

# On this Rock we stand

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
all other ground is sinking sand, all  
other ground is sinking sand....

# *On this Rock we stand*

We must have eyes to see Christ's reality as our only Rock if we are to grow in Him. *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* And Jesus said to him, *"Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."* Matt 16:16-18

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock."*

Matt 7:24

## **The Rock of the Church is the light of the world**

*Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."*

John 8:12

Jesus is the Light, and He calls us who believe in Him to be His light bearers. Why light? We need light because we have to walk in the darkness of the world and not be overcome by that darkness. We need the light if we are going to lead others out of the darkness and into the true light. How can we see a need for a light if we don't see the darkness itself? We need to see the darkness and at the same time live in the light of Jesus Christ. Our life depends on seeing the darkness.

We see the darkness when we feel mistreated. We see the darkness in us when we want to complain about not being treated appropriately. We see the darkness in us when pride wants recognition. We see the darkness when we feel we have not received due respect. We see the darkness that wants to justify indignation at being hard done by. We see the darkness in arrogance, in impatience, in anger resentment, in self sufficiency, in separation, in intolerance, in injustice, in unkindness, in self seeking, in self pity, in depression, in hate, in unfaithfulness, in worldliness, in self importance, in unbelief, in greed, in laziness, in immaturity, and in disobedience.

We need to remember we are not of the world and its darkness; we have no rights in the world, for we have been removed from the world and placed in the Kingdom of God. We are now the light for the world.

The prince of darkness comes to us with plausible arguments to justify ourselves, and to defend ourselves, but all these ways lead to death in his darkness. See the darkness and put it off by bowing down in humility and surrender to the Spirit of Light within, so that we can overcome self and sin and live in His marvellous and victorious light. But we must remember, we can't put off what we can't see and we won't see if we're not surrendered to the Rock of Ages.

See the darkness is about 'me', it's all about 'me' my rights; my way; my world, my will. The darkness has a vested interest in us continuing to look to ourselves. And it achieves this by getting us to react to the world by demanding our way. Reacting to the darkness and thereby taking its words as truth grieves the Spirit of God and therefore grieves the light in us. The darkness speaks lies and unsettling words to create anxiousness and indignation so that we grieve the Spirit of Light and abandon our faith in unbelief, thus bringing us more under his influence and control.

### **The Holy Spirit reveals our darkness**

The first thing the Holy Spirit does is convict the world, and us of sin. (John 16:8) He reveals the darkness in us so we can see what we have to deal with. If we don't see the darkness there is no need for the light of Christ. There is no need for a warning. There is no need for dying to self. There is no need to live in the light. There is no need to love the Creator instead of the creation. There is no need to live in the Spirit. There is no need to see the darkness blinding us to its death. There is no need to have eyes that see and ears to hear.

If we don't see the darkness we won't live in the light. If we don't see the darkness and live in the light, we won't remember who we are in Christ. If we don't see the darkness and live in the light we will have an identity crisis. If we don't see the darkness we will stumble and fall. We will live in the shadow of mediocrity. If we don't see the darkness as the impersonation of reality we won't find reality in Christ.

If we don't see the darkness we won't be an affective witness to Christ. We won't be free from the power of sin. We won't walk in the Spirit. We won't walk as He walked. We won't see the desperate need of those in the darkness. We won't see the danger of indifference which is the opposite of love. We won't see the prince of darkness waiting for us close by. If we are not saved from the darkness we are not saved into the light. If we don't walk in the light we won't recognise others who are light bearers for our spiritual benefit.

It is one thing to talk about the darkness, it's another thing entirely to see the darkness everywhere and stay in the light. No light, no sight. Many think they have light but fail to see where they are because of the darkness within. All of us who have been rescued from the darkness still have to deal with the ingrained darkness of our former life in the world. Some would say we have an old man and a new man, we have dual personalities; but this is a misunderstanding. The old man was Adam and the new man is Jesus Christ. We were in Adam, and now we are in Christ. We cannot exist with both, light cannot have fellowship with darkness. So the life we once lived is now dead to us in Christ, but the mind still has to be transformed into the mind of Christ. Rom 12:2

If our hearts desires are for the world and the things of the world, including its solutions for how man should live, we are mentally attached to the darkness and our eye is bad and the light we have is not clear. (Matt 6:21-24) *"If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"*  
Matt 6:23

If the light in us is darkness we won't see we have an identity problem as a Christian. We won't be able to worship in Spirit and truth. We won't see the pattern of our life is not fit for the Kingdom of God. We won't be able to be cherished or cherish others. We won't see that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves in Christ. We won't be able to be a light for others to find their way into fellowship with God. We won't have oil for our lamp so we are ready for the day of the Lord. We won't understand why we have depression. We won't be able to overcome bad habits. We won't be able to accept His will for Christian leadership. We won't be able to keep all His commandments. We won't be able to have victory over the sin in our life. We won't be

able to see the need to turn 'ON' the light. We won't be able to come to the River of the Spirit for we won't see the need. We won't be able to understand the things of God because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Cor 2:14

Jesus answered, "*Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.*"

John 11:9-10

## **Spiritual light is supernatural sight**

*'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.*

1 Cor 2:12-16

Seeing and hearing spiritually can be understood as hearing and gaining understanding directly from the Spirit, and those in whom He has placed His gift of service as a revelation of His truth. Spiritual understanding is also as having a spiritual sensing, a perception about something. It is seeing through our spirit with spiritual eyes, and hearing with spiritual ears, without which we are both blind and deaf to the truth of life on the Rock of Christ.

Unless we are truly born again in our spirit and committed to growing in Him through absolute surrender to His will, we won't have spiritual eyes and ears to see as God sees and hears. Unless we are committed to growing in Christ to a mature faith, we will continually get caught up in the darkness. Unless we are dying to self every day we may be in danger of wanting to get our ears tickled and follow after every wind of doctrine that suits our shadowy fancies.

## **The secret to a fruitful Christian life is the reality of Christ as the rock of the world**

In choosing us to be His children, God has invested the life of His Son to redeem us and give us a life like His Son. In a real way He invested Himself in the redemption of a world lost in darkness so that the dead may live to the glory of God. The new life in Christ our Rock is of the divine nature and far from Adam's grave.

What does that new life of the spirit look like? Peter helps us understand in the first chapter of his second letter. *'His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.'*

2 Pet 1:3-4

This life is Spirit empowered. *'If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.'*

Rom 8:11

The Spirit of God provides the qualities of the divine life required for those born again by God. *'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.'*

Gal 5:22-23

The life of the Spirit is to produce divine fruitfulness in the life of those born again by God. Those who are born of the Spirit are born by God to reflect the life of God in Christ as they go into the world. The chosen children of God are given great assistance, because they are to walk by the Spirit. *'But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.'*

Gal 5:16

The only way God's children can reflect God's life is by daily walking truly according to the new life we have in God by the powerful working of His Spirit. Walking in the spirit according to the life and light of God is a process of the renewing of the mind (Rom 12:1-2) so that we have the thoughts of God.

1 Cor 2:16

We certainly won't achieve the full maturity of Christ in this life, but by God's mighty power we are well and truly on the right road to heaven.

### **But we struggle with unbelief**

In spite of what God has done, and while we are enabled by His grace and power we are quick to complain when life goes sour; we are quick to feel God has let us down when we fail to receive the blessing we think should come our way. We are quick to become anxious when serious disease visits our bodies. We often complain bitterly about our circumstances when struggle is required and we fail to recognise God is Sovereign over every part of our life.

All these earthly reactions point to the great struggle many Christians have believing God has given us His reality in Christ, and then fall short of living as His holy children. Even the way we talk about our inability to remain true to our new life in Christ carries the underlying belief that the flesh of our past is more powerful than the indwelling Spirit today.

With all that is written for our benefit in the word of God, it seems we continue to walk as mere men and don't take what God is doing seriously. God wants us to stop living the way we were before He gave us life and godliness. Don't we have *the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!?"*

Rom 8:15

We must ask ourselves, what do we really believe? What does our behaviour indicate we believe about what our Father has done so that we can grow up to be like Christ? Often we try harder to do what is right in our own strength; and we forget the word of God which says: *"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts."*

Zech 4:6

We forget God is at work in us to will and to do according to His purpose. God has called us and drawn us to Himself so we can have fellowship with Him. *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day."* (John 6:44) Since this is God's work we must surely understand He hasn't planned for us to fail to realise the fullness of the blessings of being in His family. John says all who are drawn by the Father will come to the Son.

*"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out."*

John 6:37

God chose us to be in Christ before the world was made. *'Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will.'*

Eph 1:4-5

Considering how God has chosen us in love to be His precious people, it follows that He has provided for our ultimate transformation into the image of Christ. To this end, this work of God on our behalf includes the guardianship and intimacy of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Our Father has not left us unaided as if we are orphans. Jesus promised we would receive another comforter in His place. *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."*

John 14:16-17

And again in the next chapter the Lord makes sure we know His help will be close at hand. *"He will guide you into all the truth. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you."*

John 16:13-14

## **We are to walk by the Spirit**

Walking by the Spirit is only possible if we continue to forcibly abandon the flesh life of our past. *'Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.'* (Gal 5:24-25) Crucifying the flesh is a deadly business that follows the example of Christ on the cross. Now it's our turn. We can't have two masters. God sets the rules for eternal life, and His kind of life only comes when we die to self.

The birthrights of a true Christian who has died with Christ is to enjoy being partakers of the divine nature which is only possible when we crucify the old nature. To walk by the Spirit as a child of God can only be achieved with the help of the Spirit when we put off the flesh. God has not granted us all his precious and great promises so that we can

forget what He has done; He wants us to live the life He has called us to live in Christ Jesus who is the Rock of our salvation.

Those who walk by the Spirit will show a daily, moment-by-moment commitment to put on Christ. This is only possible by consciously choosing to put off the old life we once lived and rely on the Holy Spirit to guide in thought, word, and deed. Rom 6:11-14

Failure to reject our human nature with its weakness to sin and rely on the Holy Spirit's guidance will result in a believer not living up to the calling and standing in Christ that salvation provides. Eph 4:1; 1 John 3:3

To walk by the Spirit means we must willingly be filled with the Spirit's control, the Spirit must have the first thought in our life. The Spirit must be the dominating force in our life. And the only way that can happen is if we crucify the flesh in our thinking as we take our place in the Church of the Rock.

When we came to Christ we crucified the flesh. *'Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.'* (Gal 5:24) And we go on crucifying the flesh because we know how destructive it is, and realise the only way to overcome its influence is to put it to death. To walk by the Spirit means we will have ongoing success in putting to death the deeds of the flesh. Rom 8:13

Crucifying the flesh is the only way to go on walking by, and with the Spirit. And putting to death the flesh is best done by denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily. Luke 9:23

Instead of relying on our own wisdom we believe God, we trust God, we obey God, we walk in step with the Spirit of God. We abide in the word of God. We abide in Christ. We do the will of God in Christ. We stay true the work of God as He works in us. We stay true to the life of Christ in us.

### **We need diligence and perseverance to live on the Rock**

*'Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance,*

*and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.'*

2 Peter 1:5-7

The need for diligence means spiritual increase requires careful and persistent work and effective effort. Putting the flesh to death requires determination. Spiritual growth can only be made by putting off the old man and putting on the new man in Christ.

Eph 4:22-24

If we are not putting the flesh to death we are not applying the word of God to our hearts. If it has been some time since we deliberately severed some fleshly way from us, we are acting as if we have already arrived. But how can that be if we are still learning to live by imitating Christ to be imitators of God?

Eph 5:1

### **We need help from the Church because the flesh is unwilling to surrender**

At no time will the flesh give up its desire to have its way in us. *'For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.'*

Gal 5:17

We must fight the good fight. (1 Tim 6:12) Our sanctification is by the word of God. We walk by the Spirit when we diligently apply the word of Christ to all aspects of our lives as we live in the body of the Rock. There is no room for some passive idea of growth by osmosis, as if we can grow by some loose association with the Church.

A failure to take our sanctification seriously within the Church not only limits our personal growth but seriously handicaps the whole body of Christ; we become an impediment to the life of the body of Christ.

Obedience is necessary. *'And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.'*

Acts 5:32

If we are unwilling to obey God and we resist the Spirit in separating ourselves from the ways of the world in order to serve the life of the Church we will not be able to please God.

Since the Holy Spirit is only given to the obedient, what does indifference and disobedience do to our relationship with God's Spirit?

The Spirit doesn't work with the disobedient. But if we are seeking first the kingdom of God, then evidence of fleshly behaviour should grieve us before it goes unattended and grieves the Spirit who lives in us.

Eph 4:30

When we obey Him, the Holy Spirit abides in us as our heavenly comforter, guide, teacher, and constant witness to Christ as the reason for the life of God in us to His glory. The Spirit is thus the hidden power of our sanctification in Christ' Church.

### **Without the Spirit we can do nothing in Christ**

If we are not mindful of the need to constantly walk by the Spirit we will carry out the deeds of the flesh. Snoozers are losers. The fruitful Christian life depends on depending on the Spirit of God in our moment by moment walk. The more intimacy we have with the Spirit, the more fruitful we will be in our service to the Rock of our life.

Walking by the Spirit means we can trust God in all things so we can give thanks in all things. We can be anxious for nothing because we have God. It means we can always rejoice, and it means we will pray without ceasing. And the fruitfulness of the Spirit's life will become the joy of our life in Christ. We need to be more familiar with the presence of the Spirit of God.

We should be horrified to realise we unconsciously go about our days as if it is business as usual instead of walking by the Spirit in overcoming the flesh and witness to God's salvation of Christ.

Jesus said our first priority is to be the kingdom of God. (Matt 6:33) He also said without abiding in Him we can do nothing. (John 15:5) Walking by the Spirit means we can obey His commands as our only priority.

### **Jesus is God's reality of truth and light**

*"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His*

*power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,".... "But of the Son He says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, And the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of His kingdom." You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness above Your companions." And, " You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of Your hands ; They will perish, but You remain; And they all will become old like a garment, And like a mantle You will roll them up; Like a garment they will also be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end."*

Heb 1:1-3, 8-12

Seeking the kingdom of God as our first priority means we give proper consideration to fulfilling our responsibilities according to the providence of Christ's reign, but only as we live in the light of His presence; always keeping our attention fixed on continued trust in God's future care and the pursuit of His glory.

In our seeking of Christ the believer is not concerned with being anxious about the world's chaotic, confused, and disordered system of priorities, or the things of worldly desires, because our great reality is Jesus Christ our risen Lord, and not the world that has fallen into darkness concerning the truth of God. When we are not abiding in the life of Christ, we are confused about the truth and we will be prone to anxiety because we are not dwelling in the light of His reality.

Even this forgetfulness according to the flesh is used by God for our good, for how else can our faith be put to the test and developed apart from facing adversity and difficult trials? In the world we will have tribulation because this world and its people have fallen from the truth of God.

And so we complain in vein, and we think we can change things but end up frustrated, and then we want to get control over others. But this is the way of the world in darkness. The fact is the only absolute good is in Jesus Christ. So the only Reality that is true to the glory of God abides in Him who is Himself the light of the glory of God.

Believing in Jesus and denying ourselves and taking up our cross to follow Him changes us spiritually to be able to respond to His reality and live in His light. But in no way does that change the world and those who will not follow Him.

The difference from our former life in the flesh is that we are not hopelessly lost in darkness without understanding. Our home is not in the world but in heaven with Jesus Christ who is Lord of Lords. And while our bodies are still part of the world, we have to contend with disagreeable people along with sickness and disease like everyone else in the world, but we have the life of Christ abiding in us.

The goodness and the mercy of God towards us mean He uses what is not good in the world as the very machinery of perfecting our transformation into the image of Christ. And this happens as we learn to trust Him and put away any fleshly ways in order to be true to His grace made alive in us.

Therefore, for the believer who lives with Christ, although a new heart has been received, the mind remains conditioned by life in the flesh, and now must be progressively overcome by fixing the mind on the mindset of the Spirit of God.

Nothing we do or say comes from outside of us, for as we think we behave. Actions are the children of our thoughts, and our thoughts tell us about what we believe, and what our priorities and treasures are.

Unless we view the world through the spiritual eyes of our divine nature in Christ, we will think our reality is still according to the earthly nature that has not been transformed in our minds. We have God's help because it is His work in us. We are not told to pull ourselves up to the statute of Christ on our own; we have been placed under the governance of the Holy Spirit who is our teacher and enabler.

And the Holy Spirit works with those who obey Him. And He will lead us, teach us, confront us, and empower us according to our level of obedience. And our obedience will depend on where our priority rests, in the world or in Christ.

So the apostle John has a word for us: *'Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.'*

1 John 2:15-16

*'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'* Matt 6:21

And to complicate matters even more, we have an adversary, the devil. Although he is a defeated foe, and without any real power to prevent our Father from taking us home, He uses mind games to see if he can limit our spiritual growth and effectiveness concerning the kingdom of God. His mind is in the world and he knows we haven't done away with the world's mindset completely.

And the quickest way to hobble us is to get us to think the ways of the world are ours, our legitimate rights, and that we have every right to get what we want from the world, after all, didn't God make the world for us to enjoy? Therefore since we have a right to be treated well, and we should defend ourselves when wronged, you have the right to get your own justice. An eye for an eye sounds fair.

But our Rock has a different teaching. *"But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two."*

Matt 5:39-41

And so our Father uses the painful experiences of life to motivate us to reset our priorities in heaven to be transformed into the image of Christ who taught us not to react to the evil people Satan uses to deny us of our victory in Christ.

The principle of transformation begins when we are dissatisfied enough and desperate enough, we will die to self, so that we can be delivered enough to be devoted enough to worship God with all we are.

### **In dying we gain the pleasure of union with Christ**

Dying to self is not easy to do by ourselves, this is why Jesus says we must deny ourselves and take up our cross. To surrender our human

will is a kind of death that can only take place when we hear and respond to the call of our great Shepherd. Joining His cross is our means of escape from death and condemnation.

And once we hear Him we join His cross to live on the Rock as we follow His example, and we follow because *'the love of Christ controls us'* and because of the urgent necessity to die daily that He demands; having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.'

2 Cor 5:14

And the work of denying self isn't done while we walk down here. We are often in the habit of thinking we have given up our fleshly life at conversion, only to find the very same day the ways of the flesh still live in our minds. So the ongoing cross of our surrender is going to be experienced as pain for our greatest good. Because our transformation is not complete at any time we will not surrender our self will as long as we believe all is going well with us.

The Father has us undergoing children training in the darkness of the world so that we need to struggle to mature and be free of our sinful impediments. However the more the more we are ignorant of the ingrained worldly mindset, the less likely we will see our actual failings. So we struggle with our transformation, and painful experience is used to gets our attention so we can see that all not right with us and God.

Our God who made us knows exactly what we are and that our happiness lies only in Christ. And He has made it clear to us, yet we will not seek peace in Him as long as there is any possibility in our minds that we can get it somewhere else. To help us we receive the gift of faith, and faith is the process of trusting in God, and faith cannot be activated unless we see the futility of trusting in anything but God. No one chooses to have faith; we are dead to God naturally, seeking life in the flesh instead of God. So faith comes when we suffer enough to be desperate enough to die to self so God can have His way in us.

The full surrender of the self to Christ is the result of the Father's irresistible drawing us to Himself from our spiritual death. Therefore following Christ demands painful separation so dying to self isn't easy. This is why giving verbal agreement to the truth of the gospel is not the

same as absolute surrender to that truth, for it is possible to say we believe and never surrender self so we continue to do what we like.

But *“Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”*  
Acts 14:22

### **God’s Grace is sufficient in our surrender to the Rock**

As Christians God is present with us administering His underserved love to us by faith, and this love is what we call grace, and grace cannot be separated from Him because it is His love coming to us in person.

God is with us as we struggle. *“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.’*  
2 Cor 12:9

We don't enter into God's rest without having to struggle as a way of life, but we live this life through the administration of His grace to us as our very infusion of life. And since our Father wants the very best for us He will use every opportunity to train us through adversity.

This transformation must take place in the presence of God if we are to be able to give thanks in all things. Jesus promised us His presence. *“I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*  
Matt 28:20

We are not left to do what only God can do. *‘for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.’*  
Phil 2:12-13

If we are unaware of the presence of God working in us, we will lose heart because we then must believe we struggle alone. If our eyes of faith don't see the Reality of Christ our Rock is with us, we will resort to the blindness that thinks the world is all there is. If we do not believe in the presence of God with us, we cannot be fully comforted by the grace of His love in us.

We need to believe: *‘that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and*

*height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.'*

Eph 3:16-19

## **God's perfect plan is the church built on the Rock**

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand....

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall."*

Matt 7:24-27

In the world we once lived as independent sand islands, each with our own agenda and personal governance. In Christ who is our foundation of solid rock we give up our independence to live for Him under the governance of His Holy Spirit. No longer separated unto ourselves, we are bought together as integral members of the body of Christ who have one life in Him, His life.

The Father has chosen us to believe into His Son so that we can be separated from the world to be transformed into the image of Christ. No longer do we just pursue our own objectives in the world, we are now dedicated to fulfilling the purposes of our Lord and God. Salvation is about our inclusion in Christ together, and God's plan for inclusion is the church. In Christ we are no longer masters of our own destiny. Our destiny is in Christ, together we are standing on the Rock of Christ.

## **Together we are Rock dwellers in Christ**

*'And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them*

*with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.'*

Acts 2:40, 42, 44-47

*'And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.'*

Acts 4:32, 34-35

This inclusive togetherness as one life in Christ is how the persecuted church survives and grows in every age. Every member is a life support administrator for every need of every other member, dedicated to carrying one another's burdens as they walk the narrow way of the Lord. Each one is taking care to be physically supportive of others, watching out especially to the spiritual needs of each one so that no member is left behind or isolated by the sinking sand of worldly desires.

*'For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.'* Eph 2:18-22

Therefore this is not the church archipelago made up of many sand islands. An archipelago contains a visible chain or group of islands scattered, but not actually together. It has a corporate name but they are not literally connected as one living identity dependent on each other for effective life. Instead they are individuals independent of one another. They have contact only from a distance although they speak the same language and share similar intellectual ideas. In the end it is a

loose scattering or collection of separated individuals claiming to belong to one corporation but they are actually divorced from one another because they lack physical and emotional intimacy. The church of the archipelago is the imitation church of the world born out of the desires of the flesh.

In the Church that Christ built each brick in the temple bears the burden of the whole. *'Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. For each one will bear his own load.'*

Gal 6:1-5

The integrity of the temple is subject to the weakest member, so every member upholds every other member in effective church discipline to maintain the holiness of God. Shouldering others burdens in relation to heaviness, weight, burden, trouble, the load they suffer under, in Galatians 6:2 (where used of troublesome moral faults; the meaning is, 'bear one another's faults'). While each individual brick also must do its own work of upholding their holiness and supporting the whole structure.

When the church is compromised by worldly intrusions they suck the life out of the church with lying words that suggest we can have Christ and our independent life at the same time.

*'So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine."* John 8:31

On the teaching of Christ, the solid Rock, we stand. Disciples of Jesus Christ have no other life but His life, who denied Himself to die in obedience to the Father that we might live in Him.

### **Only on the solid rock can we stand in the presence of God**

Jesus Christ is the solid rock on whom we can stand; everything else and everyone else in the world is shifting sand. Jesus is the Reality of

God for our holiness and safety, and the Holy Spirit helps us remain safe by identifying where we are inclined to wander into the sinking sand.

The sand is to be found in the congregation and in the world. The Holy Spirit has a vested interest in revealing to us where our stand in the congregation and the world is not fixed on the rock of Jesus Christ. But the Spirit will only be heard by us if we are listening to His leading because we are abiding in the rock. If we insist in our heart we have arrived at the fullness of Christ, we will not have ears to hear and the Spirit will hand us over to our fleshly desires so that we learn from further painful experiences.

To the extent we are watchful in the congregation for signs of our self righteous independence, will be to the extent that we will see the fleshly ways that remain in us individually and as the body of Christ that we must put down by the Spirit of God. To the extent that we abide in Christ as the foundation of our life and only reality, will be the limit of our ability to see the darkness of the world and still stand in the light of God.

If we think we are teacher in the congregation and not also pupil to be taught the truth of life in the rock, we have deceived ourselves and need to humble ourselves and resume the life of the little one in Christ. If the congregation is not teaching us about itself and especially about ourselves, then we are not taking our place in the body of Christ as His servant to please Him only we will not be able to build up what is needed into the body of Christ.

Since no one in the body of Christ has, or ever will achieve the fullness of Christ in this earthly life, what we see in the body and ourselves that doesn't reflect the life of Christ should trouble us, and therefore reveal to us what we need to attend to for the upward growth of the body and ourselves.

If our experience in the congregation is smooth and everything and everyone is going along just fine, we have likely circumcised ourselves from the actual life of the Spirit of Christ. If we have remained steadfastly attached to the true Vine, and walk by the Spirit we will be

struck by the presence of many encumbrances of the flesh that exists in ourselves and the body that still resists the Rock of Ages.

The true knowledge that is in Christ concerning His life in the church is the only way we can be aware of what needs to be done away with for every member to be effectually building up the body of Christ. Our spiritual education can only take place in the vacuum of what we don't know, so if we are not being diligent in seeing where we are in relation to the life of Christ, the body falls short of the Reality that is Christ, and we won't see and hear from others what we don't know, and growth is inhibited.

Therefore if growth is stalled in us and the body, we have grieved the Spirit of God, because His presence with us and in us is to facilitate the growth of the body of Christ in His ministry of grace to the world. The flesh in us doesn't bring conviction of sin, and if we are not made aware of our failings through the ministry of the word from the pulpit and from the brethren, we are not being led by the Spirit of God.

For growth to take place conviction must precede righteousness. The more we abide in Christ and stand on the rock of His salvation, the closer we come to see the glory of His life, and the more we will be convicted by the flesh that remains to be in put off by the power of our abiding in the Spirit of Christ.

When repentance becomes something we did at conversion, conviction of sin will become less frequent, and we will fall the test of humility that knows the reality of daily repentance. If repentance is not continuous, spiritual growth isn't either.

### **What we see in the world is a mirror for our souls**

Whatever evil we perceive in the world or the church had its seed in us from the beginning. So our Father uses the world and the church as a mirror for our advancement in the practical ways of His righteousness, so we can then put off what doesn't belong to the life of Christ in us.

It is only the flesh in us that limits what we will receive from the teaching of the word of God and the people who have been called out of the world to live in the body of Christ.

We need to be diligent in our discernment and in appraising ourselves and others as to whether the fruit of the Spirit is operating or the fruit of the world. We will always need help from the brethren to remove the speck in our eye so we can see clearly the way of the Lord in order to be of help to others.

If we are at all concerned with the truth of God we need to be aware that we will interpret the word of God to fit into our present level of worldly satisfaction. Consequently it is not wise to assume that we all speak the same truth. We may use the same words but find that many will have a meaning that is something else entirely. Are we wise enough to know what others say is not always what we mean, and what the sacred scripture teaches concerning the kingdom of God?

And while the body grows by that which every joint supplies, are we humble enough to receive what we need even from the weakest brethren, for they too have received a spiritual gift of service for the good of the body, even if it is still undeveloped? We are greatly advantaged by abiding with each other with our eyes wide open to the Spirit of Christ.

Are we patient enough with ourselves and our brethren to always speak the truth in love without fear or favour, and never give up being a faithful servant of Christ in carrying out His passion and purpose for the salvation of the elect still adrift in the world, and the chosen children already in the church?

Will we obey the Lord who calls on anyone who would follow Him to take up our cross; or will we give in to the influence of the flesh in the world that has taken a seat in the assembly of God that wants to find another truth, and another way, so that everyone can have eternal life on their own terms? A failing to which we must all plead "guilty your honour" at some time.

The less we are led by the Spirit the more often we give in to the compromise of the flesh in the world. The absence of heartfelt regular repentance will result in more compromise. For when our abiding is weak the flesh is unrestrained.

It is only when our eyes are open to the knowledge of God in Christ in whom we live as fellow members of His Church that we can be consistent in walking as Jesus walked. Jesus Christ needs to be our only Reality, and the solid Rock on whom we stand in the face of every opposition and compromise to His truth, which is His life laid down for us so we can live in Him.

Think again

As a practical everyday help for standing on the Rock of Christ, instead of automatically musing in our minds in reflections about the world, what we will eat, what we drink, and the everyday mundane things of life; we should take charge of our minds and turn our thoughts to the kingdom of God as our great reality here, and our future heavenly destination, looking always to our Lord Jesus Christ seated on His throne. So when we don't have to focus our thinking on the job at hand, let us make our default mindset fall back on the things of God and not the world or the things of the world.

Therefore consider this:

Jesus Christ is our Lord and God when we lovingly live only for Him. This means that whatever He desires for His church and the world becomes our one passion and desire, so that He can lovingly live through us. The Holy Spirit works this purpose out in the heart of those possessed by Christ for His glory.

Our minds must be fixed rock solidly on standing in humble service with Jesus Christ. We cannot stand on the Rock and keep some space to ourselves. If Jesus is to be our Lord, He is Lord of all of us or none of us.

Dearly beloved, we abide in Christ the Rock of our salvation, His presence is our peace, and therefore we walk with Him in all truth.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand....

# Living Water Resources

## Come to the River

*“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”*

Matt 16:16-18

*Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”*

Matt 7:24

Jesus Christ is only our Lord and God when we lovingly live only for Him. This means that whatever He desires for His church and the world becomes our one passion and desire, so that He can lovingly live through us. The Holy Spirit works this purpose out in the heart of those possessed by Christ for His glory.

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