by His Spirit. For without the life of His Spirit in us we can do nothing, absolutely nothing, positively nothing, nothing of any eternal value. But if we abide in Him by our spirit and He abides in us by His Spirit, we can be and do everything God created, redeemed and commands us to be and do.

Let’s look at what the Godhead commands us in the Bible to be and do and see if we indeed need to be filled with, enabled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to be able to accomplish these things.

John 3:5 “Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

What does Jesus command us to be or do?

He tells us that we must be born again, born from above, born of water and the Spirit.

I listed this command first because it is essential to us being able to come to the Father daily to ask to be filled with the Spirit. Until we are born again of the water of the word and of the Holy Spirit, God is not our Father so we cannot come to Him for our daily provision. I covered in great detail what it means to be born of water and of the Spirit in Chapter 4 of this section, so I won’t go over that again, but we saw there that we need the Holy Spirit to be born of water and of the Spirit. So, the answer to our question is yes, we need the Holy Spirit to obey this command.

What is the first and great commandment in the Bible?

Matthew 22:36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

37 Jesus said to him, ‘*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*’

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like it: ‘*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*’

40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Related to this, Jesus gave us a new commandment.

John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

Jesus also added to the second great commandment, “*You shall love your neighbor,*” that we need to love our enemies.

Matthew 5:43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘*You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.*’

44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,”

Is it humanly possible for us to love the way God commands us to love in these commands?

No! The commandments in the Law were given to show us how sinful we were because none of us were able to keep them, and they were meant to show us our need for a Savior, Jesus.

Galatians 3:24 “Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”

If no one was able to keep God’s original commandments why did Jesus add a new commandment to them and then add that we need to love our enemies?

As the original commandments were meant to bring us to Christ and to show us our need to be justified by faith.

The purpose of Jesus adding to them was to show us our need to be born again of the Spirit and our need to be filled with, empowered by, Him. Because the only way we can obey these commandments to love is if the Holy Spirit enables us by producing this type of love in us.

Galatians 5:22 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love...”

Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words: “Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christian love is the fruit of His Spirit in the Christian. Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments.”

Thank God, that as always, whatever God commands us to do, He supplies us with the ability to be able to obey Him and do it. The ability in this case is the Holy Spirit producing in us the fruit of the Spirit, the nature of God, which is love. So, again, the answer is yes. We are going to need to be filled with, submitted to, changed by, the Holy Spirit to be able to obey the Godhead’s commands to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, to love our neighbor as ourselves, to love one another as Jesus loves us, and to love our enemies.

God’s two main purposes for leaving us, His born again children, in the world are for us to be conformed, transformed, into the image of His Son Jesus and for us to preach His gospel to the world, making disciples of the nations. We will look at these next to see if we indeed need the life of the Spirit in us to accomplish these.

Romans 8:29 “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

What does it mean to be conformed to the image of Jesus?

We will all be changed into 33-year-old Jewish males. JK, But we could come to that conclusion from the following definition of what it means to be conformed.

Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words: “conformed – to make of like form with another person or thing, to render like.”

The following definition of conform will give us a little more insight into what it means to be conformed into the image of God’s Son.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: “conform – to become or be like,” or “of the same form”: Indicating an inner change of nature, working into the outward life...”

So, the Scripture is talking about Jesus’ nature, attributes, and character being formed in us and then these being seen in the way we live and act as the following commentator alludes to.

Joseph Benson’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments: “Observe, reader, a conformity to Christ’s image in spirit and conduct, is the mark of all those who are foreknown, and will be glorified.”

But how are we conformed to Jesus’ image?

Paul tells us in the verse following verse 29.

Romans 8:29 “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

30 “Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

After the Father justified us through our faith in Christ, He glorified us when He sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The only way we are going to be changed into the image of Jesus, God, is if Jesus, God, is living inside of us by His Spirit.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary: “As to the glorification of the believer spoken of by Paul and Peter, it involves the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus

Christ (2Th_2:14). The present invisible glory of the believer through his union with Christ by the Spirit is greater than the visible glory recorded in the OT (2Co_3:7-11).”

Therefore, we are conformed to the image of Jesus as the Holy Spirit, the glory of the Father, forms in us the fruit of the Spirit which is the nature, attributes, qualities, and character of the Godhead.

Galatians 5:22 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control.”

Paul confirms that we are conformed/transformed into the image of Jesus by the Spirit in his letter to the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 3:17 “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

What does it mean to be transformed into the image of the Lord?

Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary: “transform – to change radically in inner character, condition, or nature.”

And how is this transformation accomplished?

“By the Spirit of the Lord.”

No question here then as to whether or not we need the Holy Spirit to be transformed/conformed to the image of Jesus.

Mark 16:14 “Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

15 And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’”

Do you see the absurdity of this command in the natural?

Jesus comes to His 11 disciples who are hiding in the upper room because they are terrified of the Jewish leaders. He rebukes them for being hard hearted and full of unbelief and then He tells them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Eleven, count them, eleven, fearful, hard hearted and unbelieving men are told to go into the entire world and make disciples of all the nations. This command was totally impossible for these men to accomplish in their own natural abilities.

Thank God that He never intended for them to do this in their own power and ability.

Acts 1:4 “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me;

5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

What happened when they obeyed Jesus and received Spirit baptism and were born again and filled with the Spirit?

They came out of hiding and boldly preached the gospel to thousands of Jewish people without any fear or hesitancy. What a difference receiving the Holy Spirit, being born again, made in these men’s lives.

Acts 2:14 “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, ‘Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.’”

What was the result of Peter preaching to this crowd?

Acts 2:41 “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”

That Pentecost Day, 3000 souls responded to the gospel message that the disciples preached. Three thousand people repented of their sins, believed on Jesus as their Savior and confessed Him as their Lord and then obeyed Him in receiving water and Spirit baptism.

We also need to obey the Lord and go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature and to make disciples of all the nations in our generation. And we too must first obey Him and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, be born again of the Spirit, and then stay filled with the power of the Spirit if we are going to effectively do that. We will not be able to bring in this last day’s harvest of souls without the life and power of the Spirit abiding in and working through our lives, just like Jesus’ first disciples would not have been able to impact their generation without being filled with, empowered by, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus and the Bible command us numerous times to pray. I will list a couple of examples of this here, but there are many, many more.

Luke 18:1 “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,”

1 Thessalonians 5:17 “pray without ceasing,”

What are we commanded to do in these verses?

To pray. Jesus said, “men ought always to pray” and Paul wrote that we are to “pray without ceasing.” We are commanded to pray, and prayer is vital and essential to us as Christians, yet the Bible says that we often don’t know what to pray for as we should.

Romans 8:26 “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray

for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

What is the focus of these verses?

Our weakness in the realm of prayer, that we don't know what we should pray for as we ought, and how the Holy Spirit comes to our aid and helps us to overcome our shortcomings and pray effectively.

How does the Spirit help us to pray?

“The Spirit Himself makes intercession for us... according to the will of God.” Before we look at what this means, let me assure you that it does not mean that the Spirit literally prays for us. In other words, if when we are praying and don't know what else to pray for, we cannot stop praying and expect to hear the Holy Spirit praying for us; it doesn't work that way. If you don't believe me, try it and see what happens.

What it does mean is that the Spirit enables and inspires us to pray in tongues when we are at a loss for what to pray for with our understanding, with our mind. And when we yield to His leading and allow our spirit to pray by His enabling in the Spirit, tongues, we will actually be praying the will of God for whatever it is that we are praying for.

An added bonus of this is, while our spirit is praying in tongues the Holy Spirit often gives our mind the interpretation of what we're praying. So, we can go back and pray with our understanding when we finish praying by the Spirit in tongues, and we can go back and forth between the two.

1 Corinthians 14:13 “Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding...”

“What is the conclusion then?”

I will pray with my understanding of what the Spirit has revealed to me to pray for, and I will also pray with my spirit in tongues as the Holy Spirit enables me when I don't know what I should pray for. And once again, we see that because of our human weaknesses, we need to be filled with, helped by the Holy Spirit if we are going to be able to obey God's command to pray effectively.

Here is some more teaching from the Scriptures on the necessity of us walking, living in the Spirit, if we are going to please God and make heaven our eternal home. And as with the other commands we have been looking at we will only be able to do this by us staying filled with the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16 “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”

What are we commanded to do here?

To walk in the Spirit and not to fulfill the lust of the flesh.

What are we shown in verse 17?

There is a battle going on between the flesh and the Spirit for control of our lives.

We gain a little more insight into this subject in these verses from the Book of Romans.

Romans 8:4 “that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”

What do we learn from this?

If we are going to live righteously, we must walk, live, according to, led by, controlled by, the Spirit and not walk

according to the flesh. We also learn that what determines whether we walk, live, according to the flesh, or the Spirit is what we set our minds on.

But what if we just live our lives and don't set our minds on either?

The default setting of our mind is to walk, live, in the flesh and to live for the world. If we get up in the morning and don't intentionally set our minds on the things of the Spirit, we will walk in the flesh. We must consciously choose each day to set our minds on the things of the Spirit and to go to the Father each morning and ask to be filled with the Spirit so that we can walk, live, in the Spirit.

Does it really matter that much?

If we want to obey God's command to walk in the Spirit, it does. And if we want to live and not die, it does.

Paul continues.

Romans 8:6 "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

What does "carnally" mean?

It is the same Greek word "sarx" translated "flesh" in these other verses we just read.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary: "Sarx – flesh – As implying sinfulness, proneness to sin, the carnal nature, the seat of carnal appetites and desires, of sinful passions and affections whether physical or moral."

Don't we all die anyway whether or not we are carnally or spiritually minded?

Yes, we all die physically, but Paul is talking about dying spiritually. This letter and all the letters in the New Testament were written to believers in the churches, the majority of which were spiritually alive through Spirit baptism. Paul is warning them that if they choose to walk in the flesh, their lives producing the works of the flesh, that they will eventually die spiritually and eternally.

Unbelievers and believers who have not chosen to receive the Spirit cannot walk in the Spirit. They don't possess the Spirit, they are spiritually dead and can only walk in the flesh. So the warning we read, "to be carnally minded is death" is for born again believers to not be carnally minded lest they die spiritually.

Let's continue looking a little further into the Book of Romans at the subject of the flesh and the Spirit.

Romans 8:11 "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

What do we see here?

Paul is writing to the believers in the church in Rome, but he says that it only applies to those believers who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them. He says to them, God will give life to your mortal bodies, spiritual life, eternal life, which is more than living forever, but is a supernatural quality of life to be lived out in your body in the here and now through the life, power, of His Spirit who dwells in you.

Paul continues.

Romans 8:12 "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors – not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh."

Why is Paul saying this?

We saw earlier that the flesh and the Spirit are vying for control of our lives. The flesh cannot take control of our life, we have to choose to give into it and walk in the flesh, and the Spirit won't take control of our life. We have to choose to follow His leading. The flesh however can be very persuasive in its arguments as to why we should obey its desires and why we should give into it and let it take control of our life.

It will try to convince us that we are obligated to meet its needs, desires, so Paul assures us that we are not debtors to the flesh, to live/walk according to its leadings; we owe it nothing.

Paul continues.

Romans 8:13 “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

What will happen to us if we live, walk, according to the dictates of the flesh?

We will die, spiritually and eternally. Not immediately. Our Father is very gracious to, and patient with us, and will give us many chances to gain victory over this monster. But we must eventually kill it, or it will kill us.

How do we kill it?

“By the Spirit” is how we put to death the deeds of the body, the works of the flesh. (I consider these two terms synonymous).

What are the deeds of the body/the works of the flesh?

These are what are produced in our life when we walk, live, according to the flesh. As opposed to the fruit of the Spirit being produced in our life when we walk, live, according to the Spirit.

But how do we kill the flesh by the Spirit?

We choose to allow Him, the Spirit of God, to lead our life, and when we do that, we are walking in the Spirit and the Spirit will lead us to where there is no provision for the flesh, and if the flesh is not fed, given into, it will die. The Spirit will also command us to do things and stop doing other things that will weaken the flesh and strengthen us spiritually.

Romans 13:14 “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

What is Paul saying here?

“Make no provision for the flesh.” No provision, none, notta, nothing, not even a little snack.

As with the other things that we have looked at that God commands us in His Word to be and do, we can only put to death the flesh and the habits of the body and walk in the Spirit, by staying filled with, led by, controlled by, submitted to, the Spirit.

As we begin to bring this chapter to a close, let's take a minute to look at a snippet out of Jesus' life. This will give us an example of what we have been studying being lived out which should be a great encouragement and inspiration to us all.

Luke 3:21 "When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened.

22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.'"

What does water baptism follow?

Water baptism follows someone repenting of their sin, believing on Christ as their Savior and Lord, and then obeying His command to be baptized in water.

Did Jesus need to do these things?

No! He had no sin to repent of. He did not need a Savior, He was the Savior, and He did not need to be baptized in water.

So why did He do it?

He did it in obedience to the Father and as an example for mankind.

What happened after Jesus was baptized?

He prayed! "And while He prayed, heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him." This is a picture of Him receiving the Holy Spirit, Him being baptized by the Holy Spirit, Him being born again of the Spirit. (Take note that this happened after He was baptized in water and while He prayed for it.)

Did Jesus need to receive the Holy Spirit and be born again of the Spirit?

No! He received the Holy Spirit and was born of the Spirit at conception, and He never sinned, so He never died spiritually and so He had no need to be born again. Again, all this was done as an illustrated example for man, as was the

Father speaking from heaven, after the Spirit came upon Jesus, saying, “You are My beloved Son.”

What happened next?

After Jesus was Spirit baptized and “filled” with the Spirit, He returned from the Jordan River where He had been baptized in water, “and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”

Luke 4:1 “Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.”

Why did the Spirit lead Jesus into the wilderness to fast for 40 days?

As an example to mankind of our need to put to death our flesh nature by His, the Spirits, leading. In the wilderness there was absolutely no provision for the flesh. Jesus’ flesh nature, if He had one, was dead already because He had never sinned, but if it were alive, it would have died during that 40-day wilderness fast.

So, when the devil tried to tempt Jesus to sin, the devil’s ally, the flesh, was dead and could not assist him, and because Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. He did not give in to the devil’s temptations.

We on the other hand have all sinned. Even though we may be born again believers we still need to stay filled with, led by, and empowered by the Holy Spirit if we are going to be able to walk in the Spirit and put to death and keep dead our flesh nature. And if we do, when the devil tries to tempt us to sin, his ally, our flesh, won’t be able to help him defeat us either, and so we too can be victorious over temptation.

After Jesus mortified the flesh by the Spirit, then resisted the devil’s temptations by the power of the Spirit and the Word of God, this happened.

Luke 4:13 “Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

14 Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.

15 And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.”

As we have followed the progressive steps that are given to us in the Word of God through this short snippet from Jesus’ life and consider that they were given to us as an example for us to follow, we should all be greatly encouraged and excited at what God has made available to us if we will but obey and do what He has shown us to do. God is waiting for us His children to follow Jesus’ example so that we too can also minister to our generation “in the power of the Spirit.”

I could go on and give more Scripture examples of our needing to be filled with and empowered and enabled by the Holy Spirit to be able to be and do what God commands us to be and do, but I’ve covered the most important ones, and I believe you get the point.

Alright, alright, I’ll give you one more example, but that’s it!

Ephesians 5:18 “...but be filled with the Spirit,”

What is the command we are given in this verse?

“Be filled with the Spirit.”

Do we need to be filled with the Spirit to be able to obey this command to be filled with the Spirit?

Sorry, I couldn’t help myself.

I will end this chapter with the following clarifications of some of the things I have said, taught, in this chapter.

First: I talked about our need to mortify, put to death, the flesh, but I need to make clear that this is not a one-time

event. We don't kill it and then never have to deal with it again. We need to continuously resist giving into it, making provision for it, feeding it, and we do this by being filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit daily, even minute by minute.

You only have to give the flesh a crumb to revive it, and once it is revived it won't be long before it is in control of your life again. As I heard a pastor say once, "Our flesh has resurrection powers second only to that of Jesus Christ." This is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance.

Second: I have said a number of times that we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be able to be and do what God has called us to be and do. I should have said we can only be and do these things in a way that pleases and glorifies God by being filled with His Spirit. We can preach the gospel, pray, read the Bible, go to church, etcetera, etcetera, without being born again or being filled with God's Spirit. Millions who do not have the Spirit are doing these things in the power of their flesh every day, but they are not pleasing or glorifying God.

Romans 8:8 "So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."

Paul spoke these words to the believers in the Roman church for the benefit of those who did not have the Spirit dwelling in them, because if we don't have the Spirit, we can only serve God in the flesh. And if we are serving God in the flesh, we are not pleasing Him, and we are not glorifying Him. We are glorifying ourselves; think Pharisees.

Matthew 6:5 "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward."

They impressed the people, but it was all done in the flesh,
and it did not please or glorify God.

Chapter 21

My Theory

What is being taught in the church today concerning receiving the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and being born again of the Spirit is very different from what was taught and practiced in the early church after Pentecost. We have just studied what the apostles taught: Repent, believe, obey, and then receive the Holy Spirit through the baptism of the Spirit.

But the 3 main teachings in Christianity today are: a person receives the Holy Spirit, and is born again when they are baptized as a baby, a person receives the Holy Spirit and is born again when they believe on Jesus, and a person receives the Holy Spirit and is born again sovereignly by God before he believes on Jesus if he is one of God's chosen ones.

How did we get so far off from what the apostles taught and practiced in the Book of Acts?

To answer this question, I will not be able to show from the Scriptures what I believe happened because this happened after the Bible was written. So, I will be using church history in a very general way, and conjecture, my thoughts, my theory, of what might have transpired to try and explain.

I will start with the devil because he is the one who most benefits from this confusion and the one most responsible for it. The devil is the one who tempted Eve in the garden which is what led to man's sin and spiritual death. From that time to the flood, he witnessed man's total wickedness which led to judgment and destruction. After the flood he saw in the history of the nation of Israel a cycle of revival and apostasy. He was not too concerned about these revivals of religion because they never lasted for too long and always ended in failure.

When Jesus came on the scene there was a small group of people who became His disciples and began following Him. But He was doing powerful miracles and drawing large crowds of people, which got the devil's attention. So, with the aid of the religious leaders and the Romans, the devil was able to end this movement by putting to death its Ringleader.

I'm sure he was more than a little concerned when Jesus rose from the dead, but when Jesus ascended back into heaven all that was left was a small group of His followers. There were 120, hiding in an upper room for fear of the Jews. This religious revival was over, or so he thought.

Ten days after Jesus ascended back into heaven, on the Jewish holiday of Pentecost, Jesus baptized those 120 believers in the Holy Spirit. In an instant these people were changed, born again, a new creation. And now instead of the one Jesus who had died and been buried in the ground and then rose and returned to heaven, the seed had multiplied and there were 120 little Christs released into the world.

And before the devil could catch his breath and figure out what to do, in just 12 hours their number increased to 3,120 little Christs. And it didn't stop there, every day the numbers multiplied.

The devil sent the religious leaders to persecute them, but they multiplied more. He started killing them in Jerusalem, but that only served to get them to go into the rest of the world. This thing was out of control, so he got the Roman government to begin persecuting and killing them, but still they increased more and more.

Persecution didn't work, what was he to do? Then he remembered: when these Christians were only believers in Christ, they were no problem at all. It was after they received the Holy Spirit and were born again that they became a threat to his kingdom.

He had a plan. He would give the Emperor Constantine a vision of the cross, and the rest is history. Christianity became

the religion of the state and was soon in bed with the government. Everyone was now a believer in Christ, but very few were actually converted and almost no one was being baptized with the Spirit and being born again. It wasn't long after this happened that the baptism of the Holy Spirit as it was experienced and taught in the Book of Acts had ceased almost completely.

The church needed to come up with new teaching because the Bible clearly taught that Jesus commanded people to be baptized by the Holy Spirit and to be born again, so it was taught that a person receives the Holy Spirit and is born again when they are baptized in water as a baby. But you will not find this teaching anywhere in the Bible.

The devil had succeeded; man was back to his old ways. There were revivals of religion followed by periods of apostasy but that was just man being man which is all he can be without the Holy Spirit. Hundreds of years down the road the reformation happened, but men were still not receiving Spirit baptism, so they still taught and believed that we receive the Holy Spirit and are born again when we are baptized in water as infants.

A group rose up and taught that water baptism wasn't for infants but for people after they had made a conscious decision to believe in Jesus. These people taught water baptism is what a person does after they believe in Jesus, not when they are infants. Since no one was teaching or receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit as it is revealed in the Book of Acts and because the Bible clearly states that we must be Spirit baptized and born again, these people taught that this happens when a person makes a decision to believe on Jesus as their Savior; also, unscriptural.

Another group came into being at this time who believed that man was so depraved he could not believe in Jesus in his natural condition. They taught that God sovereignly births by His Spirit those He has chosen to be saved and then once they are born again, they are able to believe on Jesus. Again, this is not what the Bible teaches or what we see practiced in the Book of Acts.

A few hundred years after this, about 1900, some people began praying and seeking for a revival of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as it is presented in the Scriptures with the manifestation of tongues. Thank God they prevailed, and the full gospel church of Acts was restored.

But for whatever reason these people held on to the teaching that a person receives the Spirit and is born again when they believe in Jesus. Maybe these new Pentecostals kept the old teaching because this is what they had been taught their whole lives, or because they were a new and small group and were intimidated because the protestants believed we receive the Holy Spirit when we believe in Jesus and had for hundreds of years. Whatever the reason, I'm sure the devil had his hand in it.

Thankfully, they also taught that a person needs to go on and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit to empower them to be witnesses for Christ. This is a great step forward for those who choose to receive Spirit baptism. But it leaves those who choose not to receive Spirit baptism, because they are trusting that they received the Holy Spirit and were born again one of these other 3 ways, without the Spirit.

Now without a doubt the Holy Spirit is involved in bringing a person to repentance and faith in Christ. He convicts us of our sin and our need for a Savior. He gives us revelation that Jesus is that Savior, the only begotten Son of God, the promised Messiah. He anoints the gospel as it is preached to us so that the word births faith in our hearts so that we are able to believe in Him, but this is not God sending the Spirit of His Son into our hearts and us being born again of the Spirit.

This is us through our faith in Jesus being adopted into God's family as His children. This is what Jesus called being born of water and Peter described as being born again through the word of God, and what Paul was referring to when he talked about the washing of water by the word which makes us justified and righteous. But this is only what prepares us to receive the

baptism of the Holy Spirit and to be born again of the Spirit. It is not that experience.

Holy Spirit baptism and being born again of the Spirit are experienced by a choice of our will which is why Jesus commanded us to do both. If they were automatic, He would not have needed to tell us about them and commanded us to do them. We would have experienced them automatically, which is what the 3 main branches of Christianity teach today.

You cannot find clear Scriptural support for any one of these teachings in the Word of God. None of these ideas were practiced or taught in the church in Bible times, as the Bible was being written. Infant baptism began to be practiced sometime between 200 and 400 AD, maybe earlier. The teachings on receiving the Holy Spirit and being born again when you believed in Christ began being taught about 1525 AD, and the teaching of receiving the Holy Spirit and being born again before believing in Christ came into existence a few years after that.

What we do see stated over and over again in the Bible is that the Apostles taught repentance, faith in Jesus, obedience to Him in water and Spirit baptism, and that believers received the Holy Spirit when they were baptized by the Spirit. That is what we see practiced and taught all through the Book of Acts. The 120 in the Upper Room were baptized with the Holy Spirit and born again on the day of Pentecost, not when they believed on Jesus, which is why Pentecost is called the birth of the church.

They were there waiting for and praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit because Jesus had told them to wait for the Promise of the Father. If they hadn't heard from Jesus about the Promise of the Holy Spirit, they would not have exercised their faith and waited for and chosen by faith to pray for and receive Him, the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 3:2 “This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”

How does Paul say that believers receive the Spirit?

“By the hearing of faith.” People are told they need to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and they either choose to do that or they don’t. Which is the same way that we come to believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We hear about Him through someone preaching the gospel to us or by reading His Word and we make a decision of our will to either accept Him or reject Him, it’s not automatic, it’s a choice made by faith.

Romans 10:13 “For “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

In the same way people need to be told about Holy Spirit baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, so that they can make a choice about whether or not to receive Him. We see this in practice with Jesus telling the 120 to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit. We see it with Peter telling the 3000 converted on the Day of Pentecost about their need to receive the Holy Spirit.

We see it with Jesus sending Ananias to tell Saul about his need to receive the Spirit after his conversion. And with Peter and John going to the Samaritan believers to tell them about their need to receive the Spirit after they believed. And with Paul telling those believers, he met at Ephesus about receiving Holy Spirit baptism after they believed and were baptized in water. These people were told about Spirit baptism so that they could exercise faith and their free will and choose to receive the Spirit into their hearts or choose not to.

I am not saying these things to be controversial, although I know much of what I am writing is controversial, but in spite of that, I’m writing this because we need to be biblical. And I cannot find anywhere in the Bible where it says we are

baptized with the Holy Spirit and born again by any of these 3 ways that are being taught today. We receive the Holy Spirit and are born again when we hear about Jesus' command to be baptized by the Holy Spirit and choose to exercise our free will and by faith choose to receive Him.

Why am I making such a big deal about Holy Spirit baptism?

For the same reason the devil is trying to convince the world that it is no big deal, we both know it is a matter of life and death for individuals and for the church. And, because this is what Jesus came to earth to make available to mankind.

Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit Jesus was going to reunite the Godhead with man and man with the Godhead. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is how Jesus is bringing man back into the relationship that he had with the Godhead at creation and the cross is the means by which He is able to accomplish this.

I make a big deal about it because Jesus and the Bible make a big deal about it. All 4 gospel writers tell us that Jesus came to baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33). Peter also tells us in Acts 11:16 that Jesus talked to them about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The main subject of Jesus' dialogue with the disciples just before He was arrested and killed was about Him sending the Spirit to be inside them to make them one with Him and the Father (John chapters 14-17). One of the first things Jesus commanded His disciples to do after He rose from the dead was to receive the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). The last thing Jesus told His disciples before He ascended back into heaven was to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-9).

How effective were Jesus and His disciples in convincing people of the necessity of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

By the time the New Testament was finished being written near the end of the first century probably close to 100% of believers were Spirit baptized tongue talkers, full gospel saints.

How successful has the devil been since then in stopping believers from going on to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and being born again of the Spirit?

Before 1900 when people began seeking and experiencing Holy Spirit baptism and tongues again, there were most likely less than 5% of believers who were Spirit baptized. That number is actually probably closer to 0% than 5%, but no one knows for sure. What we do know for sure though is that in 2020 only 27% of believers worldwide had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That means that almost 75% of believers, just 5 years ago, were not Spirit baptized and if my understanding of what the Bible teaches is accurate, not born again of the Spirit. I would say then that the devil has been very, very successful with his strategy!

As I said earlier there is no biblical teaching to support that babies receive the Holy Spirit and are born again when they are water baptized. There is also no biblical support for God baptizing unbelievers with the Holy Spirit and them being born again so that they who He has sovereignly chosen can believe in Him.

But those who believe that they receive the Holy Spirit when they believe in Jesus do have some Scriptures that they use to support their teaching so we should take a minute to look at these.

The two main Scriptures that are used to support the teaching that everyone receives the Holy Spirit, baptism by the Spirit and are born again when they believe in Jesus were both written by the Apostle Paul. We will look at these and two other Scriptures written by the Apostle Paul that seem to teach something different.

Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth the following:

1 Corinthians 12:13 “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

Does it appear that Paul is saying to the believers in the church in Corinth that they were all baptized by the Holy Spirit?

Yes, that is exactly what he is saying.

But Paul wrote to the believers in the church in Rome the following:

Romans 8:9 “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”

Does it appear that Paul is saying to the believers in the church in Rome that some of them might not have received the Holy Spirit?

Yes, that is exactly what he is saying.

Why the difference, contradiction, between the churches?

First, Paul was writing to the believers in the church in Corinth when he said, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,” he wasn’t writing this to every person who would ever believe in Jesus. If what he taught applied to every believer who ever lived, then there really would be a contradiction because it would have to apply to all the believers in the church in Rome as well, and Paul clearly says some of them might not have received the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, Paul, when writing to the Corinthian church, was writing to a church that he had pioneered. He knew his own experience of receiving the baptism of the Spirit, and he knew what the believers in the church in Corinth had experienced. He knew because he knew the full gospel message that he had preached to them so he could confidently say to them, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” Paul preached the full gospel message as we saw recorded in Acts 19:1-6, so he knew what the Corinthian believers had been taught and saw what they had experienced because he was there with them.

On the other hand, Paul had never been to the church in Rome. He did not know the people in that church. He did not

know who had preached what to them, so he could not vouch for them all having received the Holy Spirit because receiving the Holy Spirit does not happen automatically when a person believes in Jesus. If whoever preached to those in Rome preached what the vast majority of the church world is preaching today, they would have never heard about their need to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and so would not have received the Spirit.

Anyway, for believers today, who have had no experience of being baptized by the Holy Spirit as it is described in the Bible, to say, that they have all been baptized by the Spirit because Paul said that he and all the saints in the Corinthian church, we all, have been baptized by the Spirit, for them to say that “we all” includes them and all believers who ever lived, is a stretch by anyone’s imagination. It is just fantastic, unrealistic.

Another Scripture used to support that all believers receive the Holy Spirit when they believe in Jesus is found in the Book of Ephesians.

Paul wrote the following to the believers in the church in Ephesus:

Ephesians 1:13 “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,”

What does it mean to be sealed with the Spirit?

To receive from God the Holy Spirit into our hearts as the following Scripture shows.

2 Corinthians 1:21 “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,

22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”

Does it appear that Paul is saying to the believers in the church in Ephesus that they all were sealed with, received, the Holy Spirit when they believed?

Yes, he says, “having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,”

But Paul asked the following question to some people he met at Ephesus who he thought were believers:

Acts 19:1 “And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples **2** he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.’”

Is it accurate to conclude from Paul’s question, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” that a person could be a believer and not have received, been sealed with, the Holy Spirit?

Yes, that’s exactly what that question implies.

Why then the discrepancy between what he said to the believers in the church in Ephesus and these perceived believers he met at Ephesus?

He knew the believers in the church in Ephesus because he had pioneered the church there and knew that he had preached the full gospel message to them, so he knew that they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed because he would have prayed with them to receive, be baptized by, the Holy Spirit.

But these people he met at Ephesus that he thought were believers in Christ he did not know. He did not know what they had been taught. He does not know if they have heard the full gospel message and been told about their need to receive the Holy Spirit through Spirit baptism. So he asks them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed.

So again, believers today are taking what Paul wrote to and about the full gospel saints in the church in Ephesus, that he had disciplined and knew exactly what they had experienced and claim that experience for themselves on the basis of this Scripture. Again, this is unrealistic at best.

So how did we end up with so many in the church teaching that we receive the Holy Spirit and are born again when we believe in Jesus?

I'll do a brief recap here as I bring this chapter to a close. By 200-400 AD, probably earlier, the devil had successfully stopped the teaching and practice of Holy Spirit baptism. What began to be taught was that a person received the baptism of the Spirit and was born again when they were baptized in water as a baby. At the time of the Reformation Luther continued to teach this doctrine.

When the Anabaptists argued against this and said a person needs to be water baptized after they make a decision for Christ as the Bible teaches, and not when they are babies, this became the practice of the protestant churches with the exception of a few denominations.

But there was a problem; people had believed and practiced for hundreds of years that a person receives the Holy Spirit and is born again when they are baptized as babies. But now they were ending that practice, and they knew that Jesus commanded believers to be born again and to be Spirit baptized. What were they going to do?

They decided to teach that a person received the Holy Spirit and was born again when they believed in Jesus. They had to fit in what Jesus commanded somewhere and they didn't really have many options.

Why didn't they just go to the Book of Acts and teach and preach what Peter and Paul taught back then?

Because the baptism of the Holy Spirit hadn't been taught or practiced the way the Bible teaches for approximately 12 to 14 hundred years, and in their day, no one was receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

So, they took the Scriptures we just looked at above and used them to support their doctrine and the church for the most part held onto this teaching from then until now.

I hope and pray that when God pours out His Spirit on mankind for the last days revival that will precede Jesus' return that it will usher in a return in the church to what was taught and practiced in the Book of Acts church, the original church, the full gospel church.

In ourselves, we are just ordinary people, but by the power of the life of God in us, we can change our world. The first disciples experienced this, beginning at Pentecost, and they turned their world upside down. The impact of what God did through them is still being felt in the world today. That power, life, Spirit, is still available to us today, and if we will choose to receive Him into our hearts, God will use us to turn our world right side up.

The devil understands this and opposes it with everything in his power. We need to understand it too and make sure that our generation hears the full gospel message as it is presented in the New Testament.

SECTION THREE

The Lord's Prayer

Chapter 22

Matthew 6:5-8

The Lord's Prayer is recorded in the Bible in Matthew 6:9-13 and in Luke 11:2-4. I will primarily use Matthew's version for this study. In Matthew's version he records Jesus' preliminary instructions for praying in verses 5-8, which is where we will begin our study. Matthew also records Jesus' commentary on His prayer in verses 14-15, which we will look at much later in this section.

In this chapter we will look at Jesus' instructions and teachings given to prepare us to pray. I will also share some of my own concepts, thoughts and teachings along with others' teachings and commentary, on these verses. I will also quote many other Scriptures because the best commentary on the Scriptures is other Scriptures.

We will begin with Jesus' preliminary instructions.

Matthew 6:5 “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.”

What is Jesus' warning to us?

“You shall not be like the hypocrites” who pray with the wrong motive.

What is their motive?

To “be seen by men.” They are praying in the flesh to be seen and admired by men.

Not everyone who is living in the flesh for the things that are in the world is living for the lust of the flesh, sensual pleasures, and/or for the lust of the eyes, material possessions.

Some are living for the pride of life, the praises, adulation, of men.

1 John 2:16 “For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world.”

Even though these men are praying, they are in the flesh praying for what is in the world, in this case the pride of life. And Jesus warns us against this because He knows that human nature is prone to it.

What does Jesus tell us the outcome of their praying is?

“They have their reward:” that is, they receive what they were seeking: the respect, admiration, praises and adulation of men. This is insinuating that they will receive nothing more; no reward from the Father for their efforts.

In the next verse He tells us how we, the Father’s children, are to pray to our Father.

Matthew 6:6 “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

What does Jesus tell us to do when we pray?

Go into our room, shut our door, and pray to our Father who is in the secret place.

What does it mean to go into our room?

To get somewhere alone, if that is possible. If it is not possible, we may need to pray when others are sleeping. Or we may only be able to get alone into our own mind.

Jesus practiced what He taught others. He often got alone with the Father to pray.

Luke 5:16 “So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”

What does it mean to shut our door?

Close out, remove yourself from all distractions and interruptions. This will include both physical and mental distractions and interruptions, again when this is possible.

Who does Jesus tell us to pray to?

Our Father.

How is God our Father?

First of all, God is all of mankind's Father through creation. Then He is the Father of those who have put their faith in Jesus as their Redeemer, He legally adopts them into His family as His children. He becomes the literal Father of the redeemed when they obey Him in Spirit baptism and are born again of His Spirit, He is their Father through regeneration.

These are who the Lord's Prayer is for – those whom I have called full gospel saints. Those who have repented of their sin, believed on Jesus as their Savior, and confessed Him as their Lord, obeyed Him in water and Spirit baptism, and are now being led by and empowered by the Spirit to do the Father's will. If this does not describe your experience with the Father, I suggest you go back and read Section 2 of this book and follow the steps listed there.

Jesus tells us that if we pray this way our Father will reward us, how or in what way?

Jesus doesn't tell us here, but I would say from what He teaches in His Word and from my personal experience, some of the ways He will reward us are: with His Presence, by speaking to us, by answering our prayers.

Matthew 6:7 “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathens do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

8 Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”

What does Jesus tell us not to do in these verses?

Not to use vain repetitions like the heathen do, or maybe like your children do when they want something, and you tell them they can't have it; He tells us clearly “do not be like them.” Remember, we are coming into the Presence of our Creator, Father and God for communion with Him, so we should

not be there to try and manipulate Him to do our will, but to seek to find out His will and to pray for His will to be done, as Jesus tells us to a little later on in the Lord's Prayer.

Why do you think Jesus adds “your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him?”

The obvious answer is that the Father knows all things so of course He knows what we need before we ask Him. But not only does He know what we need, He knows what we need better than we do. And so, Jesus is going to tell us in the Lord's Prayer what the Father would have us pray for and about, and the Father will reveal what we should add to that by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:26 “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Practical Helps

Before we move into our study of the Lord's Prayer itself, let me give you a list of some practical things you can do to be successful in your pursuit of meaningful communion, prayer, with your heavenly Father.

Come with the right motives.

Our motives for meeting with Him each morning, day, should include some of the following things and whatever else the Holy Spirit reveals to you. We should come to offer up to Him our praise, worship, thanksgiving, love, and adoration. We were created for this, and He is worthy of it. We should be coming for a time of intimacy with Him, where we can get to know Him better; to hear His voice; to be transformed more and more into the image of His Son Jesus; to offer up ourselves to Him, that we might know and fulfill His will, plan and purpose for

our life; to be filled with and empowered by His Holy Spirit because it is only by the leading and enablement of the Spirit that we can know and do His will – to make intercession for others, etc.

Have a plan and schedule time to meet with Him.

We do things consistently that we plan for and schedule time for. Put this time for prayer in your planner and make it a priority. The most ideal time to pray is first thing in the morning when you are fresh and alert. And before you start thinking about and dealing with the affairs of life, when others are sleeping, and the world is quiet. Because of families, and people's work schedules, and the fact that for the most part the world runs during the daylight hours, early morning is going to be the best time for most of us to meet with the Father. If this doesn't work for your personal schedule, don't worry. He is available 24/7, but morning is the ideal.

Get enough rest.

Now because most of us are not very disciplined when it comes to getting enough sleep at night, we are going to have to discipline ourselves to go to bed early enough in the night, so that when we sit down in the morning to commune with our Father, we are alert and do not fall asleep. Getting enough sleep each night may be the second hardest thing we will have to do in this process.

Get alone.

Getting alone is not absolutely necessary, but because of the age we live in and our undisciplined minds (more on that in a minute) this may be the better way to begin. When we are alone, we won't have the distraction of other people praying. Plus, we have Jesus as an example of someone who practiced this so we will be in good company if we do this.

Mark 1:35 “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”

If Jesus disciplined Himself to make time to spend alone in communion with His heavenly Father, it was because He understood the importance of it. If we have the same understanding, we will also discipline ourselves to be able to meet with our heavenly Father in a place and at a time where we will not be interrupted or distracted.

Sit or kneel, close your eyes.

Once you are ready to begin praying, sit or kneel. If you are moving around, walking, your mind will be distracted by your activity and the things you see. Once you are settled, close your eyes, again this will remove many distractions.

I pray sometimes at the gym. What?! When I get there, I put my ear plugs in, get on the treadmill and get it up to speed, close my eyes and have a wonderful time of prayer in the Presence of my Father. This is especially helpful when I am a little drowsy and keep nodding off when I sit down to pray. We must do whatever it takes to be able to daily spend time in communion with our heavenly Father. So, think outside the box, be creative, find a way, and make it happen!

Try to focus your mind and sense God's Presence.

This is going to be the hardest part of this process for almost everyone, but God will help us if we do our part. Before you start to pray to Him try to sense, focus your mind, concentrate, on the Father, His Presence. You have access into the holiest, the place of the Father's manifest Presence by the blood of Jesus, enter boldly into it!

Hebrews 10:19 "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,"

Overcoming this greatest challenge.

Concentrating, focusing our minds, is, as I said, going to be the hardest part of this process for almost everyone. We live in a technological age where our minds are being bombarded with input almost continuously. We spend hours each day watching and listening to our phones, computers, laptops, pads, TV's, radios, and CD players, etc.

Much of what we are exposed to comes in short blasts of video and/or audio that jump from one thing, to another, to another: on and on. Some of the sources of this barrage are Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok, news websites, and many more too numerous to list. For this reason, slowing down and focusing our minds is going to be very difficult for this generation, until we begin to discipline our lives, our minds, and our thinking.

Mastering a wandering mind.

When my mind just won't cooperate and focus on God or if I am praying and I lose focus and my mind wanders to some problem or issue that is going on in my life or some other distraction, I pray along the lines of this verse, using it as a guide.

2 Corinthians 10:5 "Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

These rogue thoughts can be captured and disposed of and we can focus or refocus our minds on the Father; we have that ability by His grace; and yes, it is hard work.

Setting our minds

The default setting of our mind is on ourselves, the things of the flesh and the things of the world. So, if we don't intentionally exercise our mind on the Father, His Word, spiritual things, heaven, things above, it will automatically turn to us, the things of the flesh, and the things of this world. That's why the better we have prepared ourselves beforehand and the sooner we do this each day the better chance we have of being successful.

Colossians 3:2 "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."

So, overcoming this greatest challenge is going to take discipline in many areas of our life, especially those areas that pertain to our minds and our thinking. And sacrifice! We are

going to have to let some things go. It will also require us to make some adjustments in the way we are now living.

But if we are willing to discipline ourselves and put into practice Jesus' instructions and these helps that I have listed, and make the sacrifices and adjustments in our life, we will be able to successfully focus our minds and enter into the Father's Presence daily for a time of communion with Him.

Be prepared for a battle.

When you decide to make spending time in prayer in your Father's Presence each morning a priority in your life, be prepared for a fight! Your flesh has no desire to spend time in the Presence of your Heavenly Father and will resist you every step of the way. The world will try to distract you and will offer you dozens of alternatives, distractions, to think about other than God, His Word, Voice, Presence, and Spirit. And the devil will use all of his devices to keep you from it. He will try and convince you that this is not for you and is a waste of your time.

But be determined, and don't give up. Once you overcome the obstacles and begin to enjoy daily fellowship with your heavenly Father, and as He begins revealing to you His will for your life, and filling you with His power, and you are filled with the joy that comes from being in His Presence, you will see that it was worth all the effort.

Acts 2:28 *"You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence."*

Before we begin looking at the Lord's Prayer itself, here are a few more of my thoughts on prayer that I think will help you as you begin to put into practice Jesus' teaching on prayer.

1. Pray audibly, when possible, not necessarily loud enough for others to hear, but speak the words. When we put our thoughts into words, we have to think them through, so by speaking our prayers our thoughts are more fully developed. If they remain only thoughts in our head, then they are often incomplete.

2. Prayer is us communicating, conversing, with the Godhead and normal communication is two-way, so be prepared to hear Them speak to you. This is one of the great joys of prayer.

John 10:27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

John 16:13 “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

Matthew 4:4 “...man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

3. When praying be sure to use the prayer language that God has given you by the Holy Spirit, tongues. He gave tongues to us to help us when we pray, so take advantage of them.

1 Corinthians 14:14 “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.”

What are the two ways that Paul says he prays?

With the, his, spirit and with the, his, understanding.

When Paul prays with his spirit how does his spirit pray?

In tongues as it is led by and enabled by the Holy Spirit.

What does Paul mean when he says he prays with his understanding?

He prays using his mind in a known language and understands what he is saying.

How does praying in tongues help us when we pray/worship?

Our mind, understanding, is limited, but God’s Spirit has unlimited knowledge. So, for example, if I am praying to God about a certain situation with my understanding, I am limited, and after a short time have to stop because I can’t think of any

more things to pray about concerning that situation. But, if when I get to that point, I allow my spirit to take over and begin to pray in tongues by the Holy Spirit I know I am praying the will of God concerning that situation, even though I don't know what I am saying.

Romans 8:26 “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And I find as I am praying in tongues, new revelation of what to pray for concerning that situation is deposited into my mind/understanding and I can go back and pray to God with my understanding again. And I can go back and forth between praying to God with my understanding and praying to Him with my spirit in tongues.

How does this happen as I don't understand what I am saying when I am speaking in tongues?

While my spirit is praying by the Holy Spirit in tongues, the Holy Spirit can at that time be giving the interpretation of what I am praying in tongues to my understanding.

1 Corinthians 14:13 “Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.”

What is Paul saying can happen when we are speaking/praying in tongues?

He is telling us that while we are praying/speaking in tongues, God can give us the interpretation in our understanding of what we are speaking.

Paul is not actually dealing with personal prayer or worship when he says this. He is speaking about interpreting tongues messages and speaking the interpretation for the benefit of others, but the principle is the same.

Our spirit can be praying in tongues and the Holy Spirit can give us the interpretation in our understanding. Anyone who prays in tongues and with their understanding has experienced this many times during their times of prayer and worship.

I am inserting Andrew Murray's, *Daily Fellowship with God* teaching here which will be very helpful to you being able to come into the Presence of your Father in heaven consistently.

Daily Fellowship with God **By Andrew Murray**

1. The first and chief need of our Christian life is, Fellowship with God. The Divine life within us comes from God, and is entirely dependent upon Him. As I need every moment afresh the air to breathe, as the sun every moment afresh sends down its light, so it is only in direct living communication with God that my soul can be strong.

The manna of one day was corrupt when the next day came. I must every day have fresh grace from heaven, and I obtain it only in direct waiting upon God Himself. Begin each day by tarrying before God, and letting Him touch you. Take time to meet God.

2. To this end, let your first act in your devotions be a setting yourself still before God. In prayer, or worship, everything depends upon faith and adoration, speaking thus within my heart: "God is. God is near. God is love, longing to communicate Himself to me. God the Almighty One, Who worketh all in all, is even now waiting to work in me, and make Himself known." Take time, till you know God is very near.

3. When you have given God His place of honor, glory, and power, take your place of deepest lowliness, and seek to be filled with the Spirit of humility. As a creature it is your blessedness to be nothing, that God may be all in you. As a sinner you are not worthy to look up to God; bow in self-abasement. As a saint, let God's love overwhelm you, and bow you still lower down. Sink down before Him in humility,

meekness, patience, and surrender to His goodness and mercy. He will exalt you. Oh! take time, to get very low before God.

4. Then accept and value your place in Christ Jesus. God delights in nothing but His beloved Son, and can be satisfied with nothing else in those who draw nigh to Him. Enter deep into God's holy presence in the boldness which the blood gives, and in the assurance that in Christ you are most well pleasing. In Christ you are within the veil. You have access into the very heart and love of the Father. This is the great object of fellowship with God, that I may have more of God in my life, and that God may see Christ formed in me. Be silent before God and let Him bless you.

5. This Christ is a living Person. He loves you with a personal love, and He looks every day for the personal response of your love. Look into His face with trust, till His love really shines into your heart. Make His heart glad by telling Him that you do love Him. He offers Himself to you as a personal Saviour and Keeper from the power of sin. Do not ask, can I be kept from sinning, if I keep close to Him? but ask, can I be kept from sinning, if He always keeps close to me? and you see at once how safe it is to trust Him.

6. We have not only Christ's life in us as a power, and His presence with us as a person, but we have His likeness to be wrought into us. He is to be formed in us, so that His form or figure, His likeness, can be seen in us. Bow before God until you get some sense of the greatness and blessedness of the work to be carried on by God in you this day. Say to God, "Father, here am I for Thee to give as much in me of Christ's likeness as I can receive." And wait to hear Him say, "My child, I give thee as much of Christ as thy heart is open to receive." The God who revealed Jesus in the flesh and perfected Him, will reveal Him in thee and perfect thee in Him. The Father loves the Son, and delights to work out His image and likeness in thee. Count upon it that this blessed work will be done in thee as thou waitest on thy God, and boldest fellowship with Him.

7. The likeness to Christ consists chiefly in two things – the likeness of His death and resurrection, (Rom. 6: 5). The death of Christ was the consummation of His humility and obedience, the entire giving up of His life to God. In Him we are dead to sin. As we sink down in humility and dependence and entire surrender to God, the power of His death works in us, and we are made conformable to His death. And so we know Him in the power of His resurrection, in the victory over sin, and all the joy and power of the risen life. Therefore every morning, “present yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.” He will maintain the life He gave, and bestow the grace to live as risen ones.

8. All this can only be in the power of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in you. Count upon Him to glorify Christ in you. Count upon Christ to increase in you the inflowing of His Spirit. As you wait before God to realize His presence, remember that the Spirit is in you to reveal the things of God. Seek in God’s presence to have the anointing of the Spirit of Christ so truly that your whole life may every moment be spiritual.

9. As you meditate on this wondrous salvation and seek full fellowship with the great and holy God, and wait on Him to reveal Christ in you, you will feel how needful the giving up of all is to receive Him. Seek grace to know what it means to live as wholly for God as Christ did. Only the Holy Spirit Himself can teach you what an entire yielding of the whole life to God can mean. Wait on God to shew you in this what you do not know. Let every approach to God, and every request for fellowship with Him be accompanied by a new, very definite, and entire surrender to Him to work in you.

10. “By faith” must here, as through all Scripture, and all the spiritual life, be the keynote. As you tarry before God, let it be in a deep quiet faith in Him, the Invisible One, who is so near, so holy, so mighty, so loving. In a deep, restful faith too, that all the blessings and powers of the heavenly life are around

you, and in you. Just yield yourself in the faith of a perfect trust to the Ever-Blessed Holy Trinity, to work out all God's purpose in you. Begin each day thus in fellowship with God, and God will be all in all to you.

Chapter 23

Matthew 6:9

Matthew 6:9 “In this manner, therefore, pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.’”

“In this manner, therefore pray:”

Jesus gives us one last instruction on how we should pray just before He begins to tell us what we should pray.

What does “in this manner, therefore pray” mean?

Synonyms for “in this manner”: in this sense, on this basis, based on this, given what has been said, and as such.

Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible: “This prayer is given as a “model.” It is designed to express the “manner” in which we are to pray, evidently not the precise words or petitions which we are to use.”

Adam Clarke says the following about this verse and the Lord’s Prayer as a whole.

Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible: “...besides its own very important use, it is a plan for a more extended devotion. What satisfaction must it be to learn from God himself, with what words, and in what manner, he would have us pray to him, so as not to pray in vain!

We do not sufficiently consider the value of this prayer; the respect and attention which it requires; the preference to be given to it; its fullness and perfection: the frequent use we should make of it...”

Mr. Clarke says, “it is a plan for a more extended devotion.” Jesus is giving us very specific things to pray for, but He is giving them to us in outline form, as a template, so that we, through the study of His Word and by the direction of the Holy Spirit, can fill in the details of the outline.

The Spirit will guide us to be able to fill in the outline as it applies to each of us personally. The details then will be appropriate for us according to the level of our relationship with the Father at the point we are at in our walk with Him. They will change and grow as we change and grow, as our revelation of the Father and His will changes and grows, and as our relationship with Him changes and grows. The details will always be somewhat unique to us, but the outline, the essentials, what Jesus has told us to pray, will remain constant for us all.

Here is the format I will use as we study the Lord's Prayer itself. I will share my own and other people's thoughts, teachings, along with many Scriptures, as Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture. Intermixed with this I will write down what I pray, in italics, to give an example of how I incorporate these teachings and Scriptures into what I am praying. In fact, much of what I pray is taken directly from the Scriptures. I am not sharing what I pray to in any way suggest that you should pray what I pray, although you should also incorporate the Scriptures into your prayer. As I said earlier, God will give you your own revelation of what you should pray through the inspiration of the Scriptures and by the leading of the Holy Spirit, I am simply sharing what I pray as an example, an aid, that might be helpful to you.

“Our Father in heaven”

As His children, legally and literally, we have the wonderful privilege of complete and total access to our Father. But this privilege and access is not something that we deserve or that we have earned. Our relationship with the Father is a gift of His grace based on what Jesus accomplished for us through His birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and the sending of His Spirit.

We have access into the Father's Presence only through our Lord Jesus Christ, by His blood and by His Spirit, having our sins washed away by His blood and our spirit united with His

Spirit, this is how we enter into the Father's manifest Presence in the Holiest.

Ephesians 2:18 "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father."

This is important: we need to understand this; we have access to come boldly into the Father's Presence, only by the blood of Jesus and by the Spirit of the living God.

Hebrews 10:19 "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,

21 and having a High Priest over the house of God,

22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

How do we enter into the Holiest?

"By the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way."

What is the Holiest?

In the Old Testament Tabernacle, the Holiest or the Holy of Holies as it was called, was the place of God's manifest Presence. No one was permitted to enter into the Holiest but the High Priest and him only once a year when he brought the blood of an animal sacrifice to make atonement for his sins and for the sins of the people of Israel.

The Holy of Holies in Jesus' time was located in the temple in Jerusalem and consisted of a large room divided into two parts by a thick veil. On one side of the veil was the Holy Place where the priests ministered and on the other side of the veil was the Holy of Holies, the Holiest, where God's Presence was manifest. I repeat, no one was allowed to come beyond the veil into God's Presence in the Holy of Holies but the High Priest and him only one time per year.

But all of that changed when Jesus died for the sins of the world.

Mark 15:37 “And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.

38 Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”

The veil or curtain that kept anyone from coming into the Presence of God was approximately 4 inches thick and went from the ceiling to the floor. At Jesus’ death it was torn from top to bottom, showing that it was God who had torn it, and signifying that entrance into the Father’s Presence was now available to all, through the death, shed blood, of His beloved Son.

So now we can draw near to our God, “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” Which refers to the power and work of the blood of Jesus. Through Jesus shed blood and by His Spirit we have become God’s children and He our Father, and as His children we can come into His Presence boldly.

Father, as we set our minds upon You today, we come before Your Presence in the name of Jesus and by the blood of the Lamb, knowing that we are accepted in the Beloved.

Ephesians 1:6 “to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”

We come before You into the Holiest to offer up to You the sacrifice of our lips, even thanksgiving and praise unto our God. We come rejoicing in this wonderful privilege that You have made available to us through the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 13:15 “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”

But He is not only our heavenly Father. He is also God almighty, our Creator and our Redeemer, and there is a proper way for us to enter into His Holy Presence.

The Holy Spirit gives us some instructions of how we are to enter His Presence in the Book of Psalms.

Psalms 100:2 “Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.

3 Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.”

When we come before His Presence we are told to come with joy and gladness, singing and rejoicing, and praising Him. We enter in through His gate, and we are told to do so with thanksgiving. Jesus is the gate, the door, the way of entrance unto the Father and we must come through Him.

John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

How do we come to the Father?

Through Jesus.

What do we enter into His Presence doing?

Offering up to Him the thanksgiving to which He is due.

Psalms 100:4 “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving...”

We thank You Father for making us in Your image to be Your loving, trusting, obedient and dependent children. To live in union and communion with You, fulfilling Your will, plan, and purpose for our lives. Thank You for making us eternal beings with consciousness and intelligence able to reason and make choices and for giving us free will. For providing us with everything we need for life and godliness.

We thank You for making us one with the Godhead through the indwelling of Your Spirit and we thank You that when we lost that relationship through our sin that You didn't give up

on us, but You sent Your Son into the world to restore us to oneness with You again.

We thank You Word for becoming flesh and dwelling among us. For humbling Yourself and becoming a man. We thank You Jesus for living a perfect sinless life, always doing the will of the Father, living to please Him and not Yourself. We thank You for obeying the Father and willingly submitting Yourself into the hands of sinful men to be falsely tried and shamefully treated. We thank You for willingly suffering shame and humiliation at their hands, the insults, accusations, mocking's, spitting, beatings, torture, and the cross.

We thank You for taking our sins upon Yourself on the cross. For dying spiritually, being separated from the Father and the Spirit, and then dying physically in our place. We thank you for descending into the lower parts of the earth to bear whatever tortures faced You there and we thank You for raising from the dead, ascending to the Father and receiving and pouring out Your Spirit into our hearts.

We thank You Holy Spirit for willingly coming into us and uniting with our spirit. We thank You for never leaving us in spite of all of our rebellion, all the times we grieved You. Thank You for Your faithfulness, patience, gentleness, kindness and grace, You have been so, so good to us.

Godhead we thank You for everything that You have done, are doing and will do, for us, in us, and through us. To You be all the glory.

After I have finished offering up thanksgiving to God for what He has done for me, I offer up praise to Him. I praise Him for who He is. (If you have not sensed His Presence before this, you may now, for "God inhabits the praises of His people.")

Take your time here in His Presence praising and worshipping Him, this is not some formality we need to hurry through, and get out of the way, so that we can get to the

important stuff. This is the important stuff. This is one of our highest callings as children of God!

Hebrews 13:15 “Therefore by Him (Jesus) let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”

When are we to offer praise, worship and thanks to Him?

“Continually!”

The Scriptures teach us that the Father is seeking worshippers.

John 4:23 “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.”

What is the Father seeking people for?

“To worship Him.”

This is what we were created and redeemed for and will be what we do for all of eternity in heaven.

Revelation 7:9 “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’

11 All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

12 ‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen.’”

But we shouldn’t wait until we get to heaven to become worshippers of God, (actually, if we are not worshippers of God now, we are probably not on our way to heaven) we should begin right here and right now. We should obey the exhortation given to us at the end of the Book of Psalms.

Psalms 150:1 “Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament!

2 Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

3 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp!

4 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!

5 Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals!

6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD”

What does the psalmist exhort us to do?

Praise God everywhere, at all times, for everything, every way that we can and with everything that we are for He is worthy.

Psalms 100:4 “...And into His courts with praise...”

Father, we praise You today for who You are, God Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth. You are the Sovereign Potentate, the rightful ruler of heaven and earth. For You have made all things, visible and invisible, all powers, principalities, rulers and dominions, and You have made them by and for Your pleasure, to serve Your will and plan and purpose for them.

Revelation 4:11 “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

You are the all-wise God, You know everything, for You inhabit eternity, You are the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. You are everywhere present, working, orchestrating, setting things in order, preparing things in advance that You might accomplish all of Your will in Your creation. For You will bring to pass Your will, plan and purpose for Your creation, for none can thwart You, for You work all things according to the counsel of Your own will.

Ephesians 1:11 “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,”

You are holy, holy, holy, You are righteous, pure and just, and You are worthy of all glory, honor, power and dominion forever and ever. You are worthy to be praised from the coming up of the sun until it sets. You are worthy of all of our love and worship, of all that we are or ever will be. We love You with everything we are, and we adore and desire only You.

Isaiah 6:3 “And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!’”

We praise You Lord Jesus our Savior, Lord, God and King. You are worthy of all of our love, adoration, thanksgiving and praise. You are our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, our everything and our all. You are wonderful, counselor, Almighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. You are the one through whom all things were created; the preeminent one.

Colossians 1:16 “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”

You are our hope and our confidence, to You belongs all glory, honor, power, wisdom, strength, and might. We exalt and magnify You for You are worthy forever and ever. There is none like You, You are indeed the Holy One of God. We love you and adore you and are forever grateful to You for all You have done for us. We will worship and praise and love You for all of eternity, our blessed Savior and God.

Revelation 5:11 “Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,

12 saying with a loud voice: ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!’”

“Hallowed be Your name.”

As we continue looking at the Lord’s Prayer, we see that we are told to pray and acknowledge that the Father’s name is to be hallowed.

What does it mean for something to be hallowed?

Treated as sacred, revered, feared, respected, revered as holy, honored, glorified, set apart, made separate from the common or ordinary, exalted.

What does His name represent?

Himself and all that He is.

Who should hallow His name?

All of His creation, including ourselves.

How do we hallow the Father’s name?

God tells us in this verse.

Leviticus 22:31 “Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I am the LORD.

32 You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel.”

How are we to hallow Him and not profane His holy name?

By obeying Him and doing what He commands us to do.

This Bible encyclopedia explains it this way.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: “To ‘hallow the name’ includes not only the inward attitude and outward action of profound reverence and active

praise, but also that personal godliness, loving obedience and aggressive Christlikeness, which reveal the presence of God in the life, which is His true earthly glory.”

According to this, how do we hallow His name?

If we name His name, call ourselves His children, Christians, we should hold Him in profound reverence in our hearts and actively praise Him. Our lives should be marked by personal godliness, loving obedience and aggressive Christlikeness, we should live as Jesus lived. When we do these things, we reveal His Presence in our lives and show forth His glory in the earth.

But when we don't do these things, we dishonor Him and His name is blasphemed among unbelievers.

Romans 2:23 “You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?”

24 For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the gentiles because of you,’ as it is written.”

Why was the name of God blasphemed among the Gentiles?

His people dishonored Him by breaking His laws, not keeping His commands, and by living like the rest of the godless nations around them. In a recent survey, “the hypocrisy of religious people” was the top reason people of no faith gave for doubting Christian beliefs.

Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: “Those that name the name of Christ, but do not depart from iniquity, as that name binds them to do, name it in vain; their worship is vain, their oblations are vain, their religion is vain.”

Let's take a minute to look at an incident in Moses' life that will help us to understand the significance that God puts on us hallowing Him, His name.

With the exception of the Lord Jesus Christ, Moses is the person in the Bible who had the most intimate and personal

relationship with the Father. He spent days and days in God's Presence, communing with Him, and more than any other person who ever lived, he was greatly used by God. But Moses was rebuked by the Lord and told he would not enter into the Promised Land when he failed to hallow Him before the people.

Numbers 20:7 "Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, **8** 'Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.'

9 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?"

11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.'"

How did Moses fail to hallow God in the sight of the people?

God told Moses to speak to the rock and Moses struck the rock. He did not obey His command, he did not reverence, hallow, honor Him before the people.

This should show us that if we are going to experience and maintain an intimate, personal relationship with the Father, it is important for us too, to hallow our God by loving, trusting, revering, and obeying Him.

Listen to these words by the prophet Isaiah, another person who spent time in the Presence of God and who was also used mightily by Him.

Isaiah 8:13 “The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow;
Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.”

Why should we hallow, fear and dread our loving Father?

Because He is not only our loving Father and the Savior of the world, but He is also the Judge of all the earth, and someday we will all stand before Him and give an account of what we did with this life He has entrusted us with.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man's all.

14 For God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.”

What does the Bible say man's all is?

To “fear God and keep His commandments.”

Why does the Scripture say we need to fear and obey Him?

Because “God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.”

He created, redeemed, adopted, and birthed us by His Spirit into His family to be His children so that we can accomplish His will, plan, purpose, and destiny for our life. We will only accomplish these as we walk in loving obedience to His will for us, by obeying all that the Lord Jesus has commanded us, and by being led by and empowered by His Spirit.

One day we will all stand before Him and give an account of what we did with this life He entrusted us with. We can be confident on that day if in this life we learned to love, trust, revere, fear, hallow, and obey Him.

Philippians 2:12 “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Why are we told to work out our own salvation?

Because it is God who is working in us both to will and do of His good pleasure. God is revealing to us, His will for us, and enabling us to do it.

How does Paul say that we should work out our salvation?

With fear and trembling. Don't take God's grace for granted. He has graciously forgiven and regenerated us so that we might do His will, and He will hold us accountable for doing so.

The following words were spoken by Jesus to those who had believed on Him and confessed Him as Lord.

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Who does Jesus say is going to heaven?

Those who believe in Him, confess Him as Lord and do the will of His Father in heaven.

What does He call those who do not do the will of His Father?

"You who practice lawlessness!"

And what does He say to them?

"I never knew you; depart from Me,"

So, we see that Jesus brings balance to His model prayer by teaching us that God is not only our loving Father whose Presence we can enter into boldly through His blood. But that He is also God Almighty, the one who will judge the whole world through the Lord Jesus Christ, and we must hallow Him by obeying Him and doing His will. God is love, and God is holy, and we must not lose track of either of these truths as we enter into His Presence.

Father, we pray today, teach us the fear of the Lord, to hallow, revere and obey You. We give ourselves to serve Your will today for we know that one day we will all be judged by Your Son Jesus Christ. Jesus, You are the one who is worthy to judge us for You became a man and lived a life of total obedience to the Father.

John 5:22 “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,

23 that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

You are the one who died for our sins so that we could be made righteous through faith in You, and the one who comes to live inside of us by Your Spirit to empower us to live as You lived, always doing the will of the Father. When we stand before You Lord, we will be without excuse if we have not fulfilled the Father’s will, plan and purpose for our lives, for You made available to us everything that we need, all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

2 Corinthians 5:9 “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...”

Chapter 24

Matthew 6:10

Matthew 6:10 “Your kingdom come. Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.”

After we have entered into the Father’s Presence offering up to Him the thanksgiving, praise and reverence that are due Him, His name. The first thing Jesus tells us to pray for is that God’s kingdom would come into our hearts, for that is where the kingdom of God must first come. And that His will would be done here on Earth in the lives of His creation just it is being done by those who inhabit heaven.

God created mankind, beginning with Adam and Eve to do His will. They chose not to do His will, but to instead become their own god and do their own will, the original sin. God sent His Son to earth to purchase repentance for man so that man could change his mind, repent, and man’s relationship with God could be brought back into the order it was created to have. God as God and man as His loving, trusting, obedient children.

Jesus died to pay the penalty: death, for man’s decision to disobey God’s will and do his own will. And we, Christians especially, have made that the focal point of Jesus coming to earth and dying, so that God could forgive us our sins and take us to heaven. But Jesus says no, the focal point, the first thing I want you to pray for is, that you, man, should repent and receive the Father’s kingdom, His rule and reign, into your heart and begin to live to do His will as He created and now redeemed you to do. God has not changed His mind about us, man, needing to do His will here on earth.

“Your kingdom come.”

What is Jesus telling us to pray for in this verse?

For the Father’s kingdom to come, be established.

What is the Father's kingdom?

The word "kingdom" means: the king's domain. It speaks of the place where the king rules and reigns, where his will is being done.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary: "Kingdom" must be interpreted in this context as the rule which God establishes in the hearts of men when Jesus Christ is received by faith...It means first and primarily the rule of God in the human heart because of Christ..."

Where is Jesus telling us to pray that the Father's kingdom would come?

On earth, within the lives, hearts, of His creation.

Luke 17:20 "Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation;

21 nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

I begin my prayer here by praying for the Father's kingdom to come into the hearts of all of mankind and for them to begin to live in obedience to His will. We need to learn to pray for what Jesus instructs us to pray for.

Father, I pray that Your kingdom would be established in the hearts of every man, woman and child alive now on planet Earth and all those who will ever live until the end of time. I pray that we would all come to our senses and repent of our sin, have a change of mind about being the god of our life, dethrone self from the throne of our heart and enthrone you as our God.

Acts 20:21 "testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God..."

That we would all submit ourselves to Your rule and reign in our life. That we would begin by obeying Your command for us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and

to make Him our Lord and begin to obey everything that He, Jesus, commands us to do.

1 John 3:23 “And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.”

Father, I pray that we would all begin by obeying Your Son Jesus’ command for us to be baptized in water and His command for us to receive the Holy Spirit, be baptized by the Spirit, be born again of the Spirit. And I pray that we would all submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit’s leading when He comes into our hearts.

Romans 8:14 “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

“Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.”

And I pray Father that we would all yield ourselves to Your Spirit so that He could lead us into Your will for our lives and that He would also empower us to live out Your will here on earth. For we know that only those who are doing Your will here on earth will join those who are doing Your will in heaven.

Matthew 7:21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”

After I have prayed for mankind as a whole, I pray for myself and those who I have been inspired to pray for. All that I pray for concerning us is in the context of God’s kingdom coming into our hearts and us turning from doing our will and beginning to do His will. This begins with repentance, trusting Christ as our Savior and Lord, and then obeying Him in receiving His Spirit into our hearts, and being born again. It is only by the Holy Spirit’s leading and enablement that we can do the will of God.

I am praying for some who are full gospel saints who are doing what I just listed and some who are sinners who need to do what I have listed, so my prayers are varied.

I begin by praying for myself because I am the one that I am most responsible for and the one that I will have to give an account to God for. I am also the only one that I really have any control over, so I pray to submit my life, my will, to fulfilling the Father's will for me.

I use Romans 12:1-2 as a template for my prayer.

Romans 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Romans 12: 1 "...That you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service..."

Father, not only do I pray for mankind as a whole but I also pray for myself. As I come before You today, I present to You my body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable. Washed in the blood and sanctified by the Spirit, made useful for Your work.

2 Timothy 2:21 "Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work."

It is my reasonable service to give myself in service to You for I belong to You through creation, redemption, and regeneration. I am not my own, I have been bought with a price. I therefore give my life in service to You that You might be glorified in my body and in my spirit which are Yours.

1 Corinthians 6:19 “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?”

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Lord Jesus, I give my life to live for You the one who lived His life and died for me. This is my reasonable service.

2 Corinthians 5:15 “and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”

Romans 12: 2 “**And do not be conformed to this world...**”

Lord as I live my life in service to You, I pray that I will not be conformed to this world. For I reckon the part of me that desires to be conformed to this world, self, the flesh, dead, crucified with You, united with You in Your death through water baptism and myself raised up with You by the glory of the Father, the Holy Spirit, that I might walk, live, in newness of life.

Romans 6:3 “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?”

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

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

I have been crucified unto the world and the world unto me.

Galatians 6:14 “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

I therefore renounce my love and affection for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. For if I love the world the love of the Father is not in me. And the world is passing away and the lust thereof and if I am living for it, I will perish with it. But if I live to do the will of the Father I will abide, live, forever. I therefore give myself to live to do Your will, my God.

1 John 2:15 “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

Father, I renounce my friendship with the world and choose instead to be a friend of Yours.

I also renounce this adulteress relationship that I have carried on in the flesh with this world my whole life. I thank you for Your mercy, patience, grace and forgiveness for these sins. I give you all the glory for the progress You have made, by Your Spirit, in overcoming these enemies in my life.

And I look forward to the day when I will experience total deliverance and victory over the flesh, the world, and the devil at Your coming.

James 4:4 “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

Romans 12: 2 “...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

Father, instead of being conformed to this world I give myself to being transformed, conformed, to the image of Jesus, by Your Word and Your Spirit, and as my mind is renewed,

thinks differently. I therefore set my mind on things above where Christ is seated at Your right hand and not on the things of earth. I set, focus, my mind on living so as to make heaven my eternal home.

Colossians 3:1 “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Father, I choose to be heavenly minded, Christ minded, sober minded, biblically minded, spiritually minded which leads to life and peace. And I choose not to set my mind on the things of earth, the world, because if I am earthly, worldly, fleshly, carnally minded it leads to death.

Romans 8:5 “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

Father, I choose today to have the same mind in me that was also in Christ Jesus my Lord who being in the form of God did not think it robbery to be equal with You.

For even now I am one with You through the Lord Jesus Christ and by the regeneration of Your Spirit. Even now I am a son of God. But like my Elder Brother I also choose to make myself of no reputation and instead choose to take the place of a bondservant, a bondservant being one who lives not to do his own will but the will of the one to whom he belongs.

And I belong to you Father and choose to live my life to do Your will.

Philippians 2:5 “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant..."

Thayer's Greek Definitions: Bondservant – “A slave, bondman... metaphorically, one who gives himself up to another's will... devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests.”

Romans 12:2 “...that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Father, I pray that with the mindset of a bondservant, I would be able to ascertain, discern, know, what is Your good and acceptable and perfect will. And by the power of Your Spirit, I would be able to live out Your will for my life to the glory of Your Name.

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible: “That ye may prove – The word used here is commonly applied to metals, to the operation of testing, or trying them by the severity of fire, etc. Hence, it also means to explore, investigate, ascertain. This is its meaning here. The sense is, that such a renewed mind is essential to a successful inquiry after the will of God.”

After I have prayed for myself, I pray next for those that I have a natural connection to and then those whom the Lord has shown me that I should pray for. I pray for these in groups and only pray for individuals when I am aware of special needs or when the Spirit prompts me to.

Again, the main context of what I am praying to the Father for all of these is: “Your kingdom come, Your will be done.” Because of this there is a lot of redundancy in what I pray. When I use the term “our” in the following examples I am talking about myself, my wife, and my ex-wife.

Father, I pray next for my wife, and my ex-wife; our children and their spouses and their ex-spouses; their children and their spouses and their future spouses; their children

and their future spouses, and all their extended families throughout the generations.

I pray that You would pour out Your Spirit upon them. Those who are full gospel saints, I pray that that they would daily seek Your will and the power to live it out.

Those who are not, that You would convict them of sin, righteousness, and judgment bringing them to a place of godly sorrow and repentance, that they might all become full gospel saints who would love You with all their heart, soul, mind and strength and who would live daily seeking Your will and the power to live it out.

Colossians 1:9 “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him...”

I pray next for our brothers and sisters and their extended families and then for our cousins and their extended families. I use the same wording as above so I will not write these out. After these, I pray for our spiritual children, and I pray a little bit differently for them so I will write that out.

Father, I pray for our spiritual children, those who You have allowed us to play a part in bringing them into the family of God. I thank You for this great privilege. I pray for these, their spouses, their children and their spouses, their spiritual children and their spouses and all of their extended families throughout the generations.

I pray that You would pour out Your Spirit upon them. Those who are full gospel saints, that they would daily seek Your will and the power to live it out.

Those who are not that You would convict them of sin, righteousness and judgment bringing them to a place of godly sorrow and repentance, that they might all become full gospel

saints who would love You with all their heart, soul, mind and strength and who would live daily seeking Your will and the power to live it out.

3 John 1:4 “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

Next, I pray for a group that I call “believers.”

Galatians 3:26 “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”

Father, I pray for believers, those who are children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, those who You have adopted into Your family. But I am praying for those of these who have never repented of their sin, or who have repented but who have turned back to being their own god. These who are not living to do Your will and the majority of whom have never received Your Spirit.

Those who are unrepentant, disobedient, unregenerate children who are in danger of the judgment.

Father, I pray that You would pour out Your Spirit upon them convicting them of sin, righteousness and judgment, bringing them to a place of godly sorrow and repentance. That they might all become full gospel saints who will love You with all their heart, soul, mind and strength and who will live daily seeking Your will and the power to live it out.

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

Father, I also pray that You would raise up from among these believers an army of full gospel laborers who You can use to help bring in this last day’s harvest of unbelievers.

Which is who I pray for next.

Father, I pray now for unbelievers. These who have never turned from their sin, trusted Christ as their Lord and Savior,

are not living in obedience to You, and who have never received Your Spirit. These who are unrepentant, unbelieving, disobedient, unregenerate children who the devil has blinded to the truth of the gospel that they might not be saved. Multitudes of whom are caught up in the false manmade religions of this world.

2 Corinthians 4:3 “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”

Father, I pray that You would pour out Your Spirit upon these convicting them of sin, righteousness and judgment. Bringing them to a place of godly sorrow and repentance. That You would give them revelation of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world. That there would be great awakening among these in these last days and that multitudes of these would become full gospel saints who will love You with all their heart, soul, mind and strength and who will live daily seeking Your will and the power to live it out.

Acts 17:29 “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.

30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,”

Lastly, I pray for full gospel saints.

Chapter 25

Matthew 6:11

Matthew 6:11 “Give us this day our daily bread.”

Jesus, after commanding us to pray for the Father’s kingdom to come, to be established in the hearts of His creation, and for His will to be done by us – tells those of us who have repented, trusted Him as our Lord and Savior, have obeyed Him and received His Spirit into our hearts and are being led by His Spirit, in other words – those of us who have become full gospel saints, to ask our Father for our daily bread. As we saw in an earlier chapter, our daily bread is the Holy Spirit, our spiritual sustenance – the one who reveals to us the Father’s will and empowers and enables us to live it out in our lives.

When I am praying for this group and use the word “we” or “our” I am referring to all full gospel saints including myself. This group is who I am praying for in the last 3 chapters of the book.

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

Father, we come before You today asking You to give us this day our daily bread. To speak a word into our hearts, a word in season, a rhema word. Speak to us Your will, plan, and purpose for our life. Tell us what You would have us to be and do today for we do not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Matthew 4:4 “But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

The main way that God speaks to man is through the Bible, whether read or heard preached. If God has spoken to you in

this way, have you obeyed what He spoke to you to do or stop doing? If not, God's Word for you today is, Repent! Do what I have already commanded you to do!

If you are obeying what God commands you to do in the Bible then you are a full gospel saint and can expect God to speak to you by His Spirit to lead you into His personal will, plan, and purpose for your life. We should expect this as the Father has a will, plan, and purpose for each of us individually and we can only know it as He reveals it to us by His Spirit.

The key to hearing God speak to you today is to do what He told you to do yesterday. All through the Bible we read of God speaking to very ordinary people who simply obeyed what He spoke to them to do. Many of their names are listed in Hebrews 11, the faith chapter, because they heard God speak to them and obeyed Him by faith. We need to do the same.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "Faith is only real when there is obedience, never without it, and faith only becomes faith in the act of obedience."

Father, we are asking that You would give us ears to hear what You are speaking to us today by Your Spirit. We also pray that You would give us a heart that will obey You and do what You speak to us to do.

Revelation 3:13 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

And Father, we also ask in obedience to our Savior that You would fill us with Your Spirit today. For we know that we can only be and do what You speak, command, us to be and do today by the power, life, of Your Spirit in us. For we live this Christian life not by might nor by power but by Your Spirit. Jesus, we ask that You would fill us with Your Presence, Your life, Your Spirit, Yourself for we know that we can do nothing without You.

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

Father, we understand our total dependance on and our desperate need for Your Spirit and that You are the only one who can supply Him to us. So we come persistently asking and keeping on asking, seeking and keeping on seeking, knocking and keeping on knocking.

Knowing that as our Savior promised everyone who asks and keeps on asking receives. Everyone who seeks and keeps on seeking finds. And to everyone who knocks and keeps on knocking the door will be opened.

Luke 11:9 “So I say to you, Ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks and keeps on asking receives; and he who seeks and keeps on seeking finds; and to him who knocks and keeps on knocking, the door shall be opened.” AMPC

Father, we know that you will much more give the Holy Spirit, our spiritual sustenance, to us Your children, then even our human fathers gave food, our physical sustenance, to us when we asked them. For You are a good, good, God and Father to us. You are Jehovah Jireh, our Provider. And we know that it is Your good pleasure to give unto us Your children all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

Luke 11:11 “If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

C. S. Lewis: “God made us: invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on petrol, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human engine to run on himself. He himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or

the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other.”

Father, as we are connected to You through our connection to the Vine, we are asking that You would pour out through the Vine into us the branches the Holy Spirit as a river of Living Water. And Father, we pray as we receive Your Spirit into our hearts and allow Him to flow back out of our hearts to a world dead in sins and trespasses that wherever that river of Living Waters would flow it would bring forth life, abundant life, spiritual life, eternal life.

John 7:37 “On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit...”

Father, we are praying today for a fresh wind of the Spirit in our sails. For a fresh Holy Spirit fire in our bellies, for a Holy Ghost zeal for the will and the work of God, for a fresh Holy Spirit passion for the harvest field and a Spirit born burden for the lost. Father, we are praying for Holy Ghost boldness that we might boldly preach Your full gospel message to believers and unbelievers!

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

Father, we are praying today that by Your Spirit we would be enabled to put to death in our life self, the flesh, the deeds, habits, of the body, the works of the flesh, that we might live and not die spiritually.

Romans 8:13 “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

Father, that instead of our lives producing the works of the flesh, we are praying that You would produce in us by Your Spirit the fruit of the Spirit which is the character and nature of our Savior. For our desire is to be transformed, conformed, to the image of Jesus by Your Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18 “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

And Father we are praying that You would by Your Spirit develop in us the fruit of the Spirit which is love, agape love. Because it is only through Your supernatural love that we will be able to love You with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and our neighbor as ourselves. And the only way we can obey Jesus and love one another as He loves us. And the only possible way we are going to love and forgive our enemies.

Matthew 5:44 “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,”

Father we are asking that You would help us by Your Spirit to pray effectively Your will in every situation and circumstance of life. For Father we do not know how to pray as we ought to pray.

Romans 8:26 “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Father, we are asking for power by the Spirit to be witnesses unto our Savior to all those within our sphere of influence.

Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

And Father, we are asking that You would confirm this full gospel message that we preach with signs, wonders, and miracles following so that all would know that this message we preach is indeed the Word of God.

Mark 16:20 “And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.”

Father, we are praying for a revival of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us to bring in this last day’s harvest of souls. And that You would pour out of Your Spirit on all mankind.

Act 2:17 “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh...”

Father, we are also praying that You would raise up from among Your full gospel saints, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for Father we are in desperate need for Holy Spirit filled leadership in Your church in these last days!

Ephesians 4:11 “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,”

Father, we thank You for filling us with Your Spirit today, and for Your soon coming Holy Spirit outpouring upon all of mankind.

Chapter 26

Matthew 6:12

Matthew 6:12 “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

“And forgive us our debts.”

Father, we are asking today that You would forgive us our sins and trespasses against You. We are not asking that You would forgive us of sins that we are willfully committing. We need to repent of those first and then ask for Your forgiveness.

We are asking that You would forgive us these areas in our life where we have not yet been conformed to the image of Jesus. We are praying that You would forgive us in these areas, that You would wash us, and we would be whiter than snow. And we pray that when You bring these areas of sin to our attention, that we would be quick to repent of these and to gain victory over them by the power of Your Spirit.

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

“As we forgive our debtors.”

Father we are asking that You would also forgive those who have sinned against us. We forgive them, and we are asking that You would forgive and bless them, and use them, and work in and through their lives.

We are asking that You pour out Your Spirit upon them. Those who are full gospel saints that they would daily seek Your will and the power to live it out.

For those who are not, we ask that You convict them of sin, righteousness and judgment bringing them to a place of godly

sorrow and repentance. That they all might become full gospel saints who will love You with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength and who will live daily seeking Your will and the power to live it out.

Luke 6:28 “bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.”

Father, we are also praying for those of us, Your full gospel saints, who have not yet obeyed You, in forgiving those who have sinned against us. We pray that as we come before Your throne of grace today to receive mercy, the forgiveness of our sins, that we would also find, appropriate, grace, by the power of Your Spirit to help us in this our time of need, to forgive all those who have sinned against us.

Hebrews 4:16 “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

For Father, if we do not obey You and forgive those who have sinned against us, then You will not forgive us our sin. And if You do not forgive us our sin, then we are surely lost!

Matthew 6:14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Chapter 27

Matthew 6:13

Matthew 6:13 “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

“And do not lead us into temptation.”

Father, we know that You do not tempt anyone to sin, but we also know that You do allow us to be tempted.

James 1:13 “Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.”

Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible: “And lead us not into temptation – This is a mere Hebraism: God is said to do a thing which he only permits or suffers to be done.”

And we also know that You do not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, and with every temptation You also make the way for us to escape and not sin. Father, we pray that You would always help us to take the way of escape and that we would never give in to sin. For sin is not a toy or a game, it will kill the believer as well as the unbeliever if we choose to practice a lifestyle of sin.

1 Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

“But deliver us from the evil one.”

Father, we know that You have delivered us out of the devil's kingdom and brought us into the kingdom of Your dear Son. That our citizenship is in heaven, and that even now we are Your beloved children.

Colossians 1:13 “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,”

But Father, we also know that You have sent us into the world to continue the process of our sanctification, us being transformed into the image of Jesus.

Romans 8:29 “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

And to use us to bring others out of the devil's kingdom and into Your glorious kingdom.

Matthew 28:18 “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...”

Ephesians 6:10 “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

Father, as we are laboring in the power of Your might to bring men and women out of the devil's kingdom and into Your kingdom, help us by the Spirit to put on the whole armor of God, that we might be victorious over all of the devil's strategies.

2 Timothy 2:26 “and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”

Ephesians 6:12 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

And Father, as we are laboring in the harvest field for the souls of men we are not fighting against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities, hosts of darkness and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.

We are asking therefore Father, that You would empower us by Your Spirit as we put on the full armor of God, to be able to stand against these adversaries and having done all, to stand.

Ephesians 6:14a “Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth...”

Father, as we gird ourselves with truth let us lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily ensnare us. For we cannot be victorious in this battle if we are living a lie, weighed down with the things of the flesh and the world and are living in willful sin.

Hebrews 12:1 “...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us...”

And Father, as we are engaged in this battle, let us stand on the truth that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us and that we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Romans 8:37 “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

And above all Father, let us understand this truth and stand upon it, we are fighting from a position of dominion and victory.

For greater is He who is in us than he who is the world!

1 John 4:4 “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”

Ephesians 6:14b “...having put on the breastplate of righteousness,”

Father, that we would put on the breastplate of righteousness, the imputed righteousness that is ours through the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from all our past and present sin.

And that we would live a righteous testimony by the power of Your Spirit in us. For he is righteous, who does righteousness but he who sins is of the devil.

1 John 3:7 “Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

8 He who sins is of the devil...”

But we are not of the devil. But we overcome the devil, by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony and we love not our life even unto death!

Revelation 12:9 “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

11 “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

Ephesians 6:15 “and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;”

Father, that we would have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, marching through the world fulfilling the great commission we have been given of preaching the gospel to the world and making disciples of the nations by the grace, power, of Your Spirit in us.

And that we would be fulfilling our calling as peacemakers helping men and women to make peace with God.

Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.”

And that we would be fulfilling the ministry of reconciliation that You have given to us, as Your ambassadors pleading with men and women to be reconciled unto You.

2 Corinthians 5:18 “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”

Ephesians 6:16 “above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

Father, that we would take the shield of faith that we might be able to quench all the fiery darts, arrows, of the devil. All the flaming arrows of condemnation, accusation, temptation, deception, pride, fear, doubt, unbelief, distraction, and diversion, that he shoots into our hearts and minds to try and hinder us from fulfilling Your plan and purpose for our life.

Father, that we would not meditate upon these things that he shoots, speaks, into our minds and hearts so that they will not accomplish his intended purpose for them, but that we would quench these thoughts instantly by faith.

1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith...”

Ephesians 6:17a “**And take the helmet of salvation...**”

Father, we know that the battle is in the mind, the heart, the inner man. Therefore, let us put on the helmet of salvation. Guarding our minds and hearts with all diligence for out of these flow the issues of life.

Proverbs 4:23 “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”

Joseph Benson’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments: “Keep thy heart with all diligence – The Hebrew is, Above all keeping, keep thy heart, that is, thy mind and thoughts, thy will and affections, which are the more immediate cause of men’s actions.”

And let us cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:5 “casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,”

Father, we pray that we would be Christ minded, sober minded, single minded, spiritually minded, biblically minded, heavenly minded.

And Father, that we would meditate, think, on the things that are noble, true, just, pure, lovely, virtuous, praiseworthy and of good report.

And that we would keep our minds stayed on You Father, for You keep those in perfect peace whose minds are stayed on You.

Isaiah 26:3 “You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.”

Ephesians 6:17b “...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;”

Father, that we would take the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Studying to show ourselves approved, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Father, that we would become proficient in Your Word, which is a powerful two-edged sword. That we would be able to use it as a mighty defensive weapon to thwart all of the devil’s temptations, just as our Savior did when the devil tempted Him in the wilderness.

Luke 4:3 “And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”

4 But Jesus answered him, saying, “It is written, ‘*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*’”

And that we would be able also to use this two-edged sword as a mighty offensive weapon to advance Your kingdom in the earth through the preaching of Your Word.

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...”

Ephesians 6:18 “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints”

Father, that we would pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit for all the saints, and for all men, especially those whom You have shown us that we should intercede for.

For the fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

James 5:16 “...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

For You have given us Father, intercessory prayer as a mighty offensive weapon to use in conjunction with the preaching of Your Word, the Gospel, to see men and women brought out of the devil's kingdom and into Your glorious kingdom!

“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

For Father, truly Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory.

And You have brought us into Your kingdom by Your power for Your glory.

And we serve Your kingdom by Your power to Your glory.

For Father, You have chosen to use from this world the foolish things, the weak things, the base things, the things despised and the things that are nothing, to advance Your kingdom in the earth. That You might receive all the glory!

1 Corinthian 1:27 “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

Therefore Father, we give You all the glory! For You alone are worthy to receive all the glory! Forever and ever and ever and ever, Amen! and Amen! and Amen! and Amen!

Postscript

Postscript

Besides spending this time in prayer each day, we should also try to spend some time during the day reading and/or studying the Bible. This will be one of the main ways the Lord will speak to us! Without this our spiritual life will lack weight, balance and stability. Our spiritual health will depend on us doing this. The flesh and the devil hate and fear our spending time in God's Word as much as they hate our spending time in communion with Him in the secret place. So, we need to do whatever it takes to follow through with time in the Word! God will help us, and the Holy Spirit will be our teacher.

Joshua, like Moses, spent much time in the Lord's Presence communing with Him.

Exodus 33:11 "So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle."

When the Lord met with Moses in the tabernacle to speak with him, Joshua was there. And when Moses returned to the camp to tell the people what the Lord had said, Joshua remained in the tabernacle in the Lord's Presence. I'm sure it greatly pleased the Lord that Joshua loved to spend time in His Presence, but the Lord commanded Joshua to also spend time in His Word.

Joshua 1:8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

Like Joshua we need to spend time in His Presence in prayer and time in reading and studying His Word!

This book contains step-by-step instructions to achieve a life of intimacy with your Father in heaven. Using the Lord's Prayer as a template, you will discover how to enter into the very Presence of God to enjoy daily fellowship with Him.

It will instruct you on how to hear the voice of your Creator and how to receive the grace, power, and ability you need to live a life of obedience to Him.



Barbara and Billy Conrad