

# A TIME OF TEARING

A Series of Articles by Keith Mason

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## A TIME OF TEARING

On the basis of our need and His transforming grace we shall

repair the ruined cities  
rebuild the old ruins  
raise up former desolations.

Those who mourn and be torn by repentance in the rending of heart

they will experience -  
beauty for ashes;  
oil of joy for mourning;  
garment of praise for heaviness.

It's the poor in spirit,  
brokenhearted in emotions;  
captive in will,  
blind in mind;  
bruised in body,

who will qualify for God's programme of restoration. Repentance, the royal honour, a gift from the Prince of Life is the key to usefulness. He comes near to the brokenhearted, who know the tears that tear, and ultimately know the joy of inner harmony of soul.

Study Isaiah 61:3,4 and Luke 4:18 together.

When we go through a season of tearing in our hearts, in our relationships, in geography or in our work, God proposes change of behaviour, another step in sanctification. God's inner peace comes to those who accept the time to lose and the time of tearing. We build the Kingdom of God only on the basis of personal repentance, that continues as we grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord.

A time of tearing can be related to three themes, in the Bible and our experience.

- |     |               |   |                |
|-----|---------------|---|----------------|
| (a) | repentance    | - | Joel 2:13      |
| (b) | judgement     | - | 1 Samuel 15:28 |
| (c) | new direction | - | Hebrews 10:9   |

(A removal of the first things in order to establish the second)

### Repentance

Even evil kings and queens would rend their garments like Ahab and Athaliah. The difference between Saul and David lay in their hearts. Through worship and repentance David had intimate fellowship with God. Saul himself sat on the throne (except for the first year when the fruits of the Spirit were operating!). How many leaders today sit in their positions without the anointing.

God is going to remove proud, self-sufficient ministries who refuse the message of personal repentance. He will tear away their little empires and kingdoms where they have

super-imposed their wills over the Lord.

Deep brokenheartedness brings the presence of God in revivals. I knew Donald Macphail, who as a teenager witnessed the Lewis awakening. The repentance was so real, he told me, there was no need for deliverance ministry; the demons had no ground to remain on lives when the precious blood of the Lamb did the cleansing work. The RENT heart knows the RENT veil into His presence, and the RENT heavens confirm the glory of God. Deep brokenness characterized the young Josiah who rent his clothes at the reading of the law of the Lord. He was changed inwardly before his reforms outwardly changed many in Israel. Undoubtedly he was aided by the prophecies of Jeremiah, that heart surgeon whose word brought either rebellion or repentance.

Will we be honest in His searching presence and allow the Lord to give us His hunger for His purpose? God puts His servants on the shelf for a deeper repentance and heart dealings.

## **Judgement**

Matthew 21:44 declares a vital principle of the dealings of God.

*“And whoever falls on this stone will be broken, but on whoever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”*

Repentance or judgement confronts us all. Every one will either fall on the Lord Jesus, the precious cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6), or know His crushing judgement. Repentance means we will judge ourselves and be not judged. If we fail to repent only a torn Kingdom awaits us - something of the activity of the Lord is removed from us. For prophets, the dealing is drastic. Remember the man of God in 1 Kings 13. Implicit obedience was essential in the expedition and execution of the divine will. Thinking again in the Josiah story, his grief at the demands of the law, and Judah's utter failure to obey, brought the repentance that averted the judgement to a later date.

The judgement on Saul (1 Samuel 15:26-28) and Solomon (1 Kings 11:12, 14:8) with the divided kingdom, always follows the kingdom of flesh. How many believers today have played the fool and have been taken up by our own pre-occupations? Choosing eternal life and the foreverness of God's ways means laying down our lives or else self is still on the throne. Foolish virgins have the New Testament Kingdom torn from them for failing to prepare for the second coming of Christ. Ultimately, in Revelation hundreds of millions come under the judgements of God (Revelation 6:8, 9:4-6, 16:2, 16:8-16). The popular idea that the New Testament God is mercy and the Old Testament God is primarily judgement is blown away by 2 Peter 3, Jude, and Revelation. No wonder certain theologians are attempting to rid the Bible of these books.

Christians can be unbalanced.

Some are in sympathy with the judgement of God and have no time for His mercy. Others (and this is much more frequent), emphasize love and grace, and cannot see judgement at work, because they feel all judgement of sin has been accomplished at the Cross. This truth pertains to those who have received the atonement, and been reconciled to God. Children of wrath are under the law (1 Timothy 1:9-11) and prone to judgement. Even believers will reap corruption what they sow to the flesh.

Today Europe is the strategic center for God's judgement in two ways:

- (a) EU is driven by the glorification of man's desire.
- (b) Islamification of Europe will intensify because politicians will do and say things out of fear of Islam.

With anti-semitism on the rise in Europe we can see how God is preparing the ground for Armageddon, the ultimate judgement of goat nations. The new Iranian president, aware of the supernatural help in September 2005 in a speech to the UN - is a worrying sign of the times. Just like Hitler was aided by supernatural evil powers, world dictators in the next two decades will be more of a problem than the secular Saddam Hussain.

A massive geopolitical tearing draws near in the climax of the ages.  
Luke 19:27 declares

"But bring those enemies of mine here,  
who did not want Me to reign over them, and  
slay them before Me."

The wicked, lazy servant of Europe with its institutions has become God's principal target for judgement. Where Jesus cannot bring His Lordship, the word of God will bring the discriminatory judgement of death - first a spiritual death, then the physical.

### **New Direction**

The pain of tearing can be very real in those transition stages of life.....unemployment through recession or unjust dismissal, divorce or being a victim of fraud or violence. The God of purpose has the right to tear way from our lives any hindrance.

- \* personal ambition for status.
- \* fortune or love of money.
- \* love of position.
- \* narrowness in doctrinal correctness to a particular grouping.
- \* a wrong relationship.
- \* exclusive reliance on frontal lobe thinking.
- \* tender family ties that oppose the call of God.

The three pretty bubbles of fame, fortune and fun must go POP! POP! POP! God will take away the first in order to establish the second says Hebrews 10:9. God's seconds are better than His firsts - the only potter where this is true. Tearing in pursuit of the next

stage of God's will can be painful and devastating, but new connections will be formed, and a time of sewing begin.

In Acts 21 we read of a deep emotional tearing. Paul's future was charged with uncertainty, he was in the grip of a dilemma. The apostle knew by the imposition of the Spirit he was not returning to Jerusalem on furlough (Acts 20:22-25). He was coming to his worst crisis, inescapably. At Tyre (Acts 21:4) the human element was uppermost in the disciples and the prophecy was deeply influenced by that. Finally Agabus came, sent by the Spirit, confirming Jerusalem was the destination.

For Paul, like Jesus, Jerusalem equals Calvary. Things can be in the background recess of the memory and the Holy Spirit through a holy prophet, bring the recall so we don't just sit on a revelation. Agabus was vital and necessary to bring a holy reminder, because

#### DELAYED OBEDIENCE = DISOBEDIENCE

However, in Acts 21:12, the people tried to stop Paul even though the prophet had confirmed an earlier witness in Paul's spirit. The tie of human sympathy can be the strongest in preventing the will of God. Paul's reply in verse 13 mentions the tearing:

*"What are you doing weeping and breaking my heart?"*

The criterion for the will of God is the Cross. The God idea of the new direction will be contested often by the nearest and dearest.

Will we allow God to tear?

Will we be strong enough to resist human pressure and go forward even if it means the breaking of fellowship?

The secret of Paul's strength was that he had already lost his life to the demands of the Cross and would take up the daily cross to follow His Master. The Lord's body was revaged, torn, smitten by God, pierced by nails and spear. He also died of a broken heart, suspended in mortal anguish physically and emotionally, utterly abandoned, naked, stripped of all clothes, like a meek and silent lamb! The time of tearing had troubled His soul, tormenting mind and terrifying heart. Whatever loss we go through as His servants the grace of Calvary will heal, and make all things new.

Tearing is the precursor of triumph and resurrection when God sovereignly brings such a season. In the midst of being torn, Jesus gave a new direction to John and Mary, those remarkable stalwarts of the Cross. John would know a brother's care for Mary and Mary would flow in maternal fidelity for John. In the precious moments of being torn away from the familiar we must never allow bitterness, but worship our God, who works all things together for good. Even the exile Jeremiah prophesied was for Israel's good. (Jer. 24:5).

On the Cross, Jesus Christ became

poor in spirit,

brokenhearted in the emotions,

captive in will,

blinded in eyesight,

bruised in body

in order that we may know unsearchable riches, healing and wholeness of heart, liberty of action, seeing in the spirit and healed in our bodies.  
Hallelujah for His tearing and our redemption!

## HOLY EXPECTATIONS

When we see Him we shall be like Him, said the apostle John. Two integrated expectations are found in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians: the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and holiness. John's statement could be a subtitle for Paul's intimate love letter written to a church born in a riot. Before we go any further I want to establish not the historical context of that birth in Acts 17, but the spiritual context of Paul's urgent message.

If we want to desperately pursue God and His plan for us, we need to see that Paul's letters (14 from Romans to Hebrews) reveal levels of experience and glory beyond the four gospels. At first that sounds like error. The gospels are the history of how twelve fallen men received eternal life from the Lord Jesus Christ. It's a very small snapshot of between 23 and 28 days of the life of our Lord. The Son of Man surrendered His divinity by not using the divine attributes. Yes He is the eternal Son of God always and forever, but only manifested His glory in a few glimpses - Cana and mount Tabor the notable times. A notable US Bible teacher speaks of a dream and meeting Paul in heaven. The great master builder of the church tells him its a big mistake to elevate his letters above the gospels. No one would want to do that because the New Testament is all gold and silver and precious stones. However, to grip what Jesus said, to do the Master's truth, we must be men and women of living experience. Paul points the way to the experience of glory, the dying out to self, and a hundred and one other essentials we need to be what the new covenant declares. The letters are not greater than the gospels in inspiration, but paint the wider canvass of heavenly places. Thessalonians are two of the five letters that have no reference to the Old Testament. With Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians we are taken into the heavenly dimension. If we're really living this is the map..... the five revelation letters of PROGRESS.

We need balance today. There is ministry on both sides of the Cross. The sufferings of Christ balance the power of His resurrection. The mind of Christ is both true humility (Phil. 2:5-7) and seeing in the Spirit when absent from the situation (1 Cor. 5:3). The balance of character and supernatural breakthrough is important. Supernatural knowledge will puff you up and give pride. The balance has to come by obedience in love. Do the revelation with humility. How?

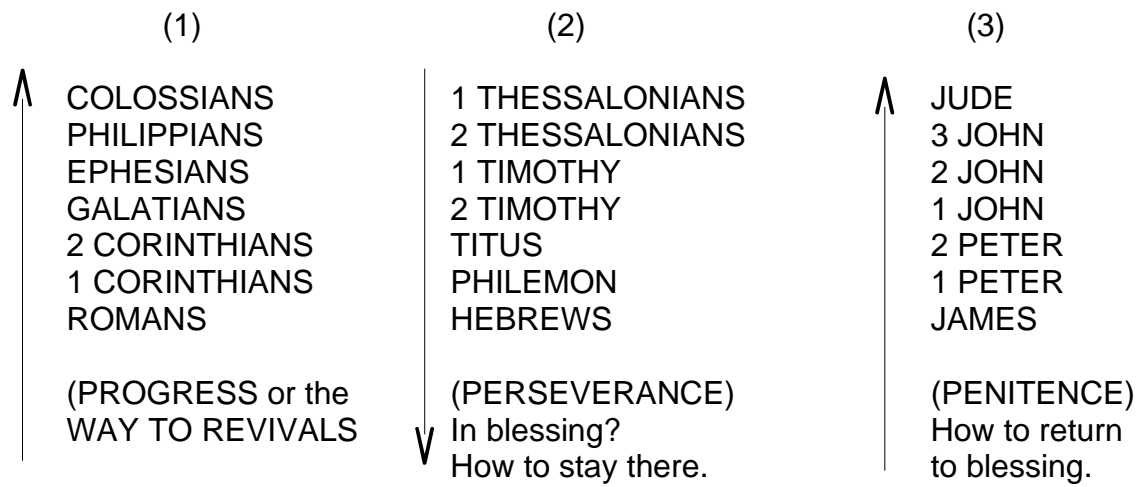
By knowing His grace propels you to do what He HAS GIVEN you. It's ALL OF GRACE. God is working IN you to will and to do of His own pleasure. Whatever good we have done in the Spirit we have received it from heaven. Boasting and pride excluded! Hallelujah!

Jesus lived two lives.....before the Cross He was in the flesh (a human body, never in sin); He was under the law and walked on the earth. After the Cross He was in the Spirit, in liberty and in the heavenlies. Paul's knowledge (2 Corinthians 5:16) was in the second sphere - and that is why access to glory is much more apparent in the epistles than the gospels. Jesus relinquished flesh, law, earth for spirit, liberty, heaven. Will we?

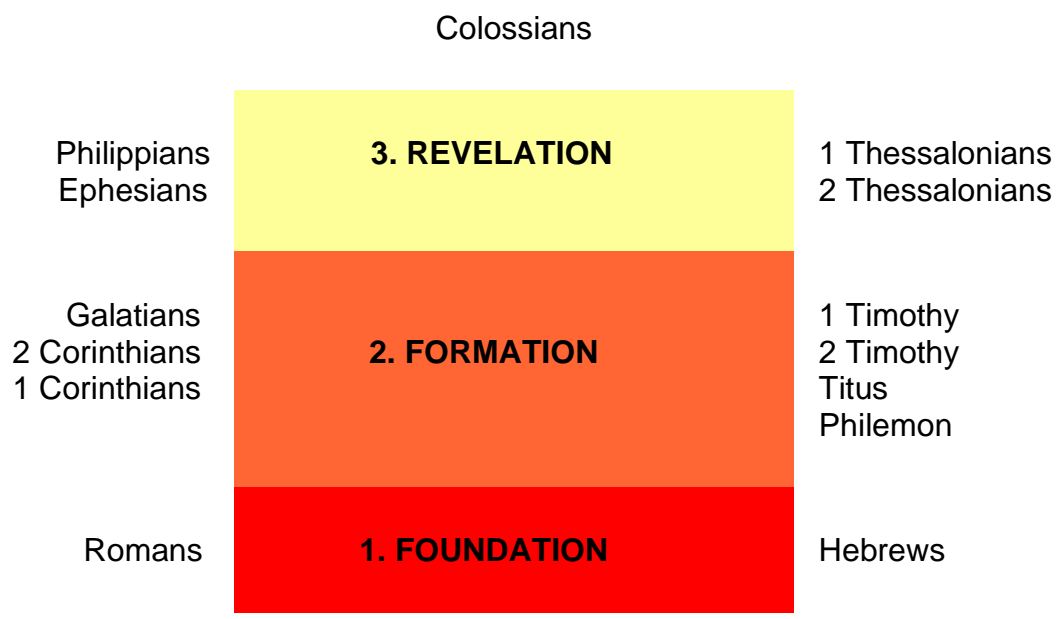
Secondly we need to see the context of the Thessalonian epistles with the other letters. Truth is multi-layered, and one aspect is the very ordering of the letters. There are three groups of seven letters - letters of PROGRESS (from the foundation of Romans to the high point of Colossians where Christ is pre-eminent); the letters of PERSEVERANCE (from 1 Thessalonians to the final appeal of Hebrews); the letters of James to Jude are primarily



the letters of PENITENCE. No one can appeal to the backslider quite like the apostle of the return, Peter.



If we focus on Paul's 14 letters we see a temple of truth with three different levels of truth.



## 1. FOUNDATION

So we have a 2 - 7 - 5 formation. The two foundational books mention Old Testament saints the most. Why? They are waiting IN FAITH for the Messiah to come. The seven formation books mention the Cross the most. Why? It is the path of LOVE..... that makes His path through problems in the church. Surely Corinth and Galatia were churches in the wilderness. Yet Ephesus, Colosseae, Philippi and Thessalonica are churches experiencing the promised land of CHRIST IN YOU, the HOPE of GLORY. Here there are no references to the Old Testament; we are in the Spirit, in the heavenlies and in the perfect law of liberty.

One of the tragedies of the true church is that we let the formation truths split us. Marriage and divorce. The place of law. How to heal or prophesy. Sufferings of Christ. Elders and deacons. Finance. Do we have demons? Etc. etc. What is the answer? Simply Jesus living His second life in us, the hope of glory. Or living in the experience of the revelation letters.

Now we can come to 1 Thessalonians, because we have seen something of its spiritual context. Also we need to appreciate the balance of Cross and Resurrection, the first Coming on earth and the second Coming in the air, the sufferings and the glory, and the balance of being on the earth yet at the same time being in heaven. See John 3:13 where Jesus has a present tense consciousness of the ISNESS of being heaven while He talked to Nicodemus on earth! Holy expectation comes from what the Father is saying to the Son. Jesus could do nothing of Himself but only be subservient to the Father's pleasure and purpose. If Jesus suspended His deity to function as a new creation man under the anointing of the Spirit, we must also crucify the flesh to also live and walk in the Spirit, waiting for His glorious return.

## THE BEGINNING

After the riot at Jason's house Paul walked at least 35 miles to Berea. He had only been at Thessalonica for a few weekends of ministry and an evangelistically aggressive church had been born who were to relay the rhema of God's Word to all Greece and S.Bulgaria. The Greek city had been called Therma or "hot springs" and the work of faith through the embattled believers was red hot. They turned the world upside down by the conviction of sin and openness to the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. The real riot was nothing to do with jealous Jews, but rather a spiritual; R.I.O.T. or radical invasion of truth. This R.I.O.T. entered their hearts and caused three qualities of enduring reality.

### a) The Work of Faith (verse 3)

They turned the world upside down by their acts, process and result of faith. Smith Wigglesworth had three stages of faith based on Mark 4:28;

the blade	=	saving faith (Eph. 2:8),
the head	=	hearing faith (Rom. 10:17),
the full corn	=	abiding faith (John 15:7)

After the new birth we need the supply of the rhema Word of Christ which produces instant faith. (Romans 10:17). They already had their faith strengthened by the riot at Jason's

house, but had to grow and “exceedingly growing faith” was the apostolic tribute to this young church.

As an art teacher we have to know the difference between primary and secondary sources. If a student photographs or draws an object it is primary, but if an image is taken off the internet it is secondary. The primary source of faith is the word of spirit and life our Lord Jesus speaks. (John 6:63). Logos, the written word of God, can become personal, spoken, subjective and specific provided we follow these young Thessalonian believers. How? They received the word in much affliction in the joy of the Holy Spirit.....says verse 6. Notice three things here - they received the engrafted word in meekness (meditation). They received it in much affliction (suffering). They received it in the joy of the Holy Spirit (supernatural power). These are three essential keys to strong faith that keeps growing.

The balance between meditation and the Holy Spirit has been emphasized in recent years, but very little concerning the place of suffering. Persecutions, insults, rejections should strengthen faith and lengthen love if we hear the counsel of Scripture and church history correctly. Today too many saints prefer feelology to theology and pander to their emotional state. Carnal believers fail to make Jesus Lord by living in the realm of emotions. The ancient saints, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Jacob, Job, Jeremiah and the prophets lived a life with their Lord on the inside, in their spirits. The Kingdom comes to earth by self abnegation : the giving up of the soul to God by crucifixion. Tozer said, we can only be as happy as we are holy - and this apostolic gospel is rarely heard in Europe today. We go through the desert of crucifixions into the successful warfare and welfare of the Promised Land. The young church at Thessalonica knew this principle; And so did Saul who became Paul. The defining moment of his life was witnessing the joyous martyrdom of Stephen whose face was transfigured like an angel. Even after this he dragged christians off against their own will to be tortured. Then came the blinding light defining moment and the destiny unveiled when the Lord included suffering and highlighted suffering in his apostolic commission. (Acts 9:16). The full corn of “abiding faith” is cross centred. The head (Mark 4:28) of “hearing faith” is Holy Spirit impregnated, a supernatural lifestyle of signs and wonders, healing and deliverance. The Thessalonian converts possessed both aspects. They received the word in the joy of the Holy Spirit but also in much affliction. May God teach us this precious balance.....of “whoever is least among you shall be the greatest.” Our humiliations lead to exaltation said Guyon and the mark of the apostolic team among the young churches was surely this route of suffering.

Paul calls no other church an example, (1 Thessalonians 1:7). The Greek word ‘tupos’ can mean a seal, or dye, or impression left by a blow. The word is used in John 20:25 ‘print’ and Romans 6:17 ‘form’. The Thessalonians were from the act of saving faith a cross-centred called out community of red-hot evangelists.

“For from you the word of the Lord  
thundered out not only in Bulgaria  
and Greece but in every place. Your  
FAITH toward God has gone out, so  
we need not say anything.”

1 Thessalonians 1:8

The apostolic team were nearly out of business because every part of the body was DOING ITS SHARE causing growth of the body. The gospel came to them IN DYNAMIC POWER of conviction of sin AND in the supernatural POWER of signs and wonders. Again, note the balance. Is that true of us today? Will the reformed Calvinist and the radical charismatic get married soon?!

## **b) The Labour of Love (1: 3)**

Paul's revelation is that we can enter into the intimate, eternal love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father. Their counsel of peace and glory in eternity can be known only by the cross of Christ. Paul refers in this phrase to the "painful labours of love." The essence of love is expanded in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12. Three aspects are found here.

### **1. Abstain from lust (4:3-8)**

All sexual sin brings defeat in the Christian life. By going beyond the boundaries of morality we abuse ourselves and cheat others. Continual sexual sin will despise and reject God and bring to nothing God's purpose. The "passion of lust" is strong sensual desire that has burned a present pain in our souls. The 'inordinate affection' of Colossians 3:5 is the attraction between two who have suffered this emotional and mental pain in past relationships. Buried pain promotes compulsive behaviour of fantasy lust. Counselling and the imperative of destruction by neglect will win the battle as we pray.

### **2. Abound in Love (4:1, 2, 9,10)**

We can be taught by God to love. One day an African bridegroom was stood up by his bride - but boldly declared he would be married that day and asked if any lady present in the church would come forward and take his hand in holy matrimony! She came forward! He rejoiced, knowing marriage was not based on money or physical appearance and he was taught by God to love her.

We are to be knit together in agape love (Colossians 2:2). Self interest always produces friction, disunity, and finally divorce. Only agape from both partners toward each other can cement souls and spirits. Sensitivity to one another's needs has to be learned from the essential partner in marriage who is the Lord Jesus!

### **3. Ambitious to lead a Quiet Life (4:11,12)**

God works for those who wait for Him. Holy expectations come to those who wait with rest in their spirit and zeal in their heart. Don't be a busybody meddling or trying to manage the affairs that belong to someone else. Life is lived forwards but understood lived backwards! So a quiet life at your centre, deep down in your spirit, is required, the busy life at the circumference. Check out the writings of Guyon, Fenelon and Molinos, the quietests of the late 17th century. You will find counsel of a deep and satisfying nature because they know a sovereign God in complete control of our lives, and a silent place of retreat in our human spirits where Christ IS in us, the hope of glory. True love hates the flesh and will not birth an Ishmael. We will soon know the difference between a good idea and a God idea, if we live in the Spirit.

### c) **The Patience of Hope (5: 3)**

The blessed hope is the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power and in glory. Imagine the greatest reunion the world has ever seen when ten thousand times ten thousand angels meet with millions upon millions of redeemed humanity. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is the noisiest verse in Scripture. Sound waves of sonic booms from the voice of the Lord open the graves and re-constitute the ashes of every true believer. The voice of archangel Michael and the trumpet of Gabriel announce the mid air meeting where golden glittering bodies finally see the Lord Jesus and become like Him in a split second. Mortality puts on immortality. Corruption puts on incorruption. The saints actually meet Moses, Elijah, Abel, Abraham, David, Paul, Peter and John and every righteous character from the Bible, including Adam and Eve, whom God clothed with the skins of animals.

We are to come to the patience of hope by FORTIFYING ourselves with the words of the second coming passages. How?

- a) watch and pray (Mark 13:33-37)
- b) be sober (do not allow your faculties to be dimmed by excess)
- c) don't sleep.....did you know that Gaddafi, Libya's extreme leader, said there is a giant above all to come - but it's asleep and it's the church of Jesus Christ?!
- d) don't be drunk - Matthew 24:48-51
- e) put on faith and love as a breastplate - 1 Thessalonians 5:8.
- f) put on the helmet, the HOPE of salvation. We need to guard our minds and hearts in these days of deception.

We need the patient endurance of hope because great controversy surrounds the timing of His coming. 80% of the western world believe in pre-tribulation second coming. It is a relatively new doctrine that started in the 1830's in Edward Irving's church in London. Before then everyone agreed : post tribulation. 80% of the suffering church believe in the post-tribulation appearance. Correction, probably over 90% - So it's ESCAPOLOGY or ESCUATOLOGY. 1 Thessalonians 5:9 tells us we are not appointed to wrath. There are two wraths - one from satan in the 7 year antichrist reign where we run, hide, survive. Then the wrath of God when sinners run and hide, when they say to the mountains:

"Fall on us and hide us from.....  
.... the wrath of the Lamb! For the  
great day of His wrath is come and  
who is able to stand?"

Revelation 6:16,17

Also see the place of the cosmic blackout as after the Great Tribulation and before His coming. Matthew 24:29,30 contains two time sequence words :v.29 "immediately after" and v.30 "then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven." Joel 2:31 confirms this with another time sequence word "before". Revelation 6:12-17 also confirms. We will not know the day or hour of His glorious return in power, but we will know the season (1 Thessalonians 5:2-4). How we need an undiminished, confident, eager expectation of His

return that the morning star may shine in our hearts?

Sadly the church is often asleep - but the Holy Spirit has a remnant and He is stirring up holy expectations.

Through the work of faith  
the labour of love and  
the patience of hope

WE WILL BE READY

WE WILL ENDURE

WE WILL EXPECT !

## LET THERE BE PASTORAL CARE

Some fellowships have little real pastoral care, other churches seem to be covered by a soulish co-dependance. Elders are to be welders of God's people to make them a loving unit, fit for the purposes of God. Leaders should be on the look-out for those of character, who can become members of a ministry team, or those involved in collective servanthood. There are three contemporary issues and you dear reader, will be thinking of many incidents that have caused grief in the body of Christ.

Firstly, we need to see the traits of co-dependancy and bring souls out of these insidious traps.

The co-dependant believer can be discerned by:-

- \* compelled into compulsive behaviour (habits, drugs, addictions, racing thoughts etc.)
- \* replay the memories of a dysfunctional family to the extent where they are bound in self pity.
- \* worthless feelings, and low self-esteem. A negative pattern of words and thoughts pre-dominated, so the sufferer feels they live in a valley of dry bones.
- \* feels inordinately responsible for another (see John 21:21).
- \* improvises change by controlling another's life. Sometimes wrong prayers kick in creating a climate of confusion.
- \* constantly looking for significance in another person, so a soul-tie happens.
- \* being a child loving a cruel parent and coming under their ungodly control.
- \* pornography, prostitution, promiscuity all prevent emotional and mental well-being, because your soul is being destroyed (Prov. 6:32).
- \* control of perfectionism that destroys freedom in a relationship, so a blindness exists concerning other people.

We could go on, but the snare is simply that there can be little or no godly imparting of divine life to those in ungodly relationships. When people cap the real personality under the mask of false self, and cap demons under the false self, the potential for ungodly relationships in a church setting will soar.

Let there be love.....pastoral care with huge doses of discernment.

Secondly, elders and leaders by exhibiting the Shepherd's love, have a holy obligation to multiply the ministry in the local church. This takes time, births equal amounts of despair and joy, challenges our spirituality. We are to commit spiritual things to people of character, (see 2 Timothy 2:2). FAITHFUL is Paul's key word to Timothy, and about Timothy (Philippians 2:19-22). Some folk in church go to all the conferences and courses and think that qualifies them to minister. To minister frontal lobe information is not pastoral

care because it must come from a deeper source, the human spirit infused by the Holy Spirit. We are to be faithful firstly to our vertical relationship with the Father and then horizontally with those under our charge. Brennan Manning was once asked about 7 day silences, "what do these retreats do for you?" He replied "God likes it when I show up". Faithfulness!

Out of the sanctuary stillness comes fresh revelation. Are we faithful to the rhema God would impart for someone else? Will the Spirit of counsel come upon us? Babes-in-Christ need counselling desperately, and mentoring if they desire maturity through ministry.

Thirdly, leaders need the Spirit of counsel, and supernaturally think beneath the surface of the problem. We have to see the battle with sins, self and evil spirits.

Check out	John 3: 1-21	Nicodemus
	John 4: 7-26	Woman of Samaria
	John 8: 3-12	Woman (adultery)

where Jesus strategically handles personal problems with the Spirit of counsel, knowledge and understanding. Jesus in these passages does three things - sees beneath to the perils of the situation, sees the future path, and sees how we can enter His purpose.

<u>PERIL</u>	<u>PATH</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
What is happening	Where you can go	How to get there
John 3: 6, 17, FLESH	John 3: 8 12,13 WIND	John 3: 16 BELIEVE
John 4: 18 HUSBANDS	John 4: 14 WATER	John 4: 23-26 WORSHIP
John 8: 7, 6 ACCUSE	John 8: 11 SIN NO MORE	John 8: 12 LIGHT

We are never to shrink the gospel to the benefit of recovery only. Jesus will listen to her pain and listen to his frustrations....he says in effect, "I see the battle within your heart Nicodemus, you want to believe but are held in bondage by your traditions."

The first step for the counsellor is James 1:19

*"let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."*

Then we paint the sin-free path of living water and blowing wind. If Jesus is manifest in our counselling we will have a passion to reveal how the brother or sister can enter His purposes.



At this point PRIORITIES looms large. Take Matthew 6:33 where the two statements of “seek first the Kingdom”, and “all these things shall be added” must be in the right order. Jesus knows our hearts - are the first things actually first or the blessings paramount? Only as righteousness pervades our motives can the blessing of peace flow.

*“The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.”*

Isaiah 32:17

The counsellor also needs super-sensitivity to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Without a sense of “help” we are just “fools on the hill”. God is never the route to narcissistic goals or the narcotics of pleasure. We live for His pleasure and glory by brokenness and vision. Our agendas have to be broken. Read Jeanne Guyon’s Spiritual Letters and you will find the cross where we die to self etched on every page. Pastoral care minus discernment and the dealings of the cross is sentimental, soulish, inadequate empathy.

Focus of true counselling is how do I live my life in dependance on the Trinity?  
John 14:23 and 2 Corinthians 1:3-6 need urgent meditation. Two thoughts come from these verses.

- (a) only Father and Son can fulfill you in adventure, recognition, security and love.
- (b) all your experiences, primarily are certainly not for you.

As we enter the aching heart of the needy, these two truths spoken from a heart that knows the Father’s love do begin the healing process.

When we lead with the ears, and follow with our tongue we will need

- a) words of Knowledge and wisdom  
(GIFTS of the HOLY SPIRIT)
- b) word of truth - John 17:17  
(SCRIPTURE KNOWLEDGE).

Remember the hidden story behind what the counsellee shares. Also within the background key events will have taught the person wrong belief systems so the spirit of error must be detected.

Let's pray:

“Father in heaven I praise You for Jesus, the wonderful counsellor, the Great Shepherd. Cause me to get beyond my masks and the deceitful heart to the place where you can reign as indwelling Lord and Redeemer. In Jesus all-prevailing Name. Amen.”

Let there be love. The same quality as the Father loved the Son, and the Son loved His disciples. Truth must be spoken in discerning love for maturity to come in the church. Let there be pastoral care in the redeemed community of our Lord Jesus.....without it, the world cannot be moved. As we love one another then the world will know we are His disciples!

It should be a point of spiritual honour that I do not hoard spiritual blessings for myself. When we spend others for His Kingdom in discharging my debt to God

IT WILL RETURN TO YOU IN MORAL,  
PHYSICAL and SPIRITUAL RECREATION.

Pastoral care takes energy, but as we wait on the Lord the quickening and renewing will come. Do we realise we are not our own but bondslaves of Jesus Christ?

### **PASTORAL CARE IS A MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

Ministry begins at the point you change your thinking by the word of God. Depth of ministry is proportional to how the death of Christ is related to our lives. Pastoral care involves the word of the cross, a cutting edge that exposes sin. We are not free to think our own thoughts. Ministry DISCOVERS truth. Truth must be worked out prayerfully with others. If the ministry of pastoral care is right then others will come to see it. Lets look at different kinds of counselling using the Greek words to make specific.

(a) **Elencho** “to reprove, convict.”

John 16:8 speaks of the Holy Spirit bringing home to the world its own sin. Counsellors may doubt a person's salvation if there is no conviction of sin. True counselling begins with the universal fact of sin. John G. Lake was confronted by a woman needing deliverance from alcoholism, but the targeting of the word of Knowledge came, “what about £250 of jewellery you stole from that house?” Pastoral care goes to the root of sin.

(b) **Elego** “to speak kindly.”

1 Thessalonians 2:7,10,11 reveals Paul as a comforting nurse and an imploring father. Part of counselling is the encouragement to those who are weak in mind, will and body. Listeners feed on your spirit as well as your words. Divine power is never carried by words alone, but by relationship. Jesus knew WHAT to SAY AND HOW to say it (whether in mercy or in anger!)

(c) **Noutheteo** “to train by the word”

We see the confrontation of directive input in 1 Corinthians 4:14 and Acts 2:36. God will warn us and put us on the spot! His love lies behind His rebuke. Paul warned with tears in Acts 20:31. Admonition - to rivet your mind to the seriousness of the warning is seen in Titus 3:10 and 1 Corinthians 10:11. The Holy Spirit does not need C.J. Jung or Freud or Adler. He will use counsellors to discern root issues and speak a word of warning.

(d) **Parakaleo** Romans 15:4

The encouragement of the Scriptures is that they come alongside, with divine capability to help us. The comfort can be supernaturally dramatic through the gift of prophecy. (1 Corinthians 14:3). Pastoral care should have a prophetic input. Tychicus had this ministry (Ephesians 6:21,22). The young converts at Thessalonica, a church born in a riot, needed comfort (see 1 Thess. 3:2, 1 Thess. 5:11).

(e) **Paideno** Hebrews 12:3, 5-8.

The chastening of the Lord was given to leaders in 1 Corinthians 5:4,5. The context is incest and not adultery. Chastening can be more than mere training by instruction, there is the aspect of the rod (1 Corinthians 4:21). God cannot speak to those who have not known the rod of Scripture. (Deuteronomy 11:2). It produces true sonship, prevents illegitimacy, causes a partaking of His holiness, and the peaceable fruit of righteousness. This includes the benefits of deliverance, protection, provision and fulfillment. (Job 5: 17-27).

(f) **Didasko** "to teach" Colossians 3:16

Counselling gives an opportunity for tailor teaching to be relevant to the problem. The depth of the counsel is related to the wisdom of the counsellor and how far he or she has progressed in matters of truth and life.

Romans 1:15 says:

"as much as is in me  
I am ready to preach....."

Truth must be blood-bought to be blood-taught.

(g) **Pomaino** "to tend as a shepherd....."

The context of John 10:1-6 is the excommunication of the blind man. Jesus goes after the scattered, the confused, the lost. The sheepfold today is the church.....who will be equal in reality to her Bridegroom. The door is the law and the prophets..... the narrow gate of Matthew 7:12, 13. The doorkeeper was Moses but is now your elders. The voice of strangers can be the world, religious leaders without the Holy Spirit or even Job's friends or your own counsel that emanates from your soul and not your spirit. Counsellors who follow the Lamb must give their lives to the sheep. The Lord is your good Shepherd and pastoral care comes from His interpretation of all you are going through. The negative things of our lives as well as the positive things come from His sovereign hand. May we know Him in the depths personally and intimately because He works a forever thing in our hearts. Jesus is our ticket to ride into the pastoral relationships of the Trinity.

## A WORD ON DEACONS

Pastoral care on a daily basis has to be extended in many churches to deacons or housegroup leaders. 1 Timothy 3:11 'wives' should read 'deaconesses' and so gender should not be an issue. Deacons need to be upgraded from denominational preconceptions to gifted ministers of the new covenant, anointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3) and recognized by the people of God. The only doctrinal qualification that separates deacons from elders is that the overseers must be apt to teach (1 Timothy 3:2). The deacons encourage the life force of the church, which is agape love, by a lifestyle of serving.

Serving starts with hearing God because duties must be come out of revelation. Dynamic of the Holy Spirit is needed, for duties to be seeded! Duties include instigating, administrating, listening, reading the Bible, laying hands on the sick, helping practically, being an example (John 13:17), discerning and generally operating in faith and love. Two out of seven in Acts 6 were evangelists with sign ministries. The honour of being a deacon is surely that wonder of "holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience." If deacons live in that truth then the sickness of sameness can be a thing of yesteryear.

Can the Holy Spirit enter a deacon's meeting? Will the foundation stone of prayer lead a deacon to His presence, the one thing needful that Mary discovered at His feet? Let there be pastoral care through deacons. Church order that satisfies God will bring multiplication, imple Act 6:7.

Deacons must be people persons able to relate to the body of Christ AND seekers AND those who have recently come to the Lord Jesus. May they grow in the mystery of the faith to discern the area of serving in all the committed.

## NO CONDEMNATION

The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus brings a threefold blessing:-

NO CONDEMNATION	(Romans 8:1)
NO ACCUSATION	(Romans 8:33)
NO SEPARATION	(Romans 8:35)

These great negatives of the Spirit-filled life are the goal of millions of believers who turn up at the latest deliverance and healing conferences. Having been involved in casting out demons for 20 years, I can understand their search for freedom. To live in freedom we ALSO need to see our position in Christ. Positional truths are only a lop-sided gospel if they are not balanced by the reality of intercession and deliverance. However, some fail to see who they are in Christ, and therefore receive only superficially the deliverance and healing on offer. The balance of both truths plus AN OBEDIENT HEART is our path into the victorious living of Romans 8.

Seeing our position in Christ involves our understanding of Romans 5,6 and 7, the very heart of the gospel.

When you travel abroad (and living in Romans 8 is like living in another country and climate) you have to go through a system at the airport.

### a) Check In

If you are going to fly in the wonder of Romans 8:2, the first thing is the foundation of Romans 5:1 'having peace with the Father' or the new birth. We check in by His grace at the Cross as a repentant sinner. The status of 'peace with God' comes immediately and we will never lose that status! The justification by faith is concrete. However, times come when we lose the reality or sense of the peace. The substance of peace is found in Philippians 4:6,7:

"be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer..... and the peace of God, which SURPASSES all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Even if we do not experience this blessedness, we will have Romans 5:1,2. We could press the analogy of 'check in' further and see faith as our ticket, and grace as the passport.

### b) Passport checked and stamped

Now you have authority to proceed to another country! Reigning in life (Romans 5:17) is not living lavishly like a King's kid, but being enabled to put your feet on serpents and scorpions. To reign in life we must receive two things:

1. abundance of grace.
2. gift of righteousness.

Righteousness allows us to function as a bold believer. Grace must keep coming to us if

the mountains (problems) are to become a plain! (see Zechariah 4:7). We reign in this life through the release of victorious eternal life.

### **c) Baggage inspection**

No flesh baggage is allowed to travel in His purposes! We are sin-free only as Jesus Christ is Lord by the Holy Spirit over all areas of our lives. Romans 6:6,10 and 11 gives us our position of being dead to sin. Sin is never dead to us, but we can apply the funeral position of "I am crucified with Christ". However, being sin-free begins with the position and carries on with the performance of our lifestyle. The position of being dead to sin means nothing if you ogle TV watching skin!

### **d) Walk to the Gate**

As you walk there are many duty-free but expensive shops. A tie for fifty quid! We can and must use the world, but with food and shelter should be content. The prosperity gospel based on self is a negative power when viewed from the cross of Jesus Christ. Romans 6:16-18 and verse 22 is living the life not merely loving the light (truth). At 12 I was mad keen on cars, learning all the specifications, but you've got to drive to get the experience.

### **e) Dead to the Law**

Romans 7:4-6. When you go through the gate with your passport of grace and your ticket of faith you must believe the aeroplane will actually take off. You become dead to the law of gravity! We are married to another, Jesus, who lives in heaven, in liberty and in the Spirit. If you're dead to the law of gravity you can be alive to the law of aerodynamics. The law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death. We are to live in the new law of the Spirit that quickens our mortal bodies, curbs and controls the flesh, and leads us out to be sons of God. In Romans 8 we never experience condemnation or separation from the love of God. The flesh will contest our liberty and will attempt to make us visit and live in Romans 7. We were (past tense) in the flesh (7:5) but now are in the Spirit (8:9). Which law are we looking at? The law of God (7:22) or another law (7:23)?

## **LAW BRINGS CONDEMNATION**

In Norway there is the Law of Jante, which is found in the warp and woof of their culture. Here are some of its tenets.

- a) don't think you are special.
- b) don't think you are wiser, better or know more than us.
- c) don't think you are good at anything, or can teach us anything.
- d) don't think anyone cares about you.

It reminds one of the cruel Japanese proverb "the nail that stands out is pounded down". Existence means "out from" and "standing". We exist as individuals who stand out from

the crowd. Everyone is special, unique, loved and filled with potential. The Vikings have got it sadly wrong, and this law cripples them, producing passivity, restraint, false humility, legalism and condemnation. The stronghold can be pulled down in Jesus' name as we renounce the lies, and we break off the unhealthy condemnation.

It's not just Scandinavians who have a problem with law - we all do! The deadly virus leads to missing our inheritance. The law increases sin, produces wrath and all manner of evil desire! (see Romans 4:15; 5:20; 7:7-9).

## **FLESH BRINGS CONDEMNATION**

The big secret is we cannot live the Christian life. God wants to ruin our flesh lives so that Jesus Christ can take over. In eternity the Father and Son had a relationship of glorious, loving revelation. They communicated by the rhema, living word. Religious flesh says we transform ourselves by:

bible study and reading,  
church attendance and tithing.  
witnessing.  
receiving power and anointing.  
praying.

A hundred times NO! NO! NO!

I'm not more spiritual by reading 50 classics a year, giving 20% of income or praying 2 hours a day and handing out tracts on a Saturday afternoon in the shopping mall. I've tried all these things and my flesh was still strong and largely in control. In fact, spiritual activities can enforce a sense of failure, of not measuring up to His promises. Eventually the pattern emerges of legalism, frustration, failure and condemnation.

What was the plan of God for His Son in the carpenter's shop? How did He live free from condemnation? Firstly, Jesus didn't figure out the Christian life on His own, or from Mary, nor the local synagogue. He did not simply read the Old Testament scriptures. He received bursts of advanced knowledge from the indwelling Father. The Christian life is obeying revealed knowledge, the hidden wisdom of God, so we know the mind of Christ. Jesus got on a collision course with religion because He was the first human to act on what the Father was showing Him and speaking to Him (see John 5:19; 8:28). We need our DNA radically altered by divine life insemination, and refuse to rely on the flesh. The flesh loves facts and information. Jesus refused that and chose to speak from the Father gracious words of spirit and life. In that relationship there cannot be

CONDEMNATION  
ACCUSATION or  
SEPARATION

Romans 8 living is amplified by Ephesians. When we are really living His life His way, Ephesians is the map. For us there is one revelation : CHRIST JESUS. For our Lord there was and is only one revelation : FATHER GOD.

For 3 years the disciples were shown the Father through the Son. They beheld, absorbed, listened to and walked with Jesus as He related to Father. That is no condemnation.

## THE ENEMY BRINGS CONDEMNATION

The enemy through accusation, hereditary bondage, lies or soulish prayer can bring condemnation. If we pray for someone out of our own will, confusion and condemnation will result. There are perils to prayer. Did you know satan actually prays (Mark 5:7, Luke 22:31,32)? Did you know his accusations before the Almighty concerning you and me are actually true? We must come under the protection of the blood of the Lamb. A new dependancy on the precious blood will come in these days to those in the body of Christ who are of the Issachar tribe and know the times and what the church must do. (see 1 Chronicles 12:32).

If you value the blood of Jesus mentally,  
extol the blood of Jesus verbally,  
experience the blood spiritually

then

you will never fear separation from the Father's love. The blood of Jesus silences the enemy's condemnation. The powers of darkness are paralyzed by prayer from a clean heart and pure hands. When Israel prayed soulishly for a King, reversing God's priority for prophetic leaders, not only leanness entered Israel's soul, but darkness entered King Saul to the point of suicide. David had some serious sins, but was free of condemnation because of praise and worship, those twin divine cleansing agents. Praise stills the voice of condemnation at a distance.



## PSALM 139

You cannot teach God anything.

He cannot learn, nor has He learned anything from anyone.

He cannot lie, and is always total truth.

He knows instantly and effortlessly all mysteries, all enigmas, all causes and effects, all about heaven and hell, and everything that is good and that is evil.

From womb to tomb He watches over us.

He is more wise than wisdom, more loving than love, more splendid than splendour, this infinite God is concerned with our intimate things, our protection, purpose and our problems.

Psalms emotionally heal us because His word is spirit and life to the heart of man. Our past needs the balm of Gilead if our future is to bask in His presence.

Psalm 139 reveals seven things God will do for the seeking saint in terms of His perfect knowledge.

### **(1) HE KNOWS our intimate details** (verses 2,3)

His loving concern for us is 100% or 24/7. Jesus is never exempt from any issue or detail in a saint's life. In the work and rest patterns of life He watches over us with examination, sifting the motive behind our path (verse 3). Our responsibility to God's all-knowing eye will involve us in heart searching honesty. The Psalm ends with our need for the Lord to search us. Fellowship with Jesus is halted by our unconfessed sin. However, He always feels after our ways, knowing why we do certain things. The God of now forgiveness is the God of healing of our past. The bitter pool experiences are healed by the tree being cut and felled into the troubled waters. Invite the Cross into your sins and into your negatives.

Pray "Lord Jesus I accept Your sovereignty over all my past.....all my faults and sin, all my hurts and pain. You gave me these experiences not primarily for myself, but in your redeeming grace, for others, who I will meet in your pre-planned future.  
Amen."

### **(2) GOD KNOWS our Speech** (verse 4)

Even in a world of spin, and deception, God knows whether our speech truly echoes our heart, or how we are on the inside. Remember Luke 4:22 when those who heard the gracious words of Jesus began to query, "is this not Joseph's son?" The second voice after the sense of wonder was in the flesh. What lurks behind our apparent praise? It remains the first voice or impression is usually God! The second statement or question is often the voice of the stranger or hireling. The idea that comfort and encouragement is God and rebuke or correction is the devil, deceives God's people. Proverbs 15:31,32 says:

*"the ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise.  
He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, but he who heeds rebuke gets understanding."*

Rebuke in a spirit of gentleness wins the open heart to a place of contrition. Pleasant words can come to those who repent. Proverbs 16:24 says:

*“Pleasant words are like a honeycomb; sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.”*

God knows our words and the motive and spirit behind them. He knows our words completely.

### **(3) GOD KNOWS HOW TO PROTECT US (verses 5,6)**

As we abide and hang in there in His love, He promises to enclose us in total security. (See Psalm 91:1). Before us and behind us we find the providences of God. He sees everything beforehand. He has made the video of our lives before a day ever existed! And laid His hand upon us to protect and to anoint us. Maintaining fellowship with this wonderful God becomes the bedrock of all obediences. Job’s testimony of coming forth as gold (shining out God’s character in the midst of cruel adversity) was in the context of having the hedge of protection taken away. Job 23:10-12 could be the high knowledge the Psalmist describes in verse 6. He knows the way that we take.....and Job succeeded in coming out of the trial to the end intended by the Lord. Always remember the devil is on a leash under the sovereignty of God’s purpose.

### **(4) GOD KNOWS WHAT IS IN THE DARKNESS (verses 7-12)**

Nothing escapes His scrutiny because He knows what is in the darkness. He knows why we sometimes want to escape into irresponsibility. Whoever we are - in earth, in heaven or in hell, we know He knows every detail of our lives, every thought and impulse of emotion, every movement of the Holy Spirit in the deepest recess of our being. The Lord oversees and orchestrates what is in the darkness. The remarkable 1 Kings 22:19-22 reveals demons in the light of the Lord! God allows choice saints to go through a dark night of the soul where the treasures of darkness may be revealed.

God knew what was the darkness of Genesis 1:2, and how the demonic ravaged the original creation. God knows the darkness of the cosmic blackout of Matthew 24:29. Jesus knew the night that was in the heart of His betrayer in John 13:30 where a double entendre occurred in the Greek. God knew what was in the darkness of the devil’s three hour onslaught when Jesus was hanging on the cross (Matthew 27:45). This was no solar eclipse, but an army of every demon on earth and in the air and in hell being driven to Golgotha by the Lord Jesus, who triumphed over them in the cross by ripping them off His soul and body. (See Colossians 2:15).

His irrevocable victory includes seeing God walk off centre stage of Golgotha, leaving His Son to accomplish the triumph over evil spirits. He knows what is in the darkness.

**(5) GOD KNOWS our Creation and our Purpose** (verses 13,14)

God put a blue print in our genes at birth to evolve into His purpose and calling for us. This sensational good news speaks of our discovery through the Holy Spirit of the good works in Christ Jesus that were pre-programmed by God before time began. We have to be born from above to do the marvellous works our sanctified souls knows very well. God skillfully made you a unique being and wrote down the days He planned for us in His book. For example in David's life:

- \* God knew the day David was conceived and shaped in the sin of anxiety and rejection (Psalm 51)
- \* God knew the day when a murderous heart was found in David. (1 Samuel 25)
- \* God knew the twin sin of adultery and murder.
- \* God knew David would praise God everyday of his life seven times.
- \* God knew the days of wilderness wandering (over 2,600 days).
- \* God knew the 1,000 plus days of domestic bliss with a wise woman, Abigail.
- \* He knew the thousands of days of military victory and conquest.
- \* He knew the thousands of days of poetic inspiration.

God knows the days we go through and the days when we experience eternal life and heaven on earth.

**(6) HE KNOWS our response to enemy activity** (verses 19-22)

Jesus hated lawlessness more than anyone else and was anointed beyond the sons of men. Hate is a positive and negative emotion. Godly hate is required if we are to press beyond Romans 7 and enter the flow of Holy Spirit living in Romans 8 (see Romans 7:14,15). We are called to hate sin and satan. A deliverance minister is anointed in proportion to his personal hatred toward the flesh (self-life), the world system and the devil. We loathe those who rise up against the Lord and His kingdom (Psalm 139 v.21). We love sinners but hate their sin. There comes a moment in a man's life when his wickedness is so great he goes beyond redemption. Evil spirit powers entangle him so completely, he lives as an enemy to all righteousness. The prayer of David has a new testament reference in 2 Thessalonians 1:6.

“since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you.”

We have to be super-sensitive to the Holy Spirit when to apply such a verse, because mercy triumphs over judgement. However, there comes a limit to God's forbearance. The Holy Spirit wants to cleanse the church by bringing repentance to millions of believers who have wasted time listening to cooks on tv who are blasphemers, rock musicians who are promiscuous and worse, politicians who are double-minded and all those of the world who hate true biblical Christianity. God will scrutinize our reaction to what is not of Him, to see if our hearts are pure.

**(7) HE KNOWS our anxieties** (verse 23)

Anxiety weighs you down, robs you of your experience of salvation, chokes the words, blinds us to the wonder of the moment and kills off revelation. Some cannot stop washing their hands because of the anxiety or guilt. Even Paul was concerned to the point of aching grief at the state of the churches in 2 Corinthians 11:28. A de-realization or detachment from the true self comes to the ceaseless worrier. The causes are many:-

- \* unstable parents involving many geographic moves of house when little.
- \* perfectionism or superiority in parents.
- \* lack of social interaction and periods of loneliness.
- \* the guilt of a wrong standing under God.  
(Righteousness is right standing...)
- \* no, or little affirmation in formative years. Rejection as inability to hear the affirmation.
- \* sickness, insomnia, co-dependancy.
- \* occult in hereditary bloodline.

God knows the causes and the symptoms of our anxieties. Worry is a crime against trusting the provision of His precious promises.

We pray

“Search me O God and know my heart,  
Try me and know my anxieties.  
And see if there is any wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting.”

Eternal life is multiplied by grace by those who have the honesty to examine themselves. Spend an hour with God and yield yourself unreservedly to Him. Why? He alone knows us completely and died for our sins to reveal His complete acceptance for our unworthy lives. The everlasting way flows from Christ and Him crucified. Hallelujah!

Let us explore His omniscience because His providence is always perfect. Providence means “to see beforehand” - God has got a video of your life before you ever came upon the world’s stage. Security, identity, and destiny rest in the Father’s Knowledge of us.

# SUCCESS

The world definition of success could be the degree a person's self-realization has penetrated society. You may think of Richard Branson, Kate Moss or Tony Blair. The Christian definition of success depends on how you perceive the Lord Jesus Christ in His mission of redemption.

John 17:4 says it all -

*"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which you have given Me to do."*

The ultimate climax of the work was the Cross - the indescribable hard labour of the travail of His soul. At every stage of the earth walk Jesus was in total dependance to the Father (John 5:19, 8:28). Our success is surely linked to obedience to the Word of God.

Karl Marx, a lifelong spiritualist, said on his deathbed -

"I know I'm going to hell. That is where I want to be.  
But I'm glad that I've left behind a system on earth that  
will guarantee the majority of mankind will follow me there."

After the Berlin wall, we may have to say a huge minority, perhaps 1 in 3 are still communist. He could be viewed as a successful man with his atheistic ideology. Jesus in His earth walk, in the flesh and under the law can be seen as a failure. Twelve confused recruits who after three years of mobile bible college, failed to replicate the divine life in any great measure, until the Holy Spirit fell upon them at Pentecost. They had slept at the Transfiguration and Gethsemane. They had run away from Calvary. They were slow of heart to believe in the resurrection. BUT IN THE UPPER ROOM GOD put in the 120 disciples a unique characteristic: the divine ability to duplicate the DISPOSITION of JESUS CHRIST.

The level of success is the manifestation of the character of Jesus Christ through the yielded vessel, the determined disciple, the serving son. How much of Jesus is getting through to me and through me to others? But HOW? Here are four steps that should bring success to the praying believer.

## **(1) Magnify the Lord - Psalm 34:1-3**

The Lord God cannot get any bigger.... but our conception of Him should enlarge as we grow in grace. The telescope of praise magnifies the Lord by bringing us nearer to our majestic God who is

more splendid than splendour,  
more loving than love,  
more discerning than wisdom,  
more magnificent than magnificence.

Praise is a duty so our souls get a bigger conception, a greater feeling for, and an energized will for God to manifest to us in the person of His Son. In today's culture this sublimity is substituted by hero-worship. People are co-dependant on heroes in culture, politics, sport etc. The glory that should go exclusively to God goes to man; reducing us and diminishing God. Our souls always need enlarging. The critical aspect is: from what source? Mary's spirit had already rejoiced in God her Saviour and her soul magnified the Lord out of the impetus of the Holy Spirit within her spirit. The unregenerate are unable to do so because there is no indwelling Spirit. The world enlarges its will, stimulates its mind and feels affinity and effection by hero-worship. Even academics love a previous genius. The believer wants to exalt the name of Jesus and find the Lord enlarging their souls together in His presence.

Idols make people idle, diminishing their creativity. The worship of God in spirit and in truth, however, releases individual creativity and purpose.

## **(2) Mortify the Flesh - Colossians 3:3-6**

We inherited flesh life from Adam and it cannot be improved or educated. We must destroy it by neglect, by refusing to satisfy myself. Sin is destroyed by the reality of redemption - the precious blood of our Saviour obliterating the dead works of our sin. The flesh however works connecting my body with external circumstances so that I please self.

It is a revelation to see what Augustine was getting at when he testified he was an abject, helpless, perverted moral failure. He became responsible for his sin, and refused to be a victim desiring pity. This aspect of the gospel is in danger today from some inner healing ministries who emphasize your broken past and hereditary lines beyond the place Scripture speaks of such things. How many sermons on Romans 8 dare to mention and explain verse 13?

*"For if you live according to the flesh you will DIE, but if by the Spirit you put to death the DEEDS of the body you will LIVE."*

God's weapon of execution is the power and wisdom of God: the Cross, always available to the honest and humble heart. It is there we rid ourselves of all that the fall has infected us. Not that we were responsible for Adam's disobedience, but that seed of rebellion was passed on genetically to all men. All are without exception, sinners who miss the beauty of God's plan. All are without excuse because conscience recognizes the bias of degeneration of sin.

## **(3) Meditate the Word - Joshua 1:6-8**

We find the word 'success' in Joshua 1:8 and it links with meditation and obedience. What we meditate upon we unconsciously or consciously obey. A ruminating cow produces milk from grass by regurgitating the cud thirteen times, chewing some more and swallowing. A process of meditation! We must allow the verse of Scripture to go beyond the membrane of our brain, into our hearts. The anointed word within us can produce whatever it declares because it remains a creative word, able to save our souls, when it is planted. (see James 1:21). It cannot find its home in our hearts if our riotous imagination is feeding on the frivolity or excess of TV.

*“Therefore LAY ASIDE all filthiness and overflow of wickedness and receive with meekness the IMPLANTED WORD, which is able to save your souls.”*

Contrary to ‘pop’ psychology, the negative usually precedes the positive. We mortify the flesh before we can meditate on the word.

A religious sentimentality is in vogue today where feelings have replaced obedience, and if we fail to obey godly impressions the result will be depression or a lower level of reaction. Perhaps coming to the Bible to meditate is very difficult in the restless, stress-filled world you inhabit. Simplify your life - see your relationship with God as top priority. God allows dramatic failures in our lives for the purpose of new priority. Every failure is a broken focus. People want to be entertained today rather than be diligent and concentrated on a pursuit. Budget your time for diligence is a man’s precious possession.

#### **(4) Manifest His love - John 13:34,35**

Success in reaching out to the world is the lifestyle of His agape love. We serve our own generation by the will of God, which is manifesting His love. The first time I knew this demonstration was when I was delivered of various demons by a pastor who has remained a personal friend for over 30 years. To experience God’s love personally through intimacy with Jesus or through the body of Christ makes life worth living. The apostle of love, John, says some wonderful things about the very essence of our Christian life. 1 John 4:7,8 says

*“Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God for God is love.”*

Those who manifest love are born again and know God. Some believers find it hard to develop a lifestyle of laying down their lives for the brethren. Why? because they have not come to know God by experience..... they are still babes with forgiveness and eternal life within them, but have not progressed. Perhaps they have not magnified the Lord with an open heart, have failed to mortify the flesh with a strong will, and have not meditated upon the word with a concentrated mind. Is this why so few Christians can claim to be a success?

#### **A NOTE ON DESIRES**

After the new birth God seeds us with clear purpose. He plants the plans of His heart within our spirit. Ask yourself a simple question: “Why am I a Christian?” The answer must be something along the lines of “I’m contented and satisfied doing the thing that I really am by His grace.” Here is another definition of success with respect to our desires being fulfilled. Often God can show us our desires are not His. Check out the children of Israel who wanted a King and received Saul. God had to teach them over half a century that His desire and choice was far better. Most Kings were bad ones and led Israel inexorably to the 70 year exile. God must kill off desires with no eternity in them, for our desires abort His purpose. But does He not give us the desires of our heart? Yes, but with one huge condition....we delight ourselves in the Lord (Psalm 37:4)

That fellowship with the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit crucially places the desire, purpose and plans of His heart INTO our new covenant hearts.

The worst fear for a man is not measuring up; for a woman it is abandonment. These failure areas come into our lives when God wants to kill off wrong desire. Only His desires within us can bring success when we obey them. The Lord promises men failure and futility and guarantees women heartache and loneliness when we have not arrived at His purpose for our lives. God limited man's longevity because of wrong desire - and the history of man is the history of judgement. He allows us a journey through a wilderness to test what is in our hearts. (see Deuteronomy 8:2,3). He wants to set our hope on the grace that comes at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:13)

The success of being like Jesus in our disposition comes at a cost. The price tag is identification with a personal cross, where we see the plague of our own heart and have to die out to self. Then when winter is past and the cold rains over and gone, the flowers of the fruit of the Spirit appear on the earth. In every sunset you can see the garden of Eden returning when the Lord returns, and begins the true new age of the millenium. Our real address is PARADISE. The sum of our obediences go through the custom gates of heaven. There will be reward for our success here on earth. The secret to live successfully?

Jesus gave it to Nicodemus in John 3:13

*"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is the Son of Man, who IS IN HEAVEN."*

Jesus was in two places when He spoke to the religious leader. The Pharisee was not seeing far. Jesus was! From the perspective of presently being in heaven while on earth, Jesus spoke the gracious words. Speaking from heaven guarantees success, whether those on earth receive it or not. The wise believer leaves the results to God.

## **THE GREATEST SUCCESS**

The greatest success of God was His Son entering the world by nine months of pregnancy. The holy seed was placed in chaste Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. He is how God does a thing on earth. Everything the Holy Spirit accomplishes is 100% successful. The only ones who deter, frustrate and hinder Him are the saints and servants of God.

In Isaiah 55:10,11 we see the foundation of success is the creative word. The sent word is never futile but potent, accomplishing what God sent it for. The invisible seed from heaven produces in the visible earth. Abounding in the gospels are the illustrations of this principle. Jesus received a burst of revelation knowledge in His spirit, obeyed the voice of the Father by speaking out the word, and the supernatural occurred in accordance with that seed.



To the waves - "Peace, be still"  
To the centurion - "as you've believed, be it done to you."  
To Lazarus - "Come forth!"  
To the leper - "It is my will. Be clean!"

He rebuked the fever and cursed the fig tree.  
The Word made flesh spoke word and it was so. The Genesis 1 principle is found everywhere in the gospels. God speaks and it just is.

Now in the new covenant we can go a step further: our mouths can speak the word of faith! There are obvious abuses to this extraordinary grace - prosperity teaching based on self getting is an anathema to our Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, the excesses do not invalidate the truth found in Romans 10:8-10, Mark 11:23,24, Philemon 6, Joel 3:10, Hebrews 13:5,6 and countless other verses.

Fully functioning faith fulfills the Scriptures in three ways:

- a) we believe God CAN do a thing!
- b) we believe and know God WILL!
- c) we be and live in what God DOES!

This testimony can be read and meditated in Hebrews 11 and throughout the Bible. Faith is the pivotal piece in the Christian jigsaw. The formation of faith is the inspired word of God that is anointed to us. All experience must be undergirded by the word of God. See how Jesus speaks to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus - we must interpret experience by the solid certainty of Scripture (Luke 24:25-27). Heaven and earth may pass away but not the word of God. Lazarus may leave heaven to warn the rich man's relatives, but it will not bring faith unless they believe the word of God (Luke 16:30,31).

God is a faith God. See His amazing supreme control over history when Isaiah used the past tense in describing an aspect of the atonement:

*"and the Lord HAS LAID on Him the iniquity of us all."*

God knew 700 years before the Cross the mission of His Son.....and does not use the prophetic will lay on Him but HAS LAID on Him. God knows the future exactly and through prayer desires us the people of God, to come up to the divine level of faith that will declare a thing to be so, even if there is no visible support.

The faith of the Son of God can be seen in two remarkable passages in Hebrews 1:5,6 and Hebrews 10:5-7. In Hebrews 1 we glimpse Jesus hearing in His spirit the voice of the Father at conception:

"You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."

and again:

"I will be to Him a Father  
And He shall be to Me a Son."

I believe this could have been moments after Mary had submitted to the Holy Spirit, and certainly during her pregnancy. In Hebrews 10 we hear the Son's response:

*"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a BODY You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said "Behold I have come - in the volume of the book it is written of Me - to do Your will, O God."*

He quotes Psalm 40:6-8 by inspiration of the Holy Spirit in His spirit. Although a baby He completely was divine, with a receptive spirit that could hear the Father. Two discoveries were taking place in His spirit in the first thirty years from Bethlehem to Jordan.

- (a) Jesus was equally, essentially, eternally God discovering His humanity, which was received from Mary.
- (b) Jesus was completely man (the Word become flesh) discovering His divinity, which was sealed into Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit.

A unique being had come to earth.....the first Christian who knew about community and family in the Trinity before time began. The incarnation is the greatest success because without it all mankind would be eternally lost.

Mankind's sin as deep as the heart,  
as wide as the world,  
as old as the race,

could never be forgiven and forgotten unless the Saviour had been born of a virgin. The climax of obedience to the Father's word was the cross. We also need to be receptive to bursts of revelation in our spirit. The word planted there possesses divine power....for a supernatural life that glorifies God and a discipleship that includes the daily cross. Jesus Christ our Lord kept obeying the inner prompting of the Spirit and kept fulfilling the word of God. SO CAN WE!

Luke 4:36 literally says

*"What is this in His mouth?  
He has the authority to use the power to command evil spirits  
and they come out!"*

So do we! The great thing about the good news is that Jesus never safeguards His greatness, grace or gifts....but gives them away to the sons and daughters. Those who believe shall cast out evil spirits, heal the sick, cleanse lepers and raise the dead. Faith is extending the limits off my life to prove the loyalty of God's Word.

Mark 11:24 says

*"Whatsoever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them  
and you shall have them."*

Receive means receive them then and there and is not pie in the sky in the bye and bye! The creative word that formed billions of galaxies can be released through our mouths IF the word of God is LIVING in our spirits. The same powerful word Father gave Jesus, Jesus gave to disciples says John 17:8.

God didn't make a mistake when you received eternal life. So never doubt the love of God toward you! Faith works through love to build God's kingdom here on earth. We have a tremendous part to play and a huge responsibility to be carriers of the anointed word "that calls things which do not exist as though they did."

## **MOTIVATORS**

To live successfully as believers we must receive the right motivators. Ahab was so evil because his wife stirred him up. Coveting positions of leadership brought Ananias and Sapphira their downfall. Greed led Judas' betrayal and suicide and made Gehazi a leper. Let's check out three great motivators.

### **(a) The effect of prison on Paul. Philippians 1:12**

The dark tomb-like place stenching with excrement a foot high. Prisoners asphyxiated and died in this most notorious of prisons. Paul, a Roman citizen, had one privilege - he could write letters. Once a month a guard went down to this festering hell, with a candle in one hand and a writing pad in the other. That's where the apostle wrote the epistle of joy! The most horrid circumstance turned out for the furtherance of the gospel. The Christ IN Paul was motivated, and the church has been blessed by this letter for nearly 2000 years. The palace guard knew his very survival was a miracle in Christ! (Philippians 1:13). Paul refused to live in self-pity chose grit and grace wrote a masterpiece of the Master's peace. Hallelujah, rejoice in the Lord and again I say. rejoice.

### **(b) the effect of prophecy on Josiah. 1 Kings 13:2**

Three hundred years before child king, the man of God declared the devastating truth to Jeroboam when Josiah was 26, Hilkiah found the book of the Law in the house of the Lord, and the king who had already set out various reforms, cried with a rent heart. The prophetic motivation continued the zeal of the Lord through him to remove idolatry and restore worship in spirit and truth.

The word must do a work in us, so we will worship and know the attributes of God, only then can our work be acceptable in His all-seeing sight. No creature or demon is hid from His sight. A simple sum performs God's Kingdom.

TRUE WORSHIP + LIVING WORD = GOD'S WORK.

Only the work of a worshipper who obeys the revelation has eternity in it.

### **(c) the effect of prayer on our Lord Jesus. John 17**

Truly speaking, this is the Lord's prayer. The "Our Father...." is the disciples prayer focussing on our worship and our needs. In the last few verses, spoken just before the climax of Father's will, the grisly spectacle of the Cross, we sense the Saviour's

recollection of eternity past. He strengthens resolve to go through the darkness and abandonment of Calvary by recalling the love and the glory freely exchanged between Father and Son, before the foundation of the world.

Simplify your lifestyle,  
Shut yourself away,  
Meditate these life-changing verses.  
Speak them quietly to your soul.  
Enter the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ.

God will work them within your spirit and from there you will know the true motivation of His success.

## **PRAYER -THE FOUNDATION**

Prayer is the foundation of our success, our expertise, our prudent dealings, our wisdom, our guidance and our circumspect intelligence, our ability to make other understand. That collection of words helps us define the Hebrew word, sakal, which the Holy Spirit uses in Joshua 1:8. Knowing and obeying the word of God guarantees success. God's plan for the 21st century is a Joshua generation. We have not passed this way before. On September 11th 2001 the world turned a corner! People still wonder - is Osama bin Laden alive and where is he? There exists a cultural covenant in Afghanistan that is you eat bread and salt with someone they will be your friend til death, never betray you, and even lay down their life for you! Osama has these friends in the mountains of Afghanistan! Missionaries know it, politicians flounder! Prayer that prevails brings revelation --- without true prophets, our politicians will fail.

The problems with Western believers (Americans and Europeans) is we are spoon-fed by the christian TV evangelists. They speak increasingly of money needs and the spell is cast. If I give to so-and-so, I'll be okay with God! This subtle lie is reducing the body of Christ to a pitiful prayerless bunch of priests, who are unable to dig for truth themselves! Again, prayer is the foundation for seeking the living, relevant, up-to-date word of God that is always a SUCCESS! The job of those who bring understanding of the word of God must never be to collect clones of their particular views, but to minister an anointing that causes the sons and daughters of God to discover the unsearchable riches of Christ for themselves. There is yet much truth to break open from the word of God, and much more to be obeyed! The mountain of Mark 11:23 is not merely poverty or sickness. The God channels would have you believe money, tithing and firstfruits etc.is over 50% of the Bible. Those, and related subjects like financial stewardship account for less than 3%. Let's have balance! The mountain is related, of course, to the fig tree without fruit, "nothing but leaves". The church or individual who appears to be fruitful, but is in fact barren, needs to disappear into the sea of forgetfulness. Dry rot must be burned up in the Holy Spirit fire of holiness. Pray for a personal Luke 3:16. Your success depends upon it.

Without it we will be "nothing but leaves". The downside of over-emphasis on prosperity teaching is that this is the very condition that has swept into the church. The gospel has become self-orientated. The mountain of self has made millions of believers unproductive and without the success that God's heart desires. Only clarity of thinking, produced by repentance will change the coming disaster of a dead orthodoxy among charismatics.

## THE PLANS OF HIS HEART

The motorcycle diaries was a film chronicling the early life of Che Gueverra and the inner transformation of purpose that happened as he swam across the amazon. The student doctor from middle class Buenos Aires felt impotent as he struggled to heal severe cases in a leper colony. He was celebrating his birthday with nuns and medical people in their camp on the opposite bank from the leper colony. Suddently he went out into the black night, took off his shirt and swam to the other side. The lepers gradually made out his bobbing head and began to cheer his bravery and identification with them on his special night. The change from doctor to revolutionary was taking place deep in his heart.

As believers, have we been transformed from our own agendas, opinions, desires to the plans of His wise and loving heart? Psalm 33 verse 10 tells us:

“The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing. He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.”

and verse 11:

“The counsel of the Lord stands forever; the plans of His heart to all generations.”

Whatever our race or status or intelligence, we are only products of our environment, without the new birth and baptism of the Holy Spirit. To enter Kingdom culture is to be profoundly changed, maturing in our ministries and destiny. Jeremiah 29:11-14 is like an inspiring mantra loved by charismatics but also a reality for the obedient. The Scriptures of destiny are desperately needed today and prophecy is one way only they may come to us. Deep down we know we need His plan and purpose to penetrate us - nothing else will satisfy. What is our relationship to the word of God that guides us into His plans?

### **(1) The Scriptures of destiny can mock us**

Sad but true for many, because we've given up our journey of desire, doubt the future and discover diminishing hope. Some even feel Jeremiah's lament "harvest is past, summer is ended and we are not saved" closer to their real condition than the promise of abundant life. The summer of opportunity in your life can remain til you die if you have the Caleb spirit (Numbers 14:24). Some drug addicts go through all the seasons of life before they are twenty five. As believers we may be experiencing mid-life crises or post-charismatic depression, or illness or failing strength or the gnawing sense we have frustrated the will of God. We can rescue ourselves with 2 Corinthians 1:3-6 and know that our sovereign God has placed negatives alongside positives as He spins the potter's wheel of circumstances to fashion our hearts individually. He will open a door no man can shut because despite little strength we have kept His word, and have not denied His name. Rebuke the disbelief of mockery when the promises of God seem to condemn or conspire against His Plans. Rebuke all self-pity and live in Christ Jesus.

## **(2) The Scriptures of destiny can mould us**

We are to be conformed to the image of the Son. Sin is the disposition of degeneration, but the redemption brings the regeneration of the character of Jesus. The Christian worker is tested for character again and again that Jesus may shine through unhindered:

- a) are you prepared for the end of earthly security?
- b) how much do you love money?
- c) will you criticize other ministries?
- d) will you be faithful in what belongs to another?
- e) will you split a church for any reason?
- f) will you examine the state of your flock and spend time listening, counselling, healing, being with them?
- g) will you defend yourself when being attacked?
- h) will discouragement lead you to a sense of failure and premature quitting the work?
- i) will you beat God's people with legalism?
- j) can you live in emotional pain and never let it break your spirit?
- k) will you make Christ and Him crucified and Jesus is Lord your central emphasis?
- l) will you spend time mentoring disciples and rejoice when they can go beyond your level of spirituality?

Here are a dozen questions that test our maturity and remain the road toward the plans of His heart.

## **(3) The Scriptures of destiny can motivate us**

We mature through being servants committed to the motivational gifts of Romans 12. Every believer can find a place of usefulness there when humility and the measure of faith combine. Make much of the Pauline epistles (14 letters that comprise a temple of truth) when you seek destiny for your life. There you will see more glory than anywhere else in the Bible. Why? Because they are EXPERIENCE. All the men and women of the Bible had a hunger for glory, because its essence is to motivate you toward God's purpose and inheritance for your life.

2 Thessalonians 2:14 says:

*"to which He called you by OUR gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Flesh cannot receive glory, but your spirit where the Holy Spirit dwells needs this divine fuel. Moses had the hunger in Exodus 33:18,19 and it was experienced as the goodness, grace and compassion of God being revealed to him. Why does the Spirit flow strongly in Africa? Pastors and leaders go up the mountain to pray and fast (Isaiah 58:8)

Is the gospel working for you? The gospel of grace collects the glory - other gospels fail because of self or law additions or deception. From 1975 to 1982

I was seeing men as trees walking even though I spoke in tongues and fasted regularly. After two experiences of the Lord Jesus, God gave me a second chance, a deeper revelation, where the gospel became deeply personal. The Master's second touch releases us into His seconds (the new covenant) so we can walk the second mile. The Falklands war was nothing to do with Britain recapturing a bit of imperial glory but God's method of breaking a cruel dictator and the Roman Catholic system so that Argentina had a second chance to embrace revival fires. The counsel of nations come to nothing, and the plans of His heart come to each new generation. Hallelujah!

## **How do I position myself to enter His purpose?**

### **(1) Simplify Lifestyle**

You must allow the screaming assertions of self to die and allow Jesus to be Lord. PRIORITIES in Matthew 6:33 have to be grasped. Make the first things first and the second things second:

*“Seek FIRST the Kingdom of God and His righteousness AND all these things shall be added to you.”*

The trouble is in western Christianity we have been taught wrongly, i.e. to make the benefits first and the intimate relationship with Jesus Christ second. Simplifying lifestyle is essential for this to become reality. The TV, the witch with the switch, has spiritually killed off millions of believers. The lust for entertainment has put people in a muse for amusement. Are you over-concerned with mortgages or will you rent and be flexible for mission, for motion and move into the plans of His heart? Will you eat simply and seek God for the regular fast that fast tracks you to a place of spiritual authority? Do you seek first God or Christian fellowship? The issue of loneliness must be dealt with in the secret place. Have you fasted from human contact for just 3 days and fallen in love with the Master, your Redeemer - Lord?

Read the desert fathers' \* and rather than mock their poverty, have a sense of wonder at how they managed to be true successors of pentecostal power in the areas of miracle and deliverance. This fun, fortune, fame saturated world needs a new standard. Professor William James in “The Varieties of Religious Experience”, says:

*“... and when wealth-getting enters as an ideal into the very bone and marrow of our generation, one wonders whether a revival of the belief that poverty as a religious vocation may not be the transformation of military courage and spiritual reform of which our time stands most in need.”*

\* Early Christian Lives - Penguin classics is an excellent primer.

## **(2) Hearing God's Voice**

God's still and small voice is for those who will be still and be small in their own opinion and agendas. The Pharisees rejected the counsel of God through the deceit of pride. (Luke 7:30). If we are willing to enter His plans and available through a simplified lifestyle and dependant on His leading, the plans of His heart become reality.

The word of God must speak to our hearts and the witness of the Spirit within confirm the divine guidance, by echoing the divine life within us. The Spirit never witnesses to our rational thinking and reason or emotional whim or personal volitional choice. He witnesses to the life within our spirit.....to God's nature. Our job is to abandon ourselves willingly to hear God's voice on a matter. This involves being in the right place at the right time. It may be a coppice of trees in a lonely field, it may be you just have to get to that meeting or a conversation with a Spirit-filled friend where His counsel is manifest.

Establish your own Bible study on guidance: Habakkuk 2:1,2 offer four keys.

- a) be still by being in His presence (Psalm 46:10)
- b) focus your eyes on Jesus alone (Hebrews 12:2)
- c) tune into the flow of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39, 1 Corinthians 14:14, Jude 20).
- d) write down the rhema revelation....so you can test it later or share at the right time with friends for there is wisdom in many counsellors. The wisdom of a spiritual overseer can be crucial in the early stages of guidance.

## **(3) Die out to self agendas**

Only the plans of His heart amaze us, keep us on the cutting edge and establish maturity. Our job is to die to the rebel fleshly carnal nature. A trustworthy servant has to go through:

- a) suffering - Romans 8:17,18
- b) separation - 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- c) submission - Luke 22:39-46
- d) sorrow - 2 Cor. 6:10, 7:9,.10
- e) sacrifice - Romans 12:1, John 12:24

These treasures of darkness qualify us to give God's comfort for those going through crisis. When we DIE to ourselves and fling ourselves upon Jesus Christ as LORD in real abandonment, we can bless others by the truths God has INCARNATED within our lives. We are real warriors and leaders THROUGH WHOM GOD CAN MANIFEST HIMSELF. Most pastors and elders are still children and some still in their nappies because they have refused the Cross in their lives. The bond servant gives up his right to himself forever..... so he can explode for the glory of God. They never steal hearts to themselves but hand them over to God (see Acts 20:30) A true servant is never co-dependant, they seem to do without you, because there is a snare if the child of God gets taken up with you and not God. Lack of death to self in leaders has



produced a weak, fearful body of Christ oftentimes that finds it almost impossible to connect with God for themselves and simply exist from one conference to the next! Die out to your charismatic self!

## **THE PLANS OF HIS HEART - TO ALL GENERATIONS**

The sovereign God has the same plan A. to all generations. The unchanging Father has no shadow of turning. Check out three generations in the history of Israel, all experiencing radical new beginnings.

(a) The generation that came out of Egypt under Moses but died in the wilderness. They saw amazing miracles but unbelief in the wilderness with criticism and rebellion brought the wrath of God. Only Caleb and Joshua survived and arrived on the other side of the Jordan, to take the promised land.

(b) Joshua 5:3-7 describes the new generation, their children, born in the wilderness and victors in Canaan under Joshua. They did not completely succeed, but fulfilled plan A to a far greater extent than their forefathers. They had faith to experience remarkable victories at Jericho, Ai, the five kings etc. Little by little they possessed their inheritance.

(c) Judges 2:7-10 speaks of another generation who did not know the Lord nor His works. They went after idols, and sin led them into enemy territory, and judges had to receive a special anointing to periodically deliver them from cruel enemies. These deliverers were full of mixture - Gideon was wise in abolishing the idols but foolish in later making the gold an ephod (Judges 8:27).

The plan of God's heart to each of these generations was the same: conquest of Canaan, followed by obedience to the Law, so that Israel could be a testimony to the surrounding nations. In the present church age of grace it's also plan A! Spiritual warfare preparing God's people for such a visitation of glory that the Lord's testimony becomes clear and radiant to the watching world. Joshua was the book on how to do things and echoes Ephesians. Judges is how not to do things and has many analogies with our present day church in the UK.

One similarity of our Lord's dealing is found in Judges 2:21 - 3:1. God is testing our loyalty by allowing the enemy to do outrageous things in the church. Even the Evangelical Alliance now is doubting the full inspiration of Scripture in terms of faith and church practice! God will test the church by ultimately dividing wise and foolish virgins. There will come a separation between the body of Christ and the remnant bride. There will be overcomers and compromisers. We should not be surprised because He has dealt with Israel in the same way. The anointed deliverers in Judges brought temporary rest and then the cycle of sin began again. Before the rest there is a test. Before the 1000 year rest of the Millennium, there is an increasing test upon the professing church, which will come to a head in the seven year tribulation.

God tests our hearts to refine us, and prepare us for heaven. Every generation has the opportunity to cleave to the Lord like Ruth clinging to Naomi. Or we fail the test of loyalty and become like Orpah (the one who turns the neck) and kisses Naomi but goes back to her own gods. In every generation God is willing to use a prophetic remnant to restore the

altar of the Lord. Elijah and Gideon did it, and countless others from Moses to Gene Edwards.

<u>BROKEN ALTAR</u>		<u>RESTORED</u>	
		R	
1.	Fear of man		1. Fear of the Lord
		E	
2.	Tolerating sin		2. Repentance and personal victory
		P	
3.	Casualness		3. Holy Fire
		E	
4.	Apathy		4. Fellowship
		N	
5.	Pride		5. Humility
		T	
6.	Entertainment		6. True Worship
		A	
7.	Self on the throne		7. Death to self
		N	
8.	Deception		8. Discernment
		C	
		E	

Will you take your Bible and do your own study based on these eight opposites? Will you examine yourself and pray for a deeper fellowship with your Lord?

The plans of His heart to all generations begin with restoring the altar, the place of communion with the Most High God. Only this guards against spiritual decline. Only this brings the true presence of God. Only this guarantees the success of His exploits. Derek Prince based his ministry on prayer and fasting and stood amazed at the end of a fruitful life that "God is faithful". At the altar we perceive His divine attributes and we become partakers of His divine nature. God tests UK believers in 2005 and 2006 - will be worship at the altar or the high places of denominational respectability and demonic doctrine?

Each of us must answer by our lifestyle now, and when we are judged by our Lord.

## WARRIORS NEEDED

A warrior for God's Kingdom is an equipped soldier who does not shirk from war. After the first time I held a healing meeting when words of knowledge came specifically to three sufferers an extraordinary thing happened to me. I stayed in the church to pray after the meeting for twenty minutes, but on locking the door, was thumped in the solar plexus hard enough to floor me! No one was around - and I slowly realized it was a demon on assignment. I literally had to crawl up the road to the railway station. On finding another believer, I asked him to pray for me and I was immediately set free. What had been happening? New levels .....new devils! Quite an introduction to spiritual warfare. From 1982 until today I am convinced God is looking for warriors in the church, who, clad with the zeal of the Lord of hosts, will enforce the victory that HAS ALREADY been won at Calvary.

The first step is for believers to be drawn out of the antichrist-jezebelic system just as Moses was drawn out of the water as a baby. Warriors must be anointed, blessed, called and delivered sons and daughters who turn back the battle at the gates. The delivered man can deliver others. After over 20 years casting demons out of places and people one longs for a new generation to take this aspect of ministry seriously. The longed-for revival is held back until warfare against supernatural agencies behind the scenes becomes a reality. Three qualities are essential.

### 1. THE MIND OF CHRIST

Without the Mind of Christ we are worriers and not warriors. The wisdom of God is beyond learning information, ordinary education with the emphasis on the frontal lobe. It is beyond philosophy or the rulers of this age. One wrong belief system in Christianity today is the influence of stoicism which advocates an inner fortitude under adversity, but relies on self-sufficiency and not Christ. The revelation wisdom of the Holy Spirit renews the mind along the line of the Word of God. This revelation will be mocked by believers who are not delivered from the antichrist system. The first thing that happened to Paul was he became blind for three days. Why? To begin the process of true humility so what eye had not seen and ear had not heard could flow into his spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:9,10). An entirely new way of thinking comes to those who are born again if the mind is surrendered to Jesus Christ. Two germs of stoicism challenge the Bible.

#### **(a) If you lead a moral life, you will be happy.**

Many in 1914 and 1938 were leading moral lives, but lived in the heartache and despair of two world wars. We know from 2 Timothy 3:12 the godly will suffer persecution.

#### **(b) If you are sick God is teaching you something or making you holy, or Punishing you.**

In terms of the New Testament this "another gospel" still imbibes most church thinking in the U.K. Check out Revelation 3:18 - a verse for us. Our eyes need an anointing to SEE revelation if we are to be warriors. Revealed wisdom is BEYOND natural limitation, head knowledge, and our limited experience. Once a mentor wisely said, "don't ask yourself what the world needs, but ask yourself what

makes you come alive, go and DO THAT, because the world needs people who have come alive.”

Revelation should make the saint come alive. What the world needs now is love - the obediences to revelation! The warrior judges the source of all things because he is not working things out by IQ, but receives divine guidance, through the mind of Christ.

## **2. DISCERNMENT**

The warrior will reach accurate conclusions to what is the enemy and how he operates. The children of Israel were under great oppression from Pharaoh, a type of antichrist (Exodus 3:7). In the gospels God's people were under a religious oppression with the same root, the Pharisees (Matthew 23:4). We can be controlled and dominated by hard work and intimidation of the world or the legalism of religion. Moses and Jesus were warrior deliverers caught up in an unequal fight, but both gloriously victorious.

Warriors are needed today, not merely keepers of the aquarium, but genuine breakthrough ministries. The antichrist spirit has a throne in opposition to God (Revelation 2:13). From there an angry, stubborn, warlike religious spirit abuses the true church, blasphemes the saints and betrays the true cause of Christ.

Note the inquisition in Spain, communist hatred for the gospel worldwide, and now the new war of terrorism and suppression from Islam. Warriors are in combat with the beast (Revelation 13:1,2 and 17:3,8) or the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3), two other names of the antichrist.

The warrior must also discern Jezebel in her universal deception that affects both men and women. The self-rule and self-pity of this essentially religious spirit pervades and insinuates itself everywhere - in families, churches, business and nations. Sorcery, a potent mix of flattery and criticism, mixed with false authority, spawns a passivity that in turn produces immorality (or as it translates 'prochorus' in Revelation 2:21) which more accurately means "to lead the spiritual dance." The Babylonian pattern of worship of the mother goddess and her son god instills a form of emotional and spiritual incest. Men become fathers, husbands or sons of women who are not legitimate daughters, wives or mothers. Women become mothers, wives or daughters of men who are not legitimate sons, husbands or fathers. This falseness binds a 'brother' or 'sister' in Christ in relationships of co-dependancy. The "Diana" conquest of a man will rape him of gifts, time, money and reputation. Paul rose up a warrior against her in Acts 19 and therefore could write the letter of spiritual warfare to the Ephesians.

## **3. INTERCESSION**

The third essential involves pulling down strongholds, declaring the word of faith, knowing our weapons in Christ Jesus, fasting and living for victory (see 2 Corinthians 2:14). My college principal once said that if everyone rejects you, vilifies you and throws out your name as evil, you can still go as a kneeling suppliant to the King of kings and learn the art of intercession. In the winter of 1981-2 I learned the joy of prevailing prayer when God directed me to a long wooden cabin in the grounds of an old folk's home. Every evening from 7pm I was to be there praying in tongues with an open Bible. The previous summer I had left my charge as

curate and saw my marriage annulled. God comforts in a season of sorrow. You fear friends will leave you, you fear your ministry is over, you fear nobody will believe you. God is greater than our fears and desires intimacy once our past hurts are healed. It was a prelude to a decade of being a warrior and equipping scores of young people for foreign missions -

Praise His matchless grace.

Groaning like a young bride bereaved of her husband has to be learned (Joel 1:8, Jeremiah 9:17-21). Significantly, women who know about travail, incubation and birth are called to this ministry that is the foundation stone of the men and women of war God seeks for.

Have you noticed how the devil hates the places of great revival and outpouring of the Spirit?

- a) 1905 Wales : resulting attack of the enemy was liberal theology that made the churches dry and redundant.
- b) 1906 Asuza, Los Angeles : enemy attack, continuous divisions and ultimately materialism and the cares of this life.
- c) 1950 Hebrides : enemy seed was hyper-Calvinism that grieved the Holy Spirit by placing the Word of God to the eminence of the Trinity.
- d) 1960's 70's Worldwide charismatic movement : the attacks have been many and include:
  - \* excess and spurious manifestations
  - \* cult of hero-worship
  - \* begging for money through mailing lists
  - \* diminishing of the Word of God by neglecting doctrines of repentance and judgement.

The intercessor unblocks the wells of previous revelation and brings an anointing to impart spiritual realities to an honest, humble and hungry people.

Intercession is JOINING TOGETHER

- 1) DIVINE REALITIES WITH EARTH'S ACTUALITIES.
- 2) ETERNAL LIFE WITH ORDINARY LIFE.
- 3) WHAT GOES ON IN THE HEAVENLIES WITH WHAT GOES ON IN AND AROUND US.

The warrior knows in intercession we are blessed when we lose what is most dear to us, and only then can we embrace and be loved by the One most dear to you.