

The Wonderful Promise



Part I

... I am all too human, a slave to sin. 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 ... 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. 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. (Romans 7:14-19, NLT)

Sound Familiar? Paul is describing the human condition.

As humans, we are helpless against sin. Jesus made it abundantly clear (see [Matthew 5](#)), that even if we can control our behavior, sin happens first in our minds – our sinful thoughts lead to sinful actions. And, we have sinful thoughts because we are sinful people living in a sin filled world.

This is the human condition.

The Theory of Salvation

So far in Romans,

- Paul has given us the theory of how salvation works.
- He has made it clear that it is a gift from God – from beginning to end.
- And He has demonstrated it is both an event and a process.

We describe it using these theological terms:

- **Justification:** This is an event. It happens when you invite Jesus to take control of your life. This is when you are saved from the **penalty of sin**. God now sees you through the character of Jesus and views you as if you had never sinned. The thief on the cross is an example of how this works. He accepted Jesus and was assured of salvation at that moment because Jesus freed him from the penalty of sin.
- **Sanctification:** As you stay with Jesus day by day, He not only continues to save you from the penalty of sin, but also saves you from the **power of sin**. This is a life-long process of releasing control of your life to Him. And, the more you do so, the more you take on the characteristics of Jesus – love, joy, peace, ... (See [Galatians 5:22-23](#))
- **Glorification:** This is the event we usually associate with Jesus' second coming. At that time, He will save you from the **presence of sin**. If you die before He comes you will be resurrected as a perfect person. If you're alive you will be changed as you are taken to meet Him (see [1](#)

Corinthians 15:51-58 and **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**). And you will live with Him in a place free from the influences of sin – a place where God Himself will wipe every tear from your eyes ...

“... and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.” (**Revelation 21:4**, NLT)

Jesus in Real Life

In Romans 7 we find a shift in Paul’s message. He has been dealing with the facts of Salvation and a basic understanding of how it works.

Now he begins applying it to real life. Our lives are seldom cut and dry. It’s important to know the basic facts, but applying them can often seem complicated and confusing. So, Paul now turns to practical concepts and important promises.

He begins by noting the difference that death makes in the application of a law using marriage. He points out that if your spouse dies, you are no longer obligated to the marriage and are free to marry again without breaking the law.

He is restating what he said earlier about baptism – how it represents dying to yourself and having the life of Jesus come alive inside of you (see **Romans 6:1-11**).

Building on this concept, Paul wrote:

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. (**Romans 7:4**, NLT)

Because we died with Jesus – remember He takes our sinful life and gives us His righteous life – we are now free to live differently. The *result* will be “... good deeds for God.” Notice we don’t do the good deeds *in order to be more righteous*, it is the *result of Jesus putting His righteousness in us*.

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. But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. (**Romans 7:5-6**, NLT)

Before we gave ourselves to Jesus, sin working in us produced all sorts of bad attitudes and evil thoughts leading to bad actions which result in death. But now, we are freed from the penalty of sin and are being freed from the power of sin.

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. (**Romans 7:6**, NLT)

Here is the bottom line: The focus is no longer on your actions as defined by the law – it's not about what you must avoid – it's about what you should embrace. Paul is saying you need to embrace a new way of life; living in the Spirit.

And Jesus made it abundantly clear that the Spirit would lead you directly to Him. He said:

"I will send you the Advocate – the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me." (John 15:26, NLT)

This reinforces what Paul has already made clear: Everything depends on your commitment to Jesus and your growing relationship with Him!

The Problem

But, there's a problem. Our old sinful nature is gasping for air and clawing for our attention which takes us back to the Scripture we read back at the beginning:

... I am all too human, a slave to sin. 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 ... 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. 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. (Romans 7:14-19, NLT)

Paul continues on:

I have discovered this principle of life – that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. 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. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? (Romans 7:21-24, NLT)

Doesn't this feel familiar? It certainly seems to be true in my life.

I've found myself at this point more than once in my life – haven't you? More than once I have blown it, in spite of good intentions and knowing better. I have echoed Paul's plea for help:

Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? (Romans 7:24, NLT)

The Solution

Paul continues:

Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 7:25, NLT)

Here it is.

- The solution to sin in our lives is not a better understanding of Biblical Doctrines – as important as they are.

- The answer is not keeping the Sabbath better by avoiding all the wrong things.
- The answer is not even necessarily spending more time reading our Bibles – even though our Bibles are critical to our spiritual growth.

The answer is Jesus!

- The doctrines become helpful when we understand what they reveal about Him.
- The Sabbath becomes meaningful when we see that is a special time to spend with our friend, Jesus.
- And, the Bible comes to life as we see Jesus in every nook and cranny.

Paul goes on to say:

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 7:25, NLT)

He acknowledges the struggle – and, as we know, it is a very real struggle – and then he makes one of the most powerful and wonderful statements in Scripture:

So now ... (Romans 8:1, NLT)

This means that what is coming is based on what was just said. Another way to say this is “Therefore ...”

I’m sure Geometry was one of your favorite classes in high school – it was my favorite math class to teach. You may recall those delightful things called proofs. In them, you would make several logical statements and then use the word “therefore ...” to indicate the conclusion – to show what must be true based on logical statement.

This is what Paul is doing here – this is like a proof.

The point he made is that life is a continual struggle with sin. Because this is true, he then says:

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

This is incredible. Paul is saying that because the struggle is so real, for anyone who belongs to Jesus there is no condemnation! We are continually being freed from the penalty of sin!!

Remember these words from **Steps to Christ?**

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. (SC, page 62)

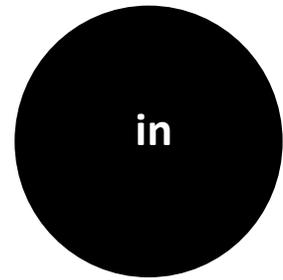
So, how do you know you have given yourself to Jesus and accepted Him as your Savior?

In some translations, it is translated this way:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus ...
(Romans 8:1, CSB)

To understand this, it may be helpful to think of a circle. Relative to a circle, where are the two places you could be?

There are only two alternatives – in or out. If you’re close to the edge outside, you’re still outside. If you’re right on the edge inside, you are inside. You are either in or out.



out

The same is true of Jesus, you are either in or out. Either you have given yourself to Jesus or you haven’t. If you’re not sure, most likely you haven’t.

This is something you can deal with. You can’t control sin in your life, but you can choose to give your life to Him. Or, you can choose to stay away, maybe thinking you’ll consider it again in a few years; which is generally not a good idea because the chances of it happening then are slim.

Give Yourself to Jesus

If you want to be sure you have right standing with God – this is what I would suggest:

1. Sometime soon – maybe as we are talking right now, or as we have prayer in a few minutes, or this afternoon in the quietness of your room – just do it. Don’t put this off until tomorrow – follow through with this while you’re feeling convicted. Perhaps read **Matthew 11:28-30**:

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest ...” (Matthew 11:28, NLT)

What could be more restful than knowing you are right with God? Or **Revelation 3:20**:

“Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in ...” (Revelation 3:20, NLT)

Then, in your own words, give yourself to Jesus. Ask Him to come in and take control of your life and to make Himself real to you.

2. Write this down somewhere handy – in one of those blank pages at the beginning or end of your Bible or on a piece of paper and tape it up in your room someplace where you will see it. Write down the date, the time, and the commitment you made to Jesus. Put down enough information so looking back at it you will remember the reality of what you did. You may want to include **Romans 8:1** there as well to remind you of what this means between you and Jesus.

Later, when you question your commitment, go back and read it. If you have failed Him, ask for forgiveness, and reaffirm your commitment. Remind yourself that you gave yourself to Jesus and He freed you from the penalty of sin and will continue to be at work in your life.

3. And then, set aside some time each day to spend with Jesus, getting to know Him better by reading about Him in the Bible. Ask Him to use this time to make Himself more real to you every day. This is how you stay with Him!

This promise follows your commitment to Jesus:

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. (Romans 8:2, NLT)

Next week we will look a bit more at how this works in our every-day lives as expressed in **Romans 8**. Spend a bit of time reading **Romans 8** to get familiar with the passage.

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 Sermons in this Series

- January 5, 2019: **Welcome to Rome (Romans, Part 1)**
- January 26, 2019: **The Big Problem, Part 1 (Romans, Part 2a)**
- February 2, 2019: **The Big Problem, Part 2 (Romans, Part 2b)**
- February 16, 2019: **The Incredible Solution, Part 1 (Romans, Part 3a)**
- March 2, 2019: **The Incredible Solution, Part 2 (Romans, Part 3b)**
- March 23, 2019: **Salvation; A Review of Romans So Far (Romans 1 – 6)**

Scripture References

Isaiah 1:18-20 (NLT): *“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 1:18-20**, NLT)

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 3:14-17 (NLT): *And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.*

¹⁶ *“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.* (**John 3:14-17**, NLT)

John 5:39-40 (NLT): *“You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! ⁴⁰ Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.”* (**John 5:39-40**, NLT)

John 15:26-27 (NLT): *“But I will send you the Advocate – the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. ²⁷ And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.” (John 15:26-27, NLT)*

John 16:5-15 (NLT): *“But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. ⁶ Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you. ⁷ But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment. ⁹ The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me. ¹⁰ Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. ¹¹ Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.*

¹² “There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. ¹⁴ He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’” (John 16:5-15, NLT)

Romans 7 – 8 (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.

God’s Law Reveals Our Sin

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.

Struggling with Sin

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.

Life in the Spirit

8 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.

The Future Glory

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.

Nothing Can Separate Us from God's Love

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.” **Psalm 44:22**) 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 7 – 8**, NLT)

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 (NLT): But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! ⁵² It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. ⁵³ For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

⁵⁴ Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory (**Isaiah 25:8**). ⁵⁵ O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (**Hosea 13:14**)

⁵⁶ For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. ⁵⁷ But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

(**1 Corinthians 15:51-58**, NLT)

Philippians 1:3-6 (NLT): Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. ⁴ Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, ⁵ for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. ⁶ And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. (**Philippians 1:3-6**, NLT)

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NLT): And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. ¹⁴ For

since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.

¹⁵ We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ So encourage each other with these words.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, NLT)

1 John 5:11-13 (NLT): *And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.*

I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life. (1 John 5:11-13, NLT)

Revelation 3:14-22 (NLT): *"Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen – the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's new creation:*

¹⁵ *"I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other!"* ¹⁶ *But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!"* ¹⁷ *You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!'* *And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.* ¹⁸ *So I advise you to buy gold from me – gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see.* ¹⁹ *I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference.*

²⁰ *"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends."* ²¹ *Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.*

²² *"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches."* **(Revelation 3:14-22, NLT)**

Revelation 21:1-4 (NLT): *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.*

³ *I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them."* ⁴ *He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."* **(Revelation 21:1-4, NLT)**

E.G. White Resources

Desire of Ages, page 107: *“I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance,” said John; “but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” (Matthew 3:11). The prophet Isaiah had declared that the Lord would cleanse His people from their iniquities “by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.” The word of the Lord to Israel was, “I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.” (Isaiah 4:4; 1:25). To sin, wherever found, “our God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12:29). In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them. Jacob, after his night of wrestling with the Angel, exclaimed, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” (Genesis 32:30). Jacob had been guilty of a great sin in his conduct toward Esau; but he had repented. His transgression had been forgiven, and his sin purged; therefore he could endure the revelation of God's presence. But wherever men came before God while willfully cherishing evil, they were destroyed. At the second advent of Christ the wicked shall be consumed “with the Spirit of His mouth,” and destroyed “with the brightness of His coming.” (2 Thessalonians 2:8). The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked. (Desire of Ages, page 107 – based on Luke 1:5-23, 57-80; 3:1-18; Matthew 3:1-12; and Mark 1:1-8)*

Desire of Ages, pages 552-556: *On the way to Jerusalem “Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.” A few miles from the Jordan, on the western edge of the valley that here spread out into a plain, the city lay in the midst of tropic verdure and luxuriance of beauty. With its palm trees and rich gardens watered by living springs, it gleamed like an emerald in the setting of limestone hills and desolate ravines that interposed between Jerusalem and the city of the plain.*

Many caravans on their way to the feast passed through Jericho. Their arrival was always a festive season, but now a deeper interest stirred the people. It was known that the Galilean Rabbi who had so lately brought Lazarus to life was in the throng; and though whispers were rife as to the plottings of the priests, the multitudes were eager to do Him homage.

Jericho was one of the cities anciently set apart for the priests, and at this time large numbers of priests had their residence there. But the city had also a population of a widely different character. It was a great center of traffic, and Roman officials and soldiers, with strangers from different quarters, were found there, while the collection of customs made it the home of many publicans.

“The chief among the publicans,” Zacchaeus, was a Jew, and detested by his countrymen. His rank and wealth were the reward of a calling they abhorred, and which was regarded as another name for injustice and extortion. Yet the wealthy customs officer was not altogether the hardened man of the world that he seemed. Beneath the appearance of worldliness and pride was a heart susceptible to divine influences. Zacchaeus had heard of Jesus. The report of One who had borne Himself with kindness and courtesy toward the proscribed classes had spread far

and wide. In this chief of the publicans was awakened a longing for a better life. Only a few miles from Jericho, John the Baptist had preached at the Jordan, and Zacchaeus had heard of the call to repentance. The instruction to the publicans, “Exact no more than that which is appointed you” (Luke 3:13), though outwardly disregarded, had impressed his mind. He knew the Scriptures, and was convicted that his practice was wrong. Now, hearing the words reported to have come from the Great Teacher, he felt that he was a sinner in the sight of God. Yet what he had heard of Jesus kindled hope in his heart. Repentance, reformation of life, was possible, even to him; was not one of the new Teacher's most trusted disciples a publican? Zacchaeus began at once to follow the conviction that had taken hold upon him, and to make restitution to those whom he had wronged.

Already he had begun thus to retrace his steps, when the news sounded through Jericho that Jesus was entering the town. Zacchaeus determined to see Him. He was beginning to realize how bitter are the fruits of sin, and how difficult the path of him who tries to return from a course of wrong. To be misunderstood, to be met with suspicion and distrust in the effort to correct his errors, was hard to bear. The chief publican longed to look upon the face of Him whose words had brought hope to his heart. (553)

The streets were crowded, and Zacchaeus, who was small of stature, could see nothing over the heads of the people. None would give way for him; so, running a little in advance of the multitude, to where a wide-branching fig tree hung over the way, the rich tax collector climbed to a seat among the boughs, whence he could survey the procession as it passed below. The crowd comes near, it is going by, and Zacchaeus scans with eager eyes to discern the one figure he longs to see.

Above the clamor of priests and rabbis and the shouts of welcome from the multitude, that unuttered desire of the chief publican spoke to the heart of Jesus. Suddenly, just beneath the fig tree, a group halts, the company before and behind come to a standstill, and One looks upward whose glance seems to read the soul. Almost doubting his senses, the man in the tree hears the words, “Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.”

The multitude give way, and Zacchaeus, walking as in a dream, leads the way toward his own home. But the rabbis look on with scowling faces, and murmur in discontent and scorn, “that He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.” (554)

Zacchaeus had been overwhelmed, amazed, and silenced at the love and condescension of Christ in stooping to him, so unworthy. Now love and loyalty to his new-found Master unseal his lips. He will make public his confession and his repentance.

In the presence of the multitude, “Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. (555)

“And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.”

*When the rich young ruler had turned away from Jesus, the disciples had marveled at their Master's saying, “How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!” They had exclaimed one to another, “Who then can be saved?” Now they had a demonstration of the truth of Christ's words, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” **Mark 10:24, 26; Luke 18:27.** They saw how, through the grace of God, a rich man could enter into the kingdom.*

*Before Zacchaeus had looked upon the face of Christ, he had begun the work that made him manifest as a true penitent. Before being accused by man, he had confessed his sin. He had yielded to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and had begun to carry out the teaching of the words written for ancient Israel as well as for ourselves. The Lord had said long before, “If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.” “Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God.” **Leviticus 25:35-37, 17.** These words had been spoken by Christ Himself when He was enshrouded in the pillar of cloud, and the very first response of Zacchaeus to the love of Christ was in manifesting compassion toward the poor and suffering.*

Among the publicans there was a confederacy, so that they could oppress the people, and sustain one another in their fraudulent practices. In their extortion they were but carrying out what had become an almost universal custom. Even the priests and rabbis who despised them were guilty of enriching themselves by dishonest practices under cover of their sacred calling. But no sooner did Zacchaeus yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit than he cast aside every practice contrary to integrity.

*No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven. **(556)***

The Christian in his business life is to represent to the world the manner in which our Lord would conduct business enterprises. In every transaction he is to make it manifest that God is his teacher. “Holiness unto the Lord” is to be written upon daybooks and ledgers, on deeds, receipts, and bills of exchange. Those who profess to be followers of Christ, and who deal in an unrighteous manner, are bearing false witness against the character of a holy, just, and merciful God. Every converted soul will, like Zacchaeus, signalize the entrance of Christ into his heart by an abandonment of the unrighteous practices that have marked his life. Like the chief publican, he will give proof of his sincerity by making restitution. The Lord says, “If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity;

... none of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him ... He shall surely live.”
Ezekiel 33:15, 16.

If we have injured others through any unjust business transaction, if we have overreached in trade, or defrauded any man, even though it be within the pale of the law, we should confess our wrong, and make restitution as far as lies in our power. It is right for us to restore not only that which we have taken, but all that it would have accumulated if put to a right and wise use during the time it has been in our possession.

To Zacchaeus the Saviour said, “This day is salvation come to this house.” Not only was Zacchaeus himself blessed, but all his household with him. Christ went to his home to give him lessons of truth, and to instruct his household in the things of the kingdom. They had been shut out from the synagogues by the contempt of rabbis and worshipers; but now, the most favored household in all Jericho, they gathered in their own home about the divine Teacher, and heard for themselves the words of life.

It is when Christ is received as a personal Saviour that salvation comes to the soul. Zacchaeus had received Jesus, not merely as a passing guest in his home, but as One to abide in the soul temple. The scribes and Pharisees accused him as a sinner, they murmured against Christ for becoming his guest, but the Lord recognized him as a son of Abraham. For “they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” Galatians 3:7. (Desire of Ages, pages 552-556 – based on Luke 19:1-10)

Desire of Ages, page 565: *The work of Mary was just the lesson the disciples needed to show them that the expression of their love for Him would be pleasing to Christ. He had been everything to them, and they did not realize that soon they would be deprived of His presence, that soon they could offer Him no token of their gratitude for His great love. The loneliness of Christ, separated from the heavenly courts, living the life of humanity, was never understood or appreciated by the disciples as it should have been. He was often grieved because His disciples did not give Him that which He should have received from them. He knew that if they were under the influence of the heavenly angels that accompanied Him, they too would think no offering of sufficient value to declare the heart's spiritual affection.*

Their afterknowledge gave them a true sense of the many things they might have done for Jesus expressive of the love and gratitude of their hearts, while they were near Him. When Jesus was no longer with them, and they felt indeed as sheep without a shepherd, they began to see how they might have shown Him attentions that would have brought gladness to His heart. They no longer cast blame upon Mary, but upon themselves. Oh, if they could have taken back their censuring, their presenting the poor as more worthy of the gift than was Christ! They felt the reproof keenly as they took from the cross the bruised body of their Lord.

The same want is evident in our world today. But few appreciate all that Christ is to them. If they did, the great love of Mary would be expressed, the anointing would be freely bestowed. The

expensive ointment would not be called a waste. Nothing would be thought too costly to give for Christ, no self-denial or self-sacrifice too great to be endured for His sake.

The words spoken in indignation, “To what purpose is this waste?” brought vividly before Christ the greatest sacrifice ever made – the gift of Himself as the propitiation for a lost world. The Lord would be so bountiful to His human family that it could not be said of Him that He could do more. In the gift of Jesus, God gave all heaven. From a human point of view, such a sacrifice was a wanton waste. To human reasoning the whole plan of salvation is a waste of mercies and resources. Self-denial and wholehearted sacrifice meet us everywhere. Well may the heavenly host look with amazement upon the human family who refuse to be uplifted and enriched with the boundless love expressed in Christ. Well may they exclaim, Why this great waste?

But the atonement for a lost world was to be full, abundant, and complete. Christ's offering was exceedingly abundant to reach every soul that God had created. It could not be restricted so as not to exceed the number who would accept the great Gift. All men are not saved; yet the plan of redemption is not a waste because it does not accomplish all that its liberality has provided for. There must be enough and to spare. (Desire of Ages, page 565: Based on Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-11; Luke 7:36-50; John 11:55-57; John 12:1-11)

Desire of Ages, pages 567-558: *Simon's coldness and neglect toward the Saviour showed how little he appreciated the mercy he had received. He had thought he honored Jesus by inviting Him to his house. But he now saw himself as he really was. While he thought himself reading his Guest, his Guest had been reading him. He saw how true Christ's judgment of him was. His religion had been a robe of Pharisaism. He had despised the compassion of Jesus. He had not recognized Him as the representative of God. While Mary was a sinner pardoned, he was a sinner unpardoned. The rigid rule of justice he had desired to enforce against her condemned him.*

Simon was touched by the kindness of Jesus in not openly rebuking him before the guests. He had not been treated as he desired Mary to be treated. He saw that Jesus did not wish to expose his guilt to others, but sought by a true statement of the case to convince his mind, and by pitying kindness to subdue his heart. Stern denunciation would have hardened Simon against repentance, but patient admonition convinced him of his error. He saw the magnitude of the debt which he owed his Lord. His pride was humbled, he repented, and the proud Pharisee became a lowly, self-sacrificing disciple.

Mary had been looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. He might have extinguished every spark of hope in her soul, but He did not. It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin. Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demons that controlled her heart and mind. She had heard His strong cries to the Father in her behalf. She knew how offensive is sin to His unsullied purity, and in His strength she had overcome.

When to human eyes her case appeared hopeless, Christ saw in Mary capabilities for good. He saw the better traits of her character. The plan of redemption has invested humanity with great possibilities, and in Mary these possibilities were to be realized. Through His grace she became a partaker of the divine nature. The one who had fallen, and whose mind had been a habitation of demons, was brought very near to the Saviour in fellowship and ministry. It was Mary who sat at His feet and learned of Him. It was Mary who poured upon His head the precious anointing oil, and bathed His feet with her tears. Mary stood beside the cross, and followed Him to the sepulcher. Mary was first at the tomb after His resurrection. It was Mary who first proclaimed a risen Saviour.

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration.

Christ might commission the angels of heaven to pour out the vials of His wrath on our world, to destroy those who are filled with hatred of God. He might wipe this dark spot from His universe. But He does not do this. He is today standing at the altar of incense, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help.

*The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand beside the great Sin Bearer, in the light proceeding from the throne of God. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." **Romans 8:33, 34.** (**Desire of Ages, pages 567-558:** Based on **Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-11; Luke 7:36-50; John 11:55-57; John 12:1-11**)*

Desire of Ages, pages 668 – 672: *The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He has placed upon them. God wanted them, else He would not have sent His Son on such an expensive errand to redeem them. He has a use for them, and He is well pleased when they make the very highest demands upon Him, that they may glorify His name. They may expect large things if they have faith in His promises.*

But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience.

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined

and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.

As Christ lived the law in humanity, so we may do if we will take hold of the Strong for strength. But we are not to place the responsibility of our duty upon others, and wait for them to tell us what to do. We cannot depend for counsel upon humanity. The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised. Whatever was given to Christ – the “all things” to supply the need of fallen men – was given to Him as the head and representative of humanity. And “whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”

1 John 3:22.

*Before offering Himself as the sacrificial victim, Christ sought for the most essential and complete gift to bestow upon His followers, a gift that would bring within their reach the boundless resources of grace. “I will pray the Father,” He said, “and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you.” **John 14:16-18**, margin. **(669)***

Before this the Spirit had been in the world; from the very beginning of the work of redemption He had been moving upon men's hearts. But while Christ was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper. Not until they were deprived of His presence would they feel their need of the Spirit, and then He would come.

The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.

“He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.” Jesus read the future of His disciples. He saw one brought to the scaffold, one to the cross, one to exile among the lonely rocks of the sea, others to persecution and death. He encouraged them with the promise that in every trial He would be with them. That promise has lost none of its force. The Lord knows all about His faithful servants who for His sake are lying in prison or who are banished to lonely islands. He comforts them with His own presence. When for the

truth's sake the believer stands at the bar of unrighteous tribunals, Christ stands by his side. All the reproaches that fall upon him, fall upon Christ. Christ is condemned over again in the person of His disciple. When one is incarcerated in prison walls, Christ ravishes the heart with His love. When one suffers death for His sake, Christ says, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore ... and have the keys of hell and of death." **Revelation 1:18**. The life that is sacrificed for Me is preserved unto eternal glory.

At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. **(670)**

The disciples still failed to understand Christ's words in their spiritual sense, and again He explained His meaning. By the Spirit, He said, He would manifest Himself to them. "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things." No more will you say, I cannot comprehend. No longer will you see through a glass, darkly. You shall "be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." **Ephesians 3:18-19**.

The disciples were to bear witness to the life and work of Christ. Through their word He was to speak to all the people on the face of the earth. But in the humiliation and death of Christ they were to suffer great trial and disappointment. That after this experience their word might be accurate, Jesus promised that the Comforter should "bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

"I have yet many things to say unto you," He continued, "but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." Jesus had opened before His disciples a vast tract of truth. But it was most difficult for them to keep His lessons distinct from the traditions and maxims of the scribes and Pharisees. They had been educated to accept the teaching of the rabbis as the voice of God, and it still held a power over their minds, and molded their sentiments. Earthly ideas, temporal things, still had a large place in their thoughts. They did not understand the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, though He had so often explained it to them. Their minds had become confused. They did not comprehend the value of the scriptures Christ presented. Many of His lessons seemed almost lost upon them. Jesus saw that they did not lay hold of the real meaning of His words. He compassionately promised that the Holy Spirit should recall these sayings to their minds. And He had left unsaid many things that could not be comprehended by the disciples. These also would be opened to them by the Spirit. The Spirit was to quicken their understanding, that they might have an

appreciation of heavenly things. “When He, the Spirit of truth, is come,” said Jesus, “He will guide you into all truth.” (671)

The Comforter is called “the Spirit of truth.” His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.

In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.

Of the Spirit Jesus said, “He shall glorify Me.” The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.

“When He [the Spirit of truth] is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. One might be able to present the letter of the word of God, he might be familiar with all its commands and promises; but unless the Holy Spirit sets home the truth, no souls will fall on the Rock and be broken. No amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light without the co-operation of the Spirit of God. The sowing of the gospel seed will not be a success unless the seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Before one book of the New Testament was written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying apostles. Then the testimony of their enemies was, “Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.” Acts 5:28. (672)

Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord's promise; they talk about Christ and about the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people "to will and to do of His good pleasure." **Philippians 2:13**. But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive.

In His discourse to the disciples, Jesus made no mournful allusion to His own sufferings and death. His last legacy to them was a legacy of peace. He said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (**Desire of Ages, pages 668 – 672**: Based on **John 13 – 17**)

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)

Other Resources

Six Hours One Friday, Chapter 7: *A man is never the same after he simultaneously sees his utter despair and Christ's unbending grace. To see the despair without the grace is suicidal. To see the grace without the despair is upper-room futility. But to see them both is conversion. (Six Hours One Friday by Max Lucado; Chapter 7, Remember)*