

Responding

Repent and Believe



A Discipleship School

David Boan

7



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Unit 7

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“Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, “ The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel”. Mark 1.14-15 [NASV].

Session 6 - In Review: stated as an outcome

Living out the Christian life is not a matter of doing it “by yourself”. It is rather a life lived in union with Christ. As such it is a matter of trusting the life of Christ, which we have by the Spirit, to come out in our living as a miracle of new life.

Further, we have seen that our view of God must not be contractual - as if we perform to meet conditions He has laid down, hoping by our performance that He will be favourable towards us. It is rather that He has drawn us into covenant with Him and us, freely offering Himself to us so that He has made us secure. Out of this remarkable position of grace we gladly respond to the obligations of grace which we know bring Him great pleasure.

As His “elect” people, God has dealt with us “in Christ Jesus”. All that Christ has done for us has now become the basis for who we are in God’s sight. The vicarious humanity of Jesus has brought to fruition all that God had previously foreknown of us in His beloved Son - even from before the creation of the world. This is what God has revealed to us about our “being”.

Knowing that Christ has lived vicariously for us, He has substituted for us in situations and circumstances that we could not handle for ourselves. At the same time, He has lived representing us to God in all that He has done as the God-man. His responses to God were done on our behalf. So, everything we offer to God in response to Him is found for us “in Christ”. He really is all our treasure before God.

Being redeemed means we have been purchased for God; restored to Him who longed for us. In that wonderful Man, Jesus Christ, who is both the rejected man and the elected man “for us”, we know that as He exhausted the wrath of God “for us”, God has rejected us in Him. Equally, we are also accepted in Him, justified and sanctified in Him as He rose from the dead. Now, through our risen Saviour, who has become a life-giving Spirit, God called us to Himself, illuminating us and awakening us to new life.

The gracious renovating work God has done upon us, in and through Christ, has caused us to be changed, in status, in heart, in new birth from above and also dying and rising with Christ. He has baptised us in water and Holy Spirit fire. We now live at peace with God in our heart as reconciled ones. We have been declared righteous, justified in Christ. He who sanctified Himself on our behalf has also become our sanctification - we are a cleansed people, bringing no defiling influence into our relation with God.

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1 - Conviction of the Spirit

285 - The work of the Spirit that precedes any response we can make

In between our hearing of the gospel and our response to it is a particular work of the Holy Spirit. This work is the basis upon which any response can be made by us. Found in the teaching of Jesus, as He prepared his disciples for his "going to the Father", is the promise of the Holy Spirit whom He and the Father would send.

'But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged' [John 16.7-11 ASV].

We are those who have been taken out of the world, to be born of God and then put back into the world as those who are not of the world. This is the language of John about our present situation. Once we belonged to the world. It is by the Spirit that we have come to three convictions - three settled matters - which are foundational to any response we make to the gospel of God.

First, we have a conviction of our sin, that we are worldlings. By the conviction of the Spirit, the sin we are aware of within us, is that we were unbelievers in Jesus Christ. Whether we had never heard, or whether we came from an environment rich in gospel tradition, the circumstances are not the issue. The conviction of the Spirit establishes for us, right from the beginning of our hearing, that whatever is not from faith in Jesus is sin [Romans 14.23]. It will be this conviction of sin which will motivate us - draw from us - the first act of repentance; we shall turn from this unbelief and turn to put our trust in Christ.

Second, we have the conviction that Jesus Christ is righteous; that His condemnation to death as a malefactor was a deep error of judgment by those who delivered Him over to die. Indeed, their sin was to not trust Him - it was the sin of unbelief. As the conviction of the Spirit brings us to know our own sin in not trusting Jesus Christ, so by the same Spirit we learn of His sinlessness. This compels us to consider His death on a public gallows as within God's plan for us. His righteousness is understood integral to His saving of any person who is in the world - this has become our personal conviction by the Spirit.

Third, we have come to the conviction that the ruler of this world, under whose reign we have lived up till now, has been judged. Rather than Jesus having been judged, we discover that His coming and dying for us results in the judgment of that rebellious, angelic spirit, Satan. Thus, by the Spirit, we have come to a settled conviction about the downfall and end of evil and sin. We see that the world is now passing away as its ruler's judgment becomes more

and more evident, particularly so as the light of the righteousness of Jesus is seen.

286 - These convictions draw from us the nature of our response.

These three convictions make clear that every person - ourselves included - stands between Christ and Satan. We are either yielding to the ruler of this world or trusting the Saviour of the world. This is played out on the world stage by each of us. Significantly, if we are to respond to the prevenient, enlightening, work of the Holy Spirit, we will take our place on this world stage to bear witness to our own sin, to the righteousness of Jesus and the judgment of the devil.

This response is summed up in two movements. First, knowing our own sin to be forgiven, we turn from the world, our own flesh and the devil - this is a turning around, a **repentance** arising from a change of mind brought by the Spirit. It is to turn from and to turn to - it is a conversion to another way. Second, we turn to Christ, to trust Him for all that He is for us. We **come to faith** in Him - to rely on His finished death to save us from the wrath of God, to deliver us from the devil and death, and to bring us, through his resurrection and ascension, the new life with access to God.

2- Being and Doing

287 - Being secure, being assured of who we are before we do anything.

In Unit 6 we laid down how God sees us as those who are found "in Christ Jesus". To know who we are in God's sight, is to know our true Being. Who we are in Christ Jesus is what is presented to our faith to believe - to rely on and trust. This living it out - this matter of actively working it out in practice - is the subject of this Unit 7. To live on the basis of how God sees us is to have the experience of Him dealing with us for who we are.

Knowing how we are 'before God' gives us a right attitude and basis for any 'doing' that we shall be engaged in. Knowing who we are establishes our security in the relationship in which God has placed us. As we take God at His word we begin to live within this relationship where everything depends upon what our God-man has done for us. It is not about anything we have done ourselves. This is what makes our faith certain and sure - for we are looking to Someone outside of ourselves as the basis for our certainty with God.

Further, we are clear then that the established 'being' is the the basis for the 'doing'. We are not actively trying to 'be' a Christian through doing what we do. The truth is the reverse - we are already God's children as a gift, and the task to which He calls us is only possible for us because we do it by faith - actively trusting who we are to be shown in what we do.

It is for this reason, as we come to consider practical living as a Christian, I have entitled it "Responding - Repent and Believe". This double response - a turning from and a turning to - is the constant form of our dealings with God.

288 - First the Gift and then the Task: gracious offer precedes response

See Mark 1.14-15; John 16.8-11

Jesus, as He took his stand with sinners of Israel, was baptised in water by John. The Holy Spirit came upon Him and stayed to empower Him for his public ministry. Jesus immediately engaged with the devil in the wilderness, who attempted to deflect him from his mission. After his victory over the devil in this encounter, Jesus came preaching in Galilee. The early preaching of Jesus, as Mark recorded it, was a very simple announcement.

"Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel'." Mark 1.14-15 [NASV].

[1] The message begins with a matter of timing. There is a programme of God and the right time has arrived for what would follow. This opening expression assures us that the drawing near of the kingdom of God is an element in the total unfolding of the gospel - the good news - which originates in God and is coming from Him via Jesus.

[2] The gracious initiative of God is the basis for there being any good news at all. It consists in the fact that the kingdom of God had drawn near. God's rule, his kingdom, is found in the presence of the King's Son. Mark's Gospel develops this theme over its first eight chapters. This is the "gift" which makes any call for a response possible. There cannot be an answering response unless there is an initial movement of God. So we might translate "...since the kingdom of God has drawn near..." then what follows could be asked by Jesus.

[3] Jesus called for a response which was to "repent and believe in the gospel". Here was the task! It is the only appropriate response because it is determined by the gift that precedes it. Repentance is to have a change of mind and then to live in the light of that changed mind. Faith is to trust - to take God at His word and rely on the good news. It is "good" because it is about the coming of God's Son and the assertion of his authority. It is "news" because the time is just right for God's purposes.

Do not be put off here by the command, "repent". Where the command of the word of God is stated it does not necessarily mean that people are able, of themselves, to respond. What is true with all of God's commands is that when He commands, and people carry it out, it is because He has supplied the power at the same time as He commanded. The good news conveys the power to make the response. Notice the way Jesus brings gracious gifts through command.

3 - Our Response: [1] Repentance: personal

289 - Responding within relationship

We have been set in many corporate and personal relationships by God. When we start to live on the basis that a relationship is true and real, we start to experience what it means. It is only as we live reciprocally, back and forth in relationship, that we “know” in practice what relating to God means.

God has taken a set of initiatives with us. He has made us in the image of His Son, and has redeemed us through that same Son. And just as we know the reality of living as a dependant creature, so we know the reality of living as a redeemed one as well. And on the same terms! These early chapters of Genesis informed us of the way the man and the woman lived by accepting the word of God. They trusted that the word had come from God and, when they obeyed it, a deep experience entered their life. This was the awareness of what a response of faith worked in the person who trusted another’s word.

All personal relationships work on the same principle. First there is revelation; this is the initiative of God who showed us Himself when He sent His Son. Second, there is a response to that revelation. If the revelation is received as given, the responder accepts that the revelation as true, and that it may be reliably accepted. Then the response that is made comes back to the initial mover showing the acceptance of the revealed terms. Third, there is then God’s own response to our first response; and so it goes on “from faith to faith”. In this way, a constant exchange is set up and the trusting relationship matures and becomes firm. Each person comes to know the other. The more this trusting living goes on, the deeper and more satisfying the personal exchange becomes. Persons become “known” to each other - a deep friendship follows, based on many trusting exchanges over time.

Repentance and faith are connected here as two elements of the one response. But sufficient for now - for we develop this later - to recognise that, unless the gracious initiative was first believed, the repentance could not be done, nor would it have any content. In this we recognise that faith is the river from which repentance flows.

290 - Repentance is drawn from us by the grace of God

See Acts 11.18; Mark 1.15; Matthew 3.2; 4.17; Boan, [2013] Being, # 248-249

The two responses Jesus insisted upon in His preaching were repentance and faith [Mark 1.15]. Faith is a gift of God [Ephesians 2.8]. Since repentance is itself something which flows from faith - it too, is God’s gift [Acts 11.18]. We have already noted the joy of the God over one sinner who repents and how that joy is shared in heaven [Boan, Being, #248 -249].

Repentance is a changing of mind and life. But it is not a work which issues from a man's own ability, as if he could do it of himself; it is a result of God's saving work in the man. Strictly speaking, a man does not change his mind. There is a change of mind worked upon him by the initiative of God's gracious good news. The change in his person comes to light as he repents of his sins and his old ways of thinking and acting. So, repentance is a sign, or fruit, that demonstrates a work of God has taken place in the person. It is not a basis or grounds of reception of the Gospel, it is a perceivable consequence that the gospel has been received.

²⁰ "...I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house,²¹ testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance to God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ". [Acts 20.20-21 RSV]

A man cannot engage seriously in repentance unless he has come to know that he is accepted by God, and he cannot know *that* until he has received the offered favour. We saw in 2 Corinthians 5.14 section, that once we come to trust in the fact of God not counting our trespasses against us, then we are safe, and come to our Father very willing to repent [Boan,[2013], Being #271-273].

291 - Repentance and faith are commanded

When God offers forgiveness, He stipulates the need of repentance, because it is consistent with His character. When a man comes to know that he has been set right with God, after being in the wrong, then God's Character asks for repentance. But He grants repentance to the man as a gift; He is declaring that it is His mercy that should induce a man to repent.

⁶ "Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;

⁷ let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55.6-9 RSV [See also Isaiah 59.20 RSV]

³⁷ "Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him." Acts 2.38 RSV

The context of Acts 2.22-39, part of which is quoted above, is that the preaching which had gone before had an effect in the hearts of the audience. The recapitulation of the death and resurrection of the Messiah by Peter, had caused the Jewish audience to be overwhelmed with the results of their actions. They had killed their Messiah. Accordingly, under the deep

conviction of the Holy Spirit, they asked Peter what they should now do. What was to be their appropriate next step?

The anxious question they asked was itself a result of the word of God, attended by the Spirit, already acting upon them. Peter, who must have been aware that he was seeing them under a deep conviction told them to repent [an action of theirs] and to be baptised [something which is done to them]. The first came forth from them as a fruit, the second was done to them by men to whom they submitted themselves.

But the important thing to see is that the apostles would only have baptised people when they saw the fruit of repentance. In this situation, the apostle was waiting for the signs of conviction, because he continued,

¹⁷ *"And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers.*

¹⁸ *But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled.*

¹⁹ *Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,*

²⁰ *and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, [Acts 3.19 RSV]*

God has taken pity on us for the express purpose of leading us to repent. No man ever hated sin without first having come to love righteousness.

In Luke 15 [Boan, [2013], Being, #249-250], the repentance of the son is based upon the fact that he has come to see what, as a son, he has with his father. What we saw there was: [1] His repentance does not qualify him for coming, it is a manifestation that he has had a revelation of the Father's seeking heart toward him, and that he is his Father. [2] This is why there is joy in heaven over the one sinner who repents. God rejoices because the repentance is a clear manifestation that a son has returned knowing himself to be a son and is convinced of his waywardness. However what is foundational to that repenting act is that he is also convinced of the welcome which he will receive from his father. The understanding of the One to whom we return is fundamental to whether we shall come and repent or not.

292 - A legal style of repentance

See Genesis 4.13; 1 Samuel 15.30; Matthew 27.3-4; 2 Corinthians 7.10

However, there are others, who have a quite different view of God. These are men who react negatively to God after He has shown them their sin and spoken clearly of it in judgment. Their actions show that they do not accept Him as Father. They harden in themselves, living as rebels before Him. They dig in and continue to dispute Him, as Cain did. They live in sorrow for their sin - in the sense of having remorse - but it is a sorrow that produces death [2 Corinthians 7.10].

A study of the lives of Cain [Genesis 4.13], Saul, [1 Samuel 15.30] and Judas [Matthew 27.3-4]

reveals that each of them; [1] perceived the wickedness of his sins; [2] dreaded the divine anger - thinking of God as Judge and Avenger; [3] was overwhelmed by thinking of God this way; [4] began to endure the punishment of an offended God.

That they live their life enduring the punishment of God is simply to say that God has 'handed them over' to their view of Him. If, within their own rebellion, they relate to Him as being a "hard God" then this is the basis for the life they know in experience. This attitude is exemplified by the man of "one talent" in the parable of the Talents [Matthew 25.24-30]. He is delivered over to his own idea of God [See also Romans 1. 24-32].

293 - The gospel style of repentance - a gracious gift

The following examples from the Old Testament are record a dialogue between a gracious God and His people. This is the case for Israel and even for the Ninevites; for they were graced by God with revelation to both see His character and believe His word, which worked His purpose among them.

This dialogue is the sign of a relationship manifesting a trusting exchange; which of course means that faith comes to them first, and that this comes from revelation of God's character in the dialogue. Whether it is a first encounter, as it was for the Ninevites, or a dialogue with the experienced people of God, who have fallen away in their relation, the principle is the same.

[1] Examples from the Old Testament

[a] Hezekiah.

God's dealings with Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38, is a very clear example of how: [1] the word of God is delivered to the mortally ill man that he will die and not live. Hezekiah weeps. [2] Hezekiah shows that he is a man who knows God to be a fair God who loves him and is concerned about him. Most importantly, Hezekiah has faith for an intimate access to God, so he prays. The record of how Hezekiah thought about this afterwards is found in Isaiah 38.9-20. [3] In this exchange between God and Hezekiah, God answers his prayer, telling Isaiah to return and pronounce to Hezekiah that he will now live for a further fifteen years.

[b] - David

Similarly with King David [2 Samuel 12.13,16; 24.10]. God spoke with him through the prophets Nathan [chapter 12] and Gad [chapter 24] concerning his sin. God made revelation to David whose heart was soft towards the word of the Lord.

In the case of the adultery with Bathsheba, he was found: [1] agreeing with the Lord that his sin was rightly called sin. This conviction of sin was given by God prior to repentance. [2] receiving the forgiveness of God [2 Samuel 12.13b]. There was also the gracious word of God

that he would not die. [3] receiving the discipline of God on his life as a son, in that the child of his union with Bathsheba would die. As a king of God's people, David's action had caused the other nations to blaspheme. David was a representative person [2 Samuel 12.14]. It was a discipline that he accepted as coming from a gracious and holy God. [4] About this word, he was bold, knowing Him to be a gracious God [2 Samuel 12.22] to seek to change His mind [12.15-16]. But, on finding that he could not [2 Samuel 12.17-23], he accepted the mind of the Lord.

[c] The inhabitants of Nineveh

God dealt with the Ninevites through the prophet Jonah [Jonah 3.4-10]. [1] A word of God delivered to the people of Nineveh by God's chosen prophet stated that in forty days Nineveh would be destroyed. This word from the Lord meant what it said. Indeed, if this decree of God had been annulled the people of Nineveh would not believed nor would they have repented. [2] The people actually trusted the word of the Lord [Jonah 3.5] and, in their faith, they fasted and attempted to change the mind of the Lord. The king encouraged them to repent of their wicked ways [Jonah 3.8] and their violence. So God gave revelation to see what was their problem with Him. [3] They had some notion of the graciousness of God because they think He might relent of the anger He has towards them on account of their sin. [4] When God saw their deeds, He relented and He did not do what He said He would [Jonah 3.10].

In the same way as with Hezekiah, could God have destroyed them without a message - why did He give revelation through Jonah and Isaiah? It was because He did not want to destroy them, he wanted them reformed and changed. This was the reason He sent His threatening message. But in the heat of the exchange that is not obvious, it appears only when we see the outcome.

God's "threatenings" affect our mind and emotions. They motivate us to reform our way. But it is when the threatenings have their affect, then we see the mind of the Lord revealed. See also the way God dealt with Abimelech in Genesis 20.3 - where He threatened him - and then in Genesis 20.7 - where He explained His will.

[2] Examples from the New Testament

[a] Acts 2

Examples are seen in the preaching of the apostle Peter, who had himself wept bitterly [Matthew 26.75, Lk 22.62] over his denial of the same Lord about whom he is speaking to the Jewish audience in Acts 2.37-41].

[1] The Jews were stirred with a sense of sin [Acts 2.37]. On seeing this, Peter realised that God was at work in them, softening their heart by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. When they asked what to do. [2] Peter told them what to do [Acts 2.38-39]. [3] They were encouraged to have faith in the mercy of God [Acts 2.41]. [4] They turned to the Lord.

[b] Acts 11.

18 When they heard this they were silenced. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life." Acts 11.18. RSV

It is clear that the repentance is a gift, it is something God grants. It is also clear that there is no life without it. God has not granted the Gentiles the life because they repent. What He is indicating by His gift of repentance that He is a gracious and sovereign God, desiring them to have life.

[c]2 Timothy

24 "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, 26 and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will". [2 Timothy 2.24-26 RSV]

The correction is done by the Lord's servant, and then he is to watch and see if people do repent. If they do, then it is a sign that God is at work.

Notice these practical pointers: [1] God declares that He would have all men repent. The efficacy depends on regeneration; which is God's work [Ephesians 2.10]. This applies not only to the start of our experience of God but the whole course of our life.

[2] God regenerates, but, whenever believers complain and lament that they have been forsaken by God, they indicate the sign of a supernatural hardening of heart as a statement which is God's disapproval and censure.

It is important to see this sign and to understand it. It is equally important not to judge the person; for it may simply mean that they do not have "knowledge" of God as a gracious God as yet. This is true of many persons in the church - when they get angry at God, - the God they claim to know as gracious - or maintain that He has abandoned them, then they are showing signs which must be understood.

[3] The writer to Hebrews, intending to exclude apostate people from salvation states that the reason they are excluded is that it is impossible to restore them to repentance [Hebrews 6.4-6, 10.29]. This does not teach that there is no hope of pardon for sins, but it does show apostasy as being without excuse. Further, it is not strange that God is rigorous in punishing those who show contempt towards Himself. The rejection of Christ is the rejection of the remedy for sin.

4 - Our Response [1] Repentance: corporate

294 - Common awareness that they have all left old ways

We recall what the resurrection of Christ meant for the world, and that the old Adam - the old man - has been finished off and the life of the second Adam, the new man, has come [Boan, 2013, Jesus Exalted # 147-153]. As a result, we are not surprised that the Christian church is exhorted by the apostles to put off this old man and put on the new humanity they have in Christ Jesus [Boan, 2013, Being, # 259-264]. There is a very definite emphasis in the corporate fellowship of the believers that they have left an old life and entered a new one. This has the effect of cementing their repentance from ways that they have left.

*"...do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you**; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of God" [1 Corinthians 6.9-11 ASV Emphasis mine].*

Here we see the clear indication that the repentant church can be exhorted to no longer to pick up such activities that they once left. The exhortation is based on the fact that the work of Christ and the Spirit for them has changed the situation. They need to be strongly cemented in their desire to have left old ways and to never return to such a way of life.

Notice that many things mentioned in this text are defiling of the body and also bring great shame. The fact that they have been washed indicates that they are now clean from this defilement and so the whole idea of returning to such things would indicate that they have forgotten their purification from their former sins [2 Peter 1.9].

295 - Repented of religion - leaving useless methods and techniques

Jesus taught that the religious traditions of the Pharisees and the formal religionists of his day, defiled people. The apostles and the early church were clear about obeying Him in leaving those formal religious activities that were confined to useless activities in the light of the freedom of grace. To live under grace meant that they had left Judaism as a religion and would not return - this is the whole thrust of the letter to the Hebrews. To return to such things for Paul, was to lose the freedom that Christ had died for them to have [Galatians 5.1]. It was to return to slavery.

In his stand against their own flesh the apostle Paul made it clear that there was no value in religious activities such as abstaining from certain foods or drinks, or keeping festivals, new moons or sabbath days. These were merely shadows compared with the substance which was Christ, and the practising of them was a matter of individual conscience. No one should

prescribe these for another Christian.

"These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence [Colossians 2.23 ASV].

296 - They turned from a worldly life-style

The apostles and the early teachers were careful to make sure that they did not bring the worldly wisdom into the church. They were careful to not honour the wealthy in a way that was dishonouring to others [James 2.1-4]. They left off being partial in this way. They left off going to courts to sort their differences with one another [1 Corinthians 6.1-6]. They were careful to live within Roman slavery and taxation. Yet, they lived with one another in such a way that undermined such distinctions in life, without being illegal [Philemon; Romans 13.1-6].

They did not live by appearances, as the world lives. Outward adornment of their bodies and the like they did not value, but the inward matters of the heart were uppermost in their attitudes and were honoured [1 Peter 3].

5 - Our Response: [2] Faith: personal

297 - At the heart of the gospel is the death and resurrection of Christ

See the fuller exposition in # 2009.17 Trusting – Exercising our faith in God

When Paul made a summary for the Corinthians about what it was that he preached he put it this way.

"I make known to you brethren, the gospel which I preached to you... I delivered to you of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve... five hundred brethren at one time,... to James... to me also." [1 Corinthians 15.1-8 ASV]

Paul states two grand themes. The first is the reality of the death of Christ. He makes this clear by stating the fact and confirms that by stating Christ was buried. The second is the reality of the resurrection of Christ. He states the fact and its confirmation that he was seen by others. So the basis of the gospel, for Paul, was that Christ died and was raised.

298 - *The Gospel is a revelation of God's righteousness*

See Romans 1.15b-17; 3.25; Boan, 2013, Atoning Death,#120-121

Mark recorded the kingdom of God as being at hand with Jesus' coming for us. While Jesus preached the kingdom of God, after the resurrection, the apostles of Jesus preached Jesus. Paul's way of saying the gospel is that it is "a revelation of God's righteousness".

"...I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.' "[Romans 1.15b-17 ASV]

The gospel is first a revelation of how God is righteous in Himself. The context of this 'righteousness' will be seen in the way that God conducts Himself in his covenant relationship with Israel. He remains faithful to his side of the covenant relationship. This is in sharp contrast with the human side of the relationship. Israel in particular, and men and women in general, do not give God the thanksgiving and honour which is His due.

Such relational circumstances required reconciliation which the gospel declares God has brought about through the death of Jesus, which is an atonement satisfying to Him, from His side. We saw such an atonement was foreshadowed in that made by Phinehas [Boan, 2013, Atoning Death,#120-121]. God saves through judgment that declares that He is righteous and just [Romans 3.31]. He has not passed over sins. He has, in a crisis of judgment, dealt with sin once for all.

In the covenant context, this revelation of how God, who is loving always towards us, has found a way to express His love through putting forward His own Son as a propitiation - a place of mercy - for sin [Romans 3.25]. This offering up of Jesus was not the grounds which allowed God to love us but rather it was the love of God revealed powerfully to us. It changed how He dealt with us in regard to our sins - it did not change His heart towards us.

So, the gospel is a revelation of God's righteousness which so reveals His heart to us that we are inspired and drawn to trust Him. Our faith is drawn from us as He reveals His heart towards us in the cross.

299 - *Faith is receiving the revelation made by trusting it*

Romans 1.16-17; Habakkuk 2.4

Romans 1.16-17 states that the gospel, as a revelation of the righteousness of God, is "from faith to faith" because, as Habakkuk says, righteous men live by faith. This revelation of righteousness is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes it. For the fact that it is received by trust means that it is available to any person, whether they are a Jew or a Greek.

This righteousness of God is revealed 'out from' [ἐκ] faith and 'unto' [εἰς] faith. That is, it is revealed in a context of relationship, where the faith [fulness] of God has made the revelation,

He is its origin and source. And reciprocally, as a revelation from Him, it goes out from God to faith - it appeals to and asks for the trust of the other side of the relationship. The quotation is from Habakkuk 2.4 which makes clear that the confidence of a man is not in himself or his own effort but the righteous will live by faith - they must be waiting and trusting in God.

In summary, there is a revelation. The content of this revelation is the righteousness of God. If the revelation is believed - accepted as true and trusted - then the revelation is God's power to save.

300 - Life "in Adam"

Read Romans 1-3, 4-6; Boan, 2013, Jesus Exalted, #151-153

In the early chapters of the letter to the Romans Paul writes about men and women as refusing to acknowledge God, either to give thanks, to worship Him or obey Him. Romans pictures them as having forsaken the truth and the glory of God and exchanged it for a lie. In Adam all things are darkness; minds are futile and empty; hearts are darkened. This is a long way from the Christian life, far from being children of the day who are of the light and make no provision for the lusts of the flesh [Romans 13.11-14].

As a result of this men and women are handed over by God to their preferred deeds [Romans 1.18-32] and they are understood as having been captured by an alien power, sin [Romans 3.9]. Such a capture is true of both Jew and Greeks, there is no distinction.

In Romans 4, concerning Abraham, Paul develops what he stated in Romans 1.16-17; how men and women, who respond in faith, whether they be of Jewish or Gentile origin, can now lay hold of this salvation of God. In the second part of Romans 5, Paul lists the clear contrasts between Adam and Christ. Then from chapter 6 he moves on to explain the life we have "in Christ".

301 – Abraham, an ungodly man, was reckoned as righteous, by faith

Romans 4; Psalm 32

Before he continues with his exposition of "in Adam" and "in Christ" of chapter 5, Paul wants to show that God's covenant with Israel was based upon faith from the beginning. His model for Christian faith is Abraham and not Christ; and we shall need to see why that must be so.

God has shown Himself as just and the justifier of the ungodly who has faith in Jesus [Romans 3.26, 5.6]. Paul insists the ground for human boasting has gone. It is excluded by a law [principle] of faith. And this faith does not nullify the Law but actually establishes it [3.31].

Addressing a Jewish questioner, Paul asks "How did our forefather, according to the flesh, Abraham, find it?" If he was justified by works then he has ground for boasting, but not before God. He quotes from Genesis 15.6

"And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to Him as righteousness."

He then sets out to state what "it was reckoned" means.

[1] Paul establishes that Abraham does not deserve righteousness on the basis of his own works. This is clear on the grounds that righteousness is reckoned to the one who believes, rather than the one who works. In that case it is a matter of grace [favour] and not of reward. Rewards have to do with what is due, in the sense of 'owed to us'. This is not the case here [Romans 4.3-4].

Notice that the image of works here is that of a man having done his labour for the day, and then the hirer owes him payment on the basis of the work he has already done. In this way, Paul is making clear that, if it is by a "work", this would mean something which would make God a debtor to man.

So, Abraham is a "believer", he is one who by faith receives a gift on no other grounds than that it was graciously offered.

[2] Abraham trusts in the One who justifies the ungodly [Romans 4.5, 5.6] - and this trust is, by God, reckoned to him as righteousness. In considering Abraham is being ungodly, in that he sins, does not lead us to understand that his faith undid his disobedience. His faith was "reckoned" or calculated; in spite of it; Abraham was still ungodly.

We can see why Abraham is the model for the Christian faith, and not Christ. Paul could not say of Christ that "he believed God and it was reckoned to Him as righteousness". It was not because Christ did not believe God, He did. But it could not be said of Christ because Christ was already righteous. The model for Christian faith has to be a man who is ungodly, and yet has faith which is 'reckoned to him' as righteousness.

This justification of Abraham, as an ungodly man, is backed up from Psalm 32. Paul describes David as speaking of a man to whom God is reckoning righteousness apart from works. David describes this from the point of view of the receiver who has his "lawless deeds" forgiven and "sins" covered. That is, sin which the "The Lord has not taken into account" [Romans 4.8].

[3] This faith of Abraham was reckoned as righteousness to him before he was circumcised. [Romans 4.9-12]. Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of faith - that is, faith which he had while still uncircumcised. All who follow his example as uncircumcised believers of God are copying Abraham's deeds. This is to treat Abraham as a father, as any son would. In that sense, they are his descendants. Abraham is the heir of the world through the righteousness of faith [4.13]. It is also true that the circumcised person, who has faith in God, follows in the steps of Abraham and so is a son of Abraham.

302 - The content of faith - the resurrection of Christ

Romans 4

We now see something of what it was that Abraham had faith about. He was a man who believed God about His ability to give life to the dead and that He could call into existence things that were not there [4.17]. He demonstrated this faith in adverse and contrary circumstances. He was very old in body and Sarah was past menopause. God had promised him a son. He could contemplate these facts, and yet, negatively speaking, they did not weaken his faith. The means for conceiving the promised child looked very frail indeed.

But, positively speaking, in regards to the promise of God:[1] he did not waver in his belief, [2] he grew strong in faith,[3] he gave glory to God, [4] he was fully assured that what God had promised He was able to perform.

These are the circumstances of Abraham's life in which "it was reckoned to him as righteousness". As Abraham believed in God for life from the dead, so our faith is to be expressed in similar circumstances. To believe in God who raised Jesus from the dead is to have the trust in God that Abraham did - for it is to share the same revelation of the nature of God's promise and power. For, Christ has been and is raised and we are called to trust God about what He did for us in Him.

We are believing that Jesus was delivered up because of our transgressions, and that He was raised because of our justification.

303 - Believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead

See 1 Corinthians 12.1-3, 12-13; 15.1-19; Galatians 3.10-14, 26-29; Philippians 2.1-11; Colossians 3.5-11; 1 Thessalonians 1.2-10.

It is important to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. This is the most important entry point for us in the understanding of how God deals with us through Jesus, and on what basis He has arranged for us to experience the salvation which He has won for us.

Paul, discussing in Romans 10 how the Jewish people are zealous for God, shows that their knowledge is faulty about how God is relating to the world as they knew it. In Romans 10.6-11 Paul shows that seeking to establish their own righteousness, based upon their performance, they have failed to trust in the gift of righteousness which comes from God. This righteousness is one which is based on faith [10.6-11].

Paul insists that there is nothing to do to bring Christ down from heaven, and nothing to do to bring Him up from the dead. Rather, the word of Christ is close to the Jews, it is the gospel which the apostles of Christ are preaching. He is making it clear that Jesus Christ is alive and speaking to them. His word is very near to the listeners. Paul calls the gospel the "word of faith" and he says the word of faith is that

"if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." [Romans 10.9]

This dual movement is: [1] a confession that Jesus is God, and then [2] a sure trust that God raised Him from the dead.

He explains that the result of faith in the heart is righteousness, and in Romans he means that faith is reckoned as righteousness, as it was for Abraham [Romans 4.2-5]. It will also mean in our experience the forgiveness of sins, knowing that they are covered, as was the case for David [Romans 4.6-8]. And all this is a gift of God's grace in the man Jesus. And the basis of this forgiveness is the death of Jesus being a full propitiation for the sins of the world.

6 - Life in Union with Christ - Faith: personal

We interrupt our running argument of Romans to insert a series of perceptions about the understanding of the inner facets of the Christian life drawn initially from Romans and then expanded using other parts of Scripture.

304 - We register our relationship with God in our conscience.

Sometimes, when people see things happen, they say, "God is here". Often they mean that He wasn't there before they saw what they saw. This view comes from the Old Testament when God is external to a person whereas after the resurrection of Christ we are indwelt by His Holy Spirit.

As the people of God after Christ's resurrection and ascension, we know God intuitively by union with His Spirit, who enters into us and deals with us in our inner being.

"But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit just as it has taught you, remain in him." [1 John 2.20, 26-27 NIV]

Further, with us, in these times, it is not a matter of God "coming" and "going" as it was in the Garden, and in Israel's experience, as seen in the Old Testament. When the Spirit of the Lord is grieved within us, we often say He has gone away and left us. This is not true, we are simply registering internally His displeasure and grief.

God is not primarily manifested in physical ways, although His presence may be accompanied by a physical manifestation in our body, on our head, or by heat or some other sensation. These sensations, in any case, are not the coming of God, but can be a manifestation that God is already present and He gives these sensations, by His own will, for our comfort.

Even though there may be sensations, the most powerful and reliable way we register God is what He makes known to us through our conscience. It is an internal matter. Later in this course, we shall speak of what it is to live by faith - and there we shall see that our conscience and our convictions are uppermost in the Christian walk. [See 1 Corinthians 8 - to be free to do or not to do as a liberty of conscience. Or 2 Corinthians 5; where it is said that persons - meaning their characters - can be manifested to someone's conscience].

Our conscience is a powerful entity within us.

“Man is more than a consciousness, he is a conscience. He is not only aware of himself, he is critical of himself. There is in the soul a bar, a tribunal; our thoughts and actions are ranged before it; judgment is passed there upon what we have been and done. Everyone who believes in morality believes in the conscience as the power we have of passing moral judgment upon ourselves... we treat him – our judicial self – with much respect. His praise will carry us a long way; his censure cast us down. It will divide and set us against ourselves, and destroy the joy in every other part of us...

We cannot get rid of this judge. He is not in our power. We cannot unmake him, though he be against ourselves. Then we did not make him. He is an incorporate part of our own being, our other self wedded to us forever. What a strange thing we are – two, yet one! Two that cannot agree - one that cannot be severed. Our enemy is of our essence, taken from under our very heart. We are one by being two. We are unhappy both because we are two and quarrel, and because we are one we cannot part. Neither of us can go out of the other's hearing. We may cease to attend much to each other, but we are always within call....

We are wedded under laws which allow of no divorce, for no incompatibility, cruelty or infidelity. Who is this judge that follows us like a shadow? We did not appoint him. We did not give him his place. He is there in spite of us. He is no fiction of our imagination, else we would not be so afraid of him; we would not dread our own creature. We fear him because he is in a position to threaten or ennoble us; because he does not suggest, but command. Temptation is only suggested, but duty is commanded... Conscience is something spiritual, a thinking being, a living moral mind.

...This judge is one clothed with power; the judge of humankind must be invested with superhuman power to enforce the law he lays upon the human conscience. He must have all power - for the command of duty is an absolute command....And for such a moral being who has power over man we have but one name – God. Conscience is the Word of God within us; and moral responsibility before God, the living God, and Christ His living Grace.

...Christ was and is the conscience of mankind and of God. He called Himself man's final judge. Was he deluded? He stands in the whole race as conscience does in each man... The moral malady of the race is mastered by the Saviour of the conscience. It is in history and in conscience that our hope lies. The conscience cries for forgiveness and the history brings it to the cross. There is the foundation of the soul and the security of the conscience, in the cross of history made ours in faith's experience of mercy." [Forsyth, P.T., [1909] *The Cruciality of the Cross*, p.127-133]

305 - Our conscience at rest.

See Forsyth, The Cruciality of the Cross, 1909) pages 122-133

Further, when we were considering how we were creatures of a holy God, we saw that the conscience we have is the awareness of the holiness of God given within those who are made in His image. In that study, we understood that the death of Christ will be the source of our conscience coming to a resolution and peace. All this is ours because God Himself is at peace with us on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice. God is satisfied - and so should we be.

Conscience has many ways that it is affected by the atonement; but the chief action on the conscience is to pacify its accusations through the love and grace of God. As we trust God's word to us in the Gospel, then we rely on the fact that there is no condemnation now. We meet, in the atonement, a place where the sin of the whole world is taken away, which carries in it the foregone forgiveness of sins. Whereas, before we knew this grace of God, our conscience accused us constantly, now that accusation stops. We now know ourselves as the sinners He came to save and that we are forgiven and cleansed.

The Spirit of God enters our person and takes up residence. He resists our flesh and commends what is true. So we recognise that our conscience is settled in the Holy Spirit's judgment. For the Word of God to us finds acceptance with our conscience. And even in places where our conscience has been conditioned by our culture, so the Holy Spirit gradually sets

our conscience at ease to follow a purer revelation.

Redemption is, among other things, rescue from the Accuser. [Revelation 12.10] Anything which establishes our peace with God is, at the same time, the basis from being free from the accusations of the devil [Zechariah 3.1, Job 1.11, 2.5, Luke 22.31, 1 Peter 5.8]. He attempts to unseat our confidence in Christ by accusing us of how we are not always consistent now, in the present. He also reminds us about our past.

Right from the start, our conscience is first set at rest from the accusation of our culture, external ethics and the awareness of our own sins. But as the Holy Spirit makes more and deeper revelation to us of the person of God, our conscience is constantly being modified by this revelation of God that we receive.

So, as a Christian, you may find that your conscience registers change, particularly as the freedom of the liberty of sonship takes hold on our life. Where we might have lived before on rules, mores and regulations that other Christians, types, spiritualities and denominations have imposed upon us, we find that a deep freedom begins to take hold.

306 - How Paul thinks of the inner life of a Christian.

A specialised study in the word use of Romans.

Throughout the letter to the Romans, Paul reveals how he understands the inner workings of a Christian. We shall first look carefully at several texts which provide a background to Christian experience and then we shall attempt to integrate this.

The new person, as he is in Christ, is the focus of our understanding. The apostle reveals a good deal about his own internal self understanding. In Romans 5-8, he explains how the Christian's faith must be placed in the working of the Holy Spirit within; and specifically how that power is applied to how we live in a body that is not yet redeemed when we ourselves are so. In the following study, we are looking at the language Paul uses to convey those inner workings of his own person.

Romans 1.8 - "...whom I serve in my spirit [πνεύμα] in the gospel of His Son."

He states that he serves God "in his spirit"; by which he means his own human spirit. The context is that Paul is calling God to witness to the fact that he continually prays for the Christians in Rome. He is asking that God would verify something to him concerning his own motives. This appeal is to an objective witness, God, who is of course different from Paul himself. This is not conclusive yet, but we note simply that, when looking for an witness from God about his own motives, Paul speaks of the importance of his spirit in the receiving of that witness.

Romans 1.21 - "...even thought they knew God...they became futile in their speculations [διαλογισμοῖς] and their foolish heart [καρδία] was darkened."

The setting of this statement about the “heart” is important. Although people knew God, in the sense of perceiving some evidence in the material world, to say nothing about what they knew within themselves, the appropriate responses of thanksgiving and honouring of God did not come from them. This was a decision - an act of will. It was a “suppression” that was done in “unrighteousness”.

As a result a futility attended their “reasonings” - the workings of their mind. This is also equated with having a “heart” that is darkened. Here, Paul associates the heart with the reasoning action of the mind. There will be other associations he uses which we shall see later. Don’t miss however, that the decision of the will leads to an effect in the mind for subsequent understanding.

Romans 1.24-28 - “...God gave them over to the lusts [ἐπιθυμίας] of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies [σώμα] might be dishonoured... God gave them over to degrading passions [disgraceful lust] ...God gave them over to a depraved mind [ἀδόκιμον νοῦν] to do those things...”

Notice here that the heart is seen to have desires - in the sense of motivating drives. Further, when this drive is acted upon, it has a dishonouring affect upon the body. Also, when God gives them over to a depraved mind it leads to the doing of the actions envisaged - so the mind has a desiring function, which leads to the initiating of action which comes to expression in/by the body. The sense of the Greek text here for the “depraved mind” is an untesting/undiscerning mind - we shall see the obverse in Romans 12.2 as we consider the renewed mind of the Christian.

Romans 2.5 - “...stubbornness and unrepentant heart [καρδία]...”

Here again, as in 1.21, the stubbornness [wilful refusal to change] is seen as a matter of the heart. This reflects the Old Testament usage of a person “hardening their heart”.

Romans 2.15-16 - “...the work of the Law written in their hearts [καρδία]. their conscience [συνειδήσις] bearing witness and their thoughts [λογισμός] alternately accusing or else defending...”

This writing in the hearts refers to the fulfilling of the prophecy of Ezekiel 36. Sufficient to see here is that the work of the conscience is that of “bearing witness”; a function we have already seen is associated with Paul’s “spirit” [1.8] receiving the witness of God. Again we notice the appeal to an objective standard outside men and women’s person, but registered within. What follows from this inner witness of the conscience is that the thoughts of a person begin to make a case for the prosecution or the defence. An internal dialogue is set up.

Romans 2.28-29 - “...outward in the flesh [σάρξ]. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not the letter...”

Here we see the “inward” idea as linked with the heart - as in 2.15-16 above. We shall see this

occur again in Romans 7. Here, the word used for “inwardly” has the idea of secretly. This secret, internal work of God the Spirit, leads to an inward internal secret motive of the heart in living for the Father [Matthew 5-7].

Romans 5.5 - “...because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit...”

In the context of experiencing the love God has for us, Paul locates the heart as the place where the awareness of God’s love is felt or registered. For Paul, the ‘heart’ is a word he uses in association with feelings. Such a work of God’s Spirit comes to be registered there.

Romans 6.6 - “... that our old man was crucified... that the body of sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves to sin...”

Paul connects our old man - the man we all once were “in Adam” - as having been crucified. This implies, for Paul, the body of sin can be considered as being done away with in this crucifixion. The result of this is that we are no longer [accepting, of course, that we once were] enslaved to sin. Sin is here understood as a power that brings us under its sway and rule. This latter statement allows us to understand the expression “body of sin” to mean the body that sin reigned over.

Romans 6.12 - “...do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts.”

The mortal body - a body that will die - is presented here as the seat of the rule of the active power, sin. Notice that there is a connection between “you” and “your body” which is assumed; but there is also a distinction made as well. Our persons [you] are to be distinguished from our body. This distinction and connection is used to portray where the struggle of the Christian life is centred and how it may be met.

The issue here is whether or not you will “let” it be so or not. Decision, an act of will, is involved here. We shall see in Romans 8.5-8 that it is a matter of setting one’s mind on the spirit or the flesh.

Romans 6.13 - “...do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God....”

Once again, the decisions of the inner life control the “members” - arms legs, mind etc of the body which is being “presented” as a soldier ‘presents arms’. That is, ready for the service of his captain. We are not to serve sin in this way with our bodies. Notice again that the “body” is seen as quite discrete from “yourself”.

Romans 6.17 - “...you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching...”

The force of the preposition here [ἐκ καρδίας] indicates that the obedience is coming out from the heart which is the seat of this obedience. It reflects the authentic inner man who is acting. This would imply that the decision taken to obey, issues from the heart. This argues

that the heart has the function of being the seat of decision making.

Romans 7.15 - *"...that which I am doing, I do not understand: for I am not practising what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing that I hate..."*

Paul is discussing of the problem of indwelling sin. He indicates that his mind does not understand what is happening within his own inner self. For he has things which he hates - and presumably has decided to not do them. He has things that he likes [wants] to do but finds that he is not actually practising these, but instead he does the things he hates - the things he had decided against. He goes on to state how this could be thought about.

Romans 7.22-23 - *"...concur with the Law of God in my inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members."*

We see here that the "inner man" is functionally in agreement with the Law of God and functionally opposed to the members of the body. The "mind" here must at least be part of what he calls the "inner man" for he uses it as a functional equivalent of that which his members are opposing.

Romans 8.5-8 *"For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God: for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so: and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."*

Here we see that the exposition of what is meant by walking not according to the flesh but rather according to the Spirit is really a matter of where/how we set our minds - both in the sense of what we think about and what we decide.

Romans 8.10 *"...the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive..."*

Here is a distinction between the body and the spirit of a man. The spirit is said to be alive as opposed to a body which is the seat of a resident hostile controlling power, sin.

Romans 8.16 *"...the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."*

Once again we notice the objective witness of the Spirit of God is registered in our spirit. The witness is done conjointly in that the Spirit bears witness *with* our spirit. Being a child of God is registered in our spirit - we know who we are in our subjective experience that way.

Romans 8.23 *"...we await the redemption of our body."*

The body is yet to come to its fulfilment in Christ. It is currently compromised by the residency of sin within it. But it is not to be despised because of its unredeemed state; its destiny is to be glorious [1 Corinthians 15].

Romans 9.1-2 *"...I am telling the truth in Christ. I am not lying, my conscience bears me wit-*

ness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart."

In considering this instructive verse, we list the following. [1] The context is about telling the truth about what is in Paul's heart. It is about calling an objective witness to verify that what is being said is so. [2] Paul can distinguish his conscience from himself. He can do this because the conscience brings a witness to him of someone else other than himself. [3] The bearing witness with his conscience takes place in/by the Holy Spirit. [4] The truth that he wants the Holy Spirit - conjointly with his spirit - to bear witness about is the sorrow and grief that is in his heart. The Holy Spirit in conjunction with his spirit has the ability to verify what is in his heart. [5] What is in his heart represents his feelings and very deep emotions. [6] The witness to his conscience is to himself not to someone outside of himself.

Romans 10.6-10 "...do not say in your heart...the word is...in your mouth and in your heart...If you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart...for with the heart a man believes..."

The decision to trust is taken in the heart. The will to trust is taken there.

12.1-2 "...present your bodies, a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service...do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove [test] what is the will of God..."

[1] There is to be a presentation of our bodies to God. Contrast this to what we saw in Romans 6.13 where the issue was not to present the members of your body to the power sin. To present our bodies is a rational decision of an act of worship. The presenting of a living/dead body is in accord to what we saw in Romans 8.5-8; there it was a decision of the mind.

[2] The mind needs to be renewed. This goes on continually and the mind is the organ of testing what is the will of God - because it can assess what is good, acceptable and perfect; for it is a discerning mind now.

Romans 12.11 "...fervent in spirit..."

This exhortation spoken to the saints in Rome must imply that they can discern the functioning of their spirit. See a similar thing is said to Apollos - zealous by spirit - in regard to his preaching/teaching ministry [Acts 18.25].

Romans 13.5 "...for conscience sake..."

Here there is a clear distinction between using one's mind to infer that the governing authorities can force one to pay tax, as distinct from being delighted to pay tax as being urged by one's conscience.

The fruit of this study presents to our faith the prospect of adopting for ourselves the apostle's understanding of his inner life and so thinking of our own selves as body, soul and spirit [1 Thessalonians 5.13].

There is a similarity in the way we think about ourselves and God. Thinking of the Trinitarian

understanding of God, we know that God is indivisible. So that, as we take the revelation of God into account, we differentiate the three Persons of the Father, Son and Spirit while holding them to be One God. So it must be with ourselves. Although for the sake of thinking clearly we regard ourselves as spirit, soul and body, we do not mentally destroy the single wholeness, the integrity, of our persons. To understand ourselves in this way is not to divide the person up in some schizoid way. Rather, it is to discern certain functions within our person for the sake of understanding what is happening within us, and also how to respond to our inner life and so manage our decision making.

307 - Functioning by faith as a redeemed person: your spirit

As to our spirit, we know that it is a creation of the Lord who formed it [Zech 12.1]. We are taught that the Word of God, in its penetration into our life, divides [differentiates] our soul from our spirit [Heb 4.12].

As to the union we have with the Lord, we are joined to Him Spirit-to-spirit [1 Corinthians 6.17]. So our spirit, which is holy - dedicated in this union [1Cor 7.34], was formerly 'dead' to God in regards to relationship, is now alive [Romans 8.10] and now works in tandem with the Holy Spirit bringing us His witness of matters of our life and being [Romans 8.13].

[1] Intuitive knowing:

This witness of to our spirit intuitively informs our conscience in such a way that an objective perception enters our life which enables us even to test our emotions, as to whether they are truly based or not [Romans 9.1-2]. Our spirit co-operates with our will [Romans 8.5-8]. This intuitive reception/registration of knowledge from our spirit can take the form of it being provoked, troubled, refreshed, renewed, knowing inner thoughts [Acts 18.16; Jn 13.21; Ps 51.10; 1Cor 2.11]. Ideas and thoughts can "come" into our mind from our spirit. The key to discerning these is that they come unsolicited and are appropriate to the setting in which we find ourself.

[2] Communing

Our communion with God, which is the basis of our worship and prayer, is anchored by the fact of the indwelling Spirit of God within us [Romans 8.26-27]. We also know that God is spirit and must be worshipped in spirit; so we must worship in spirit and truth [John 4.24]. Without confining worship to this, we learn that, as we pray in tongues, our spirit prays directly to God in a way that our mind does not comprehend [1 Corinthians 14.2-4].

[3] Conscience bearing witness

The settling of our conscience takes place as the gospel truths of God not counting our sins takes its firm place in our inner life. It resets our conscience, allowing it to be free from other mores and regulations to which it has formerly been accustomed. At the same time, the

conscience also becomes sharper as it is attuned to the holiness of the Lord and his relating to us. We become aware of a finer tuning.

308 - Attuning our spirit to the Lord.

The spirit of the Christian is where the new life dwells, the Holy Spirit works, fellowship with God is registered, God's will is intuitively known and attacks of the enemy are discerned. If we are to 'read our spirit' then we need to know what it is normally meant to be like. In this way we can register when it is out of kilter. The Bible has some things to say about this normality of the human spirit.

[1] a contrite spirit - we need to take into account that contrition, when first registered in the human person is a function of the spirit, generating a brokenness and disturbance of the heart [sou].

"The Lord is near to the broken hearted And saves those who are crushed [mg. contrite] in spirit" [Psalm 34.18 ASV]

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart O God Thou will not despise [Psalm 51.17].

"For this is what the high and lofty One says, he who lives forever, whose name is holy: 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, and who trembles at My word" [Isaiah 66.2 ASV].

A contrite inner life with its source in our spirit, spills over into our heart and breaks it as we register emotionally what it is that our sin does to God. There is a grief that comes to us at the awareness that our life falls under the disturbance of the Spirit, known in union with our spirit. To tremble at his word is to know that the inner life is handling the presence of Someone great who has come to dwell with the contrite.

[2] a humble, teachable spirit, tender and flexible

"It is better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. [Proverbs 16.19 ASV].

A man's pride will bring him low. But a humble spirit will obtain honour" [Proverbs 29.23 ASV].

A humble spirit towards God and man is the source of being ready to associate with the poor. It is a teachable spirit, not resistant. It is easily entreated and open; having the capacity to bear and forbear. It is the opposite of a haughty spirit which is stubborn and proud. Being tender and flexible it walks in submission to the Lord waiting on Him.

[3] Poor in spirit

"Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs" [Matthew 5.3].

The Lord's teaching makes clear that the poverty of our own spirit, and its inability, in its

deadness, to respond to God of itself, must be plain to the Christian before he can appreciate that the coming of the Holy Spirit of God into union with his poor spirit makes for the coming of the kingdom of heaven within him. At the deepest level of our own being - our spirit - where all the things of a man or woman are known and appreciated, we must know our own basic poverty. It enables us to lose ourselves in God's coming to us as the very source of our life.

[4] a gentle spirit

"...restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.. [Galatians 6.1 ASV]

What is necessary for the elders and the men who are to deal with the fallen ones among us is the gentleness of spirit. It is a yielding spirit to the Lord and is willing to suffer loss which in suffering harms no one.

[5] a fervent spirit

"...not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." [Romans 12.11 ASV]

It is from the source of our spirit as fervent for the Lord that the application to a life of service to Him finds its fountain. Fervency which has its origin in the soul or the flesh last only for a short time. The person of fervent spirit keeps on keeping on. This is the secret of serving the Lord always.

[6] a cool spirit

"He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding." [Proverbs 17.27 ASV].

If fervency of spirit relates to service coolness is related to knowledge and speech. We take inordinate action if we are not cool in spirit. We do not want to be driven by the emotions or the body. We must not let the will get beyond the control of the spirit.

[7] a joyful spirit

"My soul magnifies [exalts] the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour" [Luke 1.46-47 ASV].

Mary understands that she has registered first in her spirit the joy of the Lord. And this has the appropriate result in her soul that she exalts - or declares the greatness - of the Lord with her mouth. Here we learn that joy is a function of the spirit and arises within the unified life of the Spirit with our spirit.

[8] a quiet spirit

"...but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God 1 Peter 3.4 ASV].

In opposition to outward show of jewelry and trinkets, make up and externals, what is treasured in this woman who is being described is the hidden person of the heart. We have

already met the idea that what is in the heart is hidden from show - known only to the person themselves. What we learn here is that the source of this inner person is the gentle and quiet spirit and that this is precious on the sight of God. He sees, He registers, the tone of our life because He is in union with our spirit. That is where He looks. He also looks on the heart as well and appreciates our inner desires and motivations of the heart. But the source here is the spirit of the person.

The quiet inner life of the Christian is to be rested and quiet before the Lord. There is a settlement of spirit which anchors the life in a quiet restedness. This makes for a life that flows out of that restedness. To "aspire to live quietly" is the duty of a Christian.

[9] a holy spirit

"...and the woman who is unmarried and a virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit..." [1 Cor 7.14 ASV].

"...let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" [2 Cor 7.1 ASV]

"without holiness we shall not see the Lord" [Hebrews 12.14]

"... whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things." [Philippians 4.8 ASV]

Holiness is expressed in relationship by persons reserving themselves exclusively for each other, with a total preoccupation of a permanent relationship [Boan, 2013, God and Us, #25-30]. The virgin woman is encouraged to be concentrating, not upon a spouse, as is the requirement for the married person but, on how she might live entirely to the Lord. In this way she keeps herself exclusively for Him both bodily - without fornication - and also in spirit. There is no compromise to her spirit in what she does either.

Can there be a compromising of the holiness of our spirit? Here we see that there is a defilement that can come into the relationship of the Christian which can catch us in the flesh. For these fleshly engagements can affect our whole person, including the spirit of the person - for we are not divided. This effect is what lies behind the strong objection to fornication recorded in 1 Corinthians 6.15-20.

So the functioning of the spirit can be disturbed and dirtied. Perfecting holiness - bringing it to its full goal - means that we must be concerned for our spirit when we consider what we shall do in our life, what situations we shall enter, what we shall think on.

[10] a strong spirit

"...and the child continued to grow, and to become strong in spirit [Luke 1.80 ASV]

John the baptiser, in growing from childhood to manhood, not only grew in his bodily strength but also in spirit. Not only does this direct us to think of the growth of our children in the light of their strength of spirit, we also should expect that there will take place in us a

growth of our own spirit. In each situation in which we are placed we are always looking to move to a place of strength in our spirit. This is what is meant by being edified and being built up through the hearing of prophecy and the word of the Lord [1 Corinthians 14.3].

These ten points are meant not as a 'programme' for internal digging around, but as a backdrop to what we might expect our spirit to register as it comes into union with the Spirit of Christ. This is the positive aspect of knowing such things. But it also helps us considerably to understand when our spirit is not in this sort of position. When pressed down or under some oppression, we register that it has changed and become quite agitated or troubled.

309 - Functioning by faith as a redeemed person: your soul

Read 1 Thessalonians 5.23

We should be aware that the word for soul [ψύχη] has a wide range of meanings. In the New Testament it is used for the entire person. It can also refer to a person's life in general. Paul can speak of our "soul" to distinguish it from our spirit and body [1 Thessalonians 5.23]. However, in Romans, where he is dealing with the life of a Christian who lives in the tension of living in the two ages, he reverts to the word 'heart'. The apostle Paul speaks of our heart as a reference to our inner person, secret to ourselves and not necessarily discernable to others outside us - unless of course, we make our inner matters known to them.

He makes clear that the inner person is not grown by the carrying out of external regimes, rituals or programmes. Nothing which comes from outside our bodily person makes us who we are [Romans 2; Colossians 2]. The person of the heart is the real person; it is here that God looks on our heart and knows us for who we are and what we think and desire in ourselves.

[1] Deciding

Our will, or to stay with the verbal description, our deciding, arises in our soul. Paul asserts that obedience is a matter of the heart. So we understand that matters which are going to come to action - through the executive arm of our body - are decided in the heart. We obey God from our heart. from deep within our decisive soul.

Any obedience that we render to God has first been informed by our spirit, or at least, when decided, our spirit has no objection to the intended course of action. This means that at the soul-spirit interface there is a communication which works in both directions. As we consider a course of action, there will be input from our spirit which, because it is in union with the Spirit of Christ, we may say that we have heard 'the Lord, the Spirit' on this matter. [So Peter, "...the Spirit bade me go...Acts 11.12]. Or we may say that what we are contemplating is acceptable, or is not so, with our own 'spirit'. [So Paul, "...his spirit was provoked within him, as he was beholding the city full of idols" Acts 17.16]. Both of these ways of speaking about it to ourselves [or to others] are found in the New Testament. Both ways are acceptable of course because we cannot always distinguish the Spirit of Christ from our own spirit because they

are in union.

Conversely, we may, as a simple soulish function, decide a matter in our own heart, without necessarily responding to some prompt from our spirit. We can “will what is right” [Romans 7.15,18]. Then, as we consider what we are planning to do, we may find that there is a restedness in our spirit, with no input to the contrary. Then we have a freedom of conscience to act. So we are finding that we have set our minds on the things of the spirit [Romans 8.5-8] and so decide matters according to the will of God.

Faith in God is a matter of the heart because it is a decision to trust God from the heart [Romans 6.17;10.6-10].

[2] Reasoning, thinking, imagining,

Our mind, or to stay with the verbal description, our thinking, reasoning and imagining are also functions of the soul. We learn that our mind can listen to our spirit [conscience Romans 13.5]. We can conduct a dialogue within ourselves, where, on receiving a conviction from our spirit, we can then ‘reason it out’; thinking from both sides of a matter [Romans 2.14].

We also have received from God a renewed mind. Contrary to the darkened and futile mind that is dulled by suppressing the truth [Romans 1.21], our minds have been enlightened, awakened and are able to discern what is the will of God [Romans 12.2-4]. This is what is taking place in the interface between the spirit and soul in the inner man. As our reasonings think through a problem, and at the same time takes into account what the spirit is registering in its union with the Spirit of Christ, we find that our minds are able to discern what is the will of God, what is good, acceptable and perfect. Unwilling to suppress such a truth, first within ourselves, and then in action, we are operating with a mind that is discernably different to the outsider.

The “thoughts and intentions of the heart” also take into account the use of the imagination, which is that internal, creative imaging so necessary to the creative acts of thinking, formulating, logically ordering, envisaging and projecting a completed thought to ourselves, within ourselves. God’s word is alive, and in union with the Spirit of Christ is able to see into and make plain these thoughts and intentions of the heart [Hebrews 4.12].

The formulation of a “desire” of the heart arises from first envisaging and formulating these thoughts and intentions.

[3] Feelings [emotional experiences] associated with God, persons, places and things

Deep within our own hearts there is an ability to register the love and care that persons have for one another. This is especially true when we know that the love that God has for us has been poured out into our inner soul - we register that love. This love is coming across the spirit-soul interface as the Spirit of God pours it into our soul [Romans 5.5]. We also register when people have love for us.

It is also true when we have love for others which arises within us and then at the soul-body interface we set out to express that in practical ways. These ways include care for their needs, loving caresses, outgoing physical expressions of love and endearment.

We have capacity for empathy and disturbance of soul when we encounter situations in life that affect others and so ourselves. Grief and sorrow are matters of the heart [Romans 9.1-2] and these have a power to overwhelm us or even to be spurious. These need also to be subject to the spirit. For they can be manufactured by ourselves or others in a wilful way.

Equally they may also be reflections of our spirit, as emotions awakened in us by the Spirit of Christ. We may be finding an emotional response within ourselves that is fundamentally His. For Mary, the mother of our Lord, she decided to express her emotionally excited worship - her soul magnified the Lord and she praised Him. This was an action was evoked in Mary [Luke 1.48]. For, she first makes clear that the joy of the Lord was a function of her spirit, and then she made a decision to speak out how great the Lord is.

We may find a certain emotional responses and satisfactions with places and things - particularly that is true in the creative arts and matters of a job well done and completed.

310 - Functioning by faith: redeemed person, body not yet so

See Boan, 2013, Jesus Exalted, # 149-50, 151

Our body has its own drives by virtue of its creation. God has made our bodies of the elements of the earth - the dust of the ground. As to the creation of our bodies we are at one with the rocks and the trees and the animals kingdom. We are creatures of God as they are as well - in the sense that we, along with all things created, have our origin in His act of will to freely create. Our body participates in that creation from the stuff of the earth.

Our body then registers hunger and thirst and its own nervous system responds to pain and pleasure. It registers when these needs have been satisfied. As to our being made in the image of God, we were in-breathed by God and became a living soul. Our persons come to expression, incarnated in a fleshly body.

As we have seen in the studies we have conducted through Romans, the Christian life is lived within the tension of the two ages. As to our whole persons, we ourselves are redeemed. But our body still awaits its redemption, for it is of the earth [Romans 8.22-25].

"...We know that the entire creation is groaning together, and going through labour pains together, up until the present time. Not only so: we too, we who have the first fruits of the spirit's life within us, are groaning within ourselves, as we eagerly await our adoption, the redemption of our body." [Romans 8.22-23 Wright, N.T., 2011].

So the Christian life is a matter of knowing ourselves to be redeemed as to our persons,

but living in a body that has not yet experienced that redemption. It is not yet the glorious body we studied in Unit 4 [Boan, 2013, *Jesus Exalted*, # 149-50]. As a result, in discussing the Christian life as it is to be lived before the redemption of the body Paul asks us to make a clear distinction between 'ourselves' and our 'body', with its 'members' - its limbs and organs. [Romans 6.12-13].

This need to distinguish "myself" from "my body" has nothing to do with an ancient, dualistic, false understanding that thought of the body as an evil thing. Paul is not stating anything like that! What he is stating is that the body is a mortal body, a body capable of death. It is currently compromised by the resident power of sin present in it. So right now, our living out the new personal life, will have to take that into account. It is this living-while-waiting for the redemption of the body that Paul outlines in Romans chapters 5-8.

Paul thinks of our body as the executive arm of our soul's decisions. We are able to express inner selves in the external world through our body's members. In the way God has created us, it's functions are under our control. But the human soul is quite unable to get the body to do what it wants whilst sin rules there. But to assert that control while sin is resident in the body requires the life of the Spirit of Christ to come to bear upon the compromised body. While we are free from sin's power through the dying and rising of Christ, our body is still not so. This is what is made clear in the latter half of Romans 7.

Now, at this present time, the power of the resident Life of God is already at work in us because we are in union with Him. He has come to bring us to the liberty of the children of God, which is to release us to the full humanity Christ has presented to God for us. So, He will not "take over" our bodies - our executive arm.

The co-operation which must take place between our spirit and soul will be the first thing that must happen before the power of the Spirit can be brought to bear upon the indwelling sinful power resident in the body. Only in this way, and only moment-by-moment, can there be a victory over sin within the body.

311- Faith in the Union: Baptised into Christ

Romans 6.1-11; Matthew 5.14-16

The Jewish objection to such profligate grace, so victorious over sin and death, is that it suggests that we could just keep on sinning and let God's grace keep abounding [Romans 6.1]. The objection suggests that this destroys any motive for the moral and ethical life - so central to Jewish life! But this ignores that, for the baptised, there is a share in the death and resurrection of Jesus - something has happened to change us. Sharing, through baptism, in Christ's death, we, as a corporate group of God's children, are to think of an "old man" - a corporate old man - who has been crucified so that the body over which sin reigned might be done away with, and thus we are no longer slaves to sin's power. In this way, the corporate man who has died has been justified from sin.

Baptised persons are to accept this death as theirs, but they also accept that they have risen with Christ. As death once had its way with Him, it does so no longer; then neither does it with us. Once for all, in Christ, we have died to sin's rule, and we now live to God as the One we serve. We should now consider ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Our mind-set is to be this; that we are not to let sin reign over our mortal bodies and thus to obey its desires. This would be to treat our bodies as instruments of wickedness for sin to use. Rather, turning to God, we should make our bodily members be at His disposal, as instruments of righteousness. For sin will not rule us for we are not under law but under grace [Romans 6.1-14].

To be baptised into Christ is to have died, been buried and risen with Him [Romans 6.1-8]. Our body of sin - the unredeemed body ruled by a resident power of sin - is to be done away with in this risen life. Christ died to sin in his death for us; this was a moral surrender to sin's conditions but not to its nature. So He now lives to God; and so do we! The obligation is not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies.

How shall we understand this "...not let..."? We re-call in the teaching of Jesus he first told us who we are "...you are light...". Then on the basis of who we are being established as His gift to us, He then went on to say "...now let your light shine". The implication is that who we are will not come to be manifest unless we "let" it be so. This implies, not a vote of no confidence in the gift, but that there is a hindrance, a barrier to letting this life we have coming to be seen. Similar to the setting in Paul, Jesus is telling us that we have died to the power of sin in Christ. The reason for this we have already laid out in the tension of living in the two ages in which we find ourselves. And personally, this has to do with the fact that our bodies are not yet redeemed when we ourselves as persons already are.

312 - Faith in the Union: Contrast of life under law and life under Christ

Romans 7

Paul reveres the Law in some ways: he knows that it bears witness to Christ, and it shows the character of God. But He understands that it cannot make a man righteous.

In Romans he states that the Law is not, of itself, evil [Romans 7.7]. But he does understand that the power of sin, which invades the world through the sin of man, has prevented the law doing what it promised. Indeed, it is through the power of sin, that the law itself has become an alien power holding man in slavery. So the Law that what was good in itself, has now been used for evil purposes. The Law points to what is good, but it cannot make man good. So the Law fails, because it allows man to attempt his own justification. In this impasse, God has made Christ our righteousness.

313 - Living under grace, not under law

Romans 6.12-7.25

The same objection, "Are we just to keep sinning"? is raised when it is declared that we are no longer under law but under grace [Romans 6.14]. - what is not understood is that "under law" means not under "the law of sin and death" [8.2] which sin uses to slay us through using the weakness of the flesh [7.13-24] in combination with the condemnation which comes through the law when we fail [Romans 7.1-4].

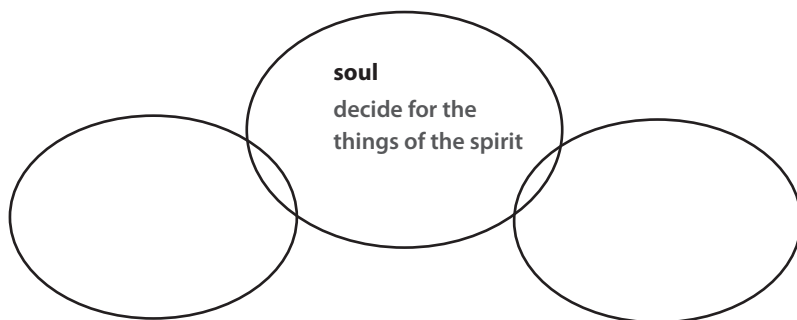
The Jewish objection is "then is the Law sinful?" [Romans 6.16]. No, answers Paul, "but as a holy thing of God it is used by sin to kill us [Romans 7.7-12]. That sin can use such a beautiful thing as God's law to do this demonstrates just how absolutely sinful sin must be.

314 – Faith in the Union: Victory over the power of sin in the body

Romans 8.1-30

The life of godliness is now a life of faith in what God has done in Christ for us, and so what He is doing in us now through union with Christ. This life of faith will come about through the law [principle] of the Spirit of life being within us. Since the Law could not set us free; God did it in Christ Jesus, who came in the likeness of sinful flesh and condemned sin, in the flesh [8.3] where it was exercising its rule in strength. In the death of Christ, since God works rightly, the just requirement of the Law [death and condemnation and curse] might be fulfilled in us; the ones who are going to walk - live moment-by-moment - not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

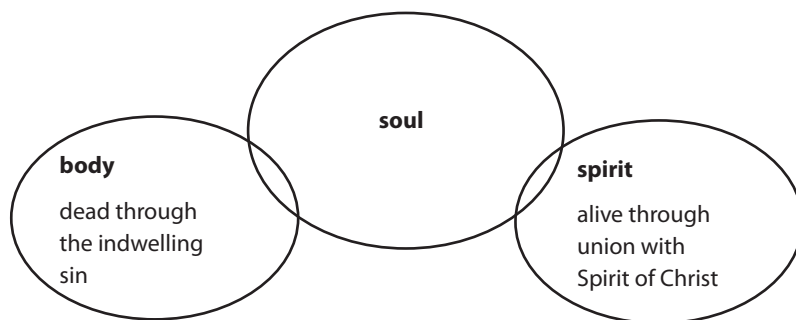
So the life we live will show up the sharp contrast between a fleshly way of life and a spiritual way of life. This begins as a matter of where we set our mind - this is a function of our soul.



What we surely know in doing this "setting of the mind" is that the choices are clearly opposites, the mind fixed on the flesh is a death choice, and the mind fixed on the things of the spirit is a life choice. Because the flesh is hostile to God it is quite unable to obey Him.

Anyone who is “in the flesh”, that is whose state is dominated by their flesh, cannot please God. Christians however, know that their state is “in the Spirit”. That is, who they are is set by the union of their spirit with the Spirit of Christ. This being “in the Spirit” is to have the Spirit of God indwelling our persons. This same Spirit is the Spirit of Christ and His indwelling is what makes it so that we belong to Christ.

Now this is the same thing as having Christ dwelling in you [Romans 8.10; John 14.20]. And even though the body is dead [to God] because of sin residing there, nevertheless the spirit is alive because of righteousness, that is, alive to God due to the union with Christ there.



Now, the same Spirit is the Spirit of the Father - who raised Jesus from the dead. The Father is the One who raised Jesus by the power of His Spirit, then we should know that just as He raised Christ from the dead so He can give life to our mortal bodies through His Spirit which indwells us.

We can see here that the Trinitarian understanding of the interpenetration of each Person of the Godhead [περιχώρησις] is fundamental to laying hold of the way of working [economy] within the Trinity. If the Father raised the Son, then He will give life to our mortal bodies - raise us by His Spirit. This is nothing less than **trusting the Father for a life-giving empowerment** of our bodies moment-by-moment, each time we decide to live according to the Spirit.

This then is the situation of our union with Christ. And this is what is presented to our faith for every moment of living a godly life. And it is from this basis that we must exercise our faith. This is the state of affairs that gives rise to the exhortation that we are not under obligation to the flesh, to live in accordance with its requirements. That leads to death anyway. We now have an obligation of grace to put to death the deeds of the body and so we will live. Paul summarises this position of his moment-by-moment life in this way:

"I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by of the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me." Galatians 2.19-20 ASV].

In just the same Trinitarian way the Spirit helps us to pray, for we are weak there as well. He prays within us. For God the Father searches our hearts and also knows the mind of the Spirit. The Spirit intercedes for us, groaning and longing for us to be finished and complete. He intercedes for us according to the character of God.[8.26-27]

7 - Response [2]: Faith corporate

315 - The independent character of faith

The Galatians, considered as the church of the town they lived in, were under great pressure from legalists to return to a law-based religion. Paul could write to them:

"...But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed". Galatians 1.8 ASV

Having received the truth, Paul expected the Galatians to hold to it irrespective of the channel through which they had received it. Indeed, if even Paul himself could unsay what he had taught them, that would not justify them in ceasing to believe. In stating this, Paul was not speaking of some individual right, or democratic value.

Paul was very jealous for the Christians he had taught that, having left the sin of unbelief, they should come under the obligation of faith. What they had embraced was the inherent authority of truth and the self-evidencing nature of the light God had shed on them.

So strong was his surety of this independent nature of their faith that his view of the relation between the teachers of the faith and the taught was,

"Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm" 2 Corinthians 1.24 ASV.

As in the case of the Galatians, trials to our faith will come. Jesus forewarns us that

"For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." Matthew 24.24 ASV.

Yet the reason that the false Christs do not deceive the elect is because they know the true Christ; nothing less would save them. So the independent faith which sees light in God's light is the underpinning of the perception, the discernment of the Christian.

316 – Assured possession of the truth must be held humbly

"The assured possession of the truth must necessarily be humble; and it must also secure a due reverence for conscience in others. The light in which a man can no longer call

man master, is the light in which he can no longer desire to be called master..." Campbell, J. Mc. [1862] p.43

"He who is tolerant because he dare not interfere with what is God's province, is tolerant on the highest ground: and his toleration will not fail. Believing that the Father of the spirits of all flesh is dealing with men, His offspring, seeking to make Himself known to them; believing that in this He is exercising judgment and mercy, blending both according to that knowledge of what is in man which is exclusively His own; hiding things from the wise and revealing them to babes; yet often bringing it to pass that the wise and the prudent of yesterday is the babe of today; - so believing we must needs refrain from judging..." p.44-45

True pure toleration towards others is as sure an accompaniment of being consciously taught of God, as humility is to ourselves." Campbell, J. Mc. [1862] p 46

Within the church, Paul makes it clear that each Christian must do his share within the common life, but he must have a right judgment about himself; such a man must understand his "measure of faith". While he must hold this humbly he also knows it surely. He must know what God has apportioned him in his service of the brethren [Romans 12.3-4]. On the other hand, once he knows that measure of faith, then he should serve in the capacities that he knows he can and must [Romans 12.5-7].

317 - Faith is not a matter of 'having' but a matter of 'hunting'.

The quotation above is from Martin Luther. He described faith in this way because he wanted to warn Christians of his day of an error generally accepted about faith in God. The same error, for a different reasons, is around us today.

[1] Having faith:

When Luther spoke of "having" he shows that one way to think of faith is as something that we have, or possess [Latin: *habitus*]. This was a serious mistake on two counts.

First, it viewed faith as a quality that somehow went with a person; it suggested that faith was some thing possessed by the individual. Viewed in that way faith was within their control and was dependent solely on them. It arose entirely out of their own self-governing.

Second, to think of faith as a possession of a person is to put the emphasis on the fact that it was 'our' faith that was important – and so pointing to ourselves. This is to think as fallen

people. We would be viewing our faith as a self-centred work and, insofar that it came from ourselves, then it was a virtue, a property of our person which could be looked upon as meritorious – something that earned us favour with God and perhaps, admiration from men.

[2] Faith as actively hunting

When Luther chose the metaphor of 'hunting' as a corrective to 'having' faith he had at least two thoughts in mind.

First, hunting requires that we fix our mind upon an object in such a way that we are focussed. Then the 'hunting' is an activity of following the object and being drawn after it. In this way Luther was pointing to the initiative of the quarry, as it moves we follow; it sets where the hunt will go.

Faith then, looks away from ourselves and to God. It is other-focussed. This is not because we are deciding to focus on God as an act of our own intention; but we focus on Him because He draws us to do so by the attractiveness of His Person and the revelation of His grace towards us in Christ.

Second, hunting is an active matter. It is not a quality that we 'have' in our possession but a constant act of trusting in Someone else who is not ourselves. Faith then, must be done constantly and freshly. It must be exercised – you do not have it, you do it! Like the 'hunting' you must trust in God as Someone who is the object of your trust and be constantly exercising that trust. Faith in God may lead you to a rested attitude and settled mind about God, but faith itself, is active and involved.

318 - Weak faith and weak conscience among the Christians

1 Corinthians 8; 10.22-33; Romans 14; 1 Timothy 1.18-20

Every Christian is individually on a faith-journey which began when he or she was called by God. This means that each portion of our past life gradually comes under the influence of the revelation that we have from God concerning Himself. Our past habits, which we have stopped doing, were a matter of repentance. However, the freedom to exercise what we know of the Lord, as we enter into the liberty of sonship, comes gradually. It is a matter of having the freedom of our conscience to exercise it fully. This is a matter of our faith.

Paul illustrates this in his taking into account the freedom of the person who has up till his conversion, been worshipping idols [1 Corinthians 8]. In the first century, meat that was sold for consumption was often killed and prepared in a way that would comply with what would be expected for the local idol worshippers. To the mature Christian, whose knowledge of God is established in his person, and who knows that an idol is nothing at all, it neither bothers him nor hinders him what men have done towards the meat in this way; he eats with a clear conscience and happy heart [1 Corinthians 8.3-6]. Paul can eat anything sold in the meat market with a clear conscience [1 Corinthians 10 25].

But Paul is aware that not all men have this knowing - for the man who was accustomed to the idol, still finds, as he eats the meat, that he thinks of it as sacrificed to the idol. As he does so, he eats with a weak conscience and so his conscience is defiled.

Paul points out that to the mature, this is an important matter to consider. For if through the mature example of eating the meat, the weaker brother is drawn into eating, against his own conscience, then we are wounding that brother's conscience. Then we sin against Christ as we sin against our brother.

Similar issues were found in the table fellowship of Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians in the church at Rome. Paul speaks of those who are "weak in faith" who have the freedom to eat only vegetables. He explains that each person is able to be made to stand by the Lord. And that we should not despise one another for what we can or cannot eat. There are differences of faith here, and the body life of the church makes allowances for that. It is vital for the Christian community to not draw one another out into a place where conscience is ignored or overruled, or even overwhelmed. For to ignore their conscience is to shipwreck their faith [1 Timothy 1.18-20].

319 - A measure of faith for ministry among the community.

Romans 12.

For the operation of those ministries that the Spirit disperses into each assembly of Christians the gifted person is given a measure [proportion] of faith so as to exercise it. Indeed, a sound judgment of one's own person - as to what one does in the body - is necessarily dependent on a measure of faith.

Armed with a measure of faith, without getting too high an opinion of oneself, a person may have a confidence and a boldness to know what it is that God has given them for others benefit. This gives an initiative into the body life; so that people may exercise giftings for the common good. Paul, as he does in 1 Corinthians 12-14 also, makes clear that not all the members of Christ have the same function. If there is a variety of ministries, there will be different gifts according to the grace given and so measures of faith as well.

320 - Faith working through love

Galatians 5.1-6

Faith, we have seen in our personal life, destroys the power, sin which resides in our unredeemed body. As we live by faith we are pleasing to God. We then find that through the Holy Spirit love is given to us, so that we take pleasure in doing good. Faith is the source of our doing, love remains the deed.

To be a Christian we have faith towards God in Christ, our faith looks away to God for strength and life. But we also look to our neighbour to exercise the love that God has given

us for others. So, being children of God by faith, we are God's through love, which then moves outward to our neighbour.

Our faith does not bring us power to do special things, rather it has to do with us becoming something radically new. Faith is concerned with a re-birth that means the end of the old man, with a change in regard to man's very existence. It cannot mean then, a change to the man's person - as if some external thing has worked upon him - but rather a change of the person themselves.

The world thinks in terms of power and effect. So it would see love as the effective power to love. Even where people have been deprived of love the world thinks of this as a deficiency in their subsequent power to love.

Luther is helpful here, he thinks not primarily of the question, "Does faith make us powerful to do good works?" but stresses the much more radical aspect of it: "What is it that makes good works really good?" Faith is not the power to act which makes good works, but is the power of good which makes works good.

Faith is the power to make everything good, and therefore as the one good work, the work of God pure and simple, it is certainty of conscience. For whatever the position and belief of the conscience are in regard to God, so are the works that derive from them. Where there is no faith, there is no clear conscience before God. So, works that take place outside of faith are dead.

Works cannot create a clear conscience and the resulting certainty - this is not only merely impossible, but it actually brings good works to an end. Rather, the certainty must be there first.

This faith makes the conscience certain - which means that it makes it good - makes works good, because it frees them from the inappropriate purpose of making man justified, of giving him an assurance before God through works, or of providing him a hiding place from God through works.

Faith liberates works from the hierarchy of a religious scale of values, in which some works are more meritorious than others. Faith gives the freedom to do what is necessary for one's neighbour, to do what is demanded by love. In this way all works become equal. For works are not pleasing on their own account, but on account of faith.

Love needs faith because only when an ultimate certainty takes away from man his anxious care for himself can love be pure love. And faith does not need love, but brings love with it unasked through its own inner necessity. For faith, which is the life-giving work of God in man, cannot exist without human creative life proceeding from it.

Faith and love mean the simultaneous conjunction of radical freedom and radical subjection to service. A conjunction where both freedoms must be preserved in their identity.

8 - Results of faith: Peace, hope and joy

We continue with the letter to the Romans armed with an understanding of our persons and the way we register internally those experiences of God which arise from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our persons.

321 - Being justified by faith we have peace with God

*Romans 5.1-11; Colossians 3.15; Ephesians 2.13-16;
Boan, 2013, Atoning Death, #118; Being, #272-5*

God made Christ sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. And we have seen that if we have become that "in Him" this is the same thing as saying that He is our righteousness [Boan, 2013, Atoning Death, #118; Being, #272-5].

The result of this work of God reconciling the world to Himself through judgment is that in Christ we have become the righteousness of God. This comes to mean, as it did with Abraham, that God has justified the ungodly. On these grounds we have peace with God. That peace results from righteousness is clear from Romans 5.1 in that "having been justified by faith" then we have peace with God.

It is a peace which we have "through our Lord Jesus Christ". It is through Him that we, have obtained an introduction to this position of grace. Such a position gives us a faith for the future; we are exulting in the hope of the glory of God.

This peace is experienced even in troublesome situations. For, because of the hope, because we see the goal to which God is taking us, we understand trouble is not a useless or despairing situation. We know that it is working something in us, a perseverance. This perseverance under stress is building our character, which in turn produces more hope. For we understand that moral change in our persons is the very thing which is the glory of God. For His glory is a moral glory, expressing His Person with respect of His character.

This peace of God guards our hearts [Colossian 3.15]. It is to be the deciding factor of our own soul when we consider friction with one another. When we see the ancient divide between Jew and Gentile brought to the fore, we must stand on the fact that Christ is our peace [Ephesians 2.13-16]. The preaching of peace to those afar off and those near is the matter of the gospel.

322 - Hope that arises from peace

Romans 5.1-11; .8.24; Philippians 4.6; Colossians 3.1-4; 1 John 3.2

Hope in the normal use of the word is an expectation of something future. Whenever we gather information from various sources, none of which are absolutely sure, then any belief which we have must be a little uncertain. The hopes of men are often located on uncertain-

ties. If I hope to see my friend tomorrow I cannot be certain that it will be so.

But hope and faith which are based on the word of God are different: these are sure and steadfast. Once we have God introduced as the speaker, the Promiser, then all uncertainty is removed. There is the sure hope that we are now set on a course which God will complete. This has a powerful impact upon our lives.

Hope is the faith in the present about some state of affairs which is still in the future. The object of Christian hope is what God has yet to do.

We are supremely confident that God, who has begun a good work in us, will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ [Philippians 1.6]. We understand that hope is always concerning something which we do not yet see

"For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for it" [Romans 8.24]

Paul will inform us that the whole world is in birth pangs until now - it awaits the glorious liberty of the children of God. The redemption of our body is included in that movement [See # 305].

Colossians 3.1-4 wants us to understand that our life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then we shall be revealed with Him in glory. This is a sure matter for us - and stands on the promise of God.

We shall have a powerful revelation of Christ at His coming. 1 Corinthians 13.12 asserts that what we see now is like looking through a dark glass - but then, at His coming, we shall see Him face to face - then we shall know even as we have been known. Our knowledge of the Lord will be in proportion to His knowledge of us. Similarly 1 John 3.2 assures us that we are children of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be. But when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall have revelation of Him in depth, we shall "see Him as He is".

323 - Hope purifies us - sets us free from mixture in our life

As we have seen above, the hope for that day is that we shall have clear, face to face, revelation of Him. And since to know Him, is to take knowledge of Him, this will make a change in us of amazing proportions. For all the change which takes place in us is in response to revelation of His person.

"And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." [1 John 3.3 ASV].

As a result, this means that we have no worries about whether we are going to arrive - our future is assured in Christ. In this way, our hope is the purifying agent in our life from self

interest. He who is not worried about himself, that he will arrive complete, is free to live for others. Free to throw his life away in pursuit of a pearl of great price. Free to seek first the kingdom of God.

The need to have no mixture of self motive in our life is simply the old requirement of holiness which we saw laid out in Leviticus 19 [Boan,2013,God and Us #29].

324 - *The "fullness of joy"*

John 3.22-30; 15.11; 1 John 1.4; 2 John 12.

Joy is a function of our spirit, as we have learned from the statement of Mary in Luke 1.47-48 [See #303]. Rejoicing is used constantly as the element in festivals where something is given by God in which there is a delight in the thing itself. With the coming of Jesus, there is a sense that the ancient time has run its course and the joy has now appeared. John the baptiser expresses this as a joy of an impending marriage. He pictures himself as the friend of the bridegroom, who is Jesus. John is rejoicing in the voice [the presence] of the bridegroom. [John 3.29].

Fulfilment and joy are associated, throughout John's gospel with the person of Jesus. And there is the culmination of perfect joy. After addressing the disciples about them being the branches and Himself as the vine, Jesus says,

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." [John 15.11].

The disciples asking of the Father in the name of Jesus will mean that they shall receive, and their "joy may be made full" [John 16.24.] Similarly, in Jesus prayer [John 17.13] He prays so that their joy may be made full. This theme of the fullness of joy is expressed also in 1 John 1.4, and 2 John 12.

Notice the extreme buoyancy and happiness of the disciples when we consider the contrast with their initial grief compared the world's joy at the death of Jesus. Jesus understands that His going away, to the Father should have caused the disciples to rejoice. They are meant to rejoice at Jesus' death because it is an exaltation, the preparation for the going to the Father.

"For the joy which was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame.." [Hebrews 12.2].

325 - *Jesus' resurrection joy is what disciples receive by the Spirit*

At the death of Jesus the world is going to rejoice, and the disciples will have grief. But their grief will be turned into joy - at the resurrection. And no one will take their joy from them [John 16.20-22] when they know this joy is the joy of Jesus in them [John 15.11].

The fact that no one can take it from them is consistent with the fact that the Spirit never

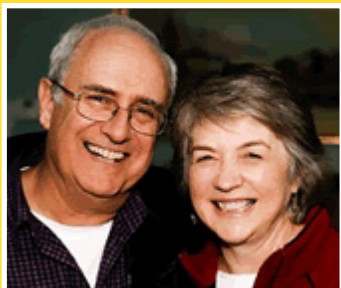
leaves them; and the experience is internal. The joy of the Lord is their strength, because it is that which buoys them from within.

326 - Joy is what is found in the life of the Christian community

The work of Paul as an apostle is constantly attended with the joy that is found in the exchange between him and the Christian communities he served. He saw that they would “make progress and in joy of faith” [Philippians 1.25]. He prayed for the Romans that God would fill them “with joy in believing” [Romans 15.13], just as he intends to come to them “with joy” [Romans 15.32]. The apostles were the Corinthians “helpers of your joy” [2 Corinthians 1.24]. “Joy” was a product of the Spirit [Galatians 5.22].

The joy of God is connected with hope, [Romans 12.12, 15.13] for the future is something coming to fulfilment, and yet is already fulfilled in Christ. He is the Man who comes to us from the future. There is much to rejoice in for the future is assured. It is a strong encouragement to know that God is the One who can present us faultless with exceeding joy on the last day. [Jude 24].





in Perth, the capital city of the state of Western Australia.

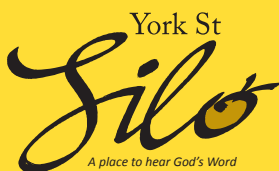
They have been married for 46 years and have five children and 19 grand-children. Throughout this time, they have been teaching the Lord's Word among Christians.

After David was ordained in 1967, he served in two Anglican parishes and a School Chaplaincy in Melbourne. They trained for missionary service but after health issues prevented them going overseas, they taught in a community at the Montrose House and later took the parish of St. Jude's Carlton for seven years. Moving to Perth in Western Australia in 1981, David cared for the Anglican parish of St Alban's in Highgate for seven years.

In 1988, they left the Anglican scene to teach into scattered and smaller groups of Christians in some Australian towns. Later the work extended into the UK, Italy, and India throughout 1995-2000.

At the beginning of 2012, in concert with others, their work became more accessible at the York St Silo, at 4 York Street in North Perth. It is here that David and Jan share the work of the putting forth of God's Word.

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