

**Having faith
means Christ
reigns in us by
His Spirit**

Living in Christ by the Spirit

God promises the people of faith His everlasting presence.

The prophet Joel told of God's people receiving the Spirit of God. *"It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days."* Joel 2:28-29

The prophet Ezekiel wrote that the chosen people will overcome sin by the power of God. God will cleanse us of sin; He will take away our hard heart and give us a new heart that is responsive to His love. He will put a new spirit in us, and more importantly, He will put His Spirit in us to enable us to live correctly according to His commandments.

Ezek 36:24-27

This is the Spirit of promise in Christ

'This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.' Acts 2:32-33

The Spirit of promise is the same Spirit that has carried out God's will since the creation of the world. But we must not assume that all those in Christ have the same expression of the Spirit that was in Christ and His chosen disciples to do miracles and signs and wonders. This working of the Spirit was to confirm Jesus' claim to be God, and to establish His body the Church on earth through the Apostles. God still does miraculous work through His children, but when He alone decides it is necessary.

The indwelling Spirit also secures our heavenly inheritance and identifies us as God's personal possession. *'Having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a*

pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.'

Eph 1:13-14

Our spiritual weakness requires the power of God

From the time of the first sin in the Garden of Eden, man has been under bondage to sin. Even with the law of God man is unable to overcome his fleshly nature. God didn't expect us to be able to keep the law; the law was given to teach us we are unable to please God by ourselves. With God's divine help by His Spirit, and by following the truth of His Word, we can progressively overcome sin and become more and more like Christ.

'For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.'

Rom 8:3-4

To do this, God is willing to give us a new life so we can take part in His life. *Jesus answered and said to him, "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 into the kingdom of God."*

John 3:3, 5

John the Baptist declared: *"As for me, I baptise you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire."*

Matt 3:11; Rom 6:4-8

"The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water."

John 7:38

With the gift of the Spirit, God takes our weakness and gives us a new life with His glory so we can be His holy children on earth.

Faith begins when the Spirit convicts of us of sin

For many who are professing Christians, personal sin is never actually acknowledged, for it is never confessed to one another. (James 5:16) That sort of humility, in the minds of many is to be avoided at all costs. Self-loathing for sinful behaviour is unknown. So where is the conviction of sin? Where is the heart broken because of iniquity? Indeed, where is the Spirit of God if that is the case? If we don't have the Spirit, we don't have God.

Rom 8:9

As the sinner is blind to his enmity with God, so the saint is blind to the fleshly attachments until the Spirit of the Lord chastens with trials and tribulations. If we are not convicted of our human weakness to obey the love of God by various trials, we will not repent and rely on the strength of Christ and grow in holiness. We should desire greater trials for greater growth in glory.

Even as we delight in the new life of God we are constantly reminded of our past rebellion. *‘And there you will remember your ways and all your deeds by which you have defiled yourselves; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done.’* (Ezek 20:43) *‘Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your wrongdoings and your abominations.’*

Ezek 36:31

Conviction of sin is for the process of overcoming the world

We are convicted, and we go on being convicted of what is inconsistent with the Christ life. Dealing with sin does not mean we will overcome sin completely in this life. When Paul prays that God would sanctify the Thessalonians wholly, (1 Thess. 5:23) he is pointing to the goal that he desires them to reach. He does not imply that any reach it, but only that this is the high moral standard toward which God wants all believers to desire with the whole heart.

When Paul talks about the new power over sin that is given to a Christian, he does not say that there will be no sin in the Christian's life, but simply tells believers not to let sin reign in their bodies, nor to yield their members to sin.

Rom. 6:12-13

John frequently declares that a child of God will not continue in a pattern of sinful behaviour, he says very clearly, *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”* 1 John 1:8

Since the Christ life is our life, (Col 3:4) we should be appalled when we are proud, unkind, impatient, demanding, self-centred and concern ourselves with our comfort or control. But in most cases, we fail to see the contradiction between what we claim as Christians and what the Spirit has to put up with in us. The trouble is the habits of the flesh are so easily remembered, and the training of the Spirit is so easily forgotten, so we just fall back on the familiar ways of old.

The Spirit gives us the quality of His life when He gives us faith

Real faith is God's choosing us, not us choosing Him, and this faith always gets results in developing holiness. True faith is becoming like Christ under the reign of the Spirit of God. Faith means God is working for our transformation, and because the Spirit gives life, there will be evidence of Christ manifesting His life.

‘For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.’

Eph 2:8-10

‘To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.’

2 Pet 1:1

‘But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).’

Eph 2:4-5

We received faith as a gift. It is not within man's power to breathe life into his deadness. Human free will cannot choose to be joined with God any more than it can choose to fly. Human free will is disposed to the darkness. It: *‘is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.’*

Rom 8:7-8

Without God's grace we are under the dominion and the will of the devil. *'in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.'* Eph 2:2

'We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.' 1 John 5:19

Without God's grace touching us with life in Christ we are lost. *"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

"All that the Father gives me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out." John 6:37

When God acts, nothing can prevent Him achieving His will.

"For the LORD of armies has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?" Isa 14:27

So, faith, and therefore salvation, is entirely the work of God because we were dead to what God required of us. And He has made us alive to live together with all who are placed in Christ.

The gift of faith is no afterthought

'God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Eph 2:4-6

"made us alive together with Christ" This is past tense, done and dusted.

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 God has chosen us in love to be His precious people who will live their lives on earth as if in heaven in His presence, then 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.

Faith means God is working to transform us into the image of Christ, and because the Spirit gives life, there will be evidence of Christ manifesting His life.

This life of faith is a corporate life

This new life is our cooperative responsibility as a people of God, for we are all working together with Christ by the power of the Spirit. God is the originator of all things pertaining to life; and man is to be the responder to His work. Even the man without faith must obey the Creator. So, it remains the responsibility of all men to repent and turn from self-determination, for all have disobeyed God.

The children of God are by faith one Spirit with God and each other in order to reflect the life and purpose of their Father. This faith life produces family affection for all who are of the same faith. Faith means all the people of God living in Christ by the Spirit. This faith life in Christ cannot be for a singular individual, but is only possible through a congregation working together cooperatively. Without the family cooperation determined for life in the Lord, there is no effective life in Christ. Faith changes our pleasure to work together for His pleasure. And Godly faith turns our desires into His desires as one family. Faith makes His purpose our corporate responsibility. Without the disposition of a heart of faith motivated by love, we will perish.

'For the love of Christ controls us.'

2 Cor 5:14

By the faith that comes from God, the Holy Spirit produces the qualities of His nature in those born again by the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit list in Galatians is not a catalogue but an indication that those in Christ will have available the life qualities of their God. The full fruit of the Spirit

is seen in the life of Christ who is our life. *'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.'*

Gal 5:22-23

The whole outcome of salvation is that we are made holy to begin to live in the presence of God. Time and again God says we will receive His Spirit to govern us and lead us into the fullness of divine fellowship. Time and again He promises to never leave us.

When God acts, things happen according to His will. Who can resist the hand of God? (Rom 9:19) True faith is knowing that God working.

We are to understand that the church is the presence of the body of Christ that Christians share as believers in Christ. So, faith is living in the promised presence of God. Fear and anxiety are proportional to our belief in His presence.

Our Father has given us brothers and sisters of the faith to assist us in the process of our spiritual growth, but we insulate ourselves from their God given ability to help, by clinging to the pathetic idea that our faith is a private matter, and no business of others.

Instead of isolating ourselves we should be eagerly seeking the gift of service the Spirit has provided in each member, according to His determination, for our benefit so that we can all be built up by one another in Christ.

Private faith is from the world and separates from unity in Christ. True faith in Christ unifies all who are in Christ by the working of the Spirit of God.

'For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.'

1 Cor 12:13

'So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, 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 cornerstone, 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 2:19-22

The indwelling Spirit is God's enabling

The Bible tells we have received the Spirit's anointing **if** we obey Him, "*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) We don't have to pray for anointing, we already have the anointing **if** we obey God. (1 John 2:20) Jesus tells us "*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*" Acts 1:8

Paul tells us in Romans we have the Spirit. '*However, 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) It is through obedience that we remain filled with the Spirit so that we will not carry out the deeds of the flesh. '*I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.*' (Gal 5:16) The Spirit was given to keep us in the Lord, not for us to use in order to put our attention on ourselves and what we want.

Evidence of a born-again life is being led by the Spirit in obedience.

The new life of faith is of the divine nature

The birthright of a true Christian is to enjoy being partakers of the divine nature in fellowship with the Father and the Son, which is only possible when we crucify the old nature. To live with the Spirit as a child of God can only be achieved with the help of the Spirit when we put off the flesh.

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.

There is no doubt that whoever has died with Christ to sinful flesh now lives together with Christ. *'Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so 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.'*

Rom 6:4-5

Since we have been raised up with Him, it is very important we keep ourselves holy and blameless, because we, who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, are the temple of God where God lives. *'Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?'*

1 Cor 3:16

For our faith to be effective in living with Christ, our indwelling Lord needs to be more real to us than all the pleasures and comforts of the world. God gives faith for fruitfulness not failure. Therefore, He needs to be more real to us than all the trials and disagreeable discomforts of the world. We need to abide in Christ and Christ must live in us. *'Christ in you, the hope of glory.'*

Col 1: 27

When we have faith that believes God's word, and we obey God's word, we should also be convinced of the promise of His indwelling presence

at all times, and in every situation; in the pleasant and the painful; then we can always experience His love which is beyond understanding and be filled up to the fullness of God. Eph 3:16-19

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in us

'Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?' 1 Cor 3:16

The Lord Jesus speaks of the Spirit living in the very heart of the believer.

"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" John 7:38

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

Further explanation of God's provision is given to us in the book of Galatians. Where we see that walking by the Spirit enables us to overcome the flesh. *'But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 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 5:16-17

Faith lives in Christ's body by surrender to the Spirit

If we cannot believe we have been given the ability to walk with God, we won't live in peace, and our claim to faith may be skin deep, it may have not resulted in a change of heart. We may not have actually denied ourselves to follow the example of Christ in order to receive His life. To have His life we must have given Him our death to self.

'Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so 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.'

Rom 6:4-6

Faith means we accept Jesus' conditions of knowing His love and the power to overcome. *And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."*

Luke 9:23-24

Faith means we follow the example of Him who denied Himself for our benefit. *"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*

Phil 2:5-8

Faith means we trust in God in all things and can be confident He will not fail us. *"Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. "I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."*

Isa 41:10

Obedient faith isn't the same as having our own ideas of what we need to have of Christ; we have to be obedient to what Jesus said is necessary for eternal life; we have to obey all He has commanded.

Matt 28:18-20

'let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.'

Heb 12:1-2

The secret to a fruitful Christian life is communion with the Spirit

'But one and the same Spirit works all these things.'

1 Cor 12:11

Living consciously with the Spirit is only possible if we continue to forcibly abandon the flesh life of our past. *"If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, this is the one who will save it."*

Luke 9:23-24

This is the self-denial of crucifying the flesh of the natural man that follows the example of Christ on the cross. Now it's our turn. We can't have two masters.

Those who live by the Spirit will show a daily, moment-by-moment commitment to put off self and put on Christ. This is only brought about 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 fallen human nature with its weakness to sin, and instead rely on the Holy Spirit's guidance will result in a believer not living up to the calling and standing of Christ that salvation provides. Eph 4:1; 1 John 3:3

Crucifying the flesh is the only way to go on walking by, and with the Spirit in the presence of God. All our self-effort and self confidence in being good people means the flesh will remain and have a dominating effect in our lives.

The flesh must be put to death and we are to do the killing with the help of the power of the Spirit of God. We are commanded to work out our own salvation. His work cannot be effective in transforming us into the image of Christ if we allow the flesh to remain active.

We can only live in communion with the Spirit as we are willing die to the world and our personal inclination as to how we should live. 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.

If we are unable to do this, we need a heart transplant. If we haven't experienced the reality of being able to walk by the Spirit, we need the heart of God to replace our heart of flesh. We need the Spirit of Christ.

Consequently, we so easily forgot we and the Spirit are at war with the powers of darkness. How long would we last if we were on patrol in enemy territory and we displayed a lack of discipline to the extent we behaved as if we were on holiday?

Not only would our lives be in danger, but the lives of all those with us would also be in serious trouble. Walking, wherever it is taking place, is something we do consciously, it is not possible to walk when unconscious; but that is exactly the way we behave when we say we know how to walk by the Spirit but no one can tell the difference from those who walk according to the flesh.

As a soldier has to learn the art of combat when on patrol and have every instinct alert for the enemy. So too does the disciple need to be diligent and dedicated to walking with awareness and obedience to the Spirit of God if he is not going to stumble into the enemies' trap.

Thus, if we are indeed Christians, we are to live by faith in the kingdom of our Christ, so we are not perplexed by what we see in the world, knowing that God is sovereign over the heavens and the earth, and that nothing happens without His consent, according to His eternal purpose to sum up all things in Christ.

Groanings under the weight of the cross is part of God's teaching so we will seek only the joy set before us when we are fulfilled in the presence of Christ in His glorious kingdom where we will reign with Him.

Faith accepts that God is the Sovereign over all things

“Yours, LORD, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and on the earth; Yours is the dominion, LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.”

1 Chron 29:11

To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in Heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, frustrate His purpose, or resist His will. Psalm 115:3

Because God is Sovereign, He determines all things. He provides for His plan to work out in the world in order to reach its climax in the return of Jesus Christ.

God's providence means God is the unseen hand behind all things. *“I am the Lord, and there is no other, The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these.”* Isaiah 45:6-7

God's sovereignty means that He is absolute in authority and unrestricted in His supremacy in all things. So, everything that happens is the result of God's permissive will. *'And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.'*

Rom 8:28

As our Sovereign Lord, His plan will not fail. In His plan for our good, He uses the consequences of sin to bring judgement on the world; and while His judgment is worked out, He uses all things that naturally occur in this process for the greatest good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose, as He teaches His people to trust Him.

God's greatest good for us is that we be like Christ, (Rom 8:29) so God uses what Satan plans for bad, to bring ultimate goodness into the lives of His people, who are being trained to walk by the Spirit and live by faith so they can share in the inheritance of Christ.

Col 1:12

Whenever God acts, He acts in a way that pleases Him, and it pleases God to give man responsibility over his own life, but he must have the Lord's direction to succeed in pleasing Him. The prophet said: *"I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps."*

Jer 10:23

We should be comforted to know that God has good intentions for our life, and that good is that we are transformed into the image of His Son so we can share in His glory.

Any problems in our life are from the devil who is the prince of the world; or as a result of our own doing; or it may be just the results of life on a fallen world that is under Adam's curse. Even then, God works everything for our heavenly benefit.

To achieve His goal, God walks with His chosen children in Christ as He works out His plan for us in the world, a world which is still under the curse of Satan who is doing his best to rob God of His desires for many holy children.

God is sovereign in the sense that there is no one higher in authority or power, everything that was made was His doing, even Satan is a created creature who is judged by God. But God does not use His power to make us robots; He does not exercise His power by controlling everything in

our lives. God has given us the freedom to choose to obey or disobey. Faith is the correct use of our choice.

God has a plan for our glorification. He seeks to reveal that plan to us and urges us to move in that direction according to His will, but we must choose to work out what He is working in us. He doesn't make our choices for us; He shows us His will and He lets us work out the consequences of our choices.

True repentance and our spiritual birth in the image of Christ means we no longer live according to the darkness of the world.

But it is God's will that we remain in the dark world to suffer with Christ in order to be His light pointing to God just as Christ was and is the Light of the world.

Faith believes God's promise to walk with us

While we walk in the world, we have God in Christ. *'The mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.'*
Col 1:26-27

God will not fail the repentant person who desires Christ more than life in the world, and has turned his back on the world. Jesus said: *"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal."*
John 12:25

In the work of making us holy, God does not go back on His word. *'Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'*
1 Thess 5:23

Jesus will not fail to keep those who give Him all their life, so they can share His life. *Jesus said to them, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."*
John 6:35-37

When we are hard pressed by the world, we will suffer with Christ as we walk as He walked. *'The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs*

with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.'

Rom 8:16-17

When we see the glory of God in all things, we see Christ in us to the glory of God. *'For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.'*

2 Cor 4:6

When we are persecuted for the kingdom's sake, we share in Christ's life on Earth. *"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me."*

Matt 5:11

But we don't suffer alone. *"lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Matt 28:20

When the world scoffs at our faith and denies our place in God's plan of salvation, we can: *'Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.'*

James 1:2-4

What more could we possibly want, since our Lord and saviour has promised to never leave us who are in Him. His love is with us because He lives in us.

'Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Rom 8:35-39

Faith in Christ means we have received all we need to walk with God

'He has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature.'

2 Peter 1:4

If we are ignorant of the promises of God, and the availability of His power to work in us as we walk with Him, we will not stand when troubles overtake us.

Only those who have surrendered their independence to decide for themselves, and have become absolutely dependant on God's will on a daily basis, always showing a willingness to obey Him in all things, only they can have any part of eternal life in Christ, and the peace which is beyond understanding.

All those who have been united with Christ and His cross can be assured of His love. *'Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

Rom 8:35-36, 38-39

Faithfully walking with God requires a new mind

God never intended we remain ignorant of His provision for us. When we humbly read the scriptures, we are able to read God's word with the Spirit of Christ who enlightens our mind from the inside. *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."*

John 14:26

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

Because He is sovereign and knows all things, God knows we have tribulation in the darkness of the world because of man's sin. Therefore, He requires we live by faith, and look to Him and rely on His grace. *'You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.'*

Isa 26:3

'Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which

is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.'

Rom 12:1-2

Offering ourselves as a spiritual sacrifice means we are intentionally dying to sin with Christ. Being renewed in the spirit of our minds means we will continually seek to know the mind of Christ.

1 Cor 2:16

Otherwise, we are still in need of a saviour. Do we believe we have been washed in the blood of Jesus? Have we believed we have been made new in the image of God? Are we truly a new creation?

If we live in the past, we live as if we don't believe, and God can't live in the old man, so we live alone. Spiritual mindedness requires effort, is God worth the effort? He thought we were worth dying for. If all our efforts to please God are done thinking He is in heaven and we on earth, His yoke will not be easy.

Faith knows God's presence in a renewed mind

We need to examine ourselves to see if we walk according to the flesh of man, or according to the Spirit. *'For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.'*

Rom 8:5-6

In the Bible, the mind refers to the heart and soul of man, his inner most being. The mind set refers to the general state of mind on a continual basis. It informs us about what is important to us and where we have placed our values and concerns.

God gives us clear instructions on how to set our minds. Our minds cannot exist in a state of emptiness, and unless we fill them with thoughts of the glorious Christ and His work, they will naturally fill with the thoughts of worldly things and the desires of the flesh.

Walking with God means setting our minds are fixed on what He is working to achieve in us and in the world. *'For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.'*

Phil 2:13

God is working a miracle of spiritual regeneration in those who believe and obey His Son. So those who are in Christ by the mercy of God are to have the spiritual mind of Christ. *'We have the mind of Christ.'*

1 Cor 2:16

'The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.'

Rom 8:6

The mind that is set on the Spirit has been reborn by the Spirit and will be led by the Spirit, and as a result we have life and peace; but the mind that is set on the flesh is death. These are the only two possibilities in this world.

If our minds are taken up with the things of the world continually, we couldn't say our minds are set on the Spirit as we walk with God. Having our minds set on the Spirit cannot be said to be done even if attending church on Sunday. Having a spiritual mind means meditating on the things of God on a daily basis.

'Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.'

Col 3:1-3

The things above include thinking on what Christ has already done for us and is still doing in us to the glory of God. Thinking of God's salvation includes walking in fellowship with God so that we bring all our concerns to Him. Having a mind for God means we can see there is nothing compared to His glory and what He has prepared for us.

Any ongoing disturbance means our minds are not with God. It means we are concerned with the things of men and not the things of God. We can't be said to be walking by the Spirit if our thoughts are continually reliving the experiences of our sinful past, or we keep looking back to what was once enjoyed.

The effect of God's indwelling means we are no longer our own to live according to the mind of natural men. If God is working in us, we should be working out what He is working in us.

If we have God living in us, surely, we will have His concerns, so we will want what He wants, and we will do what He would do. If we aren't

moved with Him, we neglect such a great salvation that allows us to share in the things of God. If we aren't moved to have our life conform to His life by His power working in us, we may not have His life.

In other words, the spiritual person will be spiritually minded as they walk daily by the Spirit. Spiritual mindedness is the best evidence we share in God's salvation. The person who is Spiritual minded does the work of God. Consequently, the Holy Spirit living in us gives us the victory over the flesh. *'But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.'* Gal 5:16

Having these promises is no reason to sit back and take it easy; there is no room for resting on our laurels. *'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

The only way to stay on course for the whole journey is to walk by the Spirit. We have to learn to always resist the devil and he will flee from us. Even this resistance requires that we remain spiritually minded otherwise we will not be aware of the devil's deception.

Faith is a disciplined life with God

The disciplined life is a life of walking in the spirit in humble obedience to the Spirit's leading, choosing to always put off the desires of natural man which the Bible calls the flesh, in order to be faithful to Christ who died for us so we can have His eternal life in the Spirit in order to walk with God. Walking in the Spirit means we deal with the darkness of a life according to natural man in the flesh in ourselves before we attempt to solve the problems in others. Reacting negatively to the darkness in others means joining ourselves with the darkness and ensuring its dominance in the world. Matt 5:39; Matt 7:4-5; 1 Pet 3:9

Just as refining gold nuggets from the ground in a fiery furnace does not to destroy the gold but remove all imperfections; our testing is not to see if we will fail; it is for the continual maturing of the Christ life in us because God is seeking our highest good. Testing is the process of purification to make us perfect; it is needed if we are to make progress in our spiritual transformation in our walk with God.

The Lord Jesus wants us to grow up to be like Him, this is the life of a disciple. Effective spiritual change comes by the Spirit's leading when we work out our

new life in Christ which God has worked in us. The only way we can do that is by living by God's Spirit according to the word of God. *'If we walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.'* Gal 5:16

'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

Those who are born again of God's Spirit have His personal power (Eph 3:20) to obey so we can live our new life without sin controlling us. Rom 6:6-7, 14

It is impossible to follow Jesus, and do all as He has commanded if we don't know what He taught. And what we don't know will be revealed to us through many trials. **The discipline that gets results comes from the Lord for our good as He allows us to be changed by trials and tribulation.**

'But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had ^[a]earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. For the moment, all discipline seems not to be pleasant, but painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.'

Heb12:8-11

Christian maturity is not optional for a life of faith

Christian maturity is walking in the Spirit. Spiritual maturity is learning to walk in obedience to God; always choosing to live by God's viewpoint rather than our human viewpoint.

To walk by the Spirit is to walk with His purpose in mind. It is learning to walk under His instruction. Since believers are indwelt by the Spirit. We should therefore also walk under His control. To walk in the Holy Spirit's control, we need to study God's Word! *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth...All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly*

equipped for every good work." (2 Tim 2:15 3:16-17) As we walk and we apply God's Word to our life, we will grow spiritually.

The word '*walk*' implies a way of life, this life requires daily movement, something has to be happening daily, and '*walk by*' can only mean a relationship is involved. And that living relationship is only as good as the time we spend in honest devoted surrender to God the Holy Spirit. The verb '*Walk*' is also given as a command we need to obey, if we are to achieve its desired results.

To walk by the Spirit means we must 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.

Therefore, every aspect of our lives needs to be surrendered to the Spirit according to His word as we wait on Him for guidance as to what we do and even think. The Spirit is the one who knows all things, and we are the ones who have known nothing of living according to the divine nature we have received. So, we defer to the Spirit of God in every aspect of our lives if we are to be filled up to the fullness of God in Christ Jesus. This means we deny our will in preference for His will. We deny our human thought in preference for His thoughts. We deny our self-esteem in preference for His esteem. And we deny the things of the world in preference for the things of God.

Because God withholds nothing from His children that will see His plan become a reality, any lack of spiritual growth is our problem not His, it is probably a failure to take up our cross and honour the Father by being His responsible representative on earth. For this reason, and to prevent a lack of growth, the Lord Jesus said that we are to make disciples and teach them to obey His commands. We disobey Him if we neglect to learn what Jesus has commanded us to do. We can't teach what we don't know.

Any lack of growth in holiness in putting on the Christ life, is a good cause to fear the Lord's judgment, since a lack of spiritual life may be a warning sign of an impending eternity without God, with the result of eternal death instead of eternal life.

We have received a spiritually changed life. The truly changed person knows they are severed from the world and all it holds to be important, (John 17:16) they know they have died with Christ, and that He has taken up residence in their heart. Their motivation now comes from within where their treasure "Christ" lives.

They can say with confidence: *'I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 up for me.'* Gal 2:20

They know they have begun a journey of refinement into the image of Christ. *'You laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.'* Col 3:9-10

They no longer seek to be led by human wisdom but, *'Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.'* Gal 5:16

Their good deeds come from a heart lost in Christ by the internal working of the Spirit. *'For the love of Christ controls us.'* 2 Cor 5:14

The process of perfecting God's image is through perseverance

'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

God provides all we need to walk by faith. God gives us a new life in the Spirit, and we need to live according to His will if we are to walk with Him and be blessed with His eternal life. And since we did not actually die to our physical bodies, we need to put the Kingdom of God before all things on earth. We need to seek first the Kingdom of God so we can do the will of God.

Therefore, the need to persevere in our faith walk is of absolute importance if we are to be like Christ. The word 'Perseverance' is used to describe the Christian walk 22 times in the New Testament. Twice 'Persevere' is used, and 'Diligence' is used four times. And then, just so we don't get lazy, the word 'Endue' is used 19 times.

The need for diligence means our 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 we inherited from Adam and putting on the new man we have received in Christ.

Eph 4:22-24

If we are not constantly putting the flesh of self to death, we are not applying the word of God to our hearts. If God's word isn't cutting off the flesh, we are not living in His presence. If it has been some time since we deliberately severed some fleshly way from us, we are acting as if we have arrived. But how can that be if we are still learning to live by imitating Christ to be imitators of God?

Eph 5:1

None of us should feel too confident; we all face the same problem. Sometime we act in immature and childish ways. Spiritual maturity is not a condition we enter as a permanent place in our spiritual experience. True spirituality is maintained by daily living obediently according to the word of God on a moment by moment walk in the Spirit. Which means, when we live under the control of the Spirit He will teach and leads us into all righteousness. *'But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.'* (Gal 5:16) *'If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.'*

Gal 5:25

Therefore, every aspect of our lives needs to be surrendered to the Spirit as we wait on Him for guidance as to what we should do and even think. He is the one who knows all things and we are the ones who have known nothing of living according to the divine nature we have received. So, it is to the Spirit of God whom we defer in every aspect of our lives if we are to be filled up to the fullness of God in Christ Jesus. This means we deny our will in preference for His will. We deny our human thought in preference for His thoughts. We deny our self-esteem in preference for His esteem. And we deny the things of the world in preference for the things of God.

This work of self-denial requires diligence, and diligence requires determination, the flesh of our past does not want to die. *'So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.'* (Phil 2:12) Working to complete what God has begun in us

means we must strive to work out what He has worked in us.

Phil 2:12-13

We must seek the Spirit's leading in our homes, even as to what we eat and what we wear. We need His leading when we are at our place of work, as to what is consistent with godliness and truth. Even in our leisure we must look to Him as to what is appropriate for a child of God. And especially in our religious practice, for we cannot worship in Spirit and truth as we should unless the Spirit leads in all these things. Nothing can be exempt from His control if we are to become the people God desires us to be.

We must fight the good fight. (1 Tim 6:12) Our sanctification is by the word of God **cutting to the very marrow of our bones to rid us of the flesh that blinds.** (Heb 4:12) We walk by the Spirit when we diligently apply the word to all aspects of our lives. There is no room for some passive idea of growth by osmosis, as if we can grow by association with the Church.

Walking by the Spirit means we are putting on the full armour of God. (Eph 6:10-18) This life of the Spirit is no picnic in the park. Walking by the Spirit is armed conflict with the forces of darkness.

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

We need to pray *'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.'*

Eph 3:16-17

If we live with the Spirit leading, we will be blessed of God and grow into the likeness of Jesus. We will overcome sin in our lives and we will share in defeating the works of Satan. We are told that if we walk in the Spirit, we will not carry out the deeds of the flesh and we will know the truth of this passage in John's first letter.

'You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who remains in Him sins continually; no one who sins continually has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just

as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who has been born of God practices sin, because His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin continually, because he has been born of God. By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother and sister.'

1 John 3:5-10

Without the Spirit we can do nothing

If we are not mindful of the need to constantly walk by the Spirit, we will carry out the deeds of the flesh. 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.

Walking by the Spirit means we can give thanks in all things. We can be anxious for nothing because we have God. This 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. Our training in the righteousness of God is a moment, by moment discipline in which we often behave as if it will happen by osmosis. We should be horrified that we unconsciously go about our days as if it is business as usual in the world.

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 is the same as abiding in Christ, with His kingdom as our only priority. **Without clinging to the Spirit of God we are sitting ducks.**

A blind man was faced with the need to travel through hostile enemy country. To guarantee he would make the trip successfully he was given an able sighted Special Forces soldier to see him through. But his success in arriving at his destination, and saving his life, depended on holding onto that soldier for the whole journey. That soldier was as dear to him as his life. Friends, without God's enabling we are the blind man, and the sighted soldier is the Holy Spirit, hang on, for your life depends on Him. In the world of spirits, He is King.

When we walk by the Spirit, we can do all the things God requires of us, through Christ who strengthens us. (Phil 4:13) We cannot do what we would like to do to bring glory to ourselves.

The secret to a fruitful life of communion with God is walking by the compelling will of the Spirit. When God inhabits our innermost being by His Spirit, He is closer to us than our breath. We need to embrace the Spirit in us and let the Spirit fill us to the fullness of God which is Christ. (Eph 3:19; Eph 1:23) We need to listen to Him. We are not to be afraid. Whatever comes our way, comes from the hand of God with God living in us. We prove the truth of our faith by living in Christ.

The question is, do we want to be like Christ and live in peace?

The overwhelming message the Lord gives us to share is that everyone needs to come to Jesus and die to self-determination so they can live. This is the life of a disciple of Jesus, it is not for those who want to rely on human ability and find a comfortable life in this world. It is only possible for those who will die with Christ and surrender to God to be born again by God and be led by the Spirit in all obedience and truth.

When we commit ourselves to following Jesus through the narrow gate of self-sacrifice, (Matt 7:13-14) we will know our own weaknesses, but when we are weak, we are strong in Him, (2 Cor 12:10) because it is His power that will work in us 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. 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 so you can be raised up with Him to eternal life?

Contents compiled by

Robert C May

Copyright © 2022

cometotheriver@optusnet.com.au

www.cometothestream.com