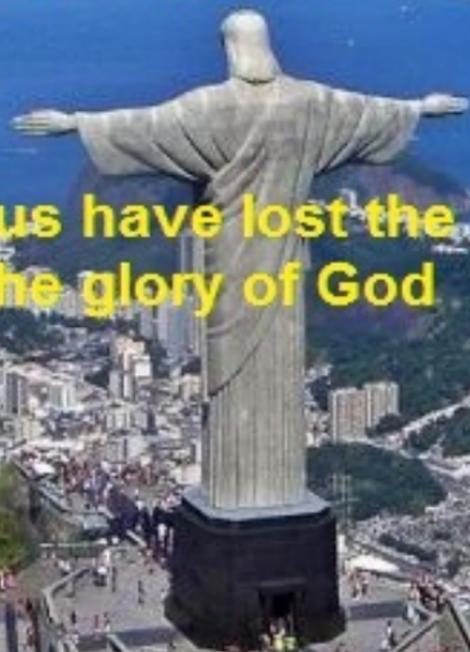


THE AMAZING OFFER FROM GOD

In the beginning God said "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." Gen 1:26

Now all of us have lost the purity of the glory of God

God wants to restore us to His image in the likeness of Christ



The amazing offer from God

How amazing is it that God wants to restore His life in us which is found in Jesus Christ?

In the beginning God said, “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*” Gen 1:26

It is Jesus, the word of God, who created all things in the beginning. (John 1:1-4) ‘*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.*’ Col 1:15-17

The fact that God wants to restore us to His divine image is indeed amazing. As normal human beings we only know ourselves by our physical bodies, our thoughts, and feelings.

But deep inside us there is something we don’t understand, something that we may yearn for but which is beyond our reach. This is something we had no part in making, but

something that longs to be delivered and found by us in order to come to life. And this deep longing can only be brought to life by God through Jesus, our creator who died so we can live.

Even though we have denied God His rightful place in our lives, He still values the image He created in all men and women, even those who reject Him His rightful place of respect and worship.

Man's godly nature is corrupted by sin

Why did Christ have to die so we can live? The problem started when Adam betrayed God's trust and disobeyed God. By sinning against God he died in his spirit according to the perfect image of God, he no longer lived up to that image in the likeness of God. Instead of being a son of God true to His image, he became just flesh. Gen 6:3

The terrible thing about man's sin is that he used his God given power and ability in the service of Satan. Since that time, everyone

born on earth as decedents of Adam is born with Adams sinful fleshly nature, and now carries his corrupted spiritual DNA which has a liking for the sin of disobedience to God.

As God's word says, "*Men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.*" (John 3:19) '*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*' (Rom 3:23) '*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.*' (Rom 5:12) '*So then as through one transgression, there resulted condemnation to all men.*'

Rom 5:18

Because of the sinful nature we inherit from Adam, we are not capable of living the life God requires, and we are unable to save ourselves from sin; we are not able to change darkness into light or produce light from our darkness. Consequently we are helplessly lost in the darkness of a sinful world unless God intervenes on our behalf.

So God sacrifices Himself for our sin

Since no one born of man can save himself, let alone anyone else, we need a divine saviour who is without sin. That means we need God to save us because He is the only one without sin.

So God sent Jesus, *“He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.”*

Heb 1:3

God came to save us as the man Jesus, and though He was tempted in every way as we are, He was without sin. *‘For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.’* Heb 4:15

‘For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly, In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.’
(Rom 5:6, 8) *‘For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.’*

Rom 6:23

Jesus' sinless death makes way for us to be washed clean and forgiven our sin. He came so that all who believe and obey Him might walk in the light as children of God. Jesus came to die for our sins so that we could live with God. He came to take our death and give us His life.

None of us is innocent of sin

None of us deserves to be forgiven; none of us can claim a pardon from God. None of us can repair the damage done to us because of our sin. The broken watch cannot fix itself, it needs the watch marker.

For our own good God wants to restore His god-likeness in us so we can walk with Him. He wants to rebirth His life in us by His Spirit so we may live with Him. He wants to breathe life into the broken spiritual heart of the natural man who walks in darkness, so that all men may walk in the light of His beloved Son. God loves us so much He wants to make us truly alive.

Therefore He has gone to enormous trouble to make peace and happiness possible for all people in order that all can have the potential to be remade alive in His likeness. God desires all of mankind to be a true reflection of His divine likeness. And to reflect His image means we will acknowledge God's image and likeness wherever it is found, even in those who deny His presence.

When we look at a coin, we see an image of the one who made the coin. So all image bearers have the stamp of their maker on them; they belong to the one who made them. In human terms, image bearers are under the authority and dominion of their maker. Image bearers are to live for the one whose image they bear a likeness too. Image bearers have to answer to their maker and give account for how they have lived.

As God's image bearer, man was made to reveal something of God's love, holiness, humility, kindness, and goodness. As God's

representative on earth, man was responsible for carrying out God's purpose under His authority. When man sinned against God he no longer revealed what God was like or represented God's purpose on earth.

But God still loved us so much He was prepared to die as a man on the cross of shame instead of us, so we can be redeemed from the darkness to live as holy children of God. Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ came to save us from sin so we could have His eternal life. The Lord God came as a man, committed to absolute obedience to God, in order to restore to mankind what was lost when Adam sinned. The amazing thing is God wants to restore our god-likeness through Jesus Christ.

This work of God we call salvation, and it is all God's doing. Even the faith to believe comes from Him. (2 Pet 1:2) We who believe and obey Him are saved by the grace of the underserved love of God, a grace which is

given freely to those who will surrender all and call on Him for a new life.

As Adam showed, one sin is enough to be ejected from the Kingdom of God. One act of disobedience moves us from living in the light of God's glory to dwelling in the darkness of a world given over to sin. But "*God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*" John 3:16

Life comes by faithful obedience in Christ

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
(John 3:36) *'He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.'* 1 John 5:12

To believe in Jesus is not to just agree that we want Him to save us; to believe in the Son of God means to trust Him completely by accepting He is God, and surrendering our life and our will to Him in obeying all His

commandments. So, just as Jesus obeyed the Father even unto death, we obey the Son, even if it we die. Jesus said, *"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."* Matt 16:25

Baptism is the first sign of our obedience

Our repentance is the act of turning completely around in absolute surrender to God. Our baptism is the public declaration of the change of allegiance by dying to self to serve God only. When we are baptised in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we agree that we are now under their dominion and authority, so that our will is no longer to be used for self, because we now live to do the will of God. Being baptised by immersion represents our death to self so we can live for God. The water is not just a sign of our cleansing; the water is a sign of our grave. If we can look back to the place we were baptised, we can point to it and say "that

is where I died to self for Christ so I could be raised up and live with Him.”

The Bible tells us, ‘Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.’

Rom 6:3-7

God gives us a new life by the Spirit

Jesus has said; *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he*

cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

John 3:3, 5-7

If we are to be restored to a relationship with God, we need a life which is suitable for fellowship with God who is Spirit. We need to be reborn by the Spirit of God; we need to be spiritual children of God made new once again in His image to reveal His likeness.

This new life is governed by the Spirit

When we die for Jesus, He will give us a new life. He gives us this new life by His Spirit being birthed in us. *'If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies.'*

Rom 8:11

As a consequence of the Spirit's presence and indwelling, we can live as the children of God in His Kingdom, for then we will be the

brethren of Christ. *'For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.'* (Rom 8:14) We will be known as those who are in Christ. We who are in Christ have the divine life of God in us, in a similar way that Jesus had the life of God in Him. 2 Pet 1:3-4

Those who are in Christ are brothers and sisters with Him through their spiritual birth.

Therefore Christians are those who are destined to be exalted to heavenly glory with Christ because they are like Him, as offspring of God. Rom 8:29

Consequently we are to live no longer according to the flesh of our former life; we are to live according to the Spirit of Christ who dwells in us, who is now our life.

'You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.' Rom 8:9

What is this new life like?

When we look to Jesus we can see what God intended for our lives. Not just natural man saved by grace. Being reborn in God's image means we will have the love for God and the love for man that Jesus gives. Image bearing is about intimacy with God and with those whom He has created in His image.

This is what Jesus came to restore in us who are born again. This is what we lost in Adam, but can be made alive by God.

The Bible says of the believer *'For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.'* (Rom 8:29) *'As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.'* Cor 15:48-49

Furthermore, God's purpose is to raise us to a higher level than Adam had before he fell into sin. Adam's sin showed spiritual immaturity as he was able to fall into sin; God wants us to be able to not fall into sin when all His work is done, since there will be no place for sin in the new heaven and the new earth.

Therefore, those who repent of their sin and obediently follow Jesus Christ are reborn in God's image, the image of His Son so that they will be free from the power of sin.

The work of God births in us the divine life of God by the Spirit, so we have God's DNA in us which frees us from Adam's spiritual curse. When we believe and are baptised by the Spirit, the Spirit indwells us as the power of God's image so we can be holy as He is holy.

However, it's important for us to understand we cannot be born again with a new life unless we first die to the old life. When Jesus died on the cross by obeying the Father's will, He was raised up by God; so we too need to

die to our will if we are to be raised up to have a new life according to the will of God.

When the Lord Jesus came to die on a cross for us in obedience to God, He denied Himself to do the will of God. And God raised Him up and seated Him on His throne. And we cannot be raised up to live with God unless we are willing to die to self in order to live with Him.

Therefore, the Lord Jesus has commands us to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily if we want to follow Him. (Luke 9:23) Otherwise we cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Taking up our cross daily is another way of saying we repent daily, we turn daily from self will, we change our minds daily so we do the will of God.

Taking up our cross means we are living a life of repentance. We must be able to say, not my will, but Your will be done. Taking up our cross means we have to die to the will of man,

our own will, so that we can live for the will of God.

Perfecting Christ's life in us

The Bible teaches us that the goal of Jesus' redemption is that we shall be fully conformed to His image by a process of continual transformation until we go to meet with Him in Glory.

'For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.' (Rom 8:29)

'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 from the Lord, the Spirit.'

2 Cor 3:18

The Lord Jesus wants us to grow up to be like Him. The only way we can do that is by living by God's Spirit. *'If we walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.'*

Gal 5:16

Those who are born again of God's Spirit have His personal power to obey so we can live our new life without sin controlling us.

The Scripture says '*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*' (2 Cor 5:17) The old life we had is no longer our reason for living.

Therefore, because we can receive His divine nature and His divine power, our spiritual life must have priority over our fleshly human nature by the powerful working of God in us.

This life of a disciple of Jesus is not for those who want to rely on human ability, it is only possible for those who are surrendered to God and are born of the Spirit, always being led by the Spirit in all obedience and truth.

When we commit ourselves to following Jesus, we will know our own weakness, but when we are weak we are strong in Him because it is His power that will work in us, (Eph 3:20) to will and to do for His good

pleasure. (Phil 2:13) And it is God's good pleasure that we would be like Christ.

Rom 8:29

All the teaching of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6 and 7) is not for the natural man, the natural man cannot do this; this teaching of Christ is showing us what it is to live as God's children; this teaching of Jesus is how He lived amongst men, and it is how He desires we live if we are to follow His example and abide in Him. He makes it all possible.

So will you surrender to Him and follow Him so you can be born again to walk with God in the same way Jesus walked on earth?

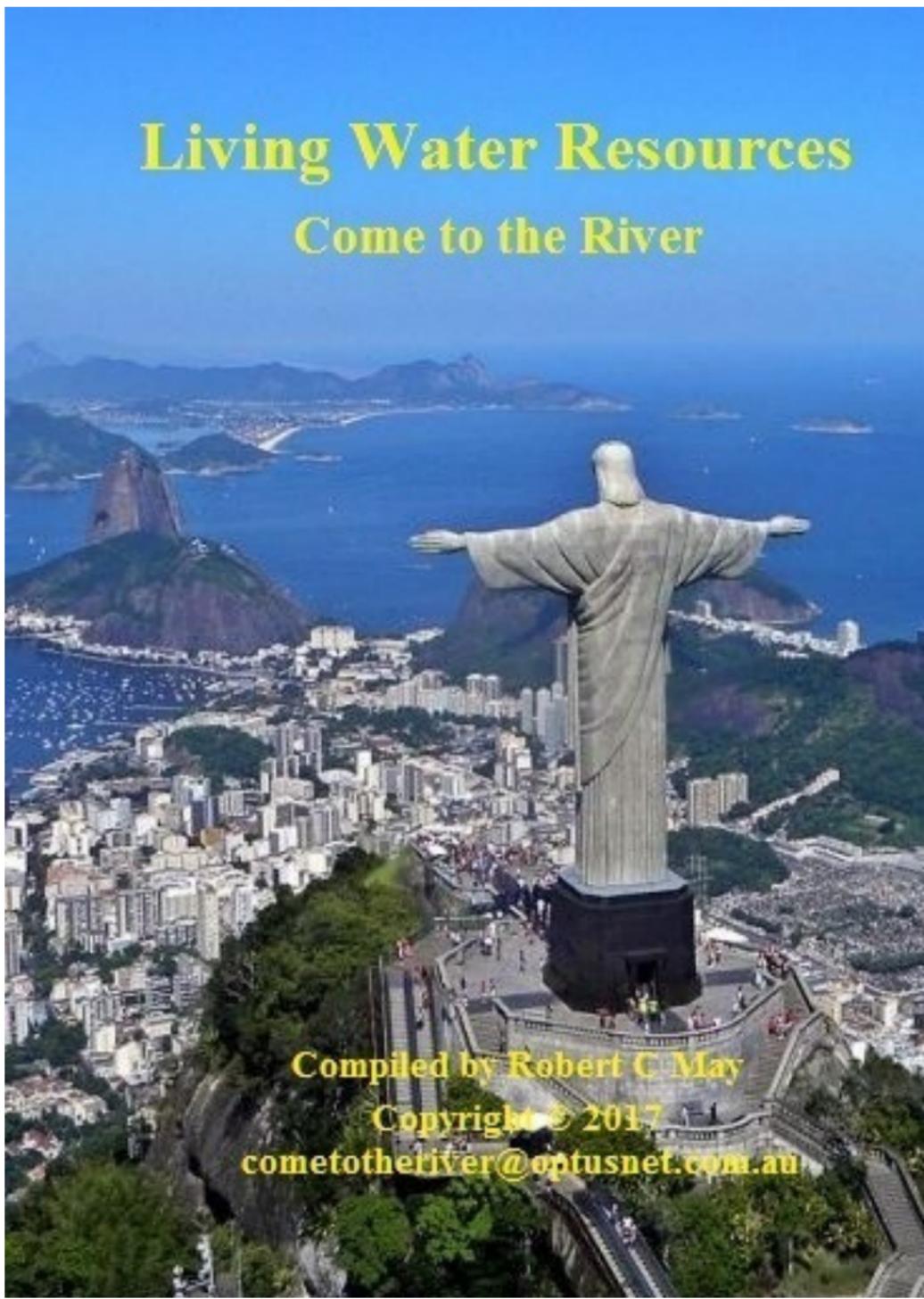
Will you come and die with Him to the ways of the world and self centeredness, so you can be raised up with Him to eternal life to be centred on God?

Will you abide in Him?

Come to Him who can save your life

Living Water Resources

Come to the River

An aerial view of the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The statue stands on a high plateau, overlooking the city and the bay. The background shows the city's dense urban landscape, the bay, and distant mountains under a clear blue sky.

Compiled by Robert C May
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