

The Wonderful Promise



Part 3

Adopted!

As most of you know, our children are adopted. We don't make a big deal about it – except when I use it as a sermon illustration – because it makes no difference to any of us. They're our children and they would not be loved any more if we had been their birth parents.

However; there have been some unique experiences because they are adopted. As they got older, they realized that while we were chosen to be a part of our family, this was necessary because someone else either didn't want them or were not able to raise them.

Our daughter really struggled with this during her 5th and 6th grade years. She became unsettled, not feeling sure where she belonged.

She developed an idealistic vision of someday reuniting with her birth mom and everything would be all right. She would then belong with the one who had for some reason given her up.

About this time, her birth mom contacted us and wanted to have contact with Kristina. We reluctantly gave our permission and this honeymoon period took place where she would come home from school and spend hours on the phone with her. The vision of a new, perfect home seemed to grow in her mind.

At the same time, whenever we did something she didn't appreciate – which seemed like all the time – she would scream at us how much she hated us and how as soon as she turned 18, we would never see her again.

It seemed like she felt she could not have a good relationship with us and her birth mom so she was trying to ruin ours so she could show her loyalty to her "real" mom.

During the summer between her 6th and 7th grade years, her birth mom invited her to come spend three weeks with her. By this time, we were at a point where we could not communicate verbally without it becoming a real mess, so we started writing letters back and forth.

After some time, she wore us down and we reluctantly agreed for her to spend some time with her birth mom. The day arrived and we put her on a plane to Minneapolis (from Seattle). To be truthful, we were both looking forward to a couple weeks free of the stress of dealing with her, but apprehensive about what would happen.

On the third day away, she called and said: "Dad, can I come home?"

“Right now?” I answered. “Why?”

“It feels really strange here,” she said. There is this lady that I don’t know very well trying to act like my mom – and I don’t like it. I want to come home.”

We got her a flight for the next day, and while there were still many difficult times, she never questioned where she belonged again – at least to us. She never again told us how much she hated us. She discovered that, even though she was not born into our family, we were really her family.

A Place in His Family!

Our children were chosen and loved long before they did anything productive. The truth is, they were pretty helpless when we first got them. Instead of peace and quiet, there was much more work for us.

But, the work wasn’t a burden – generally it was a joy. The reason they love and respect us today, is that they were loved before they even had any conscious memory of it. And that love continued through the difficult process of growing up.

The same is true in our relationship with God. He chose us, loved us, and made provision for us to be adopted into His family long before we even existed. We can never do anything to deserve it, we can only gratefully accept it and return His love. The Apostle John wrote:

Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:10, CSB)

And a couple of paragraphs later he said:

We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19, CSB)

And because of this love, He comes looking for us – wanting to adopt us into His family. Paul wrote:

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 8:15-16, NLT)

Paul points out this will lead us to the final step in salvation – freedom from the presence of sin:

... With eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay. (Romans 8:20-21, NLT)

You may recall the process of salvation. It begins when you invite Jesus to come into your lives. At that point Jesus saves you from the penalty of your sin and in God’s view, you stand before Him in the perfect righteousness of Jesus.

It continues as you stay with Jesus day by day, allowing Him more and more control over your life and destiny.

As you do this, He not only continues saving you from the penalty of your sin, but begins freeing you from the power of sin – a process that will continue as long as we live and stay with Him. It’s a process that brings our lives into harmony with God’s plan for us.

The culmination of Salvation is finally being freed from the presence of sin – when we are taken to Heaven and this earth is cleansed. Then we will be completely free from sin – its penalty, its power, and its presence around us. We will have a clear picture of what God has done for us, and nothing will be able to draw us away from Him again – this is Heaven!

Help!

As great as it is to think about and hope for Heaven, Paul knows we still live in this world. And he understands it is full of difficulties, struggles, pain, and loss. So, he next highlights two incredible promises that should give us a lot of courage.

First, he speaks about the Holy Spirit:

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. 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. (Romans 8:26-27, NLT)

He says that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. This covers every area of our life.

However, Paul, knowing both how critical prayer is to our spiritual life and how hard it can be, focuses on the Holy Spirit’s help in this area as an example. It’s hard because Satan works overtime to keep us from praying. And, it can be intimidating to know that you are speaking to the Supreme Power in the universe – the One who keeps it all in order.

Paul basically says that your language and words don’t matter because the Holy Spirit is good at knowing what is really on your mind and in your heart. He takes those things you can hardly put into words and brings them before God in the perfect language of Heaven. Paul says the Spirit even prays for you – presenting your need to be in harmony with God.

Now, I don’t know how literal all this is – if this describes a special protocol that is rigidly followed; or if this is more of a word picture trying to help you and me understand how important we are to God. What this is saying literally is that you and your need are important enough to the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe that it is specifically noticed and dealt with. To me, this is amazing!

Paul continues:

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. (Romans 8:28, NLT)

Not only does God specifically notice, He is the master of taking everything going on in your life and bringing some good out of it – even those things that Satan throws at you intending to destroy you.

Notice Paul does not say everything is good. Much of what happens to us in life is due to the fact that we live in a sinful world where freedom of choice is honored – even if the choice is a bad one. This means other people’s bad choices will have a negative impact on your life. This doesn’t seem fair, but this is what sin does.

Paul is saying that even the nasty, bad stuff that happens to us – over which we have no control – can be used by God to bring about good in our lives. Even the things that happen to you as a result of your own poor choice can be used by God.

The point He is making is that you need to trust God with your life. Without God, every bad thing that happens will destroy you more and more – and there is nothing you can do about it.

But, when you are with God, He has promised to turn your mistakes and Satan’s attacks around and use them to somehow build you up. They will still hurt and there may be some immediate consequences, but they won’t destroy you because you have given God control of your life!

When our daughter was 15, she attempted to commit suicide. She intended to be successful. I won’t go into many of the details except to say this.

I would never want to go through anything like that again. I don’t believe God had any fault in it or caused it in any way. It was something Satan threw at our daughter to destroy her while she was separated from God and to destroy our family and my ministry.

However, at this point I can say I am thankful for the experience. I know it helps that she was unsuccessful, but beyond that, it changed me in ways that has made my ministry more effective. It took some time before I have been able to see that, but I can see that now.

I’m thankful God was involved, because He redeemed an event that produced extreme pain, sadness, and doubt. He used what Satan threw at us to bring about growth, trust, empathy, and a better understanding of some parts of the suicide problem. God did what He promised He would do!

Paul then responds with these thoughts, which make the end of Romans 8 one of the most beautiful passages in Scripture:

What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? (Romans 8:31-32, NLT)

If God is committed to us this way, there is no chance for Satan to prevail in our lives as long as we stay with God. Life here is a battle between good and evil. But, evil does not stand a chance against God. We are no match for Satan or his demons, but God is! And the depth of His commitment is reflected in

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. There is nothing greater He could have done to demonstrate His love and commitment to us. He will be victorious, and if we stay with Him, we will participate in that victory!

Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one – for God himself has given us right standing with himself. (Romans 8:33, NLT)

We often think of God as the one accusing us and Jesus pleading with Him to accept us because of His sacrifice. This is a false picture. God is the one who frees you from the penalty of sin. There is no higher authority. If He says you're okay, there is nothing anyone else can say or do to change that!

Reading on:

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. (Romans 8:34, NLT)

The only other person who could condemn us would be Jesus. But He's the one who died for us. He's the one who said:

"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. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:16-17, NLT)

Saving us has been God's primary focus since sin entered the world. He is trying to get as many people to Heaven as possible, not to keep them out. Paul continues:

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? (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep." Psalm 44:22) No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. (Romans 8:35-37, NLT)

At the time Paul wrote this, Christians were being persecuted all around the Roman Empire. Many had been killed. Before it was over, thousands would die for their faith. He was telling them (and us) trouble and persecution is not a sign that God has abandoned us. What he is saying is that even in death, "overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us."

This is true because when you die connected to Jesus, the battle against sin is over. It's settled and you've won – because of Jesus' power, strength, and love!

Paul then finishes with these thoughts:

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. 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 8:38-39, NLT)

Do you believe this?

Do you and I live like we believe this?

This is one of the most important truths of Scripture. It is a truth Satan has worked hard to bury – if you're convinced that God loves you, it's easy to trust and follow Him.

This passage expresses God's true feelings towards you. He felt this way about you before you had even heard of Him, before you responded to Him in any way. His love for you has shaped all His interaction with you. He has one goal – to have you with Him for eternity.

Because, just like a parent who has lost a child, if He loses you, He will feel the loss in His heart for eternity. And just because He has other children He love, they will never make up His loss.

On the last night Jesus spent with His disciples prior to His arrest and death, He said:

“Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.” (John 14:1-3, NLT)

I love the way the Voice translates verse three:

“... I will be there to greet you personally and welcome you home ...” (John 14:3, the Voice)

Don't miss the homecoming!

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)**
- March 30, 2019: **The Wonderful Promise, Part 1 (Romans, Part 4a)**
- April 6, 2019: **The Wonderful Promise, Part 2 (Romans, Part 4b)**

Scripture References

Isaiah 30:19-22 (NLT): *O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. He will be gracious if you ask for help. He will surely respond to the sound of your cries.* ²⁰ *Though the Lord gave you adversity for food and suffering for drink, he will still be with you to teach you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes.* ²¹ *Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, “This is the way you should go,” whether to the right or to the left.* ²² *Then you will destroy all your silver idols and your precious gold images. You will throw them out like filthy rags, saying to them, “Good riddance!”* (**Isaiah 30:19-22**, 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)

Luke 11:5-13 (NLT): *Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: “Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, ‘A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’” ⁶ *And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can’t help you.’” ⁸ *But I tell you this – though he won’t do it for friendship’s sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.***

⁹ “And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ “You fathers – If your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? ¹² Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! ¹³ So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.” (Luke 11:5-13, NLT)

John 3:1-21 (NLT): *There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee.*

² *After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”*

³ *Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”*

⁴ *“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”*

⁵ *Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷ So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”*

⁹ *“How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.*

¹⁰ *Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things?*

¹¹ *I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony. ¹² But if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. ¹⁴ 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.*

¹⁸ *“There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. ¹⁹ And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. ²⁰ All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.” (John 3:1-21, 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 14:1-3 (NLT): “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.² There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.” (John 14:1-3, 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 7:21 – 8:39 (NLT): 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 7:21 – 8:39](#) , NLT)

Romans 8 (The Voice): Therefore, now no condemnation awaits those who are living in Jesus the Anointed, the Liberating King, ² because when you live in the Anointed One, Jesus, a new law takes effect. The law of the Spirit of life breathes into you and liberates you from the law of sin and death. ³ God did something the law could never do. You see, human flesh took its toll on God's law. In and of itself, the law is not weak; but the flesh weakens it. So to condemn the sin that was ruling in the flesh, God sent His own Son, bearing the likeness of sinful flesh, as a sin offering. ⁴ Now we are able to live up to the justice demanded by the law. But that ability has not come from living by our fallen human nature; it has come because we walk according to the movement of the Spirit in our lives.

⁵ If you live your life animated by the flesh – namely, your fallen, corrupt nature – then your mind is focused on the matters of the flesh. But if you live your life animated by the Spirit – namely, God's indwelling presence – then your focus is on the work of the Spirit. ⁶ A mind focused on the flesh is doomed to death, but a mind focused on the Spirit will find full life and complete peace. ⁷ You see, a mind focused on the flesh is declaring war against God; it defies the authority of God's law and is incapable of following His path. ⁸ So it is clear that God takes no pleasure in those who live oriented to the flesh.

The power of sin and death has been eclipsed by the power of the Spirit. The Spirit breathes life into our mortal, sin-infested bodies – thanks to what Jesus has done for us. By sending His Son in “the likeness of sinful flesh,” God judges sin finally and completely. The sins of the world are concentrated and condemned in the flesh of Jesus as He hangs on the cross. So now there is no condemnation remaining for those who’ve entered into the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

⁹ But you do not live in the flesh. You live in the Spirit, assuming, of course, that the Spirit of God lives inside of you. The truth is that anyone who does not have the Spirit of the Anointed living within does not belong to God. ¹⁰ If the Anointed One lives within you, even though the body is as good as dead because of the effects of sin, the Spirit is infusing you with life now that you are right with God. ¹¹ If the Spirit of the One who resurrected Jesus from the dead lives inside of you, then you can be sure that He who raised Him will cast the light of life into your mortal bodies through the life-giving power of the Spirit residing in you.

As Paul ponders the story of redemption, he finds in the family unit a beautiful image of what salvation means. Those who enter into God’s salvation are adopted into God’s family. Before we receive the gift of God’s grace, we are homeless orphans searching for some place to belong. But now all that has changed. The Father reaches out through His Son to all those orphaned by sin and death, and He brings them into His family. We are adopted into His forever family and fully enfranchised as His heirs.

¹² So, my brothers and sisters, you owe the flesh nothing! You do not need to live according to its ways, so abandon its oppressive regime. ¹³ For if your life is just about satisfying the impulses of your sinful nature, then prepare to die. But if you have invited the Spirit to destroy these selfish desires, you will experience life. ¹⁴ If the Spirit of God is leading you, then take comfort in knowing you are His children. ¹⁵ You see, you have not received a spirit that returns you to slavery, so you have nothing to fear. The Spirit you have received adopts you and welcomes you into God’s own family. That’s why we call out to Him, “Abba! Father!” as we would address a loving daddy. ¹⁶ Through that prayer, God’s Spirit confirms in our spirits that we are His children. ¹⁷ If we are God’s children, that means we are His heirs along with the Anointed, set to inherit everything that is His. If we share His sufferings, we know that we will ultimately share in His glory.

¹⁸ Now I’m sure of this: the sufferings we endure now are not even worth comparing to the glory that is coming and will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For all of creation is waiting, yearning for the time when the children of God will be revealed. ²⁰ You see, all of creation has collapsed into emptiness, not by its own choosing, but by God’s. Still He placed within it a deep and abiding hope ²¹ that creation would one day be liberated from its slavery to corruption and experience the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²² For we know that all creation groans in unison with birthing pains up until now. ²³ And there is more; it’s not just creation – all of us are groaning together too. Though we have already tasted the firstfruits of the Spirit, we are longing for the total redemption of our bodies that comes when our adoption as children of God is complete – ²⁴ for

we have been saved in this hope and for this future. But hope does not involve what we already have or see. For who goes around hoping for what he already has? ²⁵ But if we wait expectantly for things we have never seen, then we hope with true perseverance and eager anticipation.

²⁶ A similar thing happens when we pray. We are weak and do not know how to pray, so the Spirit steps in and articulates prayers for us with groaning too profound for words. ²⁷ Don't you know that He who pursues and explores the human heart intimately knows the Spirit's mind because He pleads to God for His saints to align their lives with the will of God? ²⁸ We are confident that God is able to orchestrate everything to work toward something good and beautiful when we love Him and accept His invitation to live according to His plan. ²⁹⁻³⁰ From the distant past, His eternal love reached into the future. You see, He knew those who would be His one day, and He chose them beforehand to be conformed to the image of His Son so that Jesus would be the firstborn of a new family of believers, all brothers and sisters. As for those He chose beforehand, He called them to a different destiny so that they would experience what it means to be made right with God and share in His glory.

³¹ So what should we say about all of this? If God is on our side, then tell me: whom should we fear? ³² If He did not spare His own Son, but handed Him over on our account, then don't you think that He will graciously give us all things with Him? ³³ Can anyone be so bold as to level a charge against God's chosen? Especially since God's "not guilty" verdict is already declared.

³⁴ Who has the authority to condemn? Jesus the Anointed who died, but more importantly, conquered death when He was raised to sit at the right hand of God where He pleads on our behalf. ³⁵ So who can separate us? What can come between us and the love of God's Anointed? Can troubles, hardships, persecution, hunger, poverty, danger, or even death? The answer is, absolutely nothing. ³⁶ As the psalm says, "On Your behalf, our lives are endangered constantly; we are like sheep awaiting slaughter." (Psalm 44:22)

³⁷ But no matter what comes, we will always taste victory through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I have every confidence that nothing – not death, life, heavenly messengers, dark spirits, the present, the future, spiritual powers, ³⁹ height, depth, nor any created thing – can come between us and the love of God revealed in the Anointed, Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8, The Voice)

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 John 4:7-20 (CSB): *Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

¹¹ Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us and his love is made complete in us. ¹³ This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and we testify that the Father has sent his Son as the world's Savior. ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God – God remains in him and he in God. ¹⁶ And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him. ¹⁷ In this, love is made complete with us so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as he is, so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. So the one who fears is not complete in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

²¹ And we have this command from him: The one who loves God must also love his brother and sister. (1 John 4:7-20, CSB)

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, pages 555-556: *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 555-556**)

Desire of Ages, pages 558: 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**)

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**)

Desire of Ages, page 816: How many today are like Peter! They are interested in the affairs of others, and anxious to know their duty, while they are in danger of neglecting their own. It is our work to look to Christ and follow Him. We shall see mistakes in the lives of others, and defects in their character. Humanity is encompassed with infirmity. But in Christ we shall find perfection. Beholding Him, we shall become transformed. (**Desire of Ages, page 816**)

Desire of Ages, page 826: Christ is sitting for His portrait in every disciple. Every one God has predestinated to be "conformed to the image of His Son." Rom. 8:29. In every one Christ's long-suffering love, His holiness, meekness, mercy, and truth are to be manifested to the world. (**Desire of Ages, page 826**)

Desire of Ages, page 827: All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. (**Desire of Ages, page 827**)

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)