

SALVATION

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3D-Salvation

THE ULTIMATE ISSUE.

The Westminster Confession declares: 'The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever' George Muller was asked why he ran his great orphanages by faith alone. He said his ultimate purpose was to bring glory to God. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.' (Matt5:16) We were created to glorify God, to be God-centred, 'I created man for My glory, I formed him; yea, I have made him.' (Isa 43:7) The only satisfying motive for doing anything is to glorify God, pleasing our Creator, showing love for our Redeemer.

All creation glorifies God by fulfilling God's purpose and obeying His commands. 'The heavens declare the glory of God.' (Ps19:1) Nature does this automatically. But we created in God's image, with free-will, have the opportunity to glorify Him in the greatest possible way by loving Him freely. We glorify Him when we obey and fulfil His plan and purpose for our life. We are His glory as the moon is the glory of the sun. He is as the 'sun' -the Self-Existent Source of light and life. The moon has no light of its own, it depends on the sunlight. It shines by receiving and reflecting sunlight. We glorify Him by receiving and reflecting SON-LIGHT, shining and radiating His love, life and truth. Our eternal purpose is to shine as stars with His glory-this means God's life flows into and then out from our inmost being. (Dan12:3)

This is worship-a life of glorifying God in every situation

THE ULTIMATE ISSUE is: What motivates us?

The reason we do something is all important. Do we do it to obey, love, please and glorify God? Or do we only act to please ourselves when it's in our interest? What motivates us more-our own will, glory, and name or God's will and glory? What's our bottom-line motivation? What ultimately controls us? Do we live for ourselves or for God? Do we want God to be God in our life or to be our own god? Who has the final say?

Glorifying God is our motive for Excellence for whatever we do we should do it to glorify God. We should do all things to glorify God-our job, our ministry, keeping our body as fit and healthy as possible, loving our family, giving, witnessing. Why do our work well? Why keep our house nice? Why serve the Lord to the best of our ability? It's to show our love for God and bring glory to Him. When we help someone in need, or love our husband/wife/ parents/children we're obeying God's purpose and are living as God designed us. We glorify God. All we do is to be a praise to God.

Why let God correct and change us?

So that God would be glorified through our lives: 'they glorified God in me.' (Gal1:24) 'He gives us 'the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness' and makes us 'trees of righteousness'... that He may be glorified.' (Isa61:3)

Why praise God? Because things are going well for us? Because it makes us feel better?

No, the main reason is to glorify Him and show our love for Him. It glorifies Him more if we still do it when things aren't so good.

Why go to church?-it is to obey and glorify God.

Christians are too self-orientated. We only do something if it benefits us or is convenient. When did we do something just because it glorifies God even though it was hard and we didn't really want to do it?

The issue shouldn't be 'do I want to do it?', but 'would it glorify God?' We should ask ourselves: 'Am I glorifying God in this?' We don't need any other reason to do something apart from the fact He's told us and obeying His will glorifies Him (and releases His life in us) We don't need a burden for souls to witness. It's enough to want to glorify God and we do this when we witness.

Why do we want victory over sin, satan, sickness, and poverty? To glorify God and make his Name great. In his prayers for Israel Moses' main concern was for God's Name and glory. If His people fail that does not glorify God. 'By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit.' (John15:8) We should see problems as opportunities to trust God and let Him show His power so that He is glorified.

He fills us with His Spirit for us to 'be WITNESSES unto HIM' (Acts1:8) not to glorify ourselves; to exalt His Name not to get a name for ourselves. God wants to fill us with His love so that as it shines through us He is glorified.

There are only 2 FOUNDATIONS upon which we can live.

The Bible calls them: THE TRUTH and THE LIE. (Rom1:18, 25; 2Thess2:11,12) GOD'S KINGDOM is based on THE TRUTH. SATAN'S KINGDOM is based on THE LIE

This refers to the specific, foundational truth of life and it's opposite-the lie. This is the fundamental thing we believe which controls our life. We must recognise the various manifestations of the lie which controls the spirit of the world. The lie is everywhere in the world, you hear it everyday- satan's propaganda. Satan rules the world of fallen man.(John12:31) holding them in darkness and opposition to God by his lie (2Cor4:4, 1John2:15-17, 5:19) Those who believe the lie come under the power of darkness. **We are in the middle of a conflict between 2 invisible kingdoms.** The Kingdom of LIGHT (TRUTH) and DARKNESS (deception, LIE) Each Kingdom is trying to influence you to submit to its philosophy and spirit. You must follow one or the other. Whether you love the TRUTH or the LIE determines which Kingdom you live under.

THE TRUTH is **'In the beginning God** (Elohim)'(Genesis1:1) **Elohim', the ETERNAL GOD created us.** He exists as Absolute Deity. He is uncreated and created all things. He is above His creation. There is and always will be an infinite gap between us and Him.

The Bible declares:
God is One (1Cor8:4,8; Gal3:20),
There is One God. (Deut6:4, Mk12:29, 1Tim2:5)
There is none else (Deut4:35, 39, Is44:8, Is45:5,6,14,22; Is46:9)
'Is there a God beside Me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.'(Is44:8)
'I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me... Look unto Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.' (Is45:5,22)
There is none like Him (Is46:5, Mic7:18; Jer10:6,7)
'I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me' (Is46:9)
He is God alone (Ps86:10; 2King19:15, Neh9:6)
There is none with Him. (Deut32:39)
There is none before Him.

'I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me.'(Is 43:10)

We are only creatures dependent and responsible to our Creator. We owe our existence and life to Him. We should serve, love, and glorify Him in all we do. We are under the authority of our loving Creator and Judge. If we love and believe THE TRUTH then we will put Him 1st in our life. Our life will obey the truth- we'll live unto Him. It follows from this truth that man has fallen into sin and corruption and needs salvation. He can't save himself but God has provided this salvation in Christ and offers it freely to all who would accept and believe the truth. Those who love the truth now have 2 grounds for humility before God, to glorify and love Him.(their creation and salvation) (Rev4:11,5:12; 1Cor 6:20; 2Cor5:15)

THE LIE Romans1 teaches that man's rejection of THE TRUTH causes all his corruption and destruction. It says God's judgement is on those who: **'hold THE TRUTH in unrighteousness'** (v18) Man is created knowing the truth in his heart, confirmed by creation.(v19,20) But they did not love the truth, preferring to not have God over them. So they: '(ex)changed THE TRUTH of God for (THE) LIE', with the result that they: **'worshipped and served the creation more than the Creator'**(v25) resulting in corruption(v26-)

This tells us what the LIE is. Clearly it concerns who or what is worthy of worship. It is designed to stop people worship the Creator. It denies the Creator. It says there is no Absolute, Independent Eternal Creator God. This means ultimate reality is to be found in the universe. The Universe is all there is. Nature is God. Mother Earth brought us forth. The Lie is that all things EVOLVED by chance, they weren't created. Thus man was not created but evolved as the universe is evolving. So this causes man to be his own god. Instead of God being first, something in the creation takes His place and he worships (puts highest value upon) self, things, other people, or gods (imagined beings personifying the workings of nature)

The TRUTH of God is that we are creatures and can find fulfilment and true life only in worshipping and serving God. **The LIE is that we can live independently of God, self-sufficient and directing and fulfilling.** It makes man believe: 'There is no God over me. I don't owe God anything. I'm my own god. I control my life. I'm not responsible to God, just to myself. There's no absolute morality or judgement. Whatever I want to do is right.' It follows from the lie that man is basically good and does not need salvation. His problems will be sorted as he evolves on upwards.

The lie originated with satan, (Isaiah14:12-14, Ezek28:11-19) Lucifer was created as the highest and most beautiful angel. He came into existence and God told him he was created. He knew the truth in his heart. But he didn't LOVE the TRUTH. He saw his beauty and thought he deserved to be worshipped like God. He didn't want to believe he was created by God to worship Him. He wanted to be a god himself. So he came under a deception and believed the LIE (pride) which was the basis for exalting himself.

This is THE LIE: 'God didn't create me, we're all just part of a universe that has evolved. He just says He is the Creator to keep me under his power. Yes He's powerful but I'm glorious too. I'm really just like him, He has no rights over me. I'm in the same class as Him, we are evolving together and if I put myself first and fulfil my potential I could equal and perhaps even overtake him as number one. I want to BE LIKE ELOHIM. I want to be my own god with lesser beings worshipping me.' He said: **'I will be like the most High'** (Is14:14) Only by believing the lie that God wasn't really the infinite Creator could Lucifer (a highly intelligent being) think he could be equal to God and take Him on and even win?

But the truth stands firm: 'I AM: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me' (Is43:10)

Lucifer went around the angels persuading them of the LIE: 'God didn't really create you, you don't need Him, you can all be your own gods if you follow me.' This was a Lie for the third who fell went into darkness and now are in bondage of slavery to satan. Those who didn't love the truth had pleasure in the lie of god-hood, and wanting to believe it-fell into deception. Those who don't want God to rule over them will find reasons to reject Him and make themselves their own god and so go to destruction. They believe in evolution because it gives them a basis for believing they weren't created and so are not responsible to God.

We see this process in **2Thess 2:10-12** where the spirit and person of antichrist deceives **'those who perish because they did not receive the love of THE TRUTH, that they might be saved and for this reason God sends them strong delusion, that they should believe THE LIE** (that there is no Creator and that man is god v4) **that they all may be condemned who didn't believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness (the lie)'**.

Satan used the LIE in the garden of Eden. 'For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' (Genesis3:5) *'You are divine, you don't need God. He's holding you back. He doesn't want you to realise you can be his equal. If you listen to me you'll move to a higher level of consciousness where you'll realise you are your own god, with wisdom and life in yourself. You'll see you weren't created but evolved just as God is. You won't have do what He tells you all the time. You'll be free.'* Man wanted to be independent from God and go his own way, so he believed the lie and fell into sin (rejection of God) and all the corruption and evil in life followed from this.

The spiritual warfare over your life is centred on whether you believe and obey THE TRUTH or THE LIE. Your destiny depends on this. If you love the truth that you were created by God and you humble yourself to glorify him then you will be exalted (Phil2:3-11) If you love the lie that you are an independent evolved being and thus exalt yourself to be a god you will be humbled and destroyed sharing the same judgement and fate as satan.

REDEEMED

Psalms107:2 says **"Let the REDEEMED of the Lord SAY so."** In other words we are to talk about our Redemption. But many Christians don't know what REDEMPTION means. It is a word with a very specific background & meaning.

THE SLAVE-MARKET The return of a victorious general to Rome transformed the staid, austere atmosphere of the city into a festive occasion. When a general was victorious over an enemy, he returned to Rome at the head of A GREAT TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION. He led back in triumph the forces that had served under him, the spoils of the conquered land & a large number of captives. When the news of the victory reached Rome, preparations were made for this, for it was a time when the glory won by the conqueror was heaped upon his head. He rode into the city to be received by the nobles & dignitaries in a manner becoming his victory. This was a time the wealthy looked forward to, for they could buy from the spoils of conquest-the treasures that would adorn their homes. It was a time anticipated by the slave-owner who desired to enlarge the number of his slaves, for after the captives had been led in the triumphal procession, they'd be taken to the SLAVE-MARKET & one-by-one, were put upon a slave block where were examined & tested by prospective buyers, & then purchased to be brought into a life of BONDAGE & servitude. They'd lost their POSSESSIONS & FREEDOM & now were at the mercy of their OWNER & his ENFORCER-the chief slave. Theirs was a cursed life of POVERTY, SICKNESS & DEATH, having no money, no power, no rights.

SLAVES OF SIN This was the thought uppermost in the minds of the New Testament writers when they described Jesus as our REDEEMER & the great work of REDEMPTION he accomplished for sinners. The Bible declares: **"all have sinned"**, that we've all been conquered by sin & were doomed to live the cursed life of a slave in bondage to sin. When Adam sinned he rejected God as his Master & came under the cruel domination of a new Master called SIN. **"I am carnal, sold under sin."** (Rom7:13) **Every man is born a SINNER & a SLAVE to SIN.** He is not free, his will is under the control of sin & his future is fixed by it. This master can deliver him over to even greater bondage (a slave getting weak or old was often sold in the slave-market. The new owner knowing his time was short would try to get more out of him. Sin works this way, bringing us into greater bondage as we serve it.) In the same House is the chief SLAVE of SIN=SATAN who has the power to afflict & make our situation worse. The penalty or consequence of being UNDER SIN is the CURSE (poverty, sickness & spiritual death).

THE LAW When God gave the LAW to Israel they thought it was a means to be set free, for if they kept it in every point then surely they'd win their own freedom! But this was impossible for as sinners they continually failed & moreover they found the law was a curse to them for it was a hard overseer pointing out their every fault & whipping them for it. This was the CURSE of the the LAW which magnified the CURSE of being under SIN. In fact God had given the LAW not as a means of liberation but in order to prove to them that they were SLAVES OF SIN & thus powerless to set themselves free. They (we) could never earn or deserve their (our) freedom-so important for them to know for it would cause them to look toward, & receive a Saviour, a Redeemer who would set them free. Job knew this: **"I know my REDEEMER lives"** (Job19:25)

But such is the proud spirit of man that many were still trusting in themselves. Jesus said: "If you abide in My word...you shall know the truth & the truth shall make you FREE." They (some Jews) answered, "We are Abraham's descendants, & have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free?'" (How deceived can you get? They had been in bondage to Egypt, Babylon, & Rome as well as to sin. Pride makes you say stupid things!)

-Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin (all men except Jesus) is a SLAVE of SIN, & a SLAVE does not abide in the house forever, but a SON abides forever. Therefore if THE SON sets you FREE you shall be FREE indeed." (John8:31-36) Jesus burst their Bubble! He proved they were slaves of sin because they'd committed sin (whether you commit more or less sin than others or do more or less good misses the point) This is true for all -even these God-fearing Jews. As no slave can free himself (he

has no money or power or authority) he must look outside himself for LIBERATION. We are helpless but now JESUS presents himself as the ONE who is ABLE. For he claims not to be a SLAVE but A SON, then THE (one & only) SON (John3:16) THE SON as a FREEMAN is able to set the slaves free! **"If THE SON sets you FREE you shall be FREE indeed"** This is why Jesus had to be born of a virgin. The sin-nature is passed down from Adam through the father. God was his father. Jesus was born free of sin- he was a rich freeman.

'REDEEM' means 'to buy back, to pay the RANSOM PRICE to regain something lost that had fallen into the hands of another.' Redemption is **COSTLY-that's the emphasis of the word.**

A Boy once made a boat but lost it as it was carried to sea. Later he saw his beloved boat in a shop. So he saved up to buy back (redeem) his boat. Now it was his by creation & redemption (it is the same now for us & God-we belong to Him both by Creation & Redemption.)

One word for REDEMPTION actually means-'to buy out from the slave-market of sin & set free.' *A slave-owner who had just lost his son, saw a slave of the same age in the slave-market. His heart went out to him & he bought him & at once released him. He turned round & said-"you have given me my life back-so 'I'll serve you forever' This is how we should respond to our Redeemer.*

You see we were slaves in the slave-market of sin, sold into worse & worse bondage. We were powerless to help ourselves & no-one else (Buddah, Confucius, Muhammed etc) could save us because they were slaves also. **"None can by any means REDEEM his brother. Nor give to God a RANSOM for him -for the REDEMPTION of their souls is costly, & it shall cease forever-That he should continue to live eternally, & not see the pit."** (Psalm49:7-9)
But Jesus came along- A FREEMAN-& saw us on the block. He paid the price, took our chains off & set us free! Now we belong to him not just by creation but by redemption also.
He bought us back from the hand of the enemy. He redeemed us.

A boy had caught some old, weak birds & was planning to torture & kill them. A Pastor saw this & offered to buy them. The boy was puzzled thinking they were not worth the money. The Pastor paid the price, opened the cage door & set them free-that is redemption.

THE RANSOM PRICE for us was so great.
"You were not REDEEMED with corruptible things like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, BUT with the PRECIOUS BLOOD of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish or spot." (1Peter1:18-19)
'Redeemed' here means the act of liberating through the payment of a ransom.
'Corruptible & corrupted' things of this sin-cursed earth (Gen3:17) could never provide a satisfactory redemption price-this includes man & his works-nothing in this creation can suffice. It must be untouched by sin.

Only the BLOOD of CHRIST is sufficient.
'Shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood' (Acts20:28)
Redemption is sung about in heaven:
"You are worthy to take the scroll, & to open it, for you were SLAIN & have REDEEMED us TO GOD by Your BLOOD, of every tribe, tongue, people & nation" (Rev5:9,10)
When we know what it cost our life should be filled with praise.

"The Son of Man didn't come to be served but to serve & to give HIS LIFE as a RANSOM for ('Anti-lutron'-in place of & for the sake of) the many." (Matt20:28, Mark10:45)
This speaks of substitution: The price necessary to set us free from bondage to sin & its consequence (death) was to take our place on the block & bear our sins & death on the cross.
"The man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a RANSOM for all men." (1Tim2:5,6)
On the cross he paid the price to set all men free-even condemned false-teachers who: **"deny the Lord who BOUGHT them."** (2Pet2:1)

Jesus declared on the cross: "IT IS FINISHED" - a commercial word meaning "THE PRICE IS PAID IN FULL"

2 STAGES OF REDEMPTION-BLOOD & POWER
(1) The PAYMENT confers authority, transfers all rights of ownership & control to the redeemer. There's no more obligation to the old-master. Done by Jesus on the cross by SUBSTITUTION.
(2) The RELEASE. Using this authority the Redeemer actually sets the slave free into a new life by Power. If the old-master is evil & resists this he must be overcome. Jesus did this by his death & resurrection & dynamic defeat of the devil.

THE EXODUS, the classic Old-Testament picture of Redemption shows this.
When God is called the Redeemer of Israel it speaks of the Exodus. They were cursed slaves in Egypt.
(1) Their firstborn were redeemed by the SUSTITUTIONARY BLOOD of the Passover Lamb (a type of Christ) God provided the blood for them.
(2) Those who received this redemption were set free from Egypt by GOD'S POWER (being identified with Moses in death & resurrection through the Red-Sea) This power destroyed the control of the enemy who wanted to keep them bound. **"He redeemed them with His mighty outstretched Arm"**

A Man once laid down his life to rescue a boy in a fire- that killed his parents. When it was time for the Court to decide his new family-who was found to have the right to adopt? & whom did the boy want? Yes-the one who paid the price to save him & give him a new life by his selfless intervention-he was the one who had won the right (by the demonstration of his love & power to protect) to enter into covenant with the boy & adopt him into his family as his own son.

Likewise when Jesus our Bridegroom redeemed us by his blood & power, he won the heart of his Bride. He proved Himself worthy to be her Lord. The demonstration of his love in redeeming her means she now belongs to Him. REDEMPTION establishes completely new relationships & a new life !

The other great Old-Testament picture is in the story of BOAZ & RUTH.
 This revealed the conditions a Redeemer had to satisfy to bring Redemption.
 God prepared the way for knowing the Redeemer through the Jewish Customs.
 If a Jew was sold into bondage or sold himself into slavery because of debt, provision was made for him to be set free through the Kinsman-Redeemer-only a relative had the right & responsibility to pay the price to deliver him.

The Legal Conditions to redeem:
 1. He must be a Kinsman-to have right to redeem. Thus, Boaz could redeem Ruth from her low estate. Thus the Redeemer (Jesus) had to be a man (related to us in Adam). (Heb2:14,15; John1:14)
 2. He must be Able to redeem-he can pay the price. The nearer kinsman to Ruth was unable to redeem. Likewise all in Adam were our kinsmen but could not redeem us because they were also corrupted. Boaz had the substance (wealth) to redeem Ruth. Jesus likewise could redeem us. (Acts20:28, 1Pet1:18-19)
 3. He must be Willing to redeem. The nearer kinsman to Ruth was unwilling, for it was too costly for him, he was not willing to be responsible to care & provide for her for the rest of his life. Jesus was willing to pay the price, to give up everything, he was a willing sacrifice. (Luke22:42, Heb10:7)
 4. He must not himself need the redemption he plans to provide. A slave can't free a slave. A man in debt can't clear another's debt. Jesus was sinless so he qualified. (Heb4:15, 1Pet2:22-24)

Lessons from the Hebrew Customs
(1) DEBT=Type of Sin. (In the Lord's Prayer-"forgive us our sins (=DEBTS)" (Sin=negative righteousness) Man's actions (sins) put him in debt. He is in bondage to sin (under the power & curse of debt) Jesus paid off this sin-debt with his positive righteous life (blood) poured out for us. Justice requires that every debt must be paid. Hence a ransom must be paid for the forgiveness of sins) Thus Redemption relates directly to forgiveness of sins & release from sin. The Jewish customs-teach us that the Kinsman-Redeemer must pay the debt='the penalty for our sins' (the negative payment) & in Boaz case he also paid the price to look after her in his house (as his wife), to exalt her to a new life & estate (the positive payment) Likewise on the cross Jesus paid the price to cancel our sins (Col2:13,14) & to purchase a place in heaven for us, thus providing an eternal inheritance.
(2) The story of Boaz reveals that full redemption is not just release FROM the curse but also release INTO blessing, from union with sin to (marriage) union with Christ (Boaz) & an eternal name (an inheritance & future.) This is also seen in the Redemption of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land.
(3) A redeemed slave is free, Christ does not force us to serve him. He could be a voluntary love-servant. (Exodus21:1-6; Deut15:16,17.) He had his ear-bored, signifying his readiness to hear & obey his Master. (Rom12:1,2) Christ fulfils this picture too-as God's servant (Ps40:6on Hebr10:5-7) & is the example to us of how a redeemed, freed slave should continue-for in serving God we find complete freedom.(Jn8:31,32)

RESULTS OF REDEMPTION:

1. CONTINUAL PRAISE & WORSHIP (Rev5:8)

2. HOLINESS

"Do you not know that your body is the Temple of the Holy-Spirit Who is in you, whom you have from God, & you are not your own? For you were BOUGHT at a PRICE therefore glorify God in your body & in your spirit which are God's." (1Cor6:19,20)

"Our great God & Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave HIMSELF for us, that He might REDEEM us from every lawless deed & purify for himself His own special people, zealous for good works." (Titus2:13,14)
 Christ -'our redemption' is now the center of our lives. (1Cor1:30)

3. LIBERTY-the subject of Galatians. Remember you have been set free (like a released prisoner) but use your freedom for good-not for evil. Don't be like a prisoner who goes back to a life of crime & grime. So grateful you are out, live a new-life determined never to return to bondage.

"When the fullness of time came, God sent forth His SON, born of a woman, born under the law to REDEEM those under the law" (Gal4:4,5)
 "Stand fast in the LIBERTY by which Christ has made us FREE, & do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." (5:1)
 "You brethren have been called to LIBERTY, only do not use LIBERTY as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." (5:13)
 "Being justified freely by his grace through the (through & through) REDEMPTION that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans3:24)
 "The Lord REDEEMS the soul of his servants & none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned." (Psalm34:22)

4. PROCLAMATION

"O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! for His mercy endures forever. Let the REDEEMED of the Lord SAY SO, whom He has REDEEMED from the hand of the enemy." (Psalm107:1,2)
Declare: "I am redeemed. Bought with a price. Set free from sin, curse. Set free to praise & serve him. I am a freeman. No more bondage-but glorious liberty."

SPEAKING TO THE UNSAVED-we need to tell them we are all in debt, slaves to sin, that we cannot free ourselves. We are like slaves in the slave-market of sin with no hope. But a Redeemer has come, who has paid the full price to cancel our debt & set us free. He took our place & bore the punishment & curse we deserved for our sin. He paid the penalty for our sins & also paid the price to provide all we need for a new life forever as a freeman! All you have to do is accept what he has done for you & walk free. Say 'Yes' to Jesus. All we have to do is believe in & trust the Redeemer, put our lives in his hands, receive him as our Saviour & Lord. Then our chains of slavery will fall off & we can walk out free into a new life, with our debts (sins) cancelled (forgiven) How foolish for a slave-presented with such an offer of good-news to respond by saying: "No thanks, I'll work out my own future, I don't need or want any help. I'll do it my way." Such a one is destined for destruction by rejecting his only hope.

NOTES:

A. Greek Redemption words: (1) LUTRON-the price of release, ransom (2) (EX)AGORAZEIN-to buy (3) TIME-price (4) LUTROUN (5) APOLUTROSIS-redemption

B. The Redemption (release) of the body from sin is yet future (although it is paid for by the Blood) (Rev14:3-4, Rom8:23, Eph1:14)

REGENERATION

One of the greatest miracles of life is the BIRTH of a new-baby bringing joy to the Father & Mother who've brought forth new life. This baby did nothing to earn his birth but is automatically part of a Family (sonship) & Kingdom (citizenship), an inheritor & sharer in all the blessings & provisions of this Family & Kingdom. **He has come to life with a nature inherited from his parents- LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON.** To a great extent our birth defines us & our future.

All this is true of an even greater miracle-THE NEW BIRTH.

John3:1-16 is the classic passage on this. Jesus chose Nicodemus, a man who had everything in the natural (a respected VIP, intelligent, well-off, a good moral man, a teacher- the kind of person you'd think didn't need saving) **to declare the necessity of being REBORN.** "Unless you are born again you cannot see or enter the Kingdom... You must be BORN AGAIN" (v3,5,7) Some think we are all God's children because He made us all. This is like saying a cabinet is the son of it's maker. Creating a thing is not the same as fathering (generating) it. Jesus didn't mess around but shocked him by saying that his problem was in his birth-& to enter God's Kingdom he needed a new birth.

What was wrong with his birth? "What is born of flesh is flesh"(v6) By physical birth we inherited a sinful nature (in the flesh) from Adam. Everything reproduces after it's kind. When Adam sinned he died spiritually & he came under the power of sin in the flesh. (Gen2:17,1John1:8) His dead spirit no longer could exercise dominion. We're all born into Adam's family with the same **sin-nature in the flesh.** Whether our spirit comes from Adam or God at conception, the presence of the sin-nature caused us all to die spiritually. Our spirit is our means to contact & worship God but a dead spirit means we're cut off from His life. So we can't see or enter God's Kingdom. The result of being in Adam, the result of my first birth (the birth of my flesh from Adam's flesh) is that I had a dead spirit & I needed it to be made alive again (resurrected).

My Old Man (my spirit) was under the dominion of sin (in the flesh) & death. I needed it to be made a New Man which is under the dominion of Christ, which has the Divine Life & Nature. Then I can live a new life with my spirit dominant. This life automatically (by it's very nature) depends upon & is ruled by God, whereas the old flesh-ruled life is independent from God & by it's very nature cannot submit to God.

I need God to be my literal Father, re-birthing my spirit in His perfect image.

This is REGENERATION-to be born again, to be born of God, where God's LIFE recreates our spirit & we become CHILDREN OF GOD, sharing His NATURE. This automatically means we are in His FAMILY & CITIZENS in His Kingdom, sharing in all the blessings. It is a rebirth of our spirit (v6) & a reception of ETERNAL LIFE (God's life & nature)-(v15,16)

We shouldn't be surprised that we must be reborn (v7) To live in the earth we needed to be born here. To live in heaven, in God's realm we must be born into it. To be in the Kingdom of China I must be born into it, of a Chinese father with a Chinese nature. But since I'm not-I would need a rebirth. **To be in God's Family & live in His Kingdom forever, I must be born of God my Father, with His nature.** We can't achieve this position by our own efforts-we have to be born that way.

The New Birth is impossible by our own efforts. (v4) It must be by GRACE-no one can take credit for his birth. It is a supernatural work of God.

"As many as received him, to them he gave the right to become (regeneration) the children of God, to those who believe in His Name, who were BORN NOT OF BLOOD (by being in a Christian, Jewish, noble family) NOR OF THE WILL OF THE FLESH (by our works, will-power, self-effort) NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN (no one else, no guru, group or cult can do it for you) BUT OF GOD" (John1:12,13)

God, our Father actually gave birth to you. He is the Father of spirits (Heb12:9) It's just as real as our 1st Birth (v5,6). HOW? (v4) It is by the Spirit of God surrounding our spirit like water in the womb surrounds the baby (v5), actually recreating & making alive our spirit. (v6)

The New Birth of the SPIRIT is like the action of the WIND (v8) (1) **It is God's work-we just receive the action of the wind.** It blows on us.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy (the BLOOD) He SAVED US (manifested His

LIFE) **though the WASHING of REGENERATION & RENEWING of the Holy-Spirit.**" (Titus3:5) Regeneration washes away the old-man & re-news our spirit.

(2) **It is invisible but has tangible results.** The wind communicates energy & power. You can't see it but when He blows on you & regenerates you it's very real & causes real changes.

(3) **The wind blows according to laws,** not randomly- it moves from high to low pressure, as in breathing. When you expand your lungs you create low pressure which draws the air in. Likewise, when there are the right conditions of receptivity in human heart (FAITH)-the Spirit blows into our spirit & imparts Eternal Life (the life & nature of God)-v16.

Nicodemus again asked HOW?-how can I have the Spirit blow upon me & recreate me? (v9) Jesus said we need to:

(1) **Humbly accept his first-hand authority to teach.** (v10,11,12)

(2) **Realise he is the only one who can bring us to heaven.** He is God who came from heaven to open up the way to heaven & bring us to God. We must trust Him as the only way. (v13)

(3) **Believe in him & his death on the cross-this was his mission on earth.**

Jesus used a picture from in Numbers21:9 to explain this. -Man is under the power of death (the snake of sin has bitten us & it's the poison has spread to all, infecting the whole body or human race)

-God's remedy was a brass serpent lifted on a pole.

-**Those who LOOKED in faith at it LIVED.** They received LIFE. New Life entered them, delivering them from the snake bite.

This is a picture of the cross where Jesus paid for our New-Birth.

He took our sin & sin was judged upon him.

When they looked upon the brass serpent they saw their sin (nature) put on the stake & judged (rendered harmless). Likewise all

who look in faith at Jesus bearing our sin on the cross receive the benefit of what he did there. They receive LIFE (the New Birth)

When we accept the cross where our old man was crucified with Christ & a new man (spirit) was made available, the Spirit blows upon us removing the old & bringing forth the new. Thus we received NEW LIFE (rebirth) This new life we possess is called

ETERNAL LIFE (God's Life & Nature) (v14,15,16)

This rebirth is for WHOSOEVER WILL. (v16-18) It's up to each man to receive it or not.

The CONDITION is FAITH -because it's just receiving what God has done for us. (Gal3:26)

Those who received Moses message & looked in faith were saved by believing. In the same way we received regeneration by believing the Good-News of what Jesus did on the cross. (If they don't hear they can't believe. They can be in a church for years & never

hear!)

"Of His own will he brought us forth by the word of truth" (Jam1:18)

The word is God's seed-if we receive it-the Spirit fuses with it & we are born again.

"Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the Word of God, which lives & abides forever...this word is the gospel preached to you." (1Peter1:23-25)

The nature of the thing born is determined by the seed. Our 1st birth was from seed corrupted by sin. But our 2nd Birth is from

incorruptible seed! Thus our new spirit is perfect uncorrupted creation, it doesn't sin, it's born of God with His sinless nature. It has

the ETERNAL life & nature of God. It is incorruptible (indestructible)

"If any man be in Christ he is A NEW CREATION, old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now

all things are of God." (2Cor5:17,18)

It is the creation of something all new -all of God-untouched by the fall. It's not patching up the first birth-but a new thing altogether.

It's basis is Christ's finished work in death, burial & resurrection. (v18-21)

The OLD MAN is removed (Col2:11,12a; Rom6:4-6)

& replaced with the New MAN (Col2:12b,13; Rom6:4,5,8,11)

which has the nature of Christ (Eph2:10, 4:24, Col3:10; Gal6:15, 2Pet1:3,4)

When we are put IN CHRIST- then CHRIST is also in us.

The nature & origin of this New Creation is the RESURRECTION.

The New Birth is a resurrection. (John5:21,24,25)

This means our spirit was completely dead in sin & only a miraculous act of God could raise it up from death.

How? - by identification with Jesus in his resurrection.

Faith in Christ's resurrection is necessary for salvation (new birth) (1Cor15:1-4,17; Col2:12, Rom4:24,10:9). Believing in resurrection

allows Spirit to release resurrection for your spirit by identification.

"The God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to His abundant mercy (the Blood) has begotten (BIRTHED) us again

to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible & undefiled & doesn't

fade away, reserved in heaven for you." (1Peter1:3,4)

Jesus bore our death in his full humanity- spirit, soul, & body-& so his human spirit was resurrected by God's Life, as well as his

body. His spirit was made alive & filled with life.

The amazing thing is that the same power that raised up Jesus raised our spirit from death. (Ephes1:19-2:1-7) **This is the**

origin of our salvation, our new-creation. (v8-10)

We were made alive & raised together with Christ! (Col2:11-13; 3:1) Our new life is the resurrection life of Jesus that has already

overcome sin, satan, & death (it is not like having Adam's perfection before he sinned) (Col2:15) Now the resurrected life of Christ,

the spirit of Christ is in us (Rom8:9) This life has passed through death never to die again. This is the real you -you've already

overcome satan, you've been made alive, you've risen far above all the power of the enemy. (Rom6:3-11)

We can say: "(the resurrected life of) **Christ lives in me.**" (Gal2:20 on) "**Christ in you the hope of glory.**" (Col1:27) This life is the glory of God in your spirit & our certain hope is that ultimately it will fill our entire being with glory! Jesus is the Firstborn from the dead. (Rev1:5, Rom8:29, Col1:18, Heb2:10-12) We have received the same spiritual resurrection from spiritual death & will also receive the same physical resurrection as he did. This is when his glory will be released through our whole being.

THE RESULTS OF THE NEW-BIRTH

1. **We are now sons of God by faith.** (1John1:12, 3:2, Gal3:26) We are in God's Family.
2. **Our spirit is now alive to God.** We see the Kingdom of Heaven. Prayer, the Bible & worship at church now has reality. We know God as "Abba Father" (Romans8:15,16; Galatians4:5-7)
3. **We have a New Life & Nature.** (John3:16,10:10, Romans5:5, 6:23) It is a resurrected, undefeatable, victorious life. If we walk by faith (by & from the spirit) according to this new life we'll see Christ's life & victory coming through.
4. **We are born into a New Kingdom.** (Col1:13) We are citizens (ambassadors) of heaven & its resources are available & we must live by its laws. We're no longer under satan's dominion. He has no right on us because we're not in his kingdom.
5. **Family love.** (1Peter1:22) Recognition of others in God's Family. "We know we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren" (1John3:14on)
6. **Compassion for a lost world-** those who haven't received this 2nd birth don't have God as Father. We must tell them how they can become children of God.

SANCTIFICATION

A young man called Sinner once received from his father a beautiful red Salvation Saloon. It was sparkling new, & it delighted his heart. For it was a free-gift. **"I did nothing to earn it. I could have worked for years & years & never been able to buy it."** He was so happy he changed his name to be more like it -from Sinner to Saved. He polished it every day, took pictures to show & tell his friends about it. He looked all over it & admired it's excellent workmanship. He told everyone **"My Father gave it me-it's a free gift."**

A few days later he was seen out on the highway pushing his lovely new car. Mr Helper came up to him & asked: **"Why are you pushing this lovely car."** Saved: **"It is a lovely car isn't it -a free-gift you know. If I can push it to the end of the highway then I'll be allowed in into the heavenly city."**

Helper: **"It must be exhausting pushing it around all day?"** Saved: **"Well yes, in many ways life was much easier before I received my Salvation Saloon. Especially when it's uphill. But it will be worth it in the end. And it's such a wonderful gift-it's worth getting tired for it. The least I can do to push it everywhere. And I've learned some techniques-the bumper kept cutting into my hands but then an expert told me how to install some rubber cushions & now I can push for hours without a blister ! & if I back against the car, bend knees, lift 45 degrees-wonderful for muddy roads. Sometimes I wonder if I can keep this up. It's so hard."**

"Does it have OIL & PETROL in it?"-asked Helper. **"Yes-when My Father gave it to me He said the tank was full. But I don't know what it's for. Everything will be revealed when I get to the end of the highway."**

Helper: **"Have you read the manual?"** Saved: **"Not much-I've been too busy & tired pushing"**

Helper: **"Let's get in."**

Saved: **"I've never thought of that. What's the point? It looks so good from the outside I never got in it. Also, if I stop pushing how will I get anywhere. Surely if I just SIT & REST back in my SALVATION I'll get nowhere."** But Saved was so worn out, he decided just to sit back & rest all his weight on the car & let it support him for a bit. Mr Helper got in, & told him to turn the keys in the lock. His Father had given them but he never realised he could use them.

Soon they were driving down the highway at 60mph ! Saved was quite breath-taken & excited & asked: **"Where did this power come from?"** Mr Helper explained: **"It came with a brand new ENGINE & PETROL. You still have to drive it. You have the responsibility of controlling where the car goes. But you don't have to push it! It has plenty of power to drive. You just have to trust in the power provided-sit back & turn the key & let it carry you along. Your Father sent me to help you & by the way-keep your tank full."**

THE RED SALOON represents OUR SALVATION made through the FINISHED WORK of Christ & given to us by our Father. By his blood a Great Exchange (my sin for his righteousness) took place. This enabled God to offer us, through the gospel, Salvation as a Free-Gift. When I believed in Christ & what he did, I was put (BAPTISED) into Christ & his Righteousness was given to me (IMPUTATION) & I was JUSTIFIED by his grace. I was also placed as a member of his family (ADOPTION) Thus, IN CHRIST I was put into a new relationship with God. All this was done FOR ME. The man who admired his car from the outside knew all this, but he didn't know what was INSIDE the car. There are INTERNAL (transforming) as well as EXTERNAL (legal) aspects of our salvation. For God did also did something IN US when we believed. **He IMPARTS His LIFE to us which transforms, delivers & makes us whole** (John10:10) His power is working in us to move us forward. God's Purpose for us in the Journey of Life is to become more & more like Jesus through God's Life controlling us (Rom8:28,29)

3 Key Words describe this process:
 (1) **SALVATION**- Deliverance from all sin & curse by God's Life. This logically follows after (legal) Justification. (Rom5:9,10)
 (2) **SANCTIFICATION**- to be set apart to God, & to be set apart from all that is not of God, to made holy as God is holy, to be made Christ-like. (Rom8:29)
 (3) **GLORIFICATION**-Our purpose is to glorify God, & be God's glory -in who we are, by receiving of His glory (his love, life etc) & expressing it. Rom8:28-30 describes God's eternal purpose in making us like Jesus: "**Whom He called-He justified-He glorified.**" After justification God releases His life (glory) into us to begin glorifying us. To God in Eternity it's done. But now we're in the process of God's glory growing in us. "**We are changed from one degree of glory to another by the Spirit of the Lord**" (2Cor4:17,18)

SANCTIFICATION is by BLOOD (Hebrews13:12)
 The Great Exchange of the cross first secured our justification through remission of sin & imputation of Christ's righteousness (2Cor5:21) It 2ndly secured our sanctification by releasing us from the curse of sin & imparting the blessing (the LIFE of CHRIST) "**Christ has redeemed us from the curse (death) of the law being made a curse (death) for (instead of) us for it's written 'cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree' that the BLESSING of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through (union with) Jesus Christ-that we might receive the promise of the SPIRIT through faith.**" (Gal3:13,14)
 The new life we live is comes to us through the cross. The cross released the ministry of the HOLY (sanctifying) SPIRIT to us. He COMMUNICATES God's Saving & Sanctifying Life to us (John16:14) All sanctification (growth in holiness, conformity to Christ) is by the HOLY Spirit, so called because He is Holy & His primary ministry is to make us holy by imparting Christ's Life (holiness) to us (sanctification) Thus sanctification is through the love of God & grace of Christ communicated to us through the fellowship (participation) with the Holy-Spirit. (2Cor13:14)

3 Stages of SANCTIFICATION
 "The God of peace SANCTIFY you wholly-(1) spirit, (2) soul & (3) body."(1Thess5:23)

1. THE SALVATION of the (HUMAN) SPIRIT= Regeneration= a completed PAST action by the Holy-Spirit at the moment of receiving Christ, recreating & perfecting our spirit. (Col2:10, 2Cor5:17, Eph2:10) He put a brand new ENGINE in us! Our spirit is made of the resurrected life of Christ (Eph2:5, Gal2:20) "**Christ in us-the hope of glory**" (Col1:27) Thus we are called SAINTS (1Cor1:2) which means 'sanctified ones' We've been SANCTIFIED, MADE HOLY in spirit (1Cor 6:11, Heb10:10,14; Eph4:24, 1Cor1:30, Acts26:18) At the moment of faith the Holy-Spirit baptised us into Christ & regenerated our spirit & sealed us (2Cor1:22, Eph1:13, 4:30). He did such a good job that He was also able to permanently INDWELL our reborn spirit from that moment! (Matt9:17; John7:37-39,14:16,17, 1John3:24; 4:4,13; 1Cor6:19,20, Rom8:9,23; 1Cor2:12, 12:13; Gal3:2,4:6) The Anointing of God now dwells within us (1John2:20,27, 2Cor1:21,22)

2. THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL is a PRESENT tense continuous growth process (2Pet3:18) by the Spirit. (2Cor4:17,18)

3. THE SALVATION of the BODY Our salvation will be fully manifested in a FUTURE moment our resurrection. ULTIMATE SANCTIFICATION. (1John3:2, Jude25, Eph5:26,27; Rom8:23, 2Cor5:5)

Our present sanctification is the ministry of THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT.
 The 3rd Person of the Godhead INDWELLING US means we have the OIL & PETROL in our Salvation- we're powered up & ready to go! But while I trust in myself & push, the power is not released. But if I trust (sit) in my Salvation & turn the KEY OF FAITH, the power of God works for me & carries me along the highway of life until I reach my final destination. **We can only live & progress in the Christian life by continually trusting in the power of the Holy-Spirit.** Many Christians are like Mr Saved- they don't know the Holy Spirit is WITHIN them to help them live & grow. He continually works to sanctify us, to make us more like Jesus by releasing the LIFE & LOVE of God through us. (Rom5:5, 15:16, 1Peter1:2) But it only happens through our co-operation & fellowship with Him as we look to Him & trust Him to empower & sanctify us. We are sanctified through sharing in the life of the Holy-Spirit which flows from the Love of God & Grace of Jesus. (2Cor13:14) **So we must cultivate our dependence upon the Spirit.** He's not only the PETROL, but the HELPER sitting next to us guiding us on life's journey.

GOD'S PART & OUR PART IN SANCTIFICATION.

1. He is our HELPER (John14:16,17,26)--we do it but He provides us with the strength. We must look to Him & call upon His help. (We are not passive expecting Him to do it all for us.) He is a real Person, in you, sent to help you, available for you all the time. You can turn to Him in need & He will fill you with His strength & wisdom.

2. We must work out the salvation (life) that God has worked & is working within us continuously (Philippians 2:12,13, Rom5:5) The Fruit of the spirit comes from the Spirit but is born by the branches as they allow the sap (Spirit) to fill them. (Gal5:16-25)

3. "BE (BEING) FILLED (CONTROLLED) WITH THE SPIRIT" (Ephesians5:18) The Spirit will change us & impart God's life to us but it's up to us to let Him fill & control us. The command is given to us to let Him fill us.

HOW CAN WE BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT ?

1. REPENT of any known sin, especially of trusting in self (pride) Sin blocks our spiritual PIPE -when we confess it the Spirit can apply the blood & remove it, so we can be filled. (1John1:9)

2. YIELD-PRESENT YOURSELF TO GOD We have areas (rooms) of our soul & life that aren't renewed. We give access for God to fill (control) us by presenting ourselves (body & soul) to God, inviting Him to fill us. (Rom12:1,2; 6:13) We must give Him something to fill. Lifting of Hands & Tongues are ways we do this. He'll fill whatever we give Him. 2Kings4-gives a picture of this. The more jars she presented the more oil filled her house.

3. RECEIVE BY FAITH

"How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them who ask Him?" (Luke11:13,9) Ask-believing Him to fill you. He always answers this prayer. Believe you receive when you pray. (Mark11:24) So simple? Yes-God wants us to do this

all the time-to look to Him in faith for his filling. God's will is that we're continuously filled with, controlled by & walking in the Spirit for then His LIFE will flow through us, his LOVE (FRUIT) will be developed in us & we'll become more like Jesus everyday (sanctified) Don't reach out for a feeling, reach out by faith for God-desiring to be filled & He'll fill you. Don't think to be filled you have to have a great evangelist to pray for you & have a tingling feeling. He can't follow you around all week keeping you filled but the Holy-Spirit does & you can turn to Him everyday ask Him to fill you & He will. It's by faith (a spiritual transaction) you may or may not get a feeling but what's important is that you stay filled with the Spirit. He will always fill you when you ask but the degree He can fill you depends on the first two steps.

THE SEVEN SAYINGS OF JESUS FROM THE CROSS (1)

Dying words are always important. Often we remember them above what a man says in his life. Jesus on the cross uttered 7 sayings-full of significance. He did not give a long sermon but 7 short sayings. It was very painful to breath, let alone speak. He paid a price to say each word. Each word is choice. These sayings must be important and contain key revelations.

7 is the number of spiritual PERFECTION.

FIRSTLY, the Sayings reveal his PERFECT character-LOVE.

When we are under pressure-what's on the inside comes out. It's like a refiner's fire. Heat causes impurities to come to surface which can then be skimmed away. Our imperfections are revealed and if we then confess our faults He can cleanse us. But in the horror and terror of the cross, under the physical pain, with the weight of our sin and the wrath of God and the attacks of satan upon him as well as the cursing, hatred, and mocking of men, Jesus showed no hint of sin. His enemies thought: *Now he feels his pain, loss and failure-we'll see the real Jesus.* But, He proved himself to be pure love. When squeezed - only love came out. His PERFECTION was revealed when you look at the 7 Sayings. The real test of character in when it is under pressure. So, by the way he died Jesus gave ultimate proof convincing even the hardened Centurion and soldiers.

SECONDLY, the 7 Sayings reveal God's PERFECT provision through the cross for all 7 basic needs of man.

They reveal the 7-fold perfect salvation flowing from Jesus on the cross. The 7 words spoken from the cross represent his salvation released to every area of our life, by his blood. Beholding Jesus die for us, we see every blessing paid for and given to us, and we can believe and receive them.

THE SEVEN SAYINGS

1. Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.
2. Assuredly, I say to you, today, you will be with Me in Paradise.
3. Woman, behold your son...behold your mother
4. My God, my God why have you forsaken me?
5. I
6. It is
7. Into your hands I commit my spirit

They reveal the perfection of (1) HIS PERSON (2) His WORK

HIS PERSON

1. Love for his enemies who nailed him to the cross (us)
2. Special love for those who turn to him in faith.
3. Love for his family
4. Love for God in making the ultimate sacrifice
5. Love for us in bearing the curse of sin
6. Perserverence of love
7. Total loving trust to God

HIS WORK-salvation released from the cross

1. Forgiveness -salvation available to all
2. Eternal life with God (received by believer)
3. Spiritual family, healing of broken-heart (received by the believer)
4. Propitiation (a God-ward word) - suffering punishment for sin so that God can manifest His mercy
5. Curse to blessing - suffering the curse of sin so that we can receive the blessing.
6. Redemption accomplished
7. Eternal Security for the believer

THE FIRST SAYING:

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do (Luke23:34)

Here we see his LOVE for his enemies (the Romans and all the others crucifying him) This innocent man has just been put through 6 illegal trials, beaten, mocked, given a crown of thorns, had to carry his cross through jeering crowds of people who'd cried for his death in place of a murderer.

Finally his hands and feet were nailed to a cross and he was lifted up in great agony by cruel soldiers. In all this suffering he didn't lose faith in his Father God. In his agony would he cry for pity? Or condemn and curse his persecutors? No, in his love for those he came to die for, he forgot himself and prayed those who were hurting him. He had taught: **Love your enemies, bless..., do good...** **Pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.** (Matt5:44)
Now he put it into practice in the most extreme case and fulfilled the prophecy: **he will make intercession for the transgressors** (Isa53:12)

What LOVE to (1) **Forgive** and (2) **ask God to forgive** those who had turned against him in hatred and caused him such pain! This was unconditional forgiveness. What a perfect example of how to treat those who wrong us.

The hands that once healed were nailed to the cross. **The feet that took him from place to place to minister to people's needs were also bound. But his faith and prayers were not bound.**

He prayed that the Roman soldiers - his executioners would be saved.

Was his prayer answered? YES. They ALL became believers!
When the centurion and those with him guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that happened (including how he died), **they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.** (Matt 27:54, Mark 15:39, Luke 23:47)
At least 30 soldiers saved!
Then soon after 3000, & then 2000 men were saved who were responsible for his death. (Acts 2:23,36,41; 3:13-17,4:4) We see the same principle with Stephen's prayer for Paul (Acts 7:58-60; 9:4,5)
This shows us never to regard anyone as beyond the reach of prayer.

Our prayers keep on working, even after death! What if our movements are restricted, or we are stuck somewhere with no opportunities?

Jesus shows us we're never useless. **Our prayers are powerful!**

Often the elderly can't be so active, but they can accomplish more in retirement through prayer, than in the rest of their life!

Jesus prayed for others even in his last hours. **Even pinned to the cross Jesus could achieve great things through prayer.**

The first SALVATION blessing: FORGIVENESS.

Jesus spoke this word to show that FORGIVENESS flows from the cross, meeting man's first need.
As he hung there, his blood pouring from his wounds, he prayed that forgiveness would flow out to all who would receive.
The basis for that forgiveness was the very blood of the cross.
The cross revealed the full horror of our sin-we all had a part in Christ's death, and so this prayer and blessing is for all of us.
When man had done his worst, Jesus still extended forgiveness, showing that forgiveness is available for all sin and to all men.

THE SECOND SAYING:

'Truly, I say to you, today, You will be with me in Paradise.' (Luke 23:42,43)

The focus moves now to the 2 thieves who being crucified with him, reviled him. (Matt27:44, Mark15:32) fulfilling Isa 53:12: he was numbered with the transgressors in his death. While one of them blasphemed him, (Luke 23:39) - **the other rebuked him saying,**

'Don't you fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? and indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong. Then he said to Jesus: 'Lord, remember me when you come into your Kingdom' (Luke23:39-43)

This prayer immediately brought forth from Jesus the promise of eternal life in God's Kingdom.

The 2 ROBBERS represent the whole world, divided into 2 groups-sheep (believers) and goats (unbelievers)
We see Jesus' LOVE for the whole world-especially those who believe in him. Jesus dying in the midst of 2 criminals is a picture of him coming among sinful humanity, who are under the penalty of death, identifying with us and suffering our death (the death of a sinner) bearing the punishment we deserved, even though he was innocent (sinless), in order to give us new life and an eternal future in His Kingdom.

For the one who turned to him in repentant faith, received the promise of life. In this vivid drama we see a picture of salvation and of mankind's 2 responses to Jesus.

Both had sinned and so were under the sentence of death, dying and deserving to die. (Rom3:23, 6:23) We've all robbed God, when we don't give him what is due (our love and loyalty) As our Boss He gave us resources to use for His purposes but we have spent and used them for another company.

Both reviled Christ-but he did not damn them - he only loved them.
Christ loves even those who hate him.

Both knew his claims.

Both saw his perfection.

Both were under the same conviction of the Spirit (People railing against others are under conviction trying to deflect attention away

from themselves onto others' faults).

Both heard his offer of forgiveness.

Both had the witness of the written Word: *Jesus-king of Jews* written above his cross.

Both saw Jesus dying for their sins.
Like every person they had the choice to accept or reject Jesus.

One believed and received the promise of eternal life.
One rejected and died in his sins.

WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

The believing thief shows us true conversion:

(1) He realised Jesus was who he claimed

-the sinless Son of God, who therefore was not dying for his own sins but for ours.

(2) He acknowledged his sin and that he deserved to die.

(3) He knew he was helpless to save himself.

(4) He humbly asked Jesus to save him.

His prayer was in faith, acknowledging JESUS as his LORD.
He believed that he was the Messiah who would overcome death and reign as King over all- **when (not 'if') you come into your KINGDOM.**

He prayed: *'Lord, remember me, let me be part of your eternal Kingdom.'* He believed Jesus had the power to save, even him.

(5) Jesus heard and answered his prayer.

Jesus didn't respond to insults but this contrite prayer got his attention and brought forth an immediate answer. Even in all the battles and pains he was fighting, Jesus answered this cry of faith, giving this new believer many assurances of a place in God's Kingdom and Eternal Life. (John 6:47)

(1) Truly, (2) I say to you, (3) today, You WILL be with me in Paradise

When you call on the name of the Lord in faith, He answers at once.
Jesus is still willing and able to save all who come to him. (Romans 10:13)

You can have the same assurance of salvation from the lips of Jesus, as this man did. If God received this hardened criminal, He will receive you.

He is a wonderful picture of all who are saved by grace through faith (Eph2:8,9) The robber's hands were nailed to the cross

so he could do no good works.
His feet were nailed so he could not walk in the paths of righteousness.

He did no good works beforehand, to deserve salvation.

He was doing no good works when he received salvation.

He was dying so couldn't do any good works after salvation to keep it.

He represents all who believe and turn to Christ in their helplessness and receive the Promise of Paradise.

The 2nd SALVATION blessing flowing from the Cross to those who believe, is ETERNAL LIFE in God's Kingdom with a restored relationship and fellowship with God. (John3)

His NEED and request was

(1) to be in God's Kingdom
and (2) to be personally remembered (known) by Jesus.

Jesus answered

(1) by saying he would 'be in Paradise'
and also (2) by saying he would be 'with me'.

Eternal Life is knowing God, an eternal union and fellowship with God (John 17:3) The ultimate blessing is FELLOWSHIP=to be with Jesus (Phil 1:23, 2Cor 5:8, John 14:2,3, 1Thess 4:17)

Jesus longs for our fellowship.

The purpose of our salvation is that we might have a joyful eternity in heaven in sweet fellowship with Jesus, our Bridegroom.

There's one death-bed conversion in the Bible so none need despair, but only one that none may presume.

THE 7 SAYINGS FROM THE CROSS (part 2)

John had seen Jesus being put on the cross. Then he went to get Mary and the other women. Mary and John went to stand close to Jesus.

THE THIRD SAYING:

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother (Mary)...
When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple (John) standing by whom he loved, he said to his mother: **Woman, behold your son.**

Then he said to John: **Behold your mother** (John19:25,26)

When Jesus saw them, his heart went out to them in love. Normally anyone being tortured would turn in on themselves but Jesus' love transcended his pain. In his pain he wasn't selfish and self-pitying but reached out to meet their needs. He was concerned that his precious mother would be cared for. She had given birth to him and now he was leaving he wanted to make the best possible arrangements for her. This saying reveals his LOVE for his family. Even under the pressure of being the Saviour of the world, he still had time for his family and their needs and hurts. Even in bearing the world's sin he had time to care for Mary, showing us that loving and providing for our family is important to God. Never get so spiritual that you stop caring for your family. Jesus gave us an example to never stop honouring our parents. He calls her woman (a term of respect) rather than Mother perhaps to discourage the later idolatry of Mary as 'Mother of God' (Mariology)

Mary had been told in prophecy at the birth of Christ that: **A sword will pierce your heart** (Luke 2:34,35) This indicated his early death and her suffering. At the cross, Mary was silently and bravely suffering with a broken-heart (Joseph had also died) But Jesus knows our hurts and broken heart and provides healing. Mary was in danger of being forgotten as the gospel went forth, having done her bit. How terrible after sacrificing and giving much to be tossed aside when no longer needed. How often do children do this to parents or husbands to wives etc. Would Jesus leave Mary alone and unprovided for? No! He knew what Mary suffered and provided what she needed to restore her life and give her a place of honour and protection. Jesus brought John (his best man) to Mary, to take care of her. He chose the disciple who was most like himself to take his place as Mary's son, for he knew John would care for and love Mary as his own mother. That Mary's well-being was of great importance to Jesus is shown in his choice of John. He provided Mary with a relationship that would comfort her in her loss and loneliness, aiding the healing and restoration of her soul. By saying John, behold your mother Jesus was asking John to care for Mary as his own mother. By saying: Mary, behold your son he was providing Mary with a relationship that would comfort her in her loss.

The Third SALVATION Blessing - HEALING OF THE HEART and SPIRITUAL FAMILY.

Jesus spoke these words from the cross to show that from the cross flows healing for the broken heart, restoration and creation of good relationships (Divine connections) meeting the human need for friendship and family, the antidote for loneliness. Jesus brought 2 people together who had gathered around the Cross showing that from the cross flows peace, bringing together God's people as FAMILY. If we draw close to the Cross, like Mary, he will bring us into close family relations with other believers. He'll bring us together with others who are likeminded (who draw close to the cross) so that we can serve the Lord together-this applies especially to our marriage partners. John and Mary were not related, but in God's family they became mother and son. The spiritual family is even greater than the natural family. By this Saying, Jesus revealed God's provision for a lonely and broken heart. He knew what Mary was going through- her pain and grief and made provision. What Jesus did for Mary he wants to do for all. He understands. He is sensitive to our needs. He knows our hurts and pains. He knows what you are going through and wants to care and provide for you also.

THE FOURTH SAYING

At midday something most dramatic and unusual took place. Darkness fell over the land for 3 hours. This represented the terrifying judgement of God.

In this darkness Jesus cried out with a loud voice:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46)

This is the 4th and Central Saying. It reveals the heart of his mission, the heart of his work on the cross. Christ is God but he is also man. Here he speaks from his humanity- **My God (the Father), My God (The Holy-Spirit)** He uses 'God' rather than 'Father' because he has lost that intimate fellowship. They'd turned their back on him.

The saying comes from Psalm 22- a detailed prophecy of the sufferings of a crucified man written long before crucifixion was

even invented.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, so far from the words of my screaming (roaring) (Ps 22:1)

In all the physical, emotional and mental torment of his betrayal by Judas, 6 illegal trials, false witnesses, mockings, cursings, spitting, sluggings, beatings, scourgings that Jesus had suffered at the hands of man he was silent (Isa 53:7). All his pain and agony had not caused him to cry out.

Then when he hung on the cross in extreme pain with his bones pulled apart, where every breath was a torture, with many around him mocking his humiliation - he still did not cry out in pain. No, not once-not until midday when the sun was overhead and suddenly darkness fell.

Then in that darkness something happened that made Jesus scream.

What could be so much more terrible that made him scream?

In a moment your sins, my sins and the sins of the whole world were put on him and God the Father and God the Holy-Spirit turned their backs on him. He had lived a perfect holy life, hating sin-but now the sin of the world was placed on him. Jesus took our place and bore our sins.

He suffered the punishment that we deserved and which justice demanded. He died as a Sin-Offering and paid the penalty for our sin.

The wrath and judgement of God that we deserved now fell upon him. (Isa 53:6) In the 3 hours of DARKNESS he suffered the

equivalent of eternal hell. He'd lived in the fellowship and Presence of God his whole life, even from eternity, but now for the first time he was in darkness, separated from God's presence and blessing (spiritual death) Now he drank fully the cup of God's Wrath upon sin. (John 18:11) This is the horror that caused him to scream the words:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Ps22:1)

Why did it seem like God turned His back on Jesus?
Because: Thou are HOLY (v3) Since God is holy He can have nothing to do with sin. At that moment: He who knew no sin was made SIN for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2Cor5:21)
So now the full force of God's righteous and holy anger fell on Jesus. We cannot imagine the horror he had to suffer. What caused him to scream?

It was the only thing that could-your sins, my sins, the sins of every person who has ever lived. It was anticipating this in Gethsemane that caused him to sweat blood and ask God to provide another way of bringing our salvation. But there was no other way. He had to drink the bitter cup to the last drop. I'm so glad he did it! If he didn't pay the penalty for our sin, we'd have to pay the price ourselves. **This is the ultimate revelation of his PERFECT LOVE for us.** (1John4:10).

The 4th SALVATION blessing is PROPITIATION - the basis for every blessing.

It is only because of Christ's atoning sacrifice that God can freely offer us forgiveness and grace, because he fully satisfied God's Justice.

Our greatest need was for someone to take our place, bear the punishment for our sin and set us free from the Wrath of God upon us. The Saying shows that Jesus bore sin and God's wrath for us, so that now God is free to forgive and bring us back to Himself and pour out His grace, mercy and blessings upon us. Jesus spoke these words, showing that he was bearing our spiritual death and separation from God on the cross, in order that we can be re-united to God and receive His eternal and abundant life.

These words were spoken from the cross to God to reveal that flowing out from the cross GODWARD, was a propitiation, satisfying God's Justice and appeasing His anger upon sin. This in turn freed Him to pour out His abundant mercy and life upon mankind. Thus this central saying reveals the central aspect of the work of the cross- which by satisfying God's Righteousness, provides the basis for every blessing of God.

Jesus bore the sin of the whole world so that forgiveness and salvation is available to all through Christ. Now it's up to each individual to accept or reject God's offer of Mercy.

To the believer the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ is the basis for receiving all of God's grace, and results in a life of gratitude to God, lived to please and glorify Him.

To the unbeliever it is a warning- that if God did not spare his Son when your sin was upon him, then He will not spare you in the judgement if your sin is still upon you, as it surely will be, if you have rejected the forgiveness and salvation from sin provided through Christ's atoning sacrifice.

THE 7 SAYINGS FROM THE CROSS (part3)

THE 5th SAYING.

One of the effects of crucifixion was dehydration, causing an agonising need for water. Out of this human need Jesus said: **I THIRST** (John19:28)

Of all the sayings only this one focuses on Jesus himself and his need. His need was not just for physical water but for spiritual water -the water of life. Sin separates us from God's life. On the cross Jesus identified with us and bore our sin and was cut off from God and his life. This broken fellowship resulted in him experiencing spiritual drought. He became thirsty for the living water (God's life).

The 4th and 5th Sayings go together. In the 4th we saw him bear God's punishment for our sin. In the 5th saying we see that in bearing our sin he also took the consequences of our sin (the CURSE, which includes poverty, sickness and spiritual death- Gal3:13) We were made to have God's LIFE and BLESSING flowing through us. The effect of sin is that we dry up on the inside. If God's life isn't flowing, we feel dry and empty. This lack of blessing is to be under the curse. (Deut 28) We are thirsty for God (Psa 42:2) It is like having a hole inside that needs to be filled -so we try and fill it with all kinds of things (some good, some bad- drink, drugs, work, busyness, new-age, entertainment, relationships etc) We try and quench the thirst and fill that inner need. But none of these can truly satisfy-because it's a spiritual hole that only God can fill' Only one thing will truly satisfy and that is God's Life.

Over all the wells of this world are written the words that Jesus said:
Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again (John4:13)
Then he said: **If any man thirst let him come to me and drink..**
whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst,
but the water that I shall give him shall be in him

a well of water springing up into everlasting life (v14)

A Christian need never thirst, for an eternal supply of living water has been given to him!

The 5th SALVATION BLESSING flowing from the cross = ABUNDANT LIFE.

He said: **I thirst** to show he had entered into our condition of spiritual dryness and emptiness, curse and death in order that we might have life. He felt the effects of sin. He knows what it is like. Whatever need or emptiness we may feel, we can be sure that Jesus experienced it and worse on the cross. He was saying: **I have identified with you in your sin and death so that you might have LIFE! I experienced emptiness so that you might be filled!**

What he did was redemptive. It was for us! He experienced deadness and dryness that we may truly live. To give us LIFE he bore our sin and its effects-separation from LIFE. Jesus suffered thirst (lack) that we might have fullness of life. **I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly** (John10:10) On the cross he became a curse for us that the blessing of the Spirit might come upon us through faith-a DIVINE EXCHANGE.(Gal3:13,14) He was made thirsty so that our thirst may be satisfied with new life. Thus this Saying indicates that flowing from the work of the cross are RIVERS OF LIVING WATER (John7:37)

If we believe we can come to Him and drink and be filled. Jesus bore the sin and curse (thirst) of all so he can offer life to all. Salvation is not just forgiveness. Forgiveness is the start-it opens the door legally to enable us to receive new life from God that fills, transforms our whole being and sets us free-a life of love, joy and peace. This life quenches our inner thirst and propels us forward with purpose and a desire to please Him. The BLESSING of God includes healing, wisdom in life and prosperity.

THE 6th SAYING

Shortly before his death Jesus said triumphantly with a loud voice: **'Tetelestai' = It is finished = The Price is Paid-in full.** (John19:30) Then he bowed his head and yielded up his spirit. **'Tetelestai'** was a word used in commerce. When full payment had been made for some goods or for a debt, and the transaction was completed, the word **'Tetelestai'** was stamped on the document or receipt. It declared: **The price is paid in full.**

Man is under a great SIN-DEBT and under the POWER of SIN (we are slaves to sin) We needed a REDEEMER someone who can pay the price to set us free from sin and its claims on us. We were lost, we had fallen into the hands of sin and satan and Jesus came to pay the RANSOM PRICE to restore us to that we would belong the God and be in His Kingdom. He said: **Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a SLAVE of SIN... Therefore if THE SON sets you FREE you shall be FREE indeed.** (John 8:31-36)

The Son of Man didn't come to be served but to serve and to give HIS LIFE as a RANSOM for many. (Matt20:28, Mark10:45)

Redemption is COSTLY- the price Jesus paid was the highest possible. **You were not REDEEMED with corruptible things like silver or gold, BUT with the PRECIOUS BLOOD of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.** (1Peter1:18-19) Through his precious blood poured out for us in full Jesus paid the full price to redeem us from sin and the curse. He paid the penalty for our sins and purchased a place in heaven for us. He paid for every blessing we will have for eternity. Our enormous debt of sin is paid in full. Someone had to pay the price. Knowing that we were unable to do it, Jesus stepped in and paid it for us with his death.

Thus, the 6th SALVATION Blessing flowing from the cross is REDEMPTION.

The cross was the focal point for his mission. Here he took on and dealt with the root problem of man. This saying was his declaration of success: **I've done it, I've paid the price in full, it's finished, it's accomplished.** The cross looks like a defeat but it was a place of great victory.

A price must be paid for success in any work. There is a laying down, a self-denial before the reward, a death before a resurrection. Often people don't achieve great things because they are not prepared to pay the price, to sacrifice, to obey, to deny self. We want to coast and get the final result anyway. It doesn't work that way. **Thank God Jesus completed his work and paid the full price for our salvation!**

This Saying-which is the announcement of the finished work of Christ, is the cornerstone of our faith. After describing the cross in detail Psalm 22 ends with the prophecy that the message will be proclaimed to all people that: **He has done it** (v31) So, in fulfillment, this cry of victory from Jesus lips has been ringing down the ages.

When we hear it and realise what happened on the cross, faith arises in our hearts. Faith in Christ is not a leap in the dark, it's trusting in a certainty. Faith is based on the finished work of Christ. It is resting in what he has accomplished. It is believing that the work is done, and the blessing procured. It's believing him when he says: **It is finished: forgiveness, healing, every blessing is paid for.** When we see that He has done it, we enter into rest from our own labours. We cease from our struggle to pay for or accomplish it ourselves and just

receive freely what Jesus has done.
The price for our salvation is paid-now receive it. We can't add to what Jesus has done on the cross.

Before we tried to earn our place in heaven by being good, but there no peace or rest in a religion of self-effort. How can we know if we are good enough? In fact we fall well short of God's standards. Trusting ourselves and our own goodness is a sure way to fail. Faith is the opposite of self-dependance, by faith we enter into rest from self-righteousness. Now when we put all our trust in Christ and what his completed work on the cross, we enter into assurance of sins forgiven and the possession of eternal life. It does not depend on us but on Jesus who paid the price. We can entrust ourselves and our eternal destiny to Jesus. Now we live a good life not to earn a place in heaven but out of gratitude to the One who has given us eternal life.

THE 6th day (and 6th saying) is God's work completed.
The 7th day (and 7th saying) is His entering into rest.
At the moment of death we see Jesus in full control of the situation.
He had enough breath in his lungs to utter a loud cry and say:

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit (Luke23:46; Ps31:5)
When he knew he had completed his work he just yielded up his spirit and died. He laid his own life down.(John10:17,18)
Jesus was a man with a mission from God. He had carried it out to the end. Having done all there was but one thing to do, which was to entrust himself and his cause to God. As the terror and uncertainty of death stared him in the face he committed himself to his Father.

He gave us an example, that shows us how to pray.
When we have done everything we can in a situation and there is nothing more to do, and the way ahead seems uncertain then we should do what Jesus did. Knowing that God loves us and that He will see us through the time ahead we can pray: **Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.**

We can deposit, and entrust ourselves-our life, future, destiny into God's hands. Having done what we can, we can commit it all to Him and enter into rest from our works. We can trust and cast ourselves upon our Father who cares for us, utterly depending on Him to see us through.
As we enter a difficult situation with many dangers and unknowns we can feel powerless. But if we trust ourselves to the All-Powerful One we can go forward in confident faith that He will bring us through, up and out. We will go over and not under. There will be victory through apparent defeat.

Jesus faced the greatest unknown, the hardest challenge of all - death
- with a confident faith and expectation that the loving God to whom he had entrusted himself, would see him through the darkness and bring him out into the light. (1Peter 4:19, 2Timothy 1:12)
His faith was not misplaced. On the 3rd day God raised him from the dead. He brought him out. He did not let him down. Neither will he let you down if you put yourself into His caring hands. He looks after what is deposited into His care.

Jesus shows how we should face death.
For a believer it should be a confident expectation of entering God's Presence and finding oneself in the safety of the Father's hands, entering into rest from the storms of life. **Into thy hands** - signifies looking forward to closer fellowship with the Father.

The 7th SALVATION Blessing flowing from the Cross is Eternal Security and Rest in close Union and Fellowship with the Father.

Jesus was our Representative on the cross. We were 'in Christ' on the cross ('crucified with him') and so by these words he entrusted all believers into the Father's eternal hands -the eternally safe haven for our souls, from the winds and storms of life. As he rose and entered heaven he took us with him into the Father's hands. On the cross Jesus provided for our eternal security and fellowship in the Fathers Hands! No one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hands (John 10:29)

COMMUNION - one of God's CHANNELS (MEANS) OF GRACE to us.

THE MEANS of Grace. God wants us to: '**GROW in the GRACE of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**' (2 Peter 3:18)
GRACE is the freely given LIFE and BLESSING of God. All GRACE IS IN CHRIST. It flows from Christ's death, burial and resurrection. On the cross it was all paid for. When Jesus cried: '**It is finished**' ('Tetelestai') this was a commercial word meaning 'PAID IN FULL'. In the resurrection this grace was released to Jesus and to us.

Although the grace of God is freely available God has ORDAINED CHANNELS or MEANS of Grace which are normal ways it flows to us. As we give ourselves to these channels we'll receive an abundance of grace and GROW IN GRACE. We see the early church doing this: '**They continued stedfastly (1) in the apostles TEACHING, and (2) FELLOWSHIP, (3) in the BREAKING OF BREAD and (4) in PRAYERS (and PRAISE).**' (Acts2:42) These channels of grace are mostly related to the church meeting together. An isolated christian is not involved in the means of grace and doesn't grow.

THE BREAKING OF BREAD = COMMUNION is one of two ordinances Insituted by Jesus. **(1) BAPTISM** represents the once and for all start to the christian life (our New Birth) showing how we died and rose to new life with Christ, entering a RELATIONSHIP with God through Jesus. Thus we are only **BAPTISED once.**

When we receive Christ into our heart he comes in to have FELLOWSHIP with us: '**...if anyone opens the door of his heart to me, I will come into him and sup (eat) with him.**' (Revelation 3:20) To eat a MEAL with someone has always signified having FELLOWSHIP with them-that is the main purpose of eating together. **This is what the LORD'S SUPPER is about-fellowship (COMMUNION) with Christ and each other.**

(2) COMMUNION is a time to draw near to God and deepen our FELLOWSHIP with Him-and the best way is over a meal. It is only for Reborn Christians who've already entered into relationship with God. It is for them to renew and deepen fellowship. It is inappropriate for others. We see this in the original Supper where only Christ's disciples were there (Judas had left) Only if you are in God's family can you sit at the family table. We receive Communion again and again for though we enter into relationship once we continually renew fellowship. It is a meal-the Lord's Supper which represents our ongoing need to feed on the life of Jesus and to receive cleansing and forgiveness.

'As they were eating Jesus TOOK bread GAVE THANKS (BLESSED) and BROKE IT and GAVE it to them saying: 'Take eat, this is my body which is GIVEN for you do this in remembrance of Me' Likewise He also TOOK the CUP after supper and GAVE THANKS and GAVE IT to them saying: 'DRINK from it all of you. For this CUP is the NEW COVENANT in my BLOOD, which is shed for you (for many for the forgiveness of sins)' and they all drank from it.' (harmonised from Luke22:19-20, Matthew26:26-28, Mark14:22-25)

- Jesus' actions in instituting Communion have rich SYMBOLISM.**
- (1) **HE TOOK BREAD.** Jesus TOOK HIMSELF (HIS BODY) He is the BREAD OF LIFE born in BETHLEHEM ('House of BREAD') He was born to feed the world with Himself.
 - (2) **HE BLESSED IT** (lifting it up to God, OFFERING IT up to God with thanksgiving) Jesus offered himself up to God as a willing sacrifice.
 - (3) **HE BROKE IT** Jesus allowed his body to be BROKEN for us on the cross. BREAD in Hebrew means 'that which is crushed between the jaws' Bread contains nourishment but only when crushed by our jaws is it released to us. Jesus was crushed in the Jaws of Death so that the LIFE that was IN HIM could be released to us. (see also John6)
 - (4) **HE GAVE IT** to his disciples to eat. The LIFE and BLESSINGS purchased at the cross were FREELY GIVEN to us for our nourishment.
 - (5) **We must TAKE and EAT it.** We have the choice to accept or reject this grace. We must believe and receive the life of Christ into ourselves. He is the BREAD OF LIFE, to be received daily in our fellowship with him.

Jesus then **TOOK the CUP** (symbolic of the NEW COVENANT) containing the WINE (symbolic of his LIFE-BLOOD POURED OUT on the cross), **BLESSED IT and GAVE IT** to his disciples to drink. Life, joy, forgiveness and all the blessings in the CUP (new covenant) are in the WINE (his BLOOD) for **'the life is in the blood'** and when his blood was poured out the price was paid to establish the covenant and that life could be made available to us. Christ has BLESSED and GIVEN that LIFE to us and now it's up to us to DRINK DEEPLY from the CUP-forgiveness, peace, healing and all the blessings that are in the WINE (blood)

'Do this in REMEMBRANCE of Me.' If a husband 'forgot' he was married he would stop living as a married man. His wife would then remind him with their wedding photos and rings-the symbols of their union. In the busyness of life we can forget our roots and identity in Christ. Communion is a time to remember who we are-that we're God's children, forgiven and beloved, purchased by BLOOD. As we look at the symbols of bread and wine we remember that every blessing comes by GRACE from the cross of Jesus Christ. Every blessing is in the bread and wine (the body and blood of Christ) so when we eat and drink, we are receiving the grace of God, acknowledging our need of his sustenance. This keeps us from pride and trusting in self and causes us to look to Christ. The cross is the heart of our faith and we continually need to come back and focus on it, and remember (bring to the forefront of our mind) what Christ has done. Communion helps us to do this.

Luke24:13-35 On the Road to Emmaus Jesus had his 2nd Communion. Jesus drew near to 2 disciples but they didn't know him. (v15,16) Often Jesus is with us but too caught up with our problems we do not discern his presence. But: **'As he sat at table with them (fellowship) HE TOOK BREAD, BLESSED and BROKE IT and GAVE IT to them'** (v30) **'Then their eyes were opened and they KNEW Him.'** (v31) Later they told the other disciples **'how He was recognised by them IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD.'** (v35) Jesus draws close to us and reveals Himself to us in the Breaking of Bread. Our eyes are opened and we see him anew.

'The CUP of BLESSING which we bless is it not the COMMUNION of the blood of Christ? The BREAD which we break, is it not the COMMUNION of the body of Christ? For we though many are one bread and one body, for we all PARTAKE of that one bread.' (1Corinthians10:16,17) COMMUNION ('Koinonia'-a spirit of generous sharing, the opposite of greedy grasping) means FELLOWSHIP, the mutual sharing of life and blessing. In Communion we actually **PARTAKE of the body and blood** (we receive in a special way the spiritual life and grace that the bread and wine represents -see also v18-22) You PARTAKE of the spirit of those you have close fellowship with-that's what fellowship means! In Communion we partake of the LORD. He has FREELY given and freely offers His grace and we freely give our thanks and praise and rededicate ourselves to Him. Thus the Lord's Supper is a time of Communion, a place to renew and deepen our fellowship with the Lord. It reminds us that our fellowship is based and centred on the cross. It also deepens our fellowship with each other for we're reminded we are ONE BREAD and ONE BODY and share the same salvation, Saviour and life. We are sitting at the same family table in fellowship. So to properly enter into Communion we must be in a spirit of unity and forgiveness with brothers and sisters. (1John4:7-21).

1Corinthians11 gives instructions for Communion proving Christ gave it to all the church, not just the original disciples. Those who ate in a spirit of grasping and division were not eating the LORD'S SUPPER. (v17-22) Communion was so important it was supernaturally revealed to Paul (v23) **'Jesus TOOK bread and when he had GIVEN THANKS he BROKE IT and said: 'Take eat, this is my body which is BROKEN for you, do this in remembrance of Me'** (v23,24) **'Likewise He also TOOK the CUP after supper saying: 'This CUP is the NEW COVENANT in my BLOOD. This do as often as I drink it in remembrance of me.'** For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes.' (v25,26) **'As often as you eat'** shows we are to take Communion repeatedly and there is no limit. **'Until he comes'** shows that he instituted communion for the church until his return. **'You proclaim the Lord's death'** means we confess (show) our faith in the blood by drinking.

It is the 'LORD'S SUPPER' (v20) **He has invited us to come to his table and eat.** "He has prepared a table for me in the presence of my enemies...my cup runs over." (Psalm23) All the blessings (healing etc) are on the table-symbolised in the bread and wine for they all come through the body and blood of Christ. We are free to TAKE and EAT them. All the blessings are great but the FOCUS of attention is JESUS. Our eyes should be open to see JESUS-THE HOST IS PRESENT. He has provided everything on the table. He wants us to enjoy all the blessings but most of all he wants to enjoy our fellowship. No good host would invite but not come! He said: 'REMEMBER ME- put me on the forefront of your mind-remember I am with you.' SEE JESUS the Focus of the Feast.

Therefore we must approach the Lords Table knowing we do it in his presence, at his invitation and not to participate unworthily. Treating the body and blood lightly is UNBELIEF which opens the door to destruction. (v27-32) We need to judge (check,prepare) ourselves to make sure we are entering into the meal properly. COMMUNION IS POWERFUL. For received wrongly it can be a cause of early death. Received correctly it is a major CHANNEL OF GRACE. (like a high voltage wire)

MEDITATION AT COMMUNION

SEE JESUS standing here. Open our eyes to see Jesus. You are sitting at his Table-his banner over you is love. He wants to share Himself with us. He calls us to a deeper fellowship with Him. The doorway to this is in our heart to draw close to the cross and remember

Looking at the bread remember that all the blessings are from body of Christ broken for us.
Looking at the cup remember that all blessings are through the blood.

As we see him dying for us, let go of all pride and superiority:
'Forbid it lord that I should boast save in the cross of Christ my God-
all the vain things that charm me most I sacrifice them to his blood'

Forgive and pray for the person that hurt us. How dare we not, when we remember we were forgiven of so much.

Confess any sin, see him die for it, release it and receive forgiveness.

See him carry your sickness, rejection and shame and receive health, favour and acceptance from God.

As you see him giving his life for you, THANK HIM and REDEDICATE yourself (your plans, your week) to Him.

KEYS TO MENTAL HEALTH

God wants His children to be healthy-in spirit, soul and body. (1Thess 5:23) We especially desire to have a healthy, well-adjusted, peaceful mind for: '**as a man thinks in his heart so he is.**'

The Creation of Adam reveals man's constitution. 'The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground (BODY) and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (SPIRIT) and man became a living SOUL.' (Genesis2:7) You are a spirit, you have a soul and you live in a body. We are like a light-bulb! The body is the visible filament. When it is combined or fused with invisible electricity (the spirit) it produces light (the living-soul or personality) The spirit is the source of your life. The body contacts the physical world, the soul contacts the mental world and the spirit is designed to contact and perceive the spirit realm -especially God who is Spirit. Now if you are born-again, you are a new creation (2Corinthians5:17) your SPIRIT IS SAVED but your BODY still has sin in it's members and WILL BE SAVED only in the resurrection. The body must not control us but we (our inner-man) must bring it under control. (1Corinthians9:27) **The key is our SOUL** (MIND, WILL and EMOTIONS) which is BEING SAVED as we hear and do the Word. (James1:21,22)

Our SOUL or MIND is in the middle of a war between our flesh (our unrenewed human nature) and our reborn spirit. It is being pulled from both directions. It either lines up with the flesh or the spirit (Jesus said you either serve God or Mammon but not both-Matthew6:24) The Mind can only be set in ONE direction at a time. Whichever your soul chooses to respond to and obey will dominate (2 against 1). What we choose to focus our mind upon determines if we come under the power of LIFE and HEALTH or DEATH and CURSE. 'The righteous requirement of the law (LOVE) is fulfilled in us who don't walk according to the FLESH but according to the SPIRIT. For those who live according to the FLESH set their minds on the things of the FLESH, but those who live according to the SPIRIT set their minds on the things of the SPIRIT. For to be FLESHLY minded is DEATH, but to be SPIRITUALLY minded is LIFE and PEACE.' (Romans8:4-6)

'Walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not the things that you wish' (Galatians 5:16,17) The contrasting results of obeying the flesh and spirit are described in v19-23. 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for what a man sows he shall reap. He who sows (gives his attention and life) to his flesh will from his flesh reap corruption (a lower life will fill his soul) but he who sows to the spirit will of the spirit reap eternal life (a higher life will fill his soul).' (Galatians 6:7,8). When we choose to live by the spirit, the Christ-life and peace in the spirit flows into our mind and soul thus giving us a healthy mind. 'God has not given you a spirit of fear but A SPIRIT of power, love and a SOUND MIND.' (2Timothy1:7) Jesus died to give us PEACE and deliverance from mental torment (Isaiah53:5)

'You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on (and frequently returns to) You because he trusts in You.' (Isaiah26:3) A HEALTHY MIND is a mind fixed on and preoccupied with CHRIST. 'If you were raised with Christ (to a higher life) seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth, for you died and your life is hidden with Christ.' (Colossians3:1-3)

It's our choice to be controlled by our bodies and become like the world or to REPENT (to CHANGE the whole orientation of OUR MIND to spiritual things and God's priorities) and let the spirit-life of Christ shine: **'Present your bodies to God as a living sacrifice and do not be conformed to this world (squeezed from the outside) but be transformed (from the inside, by 'metamorphosis', where the inner spirit-life is expressed and manifested outwardly) by the RENEWING (literally-the CHANGING) of your MIND (from being set on the flesh to being set in agreement with the spirit)'** (Romans 12:1,2) When your soul (mind) agrees with your spirit, the life of Christ in your spirit can flow into and through your soul bringing peace, love and health. Think of the soul as a rubber ball and there are 2 kinds of life that want to mold it (from the inside and outside). If it yields control to the worldly desires of the flesh then it's squeezed into conformity with the world. If it yields to the spirit then it's formed into the character (mind) of Christ-which is true mental health! So, we can all tell what you've been yielding to!

HOW can we have a HEALTHY RENEWED MIND ?
 The 3 basic requirements are the same for a HEALTHY MIND as for a healthy BODY:

1. NOURISHMENT 2. ELIMINATION 3. EXERCISE.

1. NOURISHMENT The mind like a computer can only work on the raw material fed to it. ('Rubbish in, Rubbish out') So fill the mind with good thoughts, especially the Word of God.(Matthew4:4, 1Timothy4:6, Psalm1). For a healthy body, you screen out bad food and feed yourself good food-likewise for a healthy mind: **'Whatever things are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-meditate on these things.'** (Philippians4:8) You have the power to choose what you eat and meditate on. If you are chewing unhealthy thoughts you have the power to change your thoughts: **'PUT OFF the OLD MAN (bad thoughts) .and be RENEWED (changed) in the spirit of your mind and put on the NEW MAN (live by the reborn spirit.'** (Ephesians4:22,24) You don't have to think on everything that happens -you're not the answer to every problem. Focus your life to do the best you can do with your abilities and resources. If we don't fill our mind with the Word it becomes like an vacuum-cleaner sucking in everything the world and the devil whispers to you. ('You're no good, you're going to be sick, its O.K to steal a bit, to lie a bit, nobody likes you.') **'No longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility (vanity=VACUUM) of their mind.'** (Ephesians4:17) These destructive thoughts break in and there's no resistance. G.K.Chesterton said: **'Men who stop believing in God don't believe in nothing but in anything.'** The result in v18 is: **'their understanding is darkened, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance in them because of the hardness of their heart (in originally rejecting the Word).'** If the Word is in you, you have the strength to rise up and kick out with the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT any destructive thoughts, as you would eject someone coming to squat in your house! 'No that's wrong, that's not my thought and it's not God's thought.' Let the Helmet of SALVATION cover your mind- meditate on the COMPLETED VICTORY of CHRIST, and who you are in Christ,your past and future salvation.

2. ELIMINATION A healthy body monitors, detects and ejects what is harmful. Likewise our mind. We're to monitor our thoughts by the PEACE OF GOD which guards our thoughts and tells us if they are right or wrong, to be accepted or rejected. **'Have no anxiety about anything ..but in everything...let your requests be made to God and the PEACE OF GOD which surpasses all understanding will GUARD your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus.'** (Philippians4:6,7) **'Let the peace of God rule (as an umpire) in your hearts.'** (Colossians 3:15)

A.N.T.S (Automatic Negative Thought S) will come into our minds but they're not truly our thoughts unless we take hold of them, speak them out and act on them. 'You can't stop birds fly overhead but don't let them build a nest in your hair.' A thought unspoken and not acted on dies unborn. Kill the A.N.T.S !

If we have yielded to, spoken out or acted upon a wrong thought then it's become part of our soul. Undealt with, a thought leads to a deed which causes a habit which becomes our character which determines our destiny.

We can and must eject it by CONFESSION- 1John1:9.

3. EXERCISE We (1) take in the WORD and (2) expel the negative but to be truly healthy the soul must be (3) exercised for it is only in DOING THE WORD that the character of Christ is formed in the soul and the life and blessing of God released. **Those with a healthy mind are productively fulfilling their purpose in life and they have screened out thoughts that hinder this. They control what goes on in their mind rather than letting their thoughts run rampant, controlled by whatever is happening around them.** They take responsibility for their thought-life rather than blaming circumstances or other people. Men used to wear long flowing tunics which would trip them up if they ran somewhere. Our uncontrolled minds can be like these tunics-we can't move forward very fast because our thoughts keep tripping us up. So, to make progress they had to tuck their tunics into their belt. Thus Peter tells us: **'Gird up the loins of your mind.'** (1Peter1:13) **'Christians, stop standing around with your minds all over the place, distracted, confused, NO FOCUS. Tuck your minds into the BELT OF TRUTH and run your race. Stop wallowing in negative thoughts and speculations. FOCUS on your purpose in life-to LOVE GOD and LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR.'**

SPIRITUAL

EXERCISES

1. PRAISE One of the most healthy things you can do is fill your life with praise. In MAGNIFYING GOD your problems seem much smaller. You realise He is the God of resurrection- He has already overcome them, that He will work everything for good and nothing shall separate you from His Love. So as you PRAISE, your mind is on Him and His Presence fills you and discouragement and defeat disappears. Church Praise Time is very important - if at all possible come in time so you don't miss some of it. You miss out and it dishonours God.

2. PRAY for others

3. Forgive others. (You can do all this every day by praying through the Lords prayer)

4. Find a place of SERVICE and MINISTRY. He that is greatest in the Kingdom is the servant of all.'

5. Use your tongue to develop control of your thoughts. If your mind is out of control use the rudder of your tongue to steer it back on course! (James3:4) Your will can exercise control over your mind by using your tongue. As you start speaking the Word you will start thinking it also, for you must focus and think on what you're saying.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR THOUGHTS!

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Jesus died on the Cross as our final sacrifice, the supreme intervention of God into man's history. Without it none of us could have been saved. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane: **'Father if it be possible there is any other way to save them, let this CUP be taken away - let there be another way.'** Surely God would have answered His Son's prayer if it were possible but it was not. Man's problem was so serious that the Cross was the ONLY answer.

If we have a true revelation of the Cross we will have the attitude of Paul in Galatians 6:14: 'God forbid that I should boast **except in the CROSS of our Lord Jesus Christ**'

This revelation kills our self-righteousness. The Cross alone delivers us from sin, Satan and the curse. It is the source of all forgiveness, salvation, healing and spiritual blessing.

The Cross is the supreme demonstration and proof of the LOVE OF GOD for us. **'So must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (to die), that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life'** (John3:15,16).

If you asked Jesus: **'How much do you love me?'** He would stretch out His hands and say: **'This much.'**

His act of love on the Cross provides our total salvation and victory.

So, Romans 8:37 says: **'We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.'**

His act of love, dying for us on the Cross is what gives us the victory.

'By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us' (1John3:16).

'In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1John4:9-10).

'God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom5:8). He did not love us because we are good. He loves us unconditionally.

His love is personal: **'I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me'** (Gal 2:20).

Paul prayed that we: **'being rooted and grounded in Love, may be able to comprehend the WIDTH and DEPTH and HEIGHT**

- to know the LOVE OF CHRIST (revealed through the Cross)
- that you may be filled with all the fullness of God' (Ephesians 3:14-21).

It is through a revelation of God's love in the Cross that we are filled with His love, life and blessings because all His provision flows from the Cross.

The WIDTH of His Love means **'He died FOR ALL'** (2Cor5:14,15).

'He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world' (1John2:2). His outstretched arms reach back to all in the past (they were forgiven 'on credit') and to us in the future. He paid the price for all sins to be forgiven, for all men, for all time - past, present and future. Pray for those who don't know about it - the only sin not covered is the sin of rejecting Christ. To ignore someone is to reject them!

The LENGTH of His Love is from everlasting to everlasting.

'I have loved you with an everlasting love; so with loving-kindness I have drawn you' (Jer31:3). **'He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world'** (Eph1:4).

The Cross was the supreme manifestation of Love but His Love for us is eternal - past, present and future. It never ends.

The DEPTH of His Love is how much he was prepared to suffer for us.

This included his physical suffering, the hatred of his enemies, the abandonment by his friends. But His cup was far more than this. The worst was bearing the sins and curse of the whole world and God's Wrath and Judgement on our sin. **'Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was on Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all'** (Isa 53:4-6).

The HEIGHT of His Love. In His love He reached down low into the depths of sin, sorrow, hell and death, in order to lift us up HIGH with Him. His love raises us up to new life and abundance, even into union and fellowship with the Godhead.

The Great Exchange was completed on the Cross - a perfect work that cannot be added to. The Cross was the perfect work of God where God put all our SIN and CURSE (the consequences of sin, including sickness) on Jesus once and for all and JUDGED it. Every

curse stops at the Cross and every blessing comes to us through the Cross: 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse, having become a curse for us (as it is written, 'cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith' (Gal 3:13,14, also Col 1:13,14). Often we try and get blessed by one thing and another but the Bible way is KNOWING and ACCEPTING the TRUTH of what was done on the Cross. Jesus said: *'IT IS FINISHED - I have taken it, I have paid the price in full. Now believe it and receive it and walk in it.'*

So satan's aim is to cloud the issue, so that Christians look to all kinds of fads (anything but the Cross for life, healing, proof of God's Love etc). *'Forbid it Lord that I should boast, save in the Cross.'* Satan wants to get your eyes off the Cross so you start doubting that God loves you, that the curse has been taken, that the blessing is already yours through Christ. Thus the Bible warns us not to get our eyes off the work of the Cross:

'Preach the GOSPEL, not with wisdom of words, lest the CROSS of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the CROSS (that it is a perfect finished work providing our full and eternal salvation) is foolishness to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God' (1Cor 1:17,18).

'O foolish Galatians! who has bewitched you that you should not obey (walk in the reality of) the truth (what truth? - the finished work of the Cross) before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? ...Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' (Gal 3:1,2). The only way you receive anything from God is by hearing in faith the message of the Cross.

The Cross is the ancient symbol of LIFE from DEATH. It is the END of everything of the OLD CREATION so that the NEW CREATION could come forth in RESURRECTION. Everything Jesus paid for on the Cross was released in the resurrection. So on the one side we see Him take the curse (Good Friday) and on the other side we see Him release the blessing (Easter Sunday). When God raised up the man Jesus Christ, He poured into him every blessing of abundant life. Now all who receive Christ are put 'in Christ' (united to Christ), so that the same power that raised up Christ is given to them (Eph1:19-2:10). Resurrection Victory, Healing, Life, Power are now ours in Christ!

The 'IN CHRIST' scriptures tell us our blessings IN CHRIST which all come through His Death, Burial and Resurrection.

It helps as we read 'IN CHRIST' or 'IN HIM' to add: 'through His Death and Resurrection'.

Try doing this with the following Scriptures:

Rom 6:11: 'Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ (through His Death, Burial and Resurrection).'

Rom 6:23: 'The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Rom 8:1,2 'There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.'

Rom 8:37: 'In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us.'

2Cor 2:14: 'Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ.'

2Cor 5:17: 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (through His death and resurrection); old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.'

Gal 3:14: 'The blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.'

Ephes 1:3: 'God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.'

Ephes 2:7: 'In the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.'

Ephes 2:10: 'We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus (by His death and resurrection) for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.'

Ephes 4:32: 'Forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.'

THE PIRATES OF CILICIA

Paul used a war from the recent history of his native Cilicia to illustrate our spiritual warfare.

This was the most dramatic episode of its history and he would have known it well. There had been a longstanding and growing pirate problem.

Palestine was the food basket of Rome and the supply ships had to go past the rocky Cilician cliffs. The pirates had high rock forts (120 of them) called STRONGHOLDS - these were their Bases. They would come out of the strongholds, raid the ships, steal the food and retreat back to their secure stronghold high up on the cliffs. All the efforts to defeat them on sea failed. Even after successful skirmishes their bases were intact and secure and the root of the problem had not been touched. There was by 67 BC an army of 10,000 Pirates that had brought Rome to its knees by cutting off its supplies. They had their foot on the neck of Rome. The problem was urgent and could not be avoided. It was Rome's major problem. Rome's normal approach to warfare failed, their weapons ineffective, because this was a different kind of army- more of a 'underground' gorilla operation. The problem was so serious that the Senate commissioned top general Pompey to deal with the problem. They offered him whatever he needed and gave him 3 years to fix it.

He had a brilliant plan (STRATEGY). He designed and built special MIGHTY WEAPONS to attack their bases rather than the individual pirates. These were ships with huge grappling hooks that he sent in 11 directions to attack the strongholds. They catapulted the hooks up onto

the cliffs to PULL DOWN THE STRONGHOLDS. The Roman fleet did not go after the pirate ships - instead every stronghold built in proud defiance against Rome was pulled down into the sea. Meanwhile Roman soldiers were positioned to capture any fleeing pirates. They brought them into captivity to the obedience of Rome (the captives are led into a new stronghold - brought under subjection to Rome). Most surrendered and came into obedience. Those who did not were punished (killed) for their disobedience.

The Pirates were overwhelmed and had no answer to these mighty weapons, which were specifically designed for pulling down the strongholds. In just 3 months Pompey had totally defeated the pirates. What had seemed to be an insoluble bondage was broken permanently. Knowing that normal weapons would fail Pompey had absolute victory by using mighty weapons. There was no more Pirate problem. He overwhelmingly defeated them and the problem never returned. Later he became Emperor. Now the provisions could freely flow to Rome.

The only way to get a permanent solution was to pull down their strongholds, rather than try fight all the pirates individually.

This war is the historical background to our passage:
'Though we walk in the flesh we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God (1) to the pulling down of strongholds - casting down imaginations (and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God) (2) and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (3) and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled' (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

These verses describe aggressive spiritual warfare through the speaking of God's Word.

The battleground is in men's minds (v4).

From the context we know that Paul is defending his ministry against the accusation that he is not God's representative but rather is using his natural powers to spread his beliefs: **'some think of us as if we WALKED ACCORDING TO THE FLESH'** (v2b). They had accused him of living by a selfish motivation and depending on fleshly (natural) power to get results. The word 'according to' is 'kata', meaning he is walking 'under the control of' the flesh, ie, under its power, motivation (selfishness) and its strategy (impulsiveness).

Paul's answer is two-fold (v3):

1. 'For though we walk in the flesh...' He concedes he acts out his life in the sphere of the flesh. The life from within must flow through his natural man. He is saying more than that he has a flesh body but that his education, personality, natural abilities are part of his preaching - and that's O.K. Be yourself in witnessing. Don't put on a religious front. Be natural and spontaneous. Let your personality come through.

2. Paul then says: '..we do not war after (according to) the flesh.' His ministry involves spiritual warfare against powers of darkness. However, to get the job done he does not depend upon his natural power. Although his natural abilities are involved, the power source for his warfare is not in the flesh, neither is his motivation or strategy (see 2Tim1:7).

Then he makes his main statement (v4):

'For the WEAPONS of our WARFARE are not carnal (of the flesh'). Realizing that the flesh and its weaponry are ultimately weak to do God's will he does not use them. He has moved into a higher realm) **- but MIGHTY THROUGH GOD.'**

There are two vital things from God in his ministry: (1) Mighty Weapons and (2) A Divine Strategy.

The WEAPONS are the WORDS OF GOD released through preaching, confession, witnessing or prayer.

He is telling us about the power of the WORD.

Romans 1:16: 'The Gospel (Word) is the power of God unto salvation.'

Jeremiah 23:29: 'Is not My Word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces.'

It has the power to burn through all resistance, to destroy satan's work, and smash all hardness and unbelief.

Jer 1:10: 'See I have this day set you (one who speaks the Word of the Lord) over the nations and kingdoms to root out, to pull down and to destroy, to throw down (to reach up and pull down), **and to build and plant.'**

Jesus overcame the devil by the power of the Word saying: 'It is written'

Likewise we overcome: **'by the word of our testimony'** (Rev 12:11).

'The word of God is living, powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword' (Heb.4:12). There is tremendous power in the Words of God to save and transform. They are weapons that can change a man's eternal destiny, defeating the powers of darkness over him, bringing him into the light. Even Paul with his natural ability had to come to the end of trusting his own power and instead depend on God's weapons. He changed the world using the ultimate weapon.

In Greek: 'mighty through God' (which describes the power of our weapons) literally means **'mighty in the sight of God'**. Mighty ('dunatos'), means **'inherently powerful'**. You see, in our sight, the sun is mighty. However, even the greatest natural power is not mighty in the sight of God for it is but the work of His fingers. But these weapons are MIGHTY EVEN IN GOD'S SIGHT! This is a far greater, superior power - Divine Power!

Paul says he is not impulsive but has God's STRATEGY. This is in the word for WARFARE (strateia) - where we get the word strategy from. This is not just a battle but an ongoing military campaign that requires strategy. So Paul says that his weapons and his strategy are not of the flesh but of God. We need both weapons and a strategy to succeed. A strategy is a plan of action whereby you focus your effort to achieve a goal. It's easy to defeat an enemy with no strategy because he reacts predictably when pressed. With no plan he is easily outwitted. We must planned strategy rather than move by impulse, reacting to each pressure. We should mobilise all our forces according to our plan as a general would during a military campaign. You can have mighty weapons but without the right strategy they will be ineffective.

Paul goes on to describe the Weapons and God's Strategy for using them. In v4, Paul made his main statement which he now enlarges upon: **'The Weapons of our Warfare are Mighty through God.'**

Anticipating our questions: *'how mighty are the weapons, how do they work and what do they do?'* and *'What is the strategy for using them?'*, Paul answers us by analogy with the Pirate War. He traces the Roman battle plan to describe the war he is fighting, using a natural war to describe a spiritual war.

His spiritual weapons are designed for a purpose: They are MIGHTY THROUGH GOD: **'to the pulling down of strongholds'** (v4b). The WEAPONS are the WORDS OF GOD designed for a purpose, they are Divinely powerful 'to the pulling down of strongholds' (v4b). These high strongholds refer to the Pirate fortresses on the Cilician coast, pulled down by the Roman grappling-hooks. The original meaning of 'stronghold' was a military fort or fortress (high military works thrown up, or lofty natural fortresses with their battlements of rock). From these Strongholds Pirates were stealing all the food going to Rome.

Interpreting this, Paul gives the spiritual parallel to 'the pulling down of strongholds': 'Casting down IMAGINATIONS and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God' (v5).

What are these strongholds, Paul? They are imaginations, high, proud, deceptive thoughts in men's minds. Paul was saying: *'My battlefield is the minds of men. Just as the Romans designed and used mighty weapons to pull down military strongholds, I use God's Words which are designed to pull down imaginations in men's minds.'* The 'high things' are false beliefs formed independently from God's Word. They correspond to the strongholds. The real warfare is in the mind.

What are these 'stronghold - IMAGINATIONS'? **Imaginations** ('logismous') are not just passing thoughts but false beliefs about God, oneself or the world; belief structures, inner convictions, settled conclusions based on evidence; reasonings erected against the knowledge of God.

They are manifestations of pride built on the foundation of a lie against God's character, a distortion of God's Word. BELIEF STRUCTURES BLOCKING THE FLOW OF BLESSING. DEMONIC DECEPTIONS. PROUD PRINCIPLES OPPOSED TO GOD'S TRUTH. MAN'S REASONINGS in REBELLION to God's REVELATION. VOID VIEWPOINTS. FOOLISH FALSE BELIEFS.

A stronghold is an inner belief, e.g. something happens that causes them to believe God doesn't love them, or that they are a failure (use the weapon of Eph 2:10), or that they are fearful by nature (2Tim 1:7) or that God doesn't want to heal them (1Peter 2:24). When people believe a lie about God or themselves, an evil stronghold is built in their mind that satan uses to control their lives and give them thoughts that steal God's blessings.

Having pulled down the stronghold, the next stage is: 'bringing into captivity every thought (noema) to the obedience of Christ' (v5).

This is the mopping-up operation. 'Noema' are thoughts that proceed from our basic convictions (strongholds). They correspond to the pirates. **PIRATES are the thoughts that flow in and out of the 'strongholds'**. Once the stronghold is dealt with they are easily captured and bow the knee to Christ.

All 120 strongholds were destroyed and 10,000 Pirates were taken captive to the obedience of Rome. Thoughts (pirates) have their basis in belief structures (strongholds). **God is sending ships of blessings but Pirates proceed out of the strongholds to steal them.** Rather than fight the pirates individually, pull down the strongholds and then it's easy to capture the Pirates. We must focus on attacking the stronghold rather than chasing individual thoughts.

First go to pull down the strongholds (the central important beliefs rather than side issues), then take the pirates into captivity - this is GOD'S STRATEGY! Once their base is destroyed pirates are vulnerable, have no strength and are easily captured (individual thoughts are easily dealt with the stronghold down). You can defeat many Pirates but if you leave their stronghold untouched you have not dealt with the root cause. They still have a base of operation, support and protection and the problem will continue and grow. The strategy of the flesh is impulsive, attacking the pirates (apparent cause) but not getting to the root cause so the problem returns. Pompey's strategy must be ours. The Words of God, like Pompey's weapons, are specifically designed to pull down the strongholds satan has set up.

Thus if I believe God does not care for me, I will have a stronghold in my mind ('God does not love me') from which pirates of worry will flow to steal from me God's blessings (thoughts that spoil my joy and peace). The key to defeat worry is to destroy the stronghold first (with a revelation of God's loving care) - then you can easily deal with the

pirates (worries): 'Casting all your care upon Him for He cares for you' (I Peter 4:7). If the stronghold is left intact the pirates will come back. First the strongholds were dealt with and then the pirates. Likewise Paul first deals with basic wrong beliefs, then it's easy to sort out any wrong thoughts.

Ironically most teachings from these verses just tell people to keep taking their thoughts captive resulting in an endless warfare against the pirates, completely missing the strategy Paul is proposing. If you identify 'thoughts' (noema) with 'imagination' (logismos) you will conclude Paul is repeating himself and you miss the two-stage strategy. Many think this is just about taking thoughts captive but that misses the point about the strategy of pulling the strongholds down first using GOD'S WORD not will-power.

When we preach Christ, the Word pulls down the strongholds of Satan in their minds so that they can believe in Christ (their thoughts then come into obedience of Christ). The Gospel pulls down the basic beliefs opposing Christ from which their wrong thoughts proceed preventing them from receiving the blessing of salvation. The Word also erects strongholds of truth, in fact building up is the major part (v8), but Paul here is defending the negative side of his ministry. Part of preaching is pulling down those beliefs that continue to steal. Having stormed the stronghold, we lead every thought captive to the OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST (the new stronghold into which the captives are led). All thoughts come into surrender to Christ's truth.

The third stage is in v6: 'If the hearers are fully obedient every last rebellious thought will be destroyed just as all the Pirates who did not surrender were punished (destroyed)'
The Pirates who did not surrender were put to death.

The final stage was the Triumph:
'Thanks be to God, Who always causes us to triumph in Christ, and makes manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place' (II Cor 2:14). After the victory the General had a triumphant procession through Rome. He rode in his chariot with all the captives in chains behind. As we witness, God's Word gives us victory and He leads us in a constant triumph. We are in the chariot in Christ triumphing over our enemies. As we continue to use the Word, we continue to triumph.

God in His grace is always sending ships of blessings on the rivers of His Spirit.
But often before we can enjoy them pirate-thoughts come rushing out of our wrong beliefs and steal them. Sinners blinded cannot receive salvation. God is sending salvation to them but the strongholds in their minds prevent them from seeing and believing (2 Cor 4:4). Christians blinded cannot receive healing, forgiveness or God's love. These strongholds built in ignorance and opposition to God's Word cannot be destroyed by natural weapons. All your brains, charm, skill and reasons can't do it. The strongholds you face may seem permanent, there for many years but God has given you weapons so powerful you can destroy them completely in a short time like Pompey (the Pirates had been a recurring problem for 100 years). As you speak the Word the strongholds will fall, and blessings flow. God wants people blessed but they are defeated by their own thoughts. By preaching the Word you pull down the doubt and raise up strongholds of truth so God's blessings will flow into their lives. Believe this happens as you preach.

Just as Pompey using his weapons won a decisive and final victory, so you, trusting in the power of the Word and the anointing of the Spirit will release overwhelming power resulting in the total destruction of the castles of doubt and unbelief.
No longer paralysed by pirates, they will find it easy to step by faith into the Provision of God! However great the unbelief, God's powerful weapons can destroy all strongholds and pirates decisively in a short time. What had seemed to be formidable fortresses were soon crushed. Once the strongholds go, the pirates (thoughts) are quickly captured and now salvation and the blessings (provisions) can freely flow into their lives (as the food could sail to Rome). Paul is teaching the Power of the Word to totally destroy every false stronghold permanently just as the Romans overwhelmed the pirates. Lean on the Word as you preach, trust it to do its work, don't depend on yourself. Just as the pirate army had no answer so Satan has no answer for your mighty weapons.

THE IRAQ WAR followed the same pattern. Kuwait was captured threatening the flow of oil (blessing). We did not initially engage in a land war (fighting soldiers individually) but used mighty weapons (advanced planes, bombs, cruise missiles) that overwhelmed the enemy. They had no defence. These weapons went past the front-lines and homed-in on the key enemy strongholds (bases, communication and supply centres, weapon storage areas, factories). Systematically (in 3 months) all the strongholds were destroyed so that the troops had no support in battle. They were exposed, confused and were easily captured (just like the pirates). Likewise, the Word goes forth with power (like a cruise missile) and penetrates accurately to the mind and heart where it destroys the key strategic strongholds of false belief.

Only the Word has the power and penetration to pull down the key strongholds and break Satan's power over the mind. Satan has been building up these strongholds in minds over a life-time but such is the power of the Word that they can come crashing down in one day when you speak the anointed Word.

Our Weapon has the power to do the job. However, we must war, we must cast down imaginations (v3,5). It is only as we speak the Word that it goes to work. Identify the stronghold, then find the appropriate scripture to launch against it. As you speak it, God will target the Word like a guided-missile, accurately into their heart and mind to destroy the required stronghold with an explosion of light!

Jeremiah 1:12: 'I will hasten (watch over) my Word to perform it.'

The Word of God is powerful. Great power is entrusted to you. God has given you weapons. God has given you His Words. They are mighty in His sight Trust in them - use them.

Salvation in 3-Dimensions
I just met the world's worst worrier and she did not have a care in the world.

I asked: 'What happened? How did you get rid of all your worries?'
 She said: 'I hired a man to worry for me.'
 I replied: 'Wow - what does he charge?'
 She answered: '£500 a day.'
 I said: 'But where are you going to find that kind of money?'
 She replied: 'Well, that's his worry, isn't it!'
 Wouldn't it be great if we had someone who could take all our worries and for free?! That's exactly what God offers us (1Peter5:7).
 We get into anxiety when we take our eyes off the Lord and try to carry the burden ourselves. One of the things we can worry about is our salvation. Has it happened?, is it happening?, or will it happen? There is a paradox here. In the Bible, salvation is sometimes past, sometimes present, sometimes future - which is it? Do our weaknesses and failures mean God won't be able to finish what He started. Will He finally be able to perfect us? What's God doing in us now?

1Thessalonians 5:23,24: 'Now may the God of peace Himself SANCTIFY (save) you COMPLETELY and may your whole SPIRIT, SOUL, and BODY be preserved blameless at the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, Who also will do it.'

* He is the God of peace: He wants you to have the assurance of your salvation, that He will see it through to the end. He does not start something and then abandon it.
 * Your salvation is so important He Himself is doing it.
 He is leaving nothing to chance but taking personal responsibility.
 * He is working on you until He has saved you completely.
 He is not going to settle for anything less than perfection.
 * Our complete being that is being saved (restored to glory) is defined to be: spirit, soul, and body.
 * The process of salvation will be complete: at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 Until then we are still under construction.
 * Our guarantee that God will complete His work in us is that: He is faithful. He began by calling us into salvation through the promise of the Gospel. He is faithful to keep His promise to do (complete it). We can rejoice and rest in this assurance: **"Confident of this very thing, that He Who has begun a good work in you will perform it (carry it on to completion) until the day of Jesus Christ"**
 (Phil 1:6).

SPIRIT-SOUL-BODY. One of the most enlightening revelations concerning the nature of man and how God is working our salvation is that man by creation is a TRINITY or TRI-UNITY. This is not surprising as threeness is the very nature of our One God. **'In the beginning God (Elohim- a plural noun) created (singular) the heavens and the earth'** (Genesis 1:1).

He created a Triune Uni-verse: (1) 'In the beginning' = TIME,
 (2) 'the heavens' = SPACE, (3) the earth = MATTER-ENERGY
 Science confirms that one can't exist without the other two.

Likewise when God created man in His image and likeness He made man a Trinity.
'The LORD God (1) formed man of the dust of the ground (BODY) and (2) breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (SPIRIT) and (3) man became a living being (SOUL)' (Genesis 2:7).

Before the Fall, these 3-dimensions of man were in harmony. His spirit (made of the breath of God) was in constant contact and fellowship with God's Spirit giving him direct intuitive knowledge of God and things.
By his body he contacted and exercised authority over the physical world.
His soul or personality (his mind, will and emotions) was formed from the fusion of spirit and body, forming the bridge between them. He lived under God's authority by the life flowing from his spirit.
 So, man is a spirit, he has a soul and lives in a body.

God's purpose is for every part of triune man to respond to the Triune God with love: 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD (FATHER), our GOD (SON), the LORD (SPIRIT) is ONE (echad - meaning a corporate unity) You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart (SPIRIT), with all your SOUL, and with all your strength (BODY)' (Deuteronomy 6:4,5).
The Three are One so we should love the One God with all three parts of our being.

But after the Fall our spirit, soul, and body got messed up. Man's spirit died to God immediately, so that we were cut off from the life of God. It became the 'Old Man'. The sin-nature (sin) came into the flesh resulting in certain physical death. All this was predicted in Genesis 2:17. So instead of the soul coming under the control of the spirit, it came under the power of 'sin in the flesh'.
This means we need salvation on all 3-DIMENSIONS: Spirit-Soul-Body.
 This explains why in the Bible we discover: **(1). We have been saved, (2). We are being saved and (3). We will be saved.** Which is right?- they all are!

| There | are | 3-STAGES | OF | OUR | SALVATION: | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----|-----------------|----|-------------|--------------------------|-------|-----|-------|------|-----|--------|------|
| 1. | We | have been saved | - | this is the | salvation of our SPIRIT. | | | | | | | |
| 2. | We | are being saved | - | this is the | salvation of our SOUL. | | | | | | | |
| 3. | We | will be saved | - | this is the | salvation of our BODY. | | | | | | | |
| Notice | the | order: SPIRIT | - | SOUL | - | BODY. | God | works | from | the | inside | out. |

1. We have been saved (the Past Tense Salvation of our SPIRIT by the New Birth).

* **'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit'** (Titus 3:5).

* We are a NEW CREATION in the spirit, we are the righteousness of God (2Cor 5:17,21).

* **'God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that (salvation) not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we (the New Man) are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them'** (Eph2:4-10). **'The new (spirit) man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness'** (Eph4:24). See Romans 6:1-11, Col2:9-15.

2. We are being saved (the Present Tense Salvation of our SOUL by the Word of God).

'The message of the cross ... to us who are being saved it is the power of God' (1Cor 1:18).

'Receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls' (James 1:21).

'Receiving the end (result) of your faith - the salvation of your souls' (1Peter 1:9).

Now our reborn spirit is perfect and indwelt by the Holy-Spirit, but our soul is not perfect. There is an ongoing process called 'the salvation of our souls, which works through us (1) receiving and (2) doing the Word of God (including repentance, prayer, worship, serving). Our soul (mind) now is the main issue (the decider) in determining what progress we make. The spirit pulls the soul one way and the flesh pulls the opposite way. Whichever way the soul votes will dominate (Gal5:16,17, Rom8:5).

It all depends on what we set your mind on and give attention to. If we become spiritually minded by allowing the Word to renew our mind to who we are in Christ in our spirit, then the fruit of the Spirit will flow out of our spirit. The result is the transformation of our life: **'Do not be (externally) conformed to this world (by its pressures), but be transformed (by 'metamorphosis') by the renewing of your mind (soul), that you may prove (in your life) what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God'** (Romans 12:2). In metamorphosis, the inner beauty of our reborn spirit (butterfly) is no longer hidden inside the soulish outer shell (caterpillar), but comes forth into manifestation. It is change from the inside out. Likewise God's will is for the life and love of Christ in our spirits to be expressed outwardly, showing forth the will of God. This requires the renewing of our mind - letting the Word of God bring our thinking (souls) into agreement with our new-creation spirit (removing blockages of unbelief, unforgiveness etc) by continually (1) hearing and (2) doing it. Faith in our salvation comes by (1) hearing the Word, but only by (2) acting it out by faith is the process completed. As a butterfly must exert its strength so you must: **'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which works in you both to will (giving you the desire) and to do (giving you the ability and power) His good pleasure'** (Phil1:12,13).

3. We will be saved (the Future Tense salvation of our BODY by resurrection and glorification)

Our eternal glory depends on how well we have received the saving of your soul: **'salvation ready to be revealed in the last time'** (1Peter1:5). **'For those who eagerly await Him, He (Jesus) will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation'** (Hebr 9:28).

'Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ' (1Thess 5:8,9). **'now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed'** (Rom13:11). See also 1 Corinthians 15:50-58.