



Photo by [Vlad Kutepov](#) on [Unsplash](#)

We began this series by comparing our physical life and health to our spiritual life and health.

Our opening illustration was about an accident where one of the victims was not breathing. We concluded that, at that moment, everything else was fluff because if you're not breathing, you'll die.

The only important consideration at that moment is to restore breathing so life can continue.

The same thing is true in your spiritual life. If you're not alive in Jesus, nothing else matters.

At this moment everything else is fluff. What you believe about how you use your money, what day to worship on, what happens when you die, heaven and hell – it makes no difference. The only thing that matters is getting connected to Jesus.

This invitation from Jesus is the bottom line basis for salvation. Responding to it is the only way to becoming alive spiritually.

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

([Matthew 11:28-30](#), NLT)

And when you come to Jesus and commit your life to Him:

He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. ([1 Peter 2:24](#), NLT)

Paul said:

... Give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life.
(Romans 6:13, NLT)

If this has not happened in your life, this is where you need to focus your attention because, at this point, everything else is fluff.

Sin & Acceptance

We then took a couple of weeks to look at what Sin is and what happens to you when you give yourself to Jesus.

We noted that your sinful actions, thoughts, and attitudes are symptoms of a deeper problem. And, just like when you are dealing with a disease, in order to bring healing you need to deal with the root cause, not just the symptoms.

We find what this problem is in [Romans 8](#):

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.
(Romans 8:5-6, NLT)

Your actions are driven by who is in control of your life. If your sinful nature is calling the shots, then your actions will come from a place of selfishness.

When you have given yourself to Jesus, the Holy Spirit is in charge. Then, your life will be characterized by actions that reflect God's character:

Sin (with a capital S) deals with who is in control of your life. The real disease is "Godlessness" – living disconnected from God. The cure is simply asking Jesus to take control of your life.

At that moment, God credits you with a complete cure – not because you're good or have actually changed, but because Jesus has covered your Sin – Godlessness - with His perfect life and absolute righteousness. His perfection stands in place of your sinfulness.

This is why Paul could write:

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ([Romans 8:1](#), NLT)

A little later in that same chapter, Paul wrote:

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. (Romans 8:14-16, NLT)

When you are adopted into God's family, He sends His Spirit to live in you to remind you that you're His child. He is not just a Father, but a Daddy, intimately involved in your life!

And as a member of His family, you have the security of knowing you are accepted, loved, and cared for. Even as you are growing and continue to make mistakes.

Spiritual Health

If you're not breathing, the only thing that matters is getting you breathing again. At that point – as we mentioned, everything else is fluff.

But, once you're breathing, the quality of your life matters. We then looked at three areas of your physical health that also help us understand spiritual health:

- Nutrition (what you take into your body)
- Exercise (your level of activity)
- Rest (both daily and weekly)

Each of these is critical to your physical health, none are fluff. A balance of good food, physical activity, and rest results in optimum health.

How you live your life on a daily and weekly basis makes a huge difference.

Eating the wrong kinds of food, failing to exercise, and not getting adequate rest will take a toll on your body over time.

The same is true in your spiritual life.

What you focus your mind on, determines the direction of your life.

When you spend regular, quality time with Jesus it will move your life in His direction. The more you get to know Him and learn to love Him, the more your life will line up with His values and directions.

Spending time with Him provides you with spiritual energy, a healthier emotional outlook, clearer thinking, and the ability to repel the temptations Satan constantly throws at you. This is what Jesus was talking about when He said:

"... Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I

won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (Matthew 11:28-30, MSG)

When you spend time with Jesus, you learn how to live your life. This is similar to exercise in our physical life. Spiritual exercise is saying "yes" to Jesus as invites you to live your life similar to the way He lived His – saying "yes" when He prompts you to move.

He may prompt you

- to speak to a "random" person as you go about your regular daily activities
- to pay for someone's lunch or groceries
- to listen to someone and to pray with them
- to help someone with something they're having difficulty with or to supply a need they have

His promptings will generally involve something He commended the sheep for in Matthew 25 where He told the story of the sheep and the goats (helping others in some tangible way).

He may also prompt you to spend more time with Him reading the Bible getting to know Him as the Friend He wants to be to you and to trust Him more as He leads you.

Saying "yes" to God, not only helps others, but like wholesome exercise strengthens your spiritual health, gives you a greater appreciation of Jesus, and draws you closer to Him.

It is also the evidence that you are learning to love Him and trust Him more. Paul wrote:

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (Ephesians 2:8-10, NLT)

He not only wants to cover your sinfulness with His perfect life, He wants to remove the attraction of sin so you can be focused on the things that really matter. His desire is for you to naturally express His love for others in a way that will attract them to Him.

Equally important to diet and exercise is rest. All of us know from experience how we break down when we don't have enough rest.

You can operate with a rest deficit for a while; but, long term it's harmful to your health making you less productive and more cranky.

The times you spend with Jesus each day are designed to be times where you rest in Him, giving you a foundation for living with less anxiety and greater confidence – because you know He is with you.

And weekly, God gives you a Sabbath rest, which is both beneficial to your physical and spiritual health. It is designed to be a special time spent with God where you can do many of the things He asks of you – creating a time of togetherness that strengthens your relationship with Him.

And, resting in Jesus through the Sabbath refreshes you allowing your body to heal and your mind to relax. It will give you a better outlook on life and greater trust and confidence in Jesus.

Where do we go from here?

So far, we have covered what I believe to be the basics of salvation – those things that are definitely not fluff in our relationship with Jesus.

There is; however, much more in the Bible than just these things. Paul said:

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, NLT)

While there are some more topics that I plan to cover, you literally have the ability to set the agenda for the next several sermons. I will be responding to questions you may have about the things we believe. You can send this to me in several ways (I do prefer to get these in writing rather than just a phone call or a conversation).

- *Text me* at 402-517-5333.
- *Email me* at martinsent@gmail.com.
- *Send me a letter* at the church address: 3005 Golden Blvd., Bellevue, NE 68123 (if you have my home address which is in the church directory, you can mail it there also)

Some of the topics I have already received that we will spend some time with are:

- What about Ellen White, why do we consider her a prophet?
- What is the Biblical support for the investigative judgement and 1844?
- Why does it matter what we believe about hell and what happens when we die?
- What about getting involved in politics? Where should our focus be and how did Jesus and the Apostles relate to corrupt, antagonistic governments.
- What really is our mission? How are we doing with it?

You can send your own concern or question. I look forward to hearing from you!

Notes

Text you find in [this color](#) is a link to more information. It may take you to the Bible verse in context and/or in several different translations utilizing [BibleGateway.com](#). In some cases, it may take you to a website where there is additional information. And, it may take you to a PDF copy of previous sermons in this series.

Previous Messages in this Series (click on the title to download it)

- May 9, 2020 – *Dead or Alive?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- May 16, 2020 – *Symptom or Disease?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- May 30, 2020 – *Out or In?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 6, 2020 – *Starve or Eat?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 13, 2020 – *Atrophy or Exercise?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 20, 2020 – *Just Love?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- July 4, 2020 – *Am I a Hypocrite?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- July 11, 2020 – *Burn Out or Rest? – Part 1* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- July 18, 2020 – *Burn Out or Rest? – Part 2* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)

Scripture References

Proverbs 3:5-12 (NIV): *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

⁷*Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. ⁸This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.*

⁹*Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; ¹⁰then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.*

¹¹*My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, ¹²because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. (Proverbs 3:5-12, NIV)*

Isaiah 1:10-20 (NLT): *Listen to the LORD, you leaders of "Sodom." Listen to the law of our God, people of "Gomorrah." ¹¹"What makes you think I want all your sacrifices?" says the LORD. "I am sick of your burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fattened cattle. I get no pleasure from the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. ¹²When you come to worship me, who asked you to parade through my courts with all your ceremony?"*

¹³ Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts; the incense of your offerings disgusts me! As for your celebrations of the new moon and the Sabbath and your special days for fasting – they are all sinful and false. I want no more of your pious meetings. ¹⁴ I hate your new moon celebrations and your annual festivals. They are a burden to me. I cannot stand them! ¹⁵ When you lift up your hands in prayer, I will not look. Though you offer many prayers, I will not listen, for your hands are covered with the blood of innocent victims. ¹⁶ Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways. ¹⁷ Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows.

¹⁸ “Come now, let’s settle this,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool. ¹⁹ If you will only obey me, you will have plenty to eat. ²⁰ But if you turn away and refuse to listen, you will be devoured by the sword of your enemies. I, the LORD, have spoken!” (Isaiah 1:10-20, NLT)

Isaiah 58 (NLT): “Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast. Shout aloud! Don’t be timid. Tell my people Israel of their sins! ² Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God. They ask me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near me. ³ ‘We have fasted before you!’ they say. ‘Why aren’t you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don’t even notice it!’

“I will tell you why!” I respond. “It’s because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers. ⁴ What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. ⁵ You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the LORD?

⁶ “No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. ⁷ Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help.

⁸ “Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind. ⁹ Then when you call, the LORD will answer. ‘Yes, I am here,’ he will quickly reply.

“Remove the heavy yoke of oppression. Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors! ¹⁰ Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon. ¹¹ The LORD will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring. ¹² Some of you will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities. Then you will be known as a builder of walls and a restorer of homes.

¹³ “Keep the Sabbath day holy. Don’t pursue your own interests on that day, but enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the LORD’s holy day. Honor the Sabbath in everything you do on that day, and don’t follow your own desires or talk idly. ¹⁴ Then the LORD will be your delight. I will give you great honor and satisfy you with the inheritance I promised to your ancestor Jacob. I, the LORD, have spoken!” (Isaiah 58, NLT)

Isaiah 64:1-6 (NLT): *Oh, that you would burst from the heavens and come down! How the mountains would quake in your presence! ² As fire causes wood to burn and water to boil, your coming would make the nations tremble. Then your enemies would learn the reason for your fame! ³ When you came down long ago, you did awesome deeds beyond our highest expectations. And oh, how the mountains quaked! ⁴ For since the world began, no ear has heard and no eye has seen a God like you, who works for those who wait for him! ⁵ You welcome those who gladly do good, who follow godly ways. But you have been very angry with us, for we are not godly. We are constant sinners; how can people like us be saved? ⁶ We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind. ⁷ Yet no one calls on your name or pleads with you for mercy. Therefore, you have turned away from us and turned us over to our sins.* (Isaiah 64:1-6, NLT)

Jeremiah 13:23 (NIV): *Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin? Can a leopard take away its spots? Neither can you start doing good, for you have always done evil.* (Jeremiah 13:23, NIV)

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NLT): *“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. ³³ “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”* (Jeremiah 31:31-34, NIV)

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NLT): *And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.* (Ezekiel 36:26-27, NLT)

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT): *Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”* (Matthew 11:28-30, NLT)

John 13:33-35 (NLT): *Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can't come where I am going. ³⁴ So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. ³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."*
(John 13:33-35, NLT)

John 15:1-17 (NLT): *"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. ³ You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.*

⁵ "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

⁹ "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! ¹² This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. ¹⁶ You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

(John 15:1-17, NLT)

Romans 6:1-23 (NLT): *Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? ² Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? ³ Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? ⁴ For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.*

⁵ Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. ⁶ We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. ⁷ For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. ⁸ And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. ⁹ We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. ¹⁰ When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he

lives, he lives for the glory of God. ¹¹ So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

¹² Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. ¹³ Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. ¹⁴ Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.

¹⁵ Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! ¹⁶ Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. ¹⁷ Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. ¹⁸ Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

¹⁹ Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

²⁰ When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. ²¹ And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. ²² But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:1-23, NLT)

Romans 7:1-25 (NLT): *Now, dear brothers and sisters – you who are familiar with the law – don't you know that the law applies only while a person is living? ² For example, when a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. ³ So while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit adultery when she remarries.*

⁴ So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God. ⁵ When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. ⁶ But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.

⁷ Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said,

“You must not covet.”⁸ But sin used this command to arouse all kinds of covetous desires within me! If there were no law, sin would not have that power.⁹ At one time I lived without understanding the law. But when I learned the command not to covet, for instance, the power of sin came to life,¹⁰ and I died. So I discovered that the law’s commands, which were supposed to bring life, brought spiritual death instead.¹¹ Sin took advantage of those commands and deceived me; it used the commands to kill me.¹² But still, the law itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good.

¹³ But how can that be? Did the law, which is good, cause my death? Of course not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation to death. So we can see how terrible sin really is. It uses God’s good commands for its own evil purposes.

¹⁴ So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin.¹⁵ I don’t really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do what I hate.¹⁶ But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good.¹⁷ So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

¹⁸ And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t.¹⁹ I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.²⁰ But if I do what I don’t want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ I have discovered this principle of life – that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong.²² I love God’s law with all my heart.²³ But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.²⁴ Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?²⁵ Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

(Romans 7:1-25, NLT)

Romans 8:1-39 (NLT): *So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.³ The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.⁴ He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.*

⁵ Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and

peace.⁷ For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will.⁸ That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

⁹ But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.)¹⁰ And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God.¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

¹² Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do.¹³ For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live.¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

¹⁵ So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father."¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.¹⁷ And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

¹⁸ Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.¹⁹ For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.²⁰ Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope,²¹ the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.²² For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.²³ And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.²⁴ We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it.²⁵ But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

²⁶ And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.²⁷ And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.²⁸ And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.²⁹ For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.³⁰ And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

³¹ What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? ³² Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? ³³ Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one – for God himself has given us right standing with himself. ³⁴ Who then will condemn us? No one – for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.

³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ³⁶ (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") ³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow – not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below – indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (**Romans 8:1-39**, NLT)

1 Corinthians 13 (NLT): *If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. ³ If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.*

⁴ Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

⁸ Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! ⁹ Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! ¹⁰ But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless.

¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. ¹² Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.

¹³ Three things will last forever – faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love.
(**1 Corinthians 13**, NLT)

Galatians 5:22-26 (NLT): *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

²⁴ *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another. (Galatians 5:22-26, NLT)*

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NLT): *Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil – the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.*

⁴ *But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. ⁷ So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.*

⁸ *God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (Ephesians 2:1-10, NLT)*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT): *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, NLT)*

1 Peter 2:21-25 (NLT): *For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.*

²² *He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. ²³ He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. ²⁴ He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. ²⁵ Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls. (1 Peter 2:21-25, NLT)*

1 John 3:11-24 (NLT): *This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹² We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And*

why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous. ¹³ So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.

¹⁴ If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them.

¹⁶ We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion – how can God's love be in that person?

¹⁸ Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. ¹⁹ Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. ²⁰ Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything.

²¹ Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. ²² And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him.

²³ And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. ²⁴ Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us. (1 John 3:11-24, NLT)

1 John 4:7-20 (NLT): Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

⁹ God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. ¹⁰ This is real love – not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

¹³ And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. ¹⁴ Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. ¹⁶ We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. ¹⁷ And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

¹⁸ Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. ¹⁹ We love each other because he loved us first.

²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? (1 John 4:7-20, NLT)

E.G. White References

Desire of Ages, pages 328-331: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

These words of comfort were spoken to the multitude that followed Jesus. The Saviour had said that only through Himself could men receive a knowledge of God. He had spoken of His disciples as the ones to whom a knowledge of heavenly things had been given. But He left none to feel themselves shut out from His care and love. All who labor and are heavy-laden may come unto Him.

Scribes and rabbis, with their punctilious attention to religious forms, had a sense of want that rites of penance could never satisfy. Publicans and sinners might pretend to be content with the sensual and earthly, but in their hearts were distrust and fear. Jesus looked upon the distressed and heart burdened, those whose hopes were blighted, and who with earthly joys were seeking to quiet the longing of the soul, and He invited all to find rest in Him.

Tenderly He bade the toiling people, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

In these words Christ is speaking to every human being. Whether they know it or not, all are weary and heavy-laden. All are weighed down with burdens that only Christ can remove. The heaviest burden that we bear is the burden of sin. If we were left to bear this burden, it would crush us. But the Sinless One has taken our place. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6). He has borne the burden of our guilt. He will take the load from our weary shoulders. He will give us rest. The burden of care and sorrow also He will bear. He invites us to cast all our care upon Him; for He carries us upon His heart.

The Elder Brother of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul who is turning his face toward Him as the Saviour. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies the strength of our temptations; for He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. The Lord "telleteth the number of the stars," and yet "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." (Psalm 147:4, 3). "Come unto Me," is His invitation. Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be opened for you to disentangle yourself from

embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon the Burden Bearer. The rest that Christ offers depends upon conditions, but these conditions are plainly specified. They are those with which all can comply. He tells us just how His rest is to be found.

“Take My yoke upon you,” Jesus says. The yoke is an instrument of service. Cattle are yoked for labor, and the yoke is essential that they may labor effectually. By this illustration Christ teaches us that we are called to service as long as life shall last. We are to take upon us His yoke, that we may be co-workers with Him.

The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God. If we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we should fall into Satan's ranks and become possessors of his attributes. Therefore God confines us to His will, which is high, and noble, and elevating. He desires that we shall patiently and wisely take up the duties of service. The yoke of service Christ Himself has borne in humanity. He said, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.” (Psalm 40:8). “I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” (John 6:38). Love for God, zeal for His glory, and love for fallen humanity, brought Jesus to earth to suffer and to die. This was the controlling power of His life. This principle He bids us adopt.

There are many whose hearts are aching under a load of care because they seek to reach the world's standard. They have chosen its service, accepted its perplexities, adopted its customs. Thus their character is marred, and their life made a weariness. In order to gratify ambition and worldly desires, they wound the conscience, and bring upon themselves an additional burden of remorse. The continual worry is wearing out the life forces. Our Lord desires them to lay aside this yoke of bondage. He invites them to accept His yoke; He says, “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” He bids them seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and His promise is that all things needful to them for this life shall be added. Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet.

“Learn of Me,” says Jesus; “for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest.” We are to enter the school of Christ, to learn from Him meekness and lowliness. Redemption is that process by which the soul is trained for heaven. This training means a knowledge of Christ. It means emancipation from ideas, habits, and practices that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness. The soul must be delivered from all that is opposed to loyalty to God.

In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage. But many who profess to be His followers have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God. They do not make a complete surrender to Him; for they shrink from the consequences that such a surrender may involve. Unless they do make this surrender, they cannot find peace.

It is the love of self that brings unrest. When we are born from above, the same mind will be in us that was in Jesus, the mind that led Him to humble Himself that we might be saved. Then we shall not be seeking the highest place. We shall desire to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. We shall understand that the value of our work does not consist in making a show and noise in the world, and in being active and zealous in our own strength. The value of our work is in proportion to the impartation of the Holy Spirit. Trust in God brings holier qualities of mind, so that in patience we may possess our souls.

The yoke is placed upon the oxen to aid them in drawing the load, to lighten the burden. So with the yoke of Christ. When our will is swallowed up in the will of God, and we use His gifts to bless others, we shall find life's burden light. He who walks in the way of God's commandments is walking in company with Christ, and in His love the heart is at rest. When Moses prayed, "Show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee," the Lord answered him, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." And through the prophets the message was given, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Exodus 33:13, 14; Jeremiah 6:16). And He says, "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." (Isaiah 48:18).

Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest. The Lord says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." (Isaiah 26:3). Our lives may seem a tangle; but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master Worker, He will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to His own glory. And that character which expresses the glory – character – of Christ will be received into the Paradise of God. A renovated race shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy.

As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here. We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal. Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ. The longer we are in the heaven of bliss, the more and still more of glory will be opened to us; and the more we know of God, the more intense will be our happiness. As we walk with Jesus in this life, we may be filled with His love, satisfied with His presence. All that human nature can bear, we may receive here. But what is this compared with the hereafter? There "are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He

that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:15-17). (Desire of Ages, pages 328-331)

Steps to Christ, page 30-31: *God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man; but however trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God. Man's judgment is partial, imperfect; but God estimates all things as they really are. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; while pride, selfishness, and covetousness too often go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God; for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe. He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give.*

The poor publican who prayed, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13), regarded himself as a very wicked man, and others looked upon him in the same light; but he felt his need, and with his burden of guilt and shame he came before God, asking for His mercy. His heart was open for the Spirit of God to do its gracious work and set him free from the power of sin. The Pharisee's boastful, self-righteous prayer showed that his heart was closed against the influence of the Holy Spirit. Because of his distance from God, he had no sense of his own defilement, in contrast with the perfection of the divine holiness. He felt no need, and he received nothing.

If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think they are not good enough to come to Christ. Do you expect to become better through your own efforts? “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” Jeremiah 13:23. There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are. (Steps to Christ, pages 30-31)

Steps to Christ, page 35: *Study God's word prayerfully. That word presents before you, in the law of God and the life of Christ, the great principles of holiness, without which “no man shall see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14. It convinces of sin; it plainly reveals the way of salvation. Give heed to it as the voice of God speaking to your soul.*

As you see the enormity of sin, as you see yourself as you really are, do not give up to despair. It was sinners that Christ came to save. We have not to reconcile God to us, but – O wondrous love! – God in Christ is “reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. He is wooing by His tender love the hearts of His erring children. No earthly parent could be as patient with the faults and mistakes of his children, as is God with those He seeks to save. No one could plead more tenderly with the transgressor. No human lips ever poured out more tender entreaties to the

wanderer than does He. All His promises, His warnings, are but the breathing of unutterable love.

When Satan comes to tell you that you are a great sinner, look up to your Redeemer and talk of His merits. That which will help you is to look to His light. Acknowledge your sin, but tell the enemy that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” and that you may be saved by His matchless love. **1 Timothy 1:15**. Jesus asked Simon a question in regard to two debtors. One owed his Lord a small sum, and the other owed him a very large sum; but he forgave them both, and Christ asked Simon which debtor would love his Lord most. Simon answered, “He to whom he forgave most.” **Luke 7:43**. We have been great sinners, but Christ died that we might be forgiven. The merits of His sacrifice are sufficient to present to the Father in our behalf. Those to whom He has forgiven most will love Him most, and will stand nearest to His throne to praise Him for His great love and infinite sacrifice. It is when we most fully comprehend the love of God that we best realize the sinfulness of sin. When we see the length of the chain that was let down for us, when we understand something of the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf, the heart is melted with tenderness and contrition. **(Steps to Christ, page 35)**

Steps to Christ, pages 62-63: *The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been – just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents – perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.*

It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

*More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” **Galatians 2:20**. So Jesus said to His disciples, “It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” **Matthew 10:20**. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works – works of righteousness, obedience.*

So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us. (Steps to Christ, pages 62-63)